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In the early twenty-first century, we face manifold crises that are increasingly shaping modern life: climate change, economic recession, terrorism, and the ongoing European refugee crisis. Others, meanwhile, perceive a sense of crisis in our political systems or in the ways in which we relate to one another in today's society. All of these concerns have found voice in the theatre in recent years, spanning a multitude of theatrical forms from performance lectures on global warming to analyses of the banking crisis. Looking further back, theatre has long engaged with the crises of its time, animating the stage with humankind's troubles and anxieties. Some of the theatrical forms to engage with ideas of crisis in the past, such as tragedy, retain their potency today. As the recent resurgence of Greek tragedy in British theatre has demonstrated, these ancient plays are still able to speak to our present day politics and conflicts. And as we mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, his plays continue to be used by theatre-makers globally to resonate with current challenges.

Theatre's relationship with crisis is also a theme that is generating increased debate among theatre and performance scholars. In September 2016, the TaPRA Directing and Dramaturgy Working Group explored the ways in which tragedy reflects various twenty-first-century crises, while a conference at the University of Birmingham discussed how theatre and performance that deals with the relationships between environment and economy at a time of accelerating ecological crisis. We hope that this edition of *Platform* can extend current discussions about the intersection between various theatrical forms and the multiple social, economic and ecological crises we face in the early twenty-first century, as well as exploring how theatre has engaged with crisis in the past.

We open this edition with Julia Peetz's article "Obama's Tears: Politics, Performance and the Crisis of Belief". Peetz reflects on the performative nature of Barak Obama's speech to the United States Congress on 5 January 2016. Focusing on Obama's emotional response to the issue of gun control in the United States, crisis is framed in both a personal and political context. Drawing on the work of Jeffery Alexander, Peetz questions the veracity of Obama's tears as an authentication "emotional avowal in the issue of gun control", and illuminates the crisis of authenticity and "the real" in contemporary political and societal debate.

Next, Chien-Cheng Chen adds to the scholarly debate around the plays of Edward Bond by paying sustained attention to some of the playwright's later and less discussed work. Cheng's article examines *The Chair Plays*, a dystopian trilogy consisting of *Chair* (2000), *Have I None* (2000) and *The Under Room* (2005), and uses these as the basis for a discussion of Bond's "dramaturgy of crisis". Cheng also attempts to illuminate some of Bond's dense theoretical writings, drawing a link between Bond's thinking and Adorno's modernist aesthetics. In the context of the ongoing refugee crisis and the rise of right-wing nationalist rhetoric, national borders are currently the focus of intense political debate.

In "Crossing Contested Borders", Panayiota Demetriou interrogates both how contested borders are performatively enacted and how performance itself might interact with these symbols of conflict, exile and migration. Her article focuses specifically on the border between the northern and southern regions of Cyprus, using the case study of Cypriot performance artist Christina Georgiou's piece *Quid pro quo* (2011) as a lens through which to view the contestation of borders and identities, as well as the role(s) of women in war.

Lastly, in an example of how politics can impact on the-

atre practice, Zindaba Chisiza and Amy Bonsall discuss the impact of the fluctuant nature of theatre funding in Malawi in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. "The Donor Dependency Syndrome" analyses the politics of Malawian theatre funding structures from the 1960s to the present day. The study starts with a consideration of the diminution of state funding for the theatre under of the leadership of Hastings Kamuzu Banda, who aimed to regulate artists viewed as a subversive threat to his presidency. Continuing their study into the 2000s, Chisiza and Bonsall assess the auxesis of international donations made to Malawian theatre makers, foregrounding the imperative and critical importance of state funding from the government in order to promote contemporary Malawian theatre.

We would like to thank peer and academic reviewers for their time and thoughtful feedback. Their support has provided invaluable assistance to the research of all who have submitted to this issue. We would also like to thank Palgrave Macmillan, Routledge and Methuen Drama for book review copies. We would also like to thank the authors of the articles and book reviews of "Theatre and Crisis". Finally, we would like to take a moment to announce that we will be stepping down as editors of *Platform* after the publication of this issue. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the department of Drama, Theatre and Dance at Royal Holloway, University of London for all their continued support of the journal during our time as editors. We hand over the editorship of Platform to the excellent duo of Raz Weiner and Julia Peetz, and wish them the very best of luck in continuing the publication.

James Rowson and Catherine Love, Editors

Notes on Contributors

Amy Bonsall is a theatre director whose work has been acclaimed across the UK and in numerous countries around the world including Malawi, South Africa, Australia and Thailand. Amy is associate director of Bilimankhwe, an international theatre company that specialises in intercultural theatre, which also forms the basis of her current Practice-Led PhD research at Leeds University.

Chien-Cheng Chen is a PhD candidate at Royal Holloway, University of London, where he researches the development and significance of Edward Bond's recent work by investigating his dramaturgy, theory of theatre, and the productions both in France and in Britain since the 90s.

Zindaba Chisiza is a Malawian academic, Theatre for Development practitioner, theatre producer/director and, currently, a final year PhD Candidate at the University of Leeds. His research examines the effectiveness of various TfD methodologies as tools for engaging with young Malawian men in interrogating Malawian masculinities and HIV. His current research interests include participatory theatre, development communication and men's' studies.

Poppy Corbett currently pursuing a PhD in the Drama, Theatre and Dance Department at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her current research addresses contemporary theatre's current fascination with "the real". Poppy is also a playwright and her work has been performed across the UK. She regularly writes theatre reviews and articles for the online theatre magazine Exeunt and have reviewed for the Times Higher magazine.

Dr Panayiota Demetriou (PhD, UoB) is the PDRA for research centre *Making Books: Creative Writing and the Digital*, at Bath Spa University, where she also lectures in Performance Studies and Cultural Geography. She is a Live Art practitioner, performance art photographer and initiator of *Performance & Live Art Platform Cyprus*.

Sarah Hoover is a PhD Candidate in the NUI Galway Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance where her research focuses on Gaming Audiences into Theatre. Her work uses larp to investigate competition, collaboration, and the affective intersubjectivities of co-creative performance.

Emer McHugh is PhD researcher and teacher at the NUI Galway Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance. Her thesis research explores Shakespeare performance by Irish theatre practitioners on national, regional, independent, and global stages. Emer is also a contributor to Reviewing Shakespeare and Shakespeare in Ireland and has served as Regional Editor for Ireland for the Shakespeare Standard.

Julia Peetz is a PhD student in Theatre at the University of Surrey, where her research focuses on mediation, the theatricality of political rhetoric and the construction of authenticity. She holds a BA in English Philology and Political Science from the University of Göttingen and an MA in Cultural Analysis from the University of Amsterdam.

James Rowson is a final year PhD candidate and Visiting Lecturer at Royal Holloway, University of London. His thesis 'Politics and Putinism: A Critical Examination of New Russian Drama' examines and explores Russian theatre since 2000, in the context of the political, social, and cultural background under the presidency of Vladmimir Putin.

Obama's Tears: Politics, Performance and the Crisis of Belief

By Julia Peetz

Abstract

This article explores a striking performance of crisis by U.S. President Barack Obama in a speech on gun control delivered at the White House in January 2016. I begin by contextualising the speech within Obama's presidency and the polarized political landscape of the United States. By performing his own ineffectiveness, I argue, the President shrewdly deployed anti-establishment rhetoric to paint himself as an incorruptible outsider to America's corrupt political system. Seen in this light, the tears he shed during the speech performatively underscored a range of rhetorical gestures, with which Obama sought to align himself with the American public and against a conspiratorial political culture dominated by lobbyists. The second section engages with Obama's tears on a more conceptual level, asking whether they can be said to authenticate Obama's professed emotional investment. I consider the reception of the tears in the American news media alongside questions surrounding the nature of acting, authenticity, staging, and reality in my argument that the tears are unreliable indicators of emotion. As such, they can be said to perform a crisis of authenticity in twenty-first century political discourse, which demands highly polished performances of politicians and seeks to discredit any performance that betrays its staged nature.

Introduction: Executive Power and Executive Impotence

It is 5 January 2016. U.S. President Barack Obama gives a speech calling for stricter gun control regulation in front of a

group of journalists at the White House. Towards the end of the speech, Obama pauses, blinks repeatedly and then wipes the corner of his eye with a finger. He continues to pause, his eyes cast down, then looks up and says, "Every time I think about those kids, it gets me mad", as tears roll down his cheeks. With "those kids" Obama is referring to the primary school students killed in the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut on 14 December 2012. The incident is one of several examples the then-President has given during his speech of what the media have dubbed "an epidemic" of mass shootings in the U.S.[1] Obama wipes one of his tears away and says, "And by the way, it happens on the streets of Chicago every day", a rhetorical gesture that connects the Newtown shooting to the city in which the President cut his political teeth as a community organiser. Chicago, of course, is known for its gang violence. Obama wipes away a tear from his other cheek, while the audience can be heard applauding. He then appears to emotionally recover, though when he ends his speech by forcefully stressing the need for voters to be passionate about the reform of gun laws because "all of us need to demand a Congress brave enough to stand up to the gun lobby's lies", the President's cheeks are still streaked with tears.

At the time of this speech, Obama was entering the last year of his presidency and his intention to enact stricter gun control legislation had so far been foiled by powerful gun lobbyists. The purpose of the speech was to announce four executive actions, the goal of which was to reduce gun violence by expanding background checks on those purchasing guns, enforcing existing gun safety laws, ensuring that mental health records are includ-

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1 A Google search for the exact phrase "epidemic of mass shootings" returned approximately 16,500 result in February 2016, the top page of which included articles by National Public Radio (NPR), the *Wall Street Journal*, the *LA Times* and CNN.

ed in background checks and boosting gun safety technology to prevent accidental shootings. Unlike executive orders, however, executive actions are legally non-binding and constitute presidential statements of intent, a detail that was largely ignored in the media coverage of Obama's speech (Farley; Murse). Even more than to outline new legal measures, therefore, the speech was designed to make an impassioned plea for the American public to hold gun lobbyists accountable. "So the gun lobby may be holding Congress hostage right now", Obama says, "but they cannot hold America hostage". As the widely televised speech reveals, Obama has the power to make himself the subject of national debate, but not to prevent gun violence by forcing the enactment of stricter legislation. In this light, the perhaps most straightforward explanation for Obama's tears is that they are an expression of the President's frustration with his own impotence on an issue in which he shows himself to be personally invested.

This article proceeds from the assumption that there is something less straightforward and rather more interesting going on when the most powerful man in the world bursts into tears while giving a clearly well thought out, structured and widely recorded speech in front of a crowd of journalists and television cameras at the White House. This assumption does not necessarily take away from Obama's investment in the issue of gun control, nor does it require me to posit that Obama's tears were somehow premeditated and acted out. I will argue, rather, that the question of whether Obama intended to cry, cried spontaneously or merely did not suppress the tears that were threatening to fall is ultimately less interesting — not least because the truth is impossible to know — than how the tears, as a theatrical gesture, underlined or undermined the rhetoric of crisis that the speech employs.

To understand how the tears amplified or modified Obama's rhetoric, I begin by examining the gun control speech both in the context of Obama's professional crisis near the end of his presidency and in the context of a perceived crisis within America's polarized political landscape. With reference to the work on presidential performances by political sociologist Jeffrey C. Alexander and studies of political polarisation, I analyse how Obama's speech mobilizes narratives of personal and political crisis to rhetorically position the President as an outsider to the very political system at the apex of which he would quite naturally be perceived to stand.

In the second section I turn more specifically to the tears, reading these as a creative intervention within a political system in crisis and an attempt to construct Obama as an authentic person and a contrast to the majority of Washington politicians. Drawing on theorisations of the relationship between acting and "the real" from Denis Diderot and Joseph Roach to Erin Hurley and Andy Lavender, I argue that the authenticity, or lack thereof, of Obama's tears is a complex matter. Though they were a striking focal point that assured that the speech received a great deal of press attention, the mediatized tug of war over whether the tears were "real" and "authentic" meant that the tears themselves ultimately performed a crisis of authenticity rather than providing a definitive authentication of genuine emotion.

From Collective Representation to Personal and Political Crisis

In this section I draw on the media-ethnographical work of Jeffrey C. Alexander to trace how Obama's presidential journey and the accompanying rhetoric have shifted between his 2008 presidential campaign, which is the focus of Alexander's 2010

book, *The Performance of Politics*, and the tearful speech on gun control given in January 2016 that is the focus of this article. Alongside this, I examine Obama's speech in the context of America's political polarization, arguing that Obama mobilizes this issue in his deployment of anti-establishment rhetoric to position himself as an outsider who is working on behalf of ordinary American people against a corrupt political elite.

Alexander's work on the power and effectiveness of politicians' performances proceeds from the premise that neither demographic statistics nor financial means nor even political issues can definitively determine the outcome of elections (8, 40, 284). Rather, electoral success depends on politicians' ability to harness and project performative power.[2] In Alexander's view, therefore, citizens experience presidential candidates as performers involved in a theatrical struggle for symbolic power (xii). While politicians seek to project an advantageous image of themselves to the public, their opponents and the mass media attempt to destabilize the intended image (9). Alexander argues that successful presidential candidates are able to make a reductively binary discourse work for themselves: "In real life, political actors are not *either* rational *or* impulsive, honest *or* deceitful but more than a little bit of each", Alexander writes. But "[i]nside the moral rhetoric of democratic politics", where "[t]he nuance and ambiguity of empirical actions does not often make an appearance", politicians are constructed and must construct themselves as being fully rational and honest and in no way impulsive or deceitful (10-11, emphasis in original). For Alexander, "[s]uccess in a campaign depends on making the civil sphere's binary language walk and talk" in such a way that, even though they employ a large staff of spin doctors, speech

2 Similar points on the centrality of performance to our understanding of how politics functions in the twenty-first century have been made by Janelle Reinelt and Shirin Rai (2, 4) as well as by Laura Levin and Barry Freeman (5).

writers, press secretaries and so forth, politicians "appear authentic and sincere" (11, 14). Politicians who manage to successfully align themselves with the "good" side of this binary in the public perception attract campaign donations and ultimately get elected because they succeed in turning themselves into "a collective representation – a symbolic vessel filled with what citizens hold most dear" (18, 41).

According to Alexander's analysis of the 2008 presidential race, Obama, with his campaign focused on the motifs of "hope" and "change", was successful in positioning himself as a democratic hero, one who could lead the American nation from a troubled past into a hopeful future (67-71). Once elected, the performative challenges of being president required Obama "to be seen as working the moral binaries that define civil society in a nonpartisan manner", to continue to make the binaries work for himself while also disavowing his own partisanship (272). This is why, Alexander observes, "[a]fter a bruising and heated electoral struggle, Obama called for the restoration of solidarity" in his victory speech at Grant Park in Chicago on 4 November 2008 (268), where the President-Elect famously spoke of "Americans who sent a message to the world that we have never been a collection of Red States and Blue States: we are, and always will be, the *United* States of America" (qtd. in Alexander 268, my emphasis).

The rhetoric of Obama's 2016 White House speech on gun control is remarkably different to the unifying rhetoric of the Grant Park speech in a number of ways. Instead of emphasising "heroic might" and "utopian possibilities for transformation" while presenting himself as "the changer rather than the changed" (Alexander 272), Obama's tears speak of the President's impotence in the face of Washington's powerful gun lob-

byists, who, he remarks, "hold America hostage". In underscoring the powerlessness of the most powerful man in the world, the tears perform the President's personal crisis and highlight a moment, late in the second term of his presidency, at which much remains unaccomplished.

According to the Pulitzer Prize-winning website *PolitiFact.com,* Obama compromised on or broke 51.6 per cent of his campaign promises (compared to 48.4 per cent of kept promises) over the course of his presidency. Significantly in light of the gun control speech's focus on the influence of lobbyists, this includes a broken promise to establish "tougher rules on revolving door lobbyists and former officials" ("The Obameter"). Gallup's continuous Obama Job Approval Poll at the time of the speech painted a similarly ambiguous picture: It plots that Obama started his presidential career with 69 per cent of Americans approving of him versus only 12 per cent who disapproved. In January 2016, the figures had roughly equalized, with 47 per cent of Americans approving of Obama's job performance on 4 January, 2016, and 48 per cent disapproving ("Gallup Daily").[3] A LexisNexis News search for the phrase "Obama is a failed president" performed on 29 September 2016, returned 262 results,[4] including one for a debate on whether Obama is a failed president organised by the debating forum Intelligence Squared on 20 June 2016 that was also scheduled to be broadcast on BBC World ("Yes, He Can!"). These figures reflect Obama's fall from an inspiring hero and collective representation to a more ambig-

3 These January 2016 figures preceded a late boost to Obama's approval ratings, which meant that for almost the entire period between March 2016 and the end of his presidency in January 2017, the percentage of those approving of Obama was higher than the percentage of those who disapproved ("Gallup Daily"). According to *Politico*, Obama's soaring approval ratings during the last year of his presidency were at least in part due to the unusual unpopularity of both of the major parties' presidential candidates, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump (Wheaton).

4 By contrast, a search for "Clinton is a failed president" returned only 15 results. Search performed in all news in all languages.

uous figure, one whose efforts to inspire hope and realise change have all too often been thwarted. This point of personal crisis in Obama's presidential journey is eloquently performed by the President's tears.

However, while Obama's speech might therefore appear to be a relatively straightforward expression of a point of crisis, my argument in the remainder of this section is that, on a deeper level, the speech constitutes an assertion of strength rather than weakness. I argue that the rhetoric of Obama's speech, under-scored most startlingly by the tears and the emotional charge they carry, functions to position Obama as a trustworthy outsider infiltrating a broken political system characterised by partisan squabbles with the intention of purifying this system on behalf of the people. I am not claiming that this a radical departure for Obama, who, as John Heilemann and Mark Halperin describe in their account of the 2008 presidential race, was advised that he could capitalize on his status as an "un-Washington" candidate by not waiting to complete his first term in the Senate before running for president (70, see also 33-34, 64). Nor is anti-Congress rhetoric unique to Obama's presidency; as Michael Foley (671) and Erwin Jaffe (77) observe, it is a relatively common rhetorical device with which U.S. presidents try to boost their popular support. Rather than arguing that the speech marks any kind of radical break, then, my analysis seeks to elucidate how Obama mobilizes a given anti-establishment sensibility in an emotionally charged way.

During his speech Obama repeatedly refers to the fact that gun control has become a partisan issue, while stressing that this is not in the American people's interest. Early on in the 35-minute speech, for example, he says, "instead of thinking about how to solve the problem [of gun violence], this has be-

come one of our most polarized, partisan debates — despite the fact that there's a general consensus in America about what needs to be done". He then emphasizes that his speech is not motivated by personal gain because he will not stand for another election in his lifetime, saying, "I am not on the ballot again". As the speech continues, this invitation to the audience to see Obama as standing outside of the political system becomes much more explicit. Obama asserts, for example, that "the vast majority of Americans, even if *our* voices aren't always the loudest or most extreme" care about reducing gun violence — thereby including himself in "the vast majority of Americans" (my emphasis).

Most strikingly, in his references to Congress Obama leaves no doubt that though he, as President, might be expected to have some influence on the U.S. legislature, this is not so. Instead, he stresses that Congress is out of line with the thinking of "the majority of Americans" and that this is so because "the gun lobby may be holding Congress hostage right now", which means that "all of us need to demand a Congress brave enough to stand up to the gun lobby's lies".[5] Throughout the speech, Obama thus continually positions himself as a concerned out-sider who sides with "the vast majority of Americans" against a corrupt political system in need of reform. Obama even goes as far as to claim that a "general consensus exists" on the issue of gun control, but that this consensus can find no political expression in a legislature dominated by partisan squabbles. Rather than speaking to his audience as a representative of the system willing and able to take decisive action, then, the President pres-

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5 Obama's assertion that Congress is out of touch with the American people is born out by the public approval ratings of Congress. According to Gallup, Congressional Job Approval Ratings have not climbed higher than 20 per cent since October 2012, whereas disapproval percentages have hovered around a minimum of 70 and a maximum of 86 per cent during the same period, November 2012-January 2017 ("Congress and the Public.").

ents himself as a lone wolf who sees through the system's lies and weeps with the American people over his own powerlessness.

Leading political scientists have provided evidence of increasing polarization, but there is far less consensus as to the nature and origin of this polarization than Obama's speech implies. Obama's assertion that politicians are largely disconnected from the public's concerns, and that the political system does not adequately serve voters, is backed up most notably by Morris Fiorina and his collaborators (Fiorina *et al.*; Fiorina and Levendusky). However, a different side to this argument is presented by Alan Abramowitz, who attests that it is the American public at large that is increasingly polarized, rather than just the party elites ("Disconnected"; *The Disappearing Center; "*Transformation and Polarization").

Fiorina and Levendusky argue that there is "a disconnect between the American people and those who purport to represent them", because while there has been an increase in polarisation at the elite level of American politics, this does not reflect an equivalent change within the much more moderate electorate ("Disconnected" 51-2). Instead, since the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, a widening gulf has emerged between the more polarized political elite and an "increasing number of ordinary Americans [who] appear to be walking away from the conflicts that characterize the party elite", so that opinions in the general public appear to converge while they diverge between the two major parties ("Disconnected" 55, 69; see also Baldassari and Gelman 441).

Abramowitz offers a rebuttal to Fiorina et al., arguing that, "while it is indisputable that partisan polarization is greater among political elites than among the American public", there is

evidence that the American public, and not just party elites, have become more polarized ("Disconnected" 80). In Abramowitz's view, there has been a "dramatic increase" in the number of people engaged in political activities and all of these people are increasingly polarized, so that Fiorina's argument that polarization is significant only within a small and unrepresentative political elite is no longer valid ("Disconnected" 75-7).[6]

The dispute between Fiorina and Abramowitz sketched above shows that leading political scientists do not agree on where polarization originates and what forces are driving it forward.[7] Obama's speech, however, clearly picks a side. When the President asserts that partisan squabbles are radically divorced from the general consensus that exists among the "vast majority of Americans", he rehearses Fiorina's argument. In the picture Obama paints the "vast majority of Americans" are therefore right to be suspicious of political functionaries who are supposed to represent them but in fact are preoccupied by their own partisan battles, in which their positions are, furthermore, influenced by lobbyists who make an illegitimate oligarchy out of a system that is meant to be democratic. Obama is following a rhetorical strategy identified by Alexander: He flatters his audience by describing it in positive terms and projecting voters as "rational, honest, independent, and capable of decisions that are wise" (91).

In addition, as he paints a picture of the legislature as disconnected from and largely uninterested in the people, Obama is feeding into anti-establishment sentiment. He is there-

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6 Fiorina and Levendusky as well as Abramowitz argue on the basis of National Election Studies and General Social Survey data.

7 Jacobson, in a 2012 article based on the 2010 Cooperative Congressional Election Study, finds that this is a far from straightforward issue, as his data could be used to add to either Fiorina's or Abramowitz's argument. In light of this, Jacobson reasons, "[Fiorina's and Abramowitz's] dispute is actually much more over the interpretation of the evidence than the evidence itself" (1626).

by arguably contributing further to a culture of suspicion, which, according to conspiracy scholar Peter Knight has permeated the American political landscape to the extent that "the natural order itself [is seen as] present[ing] a pervasive threat to its citizens" (34). Paradoxically, then, by painting himself as a relatively powerless outsider to the polarized and corrupt political establishment, Obama is able to turn his confession of powerlessness into a creative intervention within a political system perceived as being in crisis. Through the assertion that he is one of the people, and despite acknowledging a moment of vulnerability and ineffectiveness, Obama's speech actually performs a strength that consists in resisting the pull of the broken system and feeling empathetically with the rational majority of citizens rather than the detached and self-absorbed politicos.

Undecidability and the Crisis of Authenticity
In the previous section I argued that Obama's deployment of anti-establishment rhetoric serves to construct him as an authentic outsider by anticipating and averting the default perception of politicians as functionaries of a corrupt system. In this section, I expand on this analysis by questioning whether and how Obama's tears work with the anti-establishment rhetoric in constructing the President's authenticity.

To someone intent on disavowing the validity of another's emotional investment in something, tears are problematic. They are problematic because they are difficult to fake. They are difficult to fake because they are usually uncontrolled. Theatre scholar Erin Hurley explains that "affect" is an "uncontrollable, embodied, individual experience" to an "environmental change" which may result in an "emotional expression", which "displays the subjective, affective response in a socially readable way"

(17). Insofar as tears are usually the emotional expression of an uncontrollable feeling of sadness, they may be a result of affect. However, tears are also more complicated than the simple affects that result in the autonomic responses of a person breaking a sweat or blushing, because tears *can* still be faked, even if it does require considerable acting skill to convincingly cry on cue. As such, tears are usually a trustworthy sign of someone genuinely feeling deeply upset, but not always. Tears are suspect because they can be faked, but only under certain circumstances and only by certain people. As literary critic Tom Lutz reasons, "the meaning of tears is rarely pure and never simple" because the sincerity of tears remains "in the moist eye of the beholder" (23, 60).

Obama's status as President of the United States compounds the problem at this stage. Obama's rhetoric may stress that he is one of "the vast majority of Americans", but Obama is unlike most Americans in that most Americans will never have direct access to him. Instead, the public's access to Obama is restricted to media representations of him. In the case of Obama's tears, this is problematic not just because such representations are "pushed this way and that by journalists", as Alexander observes (9). Rather, it is problematic because personal knowledge of Obama would be what would allow citizens to decide, or at least make an educated guess, whether the President is the kind of skilful actor who would be able to cry on cue. Both Lutz and Thomas Dixon, who writes about the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's tears, seem to agree that a central problem surrounding the public perception of tears lies in determining whether the tears are authentic or artificial (Lutz 66; Dixon 291-2). On politicians' tears, Lutz's analysis in *Crying: A Natural and Cultural History of Tears* concludes, "[i]n public life, [tears] are

frequently forms of emotional blackmail" (225). In the absence of personal knowledge of Obama, the tears, and what prompted them, become a matter of intense speculation and controversy that, in Obama's case, plays itself out along predictable party political lines.

One's interpretation of Obama's tears is thus ultimately indicative of where on the political spectrum one finds oneself: According to left-leaning commentators for the *Washington Post* and CNN, Obama's tears were "a good thing" and "revolutionary", respectively (Cillizza; Blake), since the tears indicated the President's passion for the gun control issue. Mary Rhodan of *Time* magazine similarly interpreted the tears as an expression of Obama's emotional investment in gun control and his frustration at being unable to force stricter legislation. On the right-wing television network Fox News, on the other hand, detractors accused Obama of having rubbed raw onion on his fingers, which he was then supposed to have rubbed on his eyes during the speech to make himself cry. Meghan McCain, the daughter of Arizona Senator (and Obama's Republican opponent in the 2008 presidential election) John McCain, called the speech "bad political theatre" (Raw Story). The reception was thus split between those who believed that Obama's tears were real, heartfelt, and indicative of the President's emotional investment in the issue and those who felt the tears were deliberately planned and perhaps even intentionally brought about through the use of tear-inducing substances — a position that not only undermines Obama's authenticity but any acting skill he might be credited with having.[8]

It is therefore the undecidability of whether the tears were spontaneous or planned, heartfelt or fabricated, that is the

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8 Interestingly, Dixon notes that a similar accusation of resorting to the not particularly emotionally charged act of rubbing raw onion on her eyes was levied against Margaret Thatcher (292).

most salient point. What does it mean, in this context, to ask if Obama is acting authentically? Suppose the President had felt the sincere desire to weep, but could have stopped the tears from falling in this public setting and chose not to, then to what extent could Obama still be said to be acting authentically? While these questions lie, in their most literal sense, at the heart of the pundits' questioning of the authenticity of Obama's tears, they also open up rather more complex questions on the relation between authenticity and performance.

In *The Paradox of Acting*, Denis Diderot famously argued that an actor's successful performance depends not on feeling the emotions performed but "upon rendering so exactly the outward signs of feeling, that you fall into the trap" (16). "The player's tears", if skilfully performed on cue, therefore, "come from his brain", not his heart — and for the French philosopher this was true "[i]n tribunals, in assemblies", in the political sphere, as much as on the theatre stage (17, 108). For the theatre historian Joseph Roach, Diderot's acting theory is not just the historically most persuasive theory of acting (226); it also explains the historic distrust and marginalisation of professions like "begging, seduction, prostitution, and apostasy" whose practitioners, like the actor, are "professional illusionists" (138). The widespread distrust of politicians, I suggest, may be due to the same suspicion that the efficacy of a performance on the political stage depends on the opposite of being overcome by true, spontaneous emotion.

In our twenty-first century performance culture the ambiguous nature of acting is further compounded by the complex relationship between what is staged and what counts as reality. Carol Martin argues, not uncontroversially, that today's culture of suspicion stands in contrast to the conspiracy culture of

the 1960s and '70s, which was rooted in the belief that the real could be uncovered under a façade of conspiratorial power (23-4). Today, by contrast, Martin reasons, "the 'really real' has its own continuum that includes […] the staged" (15). In his recent book, *Performance in the Twenty-First Century*, Andy Lavender sharpens this point by asserting that, "Reality incurs not as reality but as it is *performed* (presented) and *perceived*" (24, emphasis in original). In this, Lavender echoes an argument posited by Erika Fischer-Lichte, who contends that it is increasingly through the process of the mise-en-scène that truth and authenticity can be perceived at all (89). While this argument needs the qualification that it does not follow that *everything* that is staged is therefore somehow also 'true',[9] Fischer-Lichte and Lavender make the intriguing observation that, as far as our mediatized performance culture is concerned, reality may need to be staged in some way in order to become perceptible.

For political rhetoric this complex layering of relationships between experienced and performed emotion and between the perception of reality and its staging is problematic. In the political realm, as Maggie Inchley proposes, "the 'anti-theatrical prejudice' is easily triggered" (14). This means that a politician's performance is only effective if it does not reveal its own theatrical nature and successfully manages to conceal the fact that it has been staged at all (see also Alexander 14; Fischer-Lichte 87; Levin and Freeman 6). Although a politician's performance may have been painstakingly rehearsed to produce a desired effect and although it is carefully staged in front of cameras, the politician must, ideally, sound as though he is speaking off the cuff and not shying away from displaying the emotions that are

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9 As NBC's Chuck Todd argued in a recent interview with Counselor to President Trump Kellyanne Conway, for example, disproven statements that exist in clear contradiction to evidence-based empirical reality are not "alternative facts" — they are falsehoods ("Conway").

coursing through him at the moment of speaking. Obama's tears thus stand in a complex relation not just to Obama's unknowable feelings, but to the nature of how emotion can be most effectively acted out on stage and the need to stage that which is to become perceptible as "real", yet conceal the staged nature of political rhetoric. In this light, the tears are anything but simple authenticators of emotion.

Instead, I submit, one should read the tears as drawing attention to a crisis of belief in the authenticity of politicians. The tears throw this crisis into sharp relief because they highlight the complex interrelationship between the staged and the real, concepts that, in the twenty-first century, are perceived as standing in a more complex relationship to each other than simple opposition. Positing that the concept of authenticity has "begun to come into crisis" because authenticity is increasingly questioned and obsessed about, the social semiotician Theo van Leeuwen contends that authenticity is "concerned more with the moral and artistic authority of the representation than with its truth or reality", so that one might more fruitfully ask not how authentic something is but: "Who takes this as authentic and who does not?", and on what basis (396-7). In this light, Obama's tears might be interpretable as authentic only insofar as it serves someone's political interests to posit that they are. The crisis of authenticity might then manifest itself in someone badly wanting to believe that the tears were real and in someone else wanting just as badly to believe that they were not — and yet neither being able to make a definitive determination because, in the mediatized culture of the twenty-first century, reality and stage, and person and performance, have become a complexly tangled blend.

Conclusion

At an event hosted by the *Wall Street Journal* in late 2008 Obama's then newly appointed Chief of Staff, Rahm Emanuel, remarked, "You never want a serious crisis to go to waste." Few images speak as eloquently of crisis as the leader of a country in tears. Obama used his tearful speech to draw attention to America's crisis of mass shootings in a way that simultaneously drew attention to a perceived crisis in the U.S. political system and the Obama presidency. Obama's speech deployed anti-establishment rhetoric, now a dominant trope in political discourse, to paint the U.S. Congress as corrupt, self-interested, and infested with parasitic lobbyists, in order to then present Obama as a rational, benevolent, and clear-sighted outsider whose desire was to help the American people help themselves. By constructing himself as an outsider to the tainted political sphere, Obama was able to show what might be perceived as his ineffectiveness in reforming the gun laws in a more positive light: the President might have been ineffective, but this was preferable to his having been persuaded by the gun lobby and turned into just one more functionary of the broken system. As part of his rhetoric, Obama's tears eloquently underscored his outsider position and his frustration at his own ineffectiveness.

On a more conceptual level, however, the tears fail to authenticate Obama's emotional avowal in the issue of gun control. Because an effectively acted performance does not necessarily depend on real emotion felt at the time of performing — and indeed might depend on its opposite, carefully observed and rehearsed emotion — Obama's tearful performance must remain suspect. Despite this, pundits regarded the truth value of Obama's tears as the essential discussion point generated by the speech. This points to an incongruity between the way in

which reality is increasingly being perceived in the twenty-first century — i.e., through being staged — and the anti-theatrical prejudice operating in the realm of political discourse, where performances are easily discredited if they reveal their theatrical construction. As such, the tears expose a double crisis of belief in political culture: they underline Obama's assertion of the falsity within the American political system, yet they also undermine his own believability by drawing attention to the gulf between a politician's mediatized performance and the people it strives to convince.

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On Edward Bond's Dramaturgy of Crisis in *The Chair Plays*: The Dystopian Imagination and the Imagination in Dystopia
By Chien-Cheng Chen

Abstract

In this article I examine how Edward Bond realizes his dramaturgy of crisis through dystopian imagination in *The Chair Plays*. I argue that Bond's idea of 'crisis' refers to the 'logic of Auschwitz' in an Adornian sense, that is, the crisis of modernist instrumental rationality. His dystopia is a chronotope of the extreme form of such rationality that demarcates the limits of imagination and freedom. Then I move on to examine *The Chair Plays*, that is, *Chair* (2000), *Have I None* (2000) and *The Under Room* (2005), to demonstrate how different possibilities of freedom in the dystopian world are articulated. Based on the analysis, I conclude that the rationality of Bond's dystopia is closely associated with the legal sphere and one of the aims of Bond's dystopian drama is to reexamine the relation between human freedom and legal rationality.

I.

> A dramatist who writes about society must write about the future. The present is too close to be written about knowingly. The future is the hidden purpose of drama, of all art. A dramatist has only two subjects: the future and the past which is the origin of the future. (Bond "Third Crisis" 14)

In 'The Third Crisis', the introduction to *The Chair Plays*, which was published to coincide with the production at the Lyric Ham-

mersmith in 2012, Edward Bond explicates the reason why he sets the three plays – *Chair, Have I None, The Under Room* – in the future. Since 2000 Bond has been writing plays imagined to take place in 2077 or the late twenty-first century. These apocalyptic future worlds are reminiscent of dystopian novels at the turn of the twentieth century, in which the ideal world is depicted more usually as a dystopia instead of a utopia (Claeys 107). For Bond, the futuristic imagination is closely related to the understanding of our present crisis, the roots of which are in the past. In the following I will first analyse Bond's idea of "the third crisis" and proceed to explore how he dramatises the crisis of the logic of Auschwitz through the dystopian imagination. Finally, I will demonstrate how he interrogates the possibility of the agency of the subject as realised in the power of imagination.

Bond conceives of the present crisis as "the third crisis". However, he does not offer a single definition of "the third crisis"; the crisis may refer to "Creon's ideal dystopia" (*Chair Plays* xxv), "a scientific Utopia" (xxvii), "Auschwitz-Gulag" (xxviii), or "capitalism and its market" (xxxix). That is, Bond's concerns are more with the rational logic at the heart of modernity than with any specific historical events or social phenomena. In this sense, Bond's idea of crisis can be related to Theodor Adorno's infamous assertion that it was barbarous to write poetry after Auschwitz; it is implied that any artwork made after Auschwitz must be evaluated according to its relation to the logic that was made manifest in Auschwitz. Although Bond's dramaturgy differs from Adorno's modernist aesthetics, Bond's theatre, as Karoline Gritzner argues, can be regarded as a response to the logic of a progressively homogenous world by imagining non-totalisable otherness (85). For Adorno, the progressive logic of rationality makes human beings as "fungible or replaceable" (*Can*

One Live: 434): the eradication of the self is grossly demonstrated in Auschwitz as well as in the totalising capitalist power of exchange value which liquidates the particularity of human beings (120). Likewise, for Bond, Auschwitz epitomises the logic of rationality characterised by Zygmunt Bauman as "the spirit of instrumental rationality" and the "bureaucratic form of institutionalization" that make the Holocaust entirely reasonable and plausible (18).

Regarding the dramatisation of Auschwitz, Bond states that "[…] Auschwitz is the fact that didn't happen. You have to go to Auschwitz to allow it to happen" ("The Third Crisis": 17). By "go to Auschwitz", Bond does not mean that he intends to represent Auschwitz as a historical event. As Bond's conception of Auschwitz is concerned with the unresolved problems of modernity, his dramaturgy is not *about* Auschwitz but is instead *reenactment* of the logic of Auschwitz. Auschwitz becomes a chronotope that can be located in the catastrophic future as the extreme extension of the logic of Auschwitz. If Adorno's modernism "involves a turning against the progressive time consciousness of modernity" (Rothberg 21), Bond's dramaturgical logic resides in the extreme point of the dystopian imagination of progressive modernity. L.T. Sargent defines the term 'dystopia' as follows:

> [A] non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which that reader lived. (9)

Sargent further specifies that dystopias are "self consciously warnings" that imply that choice and hope are still available (26). In this sense, the 'dystopian imagination' is an oxymoron-

ic term: if there is still imagination, there could never be total dystopia; likewise, if there indeed exists dystopia, it could only be the place where imagination is totally eradicated. As Ernst Bloch defines "imagination of the Utopian function" as that which "possesses an expectable not-yet-existence" and "anticipates a real potentiality in a psychical way" (105), Adorno also sees utopia as "essentially in the determined negation [...] of that which merely is" (Bloch 12). The utopian function implied in the faculty of imagination is also inherent in Bond's distinction between reason and imagination. For Bond, "[t]he relation between reason and imagination is logical" (*Chair Plays*: xxix). Mere reason leads to totalising instrumental rationality, while mere imagination leads to pure fantasy. Only by constituting a logical link between reason and imagination can the consciousness function properly in accordance with the rule of society. In other words, while the utopian function of imagination challenges the status quo and presents the possibility of an alternative reality, dystopia is the dominance of reason that excludes any imaginative provocations.

However, how do we understand Bond's futuristic dystopia dominated by rationality? Bond states that "[d]rama untangles the distortions between law and justice and releases them by using the forces that have bound them together. This is the purpose of *The Chair Plays* trilogy" (*Chair Plays*: xxxiii). Therefore, it is legal rationality that Bond regards as dominating in the dystopia. Regarding the relationship between law and history, it is not coincidental that Adorno analyses the implicit connection between the philosophy of history and the legal sphere in his critique of Hegel's idea of 'world spirit'. He proposes that it is in the legal sphere that the idea of 'world spirit' is ideally realised. The Hegelian 'world spirit' rationalises historical progress affirma-

tively and it is in the same way that the law systematically determines every specific being and experience. As Adorno observes, "[i]ts systematic forbids the admission of anything that eludes their closed circle" and turns into direct violence over those that cannot be properly covered (*Negative Dialectics*: 309). Adorno further states that when the individual finds himself in the wrong it is not his fault but "the fault of constituents of the legal sphere itself" (ibid.). In fact, Adorno's critique of the Hegelian 'world spirit' and its relation to the legal sphere derives from his thinking about Auschwitz as "the catastrophe", after which "it would be cynical to say that a plan for a better world is manifested in history and unites it" (320). Similarly, Bond's dystopian imagination aims to imagine the extreme situation of the catastrophe beyond which nothing can be imagined and everything will be governed by legal rationality.

II.

In his article 'From the State of Law to the Security State', published in *Le Monde* on 23 December 2015, Giorgio Agamben addresses the political implications of the declaration of a state of emergency by the French government in response to the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015. Agamben relates the state of emergency to the regime of Nazi Germany, whose sovereign power and political operations were constitutionally legalised through a series of declarations of a state of emergency. Under the conditions of the state of exception, individuals are depoliticised and deprived of their liberties, whereas the power of the police substitutes that of the juridical institutions. As a result, the executive power absorbs legislative and judicial power in the name of defending the security of the state. In other words, wars on terror legitimatise the state of security as the

normal form of contemporary governance, whose foundation is the collective fear of unforeseeable terrorism.

In *The State of Exception*, Agamben states that "[t]he state of exception is an anomic space in which what is at stake is a force of law without law" (39). That is, the decrees and actions of executive power replace the law legitimised by the legislative power and assume the force of law without being law. The law is suspended and what is not law becomes lawful. In other words, the application of the force of law is separated from the law itself. For Agamben, the police offer the best example of the embodiment of the force of law in a state of exception because the police force is endowed with power to decide what threatens the public security on a case-by-case basis, which blurs the distinction between violence and right (*Means*: 104). The execution of the police as the manifestation of the sovereign power is always what is right, even though it might have violated the law. In the following I will argue that the Bondian dystopian future in 2077 takes place in a totalitarian security state which has completed the normalisation of what Agamben terms the state of exception.

At the start of *Chair*, Alice is looking through the window at a soldier and a prisoner on the street while Billy is drawing pictures. Partly because Alice thinks she knows the prisoner and partly because Billy suggests that Alice should take a chair for the prisoner or the soldier, Alice decides to take a chair down to the street. The prisoner, however, is unable to communicate through words, although she can utter some meaningless sound. As Alice tries to decipher what the prisoner intends to convey, she bites Alice. Later, the soldier shoots the prisoner dead as she is about to chase Alice. Back in the house, Alice starts to tear up all of Billy's pictures and burns them because she knows there will be a visit from the authority. After the welfare offi-

cer's investigation, Alice decides to commit suicide and leaves a note for Billy to follow. After Alice's death, Billy takes Alice's urn of ashes and follows her death note to throw the ashes in a car park. After crossing different urban areas, Billy is eventually shot dead in the car park.

Bond's dystopian imagination in *Chair* is best materialised in the deaths of the prisoner and Billy, as well as in the welfare officer's visit. Without any standard legal procedures, the prisoner and Billy are deprived of their lives by the sovereign power. We are given no explanations about why their actions should result in the death penalty since the execution, itself being always already legalised, needs no reason. Besides violence, the authority also exerts its power through strict surveillance. In the welfare officer's investigation, any tiny actions and even meaningless sounds have to be examined in accordance with the rationalised standards and procedures. What is more appalling is how the testimony is officially recognised. Although Alice disavows that her actions were out of pity and tells the officer that the prisoner "kissed" her instead of "biting" her, the officer insists that Alice's testimony is inconsistent with other evidence and decides to conduct further investigation. This forces Alice to fabricate a consistent testimony. Moreover, the welfare officer decides that for the sake of Alice's mental health, she has to move to a single room apartment near the Welfare Department to be kept under observation. As the soldier kills the prisoner in the name of security, in the name of welfare, the officer conducts the investigation, makes the decision of eviction, and strips Alice of her freedom of movement without the due process of law. In *Chair*, the soldier and the officer demonstrate the same logic of a state of exception in which the administrative application of force is always already legalised.

The world of *Have I None* is a totalitarian state similar to that of *Chair*, in which people are required to abolish their memories. Jams, a policeman, and Sara, his wife, are no exceptions. Despite their efforts to keep everything in order, Sara is annoyed by the incessant sound of the door knocking, and their life is further disturbed by a visitor, Grit. He claims that he is Sara's brother because he found a photo of their past, which restored his memory. Unable to bear Grit's existence in the house, Jams decides to kill Grit with poison, but eventually it is Sara who drinks the poisoned soup and dies.

Jams's and Sara's anxiety over Grit's intrusion into their domestic order is best demonstrated by their hysterical reaction to Grit's sitting on one of their chairs. As Bond explains, "[t]he characters are obsessed with the place of things because authority has abolished the past and this made society amnesiac" (Tuaillon 161). The absurdity of their reactions highlights the absurd nature of order maintenance, as well as the fragility of any imposed authority. In contrast, the old woman who tried to hang a picture in a ruined house demonstrates another meaning of restoring an object to the right place. Unlike Jams and Sara, the old woman whom Jams saw when he was on patrol tried to rebuild her relationship with the ruined house by hanging a picture properly. Pictures are forbidden because, as the product of human imagination, they represent not only an alternative reality to the authoritarian state but also a useless fictional world that refuses to be incorporated into instrumental utilitarianism. In *Chair*, Alice tears all of Billy's pictures apart before the welfare officer's visit, whereas in *Have I None*, Sara goes to the ruined house and gazes at the picture before she decides to commit suicide. Both of them sense the power of imagination, but neither can be saved by it. Besides, the domination of the state

is demonstrated in the phenomena of mass suicide as part of the everyday life described by Jams and Grit. Bond reimagines the mass manufacture of death in the camp by constructing an indifferent world of mass suicide: in the peaceful future, there is no massacre but mass suicide.

If we read *The Chair Plays* as three plays envisaged to take place in the same world, it is plausible to assume that each of them represents one specific aspect of this world. In *Chair*, we see how the ostensibly peaceful domestic life can be destroyed by a tiny benevolent act. If the soldier and the welfare officer seem atrocious in *Chair*, in *Have I None* Bond offers a parodic picture of the domestic life of the police to reveal the absurd nature of the order which can be easily destabilised by an unexpected visitor. In *The Under Room*, meanwhile, Bond investigates further the problem of hospitality and the status of illegal immigrants.

The Under Room opens with the Dummy, an illegal immigrant, breaking into Joan's house to escape from soldiers. Bond makes a distinction here between the Dummy as a human effigy and the Dummy Actor who speaks the Dummy's words in order to foreground the foreignness of the Dummy (Tuaillon 96). The Dummy tells Joan that he has no papers and Joan asks him to stay for the sake of security. Later, Joan asks Jack to help them get the necessary documents for the Dummy to cross the border. However, the Dummy's money has been stolen, so he is unable to pay Jack. Joan promises that she will try to get the money, but when Jack returns, he brings the Dummy's pass. Jack reveals that he joined the army to get the pass for the Dummy, and he threatens Joan and the Dummy that they have become criminals under the control of the army. Despite this, eventually the Dummy decides to escape with Jack, while Joan kills the Dummy out

of fear. The play ends with the Dummy actor speaking his native language while the Dummy has been torn apart by Joan.

Like Grit, who has no travel documents, the Dummy as an illegal immigrant has no papers and could only live by shoplifting. As he says, "[t]he knife is my papers. You must have weapon when you live on street and have no papers" (Bond *Plays* 173). The knife as the Dummy's papers has two meanings: it represents the violence required to resist the legal norm imposed by the authority, while it is also a reminder of how he was forced to kill his mother by the soldiers. In comparison with Billy's pictures in *Chair*, which represent the ability to imagine an alternative reality, and the old woman's picture in *Have I None* that symbolises the memory of the past, the Dummy's knife suggests that imagination and memory can also involve violence and trauma.

Bond further subverts the relation between innocence and violence through Joan's reaction to the unconscious Dummy. While the Dummy in his coma starts to speak his native language to articulate his inner anxiety, Joan dislodges the hatred of the Dummy that had been suppressed under her benevolent appearance. Once the suppressed anxiety is released, it turns into violence towards others; Bond describes Joan as one who "[…] contains in fact a lot of unexpressed aggression, probably based on fear" (Tuaillon 95). After the Dummy is dead, Joan is uncertain about whether she should expose his body or hide it. She finally decides to hide it out of the fear of being punished. Joan's apparent morality of hospitality is revealed to be based on the suppression of her fear and uncertainty, and, once undone, it turns into brutality. In other words, not only those who are endowed with the executive power can exercise violence, but normal citizens can also internalise fear and resort to violence.

By problematising the relationship between morality, violence and imagination, Bond encourages us to rethink the possibility of justice and the problem of agency in the totalitarian dystopia. In the following section I will evaluate how Bond conceives of the power of imagination and the meaning of justice.

III.

Bond dialecticises the relation between dystopia and imagination by imagining a dystopia in order to assess the potential power of imagination. To understand how Bond thinks of imagination as the basis of human agency, we need to examine his ideas of "radical innocence" and freedom. In 'Freedom and Drama' (2006), Bond evokes Kant's idea of freedom and morality to explain his idea of the imperative of "radical innocence". According to Kant, "the sole principle of morality consists in independence from all matter of law (namely, from a desired object) and at the same time in the determination of choice through the mere form of giving universal law" (30). That is, the Kantian practical reason is not determined by any "matter", any specific desire and object, but by a mere "form" of universal law. Kant restricts his theory within the field of practical reason in the form of universal lawgiving and excludes any consideration of practical applications in empirical reality. Bond's idea is Kantian in the sense that he refuses to explain the imperative through psychological motives; nevertheless, he acknowledges the discrepancy between practical reason and empirical actions by stating that "the imperative remains constant but the act changes" (*Plays* 217). As Kant's idea of freedom is posited to guard against causal determinism and pathological determinants, Bond's idea of the imperative as a constant without predetermined causality makes freedom possible. For Bond, the locus of freedom is that

of radical innocence as the psychic potential inherent in imagination. In Bond's theory, what Kant designates as determinism is considered to be "ideology", as he states that "ideology seeks to impose the determinism and necessity of nature on us, the human imperative seeks the freedom it does not have" (221-22).

In other words, Bondian radical innocence as the human imperative assumes that there exists psychic potentiality that is not determined by ideology. If we take ideology to be the source of legitimacy, Bondian radical innocence designates the possibility of defying the established legitimate order. The universal self-lawgiving form of the Kantian categorical imperative also entails that the self-lawgiving causality is free from the restraint of the empirical legal sphere. Therefore, Bondian radical innocence is close to the Kantian imperative, as both presuppose that the cause of self-determination is different from legality. However, Bondian radical innocence and the Kantian categorical imperative are not theoretical equivalents. While the Kantian categorical imperative presupposes a transcendental subject and requires that the imperative should be universally valid, the Bondian subject of radical innocence is situated in concrete material conditions and the decision activated by it is therefore in accordance with the particular situation. Through dramatising extreme situations in which characters are forced to make ethical decisions, Bond examines how radical innocence *qua* imagination as the foundation of agency is manifest in the singular reaction.

In *Chair*, both Alice's taking the chair down to the street and her final suicide are "Antigone moments" (Bond "Le Sens" 143) of rebellious gestures against the totalitarian authority. Alice's ethical act is her decision to take the chair down to the street. How do we understand Alice's decision? She denies that

she does it out of pity. What determines her action is an imperative without clear motives. In fact, this is not the first time that Alice has broken the rule of the state. Her adoption of Billy is illegal as she acknowledges that she did not hand him over to the authority because she was afraid of being questioned. Unlike Joan, Alice's actions are not a product of her moral rationalisations – she never says that what she does is right and the authority is wrong. She knows what the authority demands for the common good, but she never regards her action as an overt violation of the rule. Instead, she tries to secure a space in which the authority might cease to operate, the rule fails to apply, and authentic human relations are possible.

However, her action of taking the chair implicates her in the field of the operating sovereign power. For the welfare officer, the nature of Alice's action does not matter: Alice is a criminal if she acts out of pity, which is forbidden; if Alice does not act out of any motive, then she would be regarded as mentally deranged. Either way, judicially her action is illegal. In other words, as Agamben describes, the authority in a state of exception does not follow any predictable legal procedures but imposes its law through administrative decisions. Every administrative application is lawful and needs no further legitimacy. As a result, the regulation of one's physical acts and mental state is so complete that the possibility of acting out of freedom is cancelled – even motiveless benevolent acts are forbidden. This makes Alice choose death. For Bond, "Alice is a rebel. […] So she claims there is a part of her that they will never possess and this is a shared humanity" (Tuaillon 189). Determining one's death as the resistance to being 'possessed' turns out to be the only possible way of acting out of self-lawgiving freedom against the totalising legal sphere. Alice's suicide, like her adop-

tion of Billy and her taking the chair for the prisoner, is an action that seeks the space of freedom beyond the sovereign power.

Like Alice, Sara also commits suicide, but what is the difference between their actions? It is never clear whether Sara is Grit's sister or not. Sara refuses to accept Grit's claim; however, in a mysterious interval Sara is able to share Grit's childhood memory. Bond's comment on the question of the relation between Sara and Grit is ambiguous: "He is real but he is also a figment of Sara's mind, she is inventing with various odds and ends, to create a human relationship which is forbidden by her society" (162). Sara's imagination is made manifest in her auditory hallucination of door knocking and her delusional encounter with Grit as sister and brother. The delusions, however, are real in the sense that they represent the non-totalisable working of imagination that makes Sara decide to commit suicide.

In this play, the act of suicide is described by Grit as a collective phenomenon, and Bond sees it as the symptom of human desire to live on (161). The desire to have the right to be is at the core of the Bondian imperative of radical innocence and this desire also determines the logic of imagination. Like Alice's suicide, which is possibly the last act of freedom conceivable by imagination, Sara's suicide can be categorized as one case among the mass suicide. Nevertheless, Sara could possibly commit suicide to save Grit. Sara's suicide thus indicates the possibility of self-sacrifice for others, and in this sense the ethical implication of her suicide is different from Alice's.

While *Chair* and *Have I None* reveal how the authoritarian law reduces the freedom of human beings to such an extent that only the elimination of bare life makes freedom possible, in *The Under Room* Bond proposes that freedom can only be obtained by violating the law and understanding the nature of crime. It is

important to note how Bond dramatises the point at which the Dummy decides to go with Jack: when he confesses that he was forced by the soldiers to kill his mother or father and he killed his mother, Joan responds with moralising horror; Jack, however, understands the aporetic nature of the involuntary choice and the atrocious crime committed by the Dummy (95). As Jack decides to escape with the Dummy but finds that he has been killed, he says: "I never turned t' crime out a' weakness. I 'ad a different reason. Hope" (Bond *Plays* 202). Unlike Joan, Jack has no consistent morality: he can be a comrade with the army but he can also be an outlaw who offers help to the Dummy. Like Alice and Sara, Jack understands the nature of the state as the totalised order; however, unlike Alice and Sara who commit suicide as the manifestation of radical innocence, Jack's radical innocence takes the form of crime. The Dummy Actor's final utterance in his native language is also a non-totalisable expression of his radical innocence: the language that makes him feel at home is always incomprehensible to others. Even though the body of the Dummy is killed, his native language remains a surplus that demands understanding. For Bond, language "originates in the speaker's sense of his or her right to be, to exists, and that this right ought to be acknowledged by the listener" (*Hidden* 6). Joan kills the Dummy because she is unable to understand the Dummy's language. By making the Dummy's language persist on the stage, Bond positions the spectator as the listener who has to take up the task that Joan fails to fulfil.

Throughout *The Chair Plays*, Bond makes the characters seek justice in a world dominated by legal rationality – only what is lawful is rational and acceptable. By separating law from justice, Bond demonstrates that justice is not a pre-established legal or moral system for people to follow because it would be

identical with totalitarianism or morality based on suppression. In contrast, justice is always to be created by imagination and to be realised in every singular action that questions the lawfully enforced order.

IV.

> [I]f Auschwitz did not happen in the past it must be happening now and is already happening in the future. What does this mean? How is it happening now? It is happening in the symptoms which are the return of the repressed. (Bond "Third Crisis" 16)

For Bond, Auschwitz as a *logic* of identity can be realised in the camp through the means of mass killing, which reduces human beings into disposable bodies. The same logic can also be realised both through the capitalist rationality that instrumentalises human labor in pursuit of profit and through the legal rationality in a state of exception that identifies the application of force with the law.

Adorno reminds us that "[t]he primacy of totality over phenomenality is to be grasped in phenomenality, which is ruled by what tradition takes for the world spirit" (*Negative Dialectics* 303). Only by grasping "the relentlessness of what happens" (305) in concrete instances is it possible to discern how the individual is instrumentalised as a tool in the course of historical progress and its legitimatisation. If the task of post-Auschwitz art for Adorno is to "recover a sensibility of subjective freedom from the ruins of a damaged civilisation" (Gritzner 16), Bond's dystopian plays achieve the aim by imagining those possible moments of escape from and violation of the legal order of the totalitarian world.

Following the declaration of a state of emergency by the
French government in 2015, the Turkish government also
declared a state of emergency after a failed *coup d'état* in July
2016. The European refugee crisis which began in 2015 testi-
fies to the incompetence of the legal order of the nation-state to
deal with human rights outside the status of the citizen (Agam-
ben *Means* 20). Since 2011, there have been at least 144 Tibet-
an self-immolators in protest against the Chinese domination,
a phenomenon that makes Bond's imagination of mass suicide
in *Have I None* more palpable. "To be human, in the place of
law there must be drama" (Bond "Third Crisis" 15). The aim
of Bond's dramaturgy of crisis is to dramatise the moments
of hope and failed hope when the law in a dystopian future is
suspended, questioned, and violated. Moreover, by dramatising
the dystopian future, Bond means to sensitise the spectator to
the present crisis that may end up with a catastrophe and urges
the spectator to rethink the relationship between the self, law,
and the state.

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Crossing Contested Borders: *Quid pro quo* (2011) – a performance act embodying the conceptual and material significance of women's experience of the divide

By Panayiota Demetriou

Abstract

Contested borders do not only represent the physical, institutional and legal boundaries of geographical frameworks, but also speak for the disputed processes of a constant negotiation between territory, power and socio-political identity. The Cyprus Green Line, Barbed-wire, 'Peace-Force', Buffer Zone are some of the collection of names that personify the geographical frontier, or the twisted iron thorned object that runs horizontally from East to West of the island, separating the northern from the southern part since 1974. This quintessential symbol of war, exile and migration is not only a technology of social control that memorialises the violent history that lead to its forceful establishment; it is not only made out of barbed-wire, sand bags and military troops, but it is also a physical manifestation of cultural construction that represents the Cypriot's political and socio-cultural anxiety. This article addresses an artistic practice that emerged from conflict and struggles of forced migration, focusing on Cypriot performance artist Christina Georgiou's performance intervention *Quid pro quo* (2011). Through discussion of this piece, the paper asks how performance is used to engage with such crises, through reenacting women's experiences of encountering technologies of war.

In 1974 Turkey invaded Cyprus. This resulted in the fracture of the island in two and the exodus and re-rooting of its people. Approximately 200,000 Greek Cypriots fled their cities and villages from the North to the South, while around 65,000 Turkish Cypriots living in the South were analogously forced into abandoning their houses and migrating to the North. Today, Cyprus remains partitioned by the United Nations patrolled buffer zone, with Greek Cypriots concentrated in the southern part and Turkish Cypriots in the northern part of the island.

Contested borders do not only represent the physical, institutional and legal boundaries of geographical frameworks, but also speak for the disputed processes of a constant negotiation between territory, power and socio-political identity. The Cyprus Green Line, Barbed wire, 'Peace-Force', *Buffer Zone* are some of the names that personify the geographical frontier, or the twisted iron-thorned partition that runs horizontally from East to West of the island, separating the northern from the southern part since 1974. As Maria Hadjipavlou states, "These different designations of the 'line' constitute part of the collective historical and political experience in each Cypriot community; the 'line' has acquired both a symbolic and a physical presence in our daily life" (94). This quintessential symbol of war, exile and migration is not only a technology of social control that memorialises the violent history that led to its forceful establishment; it is not only made out of barbed-wire, sand bags and military troops, but along with its checkpoints (as different narratives and sets of scripts), where 'audiences' must stay in their seats, provokes a performed corporal action. It is also a physical manifestation of cultural construction that represents the Cypriot's (both Greek and Turkish) political and socio-cultural anxiety of proximity, disidentification and liminality. This article address-

es artistic practices which emerge in such crises, conflicts and struggles of forced migration, with a focus on Cypriot performance artist Christina Georgiou's performance action *Quid pro quo* (2011), a creative act of resistance that countered nationalist and hegemonic narratives. The artist returned to the site of conflict. Georgiou carried her mother across the border, as her mother carried her children in 1974, an intervention symbolic of returning 'home'. This piece is used as a case study to explore the materiality and symbolic nature of borders. Through discussion of the case study, which was influenced by women's[1] voices of war and the role of the female in such conflicts, this paper will investigate how artistic practice facilitates the experience of interacting with borders. It will ask how performance is used to engage with crises, through reenacting female experiences of encountering technologies of war.

Political conflicts construct social and personal divisions between individuals and communities, aggravating and setting partitions through the formation of hostile and disputed physical spaces: battlefields, borders, walls and prisons. When the gunfire comes to a *telos*, "the same people in their communities are left to live with these spaces" (Pubrick, 1). These points of active separation, where the architecture of the spectacle embodies the rhetoric, modify the nation's geopolitical geography and create spatial formations that are rooted in a struggle for control and sovereignty. Here the Cypriot map has never solely been a two-dimensional topographical chart, as territorial tropes have profoundly fashioned nationalist narratives of history, identity and ideology. In *The Line* (2004), Cynthia Cockburn

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1 The term 'women' is used to refer to those who are female identified. However, I recognise that they are not a homogenous group. I am not reiterating the construction of gender and identity, but rather I acknowledge the power that the split has for the cultural construction of identity and gender roles within the context of Cyprus and for the specific moment in time, affected by post-colonial, nationalist, and patriarchal narratives.

contextualises the performance of Greek Cypriot dancer Ariana Economou, entitled *Walking the Line* (2003 – 2005), in which the artist attempts to converse with the partition of Cyprus. Cockburn writes:

> What strikes me about this scene is that the dividing line seems to be alive. The rope slithers and slides, now one thing, now another. This helps me to see how a geo-political partition is not just armored fencing, it is also a line inside our heads, and in our hearts. In fact, the physical fence is a manifestation of these more cognitive and emotional lines that shape our thoughts and feelings [...]. When we are afraid or angry at some identifiable moment, a line springs out and plants itself in the earth as a barrier. It becomes *The Line*, and passage across it is controlled, by uniformed men, at a checkpoint. (5)

Inexorably contested, these sites, these internal 'demarcation' lines, are moulded by a conflict that continues to conjure diverse opposing understandings because of the emotional and psycho-logical baggage they carry.[2] As Nikoletta Christodoulou writes. "for most Cypriots of every age, Cyprus still bleeds" (31).

> Cockburn notes,
>
> The partition line that divides Cyprus from shore to shore is two fences separated by a buffer zone. It is pa-trolled by a UN peacekeeping force, UNFICYP. In some places the line is fierce with razor wire, and at others it lapses into rusty iron sheet and oil drums. (5)

Places of conflict transform into compelling representations be-cause of their very materiality and archaeology. They comprise

2 To use the term post-conflict within the Cyprus context is problematic, as the conflict still exists through forms of complex hostility. These can be characterised by Ernesto Verdeja's minimalist approaches to the spectrum of post-violence, which understands 'reconciliation' as coexistence between two enemies, that are founded on a rejection of violence; concentrating on the pacification of violence rather than a reciprocated for-giveness.

traces and residues of the dead and signify the forms of violence. As suggested by Louise Pubrick, "Hosts to violence, pain and loss they have been irrevocably altered; their pasts cannot be dispelled, so they assume otherworldly or sacred status, are prohibited or at the very least, are difficult to live with" (1), as with the case of Famagusta, the buffer zone. As repositories of the past, they retain history in their outlines and consistencies; they are urban archives of violent histories.[3]

> And I remember taking all the keys from the cupboards, from the doors. I took them with me…I thought that I was going to go back. So, getting out of the door my husband says to me: "Just have a sight again of our house because you will not see it again; if we leave we won't come back. (Antonetta Pelekanos - Cyprus Oral History Project, 2011)

> We had nothing with us. We left empty handed. I remember that people left food on the stove and they fled away…glasses on the table. (Nahide – *The Women of Cyprus* documentary, 2004)

> I waited by the telephone for days we didn't know where he was, whether he was alive or dead. I wrote letters to my Turkish Cypriot neighbour in the village, that stayed there. I sent her some money to give to him so he can come and find us. My brother was missing for over a year, it was terrible…We later found out that he was captured and was imprisoned. The oldest son of our neighbour was very close to my brother. He tracked down my brother and helped him escape. My brother

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3 For years each side had knowledge only of its own trauma; only recently have they realised that they share a common tragedy because of initiatives to unearth disenfranchised public histories.

said that he read my letter countless times until his re-
lease and it gave him strength. I thought we would never
get to see our friends again, the help that they gave us
was immeasurable. Years later, when the borders opened
and we crossed to the side of our roots, I knocked on the
door where they used to live. We embraced each oth-
er, cried and laughed like children for hours. (Anastasia
Demetriou-Hambi, in interview with P. A. Demetriou
for *The Echo of Loss*, 2008)

We came back to Kyrenia first. Then Kyrenia was most-
ly a greek town with a minority of Turkish Cypriots in
it, and all the Greek Cypriots had fled. The house we
rented was like somebody else had moved in before us
and then they decided to move out. They had taken all
the furniture with them and thrown out all the books
in the field next to the house. And I grew up reading
those books of those two Greek Cypriot children and I
always wondered who they were. […] everywhere there
were bullets, and I was picking bullets. That was our
childhood game. There were bullets in the walls and we
were picking them. (Yeshim – *The Women of Cyprus*
documentary, 2004)

The decade between 1963 and 1974, as well as the post-war era,
were difficult periods for both communities, as the permanency
of exile made Greek and Turkish Cypriots both outsiders and
insiders, with an ambiguous refugee status.[4] The Greek Cypriots

4 Borrowing from Roger Zetter's article *The Greek-Cypriot Refugees: Perceptions of
Return Under Conditions of Protracted Exile*, the use of the terms 'refugee' and 'repatri-
ation' in the context of Cyprus are problematic in terms of their ontological significance
under international law. Greek Cypriot refugees are neither refugees according to the
1951 Geneva Convention and 1967 Protocol, for the reason that they are not "outside
of their country of origin", nor can they be considered as potential repartees. Instead,
they are technically "internally displaced" and described as being in a "refugee-like"
situation (308).

have a prolonged desire to return to the North, while the Turkish Cypriots insist that the parting is absolute. As Mary Fong and Rueyling Chuang argue, "like the married couple seeking a legal divorce, the two communities of Cyprus find themselves in a position of interdependence" (228). This represents the psychological state of a national organism at odds with itself, which is characterised by schism – in the words of Peter Viereck, "two souls in one breast" (15). Identity issues divide them but also connect them, as the dominance of the conflict concerning the spatial framework of the country acts as an unsettled presence, which infiltrates society but also permeates the individual's identity construction through the collective psyche. Borders represent issues of identity and are functionally equivalent to ego boundaries. They not only epitomise external geography but also signify internal choices of cultural orientation, the degree of security or the extent of dismay regarding one's place in one's locale (187).

The barbed wire barrier of permanent immobility was thrown open by the Turkish authorities in April 2003 for authorised crossing, and only through personal identification, along four points on the Green Line, where thousands of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriots could make one-day visits. In this sense, as Donnan and Wilson indicate, it is essential to recognise that the border is as much of an event as it is a physical reality - natural (rivers, lakes, mountain ranges), or artificial (a simple line on the ground, walls, barbed-wire). Thus, the experience of crossing different types of borders, in a legal or unlawful manner, becomes a substantial marker of one's identity (Spyrou; Christou). The Cypriots who migrated from one part of the island to the other exist between two contradictory realities of the past and the present, thus partitioning their life into the status of

before and the status of *after* their exodus. The movement of the body between the two communities (North and South) forms exchanges between these two states of existence, whilst producing an ambivalent structure of feeling, in terms of inclusion/exclusion, belonging/becoming, and remembering/forgetting. Christine Sylvester suggests that war is an experience of the body. She sees the body as a bio-political fact of war, performative and an externally manipulated actor, which is also a disputed and diverse entity "that comes with gender, race, class, generational, cultural and locational markings that affect and are affected by social experiences" (Sylvester 5). In light of this, the frontier becomes a performative arena not least through performing the theatricality of the national political ritual, but also, as borders involve the daily performances of those who routinely cross and check, through endorsing or disputing the unwarranted and lasting limits of state dominance (Sylvester 75).

I am also a product of the Cypriot conflict. Whilst I have not directly experienced it, my sense of identity has been profoundly shaped by the aftermath of the division. My mother is a 'refugee-like refugee', and for this reason I have encountered the war and lived its destruction through growing up with the stories of the women in my family, who have been directly affected by it. A question emerges here that is relevant to my own standpoint but is also equally significant to the artistic case study contextualised further in this paper, is addressed by Hadjipavlou (2010): "What are the feminist conceptions of the Cyprus conflict and what have been the Cypriot women's interventions that counter the nationalist hegemonic narrative?" According to Bryant and Hadjipavlou, heterogeneous histories and memories are utilised as 'text' towards dehumanising 'the other' to justify the partition. In relation to this, Hadjipavlou also argues that

nationalism gravitates towards the reinforcement of patriarchal power structures by obliging women to show their loyalty to these institutions and therefore transforming them into symbols of their national collectivities.

The Cyprus problem is situated in the preconception that Eurocentric heteronormative order is a structural foundation for forming the nation (Riley *et al.*, 3). It is within this context that women and other marginalised social groups from both sides of Cyprus disturb the conflict culture and official narratives imposed by those patriarchal institutions (11).[5] As Loomba maintained, throughout the island's history the "female body became the site of discovery, rape, and conquest. The Cypriot woman's body is a physical and symbolic space, where the creation of the nation is justified and defended" (Loomba cited in Papastavrou, 97). In this context, the role of women as bearers of the nation in the form of 'mothers' and 'wives' is core to the sustainability of the colonial project and collective postcolonial ideologies. In present-day Cyprus, women continue to be the symbols of home and 'nation-blood', and the breeders to preserve and perpetuate the population of the two main ethnic groups (Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot). Women's experiences of encountering war, as well as gender-based violence, do not conclude post-conflict; as suggested by Meintjes *et al.* (2001), in the case of Cyprus patriarchal gender structures are rooted in the very fabric of the society. As Hadjipavlou (2006) writes, "Women are absent from key policy-making centres of power so they are not allowed to voice their concerns and views unless they behave like men or do as men say" (41). Vassiliadou argues that women are put to the side in a nationalist discourse for the reason that "they them-

5 Özkaleli and Yilmaz (2013) state that rather than perceiving women, men and children as a collective whole that deal with war together, the governing discourse on wars divides men and women into austere roles and into distinct spaces of battlefield and 'safe' homes. Women are attributed with roles as "supporting actors whose roles reflect masculine notions of femininity and of women's proper 'place'" (Nagel, 243).

selves are constituted by the binaries of modernity" (473). It is the lost, forgotten, marginal and unspoken voices that represent the nation, but at the same time it is the nation that marginalises these accounts.[6] There have been very few endeavours to document Cypriot women's war narratives and to integrate their knowledge into public discourse; the majority of initiatives focus on dominant male narratives. Even so, these silent or disenfranchised histories have mostly been transmitted through oral traditions and rarely documented in writing. Those that have been documented[7] are limited within their modes of representation and lack the transmission of a visceral experience, which is imperative to the dissemination and accessibility of oral history collections within public discourse.

In this context, Cynthia Enloe argued that militaries need men and women to behave as their gendered subjects (Peterson, V. S.; Runyan, 83 - 4). The role of women during war is mainly humanitarian. For Enloe, "the national political arena is dominated by men but allows women some select access whereby they are expected not to shake masculine presumptions" (13). Women speaking about their experiences of war, as well as writing about them, can provide an 'alternative' narrative to war and can challenge capitalist heteronormative patriarchy and European models of civil society formation that have excluded Cypriot women. The recollections provided above rep-

6 The struggle against colonial rule and for independence of Cyprus "was created by men, ordered by men, and carried out by men. It was a patriarchal struggle on a patriarchal island which most women followed and became involved... in fact they were used by men to promote their interests" (Vassiliadou, 459). It should be added that this is not the first instance Cyprus' history when women's voices have been shut out. Women have been left out of most of the island's historical narrative (Papastavrou).

7 There have been a few recent initiatives to represent these histories, with an attempt to engage a wide range of people's narratives such as *The Cyprus Oral History & Living Memory Project* (2011) led by Nikoletta Christodoulou and the *Frederick Institute of Research* in Cyprus. Even though the project was successful in its initiative of collecting and preserving both Greek Cypriots' and Turkish Cypriots' accounts, the approaches to the contents dissemination do not facilitate wider accessibility or active engagement with a broader audience.

resent Cypriot women's narrations of the 1974 invasion from several initiatives. As Umut Özkaleli and Ömür Yilmaz indicate, the exclusion of women's accounts from the history of war makes transparent how this omission is methodical, seeing that it contributes to the facilitation of patriarchy, ethnic nationalism and patriarchal nationalism. They argue, "Women's accounts pose a direct challenge to patriarchal nationalism by surfacing contradictions and tensions between patriarchy and nationalism between this alliance" (138). Female "situated knowledges" (Haraway) lead us to unearth the existence of marginal depictions of reality (Jaggar). This type of 'counterhistory' not only exposes women's war experiences that have been overlooked, but can also alter how individuals interpret the present and visualise the future - since "what we know about the past, and thus our understanding of the present, is shaped by the voices that speak to us out of history" (Hirsch, and Smith, 12).

Influenced by the stories of the women in her family about the tragic happenings of 1974 and in particular by an account shared at a women's war remembrance meeting, Cypriot performance artist Christina Georgiou produced the performance intervention *Quid pro quo* (2011). In August 2011, using minimal movement with strong visual connotations, Georgiou carried her mother whilst walking towards the Ledra Palace[8] crossing point in an endeavour to cross the border of Nicosia. This action mirrored an exchange between her mother and all the mothers who carried their children whilst moving from place to place during the exile. The artist's mother had been exiled together with her family from the North to the South part of Cyprus in 1974. With this intervention Georgiou attempted to return her mother to the place that she called 'home'.

8 The Ledra Palace Hotel is located in central Nicosia. It operated until 1974 as was one of the most affluent hotels of the capital.

Figure 1: Christina Georgiou, *Quid pro quo*. **Nicosia, Cyprus. Anna Stylianidou (2011)**

The audience, at the time of action, happened to be the author-ities who patrolled the surrounding area and the few that were situated at the checkpoint. They actively contributed to the piece as their authoritative presence and gaze restricted Georgiou's physical actions. Their power was reflected by their physical appearance at the border and therefore acted as an additional border, which heightened the emotional registers of the piece.

Figure 2: Christina Georgiou, *Quid pro quo*. Nicosia, Cyprus. Anna Stylianidou (2011)

Reenacting this praxis, the artist crossed between the contested political unconscious and the political conscious. Her intervention raised questions in relation to how the idea of the border and its solidified historicity can be experienced differently through performing, whilst producing a psychophysical transformation of this experience. Furthermore, the very praxis of carrying her mother critiqued the past and present position of women in the Cyprus conflict, in terms of understanding the act of 'carrying' as

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'caring' and thus performing the gendered role of the woman in the Cypriot context. It reflected and brought to the surface ideas that stem from patriarchal societies and nationalist perspectives on the "preservative love" (Ruddick, 65), the 'nature'/ 'nurture' argument, that emerges from the responsibility of the mother to preserve and protect the child;[9] questioning the ethno-national, and the gender power that intersect, promote inequality and are maintained by coercion. Hence, through the action of 'carrying', Georgiou performs the anatomy and dichotomy of civil society divided into public and private arenas: women and the family as part of the private domain, anticipated to support the diminishing, 'ethically' produced narrative, "which they internalise as being their national duty" (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 622). Through this embodied action she performed her identity, which included her own cultural and political heritage attached to layers of all the female war narratives she had previously encountered. Georgiou participated in a social process and in the production of knowledge about her own culture. In her piece, the body is considered as a tool to generate a live action that engages with the border of Nicosia as well as conceptual borders of ethnicity, gender, and power; perceiving it as a site to be experienced, explored, measured, archived and memorised anew (Georgiou). She realises the border as a space in-between places, which defines the outlines of maps through correlation and interrelation while suggesting the here and there. Its physicality regulates proximity and remoteness whilst enabling movement and stagnation within its topographic frame.[10] For Georgiou the

9 This describes women as being moral by default because they have a "biological connection to life" (Woehrle). This idea is contested by feminist perspectives as it implies that the image of the 'moral mother' is biologically constructed rather than formed on a sociocultural level and it excludes the possibility that men can also 'preserve love'.

10 As Ramon Rivera-Servera and Harvey Young state, every border holds a paradoxical status "as a site of tension between an impulse for stasis and a desire for controlled movement" (5).

border is a point of arrival and departure that activates movement or stillness, actions related to its material and conceptual properties.

A border is portrayed in relation to the affect it has on each individual that engages with it. On its own it is a cause of binary constituents, not because of its existence but because of the divide it creates by its placement. In Georgiou's words, "The effects of the border can be easily described through what can be seen around its topography: segregation, disparity, isolation, and ruins" (Georgiou, 16). Like the personal account I gave above, the artist's identity formation was also influenced by the older generation of women in her family and in particular her grandmother, who she describes as a "powerful mourning figure" with strong feelings of grief and nostalgia. "Her constant mourning through her stories about the past functioned as a powerful symbol of national recognition. She referred to her present house as a 'foreign' one, which she constantly failed to identify with, leading to her feeling of being lost" (ibid). This state of existence can be described in terms of liminality, a limbo phase, where one exists between two worlds. The immediate force of exodus produces a vast emotional bearing, merging places/spaces and memories of past and present, which create an uncertain future and form a hybrid identity.

Similarly, the performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña concentrated on the crossing point between North and South, Mexico and the U.S., a performance act that also acted as a springboard for Georgiou's work. Gómez-Peña conceived the border as a state of culture that carried with it the politics of the 'brown body', through which it represented his hybrid identity by rendering the disunion of colonialism. The borders between the two countries consist of what lives in-between the U.S. and

the various Latino cultures: the U.S.-Mexico border, immigration, cross-cultural and hybrid identities, misconceptions between cultures, the conceptual misinterpretations through languages and the distinction between races. These are components that Georgiou also felt in association with her praxis of crossing the border:

> I have experienced and felt this fear while crossing and moving along the border of Nicosia throughout this project. Upon my crossing to 'the other side', I could immediately perceive my difference in relation to the 'other'. My temporary 'immigration' was giving me a little taste of the dreadful occurrence of exile, experienced by the Cypriot refugees in 1974. I see the immigrants and the citizens on both sides of the divided city as disidentificatory subjects and the buffer zone as a way to control them through political power, which is employed over them while setting restrictions in physical and emotional means (Georgiou, 16)

The processes of identification and disidentification shifted depending on which side of Nicosia the artist's body was situated (North/South). In this sense, the condition of liminality was experienced during the crossing of the border, by travelling between the two communities, considering it as the formation of a movement according to the manner through which the body is perceived at each side of the divided city. Georgiou's interaction with the Green Line hints at an exploration of attaining empathetic understanding towards her mother and other Cypriot women who practiced the same action but under exile. The embodiment and emplacement that occurred through the performance intervention *Quid pro quo* facilitated another dimension of experience towards reforming and transforming fixed percep-

tions of reality. The journey whilst carrying her mother across the border reveals a nomadic action within the very place of their home, constructing a dialogue between the artist's body, her mother's and the border.

Military borders construct possibilities for identification, counteridentification and disidentification. Consequently, the Cypriot borders can act as a force for people, artists and activists towards reframing its existence and ideology. In Mark Phelan's words, "Performance can be an effective medium for making ethical memory, providing alternative modes of commemoration that can open up different avenues of forgetting, echoing amnesia and evading the problems posed by physical forms of memorialisation" (Phelan in O'Rawe and Phelan, 139). The currency of performative modes induced from effectual and experiential registers, through taking advantage of its ephemerality and immanent sense of loss, seems 'appropriate' when it comes to embodying "the loss of so many lives for so little" (ibid). The Green Line, Barbed-wire, 'Peace-Force', Buffer Zone, appears as a more tangible component where the individual's identity is reconstructed through the outer and incarnate experience of crossing it. As Rebecca Schneider states, "the syncopated time of reenactment, where *there* and *now* punctuate each other, reenactors try to bring the prior moment to the very fingertips of the present" (2). Performing crisis or tragedy raises ethico-political questions in relation to what is at stake when attempting to represent the wounds of others from the 'outside' or from a more privileged standpoint, as the artist-observer-researcher-author, as well as striving to convey the 'voices' of the wounded from within. In using the term reenactment I am not hinting at the artist commodifying trauma. On the contrary, Georgiou's action is a response to the specific context of refugee

trauma and an embodied reenactment of how she interpreted the experiences of the women in her family. Through performing the wound, Georgiou also seeks to show how the expression of pain can overturn the 'private languages' of individuals, in terms of there being no individual ownership in pain. In this sense, through her performance intervention as well as other performances that engage with crisis and conflict, there is an endeavour to construct an alternative reality through the deformation and reformation of the standing situation. This new formation can transport individuals into a restructured collective sphere, which can include subjectivities of 'previously' marginalised voices, such as refugees' war narratives and, in the context of the discussion in this article, war accounts of Cypriot women.

As Poposki and Todorova suggest,

Creating a place not of silent obedience and interiority before the great monoliths memorialising and celebrating hegemonic power, but instead forming an arena of perpetual pluralism where opposing values, expectations are confronted through public deliberation and discourse (in O'Rawe and Phelan, 109).

In this way, performance can be used as a platform for dialogic practices and offer effective modes of generating collective narratives, as well as contesting the 'official' and 'institutional', "providing a participatory public forum for recording stories and memories inimical with the progress of official narratives and representing those who have been occluded and absent from public space" (O'Rawe and Phelan, 3). By resisting the totalisation of hegemonic narratives, performance as a medium can establish how notions of conflict or post-conflict regeneration should also be applicable to the reconstruction of the self and communities (ibid). Echoing Schneider's view, Georgiou commented

"Crossing the border is about 'moving back' in time in order to reform the present" (Georgiou, 16). According to psychogeographical notions, by crossing the border, by retelling a narrative through embodied practice, Georgiou performed according to a set of different scripts or discourses: contradictory acts of power, gender, race and class that are performed repetitively. With her attempt to cross the border she sought out gaps, challenged the hegemonic narratives of the nation, and at the same time reflected on her position in this geography of power that is manifested in space. Through using performance as a mode to engage with such crises, by reenacting female experiences of encountering technologies of war, the performance artist sought the transformation of the situation by creating a "possible future while, at the same time, stag[ing] a new political formation in the present" (Muñoz, 200).

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The Donor dependency syndrome: The politics of theatre funding structures in Malawi

By Zindaba Chisiza and Amy Bonsall

Abstract

This article examines the impact of funding models on contemporary Malawian theatre. It attempts to examine how, since its emergence, the form has been hampered by the lack of a national arts council or funding strategy. We discuss theatre in the 1970s and '80s before examining NGO funded theatre since the 1990s, moving to a case study of an international donor aided theatre company, Nanzikambe Arts.

      In this article, we argue that under President Kamuzu Banda's dictatorship (1964-1994) theatre was not supported by the state, in part, because it was perceived as a threat to the regime and artistic voices were, some times violently, silenced. After 1994, the arts funding situation did not change and into the gap came NGOs, who used performers to make message-based theatre. We also assert that in the 2000s theatre practice became further complicated by the influx of international donors and their promotion of the European canon, at the expense of theatre that was truly made by, for and about Malawians in their own languages, and using their local performance forms. Ultimately, our argument is that politics and economics has affected theatre progression and professionalism in the country, for change to happen there must be an overhaul of current funding structures.

Theatre funding in Kamuzu Banda's Malawi

Postcolonial Malawian theatre[1] was initiated at the University of Malawi's Chancellor College campus by academics in the

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1 This is a practical term, but others have referred to it as popular theatre and recently as commercial drama.

Department of English, with a production of Wole Soyinka's *The Trials of Brother Jero* in 1967 *(*Magalasi 24).[2] In 1970, the Chancellor College Travelling Theatre (CCTT) was founded with the aim of taking theatre to the people (Chimwenje 11).[3] The group came to prominence from 1972 with the arrival of James Gibbs (British), who had organised such a group at the University of Ghana (Roscoe 270-273). In addition to university drama there was also the Schools Drama Festival, established during the 1960s by the Association of Teaching of English in Malawi. Its purpose was to support in the teaching of English in secondary schools through a co-ordinated annual drama festival (Kamlongera, "Problems" 128) Initially, the festival was organised as an oral and prose competition; however, by 1969 a drama festival was adopted, supported by funding from the British Council (Kamlongera, "Problems" 128).

By the 1980s, the CCTT had helped spread literary drama in nearly every district in Malawi, through tours to secondary school and town halls, and shaped the practice by conducting theatre workshops at the School Drama Festivals (Kamlongera, "Problems" 137-145). Joel Chimwenje explains that the group was successful because it was financially assisted by the English Department, which covered its operational costs (20).

In many places in Africa, during the early post-independence years, there were efforts to uplift local culture, which had been oppressed under colonialism, through the formation of national theatre councils and national dance troupes (Kerr, "Popular Theatre" 196-208). However, in Malawi local culture was co-opted to promote and reinforce dictatorial rule (Kerr,

2 University of Malawi theatre developed separately in the different constituent colleges; however, it was the activities at Chancellor that shaped the practice in Malawi.
3 The CCTT was formed in 1970 by Mupa Shumba (Malawian), who had been exposed to the concept in the early 1960s at Makerere University (Uganda) and expatriate John Linstrum.

"Unmasking" 118). In 1964, Malawi gained its independence from the British, but by the end of the decade, the political atmosphere became repressive. The new president, Kamuzu Banda, began imposing censorship and enacting sedition laws to deal with critics (Kerr and Mapanje 17). Literature and culture that promoted critical thinking were censored or banned (Magalasi 51).[4]

By contrast, the only local culture Banda financially supported was that which reinforced his rule. For example, the Malawi Congress Party Women's League — also known as the *Mbumba* — used folk songs to mobilise mass support for Banda and in return they were given gift incentives (Kerr, "Unmasking" 118). In 1981, the International Monetary Fund began to impose Structural Adjustment Programmes to cut African debt (Therein 456). Jane Plastow explains that the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programmes SAPs led to cuts in educational and cultural programmes in many African countries (111). Consequently, support for university theatre programmes and commercial theatre companies stopped. In that year, the Department of Fine and Performing Arts was established at Chancellor College, and following that decision the CCTT came under the new department. It is important to note that the CCTT received assistance from the department of English because it formed under the patronage of the practical drama course in the department. Some people we interviewed for this article, such as James Gibbs, confirmed that the group also relied on external support from groups like Schimmelpennick-Campbell Fund. From 1981 onwards, the group had to do without the financial support it had received from the department and this impacted on its ability to make frequent tours (Chimwenje 20). The group continued to tour, but

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4 For a detailed discussion on censorship see Where Silence Rules: The Suppression of Dissent in Malawi (Human Right Watch 1990).

this was sporadic and became dormant in the late 1990s.

It is generally accepted that the CCTT inspired the birth of commercial drama in Malawi. In 1981, there emerged vernacular drama groups like Kwathu Drama Group in the urban towns of Blantyre, Lilongwe and Zomba, which came after the university tour of a Chichewa adaptation of Timpunza Mvula's *The Lizard's Tail* (Kerr, "Unmasking" 123-125). In 1987, a commercial English language group, Wakhumbata Ensemble Theatre, was formed by Dunduzu Chisiza Jr, who had first been exposed to theatre through the Schools Drama Festival between 1979-1983. He later engaged with theatre in the US. These were steps forward for Malawian theatre; however, they did not lead to the formation of any kind of national arts council to support its growth.

In 1987, the national dance troupe, the Kwacha Cultural Troupe, was formed. Waliko Makhala, former troupe leader, told us that it was formed by a Presidential decree and operated under the Department of Culture in the Ministry of Education and Culture. He further explained that the group received state subvention, which paid for the performers. Between 1987-1994, they toured Australia, Germany, Scotland and Zimbabwe. When asked why the group was formed Makhala said: "it was formed with the aim of bringing about national unity through local dances and culture hence the group recruited dancers from different districts in Malawi." This confirms David Kerr's argument that during the early post-independence years, national dance troupes were formed by African leaders to push across narratives of national unity to foreign dignitaries and visitors, and to promote cultural homogeneity among the locals (*Popular theatre* 204). From the late 1960s the political atmosphere in Malawi became repressive. Mufunanji Magalasi asserts that

conditions in the 1970s and '80s encouraged political theatre at the university, which was critical of Banda — though this was done covertly for fear of reprisals (20-81).[5] The censorship of literature went further than content alone, Banda prescribed his own version of Chichewa (Banda's ethnic dialect) and Magalasi explains that this forced writers away from writing in their own language, instead they worked in English to sidestep reprisals for not using the politically approved Chichewa (Magalasi 163). During this period, several university writers like lecturers Felix Mthanli and Jack Mapanje, and students Edge Kanyongolo and Zangaphe Chizeze were detained without charge on the basis that they had spoken or written something deemed subversive to the Banda regime (Africa Watch 71-97). It appears here that Banda was not interested in promoting socially relevant literature, particularly university theatre, because he saw it as a threat to his authority, and only wanted to use art forms if they could advance his political agenda. The formation of a National Arts Council could have removed national cultural policy from Banda's direct control.

NGO funded theatre-based work from the 1990s to the present day

NGO's in Malawi filled the gaps left by economic or governmental failure. When the first cases of HIV were reported in the late 1980s the Malawian government responded poorly by not allocating adequate funds to combat the disease (Lwanda 161). Malawi became a multiparty state in 1994 and the establishment of democracy saw the removal of constraints placed upon NGOs (Lwanda 151-161). At that time, NGO-funded theatre work came to Malawi, and NGOs began using performers

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5 For a detailed discussion on university political theatre in the 1970s and 1980s see Mufunanji Magalasi (2012).

to make message-based theatre, promoting donor messages. In other African countries, NGO funded arts work or Theatre for Development (TfD) also expanded rapidly because state support for theatre stopped after the imposition of SAPs (Plastow 110).

One of the first examples of NGO TfD came in 1994 when the Chancellor TfD team led by Chris Kamlongera, a drama lecturer, collaborated with the Girls Alliance of Basic Literacy and Education (GABLE) to make message-based plays about the benefits of sending girls to school in southern Malawi (Kamlongera, "Theatre" 449-451).[6] Another example of this work came in the form of HIV plays in the early 1990s. After 1994, the situation was little changed and the fight against HIV became the responsibility of international and local NGOs, who turned to theatre to sensitise people to the dangers of infection and failure to seek testing or treatment (Kerr quoted in Magalasi xvi). Frank Mwase, former member of Wakhumbata, said that after 1994 many artists began to abandon commercial theatre for NGO-funded TFD work (Personal Communication, 2016).

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, NGO-funded development and health radio, television drama soap operas emerged. In 1997, the development NGO, Story Workshop Education Trust (SWET) was formed and, in that same year, created the still on-going radio drama, *Zimachitika* (It Happens).[7] Blessing Nkhata, Head of Programmes at SWET, stated that since it started the soap had employed over 300 actors.[8] In 2002, the Adventists Relief Agency (ADRA) Malawi funded TV drama, *Tikuferanji* (Why are we dying?), was created.[9] Since its inception, it attracted a range of stage and radio actors including

6 Chris Kamlongera, was the first Professor of Drama in Malawi and together with David Kerr pioneered the TfD movement in Malawi in 1981 at Mbalachanda in northern Malawi. Subsequent practice came in 1985-1987.

7 For more details see www.storyworkshopmw.org.

8 Head of Programmes, SWET, Personal Communication, 20 May, 2016.

9 Deputy Country Director, ADRA Malawi, Personal Communication, 2015.

Magret Chikwembeya and Smart Likhaya Mbewe from the popular radio drama *Kapalepale* (Removing the weeds); Jeremiah Mwaungulu, former Wakhumba actor, and Kwathu actors, Bon Kalindo and Jacobs Mwase. NGO-funded radio and TV dramas offer actors a higher pay. This is a significant consideration for professionals working in an industry that does not have access to continuous funding streams. In 2008, one of the authors of this article, worked as an actor on *Tikuferanji* where, at the time, artists were paid $90.00 for a 30 minute improvised episode. For context, by 2012 the Malawi national GNI per capita was $320 (UNICEF *Malawi Statistics*). So, these wages, by any Malawian standard, was a lot of money. In 2000, the Malawi Government set out minimum wage terms in section 54 and 55 of the Malawi employment act 2000 (GOM, *Employment Act 2000*). As the provision for setting wages is done in consultation with professional organisations of workers, that Malawi lacked a cultural policy and arts council was clearly a significant hindrance to the professions growth, there is no defined minimum wage for artists in Malawi.

NGO arts work has negatively affected Malawian commercial theatre since it first emerged. Artists have needed to take NGO money for economic survival, rather than developing best practice. Moreover, NGO work often has no direct impact on artistic development or theatrical creativity — though this is not to underestimate the importance of TfD. In 2015, one of the authors of this paper conducted research on the uses of TfD by two arts based local NGOs; namely, Pakachere Health and Development Communication and Story Workshop Educational Trust (SWET). Their TfD actor training manuals revealed that emphasis was on participants learning set guidelines for making message based TfD, rather than promoting imaginative or theat-

rical creativity. For example, Pakachere's 2013 manual, which is currently in use, predominantly focuses on participants gaining knowledge on TfD, understanding the characteristics of a successful performance and how to prepare a TfD play, but nothing on actor creativity — though indigenous songs and dances, in the case of SWET, were incorporated in the plays. This is not unique to SWET, but common in many NGO TfD work in Malawi. It is understandable that, in the absence of an arts council to support theatre, practitioners have to find alternative models of funding. However, NGO funding does nothing to raise the quality of TfD because funders know nothing about the discipline and never demand rigorous evaluation of provable impact. In over fifteen project reports that we accessed by Pakachere and SWET it shows that the quality of TfD practice is surely compromised because training of drama groups is often only two to five days, which we argue is not adequate for critical TfD practice. Consequently, the practice largely lacks innovation, imagination and impact, and this is affecting commercial theatre in the country since many actors working in NGO-funded TfD are also involved in mainstream theatre.

The situation is worsened by the fact that actors who train at Chancellor College — and this is only place that offers formal training — are reluctant to go into the theatre industry because of the lack of money, as a result, they are forced to undertake NGO theatre-based work. A group of drama graduates we interviewed said that they did not go into commercial theatre because there were no companies offering employment — and Malawi only has one professional company now, Nanzikambe Arts, indeed, one respondent, Charles Nkhalamba said: 'joining an NGO was merely for the job itself not necessarily because it was theatre based'. Thokozani Mapemba, another graduate,

offered a different perspective: "theatre at Chancellor lacks both technical expertise and equipment to support the skills that we were trained in. For example, Chancellor does not produce experts on stage sound and lighting or costume and prompts. In several instances, students had to do these things without any training, which means that quality was compromised." Another respondent said: "I did not go into commercial theatre because there aren't enough theatre companies and graduates are not motivated to start their own companies because they want to find non-theatre based jobs." This means that the quality of theatre practice remains stagnant and its scope extremely limited. Almost all of the artists working in the industry have only been exposed to theatre through the Schools Drama Festival or in acting workshops organised by Nanzikambe or the Department of Culture — and these have been only sporadic.[10]

The international donor dependency syndrome in the 2000s
Donor-aided European-centred theatre became a dominant theatrical form throughout the 2000s in Malawi. However, donor aid as a theatre funding model came with both ideological and artistic problems. To illustrate our point we take a look at one of the companies currently working in Malawi; Nanzikambe Arts.

The company was founded in 2003 by British director Kate Stafford, who at the time was resident in Malawi. Its inaugural production was *African Hamlet* (2003) co-funded by the British Council and St Andrew's International High School. Following this, international donor-aided theatre project financing became the accepted model for future productions. In 2005, the company changed status to a local NGO (Kapiri 963), however, the funding model little changed. The current Managing Direc-

10 In 2004, the Norwegian Embassy, through the Copyright Society of Malawi, implement the Cultural Scheme Project to support arts in Malawi. Under the programme various workshop have been conducted. As of 2014. funding has stopped

tor, Chris Nditani, told us that since its inception Nanzikambe has received support from the British, Norwegian and South African embassies and international donors that include UNES-CO, Concern Universal and Save the Children, among others. Stafford left in 2005 and management passed to Melissa Eveleigh and Thokozani Kapiri. However, Eveleigh took charge of all productions and then appointed South African, Willian le Cordeur to deputise her.

Through an analysis of Nanzikambe's repertoire between 2003-2009, one can see that a pattern emerges; European 'classical' texts funded by European donors formed the company's mainstream theatre projects. By contrast, Malawian-centred theatre largely formed the company's TfD work (developmental and educational projects), with funding coming from local and international NGOs. The Artistic Manager, Thokozani Kapiri, argues that the funders of commercial theatre "had a lot of influence on what should constitute the agenda of Nanzikambe Art's theatre projects" (963). He further explains: "the funding agency directly or indirectly influenced the choices of the issues […] even the texts to be developed." It is then not surprising that the Shakespeare adaptations *African Hamlet* (2003) and African *Macbeth* (2005) were funded by St Andrews High School, which is historically elitist and largely taught by British expatriates, and the British Council, respectively. The French Cultural Centre and Bata Shoes Company funded French classics *A Flea in Her Ear* (2005) by George Feydeau and *The Little Prince* (2005) by Antoine de Saint–Exupéry, while *Breaking the Pot* (2007) — an adaption of Ibsen's *A Doll's House —* and Aristophanes' *Frogs* (2009) were supported by the Norwegian Embassy.

According to Kapiri, the influence of donors was not

limited to Nanzikambe's repertoire, but extended to its aesthetic decisions. For example, the funding agency of *The Little Prince* instructed them not to incorporate local art forms "arguing, it will dilute the essence of the story as recognised in Europe" (992). Despite these demands, there were efforts to Malawianise the plays. For example, Nanzikambe employed the use of the narrator — common in Malawian folklore — and incorporated local songs and dances in some productions. The language used in the plays, however, was English, targeting English speakers. The plays toured locally (secondary schools, university campuses and entertainment halls), regionally (Zimbabwe and South Africa) and in Europe.

While it is clear that the funding agencies had a Eurocentric agenda, Nanzikambe also has to take responsibility for what happened. The company took the money in order to establish its brand and audience base; however, the funding model allowed Eurocentric texts to be produced at the expense of prioritising the development of Malawi dominated intercultural performance. Responding to the choice of plays, Smith Likongwe, a board member who was involved with Nanzikambe since its formation, in an interview said: "this was mainly due to the win-win situation that is always there in partnerships like these. For example, funding came from the British Council for the production of *Hamlet* because Shakespeare's plays are studied not only in Malawian schools, but also in the international schools, which the British Council saw as a good cause."[11] A former manager, who was also interviewed told us: "European classics were Nanzikambe's niche that is how the company had positioned itself." A board member, who opted for anonymity and who had joined in 2007, offered a different perspective: "we met once a year and had to approve activities [productions and projects] for

11 Personal Communication, 2016.

the entire year.[12] If an offer came after the board had met it was unlikely for us to come back to discuss it hence management made the call." We recognise that Nanzikambe's funding model made sense in the absence of an arts council; however, there is evidence of companies thriving without donor aid. For example, between 1987-1999 Wakhumbata successfully operated as a predominantly touring theatre without donor support.

Stafford and Nditani stated that Nanzikambe was originally set up as an intercultural company. In the beginning, there were attempts at a mode of working to produce intercultural work, through the cross-pollination of ideas — taking a European text, workshopping it with a Malawian cast, setting it in Malawi, performing it in Malawi and, finally, with some productions, touring in Europe. This set the pace for its intercultural practice, which was to be fully realised later. In 2011, company became fully Malawian-led under the leadership of Chris Nditani and Thokozani Kapiri. In that year, the establishment of a three-year exchange programme with the German company, Theatre Konstanz, aimed to foster intercultural theatre and collaboration (Kapiri 1028-1114). Under the programme, Nanzikambe artists and their German counterparts collaborated creating original works such as the Dario Fo-inspired *Story of A Tiger* (2011) and *The Aid Machinery* (2012). Writing in "Theatre in Malawi, directing in Europe" and reflecting on the partnership, Thokozani Kapiri writes:

The project's lesser emphasis towards championing some super objective of its funder allowed my directing work in Europe to focus more on the aesthetics I would use, rather than on how to present work that will secure us more funds. I instantly felt artistically attracted to the work, since it proposed in its conception not to serve as a means towards an alien change agenda, like

12 Personal Communication, 2016.

other funding providers or any previous cooperation had directly or indirectly perpetuated (1018)

The donor dependency syndrome that defined Nanzikambe's early funding success stopped in 2011. Why did this happen? Writing on the impact of austerity on donor aided arts programmes in Tanzania, Vicensia Shule argues that after the 9/11 attacks on the USA, funding for African arts NGOs began to decline because western donors began giving the money to African countries to combat terrorism (81). Coupled with the 2008 economic crisis it is then not surprising that donor funding for Nanzikambe has waned. Currently, the company is still ongoing and planning future productions; however, the recent output of plays and tours has decreased.

Nanzikambe has existed for thirteen years while other companies have been unable to survive as ongoing entities and the question must be raised as to why this is. Was the company able to access funds because of its use of Eurocentric works over companies that focused solely on Malawian theatre? Importantly, did its donors think about how the funding would impact theatre more widely in Malawi? We are not arguing that international artists coming in is the problem — David Kerr and James Gibbs were positive and Stafford built something new. In our opinion, donor theatre funding would have had a much wider impact if money had been available to put towards long-term structural investment, technical and management skills training and exchange programmes as well as supporting individual production projects.

Towards a sustainable theatre funding model
In recognising that the growth and development of arts in Malawi has been hampered by the lack of a national arts council

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the Malawian Government enacted the Natural Cultural Policy in 2015 (GOM, National Cultural Policy 1-18). A crucial part of the policy is the formation of the National Arts and Heritage Council (NAHEC) 'to develop and promote Malawi's cultural and creative industries' (GOM, National Cultural Policy 16). In April 2016, we accessed a draft of the NAHEC ACT, which once passed by parliament will enable the institution of the council. Under the council, creators and producers of literary, dramatic, musical audio-visual, published and sculptural works will be supported, after applying and having their proposals vetted by the Board, through provision of loans for financing projects, provision of grants-in aid; rendering of financial support, advice and information and making bursaries available to students for local and oversees studies in the arts and culture (GOM, NAHEC ACT 12-13).

It is encouraging that the Government of Malawi, and other stakeholders are beginning a dialogue that focuses on the possible structures that need to be implemented to support the development of the theatre industry in Malawi. However, we observed that the arts council is looking at art too broadly, without considering the differences that might be between theatre, music or dance and how these impact, for example, on their development and profitability. For theatre to successfully develop and grow, we argue NAHEC needs to implement novel strategies to address the current challenges. Theatre in Malawi offers great potential for developing new types of performance, new methods of creating and delivering theatre to both its rural and urban audiences. With the promise of financial support from government it will be interesting to see if and how this money impacts upon the current theatre aesthetic.

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Book Reviews

***The Methuen Drama guide to Contemporary South African Theatre,* edited by Martin Middeke, Peter Paul Schnierer and Greg Homann**
London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015, 384 pp. (softback)
By Amy Bonsall

The Methuen Drama guide to *Contemporary South African Theatre* brings together a multiplicity of voices that chart the complex history of theatre-making in this developing 'rainbow nation'.

The scope of this book is wide - it aims to "straddle the full range of plays workshopped[sic], written, developed and produced during the first twenty years of South Africa's democracy" (1). The style throughout is accessible and discusses a wide range of theatrical practices, histories, texts and productions. Post apartheid theatrical scholarly works are numerous: *Theatre and Change in South Africa* (1996), *Theatre And Society In South Africa* (1997) *The Drama of South Africa (1999), South African Theatre in the Melting Pot* (2003) *Experiments in Freedom* (2010)*, South African Performance and Archives of Memory* (2013) and important journals such as *The South African Theatre Journal.* The significance of this work is the full access it offers to the landscape of theatre development and production in South Africa in a single, substantial, volume.

The general introduction argues that from scrutinising over one hundred South African and chiefly English-language plays, "a detailed history emerges of the struggle against apartheid, including an account of the country's remarkable and unprecedented transition into democracy." (1) It offers an account

of South African political and artistic history, both national and international, including that of the culturally and politically hugely important Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). This overview gives a useful grounding to understanding the artists and companies whose work is explored within the main body of the book.

'Part I: Overview Essays' provides a general insight into key players and innovators of the early South African theatre scene. Structured over six chapters, each chapter analyses the nature and form of specific collaborations and the "tension" between "solo playwright and the workshop tradition", recognised as a particular feature of South African theatre practice (1). Each chapter has a separate author and the introductions and conclusions act as links, connecting all the sections together to form a cohesive whole.

'Part II: Playwrights' is substantial and contains chapters covering twelve of South Africa's most influential contemporary playwrights, notably the internationally acclaimed Athol Fugard and award-winning Reza De Wet. Also included are established innovators such as Lara Foot, Zakes Mda and Paul Slabolepszy whose works have offered wide ranging responses to the racial, economic and social divides that continue to afflict post apartheid South Africa. Theatre-makers of more recent years are analysed, such as Mike Van Graan (considered the most prolific writer in the country) and Yael Farber, whose mantra is "to create theatre to wake people up and not anesthetize [sic] them" (311). Of particular interest to many will be Kevin J. Wetmore Jr.'s chapter about Brett Bailey, the divisive director, writer and designer whose *Exhibit B* (2014) was the focus of fierce protests and claims of racism when it was due to open at London's Barbican. His chapter contextualises the theatre and

other artistic pieces Bailey has produced through exploration of the methodology and content of the works.

Chapters of particular note include Jane Taylor's 'Contemporary Collaborators 1: Kentridge/Handspring/Taylor' and Emma Durden's 'Popular Community Theatre'. In the first part of Taylor's chapter she defines theatre collaboration within a South African context. She then analyses the work of the Handspring Trust focusing on plays such as *Ubu and the Truth Commission* (1997) and *Zeno at 4 AM* (2001). Durden's chapter explores the history of South African Community Theatre from its roots in "township" theatre to its current form of "popular theatre *for* and *by* township-based performers". She differentiates this from European applied theatre that is led by theatre professionals for specific communities (94).

'The Theatre Makers in One-Person Format' by Veronica Baxter offers an informative overview of the solo theatre-maker and of gender divides within the practice: there are many more male 'solo' practitioners than female and Baxter reflects on the trend of male performers playing female characters (110). While acknowledging that "solo performance is an international theatrical form", Baxter makes the case for the "monopolygue" (a term coined by Paula T. Alekson) which describes a specifically physical and muscular South African style of performance (109).

Within many chapters excerpts of text are included, giving the reader exposure to each writer's voice. Complementary to the obvious scholarly value, biographical details about certain writers proves to be insightful. For example, in Chapter 14, Muff Andersson starkly describes director and writer Mphumelelo Paul Grootboom's early township life and theorises how this influenced Grootboom's most acclaimed plays, *Relativity*: *Township Stories* (2006) and *Foreplay* (2008). Analysing Groot-

boom's frequent use of graphic violence and complex multilingual text Andersson states: "not for nothing has he been called the township Tarantino" (241).

Greg Homann's penultimate chapter provides insights into the future voices of South African theatre as well as thoughts about funding, recent links with international venues and new courses available to those wanting to study and research theatre at tertiary level. This section provides names to watch in the future such as Juliet Jenkins and Omphile Molusi. Homann argues there remains a tendency for "the memory of apartheid" and politics to dominate playmaking but that as young theatre makers find their voices "…it just might become conceivable to think of a play that supersedes these issues of oppression." (337)

By providing windows into the South African theatre landscape, each chapter of this book offers the researcher a wealth of information. However, the focus is largely on English Language plays and for a country that has eleven official languages it is surprising to have little insight given into theatre-making undertaken in the other ten. Despite this omission, *The Methuen Drama guide to Contemporary South African Theatre* is much more substantive than a guide: it is a salutary lesson in the power that theatre has in giving voice to the individual.

Audience as Performer by Caroline Heim
London and New York: Routledge, 2016, 190 pp. (softback)
By Poppy Corbett

The arrival of *Gogglebox* on our screens in 2013 was a clear sign that perhaps, as audiences, we had become more interested in ourselves than what was on the box. But are we really that interesting? The performance of audiences is the interest of Caroline

Heim's new book (though focused on the stage, not television), which richly adds to the expanding field of audience studies within theatre.[1] This valuable new addition to scholarly works aims to introduce "the concept of the audience as performer" and explore "how the embodied actions of audience members constitute a performance." (1)

This publication marks a highly significant contribution to the field because so far research that considers the active performance of the audience has mainly focused on participatory theatre in which the agency of the audience is already presumed. As Heim notes, no "book, as yet, has considered the audience primarily as performer." (7) The scope of the book is restricted to audiences at mainstream professional theatres in Western English-speaking countries. Susan Bennett has previously recognised this is as an "almost entirely neglected […] significant section of the market" (Bennett qtd. in Heim 10).

Audience as Performer's seven chapters put the question to us: who is viewing whom in the theatre? Heim suggests a shift in perspective may be useful as this is becomingly increasingly harder to discern. Not only, at times, does there seem to be an inversion of roles, but Heim considers the more substantial shift "that in the playhouse there is another troupe of performers in the auditorium: the audience." (171) The introduction offers a useful overview of the structure of the book, whilst also introducing the argument that we are in "a new age for the audience as performer." (14)

The book is structured in two parts. Part One is purely historical and offers a striking overview of audience behaviour

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1 For other works in this field see: Bennett, Susan, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*.New York: Routledge, 1997; Blau, Herbert , *The Audience*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1990; Corner, Lynne, *Audience Engagement and the Role of Arts Talk in the Digital Era,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013; Freshwater, Helen, *Theatre & Audience*. Houndsmill: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

in mainstream theatres from the 1800s to the 2000s. A wide variety of examples and time periods are traversed in three short chapters and the key impression is that the darkening of auditoriums was instrumental in altering audience behaviour. From the 1880s when electric lighting was introduced, theatre etiquette transformed. Demonstrative and audacious audience activity gave way to constricted and restrained behaviour (64). In Part Two, Heim analyses four key performative roles that a contemporary audience plays: critic, community, consumer and co-creator. There are four short case studies of audience behaviour to support Heim's findings: Steppenwolf, Signature Theatre, Times Square and Shakespeare's Globe.

One of the strengths of this book is that Heim's clear passion for audiences is conveyed. She labels it a "celebration of audience performance" and this spirit is transferred (175). Perhaps the inclusive feel stems from Heim's twofold perspective: she has also worked successfully as an actor on US stages. This role must have surely offered the useful embodied experience of an understanding of performance from both sides of the stage. Indeed, the book appears to have emerged from Heim's own experiences as an audience member, as well as questionnaires and extensive interviews with audience members, actors and ushers. Readers can therefore be confident that the research is breaking new scholarly ground and it deftly addresses a number of contemporary developments in the experience of the audience, including tweeting throughout the show and the purchasing of production memorabilia.

The findings reveal how audience culture has significantly changed and articulates the continued growth in demonstrative performances from those seated in the stalls. In chapter 4, "Audience as Critic", Heim especially "explores two emer-

gent vehicles for audience critique: post-show discussions and digital reviews." (89) Chapter 5, "Audience as Community" describes the communal space of the theatre and suggests "audiences "perform" community through their ensemble performances and their socialising." (112) In chapter 6, "Audience as Consumer", Heim analyses the pleasures of purchasing in relation to the theatre. Chapter 7, "Audience as Co-creator" analyses the reciprocal nature of performance.

The most memorable moments come from the inclusion of titbits of knowledge and anecdotal evidence of 'bad' audience behaviour throughout the ages: the "throwing of food missiles" in the 1800s (59) and the outrageous unverified account that in 2011 a couple recurrently booked West End theatre boxes for the purposes of making love (156). Heim also offers illuminating analysis of the language used by her interviewees: for instance, the term "experience" was used "57 times to describe what it means for them to be going to the theatre", whilst "event" was used only thirteen (136).

Whilst the content of the book is fascinating and the prose with which it is conveyed fluid, perhaps adequate attention has not been given to the problem of the audience and, therein, the problem of studying them. Whilst Heim acknowledges that some things are difficult to quantify (how might one produce a rigorous scholarly analysis of an audience member's awkwardly-timed fidget, for example?), it would be useful to have more insight into the challenges of the methodologies used in this research. A noteworthy omission is that hardly any directors, producers and creatives other than actors are interviewed. Whilst there is only so much scope a book like this can offer, Heim's study paves the way for a consideration of how the performance of the audience might affect creative choices made by directors

and producers.

  Audience as Performer will be useful to both students and academics alike: it provides a thorough historical contextualisation of audiences throughout time, draws on interesting theoretical concepts and uses practical examples to demonstrate that mainstream audiences can "become emancipated audience communities because they are given permission to perform in relaxed environments that privilege audience creativity." (172) Studying the audience is still a somewhat neglected field and one strangely distrusted by a large number of academics who are more concerned with what happens on the boards, than off them. The mistrust in the value of this research is strange because if theatre is not for audiences, then who is it for? This book provides a comprehensive and welcome refocusing of this debate.

Collaboration in Performance Practice: Premises, Workings and Failures, edited by Noyale Colin and Stefanie Sachsen-maeir
Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, 311 pp. (hardback)
By Sarah Hoover

Performers and those whom Erin Manning terms "researchers-creators" (133) experience increasing pressure to collaborate in both academia and practice. Most publications on this topic are either practical guides akin to Robert Cohen's *Working Together in Theatre* or examinations of specific practices such as Beth Weinstein's study of Merce Cunningham and John Cage. *Collaboration in Performance Practice: Premises, Workings and Failures* presents practical examinations of the logistics of collaboration while also addressing a gap in the critical analysis of the various aesthetics, ethics and theoretical underpinnings of

collaborative processes.

Editors Noyale Colin and Stefanie Sachsenmaier explore issues raised at their two Middlesex University symposia, drawing critical attention to the theoretical background of collaborative practice. Their introduction refers to Kathryn Syssoyeva's *A History of Collective Creation* (2013) for a historical background to the shortcomings of contemporary discourse, which Syssoyeva notes "is still permeated by ideologically-informed reading which prioritize New Left ideas of consensual decision-making and leaderlessness over those that entertain a more richly textured set of practices in radical collective work." (Syssoyeva qtd. in Colin and Sachsenmaier, 2)

The relational formation and reformation of identity becomes a through-line of the volume. Martina Ruhsam presents a Heideggarian analysis of collaboration, opposing collaboration to collectivity in her argument for a retained individual identity. Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca takes a Deleuzian look at Goat Island's rehearsal process. Susan Melrose provides a broad theoretical investigation of compromises required of individual expert identity in collaboration. Other authors in the collection address the implications of these philosophical concepts, writing on historical collaborations, collaborative configurations and on the cultural, social, ethical and political implications of collaboration for individual artists involved.

Part I, "Premises - Modelling Collaborative Performance-Making" views collaborative identities through an ethical and political lens. Andrea Kolb argues that Wagner's concept *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total art) continues to shape current collaborative practices either through adoption or reaction, "reflecting different models of democracy" (71). Addressing labour (particularly affective labour) in collaboration Noyale Colin argues

that the process of complex collaborative labour involves a deskilling and reskilling of artists which both problematizes individual authorship and demands the artists involved transform "at the level of individual subjectivity." (125) Simon Murray, on the other hand, traces neoliberal influences in the economics of collaboration and challenges the politics behind calls to collaborate. In his chapter "Contemporary Collaborations and Cautionary Tales" he engages with the political background of collaboration in any business by asking toward what end collaboration is "a means to manage time more productively, to enable difficult decisions [...] to be made more swiftly and with minimal conflict, a means to manage (and justify) labour mobility more smoothly and a strategy to secure employee loyalty to the corporate brand" (32).

Both Murray and Manning provide specific questions and suggestions for those researching and practicing collaborations. For example, Murray's checklist asks practitioners to consider: "For whose benefit is this collaboration being proposed? How is power practised within collaboration? What are the long-term consequences of this collaboration?" (33). Similarly, the headings of Manning's manifesto suggest considerations for collaborative practice: "Create New Forms of Knowledge (Embrace the Non-Linguistic)" and "Practice Thinking (Don't be Afraid of Philosophy)" (133).

Issues of authorial identity frame specific examples of collaboration in Part II, "Workings-Ways of Practising Collaboration". In "The Author of the Gift" Tim Jeeves addresses authorship directly through his practice, examining ways to question the origin of a piece of art and negotiating the necessities of identifying those origins. Kris Salata examines Jerzy Grotowski's work not as "some universal social models of collaboration,

but rather in what uniquely can happen between two people"
(183). Carol Brown and Moana Nepia reflect on their individual
cultural identities and resist the resolution of a collaboration to-
ward product. Instead, they search for dialogical conversation in
alignment with the Māori concept of *Te Kore*, "...void, absence
and nothingness also understood as a space or time of potential-
ity" (197).

This dialogical conversation is carried into Susan Mel-
rose's opening to Part III, 'Failures – Compromising and Nego-
tiating the Collaborative Self'. In her essay "Positive Negatives:
Or the Subtle Arts of Compromise" Melrose engages with pro-
ductive compromise and the risks to individual identity which are
necessary to collaborative performance-making: "This fracturing
of the self, that I am arguing is constitutive of (expert) identity
in the collaborative practitioner, is not immediately absorbed but
opens identity up..." (256). In resisting and compromising col-
lective working, individual identity is continually reformed as a
necessary part of the collaborative process. An example of this is
Sachsenmaier's examination of the research-practice Artscross,
a dance collaboration across an east-west cultural divide ("Pro-
ductive Misapprehensions: ArtsCross as a Cross-Cultural Col-
laborative Zone of Contestation of Contemporary Dance Prac-
tice"). Here she contends with the locality of practitioners and
the cultural configurations which separate or join their identities,
altering them and at the same time hardening them. What does
this relational formulation of identity unbalance in the process,
and how is that off-balancedness, often read as failure, produc-
tive? Emilyn Claid presents a practical example ("Messy Bits")
as artistic director of a dance collaboration across social and
racial divides titled *Grace and Glitter*. Questions of success or
failure in performance are interrogated, as well as by what crite-

ria performances are judged. Is the process of collaboration the smoothing of differences and how then can the product reflect the ongoing changes to identity in the process?

In addition to the processual reviews which ground the book, several essays are written in non-traditional styles providing unique avenues into identity formulation. Manning's "Ten Propositions for Research-Creation", a manifesto of practices and concepts, bullet-points complex ideas into action items. Forster & Heighes' reflections on printers' symbols, part process journal and part extreme tangent, are an open but intense means of exploring their unique collaborative process. The conversational record in de Senna's essay makes visible the negotiation of 'normal' among the societal expectations of abled/disabled performance. These alternative writing methods encourage readers to alter their viewpoints and identify where they resonate with the authors' experiences or perhaps push against them. The writing techniques themselves emphasize the relational characteristics of identity politics.

While several of the performances examined in the book, such as Jeeves' *Bodies in Space*, identify audiences as some part of the collaborative process (as objects to which affective experiences attach), few of the chapters take note of performances in which the spectator is considered a collaborator. This is unsurprising as many academic reviews of performance practice engage primarily with the process of rehearsal, separating those performed-with from those performed-for. In their introduction Colin and Sachsenmaier also lean toward discussion of expert practitioners and their experiences, which creates useful boundaries to the experimental sandbox. However, many of the same issues of production and consumption, relational identity and individual or collective success/failure dichotomies are present

in audience experience, as Brian Massumi's writings on inter-active performance demonstrate. This is particularly relevant as immersive and participatory performances become mainstream.

This collection is a refocusing of research into collaboration towards processual issues of identity, relationship, labour and the implications of those issues to researchers and performers. The mix of theoretical and practical concepts, historical contextualization and suggestions for future research and practice provides a useful foundation in collaborative theory for researchers and creators.

The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy edited by Magda Romanska
London and New York: Routledge, 2015, 533 pp. (softback)
By Emer McHugh

"Dramaturgy is for me learning how to handle complexity. It is feeding the ongoing conversation on the work; it is taking care of the reflexive potential as well as of the poetic force of the creation. Dramaturgy is building bridges; it is being responsible for the whole. Dramaturgy is above all a constant movement. Inside and outside." (165) These are the closing remarks from Marianne Van Kerkhoven's contribution to the extensive and expansive *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*, which I would wager captures the essence of this volume's ethos. If this edited collection has a thesis or argument, it is that the practice of dramaturgy does not carry a singular definition. Lawrence Switzky calls it "a job perennially in search of a description" (173), whereas Jules Odendahl-Jones claims that "almost no one has the faintest idea what dramaturgs do or what dramaturgy is." (381) It seems that what dramaturgy 'is' or what dramaturgs 'do'

is constantly fluctuating.

Magda Romanska's collection honours the diverse and varied nature of dramaturgical practice: the volume is carefully curated into eight sections, stretching over five hundred pages. Given its length, scope and focus, it is impossible to fully evaluate this collection in a few short paragraphs, but I shall offer a few impressions. The range of this book is, as stated, quite extensive: its depth is impressive. Its sections take into account world dramaturgy; dramaturgy and globalization; the dramaturg as mediator and context manager (contexts being transculturalism, translation, adaptation, and contextualisation); dramaturgy in other art forms, such as film, dance, musical theatre, and gaming; the dramaturg in public relations, among others.

As well as this, not only are these essays multifarious in scope, but they are also manifold in their written form. Its first section focuses on world dramaturgy and it was particularly satisfying to see the focus was not solely on Europe and North America, but also dramaturgical practices in Syria, Australia, India, Brazil and Latin America. And if we move into specificities, Fadi Fayad Skeiker's contribution on Syrian dramaturgy is part analysis and part dialogue (it concludes with an interview with dramaturg Mayson Ali). Elinor Fuchs' essay, reprinted from *Theatre*, is a "walk through dramatic structure" and the questions one should ask of a play, informing the reader that this is a "teaching tool" that she uses with her students (403). Anne Cattaneo's contribution is largely given over to her "six short maxims – a summation of what I know", also intended for dramaturgy students (242). One essay is a pair of shorter reflections by Anne Bogart and Jackson Gay on, suitably enough, the process of collaboration. Many of the contributors write about their own practice as dramaturgs, or choose to reflect on other

other companies and institutions' work. It is also worth noting that some, like Fuchs' contribution, are reprinted from their earlier journal forms: here, new perspectives operate in tandem with their predecessors.

What is also encouraging, too, is the inclusion of essays seeking to interrogate, as Romanska states in her introduction, "the privileges and responsibilities of the literary office" (8) – 'responsibilities' here being the instructive word. As Julie Felise Dubiner asks in her essay, "Who are we doing this for?" (251): this question reverberates throughout a number of contributions to the collection. Here, Marianne Combs' evaluation of the Guthrie Theatre's 2013-2014 season, which was notable for "the absence of women and minorities among the playwrights and directors" (256) and then-artistic director Joe Dowling's defensive response to the subsequent outcry makes for quite a pertinent read in the context of the #WakingTheFeminists movement in Irish theatre, sparked by similar circumstances. Furthermore, contributions by Faedra Chatard Carpenter, Debra Caplan, and Walter Byonsok Chon highlight issues surrounding race and interculturalism in dramaturgy: I was particularly struck by Chon's essay on his experiences working on Danai Gurira's *Eclipsed* (a play set in the Liberian civil war) and his contention of the potentiality of "the dramaturg's contribution to reach beyond the rehearsal room and continue after the closing of the production" as "cultural liaison" (140). This might sound quite utopian to the reader, but it does indicate the multiple roles that the dramaturg and literary offices see themselves enacting. It is also encouraging to witness an intersectional approach being taken towards appraising dramaturgy.

Thus, the collection is at times instructive and often self-reflective. It functions as an introduction to dramaturgy in

theory and practice, as well as facilitating a conversation about the profession and even acting as a survey of recent practice. To me, Romanska's collection is a statement as to where contemporary dramaturgical practice is at present, whilst also envisioning its future(s). Certainly, the book is always in dialogue with its forerunners – here, Gotthold Lessing casts a large shadow over the collection, as do more contemporaneous examples such as Hans-Thies Lehmann and Fuchs[1] – yet I would contend that it is always, always looking forward towards the futures of the practice as well. To summarise, Romanska's collection is a useful tool and it is also a collection that effectively demonstrates and celebrates the complexity of theatrical dramaturgy. With its compiling of multiple voices, techniques, perspectives, and techniques into one compendium – once again, facilitating a conversation seems appropriate in this context – it is a singular, vital, and necessary contribution to the field.

Bakhtin and Theatre: Dialogues with Stanislavsky, Meyerhold and Grotowski by Dick McCaw
Abingdon: Routledge, 2016, 247 pp. (paperback)
By James Rowson

Mikhail Bakhtin lived from 1895 to 1975, a fecund time in the evolution of theatre practice. Eastern Europe (and in particular Bakhtin's homeland of Russia) spearheaded innovations in methods of staging, set design, actor training and the role of

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1 For example, please see Lehmann's *Postdramatic Theatre* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006) and Fuchs' "E.F.'s Visit to a Small Planet: Questions to Ask a Play", *Theatre* 34.2 (2004), 5-9, which – as mentioned elsewhere in this review – is reprinted in this collection. With regards to Lessing, a peer-to-peer new translation of *Hamburg Dramaturgy* is forthcoming from Routledge, and is at present available online. See http://mcpress.media-commons.org/hamburg/ for details, as well as Wendy Arons, "The 'Open-Sourced' *Hamburg Dramaturgy:* A Twenty-first-Century Invitation to Interact with an Eighteenth Century Work in Progress", *Theatre Topics* 24.2 (June 2014): 145-148.

theatre director in the wake of the abolition of the imperial mo-
nopoly on theatre in 1882. *Bakhtin and Theatre: Dialogues with
Stanislavsky, Meyerhold and Grotowski* by Dick McCaw is the
first full-length study to contextualise Bakhtin's writings in the
framework of three salient directors who were active during his
lifespan: Konstantin Stanislavsky, Vsevolod Meyerhold and Jer-
zy Grotowski. In a broad sense, the study acts as a nexus between
philosophy and theatre studies, offering an enlivened revaluation
of the practice and writings of these three revolutionaries while
contemporaneously elucidating Bakhtin's key theories.

      The publication of this monograph is timely, as the body
of academic work on these directors continues to grow.[1] Depart-
ing from previous studies, however, *Bakhtin and Theatre* reflects
on how the practitioners interrogated by McCaw "illuminate"
Bakhtin's philosophical inquiries, foregrounding questions of
action, character and actor training (8). *Bakhtin and Theatre*
does not simply document the preeminent productions of Stan-
islavsky, Meyerhold and Grotowski, but instead facilitates a "di-
alogue" between the writings of Bakhtin and the theatre prac-
tice and theories of his dramatic contemporaries (1). In doing
so, McCaw offers a long-awaited rethinking of Bakhtin's phi-
losophy, appropriating his "phenomenological approach" to the
construction of character as a cynosure to theatre studies and
the actor's creative process (216). Emanating from *Bakhtin and
Theatre's* primary focus is a re-analysis of the personal and pro-
fessional relationship between these giants of twentieth-century
theatre through the theoretical framework of the Bakhtian con-
cept of the dialogic. McCaw describes how previous studies of

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1 For example, Shevtsova, Maria 'Stanislavsky to Grotowski: Actor to Performer/Doer'
in *NTQ* 30.4, 2014, pp 333-340; Skinner, Amy. *Meyerhold and the Cubists: Perspectives
on Painting and Performance*. Bristol: Intellect, 2015; Laster, Dominika. *Grotowski's
Bridge Made of Memory: Embodied Memory, Witnessing and Transmission in the Gro-
towski Work*. Kolkata: Seagull Books, 2015.

Stanislavsky and Meyerhold amalgamate their "two voices into one" (150). *Bakhtin and Theatre* resists this approach, instead arguing that their work should be read as two separate voices in dialogue with each other.

Over six chapters McCaw situates the work of Bakhtin in the theatrical and historical context of Russia and eastern Europe in the twentieth century, beginning in the moribund Russian Empire and ending with Grotowski in communist Poland in the 1970s. Part One ("Bakhtin and Theatre") introduces the reader to Bakhtin's relationship with the theatre, through both biographical observations and close readings of his literary output. This insightful section traces Bakhtin's interest in theatre from his childhood, observing the evolution of his engagement with the dramatic arts as his theories evolved, revealing that theatre was a constant reference throughout his work. This opening section acknowledges that although drama was never a primary consideration in Bakhtin's work his ideas on dialogue and the novel can be utilised to unlock theatrical problems and questions relevant to contemporary theatre practice.

Part Two ("Bakhtin and Stanislavsky") consists of three chapters that identify and explore connections between Bakhtin's theories and the written work of Stanislavsky. In these chapters McCaw focuses on Bakhtin's early works *Author and the Hero* and *Philosophy of the Act* to create a "dialogue" with Stanislavsky's writings on theatre (1). These three chapters are connected through the importance of the notion of character in both men's respective thinking. McCaw convincingly demonstrates that Bakhtin's early writings can be read as vital sources for theatre-makers' "understanding of characterisation" (144), particularly when read in dialogue with Stanislavsky's *My Life in Art* and *An Actor's Work*. By aligning Bakhtin's early works

with Stanislavsky, this section of *Bakhtin and Theatre* is interesting in further elucidating Bakhtin's theory within the context of the political and artistic climate in Russia in the early twentieth century. As a result, McCaw fills an important gap in academic literature, expounding Bakhtin's complex early theories into a more lucid context for practitioners and students of theatre.

As the section on Bakhtin and Stanislavsky underscores, McCaw does not simply focus on Bakhtin's most famous work *Rabelais and his World* (1965). Part Three ("Meyerhold and Grotowski"), however, returns to Bakhtin's later works written in the 1920s and beyond. Here, *Bakhtin and Theatre* draws parallels between Meyerhold's reinvention of the traditions of popular theatre in Russia in the 1920s and 30s, with Bakhtin's theories on carnival and the carnivalesque. McCaw acknowledges the divergences between Bakhtin and Meyerhold's use of the carnival and popular theatre, while highlighting their shared interest in Venetian playwright Carlo Gozzi. The focus here is on Bakhtin's assertion that "footlights would destroy a carnival, as the absence of footlights would destroy a theatrical performance" (7). McCaw argues that Meyerhold's innovative productions demonstrate that theatre can remove the boundaries between actor and audience, analogous to Bakhtin's carnival.

Bakhtin and Theatre concludes with a chapter on Grotowski and Bakhtin that similarly offers new perspectives. The focus is specifically on Grotowski's work that occurred before Bakhtin's death in 1975. As with the sections on Stanislavsky and Meyerhold this chapter constructs a dialogue between Bakhtin and the practice and writings of Grotowski. Contiguous to this is McCaw's narrative of how the theatrical baton was handed from Stanislavsky to Meyerhold and subsequently to Grotowski in the 1950s.

Bakhtin and Theatre is an insightful work in the field of theatre studies and provides new insight into both Bakhtin's philosophy and three vanguards of twentieth century theatre. The original framework of the monograph encourages a deep engagement with the subject matter and opens up a significant vinculum between Bakhtin and the contemporary theatre practices of his time in eastern Europe. While McCaw suggests that his readership will primarily be comprised of theatre scholars and students rather than philosophers (66), this eloquent monograph will speak to both those interested in theatre studies in general and also the writings of Bakhtin. This is a vital dialogue that will illuminate Bakhtin for students of theatre, and also demonstrates how Bakhtin's works are fertile ground for further understanding the development of theatre practice and performance in the twentieth century and beyond.