

**A Spectatorial Dramaturgy: Ethical Principles of Recycling, Habitus and
Estrangement.**

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Commentary

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This thesis was accompanied by a portfolio of publications which cannot be digitised.

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Publications in Portfolio, and Abbreviations:

- 2007, *Physical Theatres: A Critical Introduction* with Simon Murray, ('Introduction' 6%, 'Roots:Routes' 18%, 'Physicality and the Word' 12%, 'Bodies and Cultures' 10%), Routledge, ISBN10: 0-415-36250-4. – *PT:I*.
- 2009, 'Berkoff's 'London's': Staging Psycho-geographies of the Feared and the Ecstatic', *Literary London* 7:2, Literary London Journal, ISSN: 1744-0807. - 'London's'.
- 2009, 'Recycling Sources and Experiencing Physical Theatre in Educating Professionals', *Recycling in Arts, Education and Contemporary Theatre*, Norwegian Theatre Academy, ISBN: 978-82-7825-293-2. - *Recycling*.
- 2010, 'A Spectatorial Dramaturgy, or the Spectator Enters the Ethical Frame', *Performing Ethos* 1:1, Intellect, ISSN: 1757-1959. – *Spectatorial*.
- 2010, 'Play(ing) it again: Recycling as Theatres, Histories, Memories', *Art History and Criticism* 6, Vytautas Magnus University, ISSN: 1822-4555. - *Play(ing)*.
- 2012, 'The Film spectator as 'Bricoleur'; an ethics of viewing and poaching', *What Would You have Done? Explorations of Ethics in Film Studies*, ed. Jacqui Miller, Continuum, ISBN: 978-14-4382-982-1. – *Bricoleur*.

Abbreviations for additional material:

- 1979, *The Responsibility of Audience; Notes Toward a Dynamic Role for the Spectator* – *RA*. (unpublished)
- 1995, *Moving into Performance*, Mime Action Group, ISBN: 10873142-03-2. – *MiP*.
(see Appendix)
- 2007, *Physical Theatres: A Critical Reader*, Routledge, ISBN10: 0-415-36252-0. – *PT:R*

Foreword.

As I have prepared this Commentary, I have come to appreciate the values that exist between the conventions of doctoral research driven by a glimpsed destination and that which brings together previously published works. The particular, and perhaps peculiar, historiographical relationship between the works from 'then' and the Commentary from 'now', turns such research into both a reflection and opportunity to reconsider writing already 'out there'. One cannot re-write the works (although the concept of 're-working' is central to my view of the engaged spectator). But one can reflect on the perspectives that informed each original piece within a body of emerging work. A Commentary, then, becomes not only a process of revelation but also one of acknowledgment of differing circumstances of research, publication and style. The unchangeable outcomes of each published piece are thus seen in a different light, juxtaposition revealing not only advances in one's ideas but also the paradoxes and shifts in thinking that retrospection forces and allows. So a slightly declamatory approach in earlier work evolves into more measured tones, perhaps less shrill. But if we each strive to have our own 'voice', no matter how hard we try for a more mature style some of that driving rawness remains. It is an uncomfortable truth that the shrill, unformed but passionate youth lurks in the shadows.

This form of Commentary, then, becomes a revisiting of works and ideas that may have lost some of their currency, or perhaps not (hence my reaching back to both my MA Dissertation and the MiP Report). It becomes an attempt to place each work as part of a series not originally intended as such but in which chosen themes, prejudices and preoccupations play an ever-shaping role. It becomes an attempt to place some posterior coherence, convenient and inconvenient, which emerges from a process of reflection and 'looking again'. It is this mixing and juxtaposition of past work and present position that demands one looks from the side as well as straight on. For this reason I use a relational form of past and present tense as a 'vocal' device to show the ongoing 'live-ness' of the themes and ideas and passions that mark the body of work.

The Commentary is therefore exposition and critique, but also an expansion. It is a dynamic process embracing the title of the Commentary itself, becoming subject to

inevitable reworking since first being registered. Its preparation has allowed the introduction of current research, new ideas and oblique musings that extend the concerns of the extant works, giving a sense of continuing coherence and possible trajectories. It becomes an attempt to accommodate where I was then with where I am now.

The Commentary.

Introduction.

My application statement for Registration rested on two inter-active themes and areas that characterise the portfolio. Firstly, the 'knowing spectator' whereby the nature of spectatorship rests on the spectator knowing him/her-self and others as such, on their dispositions (*habitus*) and the recycling of experiences (forms of 'poaching') marking how they view. Secondly, the 'ethical spectator' as a 'spect-actor' whereby we view the experience of others as-if ourselves via mimesis and play: from empathy (the shaping influences of neural-mirror mechanisms and mutuality), and recognition (the reciprocity of being among others). My work aims to show these as tropes in a tense, uneasy but unavoidable relationship that marks spectatorship. This Commentary aims to show these tropes as informing and shaping the developing spine of my research and thus of my contribution to the field of knowledge in my subject.

The relationship between these principles I regard as inter-textual and dialectical, forming a phenomenology of spectatorship that I refer to as a 'spectatorial dramaturgy'. Such a dramaturgy must also incorporate and reflect the personal, social and cultural experiences of the spectator – what I have come to refer to as our (auto)biography.

As part of the preparation of this Commentary, I have been introduced to the work of T.J. Clark on the social history of art, a writer and theorist new to me. To my understanding, he is suggesting ways in which the aesthetic product and its social-cultural grounding must be brought into relation through an engagement with prevailing mediating factors such as class and modes of discourse. As a political ethos, I find his ideas congruent with those in my writings and Commentary. That is, that there needs to be a dynamic relationship between the historical objects of study and the social circumstances of authorship and argument (*PT:I: 2*). Any other historiography is impoverished in that

...the artist's point of reference as a social being is, *a priori*, the artistic community, rather than a wider engagement with social and political circumstances. (Clark, 1982: 10)

Rather, what is needed is ‘a multiplicity of perspectives’ (*ibid*: 19) that leads to a ‘complex dialogue’ (*ibid*: 11) between artist and critic and public. Such an ethos that no art comes out of nothing or nowhere underpins the use of Raymond Williams and others across my writing (see *Recycling*, *Spectatorial*, and *Play(ing)*).

If this challenge of engagement is widened, for the purposes of theatre, it must also extend to the dynamic relationship marking the personal and social circumstances of the spectator that provide the context and hinterland of their responses in the moment to the stage object under scrutiny.

This ethos has presence in my own spectatorial experience, in my published material and ongoing trajectories of investigation. It is also present in the relations between each work and over the arc of the works as each interrogates and builds on the previous piece as ideas and concepts become nuanced or qualified. As both spectator and writer I must acknowledge the manifestation of these principles having their own biography; materials and responses that represent the beginnings and continuities of my thinking about these matters.

Like all such constructions, ‘physical theatre’ is value-laden, and our discussion – any discussion – must in itself reflect our own values; thus the perspectives and prejudices we own up to. (*PT:I*: 7).

Whilst this commentary is, then, primarily concerned with the published works in the portfolio, I realise that these works have their roots in the dissertation presented as part of my MA in 1979 (*RA*) with its discussion of the spectator and his/her ‘responsibility’.

The predicates for my argument then rested on three ideas that subsequently remain as guiding, dramaturgical principles. Firstly, Brook’s injunction that good theatre depends on a good audience, that an audience has the theatre it deserves, that the audience has a (hard) responsibility yet is seemingly powerless (Brook, 1972). Secondly, the paradoxical nature of the spectator:

In the performing arts the beholder is a curiously complicated thing; he is an individual present on one occasion only as part of a group of other individuals all influencing each other in the matter of what they behold. (Southern, 1962: 268)

Thirdly, the paradoxical nature of theatre itself as real fiction:

Theatre is essentially a form of play. One group of people (the actors) play at being another group of people (the characters in the drama), usually for the entertainment of a third group of people (the audience). (Hunt, 1975: 57)

I believe it is these principles that I have subsequently explored and articulated in more subtle, more fully researched, more informed ways but in a voice that remains recognisably my own. As acknowledged, part of the process of ‘owning up’ is that one must admit the inter-textual nature – the intersections, cross-overs, spillages, hybridities, blurrings, and informed subjectivities – of thought and feeling not only in one’s own work but also the extent to which such things mark the experience of the spectator.

All spectators are ‘poachers’ and ‘nomads’ (*Bricoleur*: 15). We cannot help but re-use and re-work – that is, recycle – what we have learnt and put into practice, and in doing so colour new learning and new practice. What I discuss as the ‘new’ rests on a continuity of principles and a re-working of the ‘befores’ as each ‘new’ and each experience adds to this accumulated (both diachronic and synchronic) biography of experiences (*Bricoleur*: 23).

Do not treat this work as another ingredient in the cocktail of training – do not consume the words and just reproduce them – explore, develop, then learn and use them as a model for one’s own vocabulary and process. (Keefe, 1994: 6)

As poachers and nomads we must be aware of the inevitability of ‘picking and mixing’ those things that mark each individual instance of spectatorial experience whilst at the same time preserving integrity of purpose. Here I derive a hard principle from Brecht; of

the cumulative and always ongoing effect of ‘critical recycling; the familiar made strange and the strange familiar’ (*PT:I*: 165; *Play(ing)*: 142; *Bricoleur*: 23).

Although outside the immediate concerns of this Commentary, the same principles have influenced my work as a performance dramaturge and director in my approaches to working with the performance text. These then become dramaturgical imperatives whereby work is made and received in relation to what has gone before - the practitioner’s making of theatres and the spectator’s knowledge and experiences of theatres (*Recycling*: 22-23). More pertinently to the portfolio, the same principles allow a positioning of the spectator in a physical relation to the performance. A juxtaposing now discussed under terms such as ‘site-ing the spectator’ or forms of ‘immersive’ theatre. Here the spectator is made part of the physical site of presentation as well as of the emotional and intellectual world of the play. (See ‘Making Tracks’ in further research below.)

In order to structure this Commentary, I will give a summary of each portfolio work as a mapping of key points in relation to each other across an ongoing arc of research. I will then offer a narrative on this research arc as a reflection on the themes and principles that underpin a unified body of work. I will, finally, indicate further lines of research either underway or planned that continue to interrogate these themes and principles.

The Portfolio.

This is presented chronologically, but with no implication of a simple linear sequence. The works represent an arc of thinking that goes back and forth as a reflection of my processes of research, thinking and argument.

I see this as a process encapsulated in the notion of ‘roots and routes’ (see *PT:I*) that has become a trope in my work; roots (for example, found in *MiP* – see appendix) that reappear as the diverse but coherent routes of research and articulation. In this sense, the piece on Berkoff - to continue the metaphor - can be regarded as a ‘byway’; nevertheless fruitful and an important development of key ideas, but sitting outside the through-line of the Commentary and my argument.

Similarly, the MA Dissertation, whilst not an academic publication remains a root of my work that I would not wish to deny but rather give due acknowledgement to as I re-work and re-cycle ideas and axioms.

Physical Theatres: A Critical Introduction (2007).

This book was part of a two-volume project undertaken with Simon Murray, the second part being *Physical Theatres: A Critical Reader*. The volumes were and are intended to complement each other, with echoing innovative structural and stylistic devices. The entry in the portfolio list indicates which chapters I wrote and the percentage of each chapter in the book as a whole.

The book, by acknowledging and embracing the ‘messy intersections, unruly cross-overs, hybrids and spillages of theatres’ (*PT:I*: 1, 5, 6), argued for and mapped the landscapes of physical theatres and the physical in theatres. As a history and a critique of practices, the book discerned certain through-lines that place and foreground the body in theatres, as both continuing principles and the manifestations of those principles, interspersed with choric quotes acting as provocations and signposts.

‘Roots:Routes’ argued for the relationships between origins and directions of physical forms and practices, for placing contemporary practices in the context of historical and physiological legacy, and for placing the actor as both ‘actant’ and somatic whole. The chapter allowed the introduction of my first writings on the necessary ‘willing suspension of disbelief’, the cognitive and neurological foundations of mimesis, empathy and play in spectatorship, the ethical positioning of the spectator regarding objectifying gazing and necessary looking, and the resultant intertwining and paradoxical perspectives on the body.

‘Physicality and the Word’ explored the dramaturgical and physical relationship between words and bodies on stage, showing the enrichment of the spoken word by corporeality, movement and scenographies. The chapter was structured around a number of close readings of case studies, and allowed me to initiate discussion on the active role, the always-engaged position of the spectator as a ‘spect-actor’ (from Boal, 1992).

‘Bodies and Cultures’ acknowledged the inescapably partial account of the subject, whilst exploring the influence of certain non-Western practices and traditions on

Western forms and experiments in theatre. The chapter considered the tension that exists when exchanges of all kinds occur under the aegis of (inter)cultural encounters. The coda to the Introduction - quoted below – now acts as a marker to the tone and sensibility of my subsequent work.

In Three Senses.

It is in this sense that we understand the meaning of the performance or production text; the inter-textual manifestation on stage of the totality of the constituent parts or signifying systems as identified by Tadeusz Kowzan (1968) in his seminal work on the semiotics of theatre.

It is in this sense that we would wish to play with Clifford Geertz' (1983) notion of 'blurred genres' or categories. By its very nature, theatres are blurred: at the centre, at the edges and in their processes.

It is in this sense that we would consider theatre to have always been 'total' as well as 'blurred'. (*ibid*: 11)

Berkoff's 'Londons': staging psycho-geographies of the feared and the ecstatic (2009).

As already indicated, although having the status of a 'byway', this piece becomes a re-articulating and re-emphasising of the physicality of theatres. It allowed me to investigate further ideas from *PT:I* and to introduce material that, as it evolves, becomes central to my thesis.

The article looked at Berkoff's 'London' plays through the perspective of 'physical theatres' as exemplified in the work of the London Theatre Group:

... a collection of actors welded together by a common purpose. To express drama in the most vital way imaginable; to perform at the height of one's power with all available means. That is, through the spoken word, gesture, mime and music. Sometimes the emphasis on one, sometimes on the other. (Producer's note, *East*, 1978: 11)

I suggested Berkoff ‘physicalises’ ‘Londons’ by playing with London as sites of the body, sites of memory, sites of seduction. As ‘agons’ of real- and psycho-geographies of the feared and the ecstatic, so the spaces become ‘blended spaces’ of the (knowing) spectator’s recognised and imagined experiences. Thus I argued that the spectator is the recipient of the embodied word, sharing the breath of the actors and fellow spectators in the experience of theatre.

The paper allowed me to consider the relationship between words, images and bodies through the mechanisms of recycling, whereby as a spectator,

I journey in worlds that are familiar (through memory that remembers and mythologises and alters what is remembered), strange or unknown but vaguely recognised and so becoming palimpsests of the layers and traces of ‘Londons’.

(‘Londons’: 3)

I also discuss here for the first time the ideas of Boltanski regarding the paradox and ethical position of the spectator in respect of the viewing of suffering.

The fact remains that viewing suffering is especially problematic when the object of suffering is presumed to be real... (Boltanski, 1999: 23)

This implied challenge to us as spectators is taken up again in later work, becoming a central subject of further research.

Recycling sources and experiencing physical theatre in educating professionals (2009).

This article took as its theme the doing of something with some ‘thing’ (signs, ideas, themes, objects, the body) in our arts education and theatres. It argued against merely re-using in the sense of repeating or re-iterating of these things (offering a nominal claim to or patina of ‘newness’). Instead, re-use becomes a re-working, a re-thinking or re-constituting that allows some ‘different’ artifact or understanding to be seen, to emerge. It was my first extended exploration of the notion of ‘re-cycling’; what is done with the ‘re-things’? For what purpose and intention is the ‘re-thinging’ undertaken, and what is

revealed? How may the re-working be used to confront, to challenge, to interrogate? In other words, what is the position and relationship of the 'thing' or 're-thing' to the status quo? To rework Brecht as a trope for my work; does the familiar remain familiar and the strange remain strange or should the familiar be made strange and the strange made familiar so that we re-look at what we think and feel we know?

I also presented my initial sketch or diagram of diachronic stave lines and synchronic bar lines as a model of recycling, (developed below as research for a 'dynamic spiral'). If we see theatres as 'meme vehicles' or 'agent pools' as I suggest, these ideas mark a continuity from the forensic process model in *MiP* (see Appendix) and arguments in *PT:I*, toward the growing centrality of 'recycling' to my discussions of the knowing, ethical spectator.

A spectatorial dramaturgy, or the spectator enters the ethical frame (2010).

This article developed certain issues that may be considered 'an ethos of spectatorship', now seeking to reposition a 'willing suspension of disbelief' (from *PT:I*) as the 'knowing experience' and hence the ethical spectator in relation to the stage. The six sections (an ethics of recognition, looking, materiality, complicity and empathy, participation and imagination, and attending) characterised a collaboration and dialectic that I am now calling a spectatorial dramaturgy. I argued that such a dramaturgy is empirical, is an ethical economy of regard rooted in the material and social body in mutual and reciprocal concert. Such a dramaturgy also rests on the complicit, knowing, empathetic imagination located and manifested in the engaged but distanced spect-actor as agent who witnesses the work of the actor in theatres. I suggested that this relationship between a presented *mise-en-scène* and the always-present spectator entails the spectator always being active in some way or other. An ethical spectatorial dramaturgy therefore places the work of the spectator's actions within the 'weave' (see Barba and Savarese, 1991) of the theatre event.

In addition to bringing together my research and writing so far to posit the ethical position of the knowing spectator, I also discussed some ideas that become emerging paradoxes: that the implications of 'looking-being looked at' (opposed here to 'gazing') suggest a fundamental human trait essential to our 'being among others' (*Spectatorial*:

38); that agency (subsequently ‘qualified agency’) becomes central to my notion of the spectator as inevitable poacher and nomad; that the theatre requires the presence of both actor and spectator in an uneasy alliance (*ibid*: 49).

Play(ing) it again: Recycling as Theatres, Histories, Memories (2010).

This article allowed me to rework my central concerns regarding the spectator through wider perspectives of histories and memories. By revisiting the paper *Recycling sources and experiencing physical theatre in educating professionals* in the light of my other work, I was able to emphasise that cultural recycling is at the heart of our being as agents in a social and cultural nexus, a dynamic framing and reframing the of world from inheritances that are genetic, material, social and cultural. I argued that our theatres and histories are palimpsests of those before and those to come, marked by opaque shadows, half-hidden spectres, memories and knowledge that inscribe each experience. With respect to theatre, the knowing spectator draws on, is reminded of, and consequently mediates what they are watching, in the light of what has gone before. The performance text is formed and deformed and reformed. We bring our own ghosts - personal, cultural, social - to what we see and experience as agents inhabiting a shared world.

Using the privileged position that reflection and reconsideration allows, I also now note the persistence of a stylistic quirk in my writings – my voice - with the use of seemingly fragmented images and evocations, of case studies or close readings.

It is in this spirit that both volumes are intentionally heterogeneous with paradoxes, seeming contradictions and oppositions left in place – to allow the subject to be seen in its often unruly complexity... the necessary range of viewpoints that reflects the messy reality of what theatre is: an unavoidable hybrid of inherited, borrowed, stolen and invented practices and ideas. (*PT:I*: 5, 6)

At the risk of (unintended) confusion or opacity, I see a continuation of the original ‘choric quotes’ device to plant signposts and provocations that leave the ‘paradoxes, seeming contradictions and oppositions in place’. Attempts to flatten out or resolve these seem to be out of place with respect to the nature of theatre and the spectatorial

experience. Such attempts are challenged by the ethos represented by Clark's dynamic relationship of mediations and multiple perspectives, and thus a confronting ambiguity.

I also have to acknowledge a potential cost in this (ideological) position in that the reader's response may be one of alienation. Such a strategy may 'lose' the reader in a fog of (again unintended) opaqueness, rather than recognising the deliberate intentions of the approach taken – to try to capture the nature of theatre itself - as apparent clarity meets paradox and 'unruly complexity' in a reflection of life outside the theatre.

The Film spectator as 'Bricoleur'; an ethics of viewing and poaching (2012).

This chapter on the film spectator allowed me to argue that the principles of a knowing, ethical spectatorial dramaturgy underpins the cinematic as well as theatre experience, such principles predicated on notions of death and the erotic as tropes of our existence and culture (*ibid*: 1-2). The ethical dimension of the knowing spectator's self-awareness is deepened - that s/he is accepting a fiction as-if real, whilst looking and watching and being looked at and watched by others sharing the experience; that like our 'being-in-the-world, it is a relationship and thus qualifies our agency (*ibid*: 5, 13-14).

The paper took me further into consideration of the spectator's phenomenological position, whilst presenting for the first time the implications for our qualified agency of being, as viewers, inveterate poachers and nomads. I see this as another facet of the necessity of 'recycling' by which

... socialised individual agents question and use what they inherent, rework what is known, out-reach the familiar towards the imagined (*ibid*: 15).

Case studies were once again used to illustrate the positioning of the spectator as beneficiary. Non-diegetic and other cinematic devices were discussed as 'blurring the line' between the mimetic mode and the spectator but which devices only the spectator (not the character) can be aware of.

I further developed my discussion of 'Boltanski's dilemma' by suggesting that, whilst such fictions offer images of redemption out of suffering, they cannot not resolve suffering in it-self. Rather, such fictions put us 'in position' to feel and imagine the

circumstances of our-self and others in 'relation to' with its attendant moral tensions and dilemmas for action in the real world, predicated on the existential tropes of death and the erotic.

The Knowing Spectator.

The first section of chapter 2 of *Physical Theatres: A Critical Introduction* is introduced with two versions of the opening lines from *Prometheus Bound* (PT:I: 35). Further on in the same chapter I give an extended quote from the fifteenth century York-cycle pageant, *The Crucifixion* (PT:I: 49). The discussions that follow set out an argument for the placing of the spectator in relation to the enactments being presented: that in the absence of forms of staging verisimilitude ('realism', CGI spectacle) such work rests on the given dialogue-as-stage-directions, and thus on the imagination of the spectator. I argue that this imagination can only work if s/he accepts the 'as-if reality' of the enactment - unlike the nature of executions, surgeries, births and deaths familiar as very real events that unavoidably contextualise such enactments. Such a knowing acceptance of the fiction is an absolute necessity if theatre is to work as theatre and thus achieve the ethical aims that Aristotle claims for the form.

This line of thinking has become a trope in my work based on the notion of 'willing suspension of disbelief' but one that I now label with the innovatory prefix of 'knowing'; a state of mind willing entered into by the 'knowing spectator'. This borrows from the ideas of Bullough, Coleridge and James (*Spectatorial*: 47), but made dynamic in my use of Boal's notion of the 'Spect-Actor'. The engaged, made-ethical spectator who is thus also a participant in the event where, without losing the distinction between actor and spectator, both *actants* remain in a dialectical relationship.

There is no theatre without both the actor and the spectator as Aristotle tells us in *The Poetics* and as Brook reiterates in 1972 (see also *Spectatorial*: 49).

Re-looking at my work reveals a continual honing of my attempt to define the polysemic nature of theatre, drawing on Barthes, Boal, Brecht, Brook, Pavis and others whilst retaining the original influence of Hunt cited above. This reformulation is itself a conscious and acknowledged recycling of influences and knowledge: theatre is one group of people playing at being another group of people in front of a separate but engaged

group of people gathered with expectations and pre-conceptions, for the express purpose of presenting or watching and listening, never forgetting what they are doing. Theatre is always estranged and estranging (see *Play(ing)*, 2010).

This remains an attempt to oppose notions of the spectator as ‘mere observer’, as one who ‘only receives’, as ‘passive’. Thus, I am bemused at the perpetuating of this view in recent studies (for example Bouchard, 2009; Bottoms, 2011) as the work of the spectator becomes rediscovered and acknowledged. As Boal’s term both denotes and connotes, the spectator is always engaged, never passive despite an engagement conventionally predicated on remaining seated for 2 or more hours. Rather, it is a matter of always being present on a spectrum of overt to covert, external to internal, responses to the action on the stage; we respond with our own actions. We are never still – we breathe, our heart pumps and our blood flows, our body, mind, and brain are always active. Our body reacts in a variety of material and cognitive ways whether seated or promenading through a piece of immersive theatre. Indeed, whether seated or standing or walking, we are ‘in’ the world of the play as we knowingly suspend our disbelief.

Everything moves. Everything develops and progresses. Everything rebounds and resonates... Everything moves... as do I! (Lecoq, 2000: 169)

It is from this stance that I discuss the importance of applause (*PT:I*: 183) as a moment of physical release for the spectators, shared as audience with the actors and each other. It also marks the liminal point of leaving the world of the play for the real world of the street. This re-placing/re-positioning of the spectator is one of the unifying themes of my research and publications, and one that I propose developing further under my discussion of Kowzan’s table below.

A continuing negative positioning of the spectator forms part of the predicate for Rancière’s attempt to reconcile the individual spectator with the uncomfortable fact of the theatre audience - the shared experience. My reservation about such positioning is that it turns the notion of ‘participation’ into a narrow term, ignoring the always-present engagement (to varying degrees but never ‘zero’ or ‘passive’) of the spectator. The idea of emancipation here is posited on a non-existent atomised spectator, rather than the

awkward dialectic of stage, spectator and audience as a shared experience. As a construct, it also ignores the empirical fact of the spectator's experience (see Southern above, also *Bricoleur*: 3). An 'affective' approach is taken by Welch in her use of the notion of 'intimate publics', that argues for the reintroduction of emotions and 'affect' but predicated on the questionable basis that these 'have until recently been sidelined in discussion' (2011: 75). My problem with this thesis is that whilst such feelings may have fallen out of fashion in academic debate about theatre, they remain part of the spectator's real experience of theatre and articulated to him- or her-self as such.

A more congenial view is presented by Reason when, echoing my notion of the 'knowing spectator', the spectator's experience is discussed as the audience's being engaged 'in a kind of doing... imaginative... emotional... inter-subjective through kinaesthetic empathy' (2010: 19). Whilst I would argue for a more nuanced version of Reason's sense of 'levels', it seems self-evident from experience that spectators move between states of awareness, between the state of knowing suspension of disbelief and the always-possible disruption of that state as we are reminded – become aware – of the audience in the shared space. We then happily re-enter the world of the play. I argue that the concept and prefix of 'knowing' allows me to argue that we are always aware of being 'in/not in' the world of the play that is enacted in front of or around us.

Of course there are other facets of knowing: knowing as a position of superiority such as occurs if I get a reference or aside that others seem not to; knowing as a smugness of an insider's knowledge; knowing that the seats will be uncomfortable, or that the ticket prices will be expensive; knowing that the play may be too long, may not match the reviews or hyperbole that have attracted me in the first place. Yet the paradox remains that I willingly enter and knowingly accept the world of the theatre and the play - despite the lack of legroom.

I argue that we are in a dialectical relationship with ourselves as spectator and others as audience, with the fictional reality, and with those presenting that fiction or make-believe (and that we knowingly accept the real discomfort in the hope of some other gain). As Brecht reminds us, such a willing placing of ourselves is necessary for the traffic between stage and auditorium to generate the empathy by which we understand and learn (*PT:I*: 43).

Such a rediscovery of the ‘work of the spectator in live performance’ (for example, *About Performance* 10) also becomes an instance of the argument regarding the trope of ‘recycling’ (*Recycling*: 15, *Memory*: 142-143) and thus the spectator as ‘poacher’ and ‘nomad’ (*Bricoleur*: 15-16). The spectator is the other constant in theatre, but one who disappears and reappears in theatre discourse; is made passive or active, taken for granted or made totemic as fashions of theory come and go. But, again, I can trace ‘recycling’ back as an emerging theme in the 1979 dissertation where I quote John Arden.

The art of the theatre is exceedingly ancient, and I do not believe that the principles underlying it have been radically altered... The actor on the stage pretends: and presents the pretence to the public. To what end, and in what manner, the social conditions of the age and the occasion will determine. (Arden 1977: 110)

It may be argued that ‘pretence’ has changed its shape and form if we consider contemporary practices that claim or aspire to move beyond pretence such as live art, or performance art. We have to consider Artaudian and other manifestations of foregrounding the body that seek to break down the barrier between actor/non-actor and spectator. But as I suggest in my writing, there will always be a distinction between the one on stage and the one looking, however temporarily blurred or unbounded the gap between them may become (see *Spectatorial*: 46). Whilst I am not rejecting the place of this work in the spectrum of theatre, such reformed pretence tends to be restricted to minority tendencies in theatre and theory. Unreformed pretence perpetuates and maintains the hegemonic position of the ‘pretending actor’ in most theatre, film and television drama and practice.

I suggest Arden echoes Aristotle’s ‘learning’, Shakespeare’s moral and social ‘mirror’, and Brook’s ‘resonant space’. Learning, mirrors and affective space can only be effective if the spectator accepts both the fictional space and the world of the play (whatever the mode of practice) as a ‘kind-of-reality’ having meaning for his/her own real life and world. The knowing suspension of disbelief is the necessary state in which to learn from the play – the ‘knowing’ being the mechanism and mediation that allows us to

take (from) the world of the play into our own lives. To pursue this further however, learning and thus knowing our-selves and our world only becomes effective as we also take our ourselves and our world into the theatre - and thus into the world of the play. My contention and argument is that we recycle our-selves – our biography in the world – as a necessary means of relating (having empathy) to the fiction and relating the fiction to ourselves in a continual process.

A process of generating theatre meaning assumedly takes place in the context of each theatre experience, ie. in the actual encounter between a theatre performance and a spectator. (Rozik 2008: 1)

As I go on to argue in *Bricoleur* (: 23-4), each such encounter is the temporary culmination of all previous encounters, and will consequently take its place in affecting the next encounter. This is pre-figured in *PT:I*, where I argue that theatre and its dramaturgical principles are always diachronic and synchronic; it is this sense of principles as tropes underlying specific manifestations that inform my further research into a recycling model.

‘Recycling’ in all its forms is a dynamic process. One of the pieces extracted in the *Physical Theatres Reader* is taken from Jeff Pressing’s work on improvisation. I included this on account of it’s setting out in material-neurological-cognitive terms my own barely formed, perhaps naive but insightful, recycling model of practice, first iterated in *MiP*.

To begin with, improvisation (or any type of music performance) includes the following components, roughly in the following order:

- (i) Complex electrochemical signals are passed between parts of the nervous system and on to endocrine and muscle systems;
- (2) muscles, bones, and connective tissues execute a complex sequence of actions;
- (3) rapid visual, tactile, and proprioceptive monitoring of actions takes place;
- (4) music is produced by the instrument or voice;

- (5) self-produced sounds, and other auditory input, are sensed;
- (6) sensed sounds are set into cognitive representations and evaluated as music;
- (7) further cognitive processing in the central nervous system generates the design of the next action sequence and triggers it.
- return to step (1) and repeat – (*PT:R: 67*)

I return to this as an elegant and intellectually rewarding exposition of my own position of the centrality of recycling in our theatre work. Drawing on the materiality of the body, some aspects of which are discussed in other parts of this Commentary, Pressing suggests a model that rests on ‘what has gone before-what is then done’ as the basis for the actions that follow. (I am reminded of Meyerhold’s 3-stage model of action in both training and performance whereby I prepare to act - I act - I finish as preparation for next action.). Pressing, however, also notes the paradox of inventiveness in that this comes from

...the commitment to avoid repetition as much as possible, while coherence is only achieved by some degree of structural unity, which is only possible with repetition. (*PT:R: 76*)

I read Pressing as using the term ‘repetition’ in the distinctive way I argue for as ‘re-working’; to repeat in a different way as the musician or any other practitioner-artist uses their own previous work.

Thus the process of generating theatre meaning is also diachronic and synchronic at the level of each individual spectator, for each practitioner and for each teacher. As I argue (*Recycling: 22-23*), as practitioners, we unavoidably draw on and try to escape what we have done and seen already; ‘we repeat and recycle at the same time’. As teachers, we colour the memes and units of knowledge that we are reiterating and reworking as we teach these. In preparing this Commentary, I have re-read many things, and am thus reminded of Eliot’s discussion of the relationship between tradition and the individual artist. In arguing the value of the artist’s work, Eliot also emphasises that this is always done within a context; that writers cannot write except as part of a tradition that they both interpret and reshape.

I suggest here a juxtaposing with Clark's position outlined above. Despite the banal claims of cultural hyperbole, no piece of work exists only in itself; it is part of what went before as well as its own time, it comes from whatever influences (biography) are acting on the artist consciously and otherwise. But not only the writer; as I suggest, following Rozik, the spectator is both caught in and beneficiary of the same principles at work, as s/he is their own 'tradition' and changing biography.

However it is not simply repeating; as I emphasise in *Recycling* and later work, there is a profound distinction between repeating and re-saying, between reiterating and re-working. I seek to emphasise that 'only repeating' gives us negative stereotypes, perpetuating received ideas and prejudices through stock types and situations. Re-working, in contrast, may become the positive stereotype – a figure we can relate to but who also challenges us. Such a figure becomes the means of using recognisable materials whereby the familiar is made strange and the strange familiar, thus creating a psychic and emotional space for learning to take place.

The challenge in such theoretical and practical work is to avoid the mere and banal reiteration of the everyday on stage and screen.

The notion that repetition in itself is not possible in the first place must also be acknowledged although it is one with which I take issue. I would place here the arguments of Reception Theory or the ideas of Goulish, Cage, Benjamin and others on repetition and chance, or whether we see or receive the same thing when it is apparently repeated. I may watch the same film on dvd again after a long interval, but I am not reading it in the same way as my biography has changed, But the recorded or printed thing itself remains fixed and thus repeated (unlike a new production of an existing play-text) – rather it is my reception, reading and responses that may change, these influenced and marked by the earlier experience as Rozik reminds us. The evolving body of work implicitly frames itself within the validity of empirical changes in how something is received whilst remaining open to the disputed ontological status of the thing itself. My inclination is to follow the paradox of innovation and repetition that Pressing discusses in material-neurological-cognitive terms, and that is congenial to both common sense and my evolving arguments on recycling and re-working.

In *PT:I* (: 44) I first explore the notion of mirror neurons within a discussion of the cognitive and neurological roots of mimesis and empathy; key ideas that I shall return to later. I then go on to develop this discussion in *Spectatorial* (: 40-43) and subsequent work under the heading of the materiality of the body, where I now place these cognitive and neurological roots alongside the recycled discursive and acquired dispositions of the agent as a body-among-others. My intention here is to place both of these as dialectical materialities in the symbiotic and agonistic relationship that forms our habitual body. Thus the social-material body becomes the ‘habitus’ of embodied values, attitudes and patterns (from Bourdieu), one of the ‘structures of feeling’ of the living meanings and values of an inter-related continuity (from Williams), and the ‘hyle’ or lived body at the level of conscious experience, intentionality and self-awareness (from Husserl).

I see this as the everyday body, the one from which we relate and respond to what we see and hear onstage. It is the everyday body and its biography we take into the theatre and from which we respond to the world of the play. It is the everyday body that relates to the pinning of Prometheus, or the nailing of Jesus as these are enacted and simulated in front of us on the stage (*PT:I*: 35, 49). As suggested already, we can only enter the world of the play from our everyday world. But simply to reiterate the everyday is to fail the demands of theatre. We should see the everyday body or its derivations/exaggerations through complex acting (Kirby), the articulate body (Dennis), the communicating body (Marshall); the everyday body becomes known to us as spectators not as the merely reiterated body but the re-worked or heightened body.

It is this ability to recognise the re-worked body that allows the spectator to relate to the bodies (actor and character) on-stage; to engage in their own reworking as the characters and situations are related to through recognition and empathy. It is in this sense that all spectators are nomads and poachers, previously hinted at, but specifically discussed in my most recent work. To some extent, this summarises my work and themes to date as I characterise the spectator as ‘active’ - from de Certeau - in reading the ‘polyphony’ of signifiers and voices - from Bakhtin (*Bricoleur*: 14-15).

Again, we are faced with Boal’s ‘spect-actor’ who is able to both be ‘in’ the world of the play but remain aware it is only a fiction and thus maintain Brecht’s injunction for ‘distance’. Such a stance is symbiotic, as is the awareness that we are watching a fiction

as nomads from which we ‘poach’, a position itself resting on being a poacher – a knowing spectator who watches and listens in order to take, to be moved and challenged and thus learn. It is this ability that is invoked in the discussion of the Crucifixion and Prometheus, where the representation witnessed is mediated by real knowledge of executions, punishments and other pains of life with which actors and spectators, past and present, will be familiar.

It is this desire to look at what should repel us that I will return to when discussing Boltanski’s paradox.

This ability and propensity to poach-to-learn, however, is one that rests on our status as agents. But my work increasingly and properly re-works this status. Rather than possessing a simple agency as previously argued, we are ‘qualified’ agents only. It is on this basis that not only is the spectator ‘knowingly’ so but also ‘ethically’ engaged. We are agents for ourselves but only in so far as we are agents among other agents, where freedom to act is qualified by self-concern and reciprocity. Here my work draws on writers such as Berger, Winnicott, and Grene in recognising the ethical dilemma of being in the world (*Bricoleur*; 12, 14), to widen our understanding of the spectator as qualified agent by taking ideas from relational therapy and counselling.

...(the) notion of ‘self-in-relation’ points to the inherently relational nature of the person. (Fishbane 2001: 275)

... behaviour is always in relation to the behaviour of others – we ‘act in relation’. (Cecchin 1987: 405)

Again I see pre-figuring and echoes of my ideas where Zarrilli is quoted on the human as being ‘processually under construction’ then counter some aspects of this view as I argue that the body also remains the same whilst ‘re-constructed’ in our perceptions – the tension between the concrete and the perceived that again qualifies our agency (*PT:I*: 6, 62). This causes me to reflect on and question the (blurred) line and threshold between repetition and development, between repetition and the necessary principles that tie together work as it evolves. I see this as a further iteration of my sense of the tensions, the

dialectics, the messy but rich hybridities that I argue inform all theatres and thus my work as I seek to reflect on the nature of theatres. To reflect on theatres means to engage with and accept that theatres themselves reflect messy but rich truths about the human condition.

Thus the next section unavoidably touches on and reframes these themes from different perspectives.

The Ethical Spectator.

My research and drafting of *PT:I* became the introduction to the neurological and cognitive material bases of empathy, reciprocity and other facets of what Aristotle (arguing from intuition and observation) discusses as the induced feeling for others that leads to ‘katharsis’. Our being with others in the world makes us agents but agents who are both qualified and qualifying. Others act on us but equally we act on others, albeit with outcomes that are not necessarily equal or symmetrical. As social beings, we are subject to shared social-material inheritances that are manifest in each individual within his/her community and value group (see Williams above). My developing argument from *PT:I* onwards is that these socially embodied (pre)dispositions are complemented by and are in a dialectical relationship with the neurological and other inheritances of the material body. Freedom of will and choice is unavoidably compromised both by the actions of others and my own inheritances and conditionings.

It is in this complex sense that I refer to, use, and articulate my concept of the ‘ethical’ spectator across the arc of the works. Not simply as ‘being good’ but as an unavoidable awareness and a consciousness of self and being among others that underpins the traffic between stage and auditorium (*PT:I*: 43)

Such research material and argued social inheritances are equally the basis of qualified agency as I recycle and re-work these into new matter as a nomad and practitioner of heteroglossia (*Play(ing)*: 145). Thus, I am not inevitably trapped by such inheritances but accept that these form the basis of my re-workings, my own ‘newnesses’ that are the predicates for my rejection of what Baudrillard represents in *Recycling*, and later work. We either simply plunder the past or are seduced by the

apparent new if past work is ignored (*PT:I*: 4) unless we are prepared to re-work and re-use the past as illustrated by my recycling model and Pressing's dynamic process.

... the work itself may appear in curious, unexpected places; and, once disclosed in a new location, the work may never look the same again. (Clark, 1982: 18)

As nomads and poachers our memories (semantic and autobiographical), experiences and dispositions shape how we approach, experience and respond to both new and revisited pieces of work. Our responses are thus shaped by the 'weave' of actions of both ourselves and others; it is a relationship. We acknowledge and take the disclosed work mediated through the messy hybridities that mark our life, our theatres, our position as spectators – but it is what we do with the taking that is the ethical heart of the matters with which I am concerned. In theatre terms, I argue that we are always ethical spectators in that we are, always, knowing spectators.

It is in this sense that I argue we are inescapably ethical by the fact of being human in our-self among others.

This means there is a dimension of the ethical that is oppressive from the inescapable pressure of being human. This is the existential weight captured by, for example, Beckett (*PT:I*: 178; *Bricoleur*: 2). We are ethically engaged across a range of social-political positions that place us in on-going ethical and moral dilemmas that are (re)presented to us mimetically by theatres, and confronting us with choices both on and off stage, as both Aristotle and Brecht understood (*PT:I*: 39-44, 49). These positions may be experienced as positive, as uncomfortable, as satisfying; they may be ignored (as false consciousness) or taken up as a challenge. As a knowing and thus ethical spectator, we may be made uncomfortable by what we see on stage, or we may derive vicarious (and guilty) pleasure from what we watch (see *Londons*, *Bricoleur*). It is this relationship between the theatre spectator who is also social agent that is captured by Boal's notion of the 'spect-actor' already discussed; an ethical being in all its complexity manifested in the human, here as theatre spectator who returns to the everyday world.

As I argue, to be human and therefore ethical means awareness of our-selves being among others, of being 'other' to each other within communities predicated on empathy,

mutuality and reciprocity. To be ethical means much more than being good, and theatre (re)presents this 'much-more-ness' to us. To poach from Read, theatre works with and deals with the morality of everyday life (Read, 1993/1995)

Once again, I find my thinking positioned on a unifying arc reaching back to the processes of working and analysis created for *Moving into Performance* but also forward to the further work I envisage on Boltanski's dilemma.

As qualified and qualifying agents, we are subject to the workings and inheritances of the material body that have formed so much of recent neurological and cognitive investigation. From this research, I have argued for the neurological and cognitive roots of functional mimesis-empathy-play (*PT:I*: 44-46), as the basis of an ethics of materiality (*Spectatorial*: 40-43) and recycling (*Recycling*: 18), and suggesting further lines of thinking as a phenomenological recycling of first-order experiencing (*Bricoleur*: 24). This last idea is supported by further work on the place of mirror neurons (the investigative work and theory that initiated my thinking here) in phenomenal experience and intentional relations.

The same neural structures modelling the functions of our body in the world also contribute to our awareness of our lived body in the world and of the objects that the world contains... there are neural mechanisms mediating between the multi-level... experience we entertain of our lived body, and the *implicit certainties* we simultaneously hold about others... the phenomenal content of intentional relations. (Gallese 2005: 42, 43)

As Gallese and others have demonstrated, the initial work on mirror neurons and recognising the intentions of others has been extended into further areas of mirror mechanisms suggesting these are active in other cognitive functions. From the location of mirror neurons in cortical area F5, further evidence indicates mirror motor and matching mechanisms in other cortical areas mediating various cognitive functions such as phoneme production, copying intransitive movements, and emotion recognition (see Gallese 2001, Fabbri-Destro 2008). It is the empirical base of measurable theory that attracts me to such work as a counterpoint to speculative theory.

McConachie (2007) writes in rather blistering terms of the limitations of ‘master theory’ and ‘master theorists’, here drawing on Popper’s concept of scientific method such that any scientific hypothesis remains provisional theory only, useable until displaced through testing and scrutiny by a new falsifiable theory (*ibid*: 570). Certain theorists have sought to ‘place their ideas beyond the protocols of falsifiability’ (*ibid*: 572) in contrast to theories of mind and cognition that are now measurable through techniques such as functional magnetic resonance imaging and neuroimaging (see Singer et al, 2004). Against speculative ‘master theory’, McConachie discusses ideas such as ‘conceptual blending theory’ (*ibid*: 559, drawing on Fauconnier and Turner) and ‘visual intentionalism’ (*ibid*: 561, drawing on Jacob and Jeannerod). The first suggests that as spectators faced with the doubleness of theatre, we oscillate – cognitively speaking – between seeing the fiction (characters, world of the play) and seeing the reality (actors, painted scenery) but suffer no cognitive dissonance or disruption due to our ability to blend cognitive categories and selective content. The second suggests that humans have two visual systems in place that allow us to process dual visual stimuli; as spectators we see the inanimate scenery as ‘visual perceptions’ and the actors as characters acting on the world with intention. For McConachie, mimesis - in Aristotle’s sense – remains a component of performance but imitation is now located in the spectator as a mirror neural mechanism and cognitive imitation of what is seen on stage (*ibid*: 564).

I suggest oscillation, visual intentionalism, and conceptual blending become measurable re-statings of Bulloughs intuitive ‘psychical distance’, of our empirical experience as knowing spectators. Such measurable theory, whilst confronting ‘master theory’, is arguably better seen as complementing and extending aesthetic ideas and other insights into the complex cultural and social nature of spectatorship. If I choose to see a particular actor in a play I nevertheless have misgivings about attending, I am going with a certain double consciousness - here a preference for the ‘actant’ over the character or plot; I have a bias in my oscillation between actor and character. This double-ness is perhaps at its most paradoxical with respect to empathy. As indicated, recent cognitive and neurological experiments have suggested the location of the mirror mechanisms that trigger those responses we call empathy. But as Decety warns, empathy is a social and cultural term that covers a range of behaviours (and is not reserved to humans alone), and

thus implies reservations about too broad conceptualisations of the term and its connotations.

While the different disciplines' ideas of empathy clearly have something in common, one could justifiably question the heuristic or conceptual advantages of one monolithic concept of empathy (2011: 104).

I suggest this exemplifies McConachie's argument for theory that is subject to scrutiny and testing as advances in neural measuring increasingly open up the workings of the brain and mind. With respect to values such as empathy, we should note that McConachie also accepts Williams, Bourdieu and others as working within the falsifiable protocols of social science.

But the implications of Decety's writing warn us against monolithic theory – for example, forms of behaviourism or relativism. There is a danger that one hegemonic theory becomes replaced by another; *pace* McConachie, imitation is located in neither actor nor spectator alone. As I have argued, the imitations onstage trigger reactions from a nexus of causes in the spectator.

What I mean is that Dickens told us about a Miss Havisham whom he created, but when many of us read about that Miss Havisham, we bring her to life with the Miss Havishams we know. (Rosen, 2012)

Neither falsifiable theories nor untestable conjectures can alone account for any individual or collective response. There are simply too many paradoxical and interweaving elements and interlocutors that mark what I bring to a performance and take away from a collective experience.

Thus I find myself returning to my notion of qualified agency. The spectator's empathetic and thus ethical responses are dictated neither by simple mechanistic triggers nor by social constructions alone. Whilst the cognitive element of empathy can now be located in certain cortical areas and subject to neural triggers, my response in the moment is also influenced by my biography, my experience, circumstances prevailing at that

moment as qualifiers of any reflex reaction. Likewise, my social and cultural conditionings will be confronted by unbidden feelings, by archetypal moments that catch me unawares in visceral, tearful ways distinct from measurable triggers (*Recycling*: 19). Each mode of response shapes the other; both my reflex and knowing reactions are qualified by the other, just as my agency is qualified by the agency of others, by my being only in-relation-to.

To reflect what I see as the complex nature of any spectatorial dramaturgy, my use of measurable theory in research and argument is complemented by ideas marked as evocative, poetic and resonant. These are not constructions that are confounded by my own experience, or that reduce my status as qualified, ethical agent, but are insights and intuitions that match or relate to my own experience. A piece of theatre is an artefact; we construct theories that seek to explain the observable work of the theatre and experience of the spectator. The experience is a real, individual and shared one that I can enjoy with no sense of theory but not with no sense of myself and those around me as qualified and qualifying agents. I suggest we should not force the known, phenomenological body into discourse or a discursive body but rather use the latter as part of an intellectual framework to understand the human, paradoxes and all.

We must then return to the physical materiality of the theatre and spectator. If my feelings are emotions that are embodied then so are my enculturated responses. In the *Knowing Body* section, I outline the use made of concepts such as structures of feeling, ‘hyle’ and habitus as embodied elements of our lived body-among-others. Whilst conducting research for this Commentary, I have been able to extend the notion of habitus by looking at Bourdieu’s concept of ‘hexis’. My understanding of this is that for Bourdieu, hexis stands for embodiment, habitus for the dispositions of feeling and thinking. In this, Bourdieu is drawing on the ideas of Mauss, that seemingly everyday movements are socially constructed. But I would qualify this by arguing that principles become embodied, values are ‘given’ body or ‘made’ body through injunctions and other enculturations and conditionings. The body then becomes the tangible manifestation of us as a person (see Bourdieu 1977, 1984). The concepts of hexis and habitus allow the body to be located as (qualified and qualifying) agent that is bound to the world (embodied history) in necessary mutual relations to that world and to other bodies (equally qualified

agents). As such ethical agents, we are shaped by the world and by others as we shape the world and others in turn, to differing degrees and in asymmetrical power relationships.

I am attracted to these and similar ideas, for example John Berger on ‘looking’ (*PT:I*: 63, *Spectatorial*: 38), as principled and empirical arguments locating the body at the centre of human life and therefore of theatre. I am taken back to the predicates for *PT:I*, seeking to place the body at the centre of theatre, as the presenter of imitations and the receiver of those imitations as we think feelings and feel ideas (*ibid*: 39, 45). Such bodies are inescapably ethical, with the paradoxes inextricably involved as exemplified by Boltanski’s dilemma.

Conclusion.

Earlier in this Commentary I made reference to what we may call the discomforts of theatre: uncomfortable seats; the price of tickets; the unknowable quality of the play or production before it is seen. Acknowledging such ‘un-poetic’ truths about theatre is the necessary corrective to the aesthetics and aspirations of theatre, embracing inconvenient empirical facts and experiences of theatre. The portfolio of work is characterised by a refutation of the notion of the passive spectator – but it could be argued that our learnt and accepted conventions of behaviour do indeed keep us in our seats. We do not go into the theatre (in the overwhelming number of cases) expecting to do other than comply with the rules of theatre and spectator behaviour. I will not be expected to warn Othello from the stalls of Iago’s villainous behaviour. But equally we may go to the theatre knowing that we will be expected to ‘join in’ when the pantomime’s hero asks us to warn him (her?) that the villain ‘is behind you’. Or when we choose to go to a piece of site-specific, immersive theatre where I know I will be touched, moved around and not remain seated.

The point here is that whilst the diachronic principles of theatre remain, the manifestation of those principles in practice will differ from era to era and style to style across a range of social norms. The mirror will always be held up to nature according to the social conditions of the age and the style of the occasion. To which we must add the receptivity or otherwise of the spectator, who will occasionally depart from the accepted

conventions by not joining the standing ovation, or by walking out during the performance.

The first lesson the playwright learns is that he is not going to be able to control an audience's reactions anyway... As you can't control people's reactions to your plays, your duty is also not to reduce people's reactions, not to give them easy handles with which they can pigeon-hole you, and come to comfortable terms with what you are saying. (Hare, 1978: 57)

Civic society - the 'polis' - has, in certain eras, been discomforted by the audience: the collective of spectators watching and listening to ideas that may veer out of control or be deemed dangerous. If my work seeks to explore an arc of spectatorial experience, then the accepted roots of that arc would be located in Plato as well as Aristotle. Plato's characterisation of the spectator in *The Republic* – part of a 'nondescript mob' (x, 604e), an ignorant citizen unable to distinguish images from reality (vii, 515c) – demonstrates a distrust that is countered by the 'knowing and thus learning' spectator of Aristotle.

I have no desire to conceptualise the 'ideal' spectator, nor believe this can be done despite the many theorisations of the spectator that veer towards this by ignoring the uncomfortable facts of the empirical spectator. However seemingly 'passive' the conventions of theatre are deemed to make the spectator, history and experience reveal the spectator will always remain a paradox, like theatre itself.

Concluding this Commentary is not a conclusion to my engagement with theatre. In film terms, the plot may have finished but the story continues. The final section indicates the next phases of my research towards a proposed 'spectatorial dramaturgy'.

Further Research and Writing.

Extant project.

‘Making Tracks: spectatorial routes and encounters in immersive theatres’ (to be published in *New Dramaturgies: International Perspective*, Methuen, 2013)

The term ‘new dramaturgies’ is often illustrated by reference to live art, devised theatre, dance, etc. In this commissioned chapter, I propose taking a particular theatre dramaturgy – site-specific, immersive forms of theatrical installations – and looking at these as forms of a particular spectatorial dramaturgy, thus extending the notion of ‘new’. By examining and interrogating terms such as ‘participatory’, ‘immersive’, and ‘interactive’, I will propose a particular dialectical relationship between such theatres and the knowing spectator. Further, to look at the inevitable but blurred boundaries and parameters of the interactive and participatory with regard to the ethical implications of such engagements.

Whilst acknowledging other recent research and theorising in this area, I wish to look at the concrete experience of spectators who walk the site of performance, following the actors and/or creating their own routes through the installation. By continuing my predicate that the spectator is always engaged to a lesser or greater degree, I will argue that in such installation work he/she becomes positioned as a particular embodied ‘spect-actor’, who is ‘made part of the physical site of presentation’.

I will focus on recent productions of Punchdrunk (*Faust*, 2007; *The Masque of the Red Death*, 2007; *The Duchess of Malfi*, 2010) locating these against other contemporary projects (e.g. *Play*, 2006; *Volume*, 2008) and selected precursory work (e.g. *Tri Bywyd-3 Lives*, 1995; *Oraculos-Labyrinth*, 1997; *The Tower Project*, 1999) that qualifies the notion of ‘new’ itself in relation to the later work.

I will argue such work rests on concepts of ‘spatial dramaturgy-spatial narrative’ as well the spectator’s sensory encounters. Here, the actors and spectators are present for each other in particular ways, with the dynamic presence of spectators in such environments making them also performers for each other. Spectators are re-sited, informally constructing their own and each other’s ambulatory and fragmented *mise-en-scène* within the formal structure of the piece. I will argue such spectatorship may

involve a degree of objectifying gaze (as with all theatres), but more so rests on a forced reciprocal and returned looking; a necessary 'being-among-others'. I will suggest that spectators in such work inevitably become a particular form of poacher (after Jenkins), and likewise become 'signposts' for each other, extending Smith's term.

Indicative research:

Augusto Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 1992.

Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*, 1992.

Josephine Machon, *Space and the Senses*, 2007.

Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 2009.

Phil Smith, *Actors as signposts*, 2009.

Aaron Smuts, *What is Interactivity?* 2009.

Future project – 'A spiral model of recycling'.

This further piece of research would develop the recycling model (*Recycling*: 19), resembling the stave lines and bar lines from music notation, and that emerges from work with my colleague Knut Ove Arntzen. There, I set out examples of what I regard as longitudinal, axiomatic and diachronic deep principles that underpin all theatres, and that are transmitted as 'agents' (from Minsky) or 'memes' (from Dawkins) via specific theatrical manifestations.

I see such a model prefigured in the forensic process I devised for the Moving into Performance workshops. The revised model would argue for recycling set out as a spiral, elliptical figure whereby each encounter adds to those gone before, becoming the basis for next encounters. Such a model would also echo the ideas of Clark and Rozik already cited. The dynamic processes that Clark and Rozik argue for are precisely those underpinning the proposed model of recycling on the production and reception of any stage work. Theatre, as with the social history of art, rests on the ambiguous relationship between stage and spectator and so demanding a multiplicity of perspectives that may not sit comfortably with each other.

To further this in practical terms, Arntzen and I are planning a conference-workshop event in 2014 that will be both a theoretical and experiential exploration of recycling, including a critical exposition of this model.

A dialectical classification (working from Kowzan's 'The sign in the theatre').

This table put forward in 1968 acts as a 'deconstruction' of the thirteen elements (or sign systems), not of the theatre as such, but of the stage (the elements of what I call, as a dramaturg, the performance or stage text). Whilst Kowzan refers to signs in the theatre, these are rather the sign systems on/above/around the stage space; they are the signs of the stage. To be properly a classificatory table for theatre as a whole would require adding a fourteenth element: the spectator experiencing the stage text as part of an audience. The spectator (an individual sign) placed within the audience (a collective or composite sign).

Thus, as a further research project I would seek to re-cast Kowzan's model in two ways. To include a fourteenth element representing the spectator/audience, and to reconfigure this as a dialectical model and not a hierarchical one as implied at present.

My research and publications have been described as having a neo-Brechtian spine and lens; I understand this to mean an embracing of certain dialectical perspectives associated with Brecht and Benjamin, a disposition to engage with the political-ethical nature and consequences of dramaturgical principles, and thus arguing for theatre as always estranged and estranging in whatever mode or style. Such a stance also allows me to resist narrow notions of 'interactive' or 'participatory' theatres. As I have indicated, that we are always engaged as the 'spect-actor' and so in a participatory relationship with all theatres.

In applying this to Kowzan, the table of now fourteen elements would be re-set as a dialectical model showing all elements acting each on the others. I suggest these can still be classified (in Kowzan's terms) as 'of the actor' and 'outside the actor', as auditive and visual signs given functional placing in a new interactive relationship, as indicated in Brecht's ideas for an 'epic' theatre – the traffic between stage and auditorium.

Boltanski's dilemma and paradox.

I have placed this last as it seems the most fundamental empirical and theoretical question that emerges from my work so far. In *A Spectatorial Dramaturgy*, I raise two issues in relation to the enactments of *The Crucifixion*: how could a contemporary audience watch such a scene from their own time and culture, and how can we look at such a scene from our time and culture; that empathy has an obverse and counterpoint as we see how humans can 'break bodies as well as caress bodies' (*Spectatorial*: 38, 49). In the essay on Berkoff's theatre, I introduce the work of Boltanski.

... but what sort of pity can we really feel for an imaginary scene on the stage?
The audience is not called upon to offer help but only to feel sorrow... The fact remains that viewing suffering is especially problematic when the object of suffering is presumed to be real... (Boltanski, 1999: 22, 23)

The question is reiterated in *Spectatorial*, and further developed in *The Film Spectator as 'Bricoleur'*. But I increasingly see this as the central paradox and dilemma for a spectatorial dramaturgy predicated on the knowing and ethical spectator. I would suggest the reality of qualified agency further complicates the matter in that this allows us to act inhumanely as well humanely; here facts from history of moral disengagement (see Bandura, (1999) or behaviour measurable in uncomfortable experiment (see Milgram, 1974). For exemplifying this in specific theatre terms, I would refer to *The Brig* by The Living Theatre (1973, New York). These, in turn, are countered by the continuing revealing of empathy in everyday life, for example in the empirical work of David Sloan Wilson and the Binghamton project.

There are many intertwining issues here: of paradoxical distance that make remote what moves us; of reception across a range of emotions; of cognitive dissonance and the ethically contentious concept of 'false consciousness'; of spectatorial insulation and displacing of imagination leading to both denial and vicarious pleasures implicit in the question that Boltanski faces us with - why and how do we decide to watch?

Perhaps we are in states of 'décalage' or perpetual transitions between understandings concerning the world from which we watch and the worlds we enter. (*Bricoleur*: 26)

Perhaps I will be returned to a messy and paradoxical ethos and politics of 'learning' as proposed by Aristotle and Brecht – that is, 'becoming' not merely 'being'? (*PT:I*: 40-44)

Appendix.

Moving into Performance (1995).

Moving into Performance was the Report of the workshop and symposium event of the same name presented in Manchester in 1994. As dramaturge for the event I was responsible for devising a dramaturgical structure by which the four reference themes of the event (exchange, translation, authentic voice, inner structure) could be explored in facilitated peer-exchange workshops concerned with processes not outcomes. To facilitate such exchanges I devised a 'forensic process' as a methodology and model for the sessions (*ibid*: 12). This was predicated on the creative deconstruction and reconstruction of the material presented, the new material emerging from the process becoming the basis for a new cycle of deconstruction-reconstruction.

As with the dissertation, it is a rather raw piece, but I now see it both as a pre-figuring of the recycling motif explored in later works, and (at the time) an unconscious drawing on of ideas already implied in the MA writing. As a 'root', the model stands as the first iteration of the fundamental dynamic of 're-making' in both the creating-presenting and receiving of theatres (*Recycling*: 21). The Report is also the first attempt in my writing to distinguish between the literary dramaturge and the performance-production dramaturge, reflected in the account of the workshops given as an interactive performance at the beginning of the Symposium (*MiP*: 25, 28).

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