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Refugee Perspectives: the practice and ethics of verbatim theatre and refugee stories.

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Verbatim theatre has gained both critical and popular attention in the last ten years. Some of its popularity has been seen as a reflection of frustrations with the political process and plays like David Hare's *Stuff Happens* at The National Theatre in 2004 are often cited in this respect (Megson, 2005). Other critics see verbatim theatre as a manifestation of dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the media; as playwright David Edgar succinctly puts it "Verbatim theatre fills the hole left by the current inadequacy of TV documentary, perished under the tank tracks of reality TV" (Kellaway, 2004). In the last ten years the term has mostly come to popular attention through the Tribunal Plays for which the Tricycle Theatre in London has become well-known. Tribunal theatre "mobilises extant traditions of documentary performance" (Megson, 2005: 370) by presenting the edited transcripts of trials and tribunals. They began in 1993 with *Half the Picture* by Richard Norton-Taylor, based on the Scott Arms to Iraq enquiry, with the most recent one *Bloody Sunday*, also by Norton-Taylor, being staged in 2005.

The tribunal plays are, however, only one strand of verbatim theatre practice in the UK and it is important to gain some sense of the diversity of approaches and practices that have been assembled under the umbrella of verbatim theatre.

Despite its popularity, little has been published about the form and those who are concerned with analyzing it are thrown onto their own resources in terms of viewing material, speaking with those who practice it and creating it themselves. It will be suggested that, despite its adoption into the British theatre scene, in the words of the organisers of a recent symposium on the subject, "Verbatim theatre practices are current and contentious"[1] Verbatim theatre is a problematic performance methodology, especially in relation to its claims to authenticity and some of these claims will be examined in the first part of the essay. It has further been noted that verbatim theatre is a popular technique in creative projects with groups of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. The remainder of the essay will examine three specific examples of this work to provide examples of some of the questions which arise when the verbatim form is placed under scrutiny.

The term *verbatim theatre* was coined by Derek Paget in 1987. He described how practitioners had seen "a whole new area of documentary opening up – the direct communication…of lived experience through the actor as instrument" (Barker qtd. in Paget, 1987:317) by means of the new technology available to them in the form of the portable tape recorder. The notion of 'authenticity' played an important role in the early development of the form due to the emphasis on the taping, transcription and feeding back to the communities who had given their stories. Authenticity can, however, be argued to have developed to the level of fetish in contemporary practice. When director Max Stafford-

[1] Two day symposium 'Verbatim Practices in Contemporary Theatre' at Central School of Speech and Drama in London 13-14 July 2006 David Annen, Andy Lavender, Dan Milne

Clark was recently asked for a definition of verbatim theatre he responded that is was based on "a belief that authenticity is inherently dramatic" (Out of Joint, 2000). Writer of verbatim play *A State Affair*, Robin Soans, has subsequently written *The Arab Israeli Cookbook* and *Talking to Terrorists,* both of which are based exclusively on verbatim material. In a similar vein to Stafford Clark, Soans' definition of verbatim is that "every single thing should have been said by somebody, the bricks you build your house on should have been said by somebody".[2] The claim to authenticity is often reinforced by the creators of verbatim theatre through conventions that serve to place it at the centre of their enterprise. Many of these are extraneous to the production itself, in publicity material, for example, or through the use of extensive programme notes. These strategies are unambiguous but there are more subtle ways of reminding an audience that the words they are hearing are based on the authenticity of speech, and these are embedded in the practices that have developed around the performance of verbatim material.

In the performance itself, the acting conventions differ radically in places from those of a traditional piece of naturalistic theatre. The classic proscenium arch convention of the 'fourth wall' collapses in verbatim theatre, and the actors speak directly to the audience and acknowledge audience reactions. On occasions they interact with those lucky, or unfortunate enough depending on one's point of view, to be in the front row: an actor in a performance of *The Arab*

[2] Interview with Robin Soans , 17th July 2006, conducted by Alison Jeffers and Jenny Hughes

Israeli Cookbook, for example, offered a bowl of olives to the audience.[3] In speaking directly to the audience, a different level of truth claim from that of the fictional authored play appears to be created. The fact that British audiences are more familiar with these conventions in pantomime and stand-up comedy sometimes leads to an unhelpfully over-humorous reaction to these audience interventions and can be problematic for the actors in gauging the level of their performance.[4]

Writers of verbatim theatre "are freed…from some of the burdens of conventional playwriting" (Paget, 1987: 318). Verbatim playwrights are looking for what writer Dennis Woolf has called an "emotional arc" rather than the linear narrative of cause and effect which creates the classic dramatic arc.[5] Soans identifies the need for some kind of narrative in which to hold the action saying "if you don't have a narrative of some sort, at least a personal narrative among the characters…if you don't have something as simple as that then the thing will begin to meander rather like a river that will burst its banks and that's not great"[6]. Jonathan Holmes is the writer and director of *Fallujah*, a verbatim play based on the accounts of those involved with the Fallujah massacre in Iraq. He speaks of structural innovations made possible in verbatim theatre because

[3] This production was staged at the Tricycle Theatre in 2006 and gained extra resonance by taking place in the middle of the turmoil surrounding the London bombings on 7th July, 2005
[4] Conversation with the cast of *Talking to Terrorists*, The Library Theatre, Manchester 18.5.05
[5] Interview with Dennis Woolf, 15th July 2005, conducted by Alison Jeffers
[6] Interview with Robin Soans , 17th July 2006, conducted by Alison Jeffers and Jenny Hughes

audience expectations for the form allow the writer to "sidestep certain structural expectations", one of the main ones being that of narrative closure.[7]

In his essay 'The Death of the Author' Roland Barthes challenges the traditional role of the "Author-God" (Barthes 1984: 146), making a case for the text as "a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash" (*ibid*). Although Barthes' essay was discussing the relationship of the single reader to the writer of a novelistic fiction, this seems to provide an accurate description for the text of a verbatim play. The author apparently takes a secondary role, relinquishing to the audience some of the power to create meaning, thus disrupting the classic lexicon of realistic theatre. The audience has the apparent freedom to craft their own narratives from the "tissue of quotations" (Barthes, 1984:146) which is the repeated words of the play's subjects.

Anna Deavere Smith, an American actor/playwright, interviews all her subjects in much the same way as Out of Joint but, instead of then employing a company of actors to retell the stories, Smith performs them all herself. In *Fires in the Mirror*, Smith's response to the Los Angeles riots of 1991, she presents a range of reactions that remain as "fragmented and partial speeches which…do not pretend to a whole". (Lyons and Lyons, 1994:46) The apparently 'unfinished' nature of the work may give the audience the impression that they are creating

[7] Jonathan Holmes' presentation during 'Verbatim Practices in Contemporary Theatre' at Central School of Speech and Drama in London 13-14 July 2006

the whole, completing the work through their investment, participation and interpretation. Lyons and Lyons suggest that part of the appeal of Smith's work is that "it plays between the illusion of authenticity and the skilfulness of its artifice" (*ibid*). This complex interplay is, however, hard to grasp in the moment of performance. Watching a verbatim play can feel like being washed over by a great tide of voices, feelings and opinions knowing that the writer has, to use Soans' metaphor, created the banks within which to contain it. This may cause the audience to forget that verbatim theatre is a lesson in suppression; more material is recorded that can ever be used. It is manipulated, crafted and edited to create an effect. The spectator's freedom to meander within this, to create their own patterns, logic and narratives may, ultimately, prove a false one whereby the constructed nature of the playwright's vision is concealed from the audience by the very wash of the voices and the apparent lack of any narrative line.

The verbatim plays which use the words, stories, anecdotes, confessions, secrets and lies given to verbatim theatre researchers are based on personal narratives, and even silences, or refusals to answer a particular question, are indicative of a subject's story, a life retold. The circumstances in which people speak to researchers will vary but in all cases the interviewee will be aware that their words may be used in a play. This may discourage some people but Soans has noticed that this knowledge often has the opposite effect, stating that in his

experience "people are not only willing, they're absolutely desperate to talk. One of the frustrations in modern life is that nobody ever listens to people".[8]

For refugees who have experienced violence, the need to be listened to can be imperative. War ethnographer Carolyn Nordstrom writes extensively about the anthropology of listening and suggests that "…it is essential for people to reconstruct their world after violence has deconstructed all that they hold dear". She emphasizes the importance of being able to, in the words of Veena Das, "talk and talk" in order to do this (Nordstrom, 1997:79). Nordstrom draws attention to Barthes' writing on the voice and his claim that in the act of listening, the listener can begin to understand the existence of those who speak. "Listening to the voice inaugurates the relation to the Other…it bears an image of their body and, beyond, a whole psychology" (Nordstrom, 1977:80). Listening to the stories of those who have experienced violence puts the listener into a relationship with the person who is speaking. Using verbatim theatre with refugees raises questions about the nature of that relationship, asking who is telling the story, to whom are they telling it and for what reason?

Three examples: Ice and Fire, Banner Theatre and Cardboard Citizens/RSC

Ice and Fire is a company based in London, whose work has been exclusively concerned with questions of exile and asylum in Britain. Founded in 2003 by playwright Sonja Linden, they claim to be a company "that passionately believes

[8] Interview with Robin Soans , 17th July 2006, conducted by Alison Jeffers and Jenny Hughes

art has a role to play in communicating one of the most pressing contemporary issues – the growing displacement of peoples from conflict zones".[9] In 2005 the play, *Crocodile Seeking Refuge* was created following interviews with five refugees based in London. An interim script was produced in 2004 which was performed at The Actors' Centre and The Royal Court Theatre Upstairs. The material was then reworked significantly for the second part of the project and transformed by Linden into a traditional single-authored play of the same title. The implications of this decision will be discussed in more detail below. For Ice and Fire, the emphasis of the project appears to be education and information. Linden describes how she set up Ice and Fire "to communicate some of the individual [refugee] stories I found myself witness to" after being "incensed…at the indignity and suffering they had been forced to undergo."[10]

This close relationship with the subjects on whose words the play was based appears to have placed a strong feeling of responsibility on Linden. She had to not only take into account the physical, psychological and emotional trauma involved in the subjects' flight, but the fact that all of the subjects were escaping torture appears to have made that burden all the heavier. Some of the refugee subjects wanted to talk, not about the experiences that had driven them to UK, but about their treatment at the hands of the UK immigration system and what

[9] www.iceandfire.org, accessed. 4th January, 2006
[10] Programme note by Sonja Linden Crocodile Seeking Refuge Lyric Studio, London 20th Sept-8th Oct 2005

they saw as its unfair and cruel nature.[11] Linden describes herself as "a secondary witness" and also as a "midwife" to the stories, indicating something of the accountability she feels to the process, but suggesting also a personal and emotional link to the stories and, by implication, to their tellers.[12]

The second example, Banner Theatre, is one of Britain's longest established political theatre companies with over "thirty year's experience of working with marginalized and disadvantaged communities".[13] They have created a hybrid form called the *video-ballad*, which combines video interviews and the live performance of songs and music which they take to small informal venues. Banner's writer, Dave Rogers, said of the company "We choose our audiences deliberately, on the basis that if you want to push out capitalism, you need to support those who are doing the pushing" (Filewood and Watt, 2001:127). Their most recent piece, *Wild Geese*, uses the video ballad to tell "The stories of Irish nurses, Asian textile workers, Iranian refugees and Chinese cockle pickers".[14]

Rogers refuses to differentiate between refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, demonstrating a belief that all groups are members of an economic underclass, which is increasingly exploited by global inequalities created and perpetuated by capitalism. "People have been migrating to this country for centuries. Why do

[11] The crocodile of the title is based on an African story about a crocodile that escaped from a river only to be washed away in a flood and this story was taken to mirror the story of many refugees who think they have escaped only to find themselves in a more precarious position in their so-called place of refuge.
[12] Interview with Sonja Linden 26th October, 2004, conducted by Alison Jeffers and Ananda Breed
[13] www.bannertheatre.co.uk, accessed 4th January, 2006
[14] www.bannertheatre.co.uk, accessed 4th January, 2006

we have to have the supposedly good migrant who's an asylum *seeker*, therefore he's got some good reason to come here and the rest who we can *dis* because they're not asylum seekers, you know. I really hate that distinction".[15]. The performance of *Wild Geese* uses video recordings of migrant stories, as well as slides with information about refugees and migrants. These are accompanied by four live musicians who perform especially composed songs, accompanied live by a range of acoustic instruments. There is no attempt on the performers' part to voice the refugee stories directly and the implications of this will be considered in more detail below. Banner Theatre takes a more overtly political approach and aims to move beyond sympathy for the individual to a deeper understanding of the systems and structures that create refugees.

The final example is Cardboard Citizens, who are based in London and describe themselves as "the UK's only homeless people's professional theatre company".[16] In 2004 they undertook a production of Shakespeare's *Pericles* in an ambitious joint project with The Royal Shakespeare Company. The project took place in two stages, initially traveling to a variety of refugee projects and performing a scaled-down version of *Pericles* (which became known as *mini-Pericles*).This was performed by five actors, three of whom were refugees, and open discussions after the performance allowed audience members to tell stories about their own journeys. Some of these stories found their way into the second stage of the project, the large-scale production of the full play. This was

[15] Interview with Dave Rogers, 13th July, 2006, conducted by Alison Jeffers
[16] www.cardboardcitizens.org.uk accessed 4th January, 2006

performed in a disused warehouse, which had been 'transformed into a Sangatte-like holding centre' (Jermyn, 2001:7) and played to large theatre audiences.[17]

The first part of Cardboard Citizens' project was based on a participatory theatre model which placed as much stress on first-hand refugee narratives as on communicating any coherent narrative. Part of their project involved participatory theatre and dance workshops with the aim of bringing refugees together to create their own dance and theatre pieces, as well as providing them with space in which to share their indigenous performance practices. The participatory element continued into the final performance as a dance group of refugee performers was created to perform a wedding dance as part of the large-scale production.

Sometimes, having created an understanding of the full impact of becoming a refugee, the responsibility to bear that message to a wider audience may become too great. This is what appears to have happened in the case of the Ice and Fire's *Crocodile Seeking Refuge* project. As outlined above, the first stage was to gather the stories of five refugees and to edit these into a verbatim theatre piece for a public audience. These were not easy stories to hear or to tell and included tales of rape, torture and murder. Writer Sonja Linden said after the work-in-progress showing of the piece "I feel this tremendous need to be loyal to them as

[17] Sangatte was a holding centre for refugees in the north of France which became a notorious symbol for both the 'refugee problem' especially as perceived by the British tabloid press and for the inequalities of the European immigration system to those who were more sympathetic to the plight of the refugees held there.

individuals and their stories".[18]. This need may have led Linden to produce a more traditionally crafted play for the second stage of the project, placing the fictionalized character of Harriet, a middle-class asylum lawyer, at the centre of the narrative. This had the effect of removing it altogether from the genre of verbatim theatre and placing it back into the realm of realistic acting and its fourth wall convention. It would appear that Linden did not trust the ability of the verbatim theatre form to carry out the task in hand and reverted to the 'authority' of the single-authored text.

It may not have been only the terrible content of the stories or Linden's moral responsibility to the refugees who told them, but a professional conflict that drove Linden's choice in moving away from a verbatim theatre piece. She found it impossible to perceive of herself as a writer while she was simply, as she saw it, crafting other people's words. She says "I'm finding this voice issue particularly challenging and I want to be true to them, I want to be true to me".[19] The need to fulfill what she saw as the traditional role of the playwright may have driven her to alter radically the nature of the play from verbatim theatre to realistic drama, consequently causing a shift in perspective away from refugees and onto the trials of the British middle-class professionals who are trying to help them.

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[18] Interview with Sonja Linden 26th October, 2004, conducted by Alison Jeffers and Ananda Breed

[19] Interview with Sonja Linden 26th October, 2004, conducted by Alison Jeffers and Ananda Breed

One can also detect a shift in the Cardboard Citizens' project between the first and second stages of the project. The so-called *mini-Pericles* first part of the project, where refugees were encouraged to tell their own stories, gave way to the high production values of the full performance of *Pericles* with all the weight of the professional reputation of the RSC behind it. Although this project can be seen to have been a valuable experience for those refugees who became involved with it, in terms of verbatim theatre it appears that the voice of the individual refugee with a story to tell, may have been compelled to give way to the voice of the playwright and to the literary canon.

Both *Crocodile Seeking Refuge* and *Pericles* might be said to have been placed in a situation where, to use Walter Benjamin's terms, the *cult value* of the pieces has been forced to concede to their *exhibition value* (Benjamin 1999). The early stages of both projects were important only to the people who had been involved in the ritual of making them and the stories that were told were easily understood by those listening because they had had similar experiences; in Benjamin's terms, they had cult value. However, in taking them to a wider audience most of whom will not have had the same experiences, the earlier pieces are removed from their immediate creators and environment and are forced to assume what Benjamin would call, exhibition value. This shift is reinforced by the standards and production values that are expected in theatre venues or of prestigious theatre companies.

Banner Theatre in contrast, by playing to small audiences in venues located in the communities in which they have gathered the stories, can be seen to maintain cult value in both their performance style and in their adherence to the use of verbatim material. Their reluctance to mediate or to retell the refugee narratives in their own words or in venues which demand high production values, allows Banner to stay closer to the roots of the stories that are told and, ultimately, to the tellers of the stories. Their slightly rough-and-ready performance style and the eschewing of any narrative line in favour of a more folk-club style where boundaries between actor and audience are blurred (Filewood and Watt, 2001) are other ways in which their performance could be said to have a stronger cult than exhibition value.

Banner's project does raise questions about the nature of the transaction when refugees give their stories up to any story-telling professionals no matter how sympathetic, and about how much control they actually have in their re-telling. Banner attempts to avoid some of the ethical pitfalls of having an actor re-tell the refugees' stories by using video footage of the refugee subject themselves speaking. This has the effect of presenting the subjects in a less mediated way than they would be in the verbatim theatre model but, although the teller of the story has control of what they choose to say or not say, they appear to have little or no control of the framing narrative. Their stories can be manipulated by juxtaposition and other framing devices to create the message that the company wants to communicate. Moreover, Banner can choose not to use stories that do

not support their particular political agenda and the company themselves are aware of these tensions.

To conclude, verbatim theatre is a common practice in work with refugees. Understanding how the practice operates across a broad range of theatrical operations helps to comprehend how refugee stories are used in performance and to appreciate some of the ethical and political implications of that practice. There is a wide variety of practice in terms of how those narratives are manipulated and presented for re-telling to a wider audience, based on the variety of approaches as to the function of the re-telling and the context within which the stories are presented. The liberal approach of Ice and Fire and their attempt to create a better climate of understanding, stands in sharp contrast to the intentions of Banner Theatre to foster political education among their audiences. The attempt by Cardboard Citizens to create an inclusive politicized reading of refugee stories may have been compromised by their need to revert to the full text of a classic play. Despite the fact that there are signs that the use of verbatim theatre may already be on the wane in mainstream theatre, it looks set to remain a strong feature of theatre work with refugee communities for some time to come.

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Theatre of the Oppressed: an American[1] Tradition?

Douglas Hundley (University of Exeter)

There is a moment now in which the middle class is disappearing and many people believe that if we are a society, all of us are entitled at a minimum to be part of that society. If we can talk about society, we have to say all the society members are entitled to live. They are entitled to have a place where to live, a place where to work, to have health, to have education, to have transportation, to have a minimum.

(Augusto Boal in an interview with Doug Paterson and Mark Weinberg, 1996)

Politically, economically and socially the US is presently at a crossroads, combating terrorism and promoting democracy abroad while considering increasingly more oppressive legislation at home affecting immigration, right to privacy and gay marriage. Consequently, more and more Americans are feeling less a part of American society. Thus Boal's comment above, originally made in regards to his home country of Brazil, has recently gained credence in the United States. However, my intention is not to compare the current US administration to the strict military dictatorships of 1960s Brazil, but to ask what I consider to be a significant question. Why has the Theatre of the Oppressed not had more prominence in this country? Boal's brand of community-based interaction, a theatre practice synonymous with raising consciousness and propelling action towards individual and social change, while having proven highly effective in South American countries, has never been successfully exported to the United States. As

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[1] When using the terms *America* and *Americans* I am referring to the land mass that constitutes the United States and those that are citizens/residents of this specific country. See Oxford English Dictionary.

to the reasons why, critics claim it is a practice that "falls through the cracks of intercontinental translation" and that "North Americans lack both political habits and a political consciousness" (Shutzman 140). In other words, and perhaps more pointedly, theater that places greater emphasis on establishing a dialogue between audience and stage than on aesthetics is generally not considered 'real' theatre in the United States.

It has been a popular sentiment of critics of modern American theatre, but I find it profoundly ironic for in my assessment of the principle components of the Theatre of the Oppressed, I have discovered that it is a methodology steeped in North American theatre traditions. Although the fact is seldom recognized by both scholars and Boal alike, it should not be all that surprising since much of Boal's theatre training took place in New York City, a setting that enabled him to experience directly the American avant-garde theatre movement occurring at the time. Therefore, I offer an alternative genealogy to the Theatre of the Oppressed not in order to lay a national claim to Boal's methods but to emphasize the fact that America has always had the potential to generate political theatre that is by the people for the people as it is currently a country, like Brazil of the 1960s, in need of a performance genre that can provide a voice for the voiceless and a sense of entitlement to all its members of society.

Boal's Off-Broadway Education

In establishing Boal's North American lineage it is appropriate to start at the beginning, with his American drama teachers Norris Houghton and John Gassner. While still a

doctoral candidate in chemical engineering at Columbia University in the 1950s, Boal studied with Houghton and Gassner, two playwrights who experienced first-hand the detriments of the Great Depression. Consequently, they championed the cause of the social drama. Houghton, a leading founder of New York's off-Broadway movement, believed that theatre with social value could only be located outside the big commercial theatres of New York. In his 1941 survey of US amateur theatre he defines a community, "whose life is not irrigated by art and science, day upon day, as a community that exists half alive" (Buxton 1-2). He instilled in Boal the idea that commercial theatre like that found on Broadway at the time, was little interested in such irrigation and that "the non-professional theatre is the ditch through which the arid field might be watered" (ibid). John Gassner was also highly critical of mainstream theatre for alienating the working class and thus supported such companies as Harold Clurman's Group Theatre for attempting to address relevant social causes in their realist productions, but even this company was criticized on occasion for not being experimental enough in its dramaturgy and in addressing the needs of working class audiences (Goldstein 336).

With Gassner's encouragement Boal participated in his first theatre company, The Writer's Group, where he and a small number of others would meet, write and read their plays, in an environment where he admits to feeling "totally loved, totally integrated"(Boal, *Hamlet* 130). Moreover, Boal audited classes at the Actor's Studio where he was introduced to actors who through the Method offered him "the best way to understand the human being…" (129). Gassner's influence was also evident in many of Boal's early productions at the Arena Theatre. Consider his staging of Machiavelli's

classic *Mandragola* an example. It was a nationalized production in which the Machiavellian character was modeled after Dale Carnegie, the wealthy North American steel magnate and quintessential American capitalist. With this work Boal admitted to wanting to provide an outline for the taking of political power by Brazil's socially disenfranchised, power symbolized by the character of Lucrezia, the young wife kept under lock and key, but "identifiable to anyone who wants her and will fight for her" (Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* 163). By nationalizing this classic story, Boal wanted to form a connection with the Brazilian working class audience and empower them at a time when social conditions were less than adequate under the country's military dictatorship.

Adopting the Improvisational Techniques of Viola Spolin

During the late 1940s and 50s Chicagoan Viola Spolin with her groups the Young Actors Company, the Playwright's Theater Club and the Compass was experimenting with improvisational theatre exercises that closely paralleled Boal's later developed participatory theatre techniques. Spolin's exercises were initially created to strengthen stage skills; however, they soon were adopted by Chicago social workers who considered her approaches of value in achieving interpersonal connections with their clients/patients. With Spolin's polishing of the improvisational exercises through practice, they soon became a source of entertainment in which she took to audiences in a variety of cities including New York. In the early 1960s, it was her son, Paul Sills, who saw the marketability of her exercises and created theatre games from them that required audience participation, having spectators both offer suggestions and physically replace actors on stage. This is what Boal identifies in *Theatre of the Oppressed* as "simultaneous

dramaturgy" and the spect-actor respectively, two devices incorporated into his methods while working with the oppressed in Latin America during the late 1960s and early 70s. Spolin and Sills have "acknowledge[d] the value of self-discovery through storytelling, folk dance and dramatics" (Bebb), a sentiment consistently echoed by Boal in his own published works.

The Living Newspapers: the beginning of Forum Theatre

However, what appears as the most direct American influence on Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed was the avant-garde theatre practice of the Federal Theatre Project (FTP). The FTP was established in 1935 by the Roosevelt administration as one of a number of arts projects designed to give unemployed cultural workers the right to paid employment in their particular field of expertise. The Living Newspapers, a form of experimental theatre under the FTP derived in part from previous Soviet models and German documentary theatre, aimed to present the daily news on stage that quickly won the support of the Newspaper Guild. However, their reporting of the news was largely editorial and soon a brand of theatre developed "which was relevant and engaged with the forces of progress in a country where so many of the old certainties seemed open to question" (Cobb 284-285).

The Living Newspapers, inspired by Brecht, were episodic in approach using types rather than psychologically credible characters, and through employing devices such as film, slide projection, music and direct address to the audience; the production maintained an element of disruption consistent with epic theatre. In a time of the Great Depression, The

Living Newspapers offered solutions to problems that were essentially political in nature and had four characteristics vital to the form:

> They were nearly all concerned with topical, significant issues; they all treated these issues as problems requiring solutions thereby following the pattern of reflective thinking; they all involved the common man as protagonist, whether as an individual character or group; and they all took an empirical and slightly deterministic attitude towards the problem and its solution. (McDermott qtd. in Cobb 284)

Attracted to the Living Newspapers' truth telling quality, Boal incorporated these characteristics into his Forum Theatre, so to be better able to encourage his audience to see clearly a problem and its causes, often despite the government and society's preference to keep them hidden. The founder of FTP, Hallie Flanagan, believed theatre should be contemporary and "alive to the problems of today's world," earnestly reflecting the "changing social order" and revealing "the struggle of many different kinds of people" (Kazacoff 17) and by staging such theatre, actors and audience would unite as a result of the mutual understanding of the natural, social, and economic forces that lie at the heart of a time's social issues and ultimately lead to a better way of life for all. Not surprisingly, this would later become the mission statement of the Theatre of the Oppressed.

Moreover Boal's Forum Theatre borrows largely from the structure and content of the Living Newspapers. Both consist of a documentary-style that informs the audience of the size, nature, and origin of a social problem, and then calls for specific action to solve it. The Living Newspapers were written on such varied topics as housing, health,

cooperatives, natural resources, labor unions and racism, the very subjects Boal addressed in his practice of Forum Theatre in Peru, Chile, Argentina and Brazil in the 1960s and 70s.

Consider this comparison of a Living Newspaper production to an early example of Boal's Forum Theatre as further evidence. The 1936 Living Newspaper production *Triple-A Plowed Under* included twenty-six stylized scenes, tracing the history of the agricultural depression from the inflation of the First World War through to the remedies of the 1930s. The work dramatized the need for the farmer and consumer to unite for better incomes and cheaper foods. Projections, masks, spotlights, loudspeakers, ramps, and characters in the audience were used as was an offstage loudspeaker called the Voice of the Living Newspaper. It was a transitional figure who introduced new characters, established time and place, and linked the episodes.

Boal's *Arena Tells about Zumbi* (*Zumbi*) co-directed by Gianfrancesco Gaurnieri, staged at the height of Brazil's 1960s military dictatorship, was a localized story, made up of small fragments from many plays, documents and songs. Stylistically eclectic, each scene was totally independent only relating thematically. It served as a warning against all present and future evils and the text was put together in such a way as to destroy empathy and stimulate the spectator's response. "Not being able to identify itself at any time with any character, the audience often took the position of a cold spectator of consummated events" (Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* 166).

Zumbi was Boal's first attempt at using a Joker, a narrator that talked to the audience directly out of character much like that of the Voice of the Living Newspaper. Boal's *Zumbi* also consisted of actor-character separation, with actors often times alternating roles. This way all the actors were grouped into a single group of narrators and thus were able to reach a level of collective interpretation. Boal states that *Zumbi* was a "search for the most minute and truthful description of Brazilian life in all its external, visible aspects" (Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* 171), which essentially echoes Hallie Flanigan's goals with the Living Newspapers: to "understand the natural, social, and economic forces [for] a better life for more people" (Kazacoff 17).

The Influence of American Guerilla Theatre

In examining Boal's practice of Invisible Theatre, it is interesting how closely it relates to a form of protest theatre taking place in the US during the 1960s. Although Boal will admit to not having invented the technique, he is largely recognized as the first artist to have worked with it extensively in search for means of activating an audience, aiming to transform "the spectator into a protagonist, hoping to enable the spectator to become a protagonist in the political arena as well" (Kohtes 85).

In his claim to not having invented the form, he points out everyday examples of Invisible Theatre such as "shop detectives posing as ordinary shoppers," but he does not make mention of the several American troupes in the late 1960s who implemented Invisible Theatre in their guerilla theatre movement. Practitioners such as Sandra Lowell in Los Angeles, Michael Doliner in Chicago and Marc Estrin in Washington, D.C. had

already adopted this kind of theatrical practice as part of their cultural defensive. Estrin, a member of the American Playground anticipating Boal, wrote in 1969 that doing Invisible Theatre was creating a new world for the audience. "The experiencing of situations which might be true creates the conditions whereby they *become* true. [The audience] are living social change" (Estrin qtd. in Kohtes 86).

An example of an Invisible Theatre piece "performed" by Estrin and his company is entitled *Concert Piece*, an anti-Vietnam war piece especially conceived for the military band concerts of the banks of the Potomac River in Washington, DC, where

> a Vietnamese family (in black pajamas and bamboo hats) was placed among the audience, every time an airplane approached for landing at National Airport the family took cover, whispering instructions in Vietnamese, until it had disappeared. This kind of mild disruption is not enough to bring the police, but *is* enough to make the connection between the military bands and their non-musical consequences. (86)

According to Martin Kohtes, Augusto Boal travelled to the US often during the time period of 1969-70, and that it was on these occasions he was introduced to what he later labelled *Teatro Invisivel*, a method he immediately began implementing upon his relocating to Argentina after exile from Brazil in 1971.

One notorious piece of Invisible Theatre orchestrated by Boal at this time occurred at an opera house in Buenos Aires:

> The foyer [was] filled with the usual gathering of plutocrats, planters, and politicians. Suddenly, amidst this display of wealth and elegance, an emaciated-looking man faint[ed]. Another man, a doctor, [told] the startled crowd that the man had fainted from hunger. Some bystanders [debated] the problem of malnutrition -- a problem ignored by the country's elite. (Kohtes 85)

Although Boal contends that he had no knowledge of troupes like the American Playground and the invisible theatre technique at this time, highlighting an early example of invisible theatre will suggest otherwise. It regards a renowned German film theoretician Bela Belazs who published an account of his personal experiences during the last years of the Weimar Republic, when the Arbeiter-Theater-Bund (Worker's Theatre Alliance) and its agit-prop troupes had already been banned, but continued to perform, appearing invisible on the Berlin streets in 1930. This piece documented by Balazs is remarkably similar to the Invisible Theatre work of Boal.

> A young man fainted just in front of the show window of a gourmet food shop, so that he came to lie in front of a telling scene of hams and sausages, of cheese, caviar, and pineapple. Needless to say, our young man was not dressed elegantly, but rather looked as if he was unemployed... (Balazs qtd. in Kohtes 86)

Belazs explains that the small crowd which gathered outside the gourmet food shop heard from another young man that his friend had fainted from hunger whereupon a passionate discussion about unemployment developed.

This example of Invisible Theatre provides evidence that the concept and even terminology of Invisible Theatre had already been employed several decades before Boal, and given the resemblance of this example to Boal's work with the genre in Argentina, it evidently served as inspiration. But more importantly, it supports the notion that the practice of Invisible Theatre corresponds with certain political conditions: more precisely, such as a sudden loss of formerly enjoyed liberties, and to Boal it is the shock of Invisible Theatre that unites a group of people, whether it is a group of German workers desperately agitating against the rise of fascism, a group of activists expressing their

disillusionment with American democracy in the face of the Vietnam War or a Latin American proletariat suffering under the oppressive practices of an authoritative regime.

America's Need for the Theatre of the Oppressed

In the last two decades the Theatre of the Oppressed has attempted to migrate to the United States in various forms, ranging from psychodrama to university workshops, and theatre companies such as The Mandala Center, Headlines and The Cornerstone Theatre are finding success in implementing Boalian techniques with their respective audiences. However, when relocating to the North, the Theatre of the Oppressed lost its original intent, the potentially subversive edge was gone and replaced with techniques for coping with society rather than changing society; "rehearsals for revolution" were replaced with "rehearsals for healing" because American participants were not interested in fighting against a capitalist system, a seemingly undefeatable oppressor that was far more esoteric (Schutzman 138).

However, I have highlighted the little known American genealogy of the Theatre of the Oppressed to emphasize the fact that the people of the United States do have a political consciousness and the potential to take the Theatre of the Oppressed from the margins to the center of American society. With the present political, social and economic challenges facing the US, it is a timely opportunity to do so. These were the challenges facing Brazil upon Boal's initial development of the Theatre of the Oppressed and if this brand of theatre found success there it should do so in the United States. After all, the practices that assisted in shaping it are American traditions.

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The Private and the Public Wars: A Play by Martin Crimp

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This paper will focus on Martin Crimp's *Cruel and Tender*, first performed at the Young Vic in the spring of 2004. The play is representative of Crimp's tendency to explore the fields of the private and the public in equal degrees, navigating both territories in the same text. It is, perhaps, features such as this that have triggered comparisons between Crimp and Pinter and it is true that, like Pinter, Crimp is a master of language and subterranean action. In this paper, I will argue that Crimp is equally effective in depicting private and public conflicts and I will demonstrate this by exploring the techniques which he employs in order to communicate the characters' tension and aggression, concluding that his subtle methods are highly effective. In terms of theory I will focus on Stanton Garner's *Bodied Spaces*, a phenomenological approach to performance. In doing so my purpose is mainly to indicate the value of phenomenology as a theoretical approach to Crimp's theatre for which *Cruel and Tender* will serve as an example.

However, as the extensive justification of such an approach would necessarily entail a detailed application of phenomenological premises to the play which the given space here does not allow me, I will only pursue this on an essential level. That is, my aim is not to provide a complete phenomenological analysis, but to present the fundamentals of a case for the use of phenomenology for the understanding of specific traits in Crimp's theatre. In this case, these will be the embodied nature of language and spatial behaviour. The reason for this is that such considerations are central in

Crimp's theatre and, in order to fully account for their signifying depth, a phenomenological approach that lifts the text from the page, where pure literary criticism would focus, is beneficial. Moreover, phenomenology, although complementary to speech-act theory, in fact manages to extend beyond it, as it takes a step further by providing an account of the parallel corporeal experience and effect of speech on the individual and his/her interlocutor, entirely appropriate for performance analysis. The emphasis which phenomenology places on lived experience would operate so as to bring the audience into the equation, accounting for its experience of the characters' verbal and corporeal behaviour. In a play such as *Cruel and Tender* the value of this rests with a more complete understanding of the devices set to use.

One of the essential characteristics of *Cruel and Tender* is the formulation of power relations through language. The basic storyline of the play involves Amelia, a woman in her forties, situated at a "temporary home close to an international airport" (n. pag), where she awaits her husband's return from war. The man, simply named 'the General,' never appears onstage with Amelia, as he only returns in the third and final part of the play, after she has committed suicide offstage. The play is an adaptation of Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, so certain elements of the story are part of the updating process of the tragedy. Briefly, the events that transpire until the General's appearance are as follows: A sub-Saharan African woman, called Laela, is brought to Amelia's house joined by a young boy. As Amelia learns later, the woman is the General's lover and the boy is their son. Resisting the undermining of her position and the misleading to which she is subjected by Government authorities regarding the true nature of her husband's war impetus, Amelia decides to send him a pillow containing a liquid which she believes causes soldiers to yearn for home. However, the liquid is

proven to be an aggressive chemical which causes horrific injuries for the General. When he returns he is a broken man, physically and mentally.

In *Cruel and Tender* dialogues are sharp and never safe. However, it would be an oversight not to acknowledge that the strongest weapon for the characters are their monologues. The play begins with a powerful soliloquy where Amelia recounts the events that led to her present situation, giving the first samples of her unwillingness to be patronized and manipulated:

> AMELIA. There are women who believe
> all men are rapists.
> I don't believe that
> because if I did believe that
> how—as a woman—could I go on living
> with the label 'victim'?
> Because I am not a victim—oh no—
> that's not a part I'm willing to play—believe me. (1)

Crimp writes more striking, lengthy monologues for Amelia as she makes her way through revelations that shutter her belief system in her husband and her marriage, torn between the reality of the infidelity and the crimes of war which the General has committed. One of the most memorable moments in the play is Amelia's last monologue, where the fact that she is at war with everyone, from her only son to her husband, is more obvious than at any other time in the play. In her final moments Amelia determines the outcome of this war and prefaces her exit by repeating that she is not prepared to play the role of the victim (46). Her ensuing suicide, therefore, is not an act of cowardice, but one of dignity. She does not forfeit, she *chooses* to end the war.

Since the two sides of this domestic conflict are represented by Amelia and the General, when one side has finished presenting its case, it is anticipated that the spectators hear of the other side. This is how the General articulates his viewpoint:

> GENERAL. Because I have purified the world or you.
> I have burnt terror out of the world for people like you.
> I have followed it through the shopping malls
> and the school playgrounds
> tracked it by starlight across the desert
> smashed down the door of its luxury apartment
> learned its language
> intercepted its phone calls
> smoked it out of its cave
> thrown acid into its eyes and burned it to carbon. [. . .]
> because for every head I have ever severed
> two have grown in their place
> and I have had to cut and to cut and to cut
> to burn and to cut to purify the world— (57-58)

In performance it is made very clear that Amelia and the General are each other's adversary: Amelia's onstage composure and grace is directly contrastable with the General's aggression and brutality and the audience is offered two diametrically different stage images. As opposed to Amelia's several monologues, the General only delivers two on stage and, on both occasions, his gruesome speech fails to compete with Amelia's verbal eloquence.

Garner discusses monologues in *Bodied Spaces*, contributing illuminating observations for the examination of plays such as *Cruel and Tender*, where much of the information regarding crucial events is carried through speech rather than onstage action. Language is treated by Garner as *mise-en-scène*, suggesting that it achieves a physical onstage presence as concrete as that of any physical object. That is, the worlds that language succeeds in generating on stage are equally visible as those that are presented by means of set design (141-43). The only difference between the two is

that the former are realized within the spectators' imagination and consciousness. In *Cruel and Tender*, monologues serve to bring two different worlds on stage: Amelia's and the General's. The first world rests within the private, domestic domain and unveils the tensions of this environment with eloquence. The second world inhabits the public, military domain of the battlefield and records its brutality with crudeness. These two worlds, presented by the speakers of the respective monologues, clash on stage in a battle whose outcome is interpreted by the audience. Moreover, focusing on the plays of Pinter, Garner observes the possibility of "predatory interactions," during which "[. . .] the terms of presence (and nonpresence) are continually at stake" (144). As Garner maintains here, "From the interrogation [. . .] to the institutionalized language-politics, speech constitutes a field of domination and resistance, disclosure and erasure" (145). These suggestions are directly applicable to Crimp's theatre and in this case to *Cruel and Tender*, where the protagonists' two different realities are being contested on stage and two different subjectivities compete before the audience.

Another common concern of the two plays is the issue of territoriality, which leads to a spatial conflict. This is perhaps another factor why Crimp's writing has been compared to Pinter's: The concept of the intrusion of someone's private space by an enigmatic outsider is recurrent in both writers' work. In *Cruel and Tender* this materializes in the antagonistic relationship between Amelia and Laela, the driving force behind which is not primarily the claim for the General's affections, but the claim on the same domestic territory. It is not long after Laela is accepted by Amelia as a guest in her home that the latter finds the young woman properly settled in the house, accustomed to her new environment and enjoying a lifestyle of leisure and luxury. It even becomes clear by the fact that Amelia's staff is eager to serve Laela's

every need that this uninvited guest has began to receive the same if not more attention in the household as herself. This is undeniably a crucial factor as regards Laela's growing establishment within Amelia's home and one which functions to prove that the animosity between the two women is essentially constituted on territorial rather than emotional grounds. Moreover, this is a war that Amelia seems to be fighting single-handedly and on unequal terms as she strives to assert her territory with no external support, while Laela has gained allies in the women of the household staff, who encourage her spatial domination of Amelia's home. Winning this war is, for Amelia, a matter of dignity: By holding the fort or fighting her corner, she preserves her pride intact and proves that she has not sustained a blow by Laela's unwelcome presence in her house.

In order to grasp the importance of this spatial war from a phenomenological perspective it is necessary to take into account the actualities of its depiction on stage. The crucial parameter in Luc Bondy's original 2004 production of the play was that the audience encountered a sparingly decorated stage, where no single object seemed to be placed for the purposes of mere decoration. For a phenomenological account of performance, where the characters' embodied stage presence and corporeal motility are brought to the foreground as primary concerns, such choices in terms of staging style are far from insignificant. Therefore, it is not surprising that questions of this type are extensively addressed in Garner's text. As he observes in an analysis of theatrical space which is directly applicable to the first production of *Cruel and Tender*, an environment such as the one created in Bondy's staging serves one highly important effect. This is none other than to enhance the sensation of an empty space in which a body encounters its *other* and strives to cancel its attempted establishment

inside a given territory. For Garner, such battles are both verbal and physical (145). The dialogues and the characters' movement are indeed Crimp's basic tools in demonstrating such a conflict and the examination of the specifics of Amelia and Laela's hostile cohabitation serves to illustrate this point. Critics were not only quick to notice Amelia's defensive territorial behaviour, but they also phrased it in a very interesting mode, perceiving Amelia "as a figure of wonderfully fierce and frustrated intelligence, stalking her territory like a panther" (Kingston 634).

However, the invasion of domestic space and the conflict it results in is not the only type of war that Crimp is interested in exploring, as *Cruel and Tender* also navigates the territory of military conflict in an enthralling manner. The General's lifelong task has been to 'eradicate' terror and his latest mission has instigated his downfall, as after an expedition to Africa he finds himself accused of war crimes, burdened by the brutal death of a boy, who had allegedly developed terrorist activity. As in many plays by Crimp, there are different versions of the truth here, too. In the case of *Cruel and Tender*, these regard the real motives behind the General's war and the extent to which these were personal or political. In any case, Crimp's text seems to suggest, it is the aftermath that matters. In order to convey this aftermath to the spectators, Crimp does not employ gruesome stage representations, either in the form of enactment or image projection, but a brief cynical description by the Government Minister, which is as follows:

> JONATHAN. [. . .] if you want to root out terror—and I believe we all of us want to root out terror—there is only one rule: kill. We wanted that city pulverised—and I mean literally pulverised—the shops, the schools, the hospitals, the libraries, the bakeries, networks of fountains, avenues of trees, museums—we wanted that so-called city turned—as it now has been—irreversibly to dust. (13)

For the audience of *Cruel and Tender*, which was one of different nationality and cultural background as the first production of the play was a collaboration between the Young Vic and several major European festivals, the imagery generated by such a description was far from irrelevant. Staged in 2004, the play came one year after the beginning of the war in Iraq, an event of immense political significance, surrounded by great controversy. It also came almost three years after the 9/11 incidents in New York. Considering the fact that in a short piece called *Advice to Iraqi Women* read at the Royal Court Theatre in 2003 Crimp had exposed the absurdity of the consequences of war on defenseless social groups, *Cruel and Tender* could easily be interpreted as a full-length follow up to the same theme. Critics certainly thought so, with Charles Spencer commenting: "Nothing I have seen in the theatre to date so resonantly and provocatively captures our bewildering post-9/11 world, with its alarmingly amorphous war against terrorism and the ghastly aftershocks coming out of Iraq" (633). This is a readily available interpretation, but the fact that the war in the play takes place in Africa suggests that *Cruel and Tender* perhaps bears more affinities to the tragedy of Rwanda, as Luc Bondy has also suggested from his directorial perspective (20-21). And though it must be said that to deny the play a reference to the Iraq war might mean to close our eyes to the most likely interpretation taking the sociopolitical context into account, to maintain that *Cruel and Tender* is only about the Iraq war would also be like proposing that Pinter's *Ashes to Ashes* is solely about the Holocaust. *Cruel and Tender* is about terrorism, yes, but a terrorism that is as much domestic as it is universal, and about the need to identify private and public repression alike. The play is as effective as it is, for the exact reason that it moves between both worlds, achieving a most impressive balance.

I have focused here only on what I consider to be the basics in *Cruel and Tender* as regards Crimp's way of bringing to the stage private and public wars. Considering the possibilities for an appropriate title for this text the highly accurate suggestion of a German critic came to mind: His comment was that until *Cruel and Tender* Crimp was known for his shrewd depictions of the private conflicts that take place within four walls (Wengierek n. pag). This is an entirely valid statement for a number of plays by Crimp and it even holds true for *Cruel and Tender* as well. However, the significance of this text rests with the fact that it also features another, much more public war. In this paper I have tried to explore the fundamentals of how Crimp conveys conflict to the spectators and it strikes me that language, with its endless expressive possibilities is, for the playwright, the locus where everything takes place. As far as the selection of themes and their negotiation on stage in terms of form and scenic images is concerned, Crimp might be regarded as belonging to a theatrical tradition which extends from Harold Pinter to Roland Schimmelpfennig. This is particularly evident when we examine his treatment of language, demonstrating a profound awareness of the wounds it can result to. Language is the main vehicle for self-assertion and even self-sustenance and its importance could hardly be overestimated in any play by Crimp. As Amelia says to one of her opponents in *Cruel and Tender*, "I'm starting to find the way you speak an atrocity which makes cutting a man's heart out seem almost humane" (21). In *Cruel and Tender* and in Crimp's theatre in general this may well be precisely the case.

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Both Here and Gone: Polish Individuation in Teatr Piesn Kozla's *Chronicles – A Lamentation*

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Alternative Polish theatre, since the early 1990's, has sought to find a new "interpretation appropriate to this stage, in order to connect the life of the past that still exists with the life of the present" (Jung, 1951: par. 267). According to Kathleen Cioffi, the alternative theatre should have died in Poland after losing opposition to Communism as its raison d'être. Instead, as Cioffi suggests, the theatre "experienced a revitalization" (Cioffi, 2004: 44). As newly evolving archetypes supplant those which came before 1989 one can see the individuation process of a people in transition. Jung tells us that there is a link between *symbol change* and a change in human consciousness. In my opinion, a Jungian interpretation of Teatr Piesn Kozla's production of *Chronicles – A Lamentation*, which I believe links the Gilgamesh myth to Poland's nascent democracy, helps to substantiate Cioffi's claim.

Chronicles concentrates on the epic of Gilgamesh, a Sumerian myth inscribed on stone tablets over 5,000 years ago, and won Best International Show at the Edinburgh Festival in 2004, as well as The Scotsman Fringe First; the year before it was awarded The Grand Prix at the Festival of Acting in Kalisz, a very prestigious event in Poland. In 2005, *Chronicles* toured Britain, which included some performances at the Barbican. Teatr Piesn Kozla (Song of the Goat) was founded by Grzegorz Bral and Anna Zubrzycki in 1996. For the first four years the company held residence in The Grotowski Centre for

Theatre Culture Research. Since 2002, however, they have had their own performance/rehearsal space in Wroclaw. Tom Sellar, of *The Village Voice*, entitled his review of the performance "Grotowski's Living Legacy" (Sellar, 2004). While this claim has some truth, a majority of the influence, in terms of format and musical style, is owed to Garzdienice; which should come as no surprise considering Zubrzycki was the principal actress of Staniewski's company for nearly seventeen years.

The key to understanding the social relevance of *Chronicles* is through its use of archetypes. Jung believed that the ultimate goal of the myth was to find our own place and the meaning of our own epoch in the greater process of the historical enlargement of the human consciousness. "Myths are related to the collective consciousness of a certain time as dreams are related to the consciousness of the dreamer" (Jung, 1956: 16). So that a myth, which (re)presents itself to a culture, will carry with it a number of archetypes; these myths, according to Jungian thought, are the spontaneous expressions of the unconscious, and, like archetypal dreams, they contain deep intuitions and anticipations of the future. This is of particular interest to Polish theatre today because, psychoanalytically speaking, *archetypal dreams occur in times of transition*. "Mythological motifs have portrayed psychic processes of transformation since the earliest times" (Jung, 1956: 9). The questions one needs to ask of the theatre: What must be the social unconscious for such a dream to occur? What issues does the myth address for the collective unconscious?

The reason archetypal dreams occur in times of transition is connected to the role of the Hero. In the case of *Chronicles – A Lamentation* Gilgamesh is the hero figure; that the hero is not Odysseus or Achilles is noteworthy, and indicates a different psychic stage of the collective consciousness. Whereas the dream of an individual dreamer has to do with the projection of the ego, the staged myth projects the Hero on the social consciousness. The process of individuation which Gilgamesh undergoes over the course of the performance (i.e. his separation from the mother by way of a close friendship with Enkidu; the death of Enkidu; the assistance of an ancestor; the search for immortality) has to do with the *anticipation* of an ego-consciousness rather than the attainment of one. This is because "the myth is always ahead of the level of actual consciousness of the time" (Kluger, 1991: 22). In this way the performance addresses the current problem of Polish identity rather than the resolution of its transformation. The culmination of Gilgamesh's journey is an indication of psychic wholeness in respect of the development of the Hero's ego as symbolic of the community moving towards completeness (Kluger 1991: 17). From this point the myth becomes important in the creation of new value systems. Golaczynska quotes Augustynowicz, a prominent Polish director based in Lublin, on her notion that mass culture, which is itself dictated by the market, controls "the consciousness, the imagination, and the symbolic thinking of young people" (Golaczynska, 2001: 194) one can see that the values of the next generation of Poles are in flux. The Hero myth attempts a prediction of those values; and may also reveal which values are unrealistic.

Two archetypes of social implication are expressed in *Chronicles – A Lamentation*: the Mother archetype and the liberation of the son from the Mother vis-à-vis the process of individuation. The reflection of Poland's former political regime as the Mother archetype is broken into three parts within the play: Ishtar (orgiastic emotionality); The Wild Cow, Gilgamesh's Mother (cherishing and nourishing goodness); Death (stygian depths).[1] It is the job of Gilgamesh, both the King and the son, to overcome the Mother. This process is known as individuation. It is important to regard the Mother archetype, at the beginning of the performance, as the Master-Signifier, so that, by the end, Gilgamesh (and the audience by proxy) see her position as illusory. This is the very process of transition Poland has experienced over the past seventeen years. Slavoj Zizek opens his book *Tarrying With the Negative* with the image of Ceausecu's overthrow. The citizens of Bucharest are described waving their national flag as they watch their former leader being carried away. On this day, however, the communist star, positioned in the centre of the flag for nearly four decades, had been cut out with scissors. With the removal of the star; the organizing principle of national life; "the hole in the big Other, symbolic order, [was] visible" (Zizek, 1994: 1). Thus began the intermediate phase, i.e. the period when one Master-Signifier has lost hegemonic power "without yet being replaced by a new one" (Zizek, 1994: 1). It is the end of this so-called intermediate phase that we are witnessing in *Chronicles*: the end of the reign of the Mother in the collective unconscious.

The performance begins, appropriately, with a lament. The sound, inspired by a tradition of music in northern Epiros, a region between Greece and Albania, is stirring and

[1] Jung uses Indian mythology to divide these aspects of the Mother archetype: Satva, Rajas, Tamas.

affective. We are introduced to Gilgamesh: a brutal ruler obsessed with a specific goal of building of the wall of Uruk. He oppresses his people on account of his obsession with this task. What we can see at this point is the failure of the ruling power to meet the needs of his people. At the crescendo of the lament the actors pull apart and Enkidu is born: nature's solution to the psychological situation. Enkidu is Gilgamesh's chthonic counterpart (Kluger, 1991: 32). His movements are animal-like, he wears no shirt, you can see the sweat on his back as he dances and twirls. He dances alone, for he is alone in nature. Through his show of strength, independence and virility, one can immediately see that he will be a match for Gilgamesh.

And within moments of his apparition, the goddess Ishtar appears. She is a youthful aspect of the Mother archetype. Circling Enkidu, the actress licks at his salty skin, embraces him, pulls him to the ground, wraps her legs round his body, seduces him. Her intention is not merely physical, but spiritual. By seducing Enkidu, Ishtar draws him out of the animal world. In the myth his realization of this withdrawal comes from the *reaction* of the animals; in the performance it comes through Ishtar's response to him. Enkidu has been *seen*, recognised, and "if you are seen you have to see yourself and you have to become conscious," because "we cannot really know ourselves without being confronted" (Kluger, 1991: 42). And so we have the chthonic character brought into the conscious world before the audience. This primitive man who must confront Gilgamesh - the civilised man. Their meeting is necessary, because Gilgamesh, as a ruling power, must be brought back down to the *human* level.

Through this dance with the youthful aspect of the Mother archetype Enkidu is exposed to *logos*. Ishtar is separating him from his instincts, in order to bring him to civilization. And so Enkidu agrees to go to the palace because "he (is) yearning for one to know his heart, a friend" (Foster, 2001: 9). Yet it is not as a friend that we see Enkidu approach Gilgamesh in the performance, but as a lover. The actors move toward each other as if they are squaring off in a mating ritual: they slowly circle, muscles flexing, teeth bared, breath heavy and aggressive. Gilgamesh is the first to attack. Another dance begins; this one more aggressive than the dance between Enkidu and Ishtar, and yet no less sexual. The two men fight, lunge, tear at each other's bodies. Enkidu grips Gilgamesh and presses him to the ground. Sweat dripping from their faces, Gilgamesh subdued, the two men embrace under the watchful eye of the three aspects of the Mother: Ishtar, Gilgamesh's Mother and Death (the maiden, the mother and the crone). This dance has two ramifications: the sexualization of the Enkidu/Gilgamesh relationship and the transformation of Gilgamesh from tyrant to Hero.

From a psychological standpoint, the confrontation between Gilgamesh and Enkidu is that of the conscious and the unconscious: it is therefore imperative that Enkidu, as the chthonic counterpoint, the instinctive force, be more powerful than Gilgamesh, and that the actor playing Enkidu be *shorter* than him, so that while the instincts reach the conscious they do not overwhelm it completely (Kluger, 1991: 79). What we are witnessing is a puberty rite; it challenges the overpowering presence/problem of the Mother. Because Gilgamesh's libido is neutral it can flow in different directions: spiritual or sexual. The mother complex "gives men ties of astonishing tenderness"

(Jung, 1956: 19). When we see Gilgamesh reaching up with affection to touch Enkidu's cheek, it is as if he loves Enkidu as he might love a woman. But it is important that Enkidu is *not* a woman. His physical presence on stage is domineering, his muscular torso is revealed: *there is nothing feminine about Enkidu*. Out of cultural necessity, Gilgamesh's virility is directed towards virility. Enkidu here disrupts the Hieros Gamos between Gilgamesh and Ishtar. He draws Gilgamesh's desire (what Jung would refer to as libido) away from the Mother. "In matriarchal cultures the libido of man had to concentrate on itself – in order to *get out* of the mother" (Kluger, 1991: 67-68). This is because the mother is all encompassing; she overshadows *all* male activity. In her lament, Gilgamesh's mother has figuratively pressed his eyes shut, not wanting him to be fully conscious.

Kathleen Cioffi notes: "As the actors/shamans reenacted the ancient story of Gilgamesh, I felt their songs throb through my own body and somehow had the illusion that I myself had participated in the ceremony, and been, at least for a little while, healed" (Cioffi, 2004: 48). What Cioffi is experiencing as a spectator is the healing of Gilgamesh's split ego by his reintroduction to his instincts vis-à-vis the reconciliation between Enkidu and Gilgamesh. In their final embrace we are presented with an image of integration: not between one man and another, but between the conscious mind and the instincts, which are separated in an unhealthy relationship with the Mother, i.e. the disempowered citizen claiming back his independent identity outside of the community. So there is a key theme here: the consciousness of human moral conflict (between conscious and instinct)

which has been repressed in a socialist society which does not acknowledge such conflict.[2]

Gilgamesh has not fulfilled the process of individuation yet. However, he now has the ability to confront the Mother. In the union of Enkidu and Gilgamesh comes the compulsion to cut down the cedar tree in the forest, i.e. "the libido is [now] aimed at the heroic deed of overcoming the mother" (Kluger 1991: 79-80). Enkidu leads Gilgamesh up onto a platform so that he may view the sacred forest. It is noteworthy that the actors are on a platform, so that spatially we see the forest as *beneath* them: the forest is both paradise *and* the underworld. The great cedar therefore grows in the land of death, and here there is an implication of the Mother archetype, for she both gives life and takes it away, indiscriminately. Within the context of the myth, Enkidu and Gilgamesh must ascend the mountain to find the forest. This is a kind of *Gotterdamerung*, for it is the gods which live at the top of the mountain (Kluger, 1991: 99-101). The myth predicts that there is going to be an overthrow of an old regime for a new one. At the top of the mountain stand all the male characters: Gilgamesh, Enkidu, Shaman and The Immortal, Utnapishti. There is a binary on stage, a confrontation between higher consciousness and maternal chaos. That the Shaman has arrived shows the beginning of regime change for he represents "the spiritual impetus which draws man out of lethargy" symbolized by the Mother.

[2] See Chapter 1 in Slavoj Zizek, *Tarrying With The Negative: Kant, Hegel and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham[0]: Duke UP, 1994).

With a spotlight illuminating the underworld we see The Wild Cow, Gilgamesh's Mother, give birth to Ishtar. Gilgamesh encounters both his personal mother and the archetypal Mother. At this moment he must discriminate between them. He must recognise them as separate identities if he is to obtain his independence: for they are separate. This schism relates to Zizek's distinction between the real and the imaginary. Politically, we are controlled by the imaginary, in the case of Communism, by the State, which is panoptical. That the State is omnipresent only in belief is irrelevant; or, only relevant insofar as belief signifies the State's control. The (re)birth of Ishtar is terrifying for Gilgamesh, but he must overcome her as the carrier of the new consciousness. She is strong, attractive, identifiably powerful, and enters the world with a leonine roar. Her strength of course is an element of her threat, for she is fickle and does not know her own strength. And "the less conscious such a mother is of her own personality, the greater her drive: a will to power" (Jung, 1956: 22).

Ishtar wishes Gilgamesh to be her husband. Recognising him as the carrier of a new consciousness she longs to make a union with him. A bond which she will dominate, and which will allow her to retain her position as Master-Signifier. In order to suppress the Hero's rebellious nature she will bring him into her house, the inner-circle, and make him a servant for herself. As a means of doing this Ishtar promises him great wealth. If Gilgamesh says yes to this proposal he will lose his status of consciousness and become a function of the Mother; he will fall back into the cycle of nature, and become an instinctive being (Kluger 1991: 111-146). Like Enkidu, Gilgamesh will be at one with his animal nature. Animals, however, do not lead a free life. This of course is precisely the

danger Poland faced in the mid-nineties with the reemergence of the communist party after a few traumatic years of transition left much of the population disaffected. Jung tells us that being free of the personal mother does not make us free of the archetypal Mother (Jung, 1956: 36). So why is this issue only arising in 2003, fourteen years after the regime change? Because "every human archetypal experience gets its full weight only when it meets in us the maturity to receive and understand it" (Kluger, 1991: 159).

Gilgamesh is already as strong as the archetypal Mother, in that he has the ability to resist her temptation, and yet her proposal is alluring because it is familiar: "And he who went astray finds the right path again, when he beholds thy countenance" (Kluger, 1991: 128). However, "it would be a great danger for Gilgamesh to slide back into the Mother-World now that it has been overcome" (Kluger, 1991: 123). It would be a self-castration rite: a return to the era of the emasculated citizen, where the Mother (State) 'knew what was best' for the son. But Gilgamesh denies Ishtar. And so we encounter Ishtar's rage. She moves towards the spotlight, seething, growling, gnashing her teeth, taking large furious steps. Behind her are Death and Gilgamesh's Mother, for as Jung says, "the mother is the first world of the child and the last world of the adult" (Jung, 1956: 26). Soon the Shaman figure will step forward, because the era of the Mother is finished. This is the crucial moment of Zizek's previously mentioned 'intermediate phase'.

Now that the new consciousness has been freed of the Mother it must face Death. With the spotlight turned out, Death entices Enkidu to join her on the stage. She holds a long wooden pole, with which he is coaxed into a dance. Enkidu is overwhelmed by Death;

again the dance is highly sexualized; and eventually he collapses onto the floor. Gilgamesh finds his dead friend and begins to bark and howl like an animal. Death may be experienced many times in life, but only *once* can it be an archetypal experience. There are therefore a number of implications in Enkidu's death for Gilgamesh. Firstly, we must remember that Gilgamesh is two-thirds divine. But "in realizing death [he] becomes human" (Kluger, 1991: 159). He has moved out of the *status nascendi*, or "the state of becoming in the mother" (Kluger, 1991: 160). For as long as the Mother controlled existence Gilgamesh was unaware of time; he did not have to take responsibility (Kluger, 1991: 140-145). This was one of the privileges of her dominance. The Mother does not recognise her own conflicts, and therefore there was never any moral responsibility under her reign. Jung believed that conflict was a necessary element in the creation of a sense of morality (Kluger, 1991: 130). What we can see in the death of Enkidu, as well as in Gilgamesh's reaction, is the beginnings of a new value system: one which recognizes individual accountability. The impact of death is immense because it suggests the quest for a meaningful life. Here we can see the connection to Augustnowicz's notion that modern values are linked to mass culture, i.e. the sensation of rootlessness that so many Poles are experiencing: a lack of *personal* values is detrimental in a non-socialist society because personal accountability takes on a new status. Kluger also goes on to say that "a loss of values is natural after a shift of consciousness. That is the last word of material culture" (Kluger, 1991: 179).[3] Enkidu's death is also Gilgamesh's preparation for the spiritual life, that is to say "the death of the primitive nature" is the end of the "bound human creature dependent on the Mother" (Kluger, 1991: 152). And Gilgamesh "must first accept death because if he hangs on to natural

[3] By material culture she is referring to *materia* or *mater*, the Mother

life nothing else can happen" to him (Kluger 1991: 160). Jung believed that "accepting death is the condition for reaching new life" (Kluger 1991: 160).

Next we have Gilgamesh's descent into the underworld. In *Chronicles* this is signified by a plain wooden table: an interesting and insightful symbol. The photograph, for which the performance is now famous, shows Gilgamesh, Enkidu and Shaman dancing over/ around/ across the table. What is created for the audience is an empty space, i.e. the space beneath the table that they fail to penetrate. The actors are always above or outside this space. Jung would refer to this "underworld" as the expression of *emptiness*, or the great feminine secret. Many expressions of emptiness; such as the chasm, unplumbed depths, the yin, the chalice and so on; intimate man as he finds them alien to his nature (Jung, 1956: 30- 35). This symbolic image of the underworld as a feminine space is ancient, e.g. the Babylonians, who would have been aware of the Gilgamesh myth, believed that a goddess ruled the underworld or shadow world. To be dead, therefore, meant "to be in the power of the dark, devouring mother" (Kluger, 1991: 147-150). Gilgamesh must face this emptiness because he "must fall into the pit in order to make a man of himself" (Jung, 1956: 35).

The two men who dance with him in the underworld are his instinctual self (Enkidu) and the conscious part of the unconscious (Shaman). Here, the play sets up another dialectic: that between the ego and the unconscious. This dialectic leads to individuation, because the "unconscious needs the answer of the ego" for the process to be complete (Kluger, 1991: 173-180). The Shaman figure, being divine (i.e. of the unconscious) is limitless.

Gilgamesh, on the other hand, is not. However, "only what Gilgamesh" the Hero "can integrate can be realized" by the society he symbolizes (Kluger, 1991: 178). The three men together form a whole; a unity barred from them during the reign of the Mother. And it is "the task of Gilgamesh to try to be as complete as he can" (Kluger, 1991: 179).

If Gilgamesh is to take back his humanity/identity, which was denied him under the Mother (e.g. his demasculation resulting from a lack of responsibility for the value systems/moral codes forced upon him, etc.), then he must assimilate death. He must understand that he has boundaries, that he is limited – which is exactly what the Mother herself failed to understand. As long as her power was absolute, she had no need of this essential recognition. This is because absolute power is not in need of consciousness. At this point, for Gilgamesh, the Mother's "moral ambiguity becomes unacceptable" (Jung, 1956: 36-38) because he understands her limitations. Gilgamesh recognizes her position as Master-Signifier as illusory. She is dependent upon his belief in her. He sees in the Underworld what the Romanians witnessed that fateful day Ceausecu was dethroned and dragged before the nation: the hole in the flag where the communist star once reigned. The timing of this recognition is important because it doesn't come until *after* he has overcome the Mother. And this is because the archetype only reveals itself to a community *once it is in a position to comprehend it*. Teatr Piesn Kozla's *Chronicles – A Lamentation* has indeed found an "interpretation appropriate to this stage, in order to connect the life of the past that still exists with the life of the present" (Jung, 1951: par 267). Here is represented the collective unconscious of a nation that has at last rejected

the Mother. What She will be replaced by is another story. For it is in the nature of every new power to attempt to render the hole invisible.

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A Meta-criticism of Phyllis Nagy's Reception in London: What do the Critics (Not) Want?[1]

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The intention of this paper is to discuss the issue of theatre criticism (note that I am referring to *journalistic* and not *academic* criticism) that occupies the minds of many playwrights and constitutes the most common methodological tool for researchers to reconstruct a performance, while also exploring the effect a certain playwright has had on the audience at different times. As we are all aware of by now, theatre criticism is by-and-large, a white, male and bourgeois institution with great power, setting the standards of what is 'high' and 'low' theatre. It pertains to the press, one of the Ideological State Apparatuses (I.S.A) "a certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions" (Althusser 53). The Ideological State Apparatuses are carriers and formulators of the ideology of the subject; therefore, within this context, the power of the press resides in the construction of the public ideology and thus opinion and so is the power of theatre criticism.[2] Women playwrights are often the primary targets of attack or debasement by the critics since they refrain from their standards and, as a result, they are marginalized or dismissed.

> There is a general agreement [among women playwrights] that their work is being marginalized […] that national theatre critics not only frequently approach their plays with preconceived ideas, but that the current methods and criteria of theatre criticism are often inadequate. (Stephenson xi)

[1] This paper was presented at ATHE's 20th Conference in Chicago, Illinois on the 5th August 2006.
[2] Certainly, there is also another factor that has its own role to play; the reputation of a play can be constructed by word of mouth among the spectators regardless of the critics' reaction like in the case of Kane's *Blasted*.

Bearing in mind that the question "what do the critics (not) want" may be rhetorical, I will nevertheless embark upon a quick exploration of the reception American playwright Phyllis Nagy has attracted by the British press in relation to two of her plays both staged in 1995 at the Royal Court; these are *Disappeared* and *The Strip*. I firstly seek to probe the ways in which critical reception of Nagy's plays reflects the critics' biases towards women playwrights. Moreover, I intend to locate Nagy's unique quality as a playwright in her resistance to categorizations and argue that this specific trait is responsible for the disparity among critical opinion regarding her work.

Nagy began her career on the London stage just before the rise of 'In-Yer-Face' or 'Cool Britannia' hype in theatre. [3] She left New York in 1992 and came to live permanently in London where all of her plays (with the exception of two) have been produced in theatres like the Almeida, Watford Palace and foremost the Royal Court where she made her debut with *Weldon Rising* (1992). The outset of her career in London coincided with Stephen Daldry taking up the post of the Royal Court's artistic director and promoting a series of new playwrights. She has also been staged in continental Europe, the States and Australia. In 1998, Methuen included her in its Contemporary Dramatists series and published the first volume of her work. Her plays include two adaptations, Patricia Highsmith's novel *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (Watford Palace 1998) and Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel, *The Scarlet Letter* (Denver, 1994) and one translation, Chekhov's *The Seagull* (Chichester Theatre Festival,

[3] According to Aleks Sierz, the term 'in-yer-face theatre' signifies a drama that "employs shock tactics, or is shocking because it is new in tone or structure, or because it is bolder or more experimental than what audiences are used to"; overall, this type of theatre renegotiates "the relationship between audience and performers […] disturb[ing] the spectator's habitual gaze" (Sierz 4-5). For more see Aleks, Sierz, *In-Yer-Face Theatre: British Drama Today* (London: Faber and Faber, 2000).

2003). Also, her first original screenplay was turned into a film entitled *Mrs. Harris* (premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival, in September 2005), directed by herself, starring Annette Bening and Ben Kingsley.

While I was researching Nagy's plays I was struck by the lack of consensus amongst critics in terms of assessing her work. On the one hand, her work has been received with skepticism, characterized as 'incomprehensible' and self-indulgent; on the other hand, Nagy has found ardent supporters among critics that have greeted her as "a voice to watch",[4] or "the finest playwright to have emerged in the 1990s"; [5] these are discrepancies that mark her as 'a love her or hate her' playwright. Dominic Dromgoole, in his account of contemporary playwrights in Britain, vividly encapsulates this argument by asserting: "Some writers you just can't get. Your friends, colleagues, family can praise them to the skies but the flavour just won't appeal. Phyllis Nagy is one of them for me" (214).

Moreover, I came across the following paradox: despite the fact that in her plays Nagy refutes authoritative discourses and resists gender binaries, in her interviews she actually replicates these binaries based on biological essentialism. When she talks about how women's *lateral* thinking functions she declares:

> [W]hen women are at their best they tend to be structurally beyond any male dramatist. The mind at work is operating very differently. […] Men have a need for closure and anal-retentive methods of reaching conclusions. Women don't. (*Rage and Reason* 21)

I chose to discuss the year 1995, which I believe is a landmark for Nagy's theatre. The same year that Kane inaugurated a new way of approaching dramatic writing,

[4] Carole Woddis, *What's On* 16 Dec 1992 rpt in *Theatre Record* 12 (1992): 1490.

generating critical uproar with her play *Blasted*, staged at the Royal Court Upstairs, Nagy was found between two extremes: *Disappeared*, staged at Leicester Haymarket Studio,[6] and transferred to the Theatre Upstairs at the end of June,[7] won several awards and unanimous critical approval, something that catapulted her career. Yet, in the meantime, in late February, her most ambitious and complex play so far, *The Strip,* was staged at the Royal Court Downstairs,[8] and received the vilest and most inimical reviews in her career.

In a nutshell, *Disappeared* has the form of a mystery novel and is about a young woman, Sarah Casey and a fraudulent impersonator of existing people, Elston Rump. Throughout the play, Sarah mysteriously vanishes and the primary suspect for her disappearance is Elston. The end is ambiguous; we never learn whether Sarah was actually murdered or disappeared out of her own will. When Charles Spencer from *The Daily Telegraph* saw the production of the play he exclaimed: "[y]oung playwrights don't come much hotter than Phyllis Nagy" (162) admitting that he had done her an injustice in the past. He describes the play as a piece that "gets right under your skin" (162). Michael Billington from *The Guardian* declared: "I warm more and more to the work of Phyllis Nagy" (161). Simon Reade from *The Financial Times* said: "of the 1990s playwrights, Phyllis Nagy has the most exciting vision" (817). Overall, critics indulged themselves with paralleling the play to Antonioni's film

[5] Alastair Macaulay, *The Financial Times* 2 Mar 1995 rpt in *Theatre Record* 15 (1995): 161.
[6] Directed by Derek Wax.
[7] Directed by Nagy herself.
[8] Directed by Stephen Pimlott.

L'Avventura[9] and Kurosawa's *Rashomon*[10] and her writing to that of Paul Auster and Gertrude Stein.[11]

The Strip has been often and accurately described, borrowing a line from the play, as "a thousand-piece jigsaw puzzle of a Jackson Pollock painting" (*Plays 1* 246)[12] highlighting the play's complexity and multiple layers in terms of structure and themes. It cannot be described in one sentence – not even a paragraph. It has a surreal and complex plot, constantly breaking down physical and mental borders; five American and five English characters that seem always on the move, mingle, and change places from England to the States to meet in the final scene in Las Vegas. *The Strip* is a difficult read on the page as well, echoing Nagy's assertion that "the bad plays are the ones that are very satisfying reads on the page, because then there's nothing to discover in rehearsal" (Armitstead, "It started with a Kiss" 12).

The Strip was received with great scorn by many critics who, on the whole, attempted to undermine Nagy's validity as a playwright, questioning whether she deserved to be staged at such a reputable venue such as the Royal Court Downstairs (this question was also asked in 1994 when her second play, *Butterfly Kiss,* was staged at the Almeida). Surprisingly, the most rabid review came from a woman; Maureen Paton in *The Daily Express* fiercely attacked Nagy stating that "[l]ife is too short to tolerate the kind of pretentious bilge found in Phyllis Nagy's wildly self-indulgent new play,"

[9] In *L'Avventura*, a girl who is unhappy with her life, like Sarah, mysteriously disappears from a small island in South Italy and the whole film revolves around her lover's search for her. The end remains ambiguous and open-ended since it is never disclosed where she is and the cause of her disappearance.
[10] In *Rashomon*, Kurosawa explores a murder from three different points of view, promoting the relativity of truth.
[11] All reviews are taken from *Theatre Record* 15 (1995): 161-162; 815-817.

concluding that it is a "ridiculous New Age freak show" (267). Paton wondered why such fine actors like Cheryl Campbell, Nicholas Farrel and Nicholas le Prevost should participate in this incomprehensible "farrago," ironically commenting that "the employment situation in the profession must be worse than ever" (267). In *The Daily Mail,* Jack Tinker did not hide his bafflement and objection to Nagy's rising reputation: "Phyllis Nagy may not be a name on everybody's lips, even if everyone could pronounce it. Yet her reputation in the theatre seems to be growing in direct inverse ratio to her inability to tell a comprehensible tale" (267). He ironically stated that Pimlott directs this "utter tripe as if he knows exactly what it all means" (267). Also, Bill Hagerty in *Today* stressed that Nagy has been successful "only in this country [Great Britain]."[13] Finally, Benedict Nightingale in *The Times* contended: "it left me feeling as if Nagy was playing computer games, and I could not join her because nobody had given me the password" (268).[14]

It is very challenging to juxtapose these two kinds of responses; on the one hand, *Disappeared* won the trust of the critics, the majority of whom were male, due to the portrayal of a sympathetic male character, with whom they could identify.[15] Also, for the first time, all her characters are heterosexual.[16] Moreover, despite the play's non-linear structure and the lack of a *dénouement*, there is a stricter sense of causality - in contrast to her other plays - that facilitates the understanding of the events. Reviewers who in the past had complained about the uncertainty Nagy's plays embrace now

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[12] Specifically, this term has been reproduced in the reviews of Michael Billington (*The Guardian* 3 Mar 1995), Benedict Nightingale (*The Times* 3 Mar 1995) and Paul Taylor ("Sealed with a Kiss", *The Independent* 28 Dec 1994).

[13] She is often advertised under the rubric: "the best-known-unproduced-playwright-in America" (Nagy, *Plays 1* ix).

[14] All reviews are taken from *Theatre Record* 15 (1995): 266-268.

[15] Indicatively, out of the 16 reviews for *Disappeared* from the *Theatre Record* only one was by a woman.

affirmed their liking of her craft of story-telling and hailed her as a great playwright. With *The Strip* on the other hand, she was immediately banished as the 'other' as it was a play that could not be effortlessly digested, and that defied their standards. Phyllis Nagy reported:

> [T]here was a critical comparison going on at the time of *The Strip* with a play by Nick Ward called *The Present*, which opened at the Bush at the same time. And all the reviews for *The Present* were about how weird, unfathomable and brilliant this play was, And for me? The opposite. (Nagy, *Rage and Reason* 21)

Therefore, what one can elicit from the above responses is that the critics' seeking for closure and singularity of meaning, of a "password" in Nagy's plays, signals their need for logos, rationality, teleology and authority, traits that allude to the institution of patriarchy. Elaine Aston very rightly contended that with *The Strip*, "Nagy primarily upset the theatre critics by making it virtually impossible for them to come up with their usual style of plot summary" (117). Moreover, Nagy has suggested that it is a typical reaction from the part of the critics to attack when they are faced with something that their minds fail to grasp for they feel threatened and insecure (Nagy, *Rage and Reason* 21). Elsewhere, she has commented on the need for art to be challenging and to elude passive reception; she says:

> Literalism is attractive because it is immediately satisfying […]. Reason tells us that it is only when we are comfortable with information that we can understand the information. […] we have forgotten that truly dangerous art never seeks to be merely understood. It seeks to communicate, with all the mystery and danger that word implies. The literal, though sometimes dangerous, is rarely mysterious by definition. (Nagy, "Hold your nerve" 124-125)

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[16] Nagy had written another play, *Trip's Cinch* (1994) with three heterosexual characters before *Disappeared* but was produced in England later, in 2002.

Nevertheless, elaborating exclusively on biological binaries and essentialist categories overshadows other issues. For example, we should not exempt women reviewers because they can prove equally bitter with male reviewers as in the case of Maureen Paton. What is more, we should not unanimously indict male reviewers either. On the contrary, we should also view the critics' reaction within the wider context of the *ideology* reflected by their agent of expression that is, the British press in the years 1990-1995. If we take a look at Nagy's consistent supporters we encounter *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and *The Observer*, that is, the more liberal and open-minded press whose audience is more attuned to this kind of 'less conventional' theatre. At the other end of the spectrum there are newspapers such as *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Daily Express* and *Today* that appeal to a conservative public. The kind of comments that question her status as a playwright because she has not been successful in the States or because of her Hungarian origin and hard-to-pronounce name clearly reflect an astonishingly narrow-minded, xenophobic, biased and conservative attitude that regards Nagy as an outsider on the London stage.

Finally, it seems that another of Nagy's features that can be deemed 'threatening' by critics is the difficulty of contextualizing her. The comparisons critics drew when assessing *Disappeared*, served as a tool to *validate* her work using the safety-net of categorization; her work is legitimate as long as it shares common denominators with something already explored and reproduced –mainly– by men. However, the fact that they compared her to non-British artists underscores her 'otherness.' I think that Elaine Aston and Michael Coveney would go along with the above argument; Aston has written: "it is the desire to resist categorization that might be argued is a signature

of Nagy's theatre" (*Feminist Views* 111). Michael Coveney, one of Nagy's staunchest advocates, highlights the uniqueness of her style and her liminal status by arguing:

> She has not (obviously) been lumped in with the new laddish and loutish drama that has made such an impact in the wake of *Trainspotting*. Nor does she quite tally with the feminist writers of the Royal Court in the 1980s, many of whom bit the bullet on sexual politics, parturition and mother-daughter relationships without really challenging ideas of form and style. (Nagy, *Plays 1* xi)

It is true, Nagy does not clearly belong to either camp; she does not employ an overtly feminist discourse in her plays, repudiating the whole domesticated women's theatre, the "wombic element in women's writing", because, according to her, this is the only type of theatre encouraged by artistic directors when it involves staging a play by a woman (Nagy, *Rage and Reason* 27). Her denouncing of feminist sisterhood however, does not imply a refusal to explore gender which I deem as one of her primary concerns. On the other hand, she also strongly objects to the "recent spate of laddism displayed in the arts" represented by plays such as Mamet's Oleanna or Welsh's Trainspotting that propagate a widely accepted resurgence of misogyny (Kenyon 7).

On the way to the new millennium, it seems that technically, "theatre is still predominantly run by men and commented on by men" (Heidi Stephenson, *Rage and Reason* ix) and Nagy is another case of a woman playwright who has been caught in the web of power relations between critics and women playwrights, indicted by some critics due to her gender, her origin and her writing. However, I believe that she has also profited from the positive criticism by certain reviewers who supported her work, and who in the majority are men and by her collaboration with Stephen Daldry and Stephen Pimlott; I think this last point reinforces the inevitability of women dramatists to achieve a certain status in theatre without the male establishment's

support. Nevertheless, as Foucault has argued in *The History of Sexuality Vol.I,* "power creates resistance" (95) and women playwrights' tendency to explore new forms and aesthetics resists the critics' power of circumscribing what is 'acceptable' in theatre. Hence, as an iconoclastic playwright, Nagy also enters this power structure.

One of the hallmarks of Nagy's writing is the representation of fluid identities that liberates her subjects from phallocentric and hegemonic discourses. Regarding this last point on the 'fluidity of identities' Judith Butler has asserted:

> Fluidity of identities suggests an openness to resignification and recontextualization, and it deprives hegemonic culture and its critics of the claim to essentialist accounts of gender identity. (Butler, "Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory" 338)

Therefore, this tendency to portray non-fixed identities is not only a means to resist the power structure between critics and women playwrights but derives from Nagy's own refusal to be ascribed a certain identity, to fix herself in prescribed subject positions and her desire to recontextualize and reconstruct herself when she changes places of residence. She has argued:

> I've always lived elsewhere from where I come from, and I've always been interested in living elsewhere and losing identity to a certain extent, and then replacing it with another identity or not. (Nagy, "Feature" 29)

Hence, I would argue that Nagy has managed to be both an 'insider' and 'outsider' in British theatre. For some, she will always be marginalized as the 'foreigner', with a bizarre name despite the fact that she is English-speaking, who chooses to portray lesbian kisses on stage and who resists fixed identity categories as "instruments of regulatory regimes" (Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" 13); for others she belongs in the 1990s generation of British playwrights, included in anthologies or

compilations on British theatre and praised as "the most interesting writers of the British theatre renaissance" (Armitstead 12).

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Technique Development and African Dance in the UK: An Interview with Peter Badejo OBE[1]

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Introduction

The issue of technique is one which every performing artist has to contend with, especially where none is in existence or have gained currency. This paper offers a very basic insight into Peter Badejo's attempt at developing a notation system for African dance which he believes will form the framework of a meta-technique on African dance. Badejo intends the technique to be directly or indirectly applicable to all African dance forms, even though his approach is problematised from the beginning by the use of a Western framework to read African dance. Also in this paper, some of the challenges of performing African dance in the UK are highlighted, howbeit sketchily with the view of exposing attempts at relevance in the multicultural British society where African dance is often performed in contextual situations that are apposite to that in Africa.

The excerpts presented are based on an interview with Peter Badejo in which he bares his mind on the state of African dance in the UK and his pet project, the development of a technique for African dance based on Labanotation, which he calls the *Batabade* technique. It is hoped that this paper will draw relevant attention to the state of African

[1] This paper is based on an interview with Peter Badejo at Interchange Studios, Hampstead Town Hall, London on Monday 4th October 2004.

dance in the UK, and Badejo's project, perhaps opening them up to critical appraisal and debate on the way forward.

The Issue of Technique Development

The notion of *Batabade* is very interesting and the proposal of its technique as a prototype for African dance is useful since there are inherent similarities in dance practices across the African continent, in which case adapting the *Batabade* technique could be useful across African and African diaspora dance practices. What is left to be seen is how the technique would be received by African dance choreographers and dancers. According to Badejo Arts, the *Batabade* project which is made possible with assistance from the Dance department of the University of Surrey and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) has as one of its main aims to "to be the first fully codified African dance technique"[2]. In the excerpts below Peter Badejo Discusses the project and why he feels it is relevant.

IGWEONU: Can you tell us the relevance of the *Batabade* project and what it aims to achieve?

BADEJO: I seriously believe that what is debarring us from moving ahead in arts generally and in dance particularly is the lack of technique development in African dance. We have different forms of dance, practised from tradition to theatrical, but we haven not build a bridge between the forms and the technique. Once a technique is developed, then you can evaluate it from the same point of view like in western dances like ballet, contemporary dance, and jazz, because those are already based on technique. So what I

[2] Information from Badejo Arts website, http://www.badejoarts.co.uk/ (Visited Sept. 1, 2006).

am doing now is that I am developing a technique called *Batabade* based on the Bata dance[3]. Bata dance has already built a bridge for me anyway, in the sense that in the Diaspora, in Cuba, in Brazil and in America you find people dancing Bata.

Because of the transit of slavery, people took along a lot of Yoruba culture and dance happens to be one of them. I thought since that bridge has already been built why not capitalise on it and then develop a dance technique. Once the technique is developed then if you are studying *Batabade* in Ilorin or Indonesia you will be studying the same technique. But at the moment if you study Bata form there are varieties, it is interesting that one of the essences of Bata form in Nigeria is the shoulder which symbolises the lightening and power of Sango but in Cuba they do not even use the shoulder, they do some similar movement, like the leg movement but then their hand have already absolved the other influence that they have there which is the western dance but you cannot blame them. But those of us who are still not too far from what I call the origin are in a position to come up with such a technique that lets you know how to go about it. It would not stop people from doing Bata dance but it is an extraction of the essences that people need to look into to do Bata.

IGWEONU: So do you see the possibility of developing the *Batabade* technique so that it cuts across, and can be applied to all African dance forms?

BADEJO: It will be used as a prototype. There are three aspects to it, first, there is codification of existence, secondly the alphabets of the techniques itself like you have in

[3] Bata is the national dance of the Yoruba people of Southern Nigeria. It is also practised extensively in places like Cuba, Trinidad and Brazil, mainly due to transatlantic slavery.

western dance, thirdly through the alphabets you build your own technique. These three forms become a prototype that if you want to develop an Atilogwu[4] technique you can use them. You can then say for instance, if I can do the codification and the alphabets, it becomes a written technique that you can apply to that dance.

IGWEONU: In other words, you are saying that while the *Batabade* technique may not cut across all African dance forms, it will have a structure that can be applied to other forms?

BADEJO: There is no technique that cuts across all forms of dance. *Batabade* is a technique that can be adapted, improved on and applied to other forms. Because what you need in Bata may not be what you need in Atilogwu or Jarawa dance of Northern Nigeria, there needs to be that kind of adjustment. I am getting annotators to notate it but at the moment we have no choice, we still have to base our notation on Labanotation. But in doing the notation for *Batabade*, because the demand of the Bata dance is different from the straight forward ballet dance, the annotators have to work very closely with me to be able to make some additions to it so that you will be able identify its Africanness when you see it even though its based on labanotation.

IGWEONU: From what you have just said about *Batabade*, I am interested in knowing if you have any programme on ground for teaching African dance, where you are experimenting with this technique?

BADEJO: I run training programmes like the Annual "Badejo Dance with Me" Summer School, which is an international event bringing together people from Nigeria, Cuba, and

[4] The Atilogwu is the national dance of the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria.

other parts of the world. We have been running that for about nine year and are going to continue but expand it. The development on that level is that it is time now for Badejo to revisit its source, we do the summer school here (UK) every year but the participants are cut off from the origin. When you study African dance, you cannot study it in isolation because it is interwoven with other things in our lives. So from next year (2005), if we do two weeks here (UK) we will do about a week or two in Nigeria so that participants can relate the dances to its culture.

I started a platform just to help young choreographers to develop along the lines of African dance using the material that they have learnt. At the moment, what they call contemporary African dance here (UK) is a bit of African dance layered with Western contemporary dance which is not right, but you cannot blame them because most of their training is on Western contemporary dance. So may be they have been to one or two classes on African dance and they are black. That should not be the criterion, it should not matter whether you are black, green or blue as long as you know the particular form you are working with. So the training we are going through has changed now into *Batawumi* because I want my work to zero into Bata and it will involve getting young choreographers to work with the company for a period of weeks and then use that experience to create short pieces which will then platform and we will do that once in a year. So in another way if the *Batabade* technique is successful, we will need disciples and the quicker way of getting disciples for it is to invite choreographer to share in the experience and then use it in their works.

African Dance in the UK

Another important issue touched upon in the interview borders on the challenges of performing African dance in the UK. Again, excerpts from the interview in which Badejo talks generally about African dance and African dance in the UK are presented below.

IGWEONU: Earlier you raised a very interesting point about the issue of race in African dance. What do you have to say about some of the views expressed by Alphonse Tiérou in his book *Dooplé: The Eternal Law of African Dance,* especially that regarding the qualification for teaching or performing African dance?

BADEJO: We have to go back to the word African dance, are we talking about dances from our shrines, our ceremonial dances or our sacred dances, or are we talking about African dance in the theatre? African dance in theatre in an adaptation, you are using materials that are there for a different expression completely. When it comes to our sacred dances I want to keep them as sacred as possible, even though there is nothing static in this world. We want to keep them sacred because that belongs to a particular cultural experience for us, our cultural experiences are not secluded but your coming in is at our own term, that is, are you are a participant or observer? So I agree with him to the extent that there are certain aspects of African dance that should be our own, but when it comes to theatrical dance it does not matter who performs it.

Henry Oguike for instance is doing very well here in the UK but he is not doing African dance. Nobody is blinking an eye because he went to school here and learnt it and he is doing very well in his choreography. So even though he is black African he is doing

Western dance and likewise the fact that one is European does not mean one cannot do African dance, but what I am insisting on is that it has to be learnt. This is where the technique comes in, because some people just attend two workshops and then become African dance teacher.

IGWEONU: What would you say is the dominant influence in your work?

BADEJO: My work is highly influenced by traditional African dances because I do not believe that an artist can create from a vacuum, you have to have had a particular cultural experience. Even in place where the culture has been bleached there is still a remnant of it to influence the artist and we all work in contemporary environments in the sense that where we live or work influences how you express yourself. So I express myself in a contemporary form but the basis of my influence is traditional, it is embedded in the traditional.

They have turned contemporary into the preserve of particular cultures and it should not be, because if you go back to where you and I were born, you will be shocked to see how far they have moved if you do not want to see what your head tells you because sometimes you could be looking at things that has moved on and say that they are still in their traditional form. Look at the costumes of egungun masquerade, it now has buttons and all that, it has changed. I remember when I was in elementary school when the Queen came to Nigeria in 1956, we did a dance for her, there were two characters that were made into masks to represent the Queen and the Duke, and we dressed them in white to do the dances to welcome the Queen. So I believe that we are not living in the past but

each time we talk about Africa people look at the past. If you go to Alaba market[5], the electronic that you cannot find here in London you find them there and as much as all these things come in they influence the way people think, the way they dance, the way people eat and the way people talk. So we are living in a contemporary world but the contemporariness of our existence is there for the artist to pick and use in their works and that is what I do.

IGWEONU: Is ritual central or complementary to your works?

BADEJO: I am delivering a lecture in Ireland in two weeks time and it is about the total theatre form of the African expression. Unfortunately African universities have departments of music, drama, dance and so on, but once you get outside those four walls and look at what people are doing, you see it is a total form of theatre which is what the West is trying to revisit themselves. My choreography takes off from ritual but in a much neutralised form. If you visit a lot of contemporary African dance productions, quite a number of young African are revisiting ritual, but only to mesmerise. As much as ritual is the basis of your work, you do not choke people with your ritual. The audience here (UK) do not have the ability to comprehend your ritual, if you choke them with your ritual you cheapen the meaning of it and it becomes meaningless. You have to kind of dilute it to an acceptable extent, whereby you can use aspect of it as means of communication rather than teaching them ritual.

My first production here (UK) is called "A Ritual for Survival" and in it I looked at the situation then of people like us coming from Africa, it was heavily Sango dance and the

[5] Alaba market is located in Lagos State Nigeria.

likes. Sango dance worked for me in Nigeria, the Northerner, whether they call it Sango or not, when there is no rain for months would bring out their drums and dance for it, so there was a reason for their ritual, but why would you dance Sango in Brixton? So what I did was that I divided the programme into two to mirror one another, one is that if there is a problem in the African continent the people might call on their ritual in its very raw form to sort it out, Sango to bring rain, another to bring wind and so on.

So then I switched in the second part of the production to the problems in Brixton where I created a god of jobs, and where the Sango priest is important in the first part, I used a man costumed in tie and suit to be the god of the job who they need to appeal to for jobs. In the coat I labelled different aspect, when this is removed the audience sees another problem like health so this same character in suit and tie stands for all the gods and it went down very well and I remember the Guardian wrote good reviews on it. I did not do anything new, but was still coming from my ritual but had transformed it for people to understand, they could relate to it because they saw the first part. Ritual becomes the vehicle and the driver must be trained, the artist is now the driver of this ritual and you have to know how you are going to use it. That is how I approach my work which has to relate to my kind and how I view us in this society.

IGWEONU: To what extent would you say your work is influenced by the British society and Western culture in general?

BADEJO: First of all there are aspects of my work that I cannot run away from Western influence such as the theatrical setting and the audiences we are trying to reach. No artist

lives within a cultural vacuum so you are influenced by a number of factors within the society and beyond. It is give and take, and so I try to make my work live where I am creating for. I am not talking about doing Western dance, because in quite a number of productions I have seen people point their toes and then a bit of contraction and release, and all that, but I am not into that. I try to keep my Africanness. Even without dancing, if you place five African on stage and tell them to walk across, the way they walk is different, you are able to trace their Africanness up to this point. As much I am in Western society, I try to underpin my Africanness.

IGWEONU: You work regularly with dancers from all over Africa and the African Diaspora, would you say that principles of African dance cuts right across the different African nationalities?

BADEJO: There are certain essences that are in African dance that makes it African continentally or even within the Diaspora. Take for example the bent knee or bent position of African dance, which even though is very West African, has influenced a lot of dances all over the world. In Western contemporary dance they call it "the relaxed position." How about the relationship to music, we do not joke with music, in fact I do not choreograph without having the musicians there, the two develop together. Contraction and release in Western contemporary dance was developed from African dance technique, this is also common to African dance continentally.

One thing that Western contemporary dance has done for black dancers around the world is that it has taught them how to learn African dance. This is what makes it possible for

people like me to do their productions here in the UK. A journalist that reviewed one of my productions wrote that the dances where fantastic but that it looked grafted on the dancers. This is because they learned it, they have a technical way of learning dances. But when you do African dance, it is approached from two perspectives the inner and the outer, and you can tell from the way the dancers are doing the dance whether they are doing an outer or inner. Most of these dancers started with looking at how they see themselves in the mirror, rather than how they feel. Each time I teach I emphasise to students that the first things is "how do you feel the dance" before how you look dancing it.

Conclusion

It would be interesting to see how the *Batabade* technique plays out in the public domain when it is eventually introduced, bearing in mind that Badejo does not seem to problematise the fact that he is trying to create a technique based on that already in use for Western dance - Labanotation which, in a sense, could be expecting African dance to fit into a foreign mould or conversely trying to read African dance using Western frames of reference.

The *Batabade* technique seems to follow the same trajectory as Greenotation which was created by Doris Green, an ethnomusicologist. Greenotation is a percussion notation system primarily designed for notating African percussion instruments, but which is aligned with Labanotation[6]. The contention being that the placement of the two systems

[6] Information from Green, Doris. "No Longer an Oral Tradition." *Ntama Journal of African Music and Popular Culture.* Jan., 2004. http://ntama.uni-mainz.de/content/view/11/29/1/0/ (Visited 6 July 2006).

in a single grid would make it possible for both African music and dance to be read simultaneously thus ensuring that the two are kept together as in most Africa performances. Whereas both the *Batabade* and Greenotation seems to obligate African dance to its Western counterpart, the major difference perhaps, rest on Badejo's proposal that the *Batabade* technique would derive from, rather than incorporate Labanotation as the Greenotation ostensibly does.

Whereas the dual issue of funding and paucity of performance venues remain the biggest problem facing African performance companies in the UK, in the interview, Badejo deliberately focuses on the need for what is performed to be relevant without necessarily losing its Africanness.

BOOK REVIEW

Ballaster, Ros. *Fabulous Orients: Fictions of the East in England, 1662-1785*. Oxford: OUP, 2005. Pp. xiii + 408. £25 Hb.
Reviewed by Hsin-yun Ou (Royal Holloway)

For students of English literary Orientalism and other readers interested in this area, *Fabulous Orients* is a good starting point. Ballaster covers the most comprehensive scope of research on the oriental and pseudo-oriental tales in England from 1662 to 1785, perhaps since M. P. Conant published *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century* in 1908. The book explores writings relating to four oriental territories (Persia, Turkey, China and India), providing detailed synopses, sources, analogues, contemporaneous commentaries and overviews of recent studies, and analyzing their intertextuality. Ballaster argues against Edward Said's *Orientalism* by illustrating these writings' sympathetic engagement with the Orient. She observes that the Orientalists regard the Other as human beings like themselves, and she sees in these oriental tales a disinvestment of the English self rather than a confident expression of British colonial ambition. Thus China, for instance, "a manufactured product of the Western imagination," is generated "not for imperial political ends but rather for domestic narcissism or critique" (253). Ballaster's assertion, however, is only partially accurate, for some of the writings she discusses, such as *The Orphan of China,* demonstrate not only the English self-perception of the home nation, but also English cultural supremacy over China and implicitly France, though less to consolidate imperial dominance over the Orient than to reinforce English self-confidence in resisting French colonial invasion.

In the fourth chapter on China, Ballaster compares the adaptations of *The Orphan of Zhao* by Hatchett, Murphy and Voltaire (208-218). There may be some confusion for the student reader here between drama and narrative fiction, as she fails to examine Murphy's and Voltaire's plays as theatrical performances in terms of their production and reception, though Hatchett's play may have never been performed. She tends to overlook the fact that, whereas in narrative the Other can be depicted through a dominant authorial view, visual encounters on stage enable Otherness to appeal to the spectator directly, offering greater opportunity for self-expression and subversion. Although Ballaster rightly notes that "Murphy seems to be presenting private domestic virtue and loyalty as displayed by women as at odds with a patriarchalism he identifies as symptomatic of Chinese culture and politics" (217), she does not further explore this dramatic conflict or relate it to her discussion of Voltaire's Orientalism.

Finally, I would like to draw attention to some minor points in the chapter on China. Ballaster asserts that the Chinese play may have appeal in England especially because of similarities in plot and theme to *Hamlet* and other plays, for the story partly concerns "a son's revenge on behalf of his dead father" (209). In fact, the Chinese play primarily concerns the orphan's revenge in a broader scale—on the deaths of the three hundred of his family members and friends. The orphan's mother hangs herself, not "to avoid torture" (210), but to assure the Physician that she will never reveal the secret that he rescued the orphan. In Voltaire's play, Gengis-Khan is not "previously raised at the court in Pekin" (212), but is a Tartar fugitive seeking protection from the Chinese court. Voltaire only renders Zamti as a mandarin, not "mandarin and priest" (212), the latter

being the alteration made by the 1756 English translator of Voltaire's play. It is not "Murphy's preface" (214) that declares the play concerned with "a patriot zealous in a monarch's cause"; it is the Prologue to Murphy's play, written by William Whitehead. The orphan in *The Orphan of Zhao* is not "a young heir to the Chinese throne" (55), but the grandson of the Prime Minister. When Mandane complains: "What are the scepter'd rulers?" she does not accuse both "Timurkan and Zamti" (215); she is only accusing Zamti of his insistence on the divinity of kingship, which Timurkan disapproves of. Ballaster claims that Murphy's play "offers a critique of 'patriot' sentiment by presenting it as driven by the masculinist values of war and conflict" (216). In addition to its critique of patriarchal patriotism, however, Murphy's play also commends the Chinese patriots' struggle for national freedom from colonialist oppression. Despite these minor discrepancies, Ballaster's book provides useful background information and commentaries for studies in eighteenth-century English Orientalism.