

Cecilie Haagensen

Lived Experience and Devised Theatre Practice

A Study of Australian and Norwegian Theatre Students'
Devised Theatrical Practice

Thesis for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor

Trondheim, June 2014

Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Faculty of Humanities
Department of Art and Media Studies

Queensland University of Technology



NTNU – Trondheim
Norwegian University of
Science and Technology



**Queensland University
of Technology**
Brisbane Australia

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Lived Experience and Devised Theatre Practice

A Study of Australian and Norwegian Theatre Students'
Devised Theatrical Practice



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Truth in drama is forever elusive. You never quite find it but the search for it is compulsive. The search is clearly what drives the endeavor. The search is your task. More often than not you stumble upon the truth in the dark, colliding with it or just glimpsing an image or a shape which seems to correspond to the truth, often without realizing that you have done so. But the real truth is that there never is any such thing as one truth to be found in dramatic art. There are many. These truths challenge each other, recoil from each other, reflect each other, ignore each other, tease each other, are blind to each other. Sometimes you feel you have the truth of a moment in your hand, then it slips through your fingers and is lost.

Harold Pinter. Nobel Lecture December 7, 2005

ABSTRACT

This study explores the influences that young people's lived experience has on the creative dynamics in devised performance practice. The study consists of three case studies carried out in the context of two theatre education colleges, the Norwegian Theatre Academy in Norway and the Victorian College of the Arts in Australia, and analyzes three performances, one collective devised work and two solo devised works. The creative process in these performances is analyzed using Vygotsky's theory of the creative circle as framework and the relationship between the subjective experience and the aesthetic expression (form) is analyzed through notions of narrative, space and time, and body-characters.

The study finds that devising is a "life-based" theatrical practice, in that the creative devising process allows human experience to be a primary resource; new experience is developed in the creative process, where feelings, cognition, intuition and intention are activated and expressed through the embodiment and materialization of creative material. Some devising processes, however, do not start with primary experiences; they start with secondary experiences and borrowed/appropriated material. Such processes are described as "self-made" devising, and highlight the inventive aspect of devising. The distinction between "life-based" and "self-made" devising has epistemological implications for all creative processes that start with either primary or borrowed material, and it is crucial for the mediation of lived experience. The study finds intentions to be an essential aspect in the creative dynamics. Devising has both experiential and aesthetical benefits for young people; subjective experience is thought about, developed and created into new theatrical expressions.

KEYWORDS

The following is a list of keywords that appear within this document or are associated with the thesis topic. These keywords have been listed for cataloguing purposes:

Aesthetic form, creativity, creative process, creative dynamics, devising, embodiment, (lived) experience, materialization, meaning-making, open/closed work, theatre education, Vygotsky.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

The work contained in this document has not been previously submitted to meet the requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the document contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

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1 WARM UP - INTRODUCTION

1.1 RATIONALE FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY

This research began with an interest in young people's lifeworlds and the role creative practice plays in this particular phase of life. In a world that changes rapidly and demands humans to actively construct their own identities, devised performance-making can be an important arena for investigation and growth, especially for young people (Chaib 1996; Aaltonen 2006). In my Masters thesis I studied how a group of sixteen-year old performance-makers used the creative practice to cultivate and re-create experiences from their everyday lives. The study identified popular culture as an influence on their aesthetic work, and was called "Fuck Art - Let's Play; Towards a popular cultural aesthetic in young people's theatre" (Haagensen 2001). Creative practice was used as a free space where young people could try out different roles and play with aesthetic forms and new identities. The intention to play and re-create experiences from popular culture was more important to these young people than trying to fit into well-known theatrical formats and conventions (Haagensen 2001).

As a deviser, I had experienced that making devised work sometimes had a tremendous impact on my life, whereas other performance-making processes were more ordinary and had less effect on my life. I wondered why the processes turned out to be so different. The Masters study, as well as my own experience as a performance-maker at that time, made me want to learn more regarding the relationship between performance-making and creative and personal experience. The study found that young people were able to

articulate their ideas clearly, but sometimes were not able to fulfill their intentions because they lacked the necessary theatrical skills. This PhD study, therefore, investigates young theatre students who have undertaken a theatrical education and thereby have been given tools and skills to help them fulfill their ideas.

This study investigates devised performance-making processes situated in two different colleges: the Norwegian Theatre Academy (NTA) in Fredrikstad, Norway, and the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) in Melbourne, Australia. Both offer courses in devised performance-making. The study follows one collaborative production at NTA in 2006 and two solo devised productions at VCA in 2007. The focus of the study is not the colleges and their educational programs, but three devised productions and the students' creative processes and performances. The devising institutions were chosen because they have a focus on both theatrical skills and identity development, teaching students to devise work based on their own experiences instead of a script.

1.2 THESIS OVERVIEW

The chapters in the thesis are named after the different steps in a devising process, thus a devised terminology found in the praxis has been applied in order to honor the practice field of the study.

The focus of the study lies in the overlapping section between creative process, aesthetic form and the deviser's experience, and a core point is to discover how these areas are linked to and relate to one another. The main research question that guides this study is:

What influence does young people's lived experience have on the creative dynamics in devised performance practice?

Chapter 1 introduces the topic of the thesis and the relevance of the study in the context of Western devising and research on devising. The central terms of 'devising', 'lived experience' and 'creative experience' are briefly introduced and outlined, and give a suggested research model for devising. The study takes its lead from the tradition of Cultural Studies, with its focus on experience, but the study is placed within the context of Performance Studies, with a cultural-aesthetic perspective.

Chapter 2 is the methodology chapter, and places the study within the tradition of qualitative research, phenomenology and case studies. It describes the study's hermeneutical research process, which includes literature studies and case studies. It demonstrates how the data has been collected in Norway and Australia, and shows how the data has been treated. The role of the researcher and the notion of objectivity will be discussed, as well as ethical considerations.

Chapter 3 provides a literature review of devising. It provides the genesis of devising in Western countries, with examples from the Norwegian context. It covers the context section in the devising model that is subsequently presented. The chapter shows how devising is a result of a particular time in history, and focuses on the relationship between culture, experience and devised theatrical practice.

Chapters 4 and 5 provide the theory on aesthetic form and creative process related to lived experience. In order to give the research study a sufficient structure, aesthetic form and creative process have been separated into two different, yet interrelated, theory chapters. It needs to be emphasized that aesthetic form is considered to be an intrinsic part of the creative process. The

division is, in this respect, artificial. Still, the perspectives change in the two chapters, with a clearer focus on aesthetic form in Chapter 4, and a more distinct focus on the artist's creative experience in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4 considers aesthetic form and its relation to experience. Its focus is on the devising model covering the overlapping field of form-experience. Umberto Eco (1989) has provided the concept of openness of form, and this theory is developed in order to explain how the creation of art and perception of aesthetic form changes during modernity, in the avant-garde art movement. The relationship between the artist, the experience and the artwork is discussed through the notion of "narratives", "space and time" and "body-character". These three categories will be used to analyze the inter-relationship between the lived experience and aesthetic form in the creative dynamics in devised theatre practice.

Chapter 5 provides a theoretical outline of distinguished features in a creative process and emphasizes how it is related to lived experience and meaning-making processes. In the devising model, it covers the intersection between creative process and experience. Russian psychologist Vygotsky is the main theoretical source in this chapter, and his cultural-historical theory on imagination and creativity is emphasized.

The analysis is organized into three chapters, which cover three steps in the creative process: starting point material (Chapter 6), exploration and mediation of the material (Chapter 7) and performing material (Chapter 8). There are many ways to outline the varied phases in a creative process (see Appendix 9), but for the purpose of this study three different (yet overlapping) phases are privileged, based on Vygotsky's creative circle. The first phase is defined by the very start of the process, the first days, when the devisers get their creative ideas. The second phase is the middle phase, when the creative material is mediated and explored. The third phase is when the

devisers perform their work, meet the audience and reflect on the process. The three categories derived from the theory chapter on aesthetic form (Chapter 4) – narrative, space and time, and body-characters – are used as analytical lenses in all three analysis chapters.

Chapter 6 thus analyzes the starting points in the three cases by identifying primary experiences that are central to the beginning of the process, and it identifies the intentions that appear in this stage of the process. Vygotsky's first steps in the creative circle (past experience and separation of material) frames the analysis, and his theory on four different connections between imagination and reality is used as a reference for the starting point analysis.

Chapter 7 analyzes how the creative material is created and mediated in the middle phase of the devising process. In this part of the analysis, the middle part of Vygotsky's creative circle (change; associations; combination of elements) is merged into a focus on change and how the material is connected or disconnected.

Chapter 8 focuses on the performing experience and analyzes the significance of the performing experience as part of the creative process. This is the last part of Vygotsky's circle (external pictures). It analyzes what the devisers communicate and how the communication with the audience influences the devisers' experience.

Chapter 9 outlines the findings of the study. In this chapter we return to the middle section of the devising model, where experience, creative process, aesthetic form and context are synthesized and reflected upon. Themes emerging from the cases and the various stages of the process are discussed in an effort to formulate answers to the research questions. There are also suggestions for future implications of the study, and a conclusion is provided.

1.3 DEVISING IN THE NORWEGIAN CONTEXT

The study investigates performance-making processes, which have no term of its own in Norway. It is the kind of practice that Norwegian performance-makers call 'self-made theatre', or 'from idea to performance'. In English it can be situated within the term 'devising'. Although there is no Norwegian term for devising, it does not mean that this kind of practice does not exist. On the contrary, there are many examples of the practice within theatre education, school theatre, amateur groups, youth theatre and independent companies (professional companies that exist outside theatrical institutions).

Since we do not have a word for 'devising' in Norwegian, it is appropriate to give a brief outline of the English use of the term and see how it is related to the notions of theatre and performance.

Devising can be explained as a way of creating performances based on the participants' ideas, desires and preferences. In a devising process, the performers draw extensively on their own experiences and lifeworlds¹, since there are no pre-written manuscripts before the project starts. In this way, every devised performance is a sharing and a showing of the perspectives and experiences of the persons involved; their aesthetic preferences, their content creations and their collaborative process.

In Norway, we use the term 'performance' as an oppositional term to 'scripted theatre'. Performance art and devised performance are, in that manner, considered as a theatrical form rather than as a process. This thesis will consider devising as a method and process rather than as an aesthetic form. The outcome of a devising process can have a quite traditional form, but the method might be very different from a traditional process. The study does

¹ An explanation of the term lifeworld is provided in section 1.5.

not set out to create a binary position between devised performance and scripted theatre production. As Emma Govan, Helen Nicholson and Katie Normington state:

... we have recognized that theatre and performance are often interwoven, and that contemporary devisers have interrogated both modes of culture practice, not as fixed and stable categories, but as sites of experimentation that are continually in play (Govan et al 2007: 9).

In some cases, these two traditions will be seen in relation to each other in order to point out distinctive features regarding devising. As we shall see later, devising practices arose at a certain time in history as a reaction to, and revolt against, bourgeois Western society and scripted theatre traditions (Heddon and Milling 2006: 10-19). Hence, the term 'performance' rather than 'theatre' will be used, in general, in relation to devising practices.

Hans-Thies Lehmann (2006) offers the term 'postdramatic theatre', which implies many of the same features as devised performances. But Lehmann's term emphasizes the performance - the product - rather than the performance-making process and will therefore not be applied as the main term in this study. In the Nordic languages we understand performance (meaning: performance art) to be in opposition to theatre art. To avoid confusion, the term 'devised performance' rather than 'devised theatre' will be applied. As Sandra Gattenhof states:

Performance, rather than theatre, is a more welcoming and productive concept for a truly intercultural field of study than concepts that are more tightly bound up with culturally specific divisions of the arts by medium and genre (Gattenhof 2004: 72).

Although devising is a widespread practice, there is a gap in scholarly literature where the concept is in explicit focus. Most of the literature on devised performance is in the form of handbooks, or descriptions of different

devising groups' work and methods (Coult and Kershaw 1990; O'Toole 1992; Oddey 1994; Etchells 1999; Williams 1999; Lamden 2000; Nicholson 2000; Callery 2001; Kerrigan 2001; Bicât and Baldwin 2002; Paulus and Nijstad 2003; McKean 2007; Baktruppen, Arntzen et al. 2009; Graham and Hoggett 2009; Harvie and Lavender 2010).

Allison Oddey (1994) had for a decade the only scholarly book on devising. In 2006, Deirdre Heddon and Jane Milling contributed with a critical history of devising (Heddon and Milling 2006). Govan et al (2007) then offered an introduction to the theory and practice of devised performance and revealed how performance-makers have built on experimental aesthetic traditions from the 1920s. Later, Jen Harvie and Andy Lavender (2010: 2) argued that devising had moved from having a marginal position in its early days to being a "significant disciplinary and institutional orthodoxy by the first decade of the twenty-first century". In 2010, Rosemary Parsons contributed a book that focused on group devised theatre, and examined theoretical and practical aspects in group devised processes (Parsons 2010). Parsons argued that although devising was a widespread practice there was still much to be done on the topic in academia:

Far from being an exhausted topic, the multifaceted practice of devising is arguably one of the most under-examined in theatre academia (Parsons 2010: 185).

This thesis will contribute to the development of scholarly knowledge in the field and add to the relatively meagre academic list of literature on devising.

An additional rationale for the study is to be found in the absence of studies that explicitly focus on the connection between lived experience and devising. In literature, and amongst practitioners, it is recognized that devising and experience are closely connected and that devising is related to individual meaning-making processes. As Oddey states:

The process of devising is about the fragmentary experience of understanding ourselves, our culture, and the world we inhabit.... Participants make sense of themselves within their own cultural and social context, investigating, integrating and transforming their personal experiences, dreams, research, improvisation and experimentation (Oddey 1994: 1).

Although it is acknowledged that devising is a practice that offers an opportunity for people to perform their lived experience, no explicit studies exist of the connection between experience and the process of devising a performance.

1.4 POSITIONING THE STUDY

The study takes its lead from Cultural Studies focus' on lived experience, but is positioned within Performance Studies with a cultural-aesthetic perspective, as is outlined below.

1.4.1 A cultural-aesthetic perspective of the study

The German social psychologist Thomas Ziehe provides a perspective on how changes in Western society, from industrialism until now, have influenced our social world and our personal worlds (Ziehe 1975; Ziehe and Stubenrauch 1983; Ziehe et al 1989). He describes how our psychological structures have changed to become narcissistic, fragmented and self-reflexive (Ziehe 1975), and we are responsible for creating our own identities, no longer inheriting them (Ziehe and Stubenrauch 1983: 24-34). By the notion of "post-detraditionalization" Ziehe (2009: 96) explains how changes in society regarding economy, family structures, religion and industrialization, give many choices and opportunities, but also entail heavy expenses, such as complexity, chaos, anxiety, isolation and narcissistic psychological structures:

The modern mental self-reference means letting all expectations of and requests from the outside world pass

through a 'subjective filter'. It is this type of self-observation which entails the individualizing changes. In this way, the mental has gotten a public space (Ziehe 2009: 90).

This is particularly the case for young people, who receive enormous amounts of information through the media on how to live, what to think, what to believe in and how to evaluate themselves, all during a vulnerable and open phase in their lives (Ziehe 2009: 90; Ziehe and Stubenrauch 1983: 34). This leads to what Ziehe (2009: 90) describes as "identity-pain" when "the internal self-conflicts are sharpened". Making theatre can be central to some young people's experiences of creating identity (Chaib 1996; Aaltonen 2006). Due to this development in society, new aesthetic forms have arisen. Contemporary performances have developed their own ways in this milieu and might provide another understanding of identity and development in contemporary society.

A focus on this duality between developments in society and new aesthetic forms may be seen as a cultural-aesthetic perspective. From this perspective, the bond between social culture and aesthetic culture is essential. Having a cultural-aesthetic perspective on performance means that it should be understood and analyzed as part of its cultural context, not as an aesthetic work per se².

The notion cultural-aesthetic practice suggests that all symbolic systems or cultural media operates both as art or art like practices and thus, when speaking of cultural-aesthetic production we can or should not draw a sharp line between art, art-like and everyday phenomenon (Rasmussen 2001: 39. My translation).

This openness towards understanding and interpreting performative practices, which Bjørn Rasmussen argues is a key point in the cultural-

² The cultural-aesthetic perspective has been coined and developed by Faith Gabrielle Guss (2000), Rasmussen (2001) and Vigdis Aune (2010).

aesthetic perspective, resembles the position that we find in the tradition of Performance Studies. Both Performance Studies and the cultural-aesthetic perspective emphasize the boundaries between art and everyday life. The cultural-aesthetic perspective has been coined in the Norwegian research community (Guss 2000; Rasmussen 2001; Aune 2010) in order to identify and emphasize the boundaries between culture and theatrical practice. It draws on both Cultural Studies and Performance Studies. These traditions, and their influence on this research, are addressed subsequently, starting with the influence of Performance Studies.

1.4.2 Performance Studies; life and performance

Performance Studies explores the boundaries between theatre and life. Its focus lies in the border between performance and anthropology. Performance anthropologist Richard Schechner (2006: 17) argues that the notion of performance can embrace a range of human activity, including games, rituals, theatre, sports, play and performance art. The emergence of Performance Studies has been considered a paradigm shift, from studying oral representation and staging of written dramas as the main focus in theatre studies at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Performance Studies focuses on multicultural ways of acting and performing, both in everyday life and on stage (Schechner 2006). One of the hallmarks of Performance Studies is that it offers an open and wide approach to aesthetic practice.

What makes performance studies unique is that it shares the characteristics of its object: performance ... it is contingent, contested, and hard to pin down (Bial 2007: 1).

Performance studies draws on and synthesizes approaches from a wide range of disciplines (Schechner 2006). It is “an academic version of Grand Central Terminal” (Bial 2007: 2). Performance Studies is the preferred tradition in which to position this research because it emphasizes both the theatrical, cultural and individual aspects in creative performance work. Another central

theme in this research is experience, and in the tradition of Cultural Studies the notion of experience is central.

1.4.3 Cultural Studies and the study of experience

The discipline of Cultural Studies has, among other issues, a focus on the connection between the social and the aesthetic. Experience is central to it and is a key category of analysis within the field (Pickering 2008: 17). Developed by Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams, Cultural Studies focuses on how culture is produced in and through everyday living, and a hallmark of the discipline is the relationship between society and the individual. The material circumstances around us affect and shape our world and our understanding of it. Williams (1981) argues that politics, art, economies and family organization are inextricably linked in human experience. In the human experience, the individual and the social meet. Material things exist, but it is only through the individual subject that the world is experienced. In experience, there is a unification of the material elements and the subject. As Ann Gray says:

‘Experience’, then, is the ground for engagement with and the manifestation of the moments of ‘unification’ where the elements are somehow brought together (Gray 2003: 32).

To study experience, then, is to study the moment when elements from culture are brought together by the individual. The main object in this thesis is creative devising processes and how devisers use and develop their past experiences and create new experiences in their theatrical practice. Although this study takes its lead from Cultural Studies’ emphasis on experience as a key category, in order to give the aesthetic aspect and the creative performance process a key role, Performance Studies is privileged as the central research tradition. The next section elaborates on the concept of experience, on lived experience and its connection to creative experience.

1.5 LIVED EXPERIENCE AND CREATIVE EXPERIENCE

The word experience has two distinctions in the Norwegian language: *opplevelse*, which refers to a state of eventness, or a thrill; and *erfaring*, which refers to insight or, as Faith Guss (2000: 22) puts it, “sensory data that we have reflected over so that it becomes clarified and generalized”. Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) shows how the same distinction appears in the German language between *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung* (Benjamin in Guss 2000: 22). *Erlebnis* means “thrill, sensation, excitement”; while *Erfahrung* means “something lived through *and* reflected upon” (Guss 2000: 22). In English, these two distinctions are embedded in the same word: experience. This is evident in anthropologist Edward Bruner’s definition of experience: “actions, and feelings, but also reflections about those actions and feelings” (Turner and Bruner 1986: 13). In this thesis, experience will utilize both meanings. When the distinction is considered important, to shade meaning to the text for instance, the distinct connotation will be clarified.

John Dewey (1859-1952) developed a theory on art as experience (Dewey 1934/2005). Dewey distinguishes between common experiences and exceptional experiences. He refers to experience in general as something ordinary and commonplace, an amorphous drift of experiences in our everyday lives. Distinguished from ordinary experiences is a heightened feeling of having *an* experience. This is the moment “when the material experienced runs its course to fulfillment” (Dewey 1934/2005: 36). Keith Negus and Michael Pickering (2004: 31) explain what happens when we are having *an* experience: “We’re absorbed into the moment of the experience, even as it arises out of what is commonplace, so we see a commonplace situation or setting in a different light or derive from it a hitherto unrealized understanding”. This is the aesthetic experience, one that it is critical to analyze in this study. Negus and Pickering argue that:

An experience emerges from a welter of relatively unassociated experiences, bringing them together around a new point, a nexus whose significance reflects backwards and forwards in time, yet within such experiences we're not directly concerned with 'the connection of one incident with what went before and what comes after' (Negus and Pickering 2004: 31).

Hence, a welter of different experiences is brought together by the individual in associative ways in the creative moment.

However, according to Dewey, experience is not something that happens exclusively within us, as an essential psychological concept. Rather, it is connected to the world that surrounds us, and objects and events in the world are as much a part of experience as we ourselves experience these events. *An* experience is an exceptional moment, yet it is never isolated from time; it is always a part of an ongoing process, a movement and a change (a moment of completion and fulfillment). Art, for Dewey, represents the communicated expression of this "heightened vitality" experience (Dewey 1934/2005: 18).

This investigation is rooted in Dewey's understanding of experience as something commonplace, existing in the deviser's everyday life, and these ordinary experiences are the ground from which the devisers can have *an* experience in the creative process. In this way, everyday experiences and devised performance-making are thoroughly connected.

Lived experience is closely linked to phenomenology and lifeworld research. While experience can be perceived both pre-reflectively (*opplevelse/Erlebnis*) and reflectively (*erfaring/Erfahrung*), the term 'lived experience' refers to the experience as reflected upon, as a past experience (Van Manen 1990: 35-36). The history of lifeworld research can be traced back to the German philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher's *Erlebnis* (experience) and then Wilhelm Dilthey's *das Leben* (inner life) (Primožic 2001: 28). These notions

were later assimilated into the phenomenological concept of *Lebenswelt* (lifeworld). Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) was the first to describe lifeworld as an epistemological idea and to outline a lifeworld theory (Husserl 1970). The concept of the lifeworld implies an epistemology for human science research in which the question of meaning is primary. Human science research seeks to understand meaning in our everyday experience, and, in lifeworld, meanings that are often implicit or tacit (Dahlberg et al 2002: 47). Lifeworld is described by Daniel Primožic as follows:

It is the all inclusive sphere of our finite, concrete experience that is presupposed by any human activity whatsoever. This pre-reflective (before reflective, intellectual analysis) world is given in our brute experience and serves as the material for our intellectual, metaphysical and epistemological articulations of that brute experience (Primožic 2001: 28).

Hence, lifeworld refers to our brute and pre-reflective experience of the world. The lifeworld is the world of lived experience, though Max Van Manen (1990: 36) writes that lived experiences can “never be grasped in its immediate manifestation, but only reflectively as past experience”. Furthermore, lived experience can never be fully grasped in its richness and depth, since lived experience implies the totality of life.

The lifeworld theory was further explicated by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945/2010), and became lifeworld phenomenology. Merleau-Ponty investigated how we related to the world and how we bodily interacted with it. As he expresses it: “I am to the world as body”:

The body is the vehicle of being in the world, and having a body is, for a living creature, to be involved in a definite environment, to identify oneself with certain projects and be continually committed to them (Merleau-Ponty 1945/2010: 94).

Here, Merleau-Ponty explains the inextricable connection between the world and the subject, where the locus of experience is within the body. The world is

experienced as a subjective body and all knowledge is embodied knowing. Creative experience is thus embodied experience. We shall now look at the connection between lived experience and creative experience.

In this study of devised performance work there is an emphasis on both lived experience and creative experience. The connection between lived experience and creative experience is articulated by Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934), who explains how lived experience is used as the material for, and the impetus in, a creative process. Vygotsky (1930/2004: 13) argues that creative activity is always rooted in the creator’s past experiences. In a creative process, the material changes its nature and goes through a metamorphosis, through assimilation, accommodation and change, before it is finally given new expression (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 25-31). This is what Vygotsky (1930/2004: 25) calls “The mechanism of creative imagination”³. Vygotsky’s emphasis on change in the creative circle is important because using past experience as material does not mean that the experience is a mimetic representation of the world; rather, the material (past experience) is changed into something new in the act of creation.

The creative circle is not complete until the material is given an expression. The expression is what Pickering refers to as “the process whereby meanings are ex-pressed or pressed out of experience, so that it constitutes its communicative meaning” (Negus and Pickering 2004: 26). Hence, new aesthetic expression is something different from the past experience used at the beginning of the creative process. The creative expression is a mediation of past experience.

³ “The mechanism of creative imagination” is also described as a creative circle or “the circular path of imagination” by Connory et al 2010: 8)

The creative expression has a communicative aspect. This is relevant to this study in that the students not only focus on their own internal making process but consciously create performances in order to communicate with an audience. The structure of this research study is outlined in the next section.

1.6 A MODEL FOR STUDYING DEVISING

The Finnish creativity scientists Kari Uusikylä & Jane Piirto suggest that creativity can be examined through four different aspects: the creative person, the creative process, the product of creation and the context of creation (Uusikylä & Piirto 1999: 18). These four aspects of creativity may be helpful in understanding aspects of devising. Whereas Uusikylä & Piirto describe them as different aspects of creativity, it is useful not to disconnect them in this research project, rather it is the overlapping field between the performer, the process and the form, understood from its particular context, that is most interesting. How do the context, the performer, the process and the form influence each other? The participants improvise the process based on each contributor's interests and that leads to a certain performance – an aesthetic form. Every devising process and performance needs to be described and understood according to the context in which it appears. In this way, the four aspects of creativity are closely linked. Inspired by Uusikylä & Piirto's four aspects of creativity, I have made a model for researching the creative dynamics in devised practice. In order to include the different perspectives in the devising process, this model comprises the concepts of experience, process, form and context.

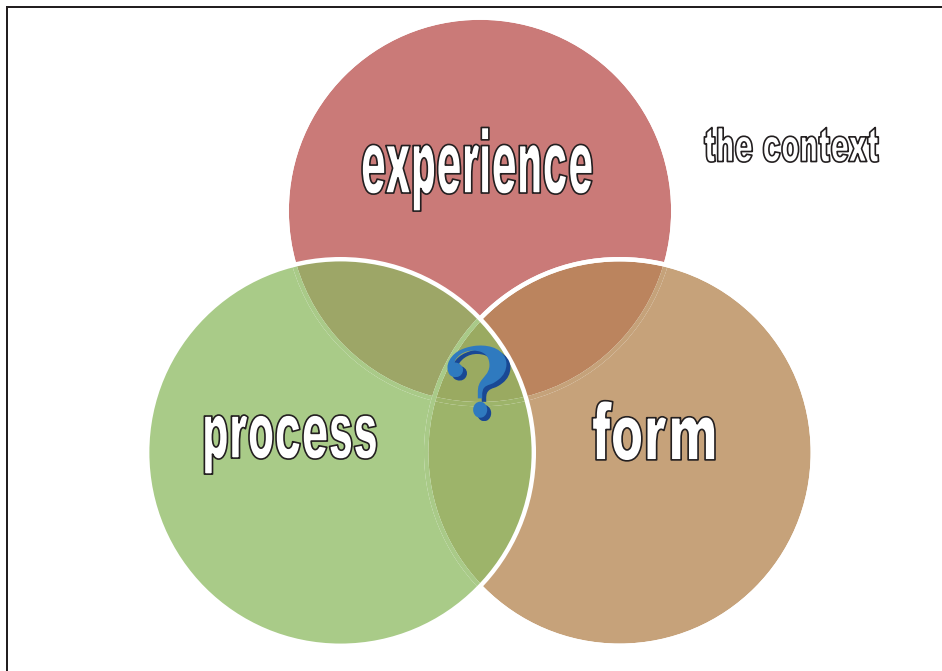


Figure 1: The devising model.

In this model, experience refers to the creative person, process refers to the creative process and form refers to the product of creation. It is within the intersection, in the middle of the model, that the analysis of the students' devising practice takes place. The model will be the framework for the literature review and will be referred to in the analysis of the case studies. The inquiry into the historical devising context, as presented in Chapter 3, will show that these four concepts (experience, form, process and context) are essential when researching devising processes. The original theory on these concepts used by Uusikylä & Piirto is replaced by theory which privileges this study. This is further described in the next chapter.

1.7 SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined the research focus, the structure and the rationale for the thesis and the focus of the inquiry has been placed in the intersection

between the creative performer, the creative process and the aesthetic form, as presented in the above devising model. The significance of the study lies in the inquiry into the creative dynamics of young people's devising practice, in an attempt to understand how lived experience is used and developed by working with aesthetic form, and how this process affects, and is affected by, young people's lifeworlds.

The key concepts of devising, experience and creative experience have been given operational definitions in the context of the study's aspirations. Experience has been related to the concept of a phenomenological lifeworld and been described as both pre-reflective and reflected upon, embodied and cognitive. Creative experience has been recognized as a mediation between meaning and aesthetic form, and common experiences have been acknowledged as the ground from which creative experience emerges. The study takes its lead from Cultural Studies, but it has been positioned within the tradition of Performance Studies in order to emphasize the theatrical aspects of the practice. Attention will now be given to methodological issues, which will be discussed in the next chapter, called Architectural Framework.

2 ARCHITECTURAL FRAMEWORK - METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the research project, how the study was framed and what strategies were employed in conducting the research.

Since the study is about researching and looking in-depth at creative experiences and expressions, the methodology for the study is placed within the tradition of qualitative research and within a phenomenological paradigm. It uses case studies, and the design and conduct of the studies are described in this chapter. Data research methods (observation, interviews, video recordings, student process notes and researcher journal), the framework of the literature and analytical lenses will also be described. The role of the researcher and ethical considerations are considered and discussed.

This research study started with a pre-understanding of creative processes based on theoretical readings and experience with creative processes through my Masters thesis (Haagensen 2001) as well as my own embodied experiences as a deviser. The first case study at NTA in Norway was undertaken early in the research process, in 2006, in order to let the praxis (case study) itself generate central themes and categories for analysis. Then followed an inquiry of aesthetic form as well as structuring the data into phenomenological themes and process phases inspired by Vygotsky's (1930/2004) creativity theory. In 2007, case studies at VCA in Australia were performed and new devising theories were studied in order to capture essential aspects of the creative processes.

2.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

The main research question that guides this study is:

What influence does young people's lived experience have on the creative dynamics in devised performance practice?

The study aims to identify the creative dynamics between lived experience, aesthetic form and the creative process, as demonstrated in the devising model in Chapter 1.6. The sub-questions consequently emphasize the connections between 'experience - process' and 'experience - form':

Sub-questions:

- How is the creative devising process developed from experience, and which elements are significant in generalizing new experience and aesthetic form?
- How is experience and aesthetic form inter-related in the devising process?

2.3 QUALITATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Qualitative research is applied in a broad and diverse field of research that tries to understand human and social phenomena. As Sharan Merriam states:

Qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible (Merriam 1998: 5).

Qualitative research draws on a wide range of methods and techniques that tries to track and understand human experience through ethnography, phenomenology, hermeneutics, participant observation, case study, interviews and so on (Denzin and Lincoln 2008). Qualitative research works

within a complex historical field and within a variety of practices. It has no theory or paradigm that is directly its own. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2008: 2. Original italics) remark that a “complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts and assumptions surround the term *qualitative research*”. Since human behavior is complex and multilayered, a variety of data collection methods is used in an effort to capture the experience. Qualitative research “crosscuts disciplines, fields and subject matters” (Denzin and Lincoln 2008: 2). Nonetheless, Denzin and Lincoln offer an initial, generic definition which emphasizes the view that qualitative research is an interpretive affair:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn them into a series of representation (Denzin and Lincoln 2008: 4).

The researcher interprets and transforms the participants’ experiences into written representation (Van Manen 1990: 111), and the process needs to be visible and transparent in a qualitative research study. In this study, this was achieved by discussing the researcher’s interpretations with the research participants during interviews and after the participants’ working sessions in the rehearsal space. The role of the researcher and his/her objectivity will be addressed later in this chapter.

While quantitative research seeks to be conclusive, qualitative research is exploratory and aims to describe and reflect on human behavior. Whereas quantitative research examines component parts, qualitative research can reveal how the parts work together to form a whole (Merriam 1998). Phenomenological research tries to see both the particularities and the complexities in the study of human experience and phenomena (Sokolowski 2000).

The phenomenological paradigm (first developed by Husserl 1859–1938) places human experience as its object. Its primary concern is to identify and illuminate phenomena through how they are perceived by actors in a situation. It takes the intuitive experience of a phenomenon as its starting point and tries to extract from it the essential meanings and features of experiences. The purpose of phenomenology is to understand the meanings and structures of human experience, as Van Manen (1990: 10) writes: “phenomenology is the systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures, of lived experience”.

Phenomenology is the study of essence, says Merleau-Ponty (1945/2010: vii). In phenomenological research, essence may be understood as an exploration or description of a phenomenon in the world. A phenomenon is both unique (it belongs to the particular context) and universal (the particular phenomenon is a part of a whole), both evocative (one cannot always be sure how a phenomenon is connected with other phenomena in the world) and precise (one can give a detailed description of the local phenomenon). In the research of experience in this study it was not possible to capture the wholeness of the participants’ experiences. It was, therefore, preferred that some recognizable phenomena identified in the creative practice be investigated. It is necessary to emphasize that a search for phenomenon in this research study does not refer to essence as some pure unmediated state and something totally objective (or universally true fact) unconnected to the subjective perception. Rather, particular phenomena are chosen, discussed and analyzed due to the study’s theoretical frame, the research question and the researcher’s subjective experience and perceptions of the devised practice. This research is an interpreted analysis of an observed theatrical practice. This aligns with a phenomenological approach described by Van Manen in the following way:

By essence we do not mean some kind of mysterious entity or discovery or some ultimate core or residue of meaning.

Rather the term essence may be understood as a linguistic construction, a description of a phenomenon (Van Manen 1990: 39).

Furthermore, identifying experience phenomena in arts-based practices must take into account that such experience is often unarticulated and unspoken. Often it is tacit, embodied or expressed through movements and actions. It includes experiences with physical material, like objects and costumes. It is expressed through sound, music and light. These materials do not exist as things per se, as objective objects, but, rather, as subjective experiences of objects, as subjective perceptions of the objects, and they constitute essential material in the creative process.

Phenomenology is a broad philosophical movement (or movements) that have taken many directions since Husserl formulated it. In his transcendental phenomenology, Husserl tried to find a method that could uncover something essential about the structure of the act of consciousness (Sokolowski 2000: 58). Susanne Ravn formulates the intention of Husserl's transcendental approach as:

The intention is to overcome all contingencies of the objective world as conceived in the natural attitude and to reach possible universal insights of the essence of things (Ravn 2009: 42).

By reducing, or bracketing, a phenomenon into particular parts, one can suspend the natural attitude of our everyday life and make transcendent the essence of the phenomenon. This does not mean, however, that the reduction includes some kind of withdrawal from the real world, rather it hopes to expose what is behind our natural attitude. Later, existentialist phenomenologists critiqued Husserl's transcendental method as being caught up in a solipsistic paradigm, e.g. Martin Heidegger (1962), Hans-Georg Gadamer (1976), Merleau-Ponty (1945/2010) and Paul Ricoeur (Ricoeur and Thompson 1981; Ricoeur and Ihde 2004). This research study draws on

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology in emphasizing the view that the world is bodily experienced through perception and mediation of experience.

Merleau-Ponty (1945/2010: xv) stresses that what we can learn from Husserl's reduction is "the impossibility of a complete reduction" as there is no direct access to the inner life. As Ravn states in referring to Merleau-Ponty:

We will never have direct access to things in themselves and never reach any description of the essence of things, as we will never be able to truly distinguish between an object's being running behind our natural attitude and its existence for us perceived as object (Ravn 2009: 44).

Merleau-Ponty (1945/2010: vii-xxiv) deals with the transcendence of our experience in another way, by centering his explorations in our perception of the world. Through the body and its senses we experience the world, and through our perception we structure the experiences and give them meaning. In *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1945/2010), Merleau-Ponty repeatedly stresses that the process of becoming a human happens in the bodily interaction with the world. Perception is the way in which the body-subject and the world interact. He states that

Our own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system (Merleau-Ponty 1945/2010: 235).

In this research project, the phenomenological approach as articulated by Merleau-Ponty is advantaged because of his emphasis on the bodily connection between the world and the body-subject. His theory on how perception and experience is an embodied process is especially relevant when studying an embodied art form, as devised performance-making truly is. The phenomenological approach is privileged because it investigates how experience is used, transformed and created in a creative devising process. It takes the lived experience in the devising process as its starting point. It provides for an in-depth study of devisers' experiences and expressions as its

core phenomenon. The approach can, therefore, be described as phenomenological qualitative research.

2.3.1 Objectivity and the role of the researcher

Since the primary site for knowledge and understanding in phenomenology is located in the subjective body, the work of a researcher can never be neutral or entirely objective; rather, it is embodied, subjective and political, as Joni Jones (2006: 343) argues: “Embodiment is political; a stance is already implied through the sociopolitical narratives embedded in bodies”.

In Husserlian phenomenology, one believes that the researcher pursues objectivity through bracketing (Van Manen 1990: 177-178; Sokolowski 2000: 49). The notion of being able to bracket prior beliefs, values and knowledge has been, and still is being, questioned by philosophers and researchers. As we have seen, Merleau-Ponty (1945/2010: ix) believed that complete reduction is not possible. This impacts on the role of the researcher because a researcher's consciousness is engaged in the world, and, as such, is in a perpetual process that cannot be transcended. Since the researcher can never experience a situation in the same way as the research informant, human science will always be a “second-order expression”, as Merleau-Ponty (1945/2010: ix) describes it.

The question of objectivity and representation in phenomenology is part of a broader development in qualitative research. Denzin (1997: xiii) believes that qualitative researchers cannot directly capture lived experience objectively. The personal biography of the researcher must be taken into account in qualitative research as she belongs to a particular class, gender, race, culture and so on, which will inform her view (Denzin and Lincoln 2008: 28).

There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of - and between - the observer and the observed (Denzin and Lincoln 2008: 29).

They argue that since the beginning of the twentieth century, qualitative research has been haunted by a double-faced ghost; earlier, the qualitative researcher assumed that one could report one's own observations of the world, including the experience of others (Denzin and Lincoln 2008: 28-29). Researchers have also believed that the informant is able to report her experiences from the world as they are and the researcher could uncover its meaning. This position has now come under assault in qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln 2008: 29), and existential phenomenology has critiqued this position. The relationship between the researcher and "the Other" has changed. Heidegger, for example, in direct contrast to the Husserlian notion of bracketing, argues that the products of a phenomenological interview are co-created by both interviewer and respondent (Heidegger 1962). An interview is considered a product of human interaction where each one has an effect on the responses of the other (Dingwall 1997; Drew 1989).

In the research process in this study, I have tried to actively understand the perspectives of the students by listening to them and discussing their experiences. I took the role of an observer who goes along with the participants in order to understand the meaning of their experiences and, at the same time, tries to keep a distance in order to hold a reflective perspective. The position as an interpretive phenomenological researcher, one who acknowledges that the reflections brought forth in an analysis are the result of a selective, embodied research process and not a neutral, objective report from a field, is privileged. As Lather states: "objectivity means being aware and honest about how one one's beliefs, values and biases affect the research process" (Lather in Guba 1990: 319).

In phenomenological research it is essential to describe a research phenomenon in a way that reflects and illuminates the phenomenological experience. When the researcher describes her observations from the practice

field, it is filtered through her particular embodied gaze. When a description of a student's experience is provided on the basis of the student's process notes, for example, the researcher adds her understanding of the student's experience in the description. Hence, the researcher transforms and influences the reports from the cases.

Van Manen (1990: 4) argues that "the preferred method for human science involves description, interpretation, and self-reflection". The research process in this study has been one of reflecting on the data in relation to the theory in a back and forth dialectic process where central themes have been developed and then critically tried out on the analyzed data material. Some themes have been discarded along the way, when not providing new insights, whereas other themes have turned out to be useful for the study.

The research design, consisting of literature studies and case studies in a hermeneutic phenomenological process, will be presented in subsequent sections.

2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A potential connection between the creative process and aesthetic form related to lived experience is presented in the devising model in Chapter 1.6. Since there is no single theory that covers this complex relation, different theories are discussed. There are four main theoretical sources used to cover the different parts of the model: Vygotsky's creativity theory is used to illuminate the relationship between creative process and experience (Theory Chapter 5), Eco's aesthetic theory on *The Open Work* (1989) and Van Manen's (1990: 101) phenomenological approach to "lifeworld existentials" are used as the main source to illuminate the connection between aesthetic form and experience (Theory Chapter 4). In order to contextualize the study's relation

to devising, Heddon and Milling's (2006) history of devising is used as the main theoretical contribution to the theory in Chapter 3.

Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory (1930/2004) related to creative processes and meaning-making has proved particularly useful for this research, and also his discussion on how the relationship between culture and the individual is essential in the creative processes. Vygotsky's (1930/2004: 25-31) description of the mechanism of creative imagination (the creative circle) is used as an analytical tool to structure the analysis into three creative phases; starting point, middle phase and performing phase, as presented in analysis chapters 6, 7 and 8. Vygotsky's creative circle (presented in Chapter 5.4) is a useful framework when identifying the special features in the creative dynamics in devising processes which is the main theme in this thesis.

Eco's theory on *The Open Work* (1989) demonstrates the larger shift in the art field from the conservative (Croche) aesthetic to the radical avant-garde movement. The theory provides a historical backdrop for the understanding of the deviser's communicative strategies and their aesthetic structures of expression. Studying aesthetic structures is another way of studying experience, different from interviews, for example, in that it puts forward the aesthetic form as a medium and expression of experience. The aesthetic structures in the performances analyzed for this study uses Eco's insight into the connection between aesthetic form and experience. Other theory is also provided, in order to illuminate different inter-related theatrical and experiential lenses as sites of investigation. These lenses are developed in Chapter 4 and are later used as analytical categories. The categories are: narratives, lived aesthetic space and time, and body-character, and they are applied to all cases.

Despite the fact that Eco and Vygotsky developed their theories at different times in history and that they belonged to different research communities,

they both share an interest in the connection between the aesthetic/cultural and individual/social historical. We could also include Merleau-Ponty in this group, with his iterative emphasis on the connection between the body-subject and the world. Eco (1989) investigates how new aesthetic forms develop as history changes and affects both the artist's art work and the audience's reception of the art during modernity. Forty years earlier, Vygotsky wrote, in *The Psychology of Art*:

Now we can envision the role of art in the future. It is hard to guess what forms this unknown life of the future will take, and it is even harder to guess what place art will take in that future life. One thing is clear, however: arising from reality and reaching toward it, art will be determined by the basic order of the future flow of life (Vygotsky 1925/1971: 17).

Thus we can see that both Vygotsky and Eco emphasize that art is related to contemporary life and that individual artists are interconnected with their cultural context.

It has been challenging to try to grasp the complexity of creative processes and to unite different theoretical and epistemological traditions, as the study seeks to investigate the overlapping field between the experiential and the theatrical aspects as demonstrated in the devising model in Chapter 1.6. A pragmatic approach, drawing on Dewey's philosophy (1934/2005), has been used in order to unite the two aspects. This position has lately been referred to as "relational knowing" (Rasmussen 2013: 30) and "ecological understanding" (Wright 2011) and seeks to develop an epistemology for art-based practices.

2.5 CASE STUDY

This study analyses three different devised performance productions as multiple bounded cases observed over time, and provides a detailed in-depth

data collection from multiple sources. This corresponds with some essential features of case study research:

Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes (Creswell 2007: 73).

The reason for taking such an approach is related to the intention of viewing creative processes in-depth rather than through their breadth. Robert Stake defines what case studies achieve:

Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances (Stake 1995: xi).

An important circumstance in this project is the context of two educational institutions. Robert Yin argues that case studies are suitable when “the phenomenon under study is not readily distinguishable from its context” (Yin in O’Toole 2006: 46). John O’Toole (ibid) comments that this is true of most drama education and community theatre experiences. The devised performance work in this study can be seen as a framed context with a limited duration. It is, therefore, a bounded case. The participants create a unique creative process and product that engages with a none-reproducible experience, suitable for a bounded case study approach.

This study focuses on the complexity and depth in devised work, and, therefore, the whole creative sequence needs to be studied. O’Toole (2006: 46) writes that “case study data is useful when the researcher is interested in and deeply involved in the structures, processes and outcomes of a project”. This aligns well with the aim of this study to accomplish an in-depth analysis of both the devised process and product related to the participant’s experience.

John Creswell (2007: 74) states that there exist three variations of case studies in terms of intent: single instrumental case studies, collective or multiple case studies and intrinsic case studies. Single case studies focus on an issue or concern and one single case is selected to illustrate the issue. In multiple case studies, several research sites are selected to show different perspectives on the issue. Finally, an intrinsic case study focuses on a special case that presents an unusual or unique situation (ibid). This research study can be defined as a multiple case study, in that two sites (colleges) and three cases (two solo works and one collaborative work) were selected in order to generate information and knowledge on an issue (lived experience related to devised creative practice).

The case study honors the agency of the participants and positions them as experts rather than merely as a source of data for analysis (Creswell 2007). In this study, five devisers were chosen as expert informants who inform the study not just as sources for analysis but also through discussions and reflections. In order to study the students' experiences of the devising process in-depth, case studies were considered to be the most appropriate research strategy for focusing on the particular situation (context) in which the experience took place, and framed it as a bounded case with a limited duration.

2.5.1 Description and rationale of the case study context

Three case studies were carried out at the Norwegian Theatre Academy (NTA), in Norway (Spring 2006), and two at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA), in Australia (Spring 2007). Heddon and Milling point out that higher education institutions have been central in the development of devising:

Universities have been key in the evolution of devising, not only because they have housed performances, but also because they have permitted residencies and thought

devising on their courses...in Australia the establishment of the Victoria College of Arts and Deakin University courses in community practice and practical theatre making, including devising, have been key (Heddon and Milling 2006: 227).

The rationale for doing case studies in the context of post-secondary educational institutions was that the two selected colleges focused on the student's theatre skill development, identity formation and cultural/political knowledge. The student's role as an "animateur" at VCA was described as a "pivotal one, with the success measured not only in artistic terms, but also by other indicators such as level of community support, participation, ownership and achievement of social and political goals"⁴ (see Appendix 6.2). This approach to devising aligned with this study's aim to investigate the connection between experience, aesthetic form and the creative process in a cultural context.

Few schools worldwide offer an explicit devising education with devised performance-making as the main focus in the curriculum. In Norway NTA offers a three year Bachelor degree in theatre making, and in Australia VCA offers a one year postgraduate course in devised theatre making⁵. The reason for the transnational approach including case studies from Norway and Australia was an aspiration to learn more about devising in a broader cultural context, not restricted to one country and one school exclusively. The students at NTA had various national backgrounds (see Appendix 6.1) and this suited the intention of the research to investigate lived experience in devising practices beyond a narrow cultural context. An Australian-Norwegian international research collaboration between the Faculty of Humanities at

⁴ Retrieved from <https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2008/Q02>

⁵ For a more thorough description of the two colleges, see Appendix 6.

NTNU and the Faculty of Creative Industries at QUT made the cross-cultural approach in this study possible.

In Norway, one group-devised work with six students was studied in the process from conception of ideas until the opening night of the performed work. In order to get a proper amount of data three students were chosen as expert informants and each were interviewed three times – at the beginning of the process, in the middle of it and at the end. The expert informants were chosen after discussions with their teachers who had a profound knowledge about each individual student. They were all between 20-22 years old and they were all able to articulate their experiences well.

The second site of investigation was VCA in Melbourne. Eight solo works were produced during the coursework, and three of these were followed closely in order to get a similar amount of data as from NTA. The productions were chosen because the students who performed the works were all 23 years old and they had created profoundly different projects that exemplified the variety of devising forms that exist. In the final thesis, only two of the solo works were used for analysis purposes. The last case was left out since the research material was less complete than the other cases as the student had not written process notes and because the interviews provided less significant insight into the deviser's experience.

Simply observing the collaborative process in Norway revealed useful information about how the devisers were thinking and reflecting during the process, as seen in their discussions with each other. Such information had to be collected in other ways when researching the solo works in Australia, since the solo devisers worked alone in the space with no-one to discuss matters with during rehearsals. However, the information turned out to be clearly articulated in the solo deviser's process notes. Therefore the main source of information was different in the Norwegian and the Australian cases. At

NTA, the main source of information was participant observations as presented in interviews (these students, bar one, did not produce process notes), and at VCA, the main source of information was the solo deviser's extensive writings in their process notes as well as interviews.

Theatre Students

The students were chosen from a large number of applicants to the two institutions and their educational context is described in detail in Appendix 6. At the Victorian College of the Arts, eight students were accepted out of five hundred applications, admitted to the course by audition. The Norwegian Theatre Academy is one of three educational options in Norway today. The students are highly committed to what they do (their theatrical practice) and they enter the course by audition. They are trained at NTA to become artists and attend a learning system that provides them with an influencing philosophy for their practices.

2.6 THE HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH PROCESS

This section gives an account of how the study was conducted as a hermeneutic phenomenological research process. Hermeneutics is the theory and practice of interpretation, and forms an important basis for human science research (Van Manen 1990: 77, Dahlberg et al 2001: 70). Hermeneutic phenomenology is both descriptive (phenomenological), in that it wants to be attentive to how things appear, and interpretive (hermeneutic), because it claims that there are no such things as uninterpreted phenomena (Van Manen 1990: 180). This study aims at describing the theatre students' experiences and giving an interpretation of those experiences. It is, therefore, a hermeneutic phenomenological study. The reflective-interpretative approach that has guided this research is well known in phenomenological research:

The reflective interpretive process includes not only a description of the experience as it appears in consciousness but also an analysis and astute interpretation of the underlying conditions, historically and aesthetically, that account for the experience (Moustakas 1994: 10).

To understand and interpret the themes and phenomena better, literature was used as a hermeneutical tool. Throughout the study, the data and the theory was synthesized and reflected upon in order to give an interpretation of the observed phenomena. Towards the end of the process, new findings emerged based on the data and the theory. The hermeneutic research process in the study is described in the following table, displaying different research phases with specific research queries, key readings and data collection:

The hermeneutic research process in the study			
Research Phase	Research query	Theory - Key reading	Data Collection
Phase 1 Preparing the research	Pre-understanding; this study intends to investigate young people's theatre work without a pre-written script. How is lived experience demonstrated in the practice? Designing the field study (methods)	Performance studies research (Schechner), Cultural studies research (Pickering, Willis), Phenomenology (Van Manen, Merleau-Ponty)	Searching for case study sites; educational institutions, performance groups, young people's theatre. Decides to do case studies at NTA and VCA.
Phase 2 Data collection Norway	Case study 1 NTA: What happens in the theatrical practice? What matters to the students? (open approach). Defines the practice as devising.	Devising literature (Oddey, Kjølnér), Method (Denzin and Lincoln) Harold Pinter (reads the same texts as the NTA students)	Observes the collaborative process and performance at NTA. Interviews, video recordings performance, improvisations, photographs. Researcher's log.
Phase 3 Working with NTA data and	Reading the data. Looking for key phases in the creative process (the empirical material). Finds four phases: (1) starting	Devising literature (Heddon and Milling, Etchells,) Eco; The open work	Writing a description from the NTA process, school context and summary of

literature	point, (2) generate material, (3) select and compose, and (4) performance. Defines the performance process as an open work.		performance. Transcribing interviews.
Phase 4 Data collection Australia	Case study 2 VCA: What happens in the practice? What matters to the students? How is solo work different from collective work? Finds the same phases in the creative process as in case 1. The students have different experiences. Differences and similarities between the schools. Realizes that Devising is highly present and articulated in Australia.	Young people's theatre in Australia (Gattenhof) Devising literature (Hancock, Carter); writes a literature review of devising.	Collects data from two solo shows at VCA. Observation, interviews, video recordings, improvisations, photographs. Researcher's log.
Phase 5 Working with VCA data and literature	Reading the data. Starting to find themes/phenomenon in the data and structure the data in a theme diagram (see appendix 7). Makes a devising model for the study based on the data and Uusikylä and Piirto's theory.	Writes a literature review (theory) on aesthetic form, creative process and lived experience.	Writes a description from the VCA process, school context and summary of performance. Transcribing interviews.
Phase 6 Analysis	Tries to make a conversation between data themes and literature. Synthesizes data and theory.	Applies Vygotsky's creativity theory to the data which consider the creative process and Eco's theory open/closed form to the data which consider the performances.	Continues to read the data and transcribe video recordings.
Phase 7 Writing the study and its findings	Re-writes the whole document. Abstracts some core findings based on the analysis.	A closer reading of Vygotsky.	Finds precise descriptions in the empirical material to demonstrate different phenomenon.

Table 1: The hermeneutic research process in the study.

2.7 DATA RESEARCH METHODS

Qualitative researchers often draw on a wide range of interpretive methods. John Law (2004: 2) argues that since social science tries to describe a contemporary world that is “complex, diffuse and messy”, the methods it uses will be influenced by that world. This qualitative study investigates the complex creative dynamics between creative process, aesthetic form and experience in a certain context. In order to capture such a complex dynamic, as displayed in the devising model in Chapter 1.6, different kinds of data material and methods have been employed in line with Law’s description of qualitative research.

The data gathering techniques were: observation, interview, video recordings from the processes (improvisations, group discussions and the performances), photographs, student’s process notes, and researcher’s journal. These research methods will be introduced, and the considerations and challenges experienced by the researcher in the process of collecting the data will be addressed.

Observation

Whereas the creative process was observed every day at NTA, the solo process at VCA was observed only partially. This is a result of some logistical challenges, since the solo devisers were working simultaneously with their productions and it was not possible for the researcher to be in several places at the same time. But, according to phenomenological research, empirical data is not restricted to what the researcher solely observes by being physically present at the site (Van Manen 1990); rather it is the researcher’s ability to understand and describe the totality of an experience that is important. Therefore it was considered sufficient to use the solo deviser’s process notes and interviews as the main source of information gathering. However, the

VCA productions were observed for one week at the beginning of the process and for one week towards the end of the production.

Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2000: 81) advocate the view that the researcher often experiences tension between falling in love with the fieldwork and keeping a distance. They argue that it is necessary to keep a distance in order to reflect on the occurring phenomena and for sorting out the researcher's experience from the experiences of the participants, as well as the larger landscape in which they all live (ibid).

This is a challenge that I experienced when gathering the data material. When I was alone with the students in the rehearsal space, the students sometimes asked for advice regarding artistic choices. I was careful not to give any, since it was the deviser's experiences, choices and preferences that were under consideration and not the researcher's. Such requests were answered by referring to the student's earlier discussions, which were written in the researcher's journal (Appendix 4.3). In this way I met the call for feedback by referring to the deviser's own thinking and strategies at an earlier stage in the process while, at the same time, attempting not to apply my personal preferences to the work.

Interviews

Interviews are widely used in phenomenological research to capture how individuals themselves conceive of their practices (Hammersley and Atkinson 1996). Interviews can be conducted as structured, semi-structured or open (Rubin and Rubin 1995). While structured interviews are rigorous, with a set of questions carefully planned, semi-structured interviews are open, yet prepared in advance:

Semi-structured interviews are designed to have a number of interview questions prepared in advance but such prepared questions are designed to be sufficiently open that the subsequent questions of the interviewer cannot be planned in

advance but must be improvised in a careful and theorized way (Wengraf 2001: 5).

The interviews in this study were carried out in order to elicit information and to allow the participants the chance to reflect on their work, and also to give them the opportunity to respond to the researcher's reflections on their work (see interview guide in Appendix 10). Therefore, the interviews were semi-structured; they were open to new ideas and reflections while also having a framework of themes to explore.

Interviews with three students in each country and two of their teachers were used as an important source of information. The students were interviewed at the beginning of the process, in the middle and towards the end (see Appendix 1). The interviews were video recorded and extracts of the transcriptions are provided in Appendix 3.

Video recordings of the processes, improvisations and performances.

As part of the data collection, improvisations, rehearsals, interviews and the performances undertaken by the students in the three case studies were video recorded (see Appendix 1). This material has been used in order to describe and analyze the process and the performances. The summaries from the performances are written on the basis of first experiencing the performances live, and, later, after the video recordings had been reviewed and revisited several times in order to observe details in the performance works.

Photographs, students' process notes, researcher's journal.

An additional source of information for the solo devised works was the students' process notes. Two process diaries, written by students from the two solo works, consist of notes from every working day in the process, describing what was undertaken each day and reflections on the work of the day (examples from the process notes are attached at Appendix 4). The process

notes include drawings of costumes, photographs, drawings of the theatrical space and its arrangement and a score of the performers' movement in space. There are bits and pieces of text, and one can observe how the text fragments are written, generated and composed into a script or a score at the end of the process. These process notes contain primary source material about the devisers' experiences and reflections in the creative working process. One of the students wrote a reflection paper subsequent to the process, based on her notes and experiences from the process (Appendix 4.2.1 and 4.2.2). This reflection paper articulates the thinking behind the process and is referred to as primary material in the research analysis.

The researcher's journal is another important tool in the investigation. While following the performance-making process, the researcher kept a written account of the day's activities and reflections on what was going on in the creative process (Appendix 4.3). The log was helpful for giving detailed descriptions of relevant phenomena. The researcher's journal contains photographs of the devisers' creative works during the process. Some of these photographs are printed in the thesis.

2.7.1 Data analysis

The research methods in the three cases yielded a significant amount of data from observation, interviews, video recordings from improvisations, group discussions and the performances, photographs, students' process notes, and researcher's journal. The methods were suitable for investigating the complexity of the creative process related to the theoretical framework of the study described in part 2.4 of this chapter.

The interviews were transcribed in textual form in word documents (see Appendix 3), an overview of the DVD data material (Appendix 1) was made, as well as written summaries of the different cases creative processes

(Appendix 11), and of the performances (Chapter 8.2). Furthermore, phenomenological descriptions from improvisations and conversations from the DVD material were later included in the thesis (e.g. Chapter 7.3.2 and 7.4.3).

In line with the tradition of phenomenological research (Van Manen 1990), the data was structured into central themes using “theming the data” (Saldana 2013: 176). A thematic understanding of the data material was developed from what I observed in the field and found in the data, which was then ordered to organize the material. The data from interviews, the process notes and the phenomenological descriptions from the DVD material were coded manually and put into a diagram. An extract of this diagram is attached at Appendix 7. The diagram identified different phases in the process and central themes in the material that were related to the relevant theory. This was done by searching for central words such as “matter”, “feelings”, “experience” in the word documents, which displayed where the notions had been used across the cases and across the data material. But I was also open to issues and themes emerging from outside of that for which I was looking. When the element of “intentions”, for example, turned out to be a central theme in the data because the student’s described their intentions with the work, it was integrated into the study and relevant theory on the theme was incorporated. Since the different cases also turned out to have peculiar features that were not applicable to other cases, each case was analyzed in light of the relevant theory that illuminated these features. The concepts presented in the theory are, therefore, not applied to all of the cases due to their diverse nature. For example, autobiography was identified in one of the cases and theory on autobiography was therefore included in the study, yet this theory was not applicable to the other cases.

When the data had been clustered into common and particular themes related to relevant theory (see Chapter 2.5 “Theoretical frame”), the data was

interpreted and analyzed based on existing theory and the analysis written into the report (the analysis chapters). It was then possible to confront and differentiate theory and to create new theory based on the data's relation to existing theory, demonstrated in Chapter 9.

Having outlined the research aims and described how the study was accomplished, the next section focuses on the restrictions of the study.

2.6 DELIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This section points out some delimitations of the research, focusing especially on what the research does not aim to include. This research is not a comparative study of the devising traditions and history of the two countries, Norway and Australia. The study seeks understanding of theatre and lived experience across cultures and the differences between the cases seem to be more pertinent than does the national differences.

An educational context is chosen as site for the case studies. The aim of the study is however not to evaluate the different colleges involved. Appendix 6 shows examples of similarity and difference between the schools, but this is not the main area of investigation. The core focus is on devisers' creative work. A description of the school context and its history in the respective countries is included in the appendices in order to contextualize devisers' practice. The role of the teacher facilitator, the school curriculum, teaching strategies and the development of different devising methods are important aspects of the devising process, but it is not privileged here as the main aspect of the research.

Furthermore, this research investigates two different devising formats: solo devised work and group devised work. The study is, however, not a

comparison of the two formats, nor is it an analysis of group processes. The decision to study different formats was taken in order to include the variety of practice found in the field of devising. The two formats are extensively used in devising practices, and many devisers alternate between different formats, methods and collaborative structures. In this way, the research reflects the diversity within the field of devising, which it demonstrates through three cases. Some similarities and differences regarding the two formats are discussed in Appendix 6, where a description of the two colleges is provided.

Another delimitation of the study is the focus on the aesthetic aspects of the creative practice rather than on a cultural and sociological analysis of the lifeworld that surrounds and influences the practice. As demonstrated in the introduction, the study is rooted in the understanding of the individual as being inextricably linked to society and historical circumstances. Yet the study does not provide a thorough analysis of the social and cultural environment surrounding the practice. The privileged perspective is the creative processes, with a particular focus on experience and devising in a certain cultural context, however it is not a cultural analysis as such.

Finally, using case studies as a method implies a delimitation regarding the generalization of its findings (Stake 1995; Creswell 2007; Yin 2009). The cases are unique and the findings are not applicable to any other related phenomena or devised practice. The purpose of the study is to achieve an in-depth knowledge about three particular cases in order to better understand the investigated phenomena. The aim is to draw new knowledge from the three cases, knowledge that might also be recognizable in other creative processes.

2.7 ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Sensitive information can be revealed during creative processes and the material is treated accordingly to international standards of ethical clearance. The project is assessed by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). NSD is the Norwegian resource center servicing the research community. The Norwegian Data Inspectorate has chosen NSD as its partner for implementation of the statutory data privacy requirements in the research community. NSD assess projects in relation to the license requirement.

All students involved in the research received written and oral information on the aim and methods of the research project (see Appendix 5). They signed a consent agreement form which clearly states their rights to continue or to withdraw from the project at any time. The two schools involved also gave their approval to take part in the study. The informants (students) have been given fictive names in the thesis and are thereby anonymous. All gathered data material will be destroyed at the end of the project, except those photographs that are printed in the thesis.

2.8 SUMMARY

This chapter has identified the research study as a qualitative phenomenological research applying multiple case studies and an array of data gathering methods. Following an existentialist phenomenological approach, the study acknowledges that objective research means that the researcher is an embodied reflective subject who should try to provide an accurate account of how the research has been conducted. Hence, this chapter has presented the research design, the theoretical framework and the data gathering methods, all of which have been characterized as being a hermeneutic phenomenological research process.

3 CONTEXT DEVISING - THEORY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the historical connection between devising and lived experience in order to elaborate and refine the analytical focus of the study. This literature review will focus on devising related to lived experience, and the historical development of the term 'devising' will be presented before a genesis is offered. Devising practices as we think of them today arose as part of the avant-garde movement in the USA, Australia and Europe in the 1950–60s, but it will be argued that its genesis can be traced back to theatre practitioners from early 1900, the context of cultural performance, folk theatre and theatre education. Although contemporary devising can be vastly different from our predecessors, many of its key features were coined in the historical avant-garde period in the 1920s, but mainly in the neo-avant-garde period⁶ in the 1950s and 1960s. In this period, practitioners started going beyond traditional theatrical boundaries, and many experiments with performance-making processes took place in order to establish a closer connection between art and life. Hence, this chapter will focus on the early history of devising, its various contexts and intentions, with a particular focus on how devising practices are related to society and life experience.

⁶ The German literary critic Peter Bürger (1984: 57-59) makes a distinction between the historical avant-garde (Futurism, Dada, Surrealism) and neo-avant-garde (Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme, Happenings, Fluxus, etc.).

3.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TERM DEVISING

Devising, as a term, has been used within the English language for a few decades (Hancock 2002). In The United States the term 'collaboration' is more often used than 'devising' (Heddon and Milling 2006: 2). There is a difference in emphasis in the two terms; devising does not necessarily involve more than one person, but collaboration certainly does (ibid). Torunn Kjølner remarks on another difference: 'collaboration' emphasizes the collective aspect, whereas 'devising' stresses the inventive and contriving aspect of the process (Kjølner 2009).

Devising is closely linked to its spatial and historical context. It is an umbrella term that includes many different practices, such as physical theatre, community theatre, performance art, political theatre, young people's theatre, to mention a few. Heddon and Milling suggest that

Devising is best understood as a set of strategies that emerged within a variety of theatrical and cultural fields, ex in community arts, performance art/live art, or political theatre. Within these fields, a range of devising processes evolved in relation to specific and continually changing cultural contexts, intimately connected to their moment of production (Heddon and Milling 2006: 2).

Govan, Nicholson and Normington (2007) also examine the plurality of strategies and approaches used by devisers and claim that they have no intention of establishing an overarching vision of what devising is. They argue that devising should be described in the plural, "as *processes* of experimentation and sets of creative *strategies*" (Govan et al 2007: 7. Original italics). This means that devising works against having a neat definition and a singular categorization. Since devising appears in different contexts and is not considered to be one single format, method or form, it is difficult to give a definition or a description that can include all its practices and aspects. Nevertheless, devising has some features that can be recognized in many

devised practices. Many practitioners and scholars point out that a devising process normally starts without a pre-written text (Hancock 2002; Oddey 1994; Heddon and Milling 2006; Govan et al 2007). If a script is used, it is often thrown on the floor and put together in different ways. Texts are often generated from improvisations, poems, commercials, autobiographical writing, lyrics, and so on. Oddey argues that:

Any definition of devised theatre must include process (finding the ways and means to share an artistic journey together), collaboration (working with others), multi-vision (integrating various beliefs, life experiences, and attitudes to changing world events), and the creation of an artistic product (Oddey 1994: 3).

The main research question in this study concerns the interrelation between different parts (process, product, experience), with a special focus on how life-experience is involved in the devising practice. Oddey confirms that such interrelations are acknowledged in the field of devised theatre.

3.3 A GENESIS OF DEVISING EXPERIENCES

The genealogy of devising is often traced back to the avant-garde. Parsons (2010) traces it back to the 1920s, while Heddon and Milling (2006) trace it, essentially, to the 1950s-60s, and Govan et al (2007) emphasize both periods. From the perspective of this research, with its explicit focus on the relation between the devising format and the lived experience, it is suggested that the genesis of devising can be found in five different theatrical contexts: within the history of theatre practitioners from early 1900, within the tradition of drama education, from the context of cultural performance, within the avant-garde; and from the tradition of folk theatre and popular forms. As Parsons (2010: 10) argues: “any attempt to establish a linear genealogy of influence from earlier theatrical movements is highly problematic” in that the scope is enormous and the contexts of the theatrical practice play a pivotal role of the

emergence of new theatrical forms. Nevertheless, it is possible to trace some key historical features that influence devising practices today. This background also informs the understanding of the creative processes in the case studies in this research.

3.3.1 Early 1900 theatre practitioners and devising

At the beginning of the 19th century, Edward Gordon Craig (1872–1966) insisted on the importance of using and investigating all elements of theatre and to consider them as equally important (Craig 1911/1980). This was a reaction to the dominant position of realism and text-based theatre at that time. “The theatre must not forever rely upon having a play to perform, but must in time perform pieces of its own art”, said Craig (1911/1980: 144). He emphasized the importance of exploring all art forms, i.e. scenography, lightning, sculptures, marionettes. This was a way of increasing the number and complexity of material and ideas that form the theatre artwork.

French director and actor, Jacques Copeau (1879-1949), sought to reform French theatre by rejecting Naturalism, and introduced instead a different approach; an actor-centered methodology that focused on the actor’s physical body and improvisation. The actor was considered by Copeau as the primary element of theatre and a “total actor”, “rooted in corporal awareness and expression” (Callery 2001: 11). The legacy of Copeau was influential on Etienne Decroux, Michael Saint-Denis and, later, Jacques Lecoq, all of whom investigated the physical possibilities in actor training and were concerned with the actor-as-creator. French actor and director Saint-Denis (1897-1971) put a major emphasis on the actor: “everything ultimately depends on the human being, the *actor*” (Saint-Denis and Baldwin 1960/2009: 112) and he distinguishes between two sorts of actors: the “actor/interpreter”, who works with a text, and the “actor/improviser”, who works without a text (op.cit: 113). In his acting training program, he put major emphasis on improvisation,

both for the individual actor and for group improvisation, and he saw the actors embodied self as the instrument for creation (Saint-Denis and Baldwin 1960/2009: 164). Similar to Copeau, Decroux (1889–1991) implored actors to take control of the creative process. In response to his developing philosophy of corporal mime, he wrote the text “The Order Of Composition” in 1931 (Decroux 1931/1985). In this text he advocated ‘actor art’, which means that theatre should develop exclusively from the actor on a bare stage, and not from a script. His ideal was performers who created their own work (Decroux 1931/1985).

The work of these theatre pioneers paved the way for new explorations of theatre regarding the use of all the elements of theatre (as an opposition and reaction to text-based theatre). In their own ways, they explored and developed a new role for actors as physically creative performers and controllers of the creative process, as opposed to being an instrument for a dominant director. This legacy is evident in contemporary devising, as will also be addressed in section 3.5.2 when considering the actor’s experience.

3.3.2 Cultural performance and devising

The roots of devising can also be found in the context of cultural performance. From this perspective, theatrical practice is seen as part of everyday life and emphasizes the potential for human growth and development through theatrical practice. For Russian avant-garde theatre practitioner Nikolai Evreinov (1879-1953) the essence of theatre is to be found in what he called “teatral nost”, a theatrical instinct:

It is an instinct which compels human beings to transform themselves and their world. It is the instinct for the transformation of Nature’s appearances. As are all instincts, it is pre-aesthetic, universal and necessary for survival (Carnicke 1989: 43).

The theatrical instinct is a voluntary, but necessary, activity separated from ordinary reality in both space and time. Evreinov (in Carnicke 1989: 21) argues that we do not need anything but a person, an actor, to make theatre, and that we should make “theatre for oneself” every single day of our lives. We should stage ourselves and be our own director, playwright, customizer and actor. And we should always trust our theatrical instinct in this work.

Evreinov argues:

Verily,--the time has come to work for a form of art different from a socially defined theatrical form! Verily--the time has come for a cult of 'theatre for oneself' as a form of art! (Evreinov in Carnicke 1989: 21).

In Evreinov's writing on the theatrical instinct, one can find resemblances to how devisers and their practices are thought of today. A deviser can have multiple functions (playwright, performer, scenographer and so on), and she uses her instincts to generate material. Her material comes from, and is part of, her own life. Carnicke's understanding of Evreinov's position can be summarized as: “If theatre is an instinct, acting must indeed be an extension of the actor's personality” (Carnicke 1989: 49).

3.3.3 Folk theatre, popular forms and devising

It is also possible to trace features of today's devising back to early folk theatre and popular performance, as Marvin Carlson (2004) argues is the case for performance art. In Italian *commedia dell'arte* the performers are able to generate material through improvisation within a set scenario. The *commedia dell'arte* tradition inspired many devising artists in the twentieth century, e.g. Jacques Copeau, who was inspired to re-work the genre (Parsons 2010: 41-44). *Commedia dell'arte* troupes, as well as travelling circuses with clowns and line dancers, travelled the countryside and performed in marketplaces and taverns in order to entertain and sometimes to agitate against the power

regime in the respective countries. Dymphna Callery explains the impact *commedia dell'arte* had on the modernist:

Artists found in *commedia* a new inspiration; *commedia's* underlying sense of parody and irony, its fragmentation and framing devices became tools for the modernists, and its themes and images permeated popular entertainment (Callery 2001: 9).

Devised theatre practitioners have also found inspiration in the folk tradition of carnivals. Mikhail Bakhtin sees early carnival traditions as a counter cultural ritual where ordinary life is suspended: "the laws, prohibitions and restrictions that determine the structure and order of ordinary, that is noncarnival, life are suspended" (Bakhtin in Carlson 2004: 23). Thus the carnival was part of life experience and bodily experiences were vital in the carnival ritual and it suspended the border between real life and performance. The carnivals were "the place in which "the drama of the body" is played out ..." and "This corporeal drama applies not to the private, individual body, but rather to the larger collective one of the folk" (Lachmann et al 1988: 124). Carlson (2004: 23) argues that contemporary performance artists draw on "the concept of carnival as a site for the playful exploration and possible challenging of traditional cultural assumptions and roles".

It has also been identified that folk forms like vaudeville, reviews and cabaret were used as inspirations for such historical avant-garde movements as Expressionists, Dadaists and Futurists. Carlson refers to Laurence Senelick, who sees cabaret as a root of the avant-garde tradition:

Emerging from bohemian haunts, the cabaret was the earliest podium for the expressionists, the DADAists, the futurists; it was a congenial forum for experiments in shadowgraphy, puppetry, free-form skits, jazz rhythms, literary parody, "naturalistic" songs, "bruitistic" litanies, agitprop, dance-pantomime, and political satire (Senelick in Carlson 2004: 94).

The collage structures of variety and cabaret suited the historical avant-garde in their effort to create a spontaneous and imaginative creative process. As Parsons writes: “Through music hall to cabaret, performances consisted of a sequence of unrelated physical or visual elements usually linked only by their inclusion in the one show” (Parsons 2010: 22). But it was not just the formal structures of folk theatre and popular forms that were an inspiration to the historical avant-garde: “one appeal of the variety structure was its adaptability to political causes” (Parsons 2010: 26). A political commitment to express everyday life experiences (often suppressed by the power system) can be identified from folk theatre and other popular forms of entertainment to the historical avant-garde, though it is expressed in very different forms.

3.3.4 The historical avant-garde and devising

The historical avant-garde, including Dadaism, Futurism and Surrealism, can hardly be called a singular movement as it consisted of different ‘isms’ with individual aims⁷. It was politically and geographically diffuse and did not have a common cohesive social program. But, as Parsons argues:

There are several identifiable avant-garde concerns that are particularly relevant to the study of devising as a “descendant” of early twentieth-century experimental theatre (Parsons 2010: 13).

In the case of this research project, two avant-garde concerns in particular are relevant: the evolving emphasis on the connection between art and life, and the emergence of new theatrical processes and techniques developed during this period in order to articulate new perceptions of the connection between art and life.

⁷ For a more thorough review of the historical avant-garde and its relation to devising see Parsons 2010: 8-44

Andrew Benjamin (1991: 99) describes the early avant-garde as a movement that questions “the possibilities of art itself”. He sees an urge to bring art closer to life, for art to play its role as part of everyday life and not be something that belongs exclusively to artist galleries. Peter Bürger (1984) emphasizes the view that despite the different isms individual projects, both the neo-avant-garde and the historical avant-garde had the intention of reconnecting art to life. The avant-garde’s concern with blurring the boundaries between art and life started in the historical avant-garde period and continued into the neo-avant-garde period. In the historical avant-garde, the Dadaists, for example, exposed the ‘uselessness’ of art through making simplistic, naive works, which they saw as ‘anti-art’. Dadaists protested against the contemporary academic and cultured values of art. They wanted to represent the opposite of what traditional ‘passive’ art stood for and employed chance techniques and shock effects in order to engage the audience (Carlson 2004: 99) . They made their work by “removing the frame that separated and elevated the work of art from everyday life” (Govan et al 2007: 18). The futurists were also concerned with moving away from “the static work of art” and “provided an important impetus for the general shift in modern artistic interest “from product to process” (Carlson 2004: 98).

Both in Dadaism and Futurism we find innovation of artistic forms. This is taken to account and further developed in the neo-avant-garde, as we shall soon see. Such forms are, for example, the concept of readymade, the concept of chance, an artistic interest from product to process, and the relationship between performer and audience.

3.3.5 Drama education and devising

Within drama education we find traces of devising (both in regards to educational and human development and through exploration of aesthetic form and process). In the tradition ‘from idea to performance’ and ‘process

drama', for example, we find that everyday experiences are used as a source for theatre processes, which is very similar to what we find when devising a performance (Nedberg and Rygg 1995; O'Neill 1995; Avenstrup et al 1988). In fact, recent research shows that devising, rather than scripted play work, is the format that is most engaging and effective for learning outcomes in the Norwegian school context (Sæbø 2009).

Gavin Bolton uses 'devising' to explain his planning process for a drama class (Bolton 1992). Kjølner (2001: 73) refers to David Hornbrook, who "sees 'devised improvisation' as one of many drama activities in the classroom, which he does not approve of". Kjølner aligns with many drama educators who associate devising with the concept of Theatre in Education (TIE). She acknowledges that the way early British TIE groups conceived and produced their program for schools has a lot in common with what we understand by devised theatre. Devising a TIE program means to start from scratch. But, she claims:

TIE is not a prototype of devised theatre as we think of it today, even if the process of making a program contains most of the characteristics we know from devised theatre (Kjølner 2001: 75).

It is true that all the practices mentioned above in some way use/used variations of what we today call devising. But the term was coined at a specific time in history. There seems to be an agreement in the literature that there is no coherent movement or a single continuous history that can account for the emergence of devised practices (Heddon and Milling 2006; Govan et al 2007). Nevertheless, literature in the field points to the fact that from the turn of the twentieth century artists sought to "break with tradition, to find new working methods and to challenge audiences through inventive use of theatre form" (Govan et al 2007: 13). Since the 1950s, the Western world has experienced some fundamental changes that have left fertile ground for a new approach to theatre.

3.4 THE EMERGENCE OF DEVISING IN THE 1950S AND 1960S

The cultural and political shifts and challenges in the 1950s and 1960s had an enormous influence on the arts. International political and cultural events like the Cold War, the Vietnam War and the international anti-war movement that followed, led to collective political protests all over the world. In the USA, the civil rights movement developed, accompanied by the free speech movement. In Australia, indigenous Australians from mainland Australia and the Torres Strait islands were given the right to vote and were granted citizenship rights, in 1967. In Norway, Norske Samers Riksforbund was constituted in 1968 in order to fight for the civil rights of the indigenous Sami people.

Internationally, marginalized groups joined together and developed the feminist movement and the gay and lesbian movements. These movements involved the commitment of people from outside left wing parties. All of these movements in the Western world called for participatory democracy. These ideas were implanted within the theatre. Heddon and Milling (2006: 17) write: "As the ideology of participatory democracy took international root, it was evident for theatre to play its role in the formation of a new society". Avant-garde art served as a radical protest to bourgeois society. Hal Foster (1996: 16) observes that the avant-garde attacked "languages, institutions, and structures of meaning, expectation and reception". Devising was an alternative to dominant theatre institutions at the time. Instead of hierarchical modes of production with the director and playwright on top, devising offered collaboration and a de-hierarchization of the production process. Devising as a collaborative process offered new and radical ways to organize art work in a politically suitable and beneficial way. It inherited the rhetoric employed within the political movement: Individual and collective rights, self-determination, community, participation, equality (Heddon and Milling 2006: 12). Collaborative devising had the potential for letting silent voices be heard. As Heddon and Milling state:

Devising developed as an appropriate model of agency for self-representation, and a process of which to make visible that which had been previously unseen and unspoken. The collaborative nature of devising also suggested the potential of complex multiple representation and multiple interpretations (Heddon and Milling 2006: 17).

Companies and directors like Joan Littlewood and The Theatre Workshop; The Living Theatre, founded in 1947 by Julian Beck and Judith Malina, Manhattan, USA; The Open Theatre, 1962, USA; The Australian Performing Group, 1967, Melbourne; and Odin Theatre, 1964, founded by Eugenio Barba in Norway/Denmark are some of the first devised performance groups who directly responded to the new changes in society.

Heddon and Milling's (2006) critical history of devising is the only scholarly book so far that explicitly focuses on the history of devising. They draw on the now common genesis of performance art, from the avant-garde Futurists to contemporary performance art (Goldberg 1979/2011; Carlson 2004). Heddon and Milling (2006: 27) introduce three strands about where devising developed: performances based on the visual arts, performances concerned with the actor, and the political and community-based strand. This road map will be used as a structure for the subsequent text, adjusted to the focus of this study, the connection between devising and life experiences. The adjusted strands are (1) Art and life: Happenings, (2) Devising and the actor's experience, (3) Devising political theatre.

3.4.1 Art and life: Happenings

In avant-garde we saw the emergence of the urge to bring art to life and life to art. Dadaists and Surrealists tried to "minimize the gap between art and life and instead render the everyday an aesthetic experience" (Heddon and Milling 2006: 66). In the movements of Happenings and Fluxus that began in New York in the mid-1960s this intention was further developed. Happenings

was a type of performance that was “art but seems closer to life”, as Allan Kaprow (1966: 5) says. Happenings were considered a tool to liberate both the artist and the spectator, and this was at a time that demanded art and performance practices to liberate the alienated individual. As Callery states:

There was a distinct move away from the notion of art as a reflection of reality. Instead artists began to claim a deeper re-presentation of life in distorted and increasingly abstract images which refracted life, as though through a broken mirror or prism, to reveal a darker truth (Callery 2001: 9).

In order to create a refracted image of life, one important tool for Happenings was the use of chance. The use of chance techniques had the effect of liberating “sensitivity towards time and space, leading to an awareness of the contingent or ‘the accidental’” (Heddon and Milling 2006: 64). Chance techniques, like a roulette wheel and throwing dice, determined how many people were part of the compositional activity or what the order of the sequences in a performance were (Kaprow 1965: 177). The goal was to destroy old values and reveal new experiences to make the human free from traditional and habitual thinking. In this way the use of chance was a protest against bourgeois society built on reason and logic. Bürger (1984: 66) argues that the chance systems were not just formal techniques, rather they were an ideological stance: “we are dealing here with an ideological category: the production of meaning, which is a production by the human subject”. Chance techniques offered new meaning connections to occur in that they cultivated randomness and ‘accidents’ instead of traditional reason structures that no longer corresponded to the larger development in society.

The Theatre of Mistakes (founded in 1974) was one of many groups that used chance and mistake as a central concept in their work. They had a focus on a task-and-formula-based dramaturgy and generated performances from a large number of improvisational exercises (Creese 1979). The exercises

allowed the group to develop new acting styles based on their own lived experience, their bodies and behavior:

The “drama” of their performance comes from each performer’s efforts at “extending” his or her own behavior by using exercises. The plays are “about” their real lives dealing with the exercises during any given performance for as long as it lasts. Their goal is *action*, not *acting as if* (Creese 1979: 70. Original italics).

The use of chance techniques, improvisation, the amalgamation of art forms, the use of mistakes and accidents in companies like the Theatre of Mistakes and in Happenings was developed in order to establish another relationship between art and life. Kaprow sums up the aim of the new experiments as an effort to break with professional skills in art and render everyday acts as the source of art. The various avant-garde techniques had this in common:

All focused in one way or another on the primacy of the irrational and/or the unconscious, on their effect upon undirected body responses, and on the elimination of pictorial and other professional skills as criteria of art. Thus the idea of art as “act” rather than esthetics was implicit... (Kaprow 1966: 282).

The neo-avant-garde’s effort to bring life to art and art to life disembogued the elitist performer and replaced her with the creative performer, and the virtuosic artist was replaced by the readymade artist. With Happenings there was a move towards the everyday, from dramatic narrative and fiction, in order to bring art closer to life and vice versa. New ways of composing and generating materials were explored in order to create lifelike actions;

The artist employs chance methods in order to arrive at a score of ‘root’ directions, which serve as basis for generating open-ended, life-like actions that make up the Happening (Kaprow in Berghaus 2005: 87).

This demonstrates how Happenings broke with traditional dramaturgy and modes of production within the traditional theatre and established a new

platform for performing lived experience. These platforms have been important for devisers, devising companies and postdramatic performances ever since. Such influences also reach new performance students and contemporary theatre institutions like the two selected for this study.

3.4.2 Devising and the Actor's Experience

Many devised theatre groups, like The Living Theatre, The Open Theatre, Joan Littlewood and The Theatre Workshop, The Australian Performing Group, Odin Theatre in Denmark and Grenland Friteater in Norway took a special interest in the possibilities of acting, the role of the actor and new encounters between the actor and audience. Both Odin Theatre and Grenland Friteater were descendants of Jerzy Grotowski, his Laboratory Theatre and the manifesto *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968) highly influenced their work. These groups (among many others) were looking for alternatives to the psychological realism and character-based theatre which dominated the theatre industry at that time. As Heddon and Milling (2006: 33) write: "For some young companies in the 1950s, Stanislavskian techniques felt too character-centered ...", and therefore, "... other kinds of actor training were beginning to be looked for".

In order to empower and liberate the actor from the director's constraints, there was a growing emphasis on the creative actor (Govan et al 2007: 29-40) who was seen as a 'total creator' rather than as a tool for the director's visions. An increased interest in improvisation, exercises and games came to life, as we have seen. In the late 1950s, Viola Spolin developed Nina Boyd's work into theatre games aimed at developing the individual's creativity and self-expression. In *Improvisation for the Theater* (1963/1999) Spolin writes about spontaneity as an essential way for re-creating earlier experiences and for creating new ones in a process that explores reality and liberates the individual from its constraints;

Through spontaneity we are re-formed into ourselves. It creates an explosion that for the moment frees us for handed-down frames of reference, memory chocked with old facts and information and undigested theories and techniques of other people's findings. Spontaneity is the moment of personal freedom when we are faced with a reality, and see it, explore it and act on it accordingly. In this reality bits and pieces of ourselves function as an organic whole. It is the time for discovery, of experiencing and of creative expression (Spolin 1963/1999: 4).

Furthermore, she states that the theatre is a cultural practice free for everyone to exercise: "Everyone can act. Everyone can improvise. Everyone who wishes to can play in the theatre and learn to become 'stageworthy'" (Spolin 1963/1999: 3). Spolin's *Improvisation for the Theater* (1963/1999) is a clear articulation of the visions of the creative actor at the time, and her work became influential for many devising companies in the 1960s and 1970s. It is "one of the most influential post-war actor-training texts" according to Heddon and Milling (2006: 34). Also game theory, like Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens: a study of the play element in culture* (1955/2010) and Roger Caillois' *Man, Play and Games* (1961/2001) provided guiding models for new ways to organize creative work. They all argued for the importance of play and games in human development during the entire life span, and this theory informed many practitioners' work.

Heddon and Milling (2006) argue that the ideology underpinning improvisation and games was linked to the emergence of devising in two key ways: "Firstly, the use of improvisation presupposed that the performer had an inner creativity that had been repressed, socialized, censored or hidden... Secondly, that the actor was 'released' from the constraints of the text into creative 'self-expression' by improvisation" (Heddon and Milling 2006: 30).

The creative self turned out to be the central site of investigation for many devisers and theatre practitioners in the twentieth century, and improvisation

and games were tools that helped release the actor's creativity. Phillip Auslander (1997: 30) argues that all the major acting practitioners like Stanislavski, Brecht and Grotowski "posit the self as an autonomous foundation for acting", although in very different ways.

Since the 1960s the role of the actor has been challenged, due to its historical context. From an emphasis on psychological character-based work, where the actor receives instructions from the instructor and the dramaturge, the creative 'total' performer has developed. Creative performers are distinguished by their concern for personal growth, liberation and control in the creative process, and the creator's self and body is the main source for creation, and new relationships between the performer and audience are searched for. The creator's personal experience is the main source for creating theatre in a new form that privileges presence over representation, as is described in the following way by Lehman:

Since the 1970s, performance and theatre practitioners have found the meaning of theatre work in giving preference to *presence* over representation, in as much as it is about the communication of *personal experience* (Lehman 2006: 109 Original italics).

Through devising personal experience artists have tried to establish authenticity and sincerity in performance. This resembles the development of individualism in Western society, which focuses on individual independence and creative freedom. Through performance, artists in the twentieth century have wished to liberate both the actors and the audience, and this is key in the early political theatre, as is evidenced in the last strand.

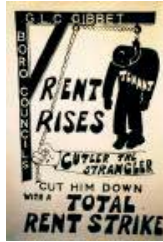
3.4.3 Devising political theatre

There lies a clear political commitment in both of the strands we have just looked at. Theatre was considered and used as a tool for change. In the first

strand we saw how different artists from different art forms joined together and found performance to be a suitable format to bring life to the arts. In the second strand, the focus was on how actors explored different ways of acting, other than using character-based methods, to express other parts of human existence and to bring new relationships to both the actor and the audience. In the current section, the focus changes to the political theatre, seen as activism, which gives new ways to organize performance work and to express everyday life-experiences.

The politics of theatre in this period has at least three different aspects. It can be understood as performances with an explicit political content creation and the forms that it brings (like the agit-prop theatre). Secondly, it can refer to the intent of emancipating and educating the individual through theatrical practice. Another dimension to political devising is linked to the exploration of democratic ways of organizing work. We shall look at all these aspects, starting with the political theatre's content and form, as seen in the agit-prop theatre in the 1960s and 1970s.

The notion of agit-prop is derived from 'agitation' and 'propaganda'. Agit-prop theatre was considered a tool that could liberate the participants and audience through enlightenment and political information. The Leeds-based company The Agitprop Street Players was founded in 1968 and was later renamed Red Ladder. It is one of the most influential political companies in Britain. Their first play was devised as a direct response to the political struggles in their community as tenants' rents increased and the tenants responded with a strike. The group made simple posters with political slogans:



(Retrieved from the Internet <http://posterworkshop.co.uk>)

They devised a fifteen minute political performance that took the form of a demonstration. This kind of political agit-prop performance was directly connected to real workers' struggles and their lived experiences. Richard Seyed, a group member, explained that "the aim of the play was to make tangible the invisible forces that impact on our lived experiences, so that they can be grasped and, hopefully, acted upon" (Seyed in Heddon and Milling 2006: 99). Theatre was being used as activism, as a tool for change and for expressing urgent life experiences in radical ways, all in response to the cultural climate of the time. The devising format allowed for a quick response and adaptation of real world events into performance. On their homepage, Red Ladder describes their work as portable, political and performed in the social environment:

The plays were short and biting, morale-boosting sketches often relying on striking visual images to get the message across, they were highly portable relying on few props and were performed at mass political demonstrations, tenants association meetings, weekend schools etc. (Retrieved from www.redladder.co.uk).

Agit-prop companies considered their work as a political act, and the aesthetics were devised as a response to their particular content needs.

Heddon and Milling state that:

This focus on politics rather than aesthetics rendered possible the ideological stance of anti-professionalization, tied to a general desire to democratize the arts, making them accessible to all. 'Devising', the creation of a 'product' from scratch, enabled by everyone's contribution, was considered a

potential model of democratic arts practice (Heddon and Milling 2006: 101).

In the political theatre of the 1960s and 1970s, much effort was expended in developing equality within the group. It sought to create organizations that did not promote or support the bourgeois ideology and tried to implement models that enabled participatory democracy. This led to the use of devising as a means of production. An example from the Norwegian context is the formation of the regional theatre, Hålogaland Teater (HT), which led to a local experiment in developing devising strategies in the 1970s. The HT collective group created a concept for the creative process that was innovative for the time. Barbro Rønning (1991: 79) identifies three characteristics in the HT model: the collective took control over the production process (instead of a director or dramaturge); the group let the audience influence the production (they were in conversation with the audience before, during and after the production); and, finally, the role of the skilled workers was given new content.

The mode of production at HT, as in much political theatre at the time, was built on the structure of the collective. The collective model insisted on shared and equal responsibility for all aspects of the production, and all jobs were considered to be equally important. But, despite the employment of a collective democratic structure, HT, and many other political groups, still developed informal power structures. As Rønning (1991: 75) writes, in practice, “democracy became an illusion”. The ideal of collective decision-making was based on unanimous agreement, but this meant that those who did not agree inevitably had to give up in order to let the process continue. It often developed “a hidden hierarchy” in the political companies, with the strongest voices in the group being the hidden, or implicit, leaders, which was a system much more difficult to confront than open hierarchies (Heddon and Milling 2006: 107). The collective decision-making process could also be

extremely time-consuming, as all the decisions in the creative process had to be made collectively through discussions. HT member, Sæverud, recognized that the collective structure worked best in periods where the group was overloaded with work, in that “the number of problems that the collective have to deal with is directly proportional with the time available to discuss them” (Sæverud in Rønning 1991: 75. My translation).

Another unfortunate effect of the collective structure was that the creative process descended into confusion and chaos as everyone tried to do everything. Seyd writes that the collective structure turned into “an anarchic tyranny of structurelessness” (Seyd in Heddon and Milling 2006: 106). Hence, the collective democratic structure which was employed in order to open up new experiences for participants and for letting all voices and experiences be heard turned out to be difficult to maintain in practice. HT abandoned the democratic model in 1985 and employed a manager/director as the leader of the theatre. The demise of collective democracy in political theatre corresponded with the demise of political engagement in society in general in the 1980s. Heddon and Milling (2006: 124) state that the “socialist theatre movement all but disappeared during the 1980s because the socialist movement disappeared”. This shows that expressions of lived experience in devised performance are closely linked to broader developments in society; as society and the political climate changes, the modes of expressions in devised performance change too. Politically devised theatre as it appeared in the 1960s and 1970s is more or less defunct today, but it explored new ways of structuring work and finding new collaboration methods, that has influenced devising practices since the 1960s.

Clearly, by comparison to the movements of the 1960s and 1970s, today’s political theatre hardly exists, but the experiments with different ways of organizing the creative process, as opposed to the traditional hierarchic way, are still key features in devising. The liberating aspect of devised

performance-making still exists as key for many practitioners, for example in feminist performance, in the field of applied theatre, documentary drama, autobiographical performance and some performance art productions.

3.5 SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to explore the historical connection between devising and lived experience in order to elaborate and refine the analytical focus of the study. The insights from this chapter make it possible to outline the significant features of devising practices and thereby understand the practices in the case studies of this research.

The 1960s ushered in a cultural shift that argued for changes in the arts in regards to process, form and experience, in such things as:

- A non-hierarchic organization of the creative **process**;
- A de-hierarchization of theatrical means and aesthetic **forms** in that all art-forms were considered to have equal status;
- A wish to let everyday **experiences** be used and articulated in performance and a wish to emancipate the individual from cultural constraints and the grip of the director in theatre;

The shift took place in a cultural **context** that was politically engaged in changing the world and the arts. This is summarized in the devising model:

CONTEXT:

Politicizing of society and performance as a useful means of expression

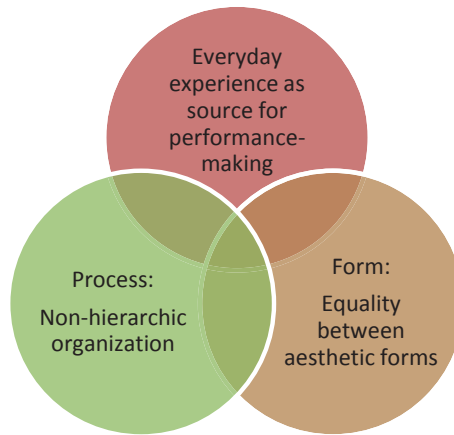


Figure 2: The devising model: Significant features in devising.

This chapter outlined a history of devising in order to identify significant features of devising. The model shows that in the history of devising, process, form and experience are essential elements in understanding the essence of devising. The historical developments in process, form and experience leads to the sub-questions posited by this study:

- How is the creative devising process developed from experience, and which elements are significant in generalizing new experience and aesthetic form?
- How is experience and aesthetic form inter-related in the devising process?

This chapter has identified a connection between lived experience, form and process and given it a historical context. The next chapter will elaborate on the relationship between experience and aesthetic form in order to find relevant categories for analyzing the case studies.

4 AESTHETIC FORM AND EXPERIENCE - THEORY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers aesthetic form and experience. It is the overlapping field between the aesthetic/theatrical and the subject/experience that is of particular interest in order to see how these two aspects are linked in the creative process. Therefore this chapter will explore the meeting point between aesthetic form and phenomenological experience in order to develop analytical categories that can be used in the analysis of the case studies. Since this area is treated by many theorists, a selection of relevant contributions will be referred to. Eco's (1989) notion of The Open Work is used as an example of a new mode of aesthetic production and perception that came to life during the 1960s. It is particularly his concept of openness of form related to artistic intention and the human lifeworld that is of interest for this research. Van Manen (1990) and Merleau-Ponty (1945/2010) have a phenomenological approach to lived experience and will be used as the main theoretical sources covering the phenomenological area of investigation. Other theories that can explain different aspects of the connection between aesthetic form and experience will also be discussed.

4.2 OPENNESS OF FORM

In The Open Work Eco (1989) provides us with the concept of openness of form. He insists on "the element of multiplicity, plurality or polemy in art" (Eco 1989: viii). The idea of the open work can explain the difference in the

character between traditional art and postmodern art, which is related to different ways of organizing and experiencing the world.

Eco (1989: 141) argues that in order to correspond to contemporary human experience art should offer multiple possibilities of interpretation, fragmentation and complexity. The artist should be offered artistic freedom to develop and perform art, which breaks with traditional ways of structuring and organizing art, and, instead, create fragmented and complex works according to contemporary existential circumstances (Eco 1989: 138). Eco (1989: 4) argues that the concept of openness is not new, but it has been present “in a far more tangible sense” than ever before due to cultural and social changes since the 1960s. From Modernism onwards, the artist has seen this openness and multiplicity as a positive aspect of her production, “recasting the work so as to expose it to the maximum possible opening” (Eco 1989: 5). This change has taken place as a result of a “historical evolution of aesthetic sensibility”, and there are factors in the modern culture that has reinforced this development (Eco 1989: 4).

4.2.1 Form and intention

Eco (1989: 158-161) argues that what makes an open work successful is linked to the concepts of “organic form” and “artistic intention” and draws on Pareyson's aesthetics of formativity:

Form is a structured object uniting thought, feeling, and matter in an activity that aims at the harmonious coordination of all three and proceeds according to the laws postulated and manifested by the work itself as it is being made (Eco 1989: 159).

This means that aesthetic form is inextricably linked to the maker of the work, in that “the content of the form is the artist” and her “way of forming” is manifested within the creative product, Eco (1989: 160) says. Furthermore,

“the work of art reveals the entire personality of the artist, not just in its subject or its theme, but first and foremost in the unique and very personal way in which it has been formed” (Eco 1989: 159-160). Hence, the way by which the artist is forming an aesthetic object reveals the artists personality, according to Eco. This also means that the terms “content”, “form” and “matter” collapses into one, in and through the artist herself (Eco 1989: 160):

The content of a work is its creator, who at the same time is also its form, since the artist gives his creation its style – this being at once the way the artist forms himself in his work and the way the work manifests itself as such. Thus, the very subject of a work is none other than one of the elements in which the artist has expressed himself by giving himself form (Eco 1989: 159).

This means that in the artistic work there is always manifest a “formative intention”, which Eco (1989: 104) describes as “a conscious organization” of the work. But Eco does not say anything about how such artistic intentions are developed or used by the artist except that it has to do with organizing the work in a way that has a “plurivocal” message (Eco 1989: 42). To be aesthetically successful, an open artwork must produce “controlled disorder” and an “organic fusion of multiple elements” must be present (Eco 1989: xii). Eco also points out that the modern work is not entirely free in that “a formative intention is manifest in every work ... For all its openness, the work nonetheless directs the public's response” in some way or another (Eco 1989: xii). It is interesting to see if the case studies in this research can generate more knowledge on how intentions, related to lived experience, are immanent and developed in the creative work.

The concepts of organic form and artistic intention are important qualifications of Eco's notion of openness, but they are also problematic and elusive, as David Robey points out:

How does one distinguish between organic and non-organic or “failed” form, especially in a work characterized by a

multiplicity of meanings? How does one identify ... the "intentions implicitly manifest" by the author? (Robey in Eco 1989: xii).

These questions remain open, but Eco's concept of openness is nevertheless interesting because he offers a theory that shows a connection between aesthetic form and the artist's experience:

In the work, the artist forms "his concrete experience, his interior life, his unique spirituality, his personal reaction to the world in which he lives, his thoughts, customs, feelings, ideals, beliefs, aspirations." ...this does not mean that the artist narrates himself in his work; he reveals himself in it as a way of forming (Eco 1989: 165).

Aesthetic form is in this way a formative development and expression of experience, yet not through the way the artist "narrates" herself (ibid), but through the way she creates aesthetic form. In the quote above Eco argues that aesthetic work is based on, and is an expression of, the artist's identity, but it is interesting also to ask if this way of aesthetic forming can be a way of forming identity. Chapter 5 considers the creative process and experience and will elaborate on this.

4.2.2 Form as social commitment

The previous chapter on devising showed that there was a political commitment in many early devising companies, especially in the political theatre. This commitment was a response to existential challenges, which facilitated new artistic creations and new audience perceptions. Eco (1989: 139-157) addresses the political in a different manner when he argues that open works are political in the way they employ and organize aesthetic forms. Eco contends that unconventional ways of organizing aesthetic work is political in its own way:

Art is therefore political in its own special way; it produces new knowledge that can serve as a basis for changing the

world, but it does not necessarily have an explicitly political content (Eco 1989: xv).

In the essay “Form as Social Commitment” Eco (1989: 123-157) demonstrates how certain avant-garde art has a social commitment that is expressed in modern open works that correspond to new developments in the contemporary world. He argues (1989: 141) that such modern open work has a special political function that breaks with formal traditional art and unlocks the audience’s habitual thinking and way of behaving. While traditional art offers, through its formal structures and narratives, an orderly and coherent universe, the real world is disordered and complex: “The order of words no longer corresponds to the order of things”, says Eco (1989: 141). Therefore avant-garde artists sought to create new formal properties that were fragmented and chaotic and hence corresponded to the contemporary real world (ibid).

Eco contends that “our feelings have been frozen into stereotypical expressions that have nothing to do with our reality” (Eco 1989: 141). In order to make art important in people’s lives and to make them think critically about their own existence, avant-garde art offers formative structures that are open to such critical reflection. In this way, avant-garde art is not “out of touch with the human community”, as many critics claim (Eco 1989: 142). It is, rather, traditional art that no longer corresponds and responds to real world development: “In fact, only avant-garde artists are capable of establishing a meaningful relationship with the world in which they live” (Eco 1989: 142). In this research study, Eco’s concept of openness is important because it shows how lived experience is demonstrated through formal properties and that the creation of art is closely linked to historical and social developments. It is interesting to see if the devisers establish a meaningful relationship with the world by working with aesthetic form and if a social commitment can be recognized in the way Eco describes.

4.2.3 Form and lifeworld existentials

Whereas Eco has an emphasis on art work as related to formal structures and historical and social development, this research project has a distinct focus on the relationship between the lived experience and aesthetic form-making. Van Manen (1990: 105) has a particular focus on lived experience and argues that there are four lifeworld existentials that are particularly suitable for investigating lived experience. These are “lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), and lived human relation (relationality or communality)” (Van Manen 1990: 101).

The four existentials can be differentiated but not separated. Van Manen (1990: 105) argues: “They all form an intricate unity which we call the lifeworld – our lived world”. A theatrical universe contains the same features as Van Manen describes: lived bodies, lived space, lived time and lived human relations. When both making and perceiving a performance, the totality of these elements is experienced in “an intricate unity”, similar to the way Van Manen describes their appearance in the lifeworld. Interestingly, postmodern performance theorists Lehmann (2006) and Erica Fischer-Lichte (2008) use body, space and time as analytical lenses when defining, respectively, “postdramatic theatre” and “performative theatre”. The content in Van Manen’s fourth existential, lived human relation, is treated in “Media in postdramatic theatre” by Lehmann (2006: 167) and in “The feedback loop” by Fischer -Lichte (2008: 38). For the purpose of this study, Van Manen’s existentials are structured into three areas of investigation that are particularly relevant to this study: *narratives*, seen as structures of experience; the performing *body-subject*; and lived aesthetic *space and time*. The perspective of “lived human relation” is embedded within these three areas in that they all focus on both perception and expression, thus communication and constitution of human relations (between performer and the audience) in performance is central. The three existentials will now be presented and it is

the meeting point between the theatrical and the subjective that is the essential aspect to illuminate.

4.3 NARRATIVE; STRUCTURE OF EXPERIENCE

Narrative is a human way of structuring and giving meaning to experiences. The claim that narrative is a fundamental mode of thought has also been put forward by Jerome Bruner. He contends that narrative offers a way of “ordering experience, of constructing reality” (Bruner 1986: ii). Narrative is a personal way of structuring an experience, but at the same time is closely linked to culture. Narrative is created and interpreted as “an intertwining of the personal and the cultural” (Garro and Mattingly 2000: 24). Through narratives, people mediate their personal and cultural experience, as Linda Garro and Cheryl Mattingly state:

In both telling and interpreting experiences, narrative mediates between an inner world of thought-feeling and an outer world of observable actions and states of affairs (J. Bruner 1986; Carrithers 1992; Mattingly and Garro 1994; Mattingly 1998a). Creating a narrative, as well as attending to one, is an active and constructive process – one that depends on both personal and cultural resources (Garro and Mattingly 2000: 1).

Hence, narrative is both personal and historically/culturally contingent. It is a way to organize and structure personal experience, but the available ways of structuring experiences are determined by cultural and historical possibilities and limitation.

In devising practices, narratives are used as ways to structure the performance. It is a conscious way of expressing the creative material in a sensible and mindful way in order to communicate with an audience.

Eco (1989) argues that when history changes, the ways of structuring narratives changes. He identifies a change introduced in the avant-garde movement from linear narratives and plots, to a-linear and fragmented narratives (Eco 1989: 143-150). This relates to the changes in modern society; new structures of society lead to new structures of experiences and, thereby, new aesthetic forms that express the evolving changes. As Mark Freeman (2001: 284) puts it: “personal identity along with the narrativization of experience becomes reconfigured in distinct ways across the course of history”. Narrativization refers to the process where we “present or interpret (something such as experience or theory) in the form of a story or narrative” (Oxford Dictionaries 2014⁸). Jefferson Singer and Pavel Blagov argue that there is a close connection between identity and autobiographical narrativization: “identity is synonymous with the autobiographical narrative individuals construct to weave together their past, present, and anticipated future into a unified whole” (Singer and Blagov 2004: 121). Identity, in Singer and Blagov’s framework, can be understood as “the system of the personality that is responsible for creating an overall sense of coherence and meaning within the individual life” (ibid).

In theatre, Janek Szatkowski (1992: 41) suggests four dramaturgical models to describe different ways of structuring and perceiving performances: “Dramatic form; Epic form; Simultaneous form; Meta-fictional form”. These different ways of structuring narratives correspond, to some extent, to different ways of constructing and making meaning out of human experiences in aesthetic ways related to historical development. Szatkowski proposes that the models are only suggestive of how different structures have been developed and applied throughout history. Despite the danger of putting normative assumptions between epoch and form, and form and

⁸ Retrieved from
http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/american_english/narrativize

experience, both Eco (1989) and Szatkowski's (1992) writings assert that the perception and creation of form is historically contingent to some extent.

During postmodernity, new aesthetic forms have been developed, or recycled, from earlier generations. It is this form of dramaturgy that Szatkowski (1992: 41) calls "Meta-fictional", also described as "the Dramaturgy of Irony". It came to life in the 1990s and is characterized by narratives that are "montages with progressive story-elements" and it is "ironic-logic motivated" (ibid). Meaning is problematized in a double strategy that both accepts the necessity of totality and acknowledges its destructive force. It is a play about human longing for totality (ibid). Narrative strategies such as appropriation, intertextuality and fragmentation are used in postmodern performance as creative ways of organizing contemporary experience, and it is interesting in this research to see if such strategies are applied by devisers in the case studies.

4.3.1 Contemporary narrative forms and strategies

Eco's (1989) concept of openness of form and multiplicity in the arts open up for a variety of aesthetic forms, like hybridization and fragmented narratives, which is seen in postdramatic arts practices. Brad Haseman's (1999: 217) study shows that many contemporary artists collaborate across disciplines and backgrounds to "share, understand and shape each other's artistic decision-making processes thereby influencing the work in the act of its becoming". As a result, their art-making takes them naturally and fluently into hybrid forms, "where established artistic parents give birth to the new" (ibid). Haseman mentions four impulses of postmodern arts practice which can be considered in relation to Eco's open work. These are appropriation, intertextuality, fragmentation and performativity. Performativity will be discussed in the section on body-subject.

Appropriation refers to the use of borrowed elements in the creation of new work. These elements might be borrowed from other art works, popular culture and non-art objects. It may include aesthetic forms from art history, styles and genres. When the Australian deviser Richard Murphet (2007: 5) speaks of his work with Pram Factory he says: “We were like magpies, we took everything that glittered”. The stealing and quoting is appreciated in many devising groups as material which can be used to address central contemporary issues or movements in the culture. When appropriation is used as a technique in postmodern performances “the aim is not to present the same work, but through working in a different context to present something quite different, from the same material” (Heddon and Milling 2006: 207). Appropriation can be considered a possibility for the deviser to reflect, interpret and change an existing material into her own creation. Appropriation in a devising context can be described as a personal mediation of existing cultural material through a creative act.

Intertextuality within a postmodern context was developed by Julia Kristeva (Kristeva and Roudiez 1980). It refers to a situation where

...all writing takes place in the web of texts that come before and after it. Any text is always replete with, even written by others’ texts, just as any subject is constituted in language not its own (Fortier 1997: 59).

Roland Barthes emphasis intertextuality as a way of reading and understanding texts in relation to historical contexts, as a part of a conversation (Barthes and Balzac 1974). The “writerly text” therefore has a capacity for plurality of meaning (Barthes and Balzac 1974: 5). This understanding of intertextuality supports the concept that the meaning of an artistic work does not reside in that work, but within makers and viewers. In relation to theatrical performance, text does not refer to written or literary texts exclusively. Gattenhof’s (2004: 165) study shows that “more often than not, this type of intertextuality is conveyed through projected image,

movement, sound or a combination of cultural codes". This kind of intertextuality is used to juxtapose historical events with those being encountered in contemporary society, and new technology is often used as a powerful device (ibid). Thus, intertextuality in a devising context means to be in a culturally ongoing aesthetic and experiential conversation with others' experience and creative work and to give an aesthetic response to this conversation.

Furthermore, David Bloome and Anne Egan-Robertson (2004: 18-19) have identified three recent approaches to intertextuality, in literary studies, in social semiotic studies and in educational studies. They argue that

the meaning constructed through intertextuality can be called *intertextual substance*. However, intertextuality also involves what can be called *intertextual processes*, which are the ways in which intertextual meanings can be built (Bloome and Egan-Robertson 2004: 31).

Hence, meaning (intertextual substance) is created in an intertextual process that is social: "People interacting with each other, construct intertextual relationships by the way they act and react to each other" (Bloome and Egan-Robertson 2004: 30). Therefore, there is an assumed intertextual connection between form, content and process, and this research will follow this theoretical path and see if such connections occur in the case studies.

Eco (1989: 143-150) demonstrates how open, *fragmented* texts and narratives are replacing linear narratives in order to create ambiguous meanings and to produce a play with social construction. Govan et al shows how contemporary devisers

... construct theatrical narratives that are explicitly intended to challenge neat distinctions between the fictional and real, between secrets and lies, and between imagination and authenticity (Govan et al 2007: 56).

In order to create such defamiliarization, a non-linear fragmented structure is often preferred, rather than a linear narrative, with a plot, exposition and a catharsis feeling for the viewer as the final goal. In a collaborative work where all of the participants' voices are to be heard, Gattenhof's study (2004) demonstrates that disjointed and multiple narratives are developed. Such multi-layered or multi-storied narrative is "'a-linear' and may be considered to be without time" (Gattenhof 2004: 168).

Fragmentation and defamiliarization are narrative techniques associated with Russian formalist Victor Šklovskij's (1893-1984) theory on estrangement. Šklovskij saw estrangement as a means of making people conscious of automatized behavior (Šklovskij 1917/1990). Šklovskij argued that human perception works by identifying an object, by automatically recognizing its surface without really identifying it: "We know it's there but we do not see it, and, for that reason, we can say nothing about it" (Šklovskij 1917/1990: 6). In order to avoid automatized perception of the object it is removed from its usual sphere and has its context changed. It is thereby "estranged". This can be accomplished in the arts in a variety of ways, Šklovskij (1917/1990: 6) argues. Stig A. Eriksson (2009) gives an account of the lineage of the notion of "distancing" and shows how estrangement is a distancing device in process drama:

Distancing devices are artistic means purposely activated to provide exposure and reflection. They involve a meaning making orientation concerned with a critical look at habitual "givens" and with an intention of promoting change (Eriksson 2011: 66).

In structuring experience through narratives, estrangement seems one important tool in providing distance, reflection and a critical eye to automatized behavior. This research will look for how deviser's apply estrangement as a device that might provide reflection and distance.

The next section considers another existential, which also has a correspondence with experience and performance: space and time.

4.4 LIVED AESTHETIC SPACE AND TIME

Being-in-the-world means to be spatially in the world (Merleau-Ponty 1945/2010). We are situated in the world spatially and the physical environment affects our existence. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2010) distinguishes between 'objective' and 'lived' space, the former is the physical or geometrical space (op.cit: 284) and the latter is the projection of our own spatial orientation on the world (op.cit: 295). As Van Manen (1990: 36) argues, lived space and time (aspects of lived experience) is difficult to put into words since it is often pre-reflective and operates below the level of consciousness. It is formed by social circumstances, the social space, yet is always subjective and given meaning in an embodied perceptual process. Lived space and time is mediated through the body and is distinguished as an active ongoing process: "The synthesis of both time and space is a task that always has to be performed afresh" (Merleau-Ponty (1945/2010: 162). This applies to the creative devising process in this research study as well, where lived space and time is used and developed into theatrical space and time in an active ongoing process. Joyce Davidson (2000: 645) argues that lived space and time forms our sense of self in the world, which is, at the same time, also formed by the environment. Lived space and time is not fixed and stable, rather it is always in the act of becoming, and "change according to our modes of existence, our moods, and environmental factors beyond our control" (Davidson 2000: 664).

The transient and fleeting aspect of lived space is what Fischer-Lichte (2008: 107) calls "spatiality" in performance. Spatiality is "transitory and fleeting", constantly exposed to "spontaneous changes" (op.cit: 107). In a performance

setting, spatiality is the shared experience that takes place here and now within a limited time:

It does not exist before, beyond, or after the performance but emerges in and through it ... As such, spatiality needs to be distinguished from the space in which it occurs (Fischer-Lichte 2008: 107).

The performative space is not primarily a physical dimensional space; it is an embodied and emotional space that “possesses the meaning of lapse or duration in time” (Van Manen and Adams 2009: 12). The emotional space reminds us of past lived experiences, events and happenings, but also enables us to identify with the performers and emphatically engage in their emotional embodied spaces. In this sense, “space carries the meaning of temporal and physical expanse as well as the time spent in an experience” (Van Manen and Adams 2009: 12). It opens up the potential for new meaning-making and new experiences. In the analysis of the case studies it will be looked for how this takes place in a devised performance.

In postdramatic theatre the notion of space is challenged (Lehmann 2006). The aim is no longer to inform the audience and let them observe what is going on in the performance space. Rather, the spectators are offered an experience that communicates directly with their nervous system.

Charged by physical energy, such immediately spatialized *body-time* aims to communicate directly with the spectators’ nervous system not to inform them. The spectators do not observe but experience themselves inside of a time-space (Lehmann 2006: 152. Original italics).

Postdramatic theatre offers a new perceptual embodied possibility. This is articulated by Fischer-Lichte when she describes a performative space:

It opens special possibilities for the relationship between actors and spectators and for movement and perception. Whatever the ways in which these possibilities are used, applied, realized, treated, or, alternatively, subverted, they

affect the performative space. Every movement of people, objects, lights, and every noise can transform this unstable and fluctuating space. The performance's spatiality is brought forth by the performative space and must be examined within the parameters set by it (Fischer-Lichte 2008: 107).

Thus, in the performative space, the interrelation between the performer and the audience is highlighted and new spatial arrangements are created in order to stimulate new experiences. This means that the artist's consideration of the audience and audience communication impacts how the artist's apply and generate their experiences. This will be addressed in the analysis.

In this study, lived space refers to the embodied subjective and psychological space of the social and cultural milieu. Aesthetic space refers to spatiality, a space controlled and mediated by the performer, a space that prepositions for certain experiences and perceptual possibilities for, and with, an audience. In the analysis of the case studies it is the intertwining space between the lived/psychological space and time and the aesthetic/physical performance space and time that is analyzed.

The next section focuses on another aspect of performance work and experience: the performing body-subject.

4.5 THE PERFORMING BODY-SUBJECT

Cultural changes in notions of 'the body' are reflected and articulated in theatrical performances. Before modernism, the physical body on stage was seen as representational and as source of semantic reading. In postmodernism, there was a change in the function of the body on stage, from articulating meaning, illustrations and representation to articulating energy, presence and actions (Auslander 2003; Lehmann 2006; Fischer-Lichte 2008).

This section concerns the performers' and the viewers' bodies. The significance of the body lies in the fact that the body is the location from which all performances are made and perceived. The relationship between the body and lived experience (it will be argued that the body is lived experience) is addressed under the headings of the phenomenological body, drawing on Merleau-Ponty (1945/2010), and the body as a historical and social construction, referencing philosopher Judith Butler (1988) and sociologist Mike Featherstone (1991). Fisher-Lichte (2008) refers to both Merleau-Ponty and Butler when she discusses the performing body. Her thoughts on the performative actor will be described before the relationship between the performer and the self is discussed, using autobiographical performance as an example.

4.5.1 The phenomenological body-subject

Merleau-Ponty's work (1945/2010) on the perception of the body came to mark a paradigmatic shift in Western thinking about how the body and experience is linked. He opposed the old dualist notion of mind and body. The body, he said, is not a thing, an object or an instrument separated from the mind and from the word, as the rationalist Cartesians claimed (ibid). Merleau-Ponty (1945/2010) argued that we are our bodies, and that our lived experience of this body denies the detachment of subject from object, mind from body. Bodily experience gives perception a meaning beyond that established simply by thought. Perception is an embodied experience.

The body is both thinking and perceiving and should therefore not be referred to as body, but as a *body-subject*. The body-subject is what constitutes us as human beings; we *are* our bodies, and, at the same time, it is our bodies that connect us to the world; without the body *we* would be impossible. The body, the mind and the world are completely *intertwined* and cannot be seen as separate from one another (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 130). Our bodies, our flesh,

this is what connects us as human beings in the world and makes us a part of the world. Our consciousness, our experiences and our identities are found in and through our bodies. As body-subjects we give meaning to the world:

The things of the world, phenomenal structures are not merely realities that are independent of us but are bound to our existence as body-subjects – as givers of meaning (Primožic 2001: 17).

As seeing human beings we are capable of having a double look at the world:

The enigma is that my body simultaneously sees and is seen. That which looks at all things can also look at itself and recognize, in what it sees, the 'other side' of his power of looking. It sees itself seeing; it touches itself touching; it is visible and sensitive for itself (Merleau-Ponty 1964/2004: 162).

This double look that Merleau-Ponty describes is important for a deviser. As her body mediates experiences from her life in a creative process, she is aware that her bodily expressions will be viewed by another. But this double look does not mean that one can look objectively at oneself; one sees oneself from the inside, with a subjective embodied gaze, not objectively from the outside. The body cannot be separated from the experience of the body. One can only analyze the world from the perspective of a subjective embodied mind. Merleau-Ponty's orientation toward the body is appealing to drama and performance scholars because it foregrounds the expressive body and offers a vocabulary with which to communicate bodily experiences that are wordless. His theory can shed light on many aspects of performance, as Auslander says:

Merleau-Ponty's concept of embodiment speaks potentially to all aspects of performance: the performers embodied experience of performing as much as the spectator's embodied perception of the performance (Auslander 2008: 139).

In this research study, Merleau-Ponty's notion of the body-subject is relevant regarding the performer's embodied (often wordless) experience in the

performance-making process, closely related to their lifeworld. This perspective will be further described in the next section, which sees the body as a social construct in a historical context.

4.5.2 The performative body-subject

A performance-maker is always a part of a particular society at a particular time in history. This impacts her work and marks her body. The interrelation between the body and society is described by Anthony Synnott:

The body is many things: the prime symbol of the self, but also of the society; it is something we have, yet also what we are; it is both subject and object at the same time; it is individual and personal, as unique as a fingerprint or odourplume, yet it is also common to all humanity...The body is both an individual creation, physically and phenomenologically, and a cultural product; it is personal, and also state property (Synnott 1993: 4).

Butler draws on Merleau-Ponty in claiming that the body is a historical idea, a historical situation: “The body is understood to be an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities, a complicated process of appropriation” (Butler 1988: 521). Butler argues that gender is a historical constitution in time rather than a natural fact. Gender is something one creates rather than something one is, so to speak. Gender is instituted through a “stylized repetition of acts” (Butler 1988: 519). Butler argues that the body becomes its gender through acts that are “renewed, revised, and consolidated through time” (Butler 1988: 523). The elementary structure of embodiment is to “do, to dramatize and to reproduce” (ibid). But this embodiment is not done without restrictions. Performing one’s gender ‘right’, according to cultural circumstances, provides reassurance; performing it ‘wrong’ leads to corrections and punishment. Hence, historical circumstances, conventions and sanctions constrain the subjective embodiment and self-styling.

Surely, there are nuanced and individual ways of doing ones gender, but that one does it, and that one does it in accord

with certain sanctions and proscriptions, is clearly not a fully individual matter (Butler 1988: 523).

In turn, individual acts are repeated and become shared experiences and “collective action” and affect the political arrangements and structures in society (ibid). The analysis will see if the devisers in this study experience those conventions and whether sanctions constrain their subjective embodiment and self-styling in their creative performance-making.

Like Butler, sociologist Featherstone is concerned with how the body is performed in late capitalism. Featherstone has a particular interest in the influence of consumer culture. He argues that in consumer culture the body has become the instrument on which the self is being performed.

In the milieu of “late capitalism” and “consumer culture”, with its multiplicity of images that stimulate needs and desires and the corresponding changes in material arrangements of social spaces, the body/self has become primarily a performing self of appearance, display and impression management (Featherstone 1991: 187).

Individuals have become role players that constantly monitor their own performance. Consumer culture (advertisements, the popular press, television and motion pictures) provide images of how the body should be stylized and how it should appear. Influenced by these images - young, fit, slim, healthy bodies - individuals create and perform their outer bodies. The consumer culture advocates for individuals to assume self-responsibility for the way they look: “Appearance, gesture and bodily demeanor become taken as expressions of self” (Featherstone 1991: 189). The individual is required to be ‘on stage’ at all times and the performing self must produce an even performance every time. This puts a tremendous pressure on each individual to be correctly stylized, to do the right performance. Additionally, such self-performance is not restricted to specific contexts: “it becomes essential to be able to project constantly a ‘winning image’ ” (Featherstone 1991: 190). The

images and the demands of consumer culture appear everywhere and are an integrated part of our culture, which clearly affects how individuals relate to their bodies and how they perform their bodies. This is relevant in the performance process, where the performing body is centre stage. This study will look at how the young devisers stage themselves and if there is a tension between accommodation and creation in the creative process. The changing notion of body is reflected in Fischer-Lichte's writing on the embodied performer, and also in autobiographical performance, as the next section will show.

4.5.3 The embodied performer

Fischer-Lichte (2008) describes the development of the concept of the performing body from a semiotic reading of the actor's body in psychological, realistic theatre since the eighteenth century to contemporary performances that play with the experience of the actor's embodiment, presence and energy. This change started in the avant-garde era and has become more distinct in contemporary performance. Fischer-Lichte (2008: 82) refers to Grotowski as one who "fundamentally redefined the relationship between the performer and his role". Grotowski argued that the dramatic role, with its emphasis on mental processes, no longer constituted the ultimate goal of the actor. Instead, he viewed actors as "embodied minds" who are both "having a body" and "being a body", and the two cannot be separated (ibid). Hence Fischer-Lichte (2008: 84) writes: "The character exists in the actor's physical performance alone and is brought forth both by performative acts and his particular corporality". She says that the parallels between Grotowski's emphasis on embodiment in theatrical practice and Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of the lived body as mediation between body and mind are striking: "Merleau-Ponty's contribution to philosophy is comparable to Grotowski's to theatre" (Fischer-Lichte 2008: 83).

The actor's embodied uniqueness is shown in contemporary performance, where, instead of a semanticized perception of the actor's dramatic role, the "perceptive multistability" in the embodiment of the actor is accentuated: "The main focus lies on the moment of destabilization, in which perception switches between the phenomenal body and character" (Fischer-Lichte 2008: 89). The perception alternately shifts between the actor's real body and the fictive character, and this allows for a perceptive multistability.

The actor's body is no longer a mere symbolic tool seen as a representation of the dramatic text. Fischer-Lichte (2008: 92) refers to Thomas Csòrdas, who confronts the concept of representation with that of "lived experience" and "experiencing". In this view, the phenomenal body is the centre of perception, and the human body is constantly changing, "constantly engaged in the process of becoming, of permanent transformation" (Fischer-Lichte 2008: 92). In contemporary performance, the embodied presence of the actor is a strong force. Fischer-Lichte argues that:

The "magic" of presence therefore lies in the performer's particular ability to generate energy so that it can be sensed by the spectators. It circulates in space and affects, even tinges, them. This energy constitutes the force emanating from the performer (Fischer-Lichte 2008: 98).

Fischer-Lichte emphasizes embodiment, presence and energy as a description of the role of the actor today. This is also applicable to autobiographical performance. In autobiographical performance the performer performs her "self" (understood as the body-subject) and her phenomenal experience is brought to the fore. In this act, the relationship between reality and theatrical fiction is challenged in particular ways, as the next section will show.

4.5.4 The performing self

In the neo avant-garde movement, like the Happenings, experiments with blurring real life and the performed life were developed, as we saw in Chapter 3. The performer, presenting herself in a 'non-acting' mode rather than representing a fictional character, came to life. In contemporary autobiographical performance, questions of authenticity and self-representation are put forward.

As Heddon (2008: 8) shows, the question of the connection between life and its theatrical expression is embedded in the notion "auto-bio-graphical". *Bio* foregrounds the aspect of life-story and experience in performance. *Auto* and *bio* are connected in that

We might ... assume that the 'auto' signals the sameness of the subject and the object of that story: that is, the 'author' and 'performer' collapse into each other as the performing 'I' is also the represented 'I' (Heddon 2008: 8).

This opens up possibilities for an exploration of truth and fiction in performance. What are the real facts presented in performance and what is fiction, and, foremost, is this person on stage a character or an 'authentic person'?

The *bio* in such performances is often, simultaneously, both personal and universal, in that the stories are often sufficiently recognizable to spectators. Traditionally, autobiographical performances have been used as an arena to "speak out" and make marginalized subjects visible, or for them to "talk back", addressing dominant assumptions about those subjects (Heddon 2008: 20). In this way, autobiographical performances can be considered political.

Autobiographical performance can have a liberating effect on the performer, as the performance can be a testimony of experience (Heddon 2008, Govan et al 2007). Heddon (2008: 53) argues that we live in an age of bearing witness, or

testifying: “testimonial times”, she says, referring to recent Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in South Africa and Australia. Such testimonial culture is linked to a “memory boom” (Schaffer and Smith 2004: 13) or “decade of life narratives” (op.cit: 1), which is also reflected in the occurrence and popularity of reality shows on television. Western society has been increasingly privatized, as Ziehe (2009) explains, and in this climate self-presentation and confessional forms, such as TV-shows, social media and autobiographical literature and performance, have become increasingly popular. Private feelings and everyday experiences can be shared in these arenas as autobiographical performances. Autobiographical performances often reveal intimate information about the performer, which sets up a particular empathy between performer and audience. When we sign on to such a ‘pact’, we expect to be told the truth about someone’s life. This pact is often fortified by artists who perform in ‘non-acting’ ways. ‘Non-acting’ can evoke a strong impression that the person on stage is performing herself (Heddon 2008).

When the presentation of the self in performance is considered a copy of an ‘authentic self’ in real life it is problematic for many reasons. In poststructuralism, the notion of the self is challenged. The subject is no longer considered to have just one identity. People play different roles that together constitute what we can talk of as a self (or as a body-subject, to use Merleau-Ponty’s notion). In performance, presentation of such alternative selves is referred to as “persona performance” (Rosenthal quoted in Zarrilli 1995: 297). If identity today is considered constantly shifting and ever elusive, an autobiographical character is relatively more fixed because she chooses to perform parts of herself, her personae. Still, the self is an unstable entity. We can split the selves into “the self who was and the self who is. There is the self who is performed and the performing self” (Heddon 2008: 27). In autobiographical performance, the different selves can be hard to identify and separate.

Autobiographical performances are based on facts and truths about the performer, taken from the performer's lived experience. But as Govan et al (2007: 64) emphasize "presentation of these facts is framed by an editing process". Autobiographical presentation is a strategic re-presentation of the self, and the perception of the different selves is a characteristic attribute of autobiographical performance. Making an autobiographical performance is a "result of a reflective process upon personal experience that is subjected through the filters of memory and personal editing" (ibid: 60). It is not a blueprint of the lived experience, but a result of a creative mediation of the experience. Postmodern critic Lois Renza argues that autobiography is neither a fiction nor non-fiction, rather it is a unique mode of expression:

... autobiography is neither fictive nor nonfictive, not even a mixture of the two. We might view it instead as a unique, self-defining mode of self-referential expression (Renza 1977: 22).

In this respect, the autobiographical performance should be seen as a unique creative expression where lived experience is transparent and not merely a reproduction. The self is not re-presented, rather it is created anew, a 'performing self' based on the performer's identity, yet not an unmediated copy of a single, true self. Autobiographical theory accentuates the connection between the performer's self and her character/persona and the analysis in the study will look at how the self and the character/persona is inter-related in the creative process.

4.6 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on aesthetic form and its relationship to lived experience in order to deduce analytical categories for the study. Eco (1989: 144) argues that "art knows the world through its formal structures" and that art is political in its own ways. The analysis of the case studies will identify the

formal structures the deviser's create and see if a social commitment can be recognized. Eco (1989: 160) also argues that the artist has an "artistic intention" that is implicit the artwork through its formal properties and therefore the terms "matter", "content" and "form" cannot be distinguished because they are a part of the artist and her artwork. In the final analysis it will be looked at how artistic intentions are related to lived experience in the cases in this study.

Van Manen's lifeworld existentials were flagged as being the impetus to investigate three central categories regarding aesthetic form and experience in devising practices: *narratives*; the performing *body-subject*; and lived aesthetic *space and time*. Narrative was described as a way of structuring and giving meaning to experience. Contemporary narrative strategies such as appropriation, intertextuality, fragmentation and estrangement are used in postdramatic performance as creative ways for organizing aesthetic work. Bloome and Egan-Robertson (2004: 18-19) argue that there is an intertextual connection between form, content and process. This research will follow this theoretical path and inquire if such intertextual connections occur in the case studies. The analysis will also see if they apply estrangement as a device to provide distance, reflection and a critical look at automatized behavior as Šklovskij (1917/1990: 6) and Eriksson (2011: 66) have identified. Singer and Blagov (2004: 121) contend that "identity is synonymous with the autobiographical narrative individuals construct". This research will see if identity can be seen in relation to other ways of structuring narratives as well.

Space and time were identified to be both a lived psychological space and an aesthetic theatrical space, described as "spatiality" by Fischer-Lichte (2008: 107). The analysis will investigate the kind of spatiality the devisers create and which perceptual possibilities the spaces offer. The intertwining of the lived/psychological space and time and the aesthetic/physical performance space and time will be analyzed.

The devisers work with the body will be analyzed through the notion of *body-character*. That notions draws on Merleau-Ponty's body-subject, but in order to emphasize the relationship between the deviser's subjective self and the work with the performance character, the notion of *body-character* will be privileged. Merleau-Ponty (1964: 162) describes the human ability of having "a double look" and the analysis will see if this is important for a deviser in the devising process.

It was shown in this chapter how Featherstone (1991) argued that self-performance had become essential and that consumer culture provided images of what the body should look like. We saw how Butler (1988) argued that the body was a historical social construction and that gender was created through performative acts. The analysis will see if, in their creative performance-making, the devisers in this study experience those conventions and sanctions that constrain subjective embodiment and self-styling. We saw that Fischer-Lichte (2008: 92) confronted the concept of representation with that of "lived experience" and "experiencing". In this view, the phenomenal body is the centre of attention. In contemporary performance, the embodied presence of the actor (not the character) and her "multistability" is a strong force (Fischer-Lichte 2008: 89). The analysis will follow this path and inquire if such destabilization of the character takes place in the case studies. In autobiographical performance there is an interest in the dividing line between the real and the fiction, where the performance can be a "testimony" of experience (Heddon 2008: 53). The body-subject will be analyzed in order to see, whether, and how the self and the character/persona are inter-related in the creative process.

The three categories – narrative, body-subject and space and time - will be used as the main analytical tools to investigate the inter-relation between the

lived experience and aesthetic form in the creative dynamics in devised theatre practice.

Aesthetic form is closely linked to the performance-making process and the next chapter addresses the creative process and its relation to lived experience, drawing on Vygotsky's social-historical creativity theory.

5 CREATIVE PROCESS AND LIVED EXPERIENCE - THEORY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers creative processes related to lived experience. Russian psychologist Lev Semenovich Vygotsky (1896-1934) provides a theory on creativity which is based in the belief that creativity is a basic human function for psychological development, learning and meaning-making. Creative acts are rooted in the individual lived experience, and in the creative process lived experience is transformed, changed and mediated into new experiences, new meaning-making and new aesthetic expressions. Furthermore, the individual's creativity is inextricably linked to culture and historical context. Vygotsky's theory is privileged in this chapter because it provides a sustainable theory on creativity that is rooted in the individual's lived experience.

Vygotsky's theory has been strongly applied in social-historical developmental psychology, social psychology, pedagogies and educational development, but his theory on creativity has not been much applied in the science of arts. In this research study, his theory on creativity, creative process, mediation and meaning-making will be used to address the connection between lived experience and the creative process. Vygotsky's writing is extensive, and some of his early works referred to in this chapter, such as "The Psychology of Art" (Vygotsky 1925/1971), is a "broadly drawn, yet powerful sketch" (Daniels, Cole et.al 2007: 1) of concepts that he expands and elaborates on in his later works. These are concepts such as creativity,

emotional experience, mediation and catharsis, which are important to this study. Vygotsky died of tuberculosis at the age of thirty-eight. He left a body of theory that contains contradictions and open ends, which has allowed room for his work to be interpreted in many ways. His writing is marked by the historical time in which he wrote (Russia 1925-1934). Although different translations of his works exist, a major body of his writing on creativity was not translated into English until recently (Connery et al 2010).

5.2 A CULTURAL-HISTORICAL APPROACH TO CREATIVITY

Definitions of creativity often include the notion of making something new and novel. For instance, Carl Hausman (2009: 5) writes that “Creativity occurs on condition that a new and valuable intelligibility comes into being”. Creativity theory also emphasizes the human combinatorial ability as a central function in the creative process. This is central in Vygotsky’s creativity theory. Another essential concern for Vygotsky is the relationship between the individual and the environment. He saw cultural-historical concerns as embedded within the individual’s life experience and, therefore, in the individual’s creative work.

Vygotsky considered creativity and imagination to be a core function in human psychological development. In fact cognition of reality is dependent on the ability to imagine, thus they function as a unity, according to Vygotsky:

No accurate cognition of reality is possible without a certain element of imagination, a certain flight from the immediate, concrete, solitary impressions in which this reality is presented ... The process of invention or artistic creativity demand substantial participation by both realistic thinking and imagination. The two act as a unity (Vygotsky 1932/1987: 349⁹).

⁹ This is a lecture by Vygotsky, called “Imagination and its development in childhood”, which is included in The Collected Works of Vygotsky, Volume 1 from 1987.

Totg Vygotsky creativity is seen as a central human function both in our everyday 'mundane' lives and for an artist who uses her creativity to make artwork. In recent creativity theory, this has been called little c creativity and big C creativity (Csikszentmihalyi 1996). Little c creativity means everyday creativity, where people use their creativity in order to do something new and novel in their lives. Big C creativity refers to eminent creativity achieved by those considered truly great in their field. Contemporary creativity theorists James Kaufman and Ronald Beghetto (2009: 1) expand this dichotomy into 'the four c model of creativity' were they add the idea of "mini-c" and "Pro-c". "Mini-c" refers to "creativity inherent in the learning process" and "Pro-c" is "the developmental and effortful progression beyond little-c that represents professional-level expertise in any creative area" (Kaufman and Beghetto 2009: 1).

Vygotsky (1930/2004) acknowledged that some humans were more skilled and trained in creative practice than others ("big C" creativity), and identified creativity as necessary for human learning (comparable to "mini-c" creativity). Furthermore, he saw creativity as an essential human condition ("little c" creativity):

In the everyday life that surrounds us, creativity is an essential condition for existence and all that goes beyond the rut of routine and involves innovation, albeit only a tiny amount, owes its existence to the human creative process (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 11).

Vygotsky (1930/2004; 1931/1998) showed that creativity and imagination have different characteristics and function at different stages in human development, from childhood to adolescence to adulthood. But its role as a central function for development and meaning-making is essential across a life span, albeit its character changes in that time. This also applies to its

character of connecting the social with the individual's psychological development, as the next section shows.

Whereas creativity traditionally has been studied as an individual act reserved for an elitist minority of especially talented artists, Vygotsky emphasized creativity as an important developmental activity with an interrelated connection between the individual and society. Vygotsky (1934/1994) argued that the individual and the environment mutually constitute each other. The environment does not exist independently of the individuals who live in and through its surroundings. The individuals are influenced by the surroundings, we interpret and act on our surroundings and thereby change it (ibid). Humans are considered by Vygotsky to be in constant movement, and the ability for humans to develop and change is important in his theory, even small children are considered by Vygotsky (1930/2004) to be active participants in their own learning within a social context.

The inextricable connection between individuals and society is an important element in Vygotsky's thinking as the "human mind must be understood as the emergent outcome of cultural-historical processes" (Daniels et al 2007: 1). Creativity and psychological development is framed by certain social and historical ways to structure experience and make meaning. The notion of context in a social-historical approach refers to both the physical and socioeconomic environment, but also to the intellectual environment "in the sense of available ideas, traditions of thinking and so on" (Daniels et al 2007: 21). Creativity is inextricably linked to these factors in the environmental context as we mediate and create new creative expressions and experiences:

Every inventor, even a genius, is also a product of his time and his environment. His creations arise from needs that were created before him and rest on capacities that also exist outside of him ... Creation is a historical, cumulative process

where every succeeding manifestation was determined by the preceding one (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 30).

But although creation is a cumulative process it is also a transformative process that mediates past experiences into new experiences and unique creative products, as we shall see later.

In the context of devising in this study, Vygotsky's emphasis on the connection between the social and the individual's experience is significant in that:

... an individual has the capacity to externalize and share with other members of her social group her understanding of their shared experience (John-Steiner and Souberman 1978: 132).

In other words, a deviser might share her individual understanding of a shared cultural experience with other students and the audience as a social group. This study will analyze how the deviser's experience is rooted in a shared culture, and how she is given the possibility to mediate and externalize her individual and social experiences on the performance arena. The shared social experiences are a core aspect in this study, in that they make communication, perception and meaning-making possible.

In Vygotsky's cultural-historical approach, the individual and the social are inextricably linked. This becomes evident when Vygotsky writes about lived emotional experience, as will be described below. Lived emotional experience is fundamental in the creative processes and for achieving cathartic experiences.

5.3 LIVED EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE AND CATHARSIS

Perezhivanie is a central term in Vygotsky's theory. It has been translated as "lived emotional experience" (Connery, John-Steiner et al 2010: 8). In the last phase of his life, Vygotsky returned to the idea of emotions as central to lived experience and elaborated on this concept as being central to all aspects of human life. In one of his little known, and last, writings "The Problem of the environment" (1934/1994), Vygotsky described an emotional experience as being a unit where environmental characteristics and individual characteristics are unified:

An emotional experience [perezhivanie] is a unit where, on the one hand, in an indivisible state, the environment is represented, i.e. that which is being experienced - an emotional experience [perezhivanie] is always related to something which is found outside the person - and on the other hand, what is represented is how I myself, am experiencing this, i.e., all the personal characteristics and all the environmental characteristics are represented in an emotional experience [perezhivanie] (Vygotsky 1934/1994: 5).

Meaning is processed through the individual lens of lived emotional experience, but this experience is always related to the environmental context in an indivisible state. Furthermore, the emotional experience is a combination of an affective and a cognitive experience, as "equitable processes that occur simultaneously" (Connery, John-Steiner et al 2010: 12). It is a process central to meaning-making, in that emotions and cognition works simultaneously in an embodied process of learning and making sense of an experience in an environmental context. Beth Ferhold explains *perezhivanie* as an "intensely-emotional-lived-through-experience" (Ferhold 2010: 164). As such, *perezhivanie* is an emotional response to impressions that activates both emotions and cognition at the same time, which can provoke new insights and learning. In this sense, lived emotional experience is a way in which we experience our experiences, a kind of meta-experience that enables us to investigate and change our behavior and expressions. This process is crucial

for creativity, as the creative process can only come into being if both cognition and emotions are activated, as will be described in section 5.4 “The creative circle”.

Emotions play a crucial role for human development and catharsis. In Vygotsky’s work, catharsis is understood as a central psychological state that is activated by emotions and is given meaning in a cognitive-affective process. It is a human function for cleansing the mind and bringing new experiences to both creator and audience. Catharsis is a central human function that can take place both in improvisation, in art-making and in aesthetic responses, as these arenas allow for investigation and resolution of powerful feelings. It is described by Vygotsky as

...an explosive and sudden expenditure of strength, of forces (psychic and otherwise), a discharge of energy. ... Although it is an explosive discharge, art does introduce order and harmony into the “psychic household,” of our feelings (Vygotsky 1925/1971: 249).

Catharsis can happen when a feeling of tension, or crisis, arises, which then has to be resolved in order to establish a renewed internal harmony. It requires “the creative act of *overcoming* the feeling, resolving it, conquering it” (Vygotsky 1925/1971: 248).

For Vygotsky (1925/1971: 244), catharsis is an experience that is exclusively connected to creativity and art and “releases an aspect of our psyche which finds no expression in our everyday life”. Although creativity is part of everyday life experience, Vygotsky emphasizes catharsis as an extraordinary experience. This understanding is reminiscent of Dewey’s (1934/2005) distinction between ordinary experience and having *an* experience. According to Dewey, *an* experience is a heightened experience that brings new insight and understanding and goes beyond ordinary everyday experiences (ibid). Catharsis, for Vygotsky, also brings new understanding, but it is

distinguished by its close connection to emotions and the embodied affective-cognitive experience of release and revelation that takes place while engaging with creative work. Catharsis is a “complex transformation of feelings” which brings new insight and can change human lives (Vygotsky 1925/1971: 214).

Perezhivanie and catharsis are cornerstones of Vygotsky’s writings, and the two are intimately connected in the creative process, as they “highlight the equal importance of thought and affect, placing emotion, interwoven with cognition, at the heart of the creative process” (Connery, John-Steiner et al 2010: 224). The circular path of a creative process related to lived experience will be described in the next section, as will the notion of mediation, which is a part of the creative experience.

5.4 THE CREATIVE CIRCLE AND MEDIATION

Vygotsky (1930/2004: 7-12) distinguishes between two basic types of human acts: reproductive acts and creative acts. Reproduction is closely linked to memory: “essentially it consists of a person’s reproducing or repeating previously developed and mastered behavioral patterns or resurrecting traces of earlier impressions” (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 7). This is an essential human function for development through an entire life. Aside from reproductive acts, Vygotsky (1930/2004: 9) observes what he calls “combinatorial or creative activity”, which are acts that create *new* products or *new* experiences.

Vygotsky explains the function of the reproductive and creative acts:

The brain is not only the organ that stores and retrieves our previous experience, it is also the organ that combines and creatively reworks elements of this past experience and uses them to generate new propositions and new behavior (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 9).

Hence, creativity, for Vygotsky, means to rework and recombine past experiences in a way that generates new experiences.

A creative act is considered to be a key human function by Vygotsky, whether it takes the form of a creative product or has the form of an individual experience. To be creative means to create something new as a response to real world needs, whether it is for individual needs or material needs:

Any human act that gives rise to something new is referred to as a creative act, regardless of whether what is created is a physical object or some mental or emotional construct that lives within the person who created it and is known only to him (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 7).

This means that a creative act is considered by Vygotsky to be both a creative product and a creative experience.

Vygotsky argues that what we call a creative act is often just the dramatic birth of material that has been created over a long period of time and is part of our existence, our experiences and who we are (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 25). A creative process is an extremely complex psychological experience crucial for human learning and development, according to Vygotsky's thinking. It is an intertwining and mediation between the individual and the social, between emotion and cognition, action and meaning, and immediate and mediated memory (Vygotsky 1930/2004; 1978). In the creative process, past experiences that are influenced by the environment go through a transition that takes the form of a circular path (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 25). This process is complicated, however it is still possible to identify some central elements in this process, and these will now be presented in more detail.

The creative process¹⁰ starts in our *lived experience* with some impressions supplied by reality as an actuating starting point. The basis of lived experience is a perception of the external and internal, in that the environment

¹⁰ Described by Vygotsky in "Imagination and Creativity in Childhood" 1930/2004: 25-31.

is inscribed in the individual perception. These experiences are then divided into single elements (*disassociations*) where “some are retained and others are forgotten” (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 25). Subsequent to the demolishing of the natural connection of the elements, the different elements can now be combined in new ways. Vygotsky argues that the process of separating the different elements from its larger context is critical in all creative work.

Subsequent to disassociation, a process of change follows, to which all the elements are subjected; they are enlarged or decreased, exaggerated or reduced. In this process, impressions from real life *change* their character. It is in this phase of the process that external impressions are transformed and not just laid down inalterably, rather they are “actually processes, they move, change, live, and die, and this dynamism guarantees that they will change under the influence of imagination” (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 26). The next step in the fantasy creation is *association* which means a unification of disassociations and changed elements. The last moment in the work of the imagination is to *combine the different elements*, introduce them into a system and create a new compound fantasy image. The process does not come to an end before the fantasy is expressed or embodied through *external pictures*, that is, “embodying constructs of the imagination in material form” (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 29). The initial impressions from the real world have now been transformed and return to the real world with a renewed and active energy (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 29). Put into a model, the circular path of the creative process can be displayed like this:

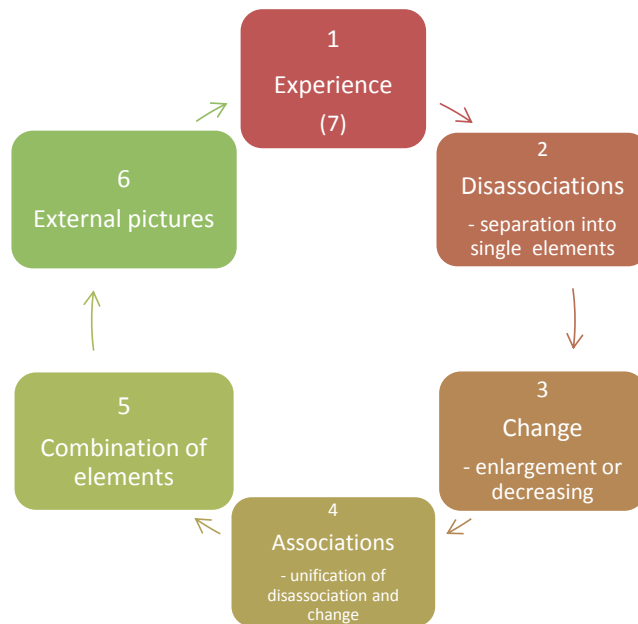


Figure 3: Vygotsky's creative circle (based on Vygotsky's writing 1930/2004: 25-31).

Vygotsky (1930/2004: 21) describes this circular path as a “full circle”, which in the end returns to reality with a potential of change in the following way:

The elements out of which they are constructed were taken by the human inventor from reality. Within the mind of this inventor, in his thoughts, these elements underwent complex reworking and were transformed into products of the imagination. Finally, once they were given material form, they returned to reality, but returned as a new active force with the potential to alter that reality. This is the complete cycle followed by the creative operation of the imagination (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 21).

While Vygotsky emphasizes the role of the mind in creative work it is important also to stress the role of the body in the creative process. Due to the phenomenological approach of this study of embodied performance and Merleau-Ponty's thinking of the role of the body as the centre of experience and perception, it is necessary to emphasize that the performer's world is experienced, expressed and made sense of bodily as well as cognitively. The

creative process is considered an embodied as well as a cognitive act. Experiences are transformed and mediated in the creative circle and this mediation is experienced and expressed bodily.

Mediation is a central theme in Vygotsky's writing, but he never gives it a single definition and he uses it in various ways throughout his writing (Wertsch 2007: 179). Mediation is considered to be a higher psychological function (different from elementary psychological processes that are of biological origin) in that experience goes through a "series of *qualitative* transformations" (Vygotsky, Cole et al 1978: 46. Original italic). The mediation as a higher psychological function allows us to react and respond to our social cultural experiences in an indirect and mediated way. As Wertsch (2007: 178) explains: "Instead of acting in a direct, unmediated way in the social and physical world, our contact with the world is indirect or mediated by signs". Mediation is rooted in the relationship between the individual and the social-historical in that the environment affects the individual's sign perception, which is then internalized in the mediated act:

It is because humans internalize forms of mediation provided by particular cultural, historical, and institutional forces that their mental function is sociohistorically situated (Wertsch 2007: 178).

In devising, the performance-making process is the medium through which devisers might experience mediation as part of their creative process. The analysis will look at how experience is materialized and how materialization might lead to mediation in the creative devising process.

Inspired by Vygotsky's thinking, this study will analyze which impressions and lived experiences are privileged as creative material, and how these experiences are transformed and changed in the performance-making process. It will be investigated to find out if the creative process takes a similar circular

shape that Vygotsky describes or if the different processes take different shapes in the work with different aesthetic forms and experiences.

The relationship between lived experience and the creative process can, furthermore, be illuminated by investigating Vygotsky's theory of connections between reality and the imagination.

5.5 CONNECTIONS BETWEEN REALITY AND IMAGINATION

Creative activity is based on the ability to combine elements, and this capacity is called imagination or fantasy by Vygotsky (1930/2004: 9). He argues that imagination is often referred to as something that is not actually true and does not correspond to reality. But the opposite is the case, according to Vygotsky (ibid), in that all creative elements are derived from reality. Vygotsky (1930/2004: 12-25) contends that fantasy and reality is deeply connected, and he elucidates the relationship between reality and fantasy by defining four fundamental connections between the two. These are: (1) past experiences, (2) secondary, borrowed or social experiences, (3) emotions, and, finally, (4) new experiences. The first and most fundamental association between imagination and reality is related to lived *past experience*. All the creations of fantasy are always made from elements of reality that are a part of a person's past experiences (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 13). The combinations of the elements are 'fantastic' but the elements themselves are derived from reality. Trolls, for example, exist in fairy tales only, but all the elements from which a troll is constructed are found in real life. The elements are derived from reality, but it is the way the elements are combined that is fantastic. Hence, lived experiences are the elements of creation. Vygotsky says:

The creative activity of the imagination depends directly on the richness and variety of a person's previous experience because this experience provides the material from which the products of fantasy are constructed. The richer a person's

experience, the richer is the material his imagination has access to (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 14-15).

This means that the more experiences people have, the more elements there will be for fantasy to combine. Hence, it is a myth, Vygotsky (1930/2004: 34) argues, that childhood is the time in life when fantasy is most developed. The more elements of experience that are available, the more potentially creative one can be, and memories are considered by Vygotsky (ibid) to be a significant resource (creative element) in the creative process. Accordingly, old people with lots of experience and memories should be more creative. When this is not always the case it is because adults lack courage and belief in their own ideas and creativity. Children use their fantasy more actively and creatively than adults and thereby realize their creative potential better than older people (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 34-35).

The second connection emphasizes the importance of *secondary and borrowed experiences*, also called *social experience* by Vygotsky (1930/2004: 17). Through other people's descriptions and expressions, through their experiences, we are able to envision an event we have never actually experienced ourselves. But others' experiences need support from our own fantasy in order to create meaning. If you have never experienced the African desert, for example, you need to have experienced other concepts like thirst, sand, heat, infinite spaces and so on, and by combining your own experience of these concepts you are able to envision what a desert is and how it feels to be in a desert (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 16).

This ability to connect to experiences that one has not directly experienced is a fundamental human function for understanding, learning and imagining, in that it exceeds our own narrow circle of experience:

He is not limited to the narrow circle and narrow boundaries of his own experience but can venture far beyond these boundaries, assimilating, with the help of his imagination

someone else's historical or social experience. In this form, imagination is a completely essential condition for almost all human mental activity (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 17).

It is obvious that this ability is essential for experiencing a central human function like empathy. Empathy enables humans to relate to, and to recognize, others' feelings and experiences.

The social, or borrowed, experience is an essential human quality that is especially relevant in theatre, where the ability to connect to someone else's experiences is crucial both for the performer who creates a character or persona and for the viewer who experiences a theatrical 'not real' universe. The experience of others' experiences is not made sense of, nor does it affect the viewer, if the viewer cannot find resonance from her own lifeworld, her own experience, in what she sees in the theatre. The *combination* of one's own experiences (reality) and the secondary experiences one meets in theatre (fantasy) is what makes a theatrical creative experience possible. Secondary, or social, experience is also a profound condition for learning and for developing a performance character or persona. The performer needs to create characters or personas that express feelings and events that the performer has never directly, or fully, experienced herself. Because the performer finds a resonance in her own emotions and experiences, she can create a *secondary*, or *borrowed*, character or persona that is neither the performer nor "not not" the performer, as Schechner (2006: 72) expresses it.

The third connection conveyed by Vygotsky accentuates the important role of *emotions* in creative imagination (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 17-20). As we saw earlier, lived emotional experience is a key concept considered by Vygotsky to be essential in all aspects of human life, for connecting the individual and the social, and for connecting the cognitive and affective. Related to imagination, emotions play an exceptional role, in that all forms of creative imagination include affective elements that are decisive for all kinds of creative experience.

Emotions are important in two key ways. Firstly, the mood and emotions we possess at a particular moment in time when we experience something influences our perception of that experience; “the influence of the emotion we are experiencing colors our perception of external objects” (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 18). External objects and expressions are given meaning through the internal process of emotional associations. The logic of external images is not decisive for internal meaning-making, rather it is the internal process of emotional associations that is crucial, says Vygotsky:

The emotion selects separate elements from reality and combines them in an association that is determined from within by our mood, and not from without by the logic of the images themselves (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 18).

This influence of the emotions on combinatory imaginations is called “the law of general emotional sign” by psychologists (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 18). It refers to the tendency to cluster together images or expressions which have affective similarity, “despite the fact that there is no association among them either based on external similarity or contiguity” (ibid). The common affective tone is what holds together images that have no rational relationship to each other. This phenomenon differs from associations based on similarity in the intellectual sense and can be revealed in dreams or daydreams, states where imaginations have “free rein and work randomly” (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 19). The importance of associations of emotions is described by Ribot, referred to by Vygotsky in the following way:

This overt or latent influence of emotions is likely to facilitate the occurrence of completely unexpected groupings and represents an almost unlimited arena for new combinations because the number of images that have identical emotional imprints is very large (Ribot in Vygotsky 1930/2004: 19).

This latent influence of emotions facilitates random and unexpected creative combinations, which are unlimited and of great importance in the creative work of art. Improvisation in dance or performance, for example, offers a

space which facilitates free bodily, perceptual and emotional movements, which has the potential for finding new and unexpected creative combinations (Østern 2009; Ravn 2009) in a way similar to Vygotsky's description of emotional creative associations. The locus of such creative process is, for Ravn and Østern, in the moving body. When the body moves and improvises, new associations, transformations and meaning are created in the embodied improvisational act (Østern 2009; Ravn 2009). The way an improviser associates and combines elements represents the most subjective internal form of imagination, which is based on an "internal logic of feeling", says Vygotsky (1930/2004: 19). In this way, an improvised performance is a very personal expression that has the potential to communicate with others' experiences. As Vygotsky (1925/1971: 249) articulates in *The Psychology of Art*: "Art is the social within us, and even if its action is performed by a single individual, it does not mean that its essence is individual". Again we see that Vygotsky stresses the dialectic between the social and the individual, as the social is inscribed within the individual's embodied expression.

We have now seen that emotion influences imagination and creativity, but Vygotsky (1930/2004: 19) also argues that imagination influences emotions. We respond to our internal imagination with real emotions, e.g. when a child imagines there is a monster under the bed, she reacts with real fear. This phenomenon is described by Vygotsky (1930/2004: 19) as "the law of the emotional reality of the imagination". This law explains why works of art have a strong emotional effect on viewers. Despite the fact that the viewer knows that what is presented in the performance is a fiction, their real emotions are engaged. Because of the emotional experience, we are able to connect deeply to fictional acts. Hence, emotions play a crucial role in the connection between reality and imagination, in that emotion affects creative imagination and imagination affects real emotions.

The fourth and final connection between reality and imagination is *new connection* (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 19). Vygotsky observes that the fantasy has the capacity to create something entirely new, something that does not exist in the human past experience, and does not parallel anything real. It is created by humans' combinatory fantasy, though still related to needs in real life (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 20). New creations, like machines, technical devices or instruments, are created as a response to real life needs and affect the world as soon as they are given material form (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 20).

The four connections between reality and imagination have now been identified as past experiences, secondary or borrowed experiences, emotions, and new connections. All these connections are mediations between reality and imagination and play a vital role in the creative process. These connections between reality and imagination will be used to analyze how the deviser's relate their lived experience (reality) to the creative work (imagination) in the performance-making process.

5.6 SUMMARY

This chapter identified lived emotional experience as the foundation for creative work, according to Vygotsky's theory. In lived emotional experience, the external cultural-historical environment is mediated and expressed through the prism of the individual's internal experiences and expressions. Lived emotional experience has been identified as 'the way in which we experience our experiences', a kind of 'meta-experience' that enables us to investigate and change our behavior and expressions. Lived emotional experience is essential for creativity, which has been identified as a central human function for development, learning and meaning-making, both in everyday life and in creating art. In this sense, Vygotsky's perspectives shows

way for this study's investigation of lived experience related to devised performance-making.

It has been shown that Vygotsky distinguishes between two basic types of human acts: reproductive acts and creative acts. Reproductive acts are closely related to the memory, and resurrect traces of earlier impressions. Creative acts, on the other hand, produce something totally new. These two acts are essential human functions for development and meaning-making. Furthermore, creative acts prepositions for cathartic experiences, which has a psychological function of cleansing the mind and creating new experiences both for an artist in the creative process of making an artwork and for the audience.

Creativity is rooted in experiences supplied by reality, and Vygotsky highlights four connections between reality and imagination, identified as past experiences, secondary, borrowed or social experiences, emotions and new connections. Past experiences are the fundament from which all creative work is made, in that creativity is a combinatory activity between elements from reality and fantasy. Secondary experiences refer to the ability to imagine and feel an event we have never actually experienced ourselves, and are closely linked to empathy. Furthermore, Vygotsky argues that emotions play an important role in the creative imagination. Emotions are highly current in artistic practices and the role of emotions in the deviser's creative work will be addressed in the analysis. The fourth and final connection between reality and imagination is new connections, and refers to the human capacity to create something that does not parallel anything real. These four connections between reality and imagination will serve as analytical categories when analyzing the creative starting points in the devising process (Chapter 6).

According to Vygotsky, lived experience is mediated and changed into new expressions and experiences in the creative circle. The creative circle will be

adapted and used as a structure in the analysis in this study. The different steps in the creative circle are transformed into three parts: the starting point (Chapter 6), the exploration and mediation of material (Chapter 7) and the performing experience (Chapter 8). Vygotsky's stage one, "Experience", and stage two, "Separation into single elements", are merged into one in this study, and refer to the first phase when the devisers get the initial ideas for the creative work, analyzed in Chapter 6. The steps are merged because they appear to be closely connected in this phase of the creative process. In the middle phase of the work Vygotsky's steps, from steps three to five, are merged into one in this study because the data shows that the steps are hard to separate; they appear to be fluent, and happen within short sequences during improvisations on the floor. Hence, Chapter 7 analyzes how the initial material is changed and developed. The last stage in Vygotsky's circle, "External pictures", is analyzed in chapter (8) and is called "Performing material". The chapter focuses on the last phase of the process, when the devisers performed their work and finally met their audience.

6 STARTING POINT MATERIAL - ANALYSIS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will analyze the starting point phase in three different cases: two solo works, named Case Nancy and Case Sarah, and one collaborative work, named Case Printer HPXX11. The focus is on how the creative devising process relates to experience. The analysis will identify theatrical and experiential elements in the first phase of the creative process.

There are many cultural, social, personal and genetic factors in a person's life that bears on the first day of a creative process. The impetus experience used can be hard to pin down and identify, both because of its complexity and because it is an internal and hidden process. Vygotsky (1930/2004: 25) writes: "every impression is a complex whole consisting of a number of separate parts... at the very start of this process... there is always a perception of the external and internal, which is the basis of our experience". Acknowledging this complexity, the following analysis will endeavor to illuminate some of the observable starting points in the process through the lenses of narrative, space and time, and body-character. Besides focusing on the initial experiences that the devisers chose to work with, this chapter also analyzes how the initial impressions were separated into different parts during this process, as this corresponds with the first two steps in Vygotsky's creative circle (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 25).

6.2 NARRATIVES

This study has a particular interest in how aesthetic form and experience is inter-related in the creative process. Vygotsky's (1930/2004: 12-25) four connections between imagination (understood as aesthetic form in this analysis) and reality (experience) will serve as a tool to structure the data: (1) past experiences, (2) secondary, borrowed or social experiences, (3) emotions, and (4) new experiences. The analysis of the lived experience from which the deviser starts to work shows that each case had one prominent phenomenal experience that was stronger than the other connections¹¹. A strong childhood experience was used by Case Nancy as the impetus material and was her past experience (1). Case Sarah had six different experiences which she intended to connect in new ways, and this impetus experience can be recognized as new experience (4). Finally, in Case Printer HPXX11 inspired by Harold Pinter's Nobel Peace speech and the theme of war, the group's main phenomenal inspiration was a secondary/social experience (2). The following analysis focuses on how narratives are developed from these different experiences.

6.2.1 Case Nancy; autobiographical memory

Nancy used as a framework narrative an autobiographical childhood memory from when she danced ballet as a young girl. She returned to her childhood home and collected her childhood diaries, photographs of her as a young ballerina, video recordings of her ballet performances, ballet posters and programs from her shows at Pania's Dance Connection. She read her diaries and wrote down excerpts (from her diaries), which display some of her feelings with dance and her body at the time:

¹¹ From the welter of experiences it turned out during the preliminary work with the data that some primary experiences seemed to be a driving force for the start of the process. These experiences were identified by the researcher and the devisers through observations, interviews, discussions and logbooks. When working with these data, different connections between reality and imagination became apparent (see Appendix 7).

13/5/95 Guess what!! I...have...been...moved...up...into...advanced!! I was really pleased that Pania thinks I'm good enough to dance in advanced.

19/5/95 I feel special about dancing because nobody in my family does it. I also like the excitement on opening night. The glitter and glamour of it all. Trying on costumes and Mum getting mad because I'm in so many dances.

10/8/96 Am I too fat? I'm 55 Kgs. I'm gonna try to get to 50 kgs before the concert. Because I've got rolls and they look disgusting. YUK! And I can't go on stage looking like that, can I?

11/8/96 But you know I could lose a few kilos. I mean I'm a dancer. I'm supposed to be thin and I'm not really, am I? I mean I'm thin enough but I do have a bit of fat on me. If I wasn't a dancer I wouldn't have this problem would I?...Least I don't have a costume that'll show off how fat I am. Oh stop it. I am not fat. I am not fat. I am not fat. I am not fat. Am too. Are not! (Nancy's process notes, Appendix 4.1).

These descriptions show how Nancy as a young girl struggled with her dance experience and started to develop a difficult relationship with her body and with her personal self-worth. When Nancy read her diaries for the creative process, her emotions were again activated and she made a list of things to help her order, describe and understand the effect of the experience:

What is it like?
Having something destroyed that you loved and cared about. That was full of innocent joy.
* like a flame being extinguished * something being torn out
* something being locked away/shut up * forgotten
* crushed * denied - pushed down
* smashed * a betrayal - by your body/teachers
* destroyed * loss of belief in self & others.
* deflated - popped like a balloon * fading.
* shutting something * Realising / being told that Santa doesn't exist
* loss of innocence

Nancy's process notes, Appendix 4.1¹².

¹² Transcription of Nancy's notes:
"What is it like?"

Having something destroyed that you loved and cared about. That was full of innocent joy.
Like a flame being extinguished *Something being locked away/shut up *Crushed *Smashed
*Destroyed *Deflated – popped like a balloon *Shutting something *Something being torn out
*Forgotten *Denied – pushed down *A betrayal – by your body/teachers *Loss of belief in self
and others *Fading *Realizing /being told that Santa doesn't exist *Loss of innocence"
(Nancy's process notes, Appendix 4.1).

Her emotions were engaged and she reflected on the experience. She asked: “How could I let them do this to me?” (Nancy’s process notes, Appendix 4.1). Instead of being a stable memory which she cannot change, she opened it and thereby had access to the feelings and effects that the memory had caused her. Both her emotions and her cognition/reflection were engaged when she met this childhood material because she was trying to figure out how she could tell the story to an audience. She had recently seen some stand-up shows and decided that she would communicate the experience by using the stand-up format (Interview Nancy, Appendix 3.1). She chose to apply this conventional aesthetic form because she felt it suited her experience.

The memory she worked with was a strong childhood experience. She stopped dancing, although she loved it, and the memories of how much she loved dancing followed her into her young adult life:

I tried to forget. Like a jaded lover I tried to forget all the passion, joy and happiness that I’d felt and move on. But I couldn’t. Not really. Every so often I’d get a pang in my chest when I watched a spectacular dance number on TV. But the dominant voice of practicality and reality always won out. I was never going to be a dancer (Nancy’s process notes, Appendix 4.1).

The quote describes the effect of the experience; what it did to her afterwards. The memory had existed inside of her ever since she’d experienced it, and her emotions were activated every time she saw a dance number on TV, she said. It is therefore a recurring memory that continued to activate her feelings. It is a touchstone experience that appears to be strong in Nancy’s memory and which informed her perception of her body, theatre and dance.

I want to present an autobiographical piece about my difficult relationship with dance and of how that early exposure to training and performance shaped a somewhat warped

personal perception of dance, theatre and my body (Nancy's process notes, Appendix 4.1).

Her difficult experience with ballet training and performance influenced her in several ways, both in regards to how she experienced her body and her relationship to theatre and to dance. It interfered with her life in a lasting way, in that it made her stop dancing, something she loved doing and which was important to her. It affected her relationship to her body, and the experience established a feeling of worthlessness:

It developed in me a feeling of worthlessness and a deeply held belief that I would never measure up to an unattainable ideal. It also established a very narrow definition of what dance and a dancer is and can be (Nancy's process notes, Appendix 4.1).

The reason why this experience is so important to her is rooted in her feelings and how it influenced her feeling of self-worth. Her autobiographical memory is reminiscent of what Singer calls a "self-defining memory" (Singer and Blagov 2004: 119-121). Such memories are affectively intense and vivid. They are repetitively recalled and often linked to other intense memories. They exist as unresolved conflicts in the personality:

Self-defining memories connect to more than the transitory interests or activities of individuals. Given their enduring relevance and affective intensity for individuals, these memories reflect long-term and central areas of concern or conflict within the personality (Singer and Blagov 2004: 120).

Nancy's experience made her stop dance (activity), but the memories also had a long-term effect on her feeling of self-worth. It affected her personality and her identity¹³, in that it developed in her "a deeply held belief" that she "could never measure up to an unattainable ideal" and that she could never be a dancer (Nancy's process notes, Appendix 4.1).

¹³ According to Singer and Blagov's definition of identity. See Chapter 4.3.

At the moment when Nancy decided to use her autobiographical memory as material for the performance-making process she allowed her strong childhood memory to be investigated and reasoned upon. As Singer and Blagov (2004: 121) emphasize, the “individuals’ capacity to use narrative processing to connect significant episodes from their past with an ongoing life story allows for the development of autobiographical reasoning”. Nancy gave herself the opportunity for such reasoning in the creative process and she aimed to create a new experience based on her past experience that could affect her feeling of self-worth.

6.2.2 Case Sarah; presence and multiple experiences

Sarah started the performance process by writing down a list of things that mattered to her at that moment, both in her personal life and as a performer. She asked herself the significant question: “What is important to me?” (Sarah’s process notes, Appendix 4.2). She wrote a long list. Here are some examples of what she found important:

Experience breathing, appreciate breath, see my surrounds, to listen to people around me, to listen to my inner voice, bring lightness and laughter into everyday situations, be happy, share happiness, to follow my intuition, to be open to the unexpected, to take time, to trust people, to be present
(Sarah’s process notes, Appendix 4.2).

It is interesting to see how prominently her personal life and her performance work are entangled in the list. By making the list, she heightened her awareness of her own presence and interests both in life and theatre.

Unlike case Nancy, who had a clear picture of her childhood memory and experience with dance that she wanted to explore, Sarah was attracted to a mass of varied experiences that she wanted to connect in new and unexpected ways. What is striking regarding Sarah’s starting point is the fact that she

collected so many different and varied experiences to explore, and she wanted them to “emerge in new forms” (Sarah’s reflection paper, Appendix 4.2.1). This resembles Vygotsky’s (1930/2004: 20) description of the forth association between imagination and reality: “The essence of this association is that a construct of fantasy may represent something substantially new”. Sarah wanted to create something new and approached the creative process with many different experiences from her lifeworld. She intended to apply an open aesthetic form in order to work creatively with this material. Her multiple entry points can be situated within six starting points¹⁴. These starting points were varied and had different magnitudes. Yet, all of them had one thing in common: they related to Sarah’s interest with presence, although in very different ways, as will be revealed below.

Starting point 1: Her mother’s absence

At the start of the work, Sarah’s mother was ill for the first time in Sarah’s life. Sarah described what this did to her: “She didn’t tell me. On the phone she sounds like a machine. I don’t know her anymore. I spent three days crying in an empty house far from my home” (Sarah’s reflection paper, Appendix 4.2.1). She went to see her mother, but she could not meet her and they did not speak for four weeks, for the duration of the solo work process. Sarah says she experienced “a deep sense of loneliness and isolation, but also a freedom in her absence” (ibid) which informed her work, as will be further discussed in section 6.4 (Body-character). Sarah’s personal experience with her mother’s absence activated her feelings and informed her own experience with presence; she felt lonely and isolated at the moment she started her creative work. Sarah asked: “Does my mother love me? Do I love my mother? Does

¹⁴ Sarah defined these six starting points herself after having made the hundred point list of things that mattered to her. After a few days in the process, she worked with myriads of elements and ideas, and she started to define these six areas as experiences which were of special interest to her. These six points are clearly articulated in her reflection paper which she wrote during the process (Appendix 4.2.1). For the sake of clarity her reflection paper is referred to in this text rather than the process notes.

your mother love you?" (Sarah's reflection paper, Appendix 4.2.1). These questions indicate that Sarah moved the experience from being a personal emotional experience to a broader phenomenal question that concerned others as well ("Does your mother love you?").

Starting point 2: An incident: The dead woman in Prague

Sarah visited her friend in Prague. One morning she walked out of her friend's flat and saw the body of a dead woman lying naked on the green grass next to a children's playground. She had been raped and murdered. Her face was unrecognizable, her body badly injured. Sarah asked: "**How could anyone do this to another human being?** How could it happen here in an overpopulated housing block?" (Sarah's reflection paper, Appendix 4.2.1. Her emphasis). This is an existential question important in her lifeworld at that moment. It is a social experience, one that made Sarah reflect on what humans were capable of doing to one another. She integrated this experience as a starting point in her theatrical work.

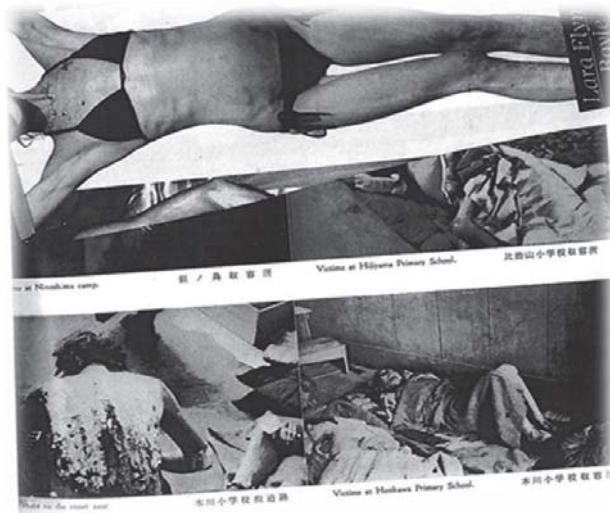
Starting point 3: Generative writing

Sarah took classes in generative writing at VCA and had also been writing before she came to VCA. Her generative writing was consumed with key images and themes that concerned her. It also encompassed all the issues presented at other starting points, "such as loneliness, calling for help but never being heard and everyday actions being subverted" (Sarah's reflection paper, Appendix 4.2.1). These are themes that were important for Sarah to write and reflect upon for several years. She used these written and processed reflections on lived experiences as creative material in this process.

Starting point 4: A series of images

Sarah collected a series of pictures of female (partly naked) bodies. The photographs display female bodily presence in extreme ways: gaunt and emaciated female models, victims with destroyed bodies from the atomic

bomb, suicide bombers with bombs attached to their chests. These strong images activated Sarah's perceptions of female bodily presence.



Photographs from Sarah's Process Notes, Appendix 4.2.

Starting point 5: The Idiots and The Princess Bride

Sarah was inspired by the movie "The Idiots" by the Danish filmmaker Lars Von Trier¹⁵. The film questions what normal behavior is and embraces the inner idiot in human beings. It is the social plays in everyday life, demonstrated in "The Idiots", that Sarah found interesting.

I enjoy the edge it plays between the outrages and unethical to a much needed interrogation and questioning of social ways of being and living. I am inspired to poke fun at everyday life in this way ... Weeing in a teapot, eating chillis, pouring water over my head. They can become everyday actions (Sarah's reflection paper, Appendix 4.2.1).

¹⁵ "The Idiots" concerns a group of seemingly intelligent, middle-class Danes who are sick and tired of life. Fed up with the unquestioned rules of reality and so-called laws of civility and hygiene, they do what comes naturally: they pretend they are mentally retarded and aggressively insert themselves into mainstream culture. This includes drooling in public, harassing innocent strangers with proclamations of nonsense and attempting physical feats of stupidity.

The film inspired Sarah to investigate what would happen if a young woman (herself) played like a child.

She was also inspired by the fairytale “The Princess Bride”, a fairytale adventure that pokes fun at itself. It delves into the imaginary then laughs at itself. Sarah says she was inspired by “The Princess Bride” because “I wanted to have this twist in my work. The magical and everyday. The theatrical and the non-theatrical” (Sarah’s reflection paper, Appendix 4.2.1).

Starting point 6: Strong women’s voices – The Paper Woman

Throughout the previous four years Sarah had created a particular female character through writing and movement. She wanted to give this character a whole performance and took the opportunity to do so in this solo work. She started the process on a bench in a crowded street in downtown Melbourne, with a paper bag covering her head. Through two holes in the paper bag she could observe the reactions of people in the street. Some people came to talk, some sat down beside her and some totally ignored her. In this way she investigated presence and human communication, which inspired and fueled her work. She called the character on the bench “The Paper Woman”, which also turned out to be the name of the performance.

The analysis of Sarah’s primary material in the first phase of the work shows that she defined six different starting point images as important to her in this work. She intended to make new connections between these multiple experiences and she wanted to investigate presence, which existed as a common interest in all of the starting points.

Her experience with presence seems to belong to three different domains, or spaces, in her lifeworld. She is interested in presence in the performance space and in the social space. There is also a private space, reflected in her first starting point (her mother’s illness) and her experience with feeling lonely

and isolated in social space (Sarah's reflection paper, Appendix 4.2.1).

Deduced from the identified starting points, Sarah seems to be interested in presence in three different spheres of her lifeworld:

Pedestrian/social presence – theatrical presence – subjective/personal presence

Sarah herself clearly articulated that she is interested in theatrical and pedestrian presence and her ambition and focus in this performance process was to investigate these two modes of presence:

I am interested in investigating performer presence. **The type of presence I seek in performance embodies my beliefs and ideas of what I want theatre to be.** In this performance I wanted to explore theatrical and pedestrian presences in the space (Sarah's reflection paper, Appendix 4.2.1. Her emphasis).

From the research perspective, we can also identify her subjective/personal interest in presence, which she herself did not include in her reflection paper or in interviews, yet it clearly exists as an impetus in her work:

When I move through most public spaces I feel like an object, devoid of individuality. **People look through me, or they look down so they don't have to address me or they watch me as an object** (a young female body). I am tired of this (Sarah's reflection paper: seeking presence, Appendix 4.2.2. Her emphasis).

It is her subjective feelings of loneliness and isolation in public space that piqued her interest in investigating social presence. Her mother's absence made her conscious of how she thought and felt about her own presence and her relationship to her mother. The subjective/personal clearly exists, but she did not include the subjective presence experience as associated with theatrical and pedestrian presence in her reflection paper. This is probably because she saw her *performance work* as exactly that: performance work, and not personal work or therapeutic work. She had a professional entrance to her

creative work, and although she reflected on her own thinking and feelings related to the work, the focus was not on private experiences but on how her experiences could be used in the creative process, as material to fuel the work. She intended to investigate presence in her performance, to see how she could make people meet and engage with her work, and with each other, in a more caring and open way.

6.2.3 Case Printer HPXX11; social experience

The nature of a collective work is different from solo works in that several participants have to develop several ideas and must negotiate agreements about a possible starting point. In this case, the students had different experiences and different aspirations as to what they would personally have liked to explore in the production. One of the things they had in common was influence from the media, and in this production a significant event framed the circumstances of their performance work. Norway at the time (January 2006) was experiencing tension due to a Norwegian newspaper¹⁶ publishing a drawing of the holy prophet Mohammad. This led to severe reactions in Muslim countries, and Norway suddenly became a participant in a global conflict, articulated through the media.

The social events in Norway at the time had made an impact on the students. The students' devised production started in February 2006 and the performance-makers wanted to take the pulse on what life felt like at that particular moment in time. Collectively, the class chose "The Feeling of 2006" as a title for their work-in-progress. When they started to discuss their collective feelings about 2006, the overriding emotion was one of fear, and the theme of war was important to several of the students.

¹⁶ On January 9, 2006 the Christian newspaper "Magazinet" re-printed facsimiles of 12 caricature drawings of the Prophet Muhammad. The result was that the Norwegian embassy in Damascus was put into flames as well as the Norwegian flag.

One of the students, Andrea, from Portugal, had seen the English dramatist Harold Pinter's Nobel lecture on television, which he gave on 7 December 2005 when he received the Nobel Prize for Literature. Pinter (1930-2008) made a great impression on her:

I was very moved! Not so much ... well of course by his words, but in fact this man, he looked at the camera, his experience, he looked at the camera and he didn't blink. We see all the misery on TV, killing, death, war, suffering and we can't handle it, but Pinter presented it in a very clear way, the conflicts. This really touched me. In a clear way (Interview Andrea, Appendix 3.4.1).

She told the class about her encounter with Pinter and his ideas and said that she would like to do a performance inspired by his speech. The theme of war (also the subject of Pinter's speech) had been an urgent and interesting topic for several other students so they created a collaborative group based on their common interest.

Together the group watched the lecture, titled "Art, truth and politics" (Pinter 2005), on the internet¹⁷. For forty-five minutes they were totally focused on the screen. Pinter was a sick man who talked directly to the camera from his wheelchair. His eyes were intense, his voice was hoarse and he spat out his words.

¹⁷ <http://www.nobelprize.org/mediaplayer/index.php?id=620>



Picture of Pinter performing his speech, as he received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2005¹⁸.

The Nobel Prize Medal for Literature represents a young man sitting under a laurel tree who, enchanted, listens to and writes down the song of the Muse, not unlike the students' enchanted admiration for Pinter's speech.

Pinter appeared to be an angry man, angry with the United States that had invaded one country after another for decades while insisting that they were doing so in order to establish democracy and peace, when they were actually taking care of their own economy and power. He took the opportunity to level severe criticism at the politics of the United States and focused on the evils of war. While the students were sighing and stretching after watching his speech, they commented on what they had just seen. "Amazing", "The way he speaks", "He doesn't blink, did you see that, he didn't blink!", "And his voice, you just have to listen to what he says" (Researcher's journal 2006, February 7, Appendix 4.3). Pinter made a deep impression on the students. It was the form - the performed speech - that actually caught their attention. It was a door-opener for the content.

It became interesting, as an observer of the process, to reflect on the students' interest in the speech. What is a speech? A speech is usually very formal, is solemn, platitudinal and ceremonial. Why were these young students so fascinated by this form of expression? The art of speaking goes back to

¹⁸ Pinter's Nobel Lecture was pre-recorded, and shown on video on December 7, 2005, in Börssalen at the Swedish Academy in Stockholm.

antiquity, to Aristotle, who played a decisive part in developing democracy. To master the art of rhetoric was the first step towards power and influence. The concept of a speech is used in many different circumstances by politicians, lecturers, the business community and so forth. A speech often consists of many clichés, empty phrases and can be platitudinous. Nevertheless, it can be very powerful. This is something the students had experienced themselves. One of the students had lived in the USA and was very engaged in the power of the speech. After witnessing the presidential election in 2000, when George Bush (junior) was elected for the first time, she had seen how influential and effective speeches could be.

Before, I used to think he was an idiot, but the war started as I was there...I went to demonstrations with thousands of people. But what for? Nothing really happened. This is a man who doesn't give a shit! He doesn't listen to his own people. Why should he listen to the rest of the world? So it makes me feel angry when I see his speech. But I never ever underestimate him anymore. I really think: watch out! The speech has enormous power. I have seen it (Interview Andrea, Appendix 3.4.1).

Andrea was actively using her first-hand past experience in the USA as an anchor to start off the creative process. Her experience from the USA engaged with her emotions; she felt angry, she said, and it made her think: "never underestimate him anymore". Andrea used her emotional and cognitive experience as the impetus for creating a performance. Such a duality, between feeling and cognition, is a crucial point in Vygotsky's theory. He pairs emotion and thought together as equitable processes that are synthesized into new meaning-making processes (Vygotsky 1930/2004, 1934/1978). This is exactly what happened in this project. The starting point narrative took its lead from a student's experience of Pinter's speech that made her reflect on the theme of war. The aesthetic form (speech) was in this way inter-related with the student's feelings and cognition. Already, even at this early stage in the process, the theatre space was being used as an arena to investigate an existential theme.

In the speech, the group found common ground from which they could progress their work, and they agreed to make Pinter's speech a starting point in their process:

Earlier, we have worked in different directions, but now we have Pinter, whom all of us have a relationship to. The fascination of him has become something we have in common (Interview Tim, Appendix 3.3).

The students found the speech to be a good starting point for saying something about a theme that was important to them - war, empowerment and politics. The process that the students were undertaking can be associated with secondary, borrowed or a social experience. Vygotsky (1930/2004) argued that it is essential to humans to be able to imagine things never seen or directly experienced. He explained the process of lived experience as the ability to: "venture far beyond these boundaries, assimilating, with help of his imagination someone else's historical or social experience" (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 17). By listening to Pinter's speech, the students imagined other people's war experiences and assimilated Pinter's experience and description of such experiences.

A closer investigation of the students' secondary experiences shows that there were different layers of secondary experience. The starting point focus was war (layer one), which none of the students had actually experienced themselves¹⁹. The speech was Pinter's interpretation and processed version of his experience with war, and this gave a second layer to the students' experience process. They borrowed Pinter's secondary interpretation as a starting point for their process, and this is the third layer. The students made a performance based on the secondary material and gave their performative

¹⁹ "None of us have experienced war, none of us have experienced these things, but we can make a performance about it" (Interview Karen Appendix 3.5.1).

interpretation of the secondary experiences; they thereby made it a new first-hand experience for themselves. Hence, the students' secondary experience can be differentiated into four layers:

1. Content: war
2. Harold Pinter's speech
3. The students use the speech as a starting point
4. The students give a theatrical interpretation of Pinter's speech and the theme; war, empowerment and politics

The identification of different layers of experience shows how a secondary, or borrowed, experience can become a primary experience. The next chapters will elaborate on this, but at this stage in the creative process we can establish that there is a link between the secondary experience (the theme of war) and the students' emotional and cognitive interest in the theme, which became a primary experience for them.

6.3 SPACE AND TIME

Through the analysis of time and space in the starting point phase of the creative process it turns out that none of the cases started working concretely with an aesthetic space and none of them had a conscious attitude towards the aspect of time. When analyzing space and time in the starting point phase it is necessary to search for the aesthetic spaces that the devisers are attracted to and how this related to their lived psychological space. How do they relate to time; do they search for chronological time, linear time or heterogeneous time, fragmented temporality (Chapter 4.4) in the starting point ideas? Eco's (1989) notion of open/closed work is used in the analysis to describe the nature of the deviser's preferred aesthetic space. Since none of the cases worked on the floor during the first days of the process, the data material

discussed in this section is the deviser's articulated intentions on space and time, which became apparent through interviews and discussions.

6.3.1 Case Nancy; closed stand-up space and unity of time

Nancy decided early in the process to make an autobiographical performance and chose a specific aesthetic space – the stand-up space – to frame her performance work. She had been interested in stand-up for some time and intended to see if she could do a show on her own:

The last six months I have really been interested in stand-ups and seen some shows. I want to see if I can do it... People laugh at me anyway, so I could make something funny anyway. No one else has made a comedy here (Interview Nancy, Appendix 3.1).

Nancy had experienced that she had a talent for being funny among friends and now she wanted to try it on stage. What characterizes the stand-up space is a direct communication between the performer and the audience, and the performer is placed alone on a podium. The performer is devoted to getting immediate laughs from an audience through telling jokes or funny monologues. It puts a great pressure on the performer to deliver laughter live in the stand-up space, in front of an audience while alone on stage, and it is therefore a demanding space to be in for a performer. Hence, it was a 'risky' space for Nancy to enter psychologically. The roots of stand-up may be traced back to such theatrical folk forms as vaudeville and the music halls of the 18th and 19th centuries. Today it belongs to mainstream popular culture and is commercially distributed on DVD, internet and television. It is interesting to notice that Nancy said that comedy was not a valid genre at her school, and none of the students had tried it out (see quote above). Nancy took a deliberate choice early in the process to enter an aesthetic space that stood out from the privileged aesthetic at her school. The stand-up show has its defined rules and can be considered a closed space in Eco's sense (see Chapter 4.2). By

choosing the stand-up space she closed the process regarding form at a very early stage, a form chosen because Nancy felt it suited her autobiographical story.

Nancy went through her childhood diaries and wrote a chronological résumé of the events that, together, constituted the total memory of her experience (Nancy's process diary). At the beginning of the process she did not seem to be conscious of the temporal diversity of the experience despite the fact that she was a little girl when she had the experience and that the experience stretched over several years (from when she was five, when she started to dance, until she was fifteen, when she stopped dancing). The experience seems to have presented itself as a united temporal memory for Sarah and she searched for how the experience "felt" at the time. From the start of the process, Nancy searched for a chronological and timely unity to her experience.

6.3.2 Case Sarah; Open space and heterogeneous time

Sarah started the creative process by doing a practical exercise in a public place. She placed herself in a public crowded street in downtown Melbourne with a paper bag covering her head. She thereby created and framed a situation from which she could control and investigate presence from different perspectives. This exercise in the very early stage of the performance-making process enabled her to consciously investigate different, yet connected, experiences with presence to inform her work, both in regards to pedestrian presence, theatrical presence and subjective/personal presence. As part of the pedestrian presence she wanted to explore, she went out into the crowded street and investigated different reactions from the public. She found that some people talked to her, asking if she was alright, some asked what she was doing, some passed by without looking at her at all; and some just looked at her and smiled (Interview Sarah, Appendix 3.2). All these

reactions provided information to Sarah about how people on the street react to a stranger. This experience made her want to set up a 'free theatrical space'. She decided that she did not want benches or chairs in the performance space, she wanted the audience to walk freely around in the space and decide for themselves how to react to her as a performer. Sarah chose to work in an open aesthetic space in order to experiment with new connections between her starting point materials. In this way, she was hoping to create a psychological space which allowed new ways of seeing and perceiving:

The artist alloys together a series of heterogeneous ideas and materials. They create a new cultural product from a class of formless matter... It is through these acts of invention that new ways of seeing and perceiving may come into being. This, I believe, should be aim of art (Sarah's reflection paper, Appendix 4.2.1).

As Sarah defined her work as being open, she was, at the same time, placing her work within a specific artistic genre. Open works are historically contingent, and the concept of openness of form holds a distinct social commitment with distinct formal preferences, according to Eco (Chapter 4.2). So, as Sarah chose to create an open space, she also placed her work within a particular artistic genre that is historically and culturally contingent.

With respect to timeline, the different starting points of the work occurred in different phases and times in Sarah's life with no temporal relationship to one another. The starting points were spread over time, from pictures of Hiroshima bombings in 1945 to contemporary pictures of skinny females²⁰. Rather than being focused on a linearity of experiences, Sarah focused on her content intention when she set up the open space. She was the one who embodied all the experiences she worked with, and her main focus of

²⁰ Timeline of Sarah's starting points: Pictures of Hiroshima bombing 1945, 1998 "The Idiots" is released, 2005 Starts to work with the Paper Woman, The Dead woman in Prague 2006, Female models 2007, Develops generative writing 2004-2007, Present time 2007 Her mother's illness.

attention was to work with presence. In Chapter 4.4 we saw that the performative space can be an embodied and lived emotional space that “possesses the meaning of lapse or duration in time” (Van Manen and Adams 2009: 12). For Sarah, this was the case, as the six different starting points circulated within her body and her embodied psychological space was the aspect that possessed meaning in her diverse temporal experiences.

6.3.3 Case Printer HPXX11; jumps and mix between times and spaces

At the beginning of the process, the collective made an open creative space where every group member’s ideas were heard and accounted for, with Pinter’s work as an anchor in the process. They focused on the discussion of the content (war crimes) and they included Pinter’s play “Ashes to Ashes” (Pinter 1996) in the process. The fascination of Pinter’s speech had evoked a renewed interest in Pinter’s written dramas. Some of the students had read some of his dramas before, and on the second day in the process they rushed to the school library to find his works. “Ashes to Ashes” introduced two characters, Devlin and Rebecca, the text had subtle war scenes and the characters were influenced by war. The students concluded that the content of the play and Pinter’s speech were both concerned with war and politics (Interview Andrea, Appendix 3.4.1). The students cut and pasted from Pinter’s two texts as they looked for ‘what fitted’ in the script and the drama, and they were not concerned with temporal unity or heterogeneity. They looked for content connections rather than temporal connections. In the Nobel speech, Pinter used political statements to describe the injustices of war, and in “Ashes to Ashes” the two characters experience the injustices of war. The two texts are divergently related to time and aesthetic space, and the link that connected the texts was the devisers’ psychological spaces in their perception of war in the texts.

As they collectively cut and pasted Pinter's texts into a new script they discussed what kind of aesthetic space they wanted to create. They wanted to use "An American show-like aesthetics" in the performance, they argued, and referred to a common past experience (Group discussion DVD 2 060209). Earlier, they had worked with a "heavy formal style" that they called "Arty Farty" (ibid). They wanted to avoid using this style again. In order to explain what "Arty Farty" meant, they referred to a performance they had made called "Nietzsche", where they used philosophical texts by Friedrich Nietzsche, slow movements and "music you never hear on the radio", as they put it (ibid). The performance was presented in a "deadly serious and formal style", without humor (ibid). They wanted to break with this aesthetically "heavy" space filled with specific cultural references, which they found to be the "preferred aesthetic" at the school, by using other aesthetic spaces, as found in American shows, for example (Interview Andrea, Appendix 3.4.1). Hence, they wanted to make a counter-cultural aesthetic space held beside their experience of the school's preferred aesthetic space, but they did not concretely define what their new aesthetic space would look like.

6.4 BODY-CHARACTER

In this section, attention is directed towards how the devisers related to their selves in this phase of the work. The analysis shows that the three cases related differently to their embodied self (see Chapter 4.5.3), according to their diverse content intentions.

6.4.1 Case Nancy; the self who was and the self who is

Nancy started the process by saying she intended to make a *true* autobiographic story based on real events in her childhood, and here she seems to be making an equation between experience and truth. The experience had taken place within a specific time in Nancy's childhood, and

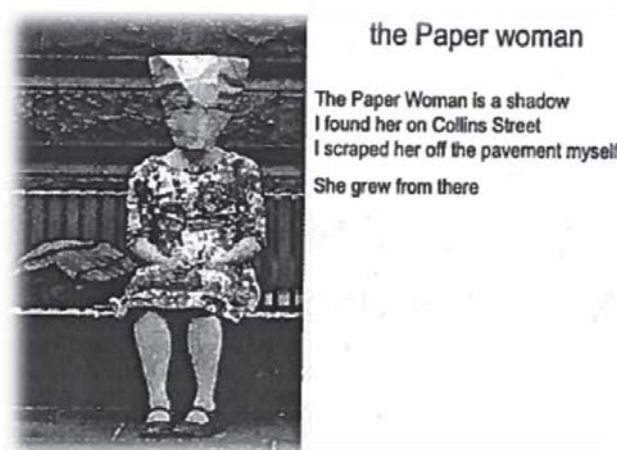
every age has its own system of feeling and understanding and the memory of an experience will change as the child develops and grows (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 12). Working with a past experience is always an interpretation of an experience. From the moment Nancy started working with her childhood memories she activated different parts of her self; the self who *was* and the self who *is*. This is a phenomenon identified in autobiographical performances, as we saw in Chapter 4.5.4. When Nancy read her childhood diaries, her emotions were activated and she wrote a list (referred to in section 6.2.1) in order to remember “what the experience *is* like” (Nancy’s process notes, Appendix 4.1). She was, however, actually describing the experience in retrospect, as she is not a little girl anymore and the experience had happened many years ago. By making this list she was reflecting on her childhood experience. This is the first step towards articulating what the experience *was* like. Sarah started the process of representing her self in order to make the performance, and in the creative dynamics she became aware that her self was ‘re-presented’ rather than recorded, in a process characterized by “personal editing” as Govan et al (2007: 60) calls it.

6.4.2 Case Sarah; Her self/not herself/not not herself on a bench

Sarah’s exercise on a bench in downtown Melbourne²¹, informed her about her subjective/personal experience with presence, in that it played with different parts of her self; it is herself who is sitting on a bench, yet not herself (the bag covers her head; she is not as she normally appears on a bench; she is ‘someone’ sitting on the bench). She is also not not herself (it is not not herself sitting on the bench with the paper bag over her head). This argument draws on Schechner’s notion of transportation, where the actor transports herself from her daily life into a performance before she returns to her daily life again

²¹ Described in section 6.3.2

(Schechner 2006: 72). The actor lives a “double negative” Schechner says. “While performing, actors are not themselves, nor are they the characters. Theatrical role-playing takes place between “not me . . . not not me”. In the case of this project, Sarah experienced the “double negative” as part of her preparation and investigation for the performance.



Excerpt from the performance program folder presenting “The Paper Woman”. The photograph illustrates Sarah sitting on the bench with the paper bag over her head.

She used this phase of the performance-making process to consciously investigate different, yet connected, experiences with her self, and this informed her work in regards to pedestrian presence, theatrical presence and subjective/personal presence. She created a new experience with presence on different levels of the self and the performance character (her, not her, not not her) by placing herself on the bench in a crowded street.

6.4.3 Case Printer HPXX11: the empathic self

In Case Printer HPXX11, the relationship between the secondary or borrowed experience and the empathic self is accentuated. In the group devised process, the students worked with their perceptions and moral emotions related to war, and their empathic self was activated:

Karen: People die every day, in war, and there are children who have no arms and legs for example, and all of these things are important to reflect upon. Even if we would not like to relate to it, we don't want to know...

Interviewer: Are these things important to you in your daily life?

Karen: Yes, absolutely.

Interviewer: These are things that you think about?

Karen: Yes, absolutely. And that is why I think it is so fantastic to work in this group which we have become, in a way, to talk about things that matters to us (Interview Karen, Appendix 3.5.1).

Karen used her personal experiences from her everyday life regarding perceptions of the themes of war and politics, and found a common interest within the group to discuss these things. The group discussions and their reflecting notes helped them clarify how the themes related to their empathetic self. Secondary or borrowed imagination is essential to human activity in that we are capable of understanding and feeling things that we have never experienced ourselves (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 17)²². It is closely linked to the ability to develop empathy. Through imagination, which is a powerful tool in drama, we are able to identify, assimilate and relate to secondary, borrowed experiences. For the students in this project, the work with a secondary experience was also related to personal moral and emotional development, in that they imagined how it would feel to be a person in a war zone. In the process of reading Pinter's text, their empathy towards people who had suffered is activated and it affected their daily lives, in that they found it hard to sleep at night: "This has become a matter close to our hearts ... That is why we can't sleep at night, for example" (Interview Karen, Appendix 3.5.1). This shows that the devisers' subjective self were engaged in the making of theatrical characters.

²² See Chapter 5.5

Even though they had honorable and altruistic intentions, the students had ambiguous feelings about war. They were engaged with other people's suffering; however, since this is not a first-hand experience, they experience it through distance:

I alter between believing that it concerns me, and not caring at all. We have actually a choice in this country; we can pretend war and suffering does not exist and read celebrity news instead (Interview Tim, Appendix 3.3.1).

They reflected on the experience as something they could deliberately choose not to focus on. None of the students had actually experienced war themselves. Some had been close to war, for example Tim's parents were Vietnamese refugees, but Tim had been born and raised in Norway.

I have grown up with war without actually experiencing it. My parents were refugees, but I have grown up in a peaceful and quiet country. I have heard all the stories of escaping, war and so on (Interview Tim, Appendix 3.3).

War is part of his family narrative, but it is not something that he directly experienced himself. The same was true for Karen, another member of the group. She had grown up in the peaceful Norwegian countryside as a farmer's daughter and had never experienced war. However, she had a strong urge to say that war was unjust and no-one should have to experience it. She expressed her frustration at not being able to help people who are suffering:

I'm tired of being impersonal, not caring, I don't think it is a good attitude to have. Even though we live in the western world... full of goodies. I think that people need to have someone... speech, or person, or living being that drives you through. Like Pinter, a good man, can do. It is important nowadays (Interview Karen, Appendix 3.5.1).

Pinter's words became their secondary or borrowed common inspiration. But, parallel with this secondary experience, the data shows that the students had a personal intention related to war in their content. They were trying to find a way of dealing with the feeling of helplessness, as distant witnesses to war

crimes in faraway places. The students discussed matters and worked creatively with this personal moral challenge. The secondary experience was, in this way, linked to personal self-interest. Psychologist Robert Frank argues that “moral emotions facilitate solutions to social problems that can only be solved through the subversion of narrow self-interest” (Frank in Greene 2011: 1). From the perspective of this case study, it seems to be a necessary connection between the moral dilemma and a personal “narrow” experience, rather than as a subversion of self-interest. This analysis shows that the empathic self is linked to moral dilemmas, personal emotions and self-interest.

6.5 SUMMARY

The three cases had different starting point experiences that fueled their work at the beginning of the process, and these were analyzed using Vygotsky’s connections between reality and imagination as a tool. Nancy went back to her childhood memory (“past experience”), Sarah had a welter of experiences that she intended to connect in new ways (“new connections”) and Case Printer HPXX11 was engaged in the theme of war through Pinter’s work (“secondary experience”).

A brief summary of how each case related to the categories follows in order to emphasize the creative dynamics in each case. Nancy chose the traditional stand-up as her preferred narrative form in order to tell her autobiographical story. The creative dynamics allowed for “autobiographical reasoning” (Singer and Blagov 2004: 121) of the personal narrative as she formed her personal narrative into a theatrical narrative. Her personal narrative became a negative, closed and self-defining memory for her, and in the process she started opening up the closed memory and reflected on its meaning. The creative dynamics of forming a theatrical narrative based on a personal

experience made an impact on her experience with her 'authentic' self that, in the creative dynamic, was differentiated into a self who *was* and a self that *is*. This shows that in the creative dynamics in the first phase of the process her personal experience was closely inter-related with her aesthetic form-making which in turn helped her create new reflections on her self. She became aware that her self was being 're-presented' rather than 'recorded', in a process characterized by "personal editing". Nancy was inspired to work with her autobiographical material in an aesthetic closed stand-up space. She looked for the chronology of her story, which she experienced as a temporally united memory. Psychologically, she created a 'risky' space by exposing herself to the demands of the stand-up space.

The analysis of Case Sarah's narrative showed that she started the process with an aesthetically and experiential open exploration of what mattered to her in her life. She defined presence to be especially important to her and approached the experience of presence from different angles by introducing six different starting points based on her personal experience, which she intended to connect in new ways. She created an open aesthetic space in order to experience human behavior in a public space by situating herself on a bench with a paper bag over her head. By forming (organizing) her work in such a manner she experienced different sides of her self – her, not her, her not not her – which was influential both on her work with the performance character and on the work with her self.

Case Printer HPXX11's starting point was substantially different to Case Nancy and Case Sarah, who both used personal experiences as the impetus experiences for their theatrical narratives (though in very different ways). In this case, the group was impressed by Pinter's words, which found resonance in them emotionally and cognitively. This was described as a secondary, or borrowed, experience drawing on Vygotsky's second connection between reality and imagination. The analysis shows that, through imagination, the

devisers were able to identify, assimilate and relate to secondary, borrowed experiences by using Pinter’s work as a medium, but the theme they engaged (war) was not a personal experience of the devisers. The secondary experience had four layers and was related to personal, moral and emotional dilemmas, but also self-interest; they were trying to find ways to deal with feelings of helplessness at being witnesses to war crimes from a distance. In order to make theatrical characters, they used secondary experiences, but they also related to their subjective emphatic selves. The group wanted to make a counter-cultural aesthetic space in response to their experience of the school’s preferred aesthetic space, but they did not concretely define what their new open aesthetic space would look like.

The analysis of the first step in the creative process can be summarized by using the devising model:

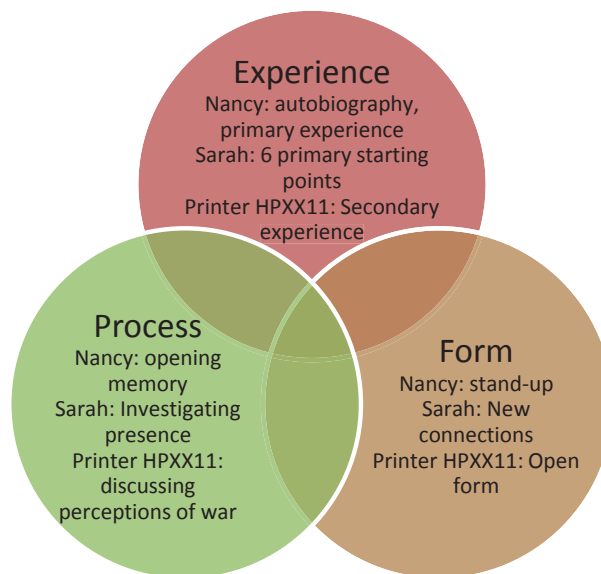


Figure 4: The devising model: Summary of the first creative phase.

The analysis has revealed two vital elements in the first phase of the creative process: the element of thinking and feeling and the influence of intention.

The analysis of the first phase of the creative process drew on Vygotsky's first two steps in the creative circle: past experience and separation into single elements. The analysis shows that the vital past experiences used in the beginning of the process were primary experiences (Case Nancy and Case Sarah) and secondary experiences (Case Printer HPXX11; Pinter's Nobel Speech). But the devisers soon started to separate the material²³ in the back and forth process between *feeling and thinking*. This process happened when they forged a distance to their experience, which performance-making as a medium enables. The performance-making allowed for experiences to be reasoned on and viewed with a double look (emotionally from within and cognitively from the outside) as the devisers imagined how an audience would see the performance.

The analysis also shows another central element in the creative process at this stage: the deviser's *intentions*, which are developed at a very early stage in the process. The artistic intention can be defined to be content intentions and form intentions, closely related to what matters for the deviser. Eco (1989: 160) argues that these terms collapse into one in and through the artist herself. The analysis reveals that the devisers developed and defined the different parts of their artistic intentions and articulated the parts of the artistic intention separately, yet in connection to one another. Content intentions and form intentions are a thread that was developed in the work in all categories (narrative, space, time and body-character) and therefore was a driving force and a central element in this first phase of the creative process. Intentions are not mentioned by Vygotsky in his writing on the creative circle, yet this analysis finds that the development of intention is of significant importance in the creative dynamics of the devising process, and that aesthetic form and experience are inter-related in the artistic intention.

²³ Nancy collects different childhood material and external pictures, Sarah separates her hundred point list into six different starting points, in Case Printer HPXX11 the secondary experience is split into different layers.

7 EXPLORE AND MEDIATE MATERIAL - ANALYSIS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the middle phase of the devising process, where the deviser explores and mediates the material. It is the longest phase, time-wise, in the creative process. The phase is marked by periods of chaos and transformation as ideas are investigated and developed. Vygotsky's steps from three to five (see Chapter 5.4) in the creative circle are merged into one in this chapter. It is focused on change and the moments in the creative dynamics where the aesthetic material/experience are connected or disconnected in the three cases.

7.2 NARRATIVES

This section analyzes how narratives are developed through the making of new connections in the material. It is appropriate to see how intertextuality is used as a narrative device in the making of such new connections. The notion of intertextuality was introduced in Chapter 4.3.2, and since intertextuality could be identified in all of the cases in this phase of their work it is used as an analytical approach. Other theory introduced in Chapters 3-5 will also be applied in order to analyze the distinct characteristics in each case.

7.2.1 Case Nancy: Re-creating and changing the memory

In the previous chapter we saw that Nancy opened her childhood narrative and accessed feelings connected to her memory and then reflected on the

effects of the experience. In the middle phase of the process, Nancy went deeper into the material and ripped the memory into different elements, which she then put together into a performance narrative and offered a new experience for herself, as shown below.

Regeneration of personal narrative

Vygotsky argues that two basic types of human behavior exist: reproductive acts and creative acts. Reproduction is very closely linked to memory:

... essentially it consists of a person's reproducing or repeating previously developed and mastered behavioral patterns or resurrecting traces of earlier impressions (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 7).

As evidenced in Nancy's process (Chapter 6.2.1), an action of reproduction occurred as she retold her story as accurately as possible. However, during the creative process of retelling her story, her primary experience was transformed by separating the memory into different theatrical material and new experiences. For example, in the making of the opening monologue, she looked at old video recordings from when she danced at the age of eight. She reconstructed the dance, with all the immature movements. The immature movements reminded Nancy of how she moved her body in a physical and embodied way at the age of eight. She had to practice and refine the movements, and right after doing so she sat down and wrote a text on how she loved dancing and how she moved her body at this age²⁴. She worked on the floor trying to find a rhythm and a composition between the movements and the text. She transformed her childhood experiences by increasing the immature movements, re-making the choreography and integrating her new

²⁴ "I stood there nervously in my brand new pink leotard, white stick legs shivering as all the greatest hits of 1992 echoed around the draughty basketball hall. I was absolutely scared out of my wits. But I needn't have worried. The classes were better than my wildest dreams. We did turns. We did jumps. We did kick-ball-changes. I came home on a cloud every Tuesday night and danced up and down the hallway before I went to bed. I was in love. And my first love's name was jazz ballet" (Nancy's process notes, Appendix 4.1).

reflexive text in order to give the experience an external picture. This example shows that Nancy experienced “the circular path of imagination”. By using her reproductive memory of a lived experience, she developed a new narrative based on her old personal narrative. Hence, she was both reproducing earlier narratives and creating new ones in the creative act. But instead of taking the shape of a circular path, Nancy’s narrative work had a linear form, as will be shown subsequently.

Intertextual change of the memory

Nancy collected a rich amount of material from her autobiographical childhood memory in this phase of the process – her diaries from when she was little, old photographs from when she was a young ballerina, posters from the performances, and even old costumes and video recordings from some of her shows. She also included other sources. From the internet she collected a variety of photographs of groups of young girls dancing (ballet, jazz ballet, cheerleading, gymnastics. See Nancy’s process notes, Appendix 4.1), she listened to music and wrote a list of songs with dancing themes (ibid) and she went to the library and read books about dance²⁵. In the starting point phase, Nancy’s interest was focused on her own past experience. In the next phase, she broadened her subjective interest into a wider phenomenal interest in dancing experiences as a common cultural experience. Through the theatrical mediation of material – writing the monologues, creating the choreography, implementing the music, creating the space – she put the personal narrative (memory) together in a new theatrical way. In this process she looked for meaning or “intertextual substance” (Bloome and Egan-Robertson 2004: 31) that could be expressed in an aesthetic form (narrative) that resonated with her autobiographical experience. For Nancy, this process

²⁵ All that jazz and more: the complete book of jazzdancing by Christy Lane, Anthology of American jazz dance by Guss Giordano, The physics of dance, Advice for dancers: emotional counsel and practical strategies by Ballieu, VCA psychology of dance, Between classes: shaping your technique and body by Gloria York.

was linear and hierarchic; top-down, from her memory on top, to structuring the material in a way that resonated with the experience, as she tried to tell her “true story” (Interview Nancy, Appendix 3.1). She connected both intra-personal texts (from her past experience: memory, diaries, choreography, costumes) and she implemented inter-personal intertextuality as she included others experience with dance (from books, photographs and videos from the internet, songs with dancing themes). Nancy’s creative work with narratives can be displayed like this:

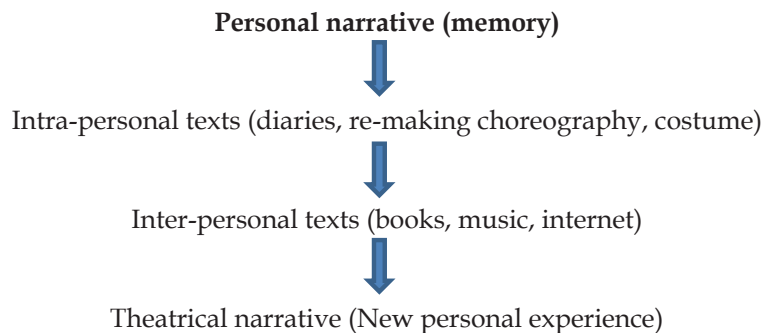


Figure 5: Intertextual dynamics Case Nancy.

Although the narrative process was linear, it was a process of re-materialization, of re-telling a story, of re-organizing a memory, of re-creating an experience, and of creating a new experience. The new narrative was not the same as the internal automatized narrative she had when she started the process; rather, throughout the process, it became a conscious telling of a memory, put into a narrative for a performance audience, with new reflective feelings for Nancy. It was based on her true story, yet the narrative was carefully constructed and edited. The narrative was no longer Nancy’s internal memory and yet it was not an “objective or true” story. As we saw in Chapter 4.5.4, Renza (1977: 22) argues that autobiography is “a unique, self-defining mode of self-referential expression”. Nancy’s creative autobiographical act might be considered a unique expression and development of a new experience based on her past experience. It was an

embodied conscious re-creation of a new theatrical narrative and experience, instead of an internal subjective memory, that was developed through the creative process.

7.2.3 Case Sarah: Creating unexpected intra-personal connections

Whilst Nancy was trying to re-construct and re-create her childhood narrative as accurately as possible, Sarah, on the other hand, purposefully tried to surprise herself by making new and unexpected connections between her six former experiences (her starting point material). Sarah started each session in the rehearsal space with a two hour movement improvisation where her key images were laid out. In order to train her bodily awareness and presence in space she developed some exercises, which she called “Body as antennae”, in order to create “a body that breathed through all its pores, almost animalistic, a body with a heightened sensitivity to all sensory stimuli and events taking place in the space” (Sarah’s reflection paper; seeking presence, Appendix 4.2.2). A description, based on Sarah’s process notes and notes from the researcher’s journal, serves as an example of how Sarah worked on the floor, making new connections by improvising and exploring her material:

Sarah starts to move in the space. She investigates her skin, smells it, touches it, and licks her arm, exploring her flesh. She breathes long breaths, following the breathing from her nostrils, to her lungs, into her stomach and all the way to her feet and hands. She trains her awareness of her body’s physical presence and the physical sensation of breathing and touching her skin. One of her key images is photographs of female bodies in different states; the skin dangling on their bodies after the Hiroshima bombings, skinny photo models and so on (starting point four). Sarah investigates her own skin with high awareness. Maybe she is influenced by the images in her subconscious? She suddenly throws herself on to the floor. She holds the position. Breathing. She throws herself into another position. She repeats this action. Like a child playing, investigating the movement, repeating the gesture again and again. Every time she freezes in the position lying on the floor, she looks like a dead body from a crime scene (The dead woman in Prague, starting point two?).

She says “I’ve had an accident” every time she freezes in a position. She goes on doing this for five more minutes. She laughs excitedly and then she stops (Sarah’s process notes, Appendix 4.2).

During the improvisation, Sarah found a connection in the material (maybe between the photographs of naked female bodies and the dead woman in Prague?) that she could use. The starting points circulated in Sarah’s thoughts, and she became clear about how she wanted them to inform her work during the improvisation:

I want them to resort themselves in my subconscious. I forget them momentarily. I keep dancing and playing, they re-emerge in new forms. Such as placing my body in a series of accidents that are potentially tragic and real or silly jokes (Sarah’s reflection paper, Appendix 4.2.1).

Unconsciously, she let the different material inform her movement improvisations. A movement, an action or sequence of actions are considered useful material for Sarah when she feels that it is something that she has been looking for in her subconscious: “I guess it must have been something I was looking for but not totally conscious of...” (Interview Sarah, Appendix 3.2). Movement is a central theme in Vygotsky’s writings on creativity as we saw in Chapter 5. He argues that the nature of a phenomenon is revealed during the process of movement and change. When the material of Sarah’s lived experience is linked to an action during improvisation, Sarah confirms this argument. She suddenly *feels* that it fits (Interview Sarah, Appendix 3.2) in the movement improvisation. Vygotsky also argues that emotions link unconscious associations together, which he calls “the law of general emotional signs”. It refers to the tendency to cluster together images or expressions that have affective similarity. During Sarah’s improvisation she felt that different material fitted, but the emotions were also connected to the intellect. Sarah worked unconsciously with her associations during the improvisations until, in a split second, she felt a connection; hence her

conscious intellect made her stop and pick a certain action/connection based on her unconscious associations of feelings and movements.

In Chapter 4.3.1 intertextuality was defined to be the process of being in a culturally ongoing aesthetic and experiential conversation with others' experience and creative work and to give an aesthetic response to this conversation. But the analysis of Case Sarah's creative dynamics shows that she was having an ongoing conversation with her own different experiences from her lifeworld (her six starting points) in an intra-personal intertextual process. For Case Sarah, the creative dynamics took the form of a complex intra-personal web as she lay out her different starting points and made new meaning or "intertextual substance" connections between her different experiences. Instead of being oriented towards other people's texts and experiences she used her own experiences, defined in her six starting points, as creative material that she connected in new intertextual ways during improvisations on the floor. The creative dynamics in Case Sarah's work with narratives can be displayed like this:

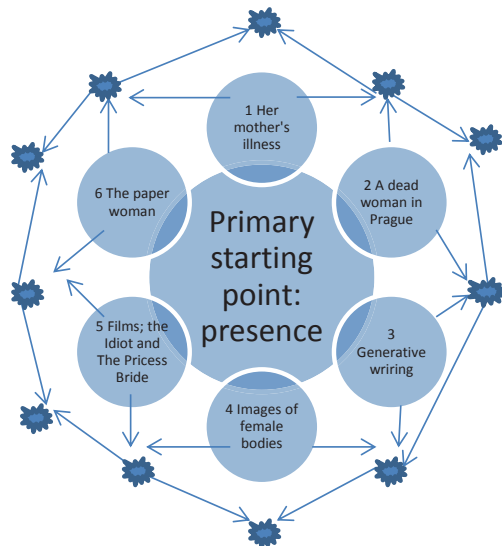


Figure 6: Intertextual dynamics Case Sarah.

Resistance and change

But there is also resistance in Sarah's material. When she, for example, laid out a piece of text on the floor and a picture of a dead body, she could not find a connection between them, and after a few minutes improvisation she threw the text away, yet pursued the new movements she had found. When trying to explain how this process was accomplished, Sarah said:

It's just a feeling...When you are absolutely sure you've got no nerve battles against the material anymore. Like when text meets other material and you have no more questions, they seem to be right. Those words keep coming up; it seems right. Your intuition says it seems right (Interview Sarah, Appendix 3.2).

It is interesting that Sarah uses the expression "nerve battles" and "intuition" in order to explain her creative experience. It leads the attention towards a physical sensory response toward the creative material. "Nerve battle" indicates that Sarah experienced an encounter in her neural system between different experiences in the moment of creation. Whether the battle was accomplished or not is guided by intuition, which Sarah defined as being the feeling that she had been looking for in her subconscious. Even though it could seem like Sarah had made the connections arbitrarily and randomly during the improvisation, there appears to be an inner logic in her work that was guided by her intuition: "I can keep going on and on and on and on and work the connections out through my intuition" (Interview Sarah, Appendix 3.2).

Furthermore, it seems like her intuition was in conversation with her intentions with the work; she chose certain actions, or connections between actions, because "they had the potential to create emotional reactions in the audience that I desired for the work" (Sarah's reflection paper, Appendix 4.2.1). Her intra-personal connections and her inner logic are shown to be interrelated with her purpose of communicating with her audience, the

external world. Vygotsky argues that there is a relationship between the inner creative world and the external world: "...artistic images follow an internal logic of their own and this logic results from the relationships the work establishes between its own world and the external world" (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 24). Furthermore, he argues that the artist holds a set of cultural and historical signs and meaning systems that make the artist able to communicate with her audience (ibid). As Connery writes:

The artist draws on a conglomerate of symbolic patterns and rhythms afforded by the content, genre, and material to purposely summon an aesthetic response on the part of the audience by means of the resultant artifact or event (Connery 2010: 23).

As Sarah is herself a part of a cultural meaning-making system, she can imagine what reactions the different actions can create in the audience. This is significant for deciding which actions to use during an improvisation. Sarah looked for connections (actions) in the material to create emotional reactions in the audience. Since she did not have any audience in the making process of the performance she had to trust her own intuition and cultural knowledge about which movements, acts, personas and so on, would create emotions in the audience.

When working with narratives in this phase of the process, Sarah engaged with different aspects of her lifeworld (her six starting points) which is reflected in her sub-consciousness, her intuition and feelings in a physical and sensuous way through improvisation. In the creative dynamic the aesthetic form and her experience were inter-related in a complex intra-personal web that allowed her to create new meaning connections and fragmented narratives.

7.2.4 Case Printer HPXX11: Intertextual connections

The analysis of Case Printer HPXX11's narrative work in this phase of the process reveals that intertextuality was their main narrative device in the creative process. Two interdependent sorts of intertextuality can be identified in the collective work. One is the intertextual work with Pinter's texts (performance intertextuality) and another being the intertextual relationship between the devisers (social intertextuality). Different devisers have different experiences and the intertextual social process proceeds from an association from one deviser to that of another deviser, and so on through all devisers. Bloome and Egan-Robertson defines this type of intertextual relationship as:

People interacting with each other, construct intertextual relationships by the way they act and react to each other. An intertextual relationship is proposed, is recognized, is acknowledged, and has social significance (Bloome and Egan-Robertson 2004: 30).

This section analyzes how an open and democratic organization of the group work in Case Printer HPXX11 enabled two interdependent forms of intertextuality to appear simultaneously, and that meaning-making happened in this interdependent sphere between the two modes of intertextuality. The section starts by analyzing the group's work with appropriation of performance text before the social intertextuality is analyzed.

'Pinter track of references': the generation of intertextual connections in Pinter's texts

Case Printer HPXX11 appropriated Pinter's political speech and his drama "Ashes to Ashes" to reconstitute a new manuscript. The devisers found that the two texts had an intertextual content relationship in that both were concerned with experiences and reflections on war, yet in different ways. The speech appealed to the intellect and the "big world" and the drama engaged the emotions and showed the conflicts of the drama characters in "the little world" (Interview Andrea, Appendix 3.4.1). Andrea explained how they

worked and reflected in the process when they made intertextual connections between Pinter's texts:

We want a combination of the beautiful dialogue in his play and then the brutality in his speech, his clarity... We are combining two different worlds, created by the same author. And they comment each other when we put them together (Interview Andrea, Appendix 3.4.1).

Their appropriation of the two texts displayed "the big picture in the little picture. With bridges between", said Andrea (Interview, Appendix 3.4.1). The two texts were combined and changed in order to comment on each other.

Furthermore, they implemented another kind of textual material into the process in order to investigate their "feeling of 2006". They searched the internet to see what had happened ten, fifty and hundred years ago. In this process they gained a new reflection on the difficulty in separating useful information from unimportant matters in a mediatized world. When one of the members did an internet search on Pinter, he typed "Printer" by accident and got many irrelevant results. Among them was news about HP Printers (posted on the internet February 2, 2005):

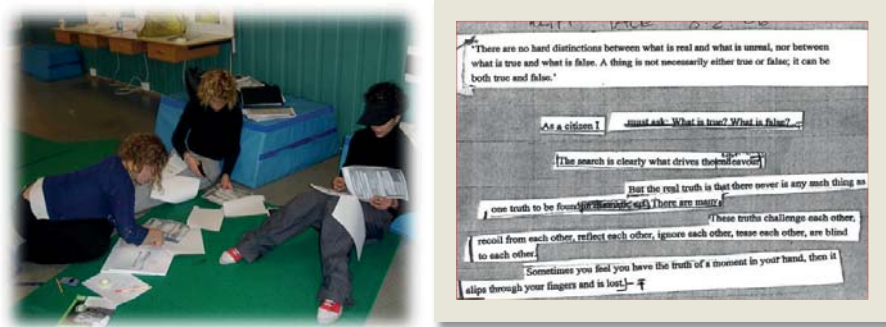
HP Printers - Mac OS: Advanced Color Management HP Next Generation Inkjet Print Products
Technology Summary
The color management solution featured with HP next-generation inkjet printing products was designed to meet a broad range of customer needs²⁶.

This kind of news had equal status as other more serious information on the internet. The internet search offered them an uncritical list of information, and it became a challenge to determine what was the important information.

²⁶ Retrieved from:
<http://h20000.www2.hp.com/bizsupport/TechSupport/Document.jsp?objectID=c00284884&lang=en&cc=us&taskId=101&contentType=SupportFAQ&prodSeriesId=1119342>

Inspired by this, they incorporated the spelling mistake into their work, deciding to name their performance “Printer HPXX11”, a pun on Pinter and the new generation HP printers. When incorporating mistakes in this way they align with devising companies like “Theatre of Mistakes” and “Happenings” who used mistakes and chance techniques in order to construct fragmented and a-linear narratives, as showed in Chapter 3.5.1.

The group continued to juxtapose Pinter’s political speech, Pinter’s drama, which is an informed poetic and ambiguous articulation of war crimes, with arbitrary information from the internet in order to create a new text that reflected the information challenges they experienced in their everyday lives.



Researcher’s photograph; Three of the members of Printer HPXX11 cutting and gluing; appropriating a new text; “a new tapestry of life”.

In this process, some excerpts were accentuated and some were cut. Vygotsky’s creative circle is clearly in play here; some elements from the play drama and the speech were enlarged and some were decreased, new associations arose (e.g. internet search) and new connections and new meanings were made as they created a new script. When asked how they knew what pieces to cut and how the texts should be placed together, the answer was: “It is instinct... After the discussions in the group I know what fits” (Interview Andrea, Appendix 3.4.1). In this process they seem to be on the ‘Pinter track of references’; one text from Pinter led to a new text and the intertextual connections were made through their common discussions, which

was related to their intention with the work: to create theatrical perceptions of war.

Creating intertextual social relationships: connecting multiple voices and experiences

Without any discussion, the group worked democratically, without a defined leader or director. They worked collectively on developing the ideas and the manuscript. Based on each participant's wishes and needs, they divided roles and tasks between them²⁷. The following excerpt from the researcher's journal indicates that the Norwegian students had a working process that was open and non-hierarchical:

It feels like I am in the middle of an ant hill. The students are constantly finding new pathways regarding the artistic work as well as the way they divide the practical tasks between them. They seem to have a sense of unanimous agreement on how to structure the process. There is always one or two who are taking the lead, but whom these two are, shifts all the time (Researcher's journal 2006, Appendix 4.3).

The Norwegian students seemed to work intertextually, both in regard to fusions of creative ideas and with the way they organized the work and shared tasks.

The students started the process by opening many entryways, letting all the voices of the group be heard and accounted for. No-one had a clear picture of how the performance would appear. Ideas were thrown on the floor, fetched by another member of the group and re-worked with the rest of the members. There was a constant circulation of states; different people with different

²⁷ For example: Andrea: Acting, making the manuscript, her own costume, commenting the improvisations/directing the chorus, music
Hans: Acting, making choreography and leading the choreography rehearsals, costumes, lightning
Karen: Acting, directing the dialog, budget, making the manuscript, writing the script on the computer

energy, ideas and impulses gave rise to new suggestions. This corresponds with Vygotsky's notion of creating new connections (Chapter 5.5). For the students, new connections were made both in regards to new narrative connections (the fusion of Pinter's text) and new connections between the individual creators (the students' perceptions and skills amalgamated into new connections during the collaborative work).

Barbara McKean (2007) argues that collaborative processes like this, where individual students' cultural, social and academic backgrounds are used, create a greater range of creative possibilities than does work created by a single individual. Hence, the more experiences that are available, the more creative connections are possible. This also reflects Vygotsky's thinking on creativity, as seen in Chapter 5. He argues that creativity is based on our experiences and the more experiences that are available, the more combinatory possibilities there are for the fantasy to work with.

Furthermore, it seems like creatively working with intertextual connections between different texts is closely related to the social intertextual relationship and organization of the work. What follows is an example of how the group shared tasks and discussed the creative content of the play simultaneously. Karen and Andrea worked together with the text, Hans and Andrea worked with choreography, and Julia and Tim were absent. In the evening, they met and exchanged information. Those who worked on the script read a few passages aloud and got feedback from the others:

Julia: It is good
Hans: It has a really good structure
Julia: Yes, a really good structure
Karen: Thanks! Can everyone please learn the text until Monday?
Andrea: Yes, because from now, no more text from "Ashes to Ashes" will be incorporated
Hans. Yeh...

Karen: Yes, and I would like to direct the dialog between Devlin and Rebecca

Tim: That's a good idea

Karen: Yes, then everyone will direct everyone...so I would really love to do that

Hans: And I have already made choreography and it is really precise

Julia: Is it for all of us or just for you?

Hans: It is for all. They (Karen and Julia) learnt it yesterday. It is really precise but we have to work on it every day

Andrea: Yes, it's a good choreography because it does not only express the feeling between Devlin and Rebecca, but also it is a good symbol of the nation. What you are willing to do for your nation... Because you kiss your fist, and then slowly you raise the fist in this kind of movement (she raises her arm slowly). For me it reminds me of pulling up the flag you know, some kind of freedom fighter. But at the same time very loving.

Karen: ...and we have really had a lot of fun!

Tim: What I can see very clearly is that all the fictional layers communicate with each other and comment each other. Instead of just one of them commenting the other. They comment each other all the way. Good work!

(DVD 4 NTA, 060210, Appendix 1)

The transcript from the audiovisual documentation is a demonstration of how the group worked with different aspects of intertextuality simultaneously. They discussed the textual structure and what the creative work meant to them as individuals (the choreography). At the same time, they found ways to organize the work in an open way, they gave each other tasks (rehearse text and choreography) and new challenges, and then suddenly they were all doing the choreography, for example. The students made new meanings and new experience from this work and they took advantage of each other's individual experience and capacities in an open process. Hence, this analysis shows that the social intertextual process is both intra-personal (within an individual) and inter-personal (between individuals).

Put into a model, displayed below, the different aspects of intertextuality work interdependently and simultaneously during this process and new meaning-making is created constantly in this creative dynamic. The intertextual meaning-making is also related to their intention with the work, as we have seen in this analysis.

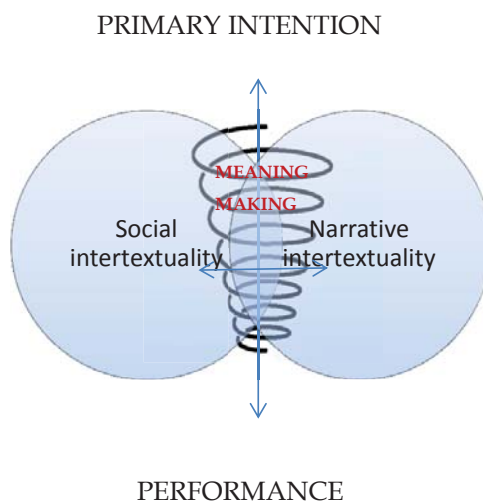


Figure 7: Intertextual dynamics Case Printer HPXX11

Their meaning-making was also guided by the message they wanted to communicate in the performance; they made artistic choices based on what kind of performance they wanted to make. As Karen said: “From the beginning we must find out what we want the audience to experience, and then we choose the material based on that” (Interview Karen, Appendix 3.5.1). The main experience (primary intention) the group wanted to give to their audience was to:

...present several truths so that we give a nuanced picture, instead of telling *one* story of *one* person meaning *one* thing... what we want to say is actually that there is not one truth to be found and that you cannot judge people for having another God, or because they live in another country, and so on.. (Interview Karen, Appendix 3.5.1).

Hence, through an intertextual process described by Bloome and Egan-Robertson (2004: 30) as “the ways in which intertextual meaning can be built”, the devisers created a performance with multiple voices and several co-existing truths. Intertextuality became their main narrative device, a working method and a tool for meaning-making.

This analysis shows that the circular path of imagination had been accomplished. They developed and changed Pinter’s texts by connecting the material (aesthetic form) in new ways, using intertextuality both in regards to developing performance text and in the process of inter-personal and intra-personal meaning-making. But instead of Vygotsky’s circle, in Case Printer HPXX11 the intertextual narrative process took the shape of a spiral (see Figure 7).

7.3 SPACE AND TIME

The analysis of space and time focuses on the concrete spatial and timely work the devisers created in relation to their lived psychological space and time and shows the significance this work had in the creative mechanism of imagination.

7.3.1 Case Nancy: Closed stand-up space and open psychological space

Nancy decided to place the audience on benches, fully frontal to her, which is the standard performance space in stand-up shows. Rather than focusing on developing a particular performance space, Nancy created a performance score that told her story and she choreographed and learnt the dance sequences. The process ran smoothly until she showed it to her teacher, who did not approve of her working with a stand-up space. Nancy referred to the meeting with her teacher in saying:

She did not think comedy was a valid thing to do. She said to me that in terms of subject matter this was not what I should do in postgraduate (Interview Nancy, Appendix 3.1).

In an interview, the teacher said that she encourages students to do something unexpected in their solo work:

What I am encouraging them to do is not to make the piece they thought they would make when they started. But to bravely, actually pick up something that came up during the process²⁸, without knowing what to do with it (Interview VCA teacher, DVD 3 VCA, Appendix 1).

Nancy chose not to make something 'unknown'. She had a clear intention from the beginning of the process to make a stand-up show, and she knew what kind of space she wanted to work with. Instead of entering an unknown space she chose a familiar and traditional performance space, and for this she was criticized by her teacher. After the showing for the teacher, Nancy lost confidence and became "paralyzed by doubt" (Interview Nancy, Appendix 3.1). She invited another teacher to see her work and he provided positive feedback. He offered directorial advice to help improve the performance according to Nancy's intentions, and during a short session on the floor with him, she returned to her original idea with the stand-up space.

Nancy chose to follow her own needs and continued with her performance despite her teacher's advice. Clearly the teacher and the student had conflicting 'needs' in this process. The teacher encouraged the students to do something aesthetically unknown, however Nancy chose to explore an experience in a psychologically 'risky' space for her, rather than experimenting with different aesthetic spaces. This was despite having been exposed to experimental training with spaces during the first months of the course. This shows that Nancy was confronted with aesthetic standards in the

²⁸ She is referring to the first two months at school.

educational devising context that are epistemologically manifested and filled with agenda. As Mia Perry states:

Theater is essentially a cultural form, socially and politically situated, ideologically grounded, and therefore reflects a perspective, an agenda and an epistemology (Perry 2011: 72).

The teacher's agency is to expand the student's horizon regarding techniques, yet not any horizon (like traditional stand-up), but to privilege an experimental horizon (to explore unknown aesthetic spaces). Nancy's agency was epistemologically different, in that she preferred to work with her psychological space: a strong childhood experience. In doing so, a traditional performance space was privileged. The two agencies collided and, despite the fear of receiving bad marks, Nancy chose to pursue her project with support from another teacher.

Nancy felt as if her experience was not being appreciated by her teacher and this caused a crisis in her creative process. The experience became a driving force in Nancy's process, which she held on to. It was a moment where her internal process was challenged by the external environment (following Vygotsky's thinking). She met resistance that could have been a 'process changer' if she had not been so determined to develop her experience (psychological space) in her own way. This shows that when working with aesthetic space in the creative circle the aspect of experience (psychological space) and subjective agency is a resilient and powerful force.

7.3.2 Case Sarah: Connecting spaces and prolonged creative time

Sarah discovered a space at VCA – a multipurpose space, an empty dance studio without chairs, with white walls, high ceiling, a door and a row of windows giving access to the street. She was very conscious of what kind of

physical space she wanted to perform and rehearse in and she was content when she found it:

I love the space ... I didn't want a normal theatre space. I wanted to create another kind of presence. And the presence from outside, the audience has to go through the outside to get here (Interview Sarah, Appendix 3.2).

The space complied with Sarah's intentions for the performance work – it connected the three modes of presence identified in Chapter 6: pedestrian/social, theatrical, subjective/personal. The pedestrian space (the street outside) corresponded with her personal intentional space in order to create a theatrical space. Sarah liked the space because it was open and did not direct attention to any particular time or place, as most theatre spaces do.

Sarah continued the process in the open space by exploring intimate and physical actions, and this opened her psychological space. She brought some chillis and a teapot and tea cups to the space. As part of her improvisation, she tasted the chillis and experienced the physical sensation of eating them raw. Her mouth burned, her stomach ached, she sweated and felt dizzy and sick. She tried to urinate into the tea pot to experience the sound of the urinating, the smell and look of the urine. When asked how she got the idea for doing this, she said a friend had talked about it: "he had seen someone weeing in someone's hands" (Interview Sarah, Appendix 3.2). This was not the first time Sarah had worked with chillis and urine. A couple of months earlier, the students had gone through a one week workshop with the topic "Family task", where they worked with childhood memories and family experiences. They had a showing at the end of the week. When Sarah did her showing, she urinated into a teapot in front of the other students and got many reactions. Some were astonished, some were upset, some were happy and some were embarrassed. Sarah discussed the experience with her fellow students and she found the effect of the urinating to be interesting. In this way, she created a performance space that challenged her psychological

space. When she was asked in an interview why she found it interesting to eat chillis and urinate in a teapot, she said:

They are intimate actions. It is silly, but I try to do it in a way that is graceful in the same time. I researched what is an intimate action, what is a violent action?...

Intimate acts. Like weeing, the smell of it, it's warm, no one touches it except your mum when you are little...

The chillis, they are all over the world...also perhaps the closeness to danger, it hurts when you get it in your eyes, it hurts your body (Interview Sarah, Appendix 3.2).

Research into the actions was part of Sarah's intention to investigate presence in an embodied way in the performance space. She said that her work was inspired by female performance artists like Marina Abramović and Linda Montana, who investigated the boundaries of privacy and intimate acts in public space (Sarah's reflection paper, Appendix 4.2.1). Sarah's research into this field of experience seems to have travelled through different times and theatrical spaces before she finally used them in the performance. Temporally, Sarah had developed the actions over time as part of her internal creative process (her psychological space). Thus the creative action had taken place over a prolonged period of time.

This aspect of the creative process has been articulated clearly by Vygotsky (1930/2004: 25): "What we call the act of creation is typically only the climactic moment of a birth that occurs as a result of a very long internal process of gestation and fetal development". The actions were residues from Sarah's former performance work and experiences with intimate actions. In this performance work, she made use of a creative experience that had been developing for a long time as part of her intra-personal intertextual process. Sarah also integrated, and had been inspired by, the larger performance art community in regards to performance space (Abramović, Montano). This shows that in Case Sarah's work with space and time she integrated her experiences with the larger performance community (open spaces and open

works) and she followed her own internal logic (psychological space and prolonged creative time).

7.3.3 Case Printer HPXX11: A performance play without space and time; “Agonies of Creation”

When the group discussed the spatial arrangements in this phase of their work the whole aesthetic concept of the performance was negotiated. They discussed where and how to seat the audience – full frontal, along two sides of the space, or to perform in a square. They tried out the square and placed the audience on chairs along the four lines of the square:

Andrea: This is a total surveillance thing (pointing at the square sketch)
Julia: Yes, it creates a community
Tim: It becomes an arena
Andrea: It is circus-like, like what we want..
Hans: A boxing ring
Andrea: I can walk in a ring, instead of in a line
Tim: And in regards of speaking with the back or side towards the audience, we don't need to be afraid of that cause we would like them to see different sides of our story anyway (DVD 6, NTA, Appendix 1).

By discussing the spatial arrangement, the group negotiated what the space meant to them and what kind of performance experience they wanted to make. The square provided different associations to the makers and raised questions about what the square might represent – an arena, a circus, a boxing ring – and they wanted to give the audience the same opportunity to create their own places in their own minds. The square enabled the performers to move freely. The last statement from Tim shows their intention to make an open work regarding spatiality, to invite the audience to have different interpretations of their work.

The devisers spent most of their time creating a new text and little time with the theatrical realization of the space, and this became evident when they had their first showing for the teacher, in the third week of production. They had still not found a way to use the “American aesthetic” space they had discussed in the starting point phase. Some of the devisers worked with cardboard TV screen boxes, pretending to be journalists, but they did not feel as if that had worked. After the run through, the teacher asked them to define the theatrical space and time: Where were they? When was the story told? This led to a crisis in the process. The teacher gave the group some advice:

Teacher: Introduce different levels, speed it up! It is falling all the time. It is too heavy. Define where you are.

Andrea: We would like to crate this American show atmosphere.

Teacher: You should be careful. It becomes so quickly a version of reproach. And I don’t know anybody who will defend the media. Who are you trying to convince? It’s like banging on open doors. It is a question of finding a universe that you can produce things from. Whether we see it or not (DVD 8, NTA, Appendix 1).

After this, the group lost faith in their spatial “American aesthetic” idea, and lacking a better spatial concept, the group decided to try out a film set concept. They did this for a couple of days, but they could not find a way to make it work. In an interview with Andrea she described the situation thus:

Midlife crisis! I don’t know. I think we realize that the script that we wrote does not fit in any kind of universe that we can realize. The film set does not fit. What fits is the script, the junction (Interview Andrea, Appendix 3.4.2).

The group felt as if they had taken a detour, trying out the teacher’s advice without managing to realize it. They hit a dead end and ended up working as they had before the tutoring without defining either place or time. And they still had not managed to get away from the heavy “Arty Farty” style they wanted to avoid at the beginning of the process. They were stuck in the

theatrical “dark and heavy space” (Chapter 6.3) they had worked with during a part of their experimental performance training at the college. They were caught in an aesthetic space with a system of reference from which they could not escape.

Vygotsky emphasizes the view that every creation comes to life as part of its specific cultural environment (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 30). Every new creation rests on earlier experiences and the aesthetic ‘landscape’ that surrounds her. This means that the students were influenced by what they had learned earlier at school and that they were caught up in a system of cultural and environmental references that continued as they worked along ‘the Pinter track of references’.

Vygotsky’s emphasis on the environment reminds us that internal logic is closely related to the external world. In this case, the students were part of a school that has a certain system of teaching and has aesthetic preferences. Hence, the interplay between the internal and external world became a challenge for the group, in that their intentions for the work collided with the external school environment. They were trained in conceptual spatial thinking, yet they could not manage to create and define a theatrical space and time that could be acknowledged by their teacher and adapted to their intentions with the play. The work with the text and their discussions and reflections had taken up most of their time in the process. Clearly, the spatial realization of the ideas had not been prioritized, and in the middle of the process they realized that they had successfully created a new appropriated text but lacked a clear spatial concept. They were ‘trapped in the text’ and trapped in an aesthetic spatiality they had wanted to avoid.

Maybe when we made the script, we should have found a theatrical way to stage it. Maybe that would have helped. Cause we made the script and jumped on the floor. And then from the floor it’s very difficult to get out again. Maybe we

could have fulfilled these stage ideas we had... (Interview Andrea, Appendix 3.4.2).

There appears to be a gap between their conscious thinking process and their ability to embody their ideas into a theatrical space beyond the experimental spatiality they had worked with earlier. This is a tough experience for the devisers. In the end, they ran short of time and the American space that they talked about developing at the beginning of the process was never fulfilled.

Vygotsky addresses the experience of not being able to fulfill the creative work as intended. He calls this experience “Agonies of Creation”:

Creation brings the creator great happiness. It is also associated with suffering, which has been given the memorable designation of the agonies of creation. Creation is difficult, the drive to create does not always coincide with the capacity to create, and this is the origin of the agonizing feeling of suffering caused by the fact that the word does not capture the thought. (Vygotsky 1930/2004: 39)

When the capacity to create does not coincide with the intentions of the creation, a feeling of suffering can come into existence. This happened to the Printer group during the process: “... it felt almost as a collective drowning, desperation, we did not know what to do” (Interview Andrea, Appendix 3.4.2). They could not find a theatrical space or time which could help them perform the text they had been working so hard with and to which they had such passionate feelings (psychological space).

This analysis section shows that Case Printer HPXX11 experienced a discontinuity in their mechanism of creativity as they were not able to realize the theatrical space and time they had imagined in their psychological space. They felt as if their experience was not being fully appreciated by their teacher and felt the agonies of creation when their ability to create did not

coincide with their intentions with the work. This was a painful experience for the devisers in Case Printer HPXX11, but it shows that in the creative dynamics, where aesthetic form and experience is inter-related, difficult experiences and unpleasant feelings can arise when the devisers do not have the capacity to create a desired aesthetic form.

7.4 BODY-CHARACTER

The analysis of body-character in this phase of the creative process shows how the deviser's subjective self is used, developed and integrated into the deviser's characters/personas. It reveals that embodiment is a central aspect in the mechanism of the creative process, where embodied transformation and change is felt and reasoned upon by the devisers.

7.4.1 Case Nancy: Embodied transformation; new connection

An important anchor in the middle phase of Nancy's process was her physical work with her body. Through the body she remembered her story, and by working with dance and choreography she got in touch with her childhood memory in different ways than through her writing. Her body had gone through great physical changes since she was a child, but these changes actually helped keep a distance to the memory and open up opportunities for reflection and new meaning-making, as will be revealed in this section.

Nancy watched the video recordings from her childhood dances and worked on the floor to re-create the choreographies. The dances turned out to be physically challenging and required a good physical condition:

It's been strange going back doing all these routines. Number one; I'm not fourteen anymore (puffs heavily). This is really tiring... so getting that kind of fitness back up in the rehearsal process has been quite hard (Interview Nancy, Appendix 3.1).

The physical challenge reminded Nancy that she was no longer fourteen years old, and this experience created a distance between her body as it was and her body as it currently is. In this process, she reflected on how the ballet training she'd had when she was young had affected her awareness of her body and the way she cared for it:

I look back at my early dance training and; Oh my God, it was so dangerous in a way, cause we were not thought how to take care of our bodies at all. And sort of no connection or listening to what your body was telling you. I was like dirge when that solitude sank in and I started to "oh I really get it now" (Interview Nancy, Appendix 3.1).

By working with the physical dances, she reflected on her bodily experience and reached a new embodied understanding of her former experience. She was both improving her physical condition and relating to her body in a new way. For the performance in question, she listened to what her body was telling her and incorporated the listening into her new choreography. Her movements become softer and she appeared more relaxed and content with her body.

Working physically with the dances made Nancy remember, feel and reflect on her story and how she related to her body. This shows that in the mechanism of creativity, embodiment is essential not only for developing a character but also for understanding embodied change and self-reflection. The creative experience was a thoroughly embodied experience for Nancy.

7.4.2 Case Sarah: Disconnecting her self into personas

Sarah developed different personas in this phase of the work with the body-character. She had previously written about "The Paper Woman" and had performed different versions of the persona in earlier work, but in this process she put "The Paper Woman" persona up front and elaborated on it.

Another impetus for Sarah to develop “The Paper Woman” at this specific time in her life was a new and important personal experience. As we saw in starting point one, Sarah’s mother had become ill for the first time in Sarah’s life and Sarah could not meet with her for the entire production period. Sarah said she experienced a deep sense of loneliness and isolation, but also a freedom in her mother’s absence that informed her work: “I allow this feeling to inform the work. And I exploit the different personas, the people in me she will never meet” (Sarah’s reflection paper, Appendix 4.2.1). The absence of her mother allowed her to try out different parts of her personality, different personas in her performance-making process. She felt free to investigate intimate actions like urinating in a tea pot, undressing, playing around in the performance space partly naked, screaming and yelling out loud, creating a “mad persona” who pulls water over her head and eats chillis, and so on, not censoring her work or adjusting it to her mother’s gaze.

She developed different facets of her self in the work with the persona. Regarding the understanding of what a persona means, Sarah refers to Rosenthal’s definition:

In acting, or playing a character, you want to impersonate the personality of a person that is not yourself. A persona, however, is an artifact, a fabrication, that corresponds to what you want to project from yourself, from within. It is like taking a facet, a fragment, and using that as a seed to elaborate on. It is you and yet not you – a part of you and not the whole (Rosenthal quoted in Zarrilli 1995: 297).

Sarah developed a range of personas based on her generative writing (starting point three), she cultivated personas created in her former performance works and created new ones during improvisations on the floor. For example, she introduced a wig, a bucket of water and a piece of text into the rehearsal space. She put on the wig and walked around the space, bowing her head,

bending her back, looking around restlessly, insecure and shy. She mumbled a piece of text from her generative writing:

She is tearing apart her clothes. Her voice is 100 cicadas. Her breath acid and roast chicken. Her eyes never stop, twisting into her skull. She sees more than anyone we have ever met (Performance manuscript, Appendix 2.2).

She played with the bucket of water and poured the water on herself. In this way she explored and developed a persona called “the grotesque character” through an improvisation on the floor using different material.

The personas Sarah developed in “Paper Woman” are multiple – shy, aggressive, vulnerable, beautiful, unstable, grotesque – and shows a range of what it can mean to be a woman. Featherstone (1991) argues that in late capitalism the image of female bodies is restricted to ideas of slim, fit and healthy. Butler (1988) argues that people learn to perform one’s gender according to cultural circumstances. The dominant cultural presentation of women is sexy, shy, modest and decent. Through different personas, Sarah spoke as a female subject from the perspective of multiple selves, moving beyond any limiting objectified position of women. She was able to explore and demonstrate a bigger spectrum of female capacities than would otherwise have been allowed by the restricted cultural presentations of women. Thus, her development of personas has a political dimension; it comments on contemporary social gender conventions by expanding the possibilities for how women can act. But the effort made is more than a comment. According to Butler (1988: 519), changing historical gender construction is achieved through repetitive acts, which are “renewed, revised and consolidated through time”. In this way, by developing and performing a broadened spectrum of stylized acts in “The Paper Woman” personas through time, Sarah contributes to changing the historical constitution of gender. At the personal level she changes her own understanding of who she can permit

herself to be, as she allows different parts of her self to be expressed and developed in the creative process.

This analysis shows that in the creative dynamics the subjective self is used, transformed and changed in the embodied development of new theatrical personas. The theatrical work and the subjective work with the self seems to be indistinct and to develop simultaneously. It might be accurate to conceive of them as two modes of experience that are in simultaneous operation and which influence each other in a profound way during embodied improvisations on the floor.

7.4.3 Case Printer HPXX11: Connecting the self and the character through embodiment

Case Printer HPXX11 decided that the two characters from “Ashes to Ashes”, called Devlin and Rebecca, would present the lines extracted from Pinter’s play. The lines from Pinter’s speech and the internet material would be presented by members of a chorus consisting of four devisers. They chose to call this chorus “the beep people”, which referred to the practice of censoring words on television with a beep sound.

Whereas Case Nancy and Case Sarah worked consciously with their bodies and put great emphasis on creating a character/persona, the members of the collective group Printer HPXX11 put less conscious emphasis on the development of character/persona. Their superior idea and intention to make a performance about an important issue seems to have had a bigger effect in the process than the need for individual role playing. Nevertheless, they created a process where they intuitively followed a creative path based on their discussions and engagement in Pinter’s texts. After much talk about their feelings about, and perceptions of, Pinter’s texts, they created an embodied expression of those thoughts and feelings. A description based on

notes from the researcher's journal serves as an example of how this process was accomplished:

We are in the rehearsal space. Three of the girls are sitting on the floor, cutting and gluing the manuscript as Hans enters the room and wants their attention. The girls are excited to see what he has been working on. Hans has made a choreography based on Pinter's drama "Ashes to Ashes". He has gone through the manuscript looking for physical instructions in the text. This is an extract of the text he has been working on;

Rebecca: Well...for example...he would stand over me and clench his fist. And then he'd put his other hand on my neck and grip it and bring my head towards him. His fist...grazed my mouth. And he'd say, "Kiss my fist".

Devlin: And did you?

Rebecca: Oh yes. I kissed his fist. The knuckles. And then he'd open his hand and give me the palm of his hand...to kiss. which I kissed.

(Example from page 3 in "Ashes to Ashes", Hans's underlining)

Based on the text he makes a choreography where he clench his fist, leads his other hand towards his neck, grips it and brings his head down. Slowly he raises his arm and kisses his fist. The knuckles. The he opens his hand.

Based on Pinter's text, he has put direct physical action together. Hans has composed different choreographies and now the group watches his moves. They are approving his work. They decide that the choreographies will be an important part of the play and of the role of the chorus. They gather in front of the mirror, counting to eight, rehearsing the first choreography. It is obvious that they have been undertaking dancing lessons and they are used to working like this. They are managing to do the choreography after a short time, continuing to synchronize the moves. They are now making a "movement library", in which they can fetch different choreographies and movements later on, during the improvisations.

This description shows how they developed a choreography that is an embodied expression of the devisers' experiences of the texts and their meaning. The text was developed into movement and given a new embodied aesthetic form that in the first choreography expressed fear and power. The affective, cognitive and intuitive work the devisers had been doing with the script seemed to be being filtered through the body and given an embodied expression through the choreography.

Tim and Andrea, who played Devlin and Rebecca, experienced yet another way of embodiment, through their characters, as this excerpt from the researcher's journal shows.

Tim and Andrea, playing Devlin and Rebecca are alone and about to start working with the dialog. They have not been working with their characters earlier. They are starting to read the text, sitting and walking around in the room. Andrea has acquired shoes with extremely high heels, style of the fifties. She is walking and walking, around and around, reading the play silently. She becomes more and more calm, absent-minded and mystical in her appearance. Tim watches her intensely while she speaks, he is oriented to her as he positions his body in the room, he listens carefully to what she says and he responds to her movements by moving his own body. He has an alertness towards her that seems to influence his own work with the character in a substantial way (Description based on Researcher's journal 2006).

Tim and Andrea started the rehearsal by just reading their lines in their new script. Imperceptibly, they improvised and sensed each other's presence through the body. They had not worked with the characters before but without coming to any agreement the improvisation developed into a bodily awareness that created two characters who were difficult to separate from the makers; is it Andrea who is talking or is it Rebecca, the character? The character and the self seemed to coalesce during the improvisation. And it happened in an embodied relational process with Tim. They were able to communicate in an embodied way and to respond to each other's bodily shifts and movements.

Lockford and Pelias (2004: 434) argue that during physical improvisation characters are established in relationship to one another: “performers are called to be aware communicators who can draw upon their cognitive, affective, and intuitive abilities – sometimes with great urgency – in order to absorb details, create characters, and establish relationships”. In the case of Tim and Andrea, they seem to have intuitively responded to each other’s embodiment of the character in the moment of improvisation; the bodily expression of the other was integrated and given a bodily response in the other. The two had worked together and been fellow students for a long time, and in the moment of improvisation their relationship made them feel safe and confident towards each other.

When asked how they were working with their characters, Andrea said promptly: "from the shoes" (Third interview Andrea). For her, it all started when she put on her high heeled shoes. She built the character on those shoes, practically speaking. Building a character is a process of bodily materialization, from the shoes in Andrea’s case. Tim said that from his perspective he did not have much time to work with the character (Third interview Tim). He did not build a story for his character, nor did he make any physical characterization of the role (ibid). He staged Devlin based on the interaction with Rebecca, responding to her actions. This shows that in the improvisational process of creating a character the relational embodiment is a fundamental step in the mechanism of creativity.

7.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the creative exploration and mediation of material has been analyzed using Vygotsky’s middle phase of the creative circle as an analytical tool. The process of change in the making of new narrative connections and

disconnections in the material has been analyzed through the notion of intertextuality and the three case studies have been shown to have different significant features in their development of narratives. The cases also related differently to space and time in their creative dynamics and the chapter has shown how the devisers used their embodied self in the making of characters/personas in this phase of the work.

As in Chapter 6.5, it is provided a brief summary of how each case related to various categories in order to emphasize the creative dynamics in each case.

In Nancy's narrative work, she connected both intra-personal texts (from her past experience: memory, diaries, choreography, costumes) and she implemented inter-personal intertextuality by including others' experience with dance. In this process, she looked for meaning or "intertextual substance" that could be expressed in a theatrical narrative that resonated with her autobiographical experience. This process was identified as being linear and hierarchic; top-down, with her memory on top, structuring the material in a way that resonated with this experience. The initial subjective memory was transformed, re-created and edited into an autobiographical performance narrative. The analysis of Case Nancy showed that she was both reproducing a past experience and creating a new one in her autobiographical work.

Nancy decided to use a traditional closed performance space, which led to a conflict with her teacher. The analysis showed that her desire to work within her psychological space exhibits a strong and resilient force in both her memory experience and in her creative dynamics. The analysis of body-character showed that when Nancy was working with physical dances she reflected on her bodily experience and reached a new embodied understanding of her former experience.

For Case Sarah the creative dynamics were marked by the intertextual process of making intra-personal connections between her internal starting point experiences. Sarah's creative dynamics took the form of a complex intra-personal web as she laid out her different starting points and made new "intertextual substance" connections between her fragmented narrative experiences. This process was guided by her intuition which, throughout the analysis, was found to correspond to her neural system, her feelings (conscious and unconscious), her cognition and intentions with the work. It was identified that Sarah followed her internal emotional logic, described as "the law of general emotional signs". For Case Sarah, the emotional internal logic was a driving force during her improvisations, and it was focused in her moving body.

Sarah's work with space and time shows that she integrated her experiences with the larger performance community (open spaces and open works) and she followed her own internal logic (psychological space and prolonged creative time). Furthermore, when Sarah was developing a range of personas she was embodying and demonstrating a broader spectrum of female capacities than those restricted cultural presentations of women identified by Butler and Featherstone. It was found that when Sarah created personas she was exploring facets of her own self. Performing the personas also showed a political dimension, in that it commented on contemporary social gender conventions by expanding the picture of how women could act.

In Case Printer HPXX11's process, intertextuality was defined to be central both in regards of the appropriation of Pinter's writings, but also in respect of social intertextuality. The meaning-making happened in an interdependent sphere between the two modes of intertextuality and was guided by both initial intentions and the assumed audience reception of the work.

The group also experienced what Vygotsky calls “Agonies of Creation” as they were unable to create a space and time that suited their intentions with the work. They were trapped in the text and trapped in a formal aesthetic space that they wanted to avoid. They experienced emotional distress (psychological space) and a creative block at this stage in the process. In order to develop the body-characters, Tim and Andrea worked with relational improvisations, and the character and the self coalesced in this process. The Chorus made their functional body-characters through embodied choreography based on their work with Pinter’s texts. The analysis of the second step in the creative process can be summarized by using the devising model:

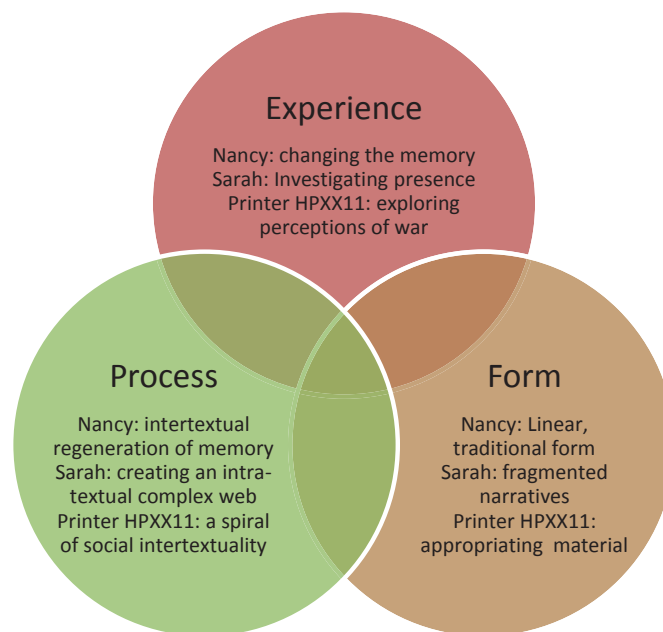


Figure 8: The devising model: Summary of the second creative phase.

When analyzing the creative devising process in this phase of the work, materialization and embodiment are shown to be significant elements in generalizing new experience and form in all cases. When forming the material and embodying the characters/ personas, the creative meaning-making

process takes place, although the intertextual creative dynamic takes different shapes (Case Nancy: linear, Case Sarah: web, Case Printer HPXX11: spiral).

The creative exploration and mediation of material happens in a process where improvisation, embodiment, materialization and meaning-making are synthesized, and they cannot be separated because their togetherness is what constitutes the creative dynamic. Whereas Vygotsky's creative circle emphasizes the cognitive aspect of the creative process, this analysis shows that in these devising processes the role of *materialization* and *embodiment* are core factors that need to be integrated into the circle in order to express the characteristics of devising in relation to experience and aesthetic form-making. The analysis shows that during the creative process, embodiment is essential not only for developing a character but also for understanding embodied change and self-reflection. Communicating this experience is the main topic of the next chapter: "Performing material".

8 PERFORMING MATERIAL - ANALYSIS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the last phase of the creative process, when the devisers performed their work in front for an audience. In all three cases the devisers performed their work for three nights within a week, at the college and with a college audience. The data used in this section are based on observations of the performances (researcher as audience), video recordings of the performances, interviews with the devisers after their first showing and the devisers' process notes.

The analysis focuses on what the devisers communicated and how they developed and expressed their experience through narrative, space and time, and body-characters, in this phase of the work. Devisers create a performance in order to communicate with an audience, and in the performing phase the devisers can finally 'test their assumptions' and explore how their work affects, and is affected by, the audience. Vygotsky (1930/2004: 21) explains how this last phase of the creative circle allows for the artistic expression to become a new active force with the potential of intervention with reality in new ways: "Finally ...they returned to reality, but returned as a new active force with the potential to alter reality. This is the complete cycle followed by the creative operation of the imagination". The analysis shows that performing creative expressions creates new experiences for the devisers as they "return to reality" and meet the audience.

8.2 NARRATIVES

This section focuses on the narrative structure in the performance and how the theatrical and experiential narrative process finds its closure. The analysis of narrative devices used in the performance reveals what the devisers communicate to the audience and how they do it. In Chapter 4.3.1 we saw that estrangement as a narrative device could provide distance, reflection and a critical look at automatized behavior. In the subsequent analysis of the performing phase of the process it will be shown how distancing comes into being in different ways in each of the three cases. We will also see that personal narratives are affected by performing the theatrical narrative. A short performance description will be given at the beginning of each analysis.

8.2.1 Case Nancy; Creating a distance to the memory, a new experience and closure of personal narrative

Nancy was able to close her traumatic memory and replace it with a new touchstone experience, with help from the audience as supportive witnesses. To give an impression of Case Nancy's performance a short description of it is provided:

Performance Description "5, 6, 7, 8 A Ballet Odyssey"

The audience gather together closely on hard wooden benches, squeezed against one another's shoulders'. The stage is framed by a huge deep red velvet carpet. There is nothing on stage. Just wooden floors and a black velvet background. We are the audience in a college hall, the gymnasium, we are back to our school days, waiting for the drama performance to appear.

Loud music spreads from scratchy loud speakers. And here she comes: the pink ballerina in a skin tight leotard. Dancing the best she can, with an excited smile on her face. She does not have the slim body of a little ballerina girl. Instead she has a beautiful corpulent "everyday" body of a twenty three year old woman. And she is dancing! But not with strict and refined ballerina movements. More like free jazz ballet, the music is within her body: her movements are tranquil and relaxed. And we are applauding, whistling and laughing, and she smiles even more, and dances all the more enthusiastically. She is doing her very best and the audience celebrates it.

After the applause, she tells her story of how she loved dancing but Gwen and Marie would sit in the corner during ballet classes and discuss the bodies of the other girls. In minute detail

they discussed the physical shortcomings of every tender adolescent body wiggling in front of them. Little bits of joy begun to leak out. She dances and tells how Gwen's influence eventually made her stop dancing at the age of fifteen.

She saw Gwen again recently. Gwen looked exactly the same. She saw her coming on the street and the fifteen-year-old girl inside of her cowered and shrivelled and searched desperately for a way out. The adult she had become however stood her ground. Gwen looked at her, up and down and asked what she was doing at the moment. Gwen was not quick enough to disguise her surprise that she was pursuing dance as a major in her undergraduate degree.

"Oh", Gwen said. Painted eyebrows shooting so far up her forehead that they almost disappeared under the frizzy red cloud that sat perched upon her head. "You are still dancing are you?" (Manuscript "5, 6, 7, 8, A Ballet Odyssey", Appendix 2.1).

And Nancy thought "Fuck it". And she looked Gwen square in the eye and said "Yes. Yes I am. Because I am a dancer".

She keeps on dancing. Light out. Applause (Appendix 2.1).

Nancy's story was structured as a traditional dramatic narrative, or "Dramatic Form", as Szatkowski (1992: 21) calls this form of dramaturgy (introduced in Chapter 4.3). Nancy's narrative was continuous, progressive, psychologically motivated and "totality-searching" (ibid). The story followed a classic Aristotelian curve that Nancy herself described as an upside down performance trajectory. Instead of a top point in the Aristotelian curve, she reached a down-point in her lack of self-worth and self-loathing. The curve described both the performance trajectory and her autobiographical lived experiential narrative. This structure can be seen in the diagram below, which was created by Nancy herself:

PERFORMANCE TRAJECTORY OF “5, 6, 7, 8 A Ballet Odyssey”

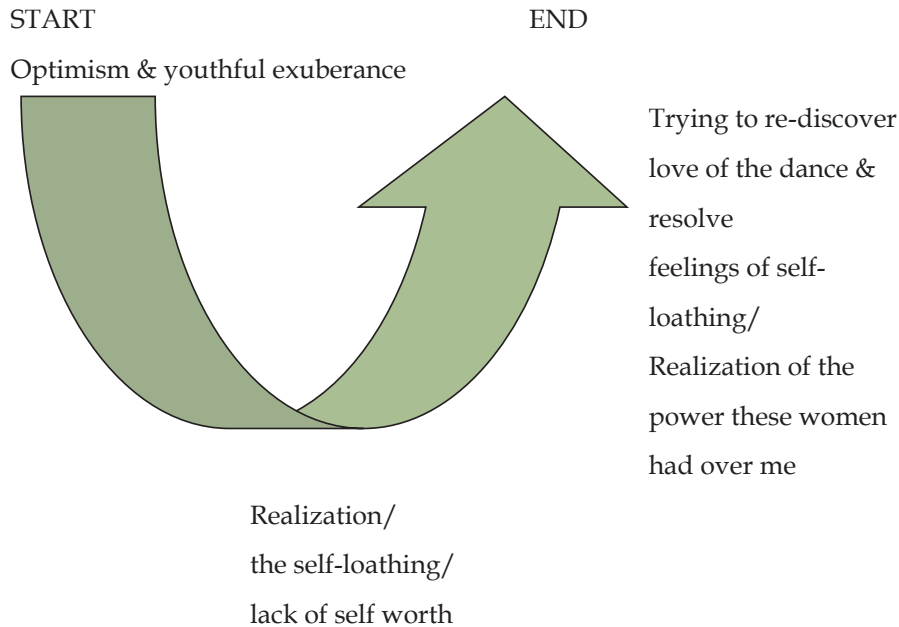


Figure 9: Nancy's performance trajectory (Nancy's process notes, Appendix 4.1. Her comments).

The trajectory points towards Nancy's autobiographical dance experience as a difficult, even traumatic, event in her life. Heddon argues that:

During traumatic events, subjectivity becomes annihilated; the subject disappears or becomes transformed into an object-powerless, lacking agency (Heddon 2008: 55).

The self's lack of status lies at the heart of the trauma. Recovering the self enables the recovery of the trauma. In psychotherapy, narrativization is used as an act of recovery. Through narrativization (defined in Chapter 4.3), a therapeutic process by which history (and the story) is reconstructed and transmitted, the event is externalized. Creating and performing a narrative trajectory, as Nancy did, is, in this sense, a performative act that enabled the recreation of the self. Enabling such recreation calls for witnesses:

Though 'theatrical' testimonial performances might very well have some implicit therapeutic benefit for the performer (enabling agency, talking back, forging self-identity, etc.) performances explicitly call forth a witness (Heddon 2008: 59).

The witness functions as someone acknowledging and approving the story told. Heddon (ibid) argues that performances of testimony, in particular, compel an intersubjective relationship between spectators. Spectators to Nancy's performance could recognize the performer's experience, in that the trauma of self-loathing that she reveals is a commonly known condition in Western society. Her story ...

...fits well into the widely-held narratives of taking a journey, suffering and finding home ... it is easy to see why they have come so pervasive. There is a fit; they fit well with what we already know (Plummer 1995: 60).

Thus the audience can emphatically acknowledge her story and create an intersubjective relationship with the performer. After the showing, Nancy felt as if her story had been supported and recognized by the audience. The response was overwhelming for Nancy and confirmed her supposition that her experience is a common experience:

So many girls have come to me and said; that just happened to me in my childhood or in my dancing career. And I knew that in this particular context people would react like that. It is a common experience. So many girls and actors have come up to me and said "Thank you". I've got lots of positive feedback: "Thanks for being honest". That's what I wanted to do. That's me - just saying it! (Interview Nancy, Appendix 3.1).

Nancy felt that her story had been confirmed, recognized and appreciated by the audience. As we saw in the starting point analysis of Nancy's narrative work in Chapter 6.2.1, her memory was a touchstone experience and a self-defining memory. Her memory was open, in the sense that it was reoccurring and it influenced her feeling of self-worth in a negative way. By being able to

re-create the personal narrative into a performance narrative, her memory was investigated and reasoned upon, with the result being that Nancy could now close the memory. Denise Beike argues that:

Closed memories are recollected with a sense of calm and resolution. They have gone through the process of emotion features becoming unbound from the event memory trace... (Beike et al 2004: 144-145).

Nancy's memory was no longer a process of internal and automatized feelings. The creative process allowed her to unbind her emotions from automatization through the making of a new conscious theatrical narrative based on her lived experience. Although Nancy did not use estrangement devices as narrative elements in her performance, she experienced a distance with her own memory and experience during the creative process, which the autobiographical investigation of the personal narrative allowed for.

Nancy's story was structured around the key points of suffering, epiphany and transformation. This is a general dominant narrative model in autobiographical performances that is characterized by a linear progression and a narrative drive to resolution, also called coming-out stories (Heddon 2008: 34-37). Nancy's coming out story allowed her memory to be externalized and made into a new experience, and in this process her experience was inter-related with the aesthetic form. Her story was reflected and reasoned upon and she found peace with her body, accepting it as is and re-discovering it as a dancing body. The performance process took Nancy through a journey that re-defined her feelings for dance and which affected her self-worth also. Performing her new narrative might be described as a new touchstone experience, which hopefully continues to influence her selfhood in positive ways into the future.

8.2.2 Case Sarah; Estrangement of lived experience and creation of existential presence.

This section shows how Sarah was able to create and investigate existential presence in her performance by generating awareness of intimate human relations through estrangement of everyday experiences as a narrative device.

Performance Description “The Paper Woman”

15 people are standing in an empty white room at VCA. A young woman enters. She is wearing a blue sweater, a skirt that covers her knees, black shoes and white pearls. She is pushing a black case into the room. She goes out again and when she re-enters she is carrying a bench, paving her way through the standing audience. She is smiling secretly at us, not saying a word. She places a garbage bag in one corner. She grabs a green light bulb lying on the floor and uses it as a microphone. She looks down on the empty bench and says: “It is a pleasure to meet you madwoman”. She sits down on the bench and replies by putting the light to her mouth again: “It is a pleasure to be seated in a seat that does not exist fuckface”. She stands in a middle position between the two previous poses and says: “Well, how delightful”. The audience breaks into spontaneous laughter.

She picks up a big yellow bucket filled with water. As she starts to walk, her neck and back bows. She says: “This is a grotesque character. She is tearing apart her clothes...”. She is walking in different directions through the room. Suddenly she jumps up on the bench and in a split second she pulls the bucket over her head, the water splashing all over her. She screams from within the bucket: “Bow! Bow! Bow down to me! You kings of filth! Queens of Misery! What has brought you here tonight”.... She pauses. Takes of the bucket and gets off the bench, looks shyly down on the floor. In the stillness she says: “I’ve had an accident”.

She puts out teacups and a teapot and invites to tea. A man sits down to join her tea party. She grabs the teapot and places it on the floor behind the black case. She takes off her panties and urinates into the teapot. As we hear the sound of the urine flowing into the pot she looks us straight in the eyes, one by one, smiling her ‘imp’-smile. People are astonished, some are laughing, and some are holding their breath. She finishes, smirks and offers her male guest tea. She holds the teapot in her hands, looks at the guest and says: “I’ve had an accident”. The man laughs with her and with the rest of the audience.

She puts on a worn out brown wig, picks up a toaster, a plate with four chilies, two toasts and peanut butter and a radio. She sits on the bench, turns on the radio, puts the toasts in the toaster and starts to eat chilies. She is looking at us while she is eating. Soon the effect of the chilies makes her face turn red and tears are dripping from her eyes. She calmly tunes the radio to another channel, listens carefully, and looks at us. Suddenly the toast pups up. The crowd is cheering and laughing.

She spreads peanut butter on the toasts and asks if anyone would like some? Another male audience member volunteers. They sit closely on the bench, looking straight forward. He eats and she spreads the peanut butter all over her face. In a desperate, alarming voice she says: “I can’t chew. I can’t chew. I forget how to chew...” The man continues to eat calmly. She is getting more and more upset. She takes off her sweater, holding on to her wig as she pulls the sweater over her head. She is now naked on her upper body. She sits still and exposed on the

bench. Breathing heavily. The man continues to eat at first, as if nothing is happening. Finally he breaks into laughter. She wipes of her face with the sweater, turns slowly to the man and whispers: "I've had an accident".

She shifts mode, quickens the man to get out of the bench. She crawls under the bench, lies on the wet floor and tilts the end of the bench towards her back. She removes her wig, lies the wig next to her head and says "I've had an accident". She starts to howl and moves herself forwards with her hands alongside her body, crawling like a seal. People are laughing again. She creeps under the garbage bag, covers her upper body with it and says: "I am a cardboard cut-out. You can squeeze me. You can push me down. You can knock me over".

She throws herself towards the floor, lands in a distressed position as if hit by a car, and says: "I've had an accident". She flings herself to another position and repeats: "I've had an accident". And again and again in a fast pace rhythm, each time finding a new dramatic position to land in. She gathers the plastic around her torso to conceal her nakedness.

She picks up a dress, a needle and thread. She walks back into the audience, gives the dress to another member of the audience and he helps her to get dressed. She touches the person's chest with her fingers. Standing chest to chest, she sews her dress to the man's jacket. They are standing very close. Everybody is quiet. The room is tense and filled with expectation and silence. She sews and says silently: "Inside my mouth splinters glass wool. Slipping out of corners of my mouth. I want to kiss you. I am thinking. I am kissing you. Glass scratches your face. Blood trembles then falls. I feel grass crawling up my throat-a gush. I can't control. My lips slip along your cheeks". She finishes the sewing, looks down and says: "I am burning an insidious whole through your flesh. I am eating you".

Slow music fills the sunny room as she crawls out of her dress, leaving it sewed / attached to the man's jacket. She leaves the room, her breasts are uncovered and walks directly into the street. Dodds Street in Melbourne CBD. The audience is watching her from the window. She leaves us, she does not look back and she does not come back. The audience continues to look through the window for a couple of minutes. A man starts to clap and everybody is applauding enthusiastically and cheering.

One by one, we leave the room, which is once again empty. Only residues from the performance remain: a bench, a wig, peanut butter, a teapot (Appendix 2.2).

Narratives replaced by Eventness

"The Paper Woman" can be described as a "simultaneous form" according to Szatkowski's (1992: 42) dramaturgical models. The narrative is "fragmented, dis-continued and a-logical[ly] motivated" (ibid). The form is "totality-refusing" and purposely divergent (ibid). Sarah was very consciously motivated to make a performance without connecting narratives:

Interviewer: Why is it important to you that the events don't connect?

Sarah: Cause I find narratives really boring...not not really, not always. But for me doing narratives; I'm just not

interested in why the person got there. I'm more interested in being in that 'having it happening, having it happening, having it happening' (Interview Sarah, Appendix 3.2).

Sarah focused on her actions to create a feeling of presence and eventness. She created a series of actions that were not put together in order to tell a certain narrative story. They appeared to be randomly connected. Such arbitrariness is an essential quality in Kaprow's definition of Happenings: "The composition/sequences of events is not rational or narrational, but based on associations among various parts; or by chance" (Kaprow in Schechner 2006: 166). "The Paper Woman" had much in common with the tradition of Happenings, Fluxus and, later, performance art, in that the performance investigated the boundaries between everyday human actions and art. Carlson acknowledges that much avant-garde artistic activity in the 1960s ...

...stressed physical presence, events, and actions, and constantly tested the boundaries of art and life, and rejected the unity and coherence of much traditional art as well as the narrativity, psychologism, and referentiality of traditional art (Carlson 2004: 108).

But even though an event "just happens to happen", Carlson (2004: 105) observes that events are typically "scripted, rehearsed and carefully controlled". In "The Paper Woman" the structure of the performance was derived from a combination of authorial choice (the maker constructed and prepared a performance score) and chance (she did not know how the audience would inter-act with her). When making this structure, she was conscious of the perceptual possibilities implicit in it. As Sarah said:

I hope that it gets the imagination working... The trick is to let them imagine for themselves, make the connections themselves. Instead of explaining too much (Interview Sarah, Appendix 3.2).

Sarah invited the audience to enter her playful creative process, and making new connections through the imagination was a profound quality for her. She continued her process of making new connections as she performed, in that she incorporated impulses from the audience into her improvisation. She prepositioned the audience and arranged the action sequences in such a way that the audience was invited to interact and to make their own connections as well.

The audience was invited to enter the space and experience the process of creativity in the act of its becoming; the performance was being created right in front of their eyes using the audience as co-players. She did not know how the audience would react to the invitation to co-act. This made both the performer and the audience hold an emergency preparedness. The facilitation of such eventness is brought forth by the use of estrangement of actions and objects.

Estrangement of everyday experiences: disconnecting automatized behavior

Sarah displaced everyday objects in the performance space, like playing live radio and changing channels. In doing so she connected the outside world to the space and created a feeling of randomness, as you never know what will be played on the radio. She used everyday objects in unusual ways, such as urinating in the teapot. In doing so, she allowed the audience to scrutinize the performer's investigation of familiar objects and actions by introducing them into a different space, in another context. Child-like actions, like urinating in a tea pot, smearing peanut butter from the toast on her face, splashing a bucket of water on herself, is surprising and unexpected given the performer's age and the performance context.

One of Sarah's central ideas for making the performance was to investigate how humans could avoid becoming automatons both in everyday life and as performers: "It is a sad dangerous problem for humanity that we become

automatons. It is even worse if this way of being is perpetuated in the theatre” (Sarah’s reflection paper, Appendix 4.2.2. Her emphasis). In Chapter 4.3.2 we saw how Šklovskij argued that by using estrangement techniques, automatized perception of the object can be avoided. In “The Paper Woman” this was done by introducing chance elements into the performance and in using everyday objects and performing normal actions in unusual ways, beyond their usual context. The function of such performance is identified by Šklovskij in his definition of art:

...in order to return sensation to our limbs, in order to make us feel objects, to make a stone feel stony, man has been given the tool of art (Šklovskij 1917/1990: 6).

Sarah created an event where she felt very alive and aware of what was happening within herself and in relation to the audience; she experienced herself as “a body fully alive in the moment” (Sarah’s Reflection Paper, Seeking Presence, Appendix 4.2.2). She created a subjective feeling of eventness where she deliberately avoided automatized behavior in her acting, instead producing sensations to her limbs. This created a heightened experience, or *an* experience, as Dewey (1934/2005: 25) expresses it, where she was absorbed into the moment of the experience.

The content intention in Sarah’s performance work was to create presence through the amalgamation of lived material. When Sarah left the performance space after the performance there was a feeling of absence in the room. She had been close to the audience and had created an intimacy in the space. When she crawled out of the dress and left the audience, she created a feeling of loss, of having being left after being very close to another person. Her mother’s illness seems to have been creatively revolved in Sarah’s body and she was able to create a feeling of existential loss within the performance space. Sarah reflected on the performing experience when she met the audience and found her intentions with the work to have been satisfactory:

The most encouraging aspect from the work is feedback from a spectator who said he felt a desire to reach out and help the persona but at the same time a resistance inside him not to do so. This informs me that the images behind the work, the murdered Prague woman, questions about being cared for and loved and the vulnerability of the human body, were carried through into another form. The creative process can indeed be a process of alloying. It is about trusting that the starting points behind a work, if *pursued*, will *inform* and *bare significance* for the creative product (Sarah's Reflection Paper, Appendix 4.2.1. Her emphasis).

Sarah was able to create existential presence with the audience by using estrangement and fragmentation as narrative devices. In the creative dynamics, her starting points had been alloyed and inter-related with the aesthetic open form and turned into a live performance event, a new theatrical and lived experience for Sarah.

8.2.3 Case Printer HPXX11: Poetic estrangement and meta-fictional narratives

Case Printer HPXX11 also applied estrangement techniques in order to create a feeling of "underlying fear". They did this by juxtaposing different narratives and presenting an ambiguous text with competing perspectives. A short description of the show is provided below.

Performance Description "Printer HPXX11"

The audience has to move their feet because four performers, wearing dark trench coats and bare feet, are marking a square with white tape right in front of the audience. They say: "This square is a square, it represents nothing. We are nobody". They enter the square, kneel to the ground, putting their hands behind their heads in an executing position and say: "It's time to pray. Before we come back to the present we must go back to the recent past. Nothing really happened. Nothing ever happened". They fall to the floor as if they were shot. Two characters, Devlin and Rebecca enter, Rebecca says: "Do you mind if I change the subject?". She starts to tell about a man she met and Devlin is obviously jealous of this man. They are quarreling. The four people with dark trench coats are referred to as the Beep People. Rebecca walks across the "dead bodies" of the Beep People on her extremely high heels, not recognizing them at all. She tells a story of a man she has met. Suddenly one of the Beep People interrupts: "Do you know it's the year of the Printer HPXX11?".

Rebecca and Deolin keeps on talking, never getting closer to understanding one another. The Beep People keeps on interrupting with weird commentaries and they make movements which comment the never ending discussion between Deolin and Rebecca. The Beep People starts to recite a poem: "Where was the dead body found? Who found the dead body?". Suddenly another Beep People says: "when did I find my first grey hair?". Another Beep People: "who was the father and the son of the dead body?". Different layers of texts meets. Different people with different voices are presented. Sometimes they meet, sometimes they crash and sometimes they ignore each other. They probably would have continued until today if they had not at one point said: "This is the end" (Appendix 2.3).



Photograph from the performance "Printer HPXX11"

The narrative structure in "Printer HPXX11" was fragmented, intertextual and meta-fictional. The meta-fictional form is described by Szatkowski (1992: 41) as "the Dramaturgy of Irony". The form is characterized by narratives that are "montages with progressive story-elements" and they are "ironic-logically motivated" (Szatkowski 1992: 41. My translation). There are three perceptible narratives in "Printer HPXX11", all with different textures: one was the poetic dialogue between Devlin and Rebecca, another was the political statements from the Beep People, and the third was the everyday comments from the Beep People. The function of the Beep People was multiple: they prayed together and spoke as "one voice", they made moral and political statements and comments on the ongoing dialogue, they gave individual statements that

had nothing to do with actions on stage. Their choreography complimented the dialogue and sometimes critically commented on it. They created physical and aural pictures to enhance certain emotions in the scenes. They sometimes acted in a highly theatrical way, pretending to be waves in the sea, for example, and sometimes they played “themselves”. In the history of theatre and performance the chorus represents the voice of the people, a collective role. Since the first creation of the chorus in Greek drama, it has been developed in new ways throughout theatre and performance history. The chorus in “Printer HPXX11” shared much of its features with Brecht’s use of chorus (Shepherd and Wallis 2004: 185); it has sometimes a moral tone, it criticizes the established truths and orders, it is used to estrange and comment on the story, it is witty, it performs both collective opinions and individual perspectives.

The everyday comments had no clear narrative of their own. It became a narrative in its meeting with the other texts, as the comments were used as interruptions to the ongoing dialogue between Devlin and Rebecca. The juxtaposition of the texts created estrangement and distance, described by Eriksson (2011: 65) as a poetic device used in order to make something strange and thereby to give a distance to the experience. Juxtaposition and estrangement were central narrative devices used throughout the piece in “Printer HPXX11” in several ways: by juxtaposing different texts, by juxtaposing texts with movements and by juxtaposing different acting styles. By employing this kind of estrangement as a poetic device, the devisers wanted to make the audience think critically about their “little world” compared to “big world” issues (Chapter 7.2.4). Karen reflected on her experience with this issue:

What happens to me, to my body is more important to me than what happens elsewhere in the world, war for example. Yesterday I had a toothache and had to pull a tooth. Then I thought that this is more important to me than people dying of hunger in the world. This contrast between the serious

happenings in the world like hunger, war, suffering, and the little things that happens to oneself is what makes us reflect and the juxtaposition leads to humor in the performance (Interview Karen, Appendix 3.5.2).

Narrative devices such as juxtaposing, doubling, intertextuality and a-linear narrative structure with multiple stories, questions meaning and opens for interpretations for both devisers and audience.

In the meta-fictional form, meaning is problematized in a double strategy that both accepts the necessity of totality and acknowledges its destructive force, described by Szatkowski (1992: 41. My translation) as a play about “human longing for totality”. A longing for totality was an impetus experience for the devisers when they started this process and enthusiastically listened to Pinter’s speech, which gave them some answers to complex issues. The devisers gave a narrative expression to their lived experiences by presenting narrative layers that constantly collided. This intention was clearly articulated by Andrea:

That’s my favorite part; the clash with reality... It is very TV like. The audience gets too much information during this play. Because there is this story they have to follow. And there are all these comments from 2006 and there are all these political statements with an astute character and also they are very generalistic about society. It is zoomed out from the everyday life of this couple, to war, and then it is zoomed back again. Back and forth all the time (Interview Andrea, Appendix 3.4.2).

Such a performance narrative invites the audience to be co-writers, in that the performance creates multiple pictures and feelings rather than a singular message or story to be discovered. Eco (1989: 12) calls such work “works in movement”, works that open up numerous personal interpretations for devisers and audience. By leaving the work unfinished, the performance continues to be developed as the performers meets the audience and it invites the audience to be active co-writers and to actively make connections and new

meanings. By offering these perceptual possibilities, the performance-makers demonstrate a lived experience that sees the world as fragmented and open, inviting people to make their own connections and meanings. As Karen put it: “what we want to pass on is really that it does not exist as one truth only. There are many” (Interview Karen, Appendix 3.5.1).

Responses from the audience on their performed narrative added insight to the devisers’ experience, as the reactions were sometimes unexpected. Karen said: “I did not expect there would be so much humor in the performance. (Interview Karen, Appendix 3.5.2). She was surprised to hear laughter from the audience since they were working with such a serious theme, but the laughter was a result of the juxtaposing the performers were doing. For example, Rebecca told a story that led attention towards events of the Holocaust:

He was a guide. He used to go to the local railway station and walk down the platform and tear all the babies from the arms of their screaming mothers (“Printer HPXX11” manuscript, Appendix 2).

Suddenly one of the Beep People said she had to “have a shit” and left the room. The audience could hear that she was using the toilet and the characters on stage stopped playing, waiting for her to come back. The story was interrupted and left open a possibility for the audience to reflect on the story and the effect of the interruption. When the Beep person who had used the toilet re-entered the stage another performer asked: “What has happened to our moral sensibility?”. By interrupting the storytelling of the Holocaust with a trivial, intimate, personal action, she accentuated a view that mundane trivial affairs are more urgent than listening to stories of war. In doing so, she showed how we relate to serious issues like war in our everyday lives; in this case, the contrasts in the play led to a moment of humor, a result of the intertextual device used throughout the piece.

What stood out as a particular estranging device in “Printer HPXX11” was the use of everyday comments like “This is the year of the Printer HPXX11”, “Today is my mother’s birthday” and so on. In a theatrical universe built on the poetic language of the two characters, Devlin and Rebecca, the everyday comments of the Beep People made for a peculiar effect; the everyday language turned out to be the strangest element in the performance. The comments highlighted the individual projects on stage; the four individuals in the Beep People chorus were constantly competing with Devlin and Rebecca, and with each other, to get attention. When they were allowed to speak as individuals they only contributed nonsense, everyday comments, totally misplaced in the setting.

Being in the decade of Twitter and Facebook, it is possible to see the comments in “Printer HPXX11” in light of popular communication strategies and increasing individualization of young people’s lifeworlds. Individuals are striving to communicate and have their voice heard, and everyday comments of the individual’s perceptions of the world is highlighted and praised in this popular cultural arena. In “Printer HPXX11” such comments were presented quite bluntly and led attention towards the value of everyday comments presented by multiple voices.

The narrative communicated the sense that all voices are not equally relevant and important; some voices just create a lot of noise. Hence, the different layers of the text reveal different levels of relevance and significance. The matter of separating important and relevant information and authorial voices from the irrelevant and unimportant was a driving force during the performance process for the group. In the performance, this was given a theatrical expression the devisers were not conscious of before they performed for an audience. Again the analysis shows that the meaning of theatrical narrative is in the act of it becoming as they play, informing the devisers’ experience in new ways as they perform to an audience.

8.3 SPACE AND TIME

This section shows how the spatial arrangements in the performances provide for different communication possibilities. The organization of the space in various ways allows the performer to control their audience in different ways, it makes them interact and communicate differently. The previous analysis of space and time in Chapters 6.3 and 7.3 showed that the deviser creates theatrical spaces that are closely connected to their lived spaces, during the creative process. These spaces are now presented and tried out on audiences and this section analyzes how aesthetic and lived psychological spaces are further developed and experienced by devisers as they meet the audience.

8.3.1 Case Nancy: Lived space as aesthetic place

“5, 6, 7, 8 A Ballet Odyssey” was a drama performance on an old school stage in the gymnasium. The audience sat full frontal and were given a central perspective. Nancy talked directly to the audience, never turning her back to the audience. The spatial arrangements (division between stage and auditorium, the red velvet carpets, the lightning, entrance and exit from the right) directed attention to a certain place and imparted a particular atmosphere. Nancy knew what she wanted the set to communicate, as it corresponded to her autobiographical memory:

I also like when it looks a bit shit, it looks a bit dodgy. Both the dance and the set and the costume... I wanted the audience to enter a world, to go back to my memory and my world and what it meant to me at that time (Interview Nancy, Appendix 3.1).

Such a ‘junk yard aesthetic’ created a relaxed and casual atmosphere in Nancy’s performance. The audience could recognize the gymnasium hall from their school days and therefore could easily identify with Nancy’s lived world. The spatial arrangement (aesthetic space) realized the performer’s aim

to tell her story in a way that reflected her autobiographical memory (psychological space) and was recognizable to the audience.

Although the work with creating a particular space was not a driving force during the process, Nancy ended up re-making the scene in which she had performed when she was a child. In doing so, she moved a past aesthetic and lived place to a new place (in time). The photographs below illustrate this journey in Nancy's lived psychological space. The first picture presents the space as it is found in a gymnasium hall whereas the second picture illustrates the transformation of the space during Nancy's performance. The past experience found its performance expression and turned it into a new experience for Nancy.



Researchers photographs from Nancy's performance space.

In this space she is re-telling her past, and in so doing is opening up a new future. The performance-making process gave her a psychological space in which she could straddle the past and the future. She innovated her past experience and changed her present lifeworld.

The aesthetic space she set up was easily recognized by the audience and was filled with cultural inscriptions. The audience was invited to witness Nancy's story, a story of human experience shared with the audience, since the place and the story was a culturally shared expression. The audience was invited to return to their own childhood experiences as Nancy's shared her private story. Heddon (2008: 118) argues that a "... 'private' place is thick with cultural (and therefore shared) assumptions and prescriptions ". Nancy knew that the audience would have had similar experiences as her and therefore be able to recognize the setting. It became a place of private psychological experiences for both Nancy and the audience. As Nancy said: "Everybody is having the same demons; You're too fat, your legs don't look good or your arms are too big" (Interview Nancy, Appendix 3.1). The aesthetic place is a central means of expression in her work that furthers her story by physically placing the audience as witnesses in the middle of her psychological experience.

8.3.2 Case Sarah: Playing with subjective and social borders in an open interactional space.

In "The Paper Woman" the audience was invited to move freely around in the space and actively participate in the performance. Sarah invited the audience to enter her playground as her co-players. She wanted them to enter the same imaginative psychological space as she had experienced when working alone during the creation of the work. The audience had to activate their own psychological spaces in order to create meaning in Sarah's work and they had to make their own connections. As Sarah says: "The connection is the final creative product. It may be an atmosphere, a world, or an experience" (Sarah's reflection paper, Appendix 4.2.1). It is open for the audience to decide. She did so by setting up a performance space with a performance score that allowed for different perceptual possibilities, both for her and the audience alike (described in section 8.2.1). The difference between Sarah and

the audience was that Sarah was the one who framed the social situation; the audience entered her universe, which was guided by her rules. She could not be sure that the audience would be willing to play with her during the performance, nor how they would respond to her actions. The performance process was, therefore, still open as the audience entered the performance space, and the performance was created in the meeting with the audience. The audience's presence was what made the performance happen. In this way, the performance itself became the moment of composition.

Sarah experienced the audience taking an active part in the performance; without questions they joined her tea party, ate with her and let her sew herself to them. She created an open space where unexpected things happened, and this made the audience alert. At the same time, the space was psychologically safe enough for the audience to dare to interact with her. As one of the audience members wrote after experiencing the performance: "Lovely presence in the space both welcoming and alarming" (Sarah's reflection paper, Appendix 4.2.2).

This form of spatial interaction creates a near relationship to the performer, and the audience becomes part of the improvisational play. The active audience participation provides new experiences, creates different directions and influences the play in substantial ways. In one show, an audience member who was invited to drink tea, tried to actually drink the urine from the teacup. At this intense point in the performance, Sarah stopped him just before he was about to drink by holding his arm, looking him in the eyes and saying several times, "I've had an accident". She improvised by using the recurring phrase and created a new meaning. She responded quickly and took action. In a split second, she had to find her own boundaries regarding what she could allow others to do. Thus she explored and experienced her own subjective limits of social behavior in the space she had invited the audience to participate in.



Photograph from Sarah's performance after she urinated in the teapot

She actively played with an intimate action and succeeded in interrogating social behavior in the performance space. Sarah reflected on what the interplay with the audience meant to her in relation to her lived experience:

With the audience I am grappling with my own inquiry into what it means to be a human being, and the ethical, social and political duties that bind me to being human. It makes sense to explore these concerns in theatre because present time and space is being shared by live material bodies, the performance can not be repeated and it is open to human error, which means the event is always being marked by traits that define the human condition (Sarah's Reflection Paper: Seeking Presence, Appendix 4.2.2).

Sarah experienced the performance as a social space where she could realize her inquiry into what it meant for her to be human. Through the eventness, and through the shared space and time during the performance, she explored and experienced her own boundaries related to theatrical, personal and social space.

8.3.4 Case Printer HPXX11: An authorial open space

In “Printer HPXX11” the spatial arrangement guided the audience chairs placed in a square. This allowed the audience to both observe each other and become ‘the frame’ that surrounded the performers’ stage. In this way, the audience was integrated as part of the Beep People. Hence, the audience was included in the performance as a passive sub-group of the Beep People, watching the active Beep People on stage as well as each other. The spatial arrangement furthered the group’s narrative in that it included the audience in the power game that lay at the heart of the intention of the performance and also worked to include the audience as a meta-commentary. As the analysis of the process in Chapter 6.4.3 showed, the group worked with their experience of being helpless witnesses to war and suffering. The performers took photographs of the audience’s hands during the performance, which again portrayed the audience as being part of the Beep People and included them in the power game.

The group started the process with a common experience of not being able to influence politicians and political events in the world, as described in Chapter 6.2.3. They were gripped by Pinter’s political speech because he was able to explain complex political matters in a voice they admired. The group implemented Pinter’s texts in their own devised play, where they addressed the matter of authorial voice:

Rebecca: What authority do you think you yourself possess which would give you the right to discuss such an atrocity?
I have no such authority. Nothing has ever happened to me. Nothing has ever happened to any of my friends. I have never suffered. Nor have my friends (Manuscript “Printer HPXX11”, Appendix 2.3).

The texts were closely linked to the devisers’ lifeworld and their interest in war as a secondary/borrowed experience. None of the devisers had experienced war directly so they questioned their authority to speak on the

subject. By the organization of the space, by the way the audience was seated and integrated into the space, the group expressed authority while they performed; they controlled the situation and they integrated the audience into the power game and the psychological space they were directing. They created a play about complex political matters, gave the audience a passive function and took the active parts for themselves. The organization of the aesthetic space allowed them to wield authority that they did not have in their real lifeworld and to present their perceptions of power games (psychological space) and complex political issues in an aesthetic space.

8.4 BODY-CHARACTER

This section focuses on how the body-character was presented in the performances, and how the self was staged and played with by the devisers as they met the audience. The actor's embodied uniqueness is described as essential in contemporary performance, where, the "perceptive multistability" in the embodiment of the actor is accentuated (Fischer-Lichte 2008: 89). This perspective will be addressed in the subsequent analysis of the body-character in the three cases.

8.4.1 Case Nancy: Embodied recovery of the self

In "5, 6, 7, 8 A Ballet Odyssey" the performer danced jazz ballet in a tight pink ballerina outfit. Nancy's physical change had been an internal conflict ever since she had grown into a young woman, and the comments from her peers had been devastating, as we saw in Chapter 6.2.1. In the performance, she addressed this change in a direct and brave way, copying and wearing her skintight costumes from her past:

I could have worn any kind of costume, but you know; here I am in this fucking leotard looking like a dickhead. I just don't look down, it's just uuuu. I look so ridiculous (Interview Nancy, Appendix 3.1).

Nancy confronted herself with her bodily change by putting on the leotard even though it made her feel ridiculous. She forced herself to look at her body in the leotard, and the costume helped her see herself from a distance, as a performance 'object', a telling body. By putting on a silly leotard she poked fun at deeply rooted feelings of lack of self-worth. She did this in order to communicate her experience to an audience:

If you are willing to take the piss out of yourself, the audience is like that too. Not taking yourself too seriously, which I don't think I could even do if I tried (Interview Nancy, Appendix 3.1).

In this way, Nancy rendered the experience more harmless by putting her body up front, using it as a way to communicate her story and thereby present her embodied self differently, as a performance character. She took control over the communication of her self. She displayed her embodied transformation by making her body a narrative device, in a conscious way, by transforming her embodied self into an autobiographical character.

In the ballet genre, dancing bodies are supposed to be slim, trained with refined movements. Ballet provides an image of the body as cultural objectification in Western dance. As dance researcher Helen Thomas says:

The ballet body provides a striking example of this process of objectification through its celebration of the ideals of visualism and the pursuit of the mastery of the body over nature (Thomas 2003: 108).

This cultural ideal of what the body should look like is played with in Nancy's performance by putting a ballet costume on her corpulent body. By doing so, she was able to comment on a cultural ideal. In contemporary society, the body is no longer seen as a natural, given fact, rather the body is shaped, constructed and transformable. This notion of the flexible body is a key feature in consumer culture, according to Featherstone (1991: 189), where

the outer and the inner body has become conjoined and “appearance, gesture and bodily demeanor become taken as expressions of self”. Thus, a corpulent body means lack of self-control. By controlling her story, Nancy was able to use her corpulent body as a narrative device in order to comment on such cultural assumptions of the body and the self.

In contemporary performance “The main focus lies on the moment of destabilization, in which perception switches between the phenomenal body and character” (Fischer-Lichte 2008: 89). The perception alternately shifts between the actor’s real body and the fictive character, and this allows for a perceptive multistability. In Nancy’s performance, the identity of the performer and the character appeared at first glance to be the same person, unambiguously related, but on closer scrutiny it was revealed to be a multilayered identity. In her story, the ‘writing’ subject was also the subject of the story; subject and object were one. Nevertheless, the self she performed is a *performed role*, and in this fact there is a layer of complexity. Between Nancy-who-performs and the story being performed there are at least two other Nancy’s: the Nancy who is performed and the non-performing Nancy. Additionally there is the ‘VCA student Nancy’ performing her story and Nancy ‘performing herself as a child’. What seems to be a stable identity is actually a presentation of different layers of the same self, which creates a perceptual multistability in Nancy’s autobiographical character. This play with different layers of the self was made manifest through the auto-biographical form, which plays with truth and fiction as theatrical and narrative devices.

8.4.2 Case Sarah: Performing a multistable self

In “The Paper Woman” several different personas were presented, but it is difficult to see where each persona started in time and where it ended. Hence, it is difficult to describe how many personas there were. There were two who

stand out as particularly refined, but there might possibly be five (or more). One persona that is clearly defined by the artist is 'the grotesque persona', one who is fearful, timid and shy. Suddenly another persona comes into being, one we might call 'the crazy housewife persona'. She puts a wig on, she is happy, smiling, bubbly and confident. She eats chillis and listens to radio. Then there is the 'normal persona', the artist performing 'herself' and speaking text directly to the audience in a non-theatrical way. Fourth is 'the imp-persona' who playfully urinates in the teapot and invites people to tea with a generous gaze. The last persona is 'the animal persona', wallowing in the water like a seal, naked upper body, on the floor. The "perceptive multistability" in the embodiment of the actor, is accentuated in Sarah's performance and is evident in her development of the different unstable personas.

Sarah created multiple personas who were neither psychologically motivated nor not-acting. Sarah sought to find a theatrical presence in the continuum between 'not-acting' and playing psychologically motivated characters, which is clearly articulated in her reflection paper:

A theatrical presence: I have become bored of the non-theatricality in lot of post dramatic performance. It's too 'advanced' to play make-believe with imaginary characters and stories, but it risks being cold and arrogant. I do want to be entertained. I don't just want to see people being themselves. I find it too difficult to pretend to be someone else, however, like an actor does. So I performed a series of persona (Sarah's Reflection Paper: Seeking Presence, Appendix 4.2.2).

Her personas were built on facets of her self, which is a part of her personality, yet they were not a 'total' person or character. Every persona had multiple fragments in Sarah's performance. The grotesque persona and the crazy housewife persona went through a series of states during a couple of minutes of performing. Rather than performing one single facet or fragment of the persona, Sarah performed personas consisting of multiple fragments

that were put together, not in a realistic psychological way, but, rather, in a fragmented way, where the reaction of an action is sometimes delayed; for example, the crazy housewife's reaction to eating chillis came not as she ate them, but several minutes later when she ate toast. Then she screamed, "I can't chew!". By delaying the response, Sarah addressed the question of automatized behavior.

Although Sarah made theatrical personas that ranged from hysterical to shy within a short period of time, there was no real pretending, there was no psychological transformation in the personas; rather, the focus was on doing a task – putting on a wig, bending the head, speaking text without any seemingly psychological logic. Sarah said: "I feel it's so much to do that I don't have the time to explain, to pretend. I'm not interested in how they've got there. In my head I know, but ..." (Interview Sarah, Appendix 3.2). When Willem Dafoe of the Wooster Group performs a persona in the performance "LDS", he describes his work with the persona in a similar way: "it's just about being it and doing it"; he is focused on actual actions rather than psychological transformations (Auslander 1997: 43). Such a way of performing opens up the potential for a certain experience for the performer, as it allows the performer to be highly aware his actions. Auslander argues that:

This leaves the mind free - instead of trying to fill the moment with emotions analogous to the character's (Stanislavski), the performer is left to explore his own relationship to the task he is carrying out (Auslander 1997: 43).

In Case Sarah it allowed the performer to investigate her relationship with the audience. Her intention was to investigate the present side of performing: "I like to be very alive, I want to see who the audience are and to see their reaction and my interpretation of their reactions" (Interview Sarah, Appendix 3.2). To create such awareness, she developed her own method ("Body as antennae") during the process, and before she entered the performance space

she did a lot of warm ups in order to remain aware and responsive: “if I’m not super ready and super alive it’s not worth it, it’s a waste of time” (Interview Sarah, Appendix 3.2). This heightened awareness made her able to react to the audience, to see each and every one of them and to respond to their presence. It also helped her to be present in her own body and to accomplish an important personal experience:

I wanted to be unafraid of exhibiting myself. A strong female body with a non-negotiable presence. I didn’t want to be hiding in the space. To do this I had moments of presenting exhibitionist like persona (Sarah’s reflection paper: seeking presence, Appendix 4.2.2. Her emphasis).

As a person, Sarah is quite shy outside of the performance space and during this performance process she wanted to exhibit different facets of her self. Doing this made her nervous before she met the audience and the training of her bodily awareness during the process helped her focus her actions and energy. In one of the shows, she felt that she had lost the awareness and found herself trying to please her audience, and her work turned into something she did not want it to be:

I lost confidence in the timing of the actions. I panicked and lost hold of the work. The ambiguity of the actions in space disappeared. **In desperation I became a poor comedian constantly setting up events and cuing the audience to laugh.** I used their laughter to support my performance ego. My work became everything I did not want it to be (Sarah’s reflection paper: Seeking presence, Appendix 4.2.2. Her emphasis).

This shows that the performer walks on an edge between trying to please the audience and fueling her ego on the one hand, and using audience reactions as the impetus to the work while simultaneously staying in contact with the intention of the work, on the other. Sarah experienced both sides of the edge during the performance process and it gave her new insights into how her existence influences, and is influenced by, the social community:

In the next stages of my work I wish to pursue a performer presence that is both more theatrical and more pedestrian... I want to find a way of combining the theatrical and outrageously joyful with pure task based action (Sarah's reflection paper: Seeking presence, Appendix 4.2.2).

In this performance process she gained important knowledge about different parts of her self and how she relates to the social life in her present lifeworld, and also gained new theatrical insights into staging a multistable theatrical persona.

8.4.3 Case Printer HPXX11: Contrasting acting styles and experience with a collective self

The acting styles of the characters in "Printer HPXX11" can be placed different places on a continuum between realism and metaphorical images. The characters Devlin and Rebecca were performed in a realistic way, as stable characters, in contrast to the multistable actor seen in Case Nancy 8.4.1 and Case Sarah 8.4.2, whereas the chorus functioned as moving images. The different acting styles (the chorus and Devlin and Rebecca) created a contrast in the play that could be perceived as a "multistability" *between* the characters.

The devisers in Case Printer HPXX11 did not work in-depth with their characters, yet they were able to give an embodied expression of an important lived experience, as this section will show. The section also shows that the experience of giving their ideas a performance expression through collaborative cooperation was more important to the devisers' self than working in a psychological way with their body-character and being 'a star' on the stage.

Karen was a member of the chorus. She described her work with her body-character as performing a function rather than as playing a character:

I am me, who have a function in this performance, more than that I am a character. But I do not feel private, so I play a role, but I do not play a character. In some scenes I am a voice, in some scenes I am a moving image. I have a function (Interview Karen, Appendix 3.5.2).

Despite that she did not work in a psychological way with a character, she still had a personal experience during the process that related to her perception of war. She experienced serious moments in the process when she could investigate difficult personal feelings related to war and suffering, and, being part of a group, gave her some sense of safety:

I like the mixture of the serious moments that I am allowed to enter and at the same time I know that there is someone there who will get me out of it. It has been great to play with that in this process (Interview Karen, Appendix 3.5.2).

This shows that Karen delved deep into her personal feelings about difficult questions in her lifeworld during the process. She expressed relief that other members of the group could help her balance this process by taking her out of her own personal feelings when she needed some distance. This also shows that although she was just “having a function” as a body-character on stage she experienced a personal development related to her own self in this process.

When asked what was most satisfying about the performance, Karen pointed to the group process:

I am very satisfied with the group, it has turned out to work in a great way. It was not obvious... And to work with a project that is so important to you. This is a project I feel such great passion for (Interview Karen, Appendix 3.5.2).

On a scale of one to ten (ten being best), the students gave the production ten with regards to group collaboration (Third interview Karen, Tim, Andrea). This meant that even though the students experienced “Agonies of Creation”

in the aesthetic work, they had other surprising experiences in the collaborative process, a successful social intertextual relationship more important to them than how they performed in their body-characters. They had many bad experiences in the collaborative work early on, as Karen explained:

... because it is a very special group, because we come from many different countries, because we have very different backgrounds, because we are very different persons and because there are many different personalities (Interview Karen, Appendix 3.5.1).

However, the group managed to turn their differences into a positive resource; they turned the differences into “complementarity” instead of conflicts and individual battles. Complementarity is described by John-Steiner (2000: 47) as something that happens when “people with different backgrounds, training, and modalities of thought complement each other in joint endeavors”. What happens is a “broadening of collaborative partner’s intellectual and artistic possibilities” (John-Steiner 2000: 47). The devisers in Case Printer HPXX11 managed to work in a complementary way and benefit from each other’s experiences. They fulfilled their intentions in this work by giving aesthetic expression to a theme that felt urgent to them, and they had the opportunity to embody and discuss their common moral dilemmas of being helpless witnesses to war and suffering. They replaced negative previous experiences of collaborative work with a positive experience, which imparted a common feeling of relief and satisfaction to the group. Essentially, they had created a “collective self”.

Through working with their embodied ideas during the process, they made body-characters that expressed their experiences of war and suffering. The body-characters were connected to the devisers’ selves as shown in Chapter 7.4.3, and performing their common perceptions of moral dilemmas was a rewarding experience for them. As Karen said after performing:

I feel completely empty now. It is an incredibly good feeling. Such an incredibly good feeling. Because we have done something which is so important for all of us to do (Interview Karen, Appendix 3.5.2).

The group established, created and performed a collective self that was a satisfying experience for each and every one of them. The subjective matters were united through the collaborative creative dynamics and performing the body-characters was an experience of 'forming matter' (described in Chapter 4.2.1) through the body, which was satisfying and important work for the devisers at that stage in their creative processes.

8.5 SUMMARY

Nancy created a traditional, logical and linear autobiographical narrative based on her personal narrative (her childhood memory). When Nancy was performing her autobiographical narrative it was possible for her to bring a close to a bad personal childhood narrative (drawing on Beike et al's (2004: 144) theory on closure of memories). It was replaced with a new narrative that was a positive touchstone experience, as described by Singer and Blagov (2004). The performance built a bridge from her childhood experience to the future, replacing a bad memory with a positive experience that helped her feelings of self-worth to recover. She experienced a distance from her personal narrative (the memory) and released her emotions from automatization during the creative process, which the autobiographical investigation of the personal narrative allowed for.

Nancy set up an aesthetic space filled with private expressions, and such a private psychological place was filled with cultural assumptions and prescriptions. She communicated her experience to the audience as a "testimonial performance" and the audience, in turn, recognized her story. By putting a skin tight leotard on her corpulent body she was able to use her

body as a theatrical device and create a distance between her self and the performed self in a conscious way. What seems to be a stable identity in Nancy's character is actually a presentation of different layers of the same self, which created a perceptual multistability in Nancy's autobiographical character. By putting on the leotard, she also commented on the cultural idea of the ballet body and the notion of the ideal female body in Western society. She made humor out of a deeply rooted feeling of a lack of self-worth.

"The Paper Woman" had a fragmented and a-linear narrative and was an event having much in common with the tradition of Happenings, both in its aesthetic form and in the way it investigated the boundaries between human actions in the everyday world and art. Sarah invited the audience to experience the process of creativity in the act of its becoming, as she invited them to be active co-players and to make new narrative connections in the creative material. By using estranging narrative techniques, she aimed to disconnect from the automatized behavior and become "fully alive in the moment". She created a range of "multistable" personas that allowed her to experience different facets of her self. By avoiding the making of psychologically motivated characters, she allowed herself to be fully present and to incorporate input from the audience into her play. She experienced existential presence with the audience in the open space and felt that her starting points had been pursued and developed during the creative process. Sarah interacted intimately with the audience and experienced a moment when her own borders (psychological space) were crossed during her improvised social play in the aesthetic open space.

"Printer HPXX11" was a meta-fictional narrative where the juxtaposition of different narrative performance texts created estrangement and distance, a poetic device used in order to make something strange and thereby to give distance to the experience. Case Printer HPXX11 developed a collective self and a sense of personal development related to the moral issues in the play.

More important than creating body-characters and individual role-playing was the “complementarity” benefits that the devisers experienced in a successful group process.

In the organization of the aesthetic space they managed to integrate the audience as part of their community (Beep People) and by doing so they took authority and control of a complex power game (psychological space). In the performance space, they down-scaled the power game they had identified in their lifeworld to fit their aesthetic space and thus were able to control the play- something that they were unable to do with the subject in the real world. Because of the different acting styles (between the chorus and Devlin/Rebecca) the body-characters created a contrast in the play that could be perceived as “a multistability” *between* the characters. The analysis of the third step in the creative process can be summarized by using the devising model:

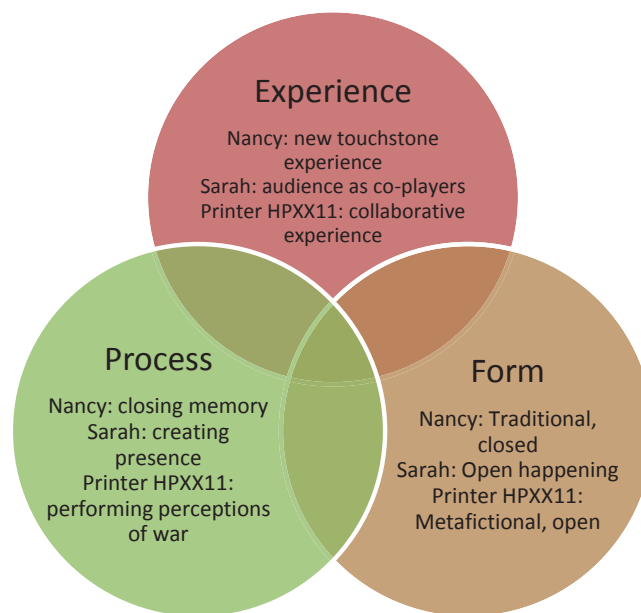


Figure 10: The devising model: Summary of the third creative phase.

The analysis has shown that the element of performing is significant in generalizing new experience and form. Throughout the making process, the devisers prepared and facilitated a certain communication with the audience in their making of narratives, space and time, and body-characters. In the last phase of the work, they were able to affect, and be affected by, other members of the social community, the audience. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that the communication with the audience was rewarding for the devisers in all three cases, yet in different ways. In "5, 6, 7, 8 A Ballet Odyssey" the audience functioned as witnesses to Nancy's coming-out story and confirmed and supported her experience. In "The Paper Woman" the performance was co-created with the audience and was based on active audience participation. In "Printer HPXX11" the audience was integrated as part of the narrative as members of the Beep People.

The devisers were able to perform their experiences and to experience as they performed. The mechanism of the creative imagination found its completion in this particular devising process and the devisers' "returned to reality", as Vygotsky describes it, with a new and active force. The experiences from this process were turned into new theatrical and lived experiences that will affect all following performance work by the students and also their personal lives in the future.

Eco (1989) argues that aesthetic structures used by artists are political in their own way. Open works signify change and new insights by introducing structures that create critical awareness and active participation in an art work. The analysis here identified "The Paper Woman" and "Printer HPXX11" to be open works, whereas "5, 6, 7, 8 A Ballet Odyssey" was described as a closed work. However, Nancy experienced a liberating process by making a closed performance. Performing was rewarding for the devisers because the creative expression was so closely linked to their selves, their personal narratives, their psychological spaces, and were based on

experiences that mattered to them. The aesthetic forms were used as a means to express their experience, which shows that a traditional narrative can be liberating for a deviser to make and to perform.

9 BUMPING OUT - FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The findings will be presented in two parts, which correspond to the research questions and the devising model of the study (Chapter 1.6). The main research question guiding this study has been:

What influence does young people's lived experience have on the creative dynamics in devised performance practice?

The first finding ties back to the section in the devising model that looked at the relation between experience and the creative process and answers the sub-question:

- How is the creative devising process developed from experience, and which elements are significant in generalizing new experience and aesthetic form?

The second main finding covers experience and aesthetic form in the devising model and answer the sub-question:

- How is experience and aesthetic form inter-related in the devising process?

The chapter ends by addressing the implications of the study and its aspirations to develop knowledge on creativity, related to experience, that can have significance for the creative process, education and other arts contexts.

9.2 SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS IN THE CREATIVE DEVISING PROCESS

This section addresses the sub-question: How is the creative devising process developed from experience, and which elements are significant in generalizing new experience and aesthetic form?

The analysis shows that the devising process can be recognized through a series of sequential steps. These will be presented in the following section as well as looking at the creative devising process as a whole. These steps represent a summary of the analysis and some of the elements can be considered as new knowledge in the devising field, such as the significance of artistic intention, the significance of embodiment and materialization connected to meaning-making, and the development of new experience. Vygotsky's creative circle (Chapter 5.4) is revised in order to create a model for the devising processes.

9.2.1 Lived Experience and primary artistic intentions

The analysis of the starting point of the process in Chapter 6 reveals that the devisers began the creative process by defining what mattered to them - in this particular devising process - in this particular phase of their lives. From a variety of lived experiences the deviser selected some particular experiences that connected their lived experience to their creative process. Nancy went back to her childhood memory - Vygotsky's "past experience", Sarah had a welter of experiences that she intended to connect in new ways - Vygotsky's "new connections" and Case Printer HPXX11 was engaged in the theme of war through Pinter's work - Vygotsky's "secondary experience". The analysis also identifies the development of *intentions* in this early creative phase of the devisers' work to be important.

The analysis finds that aesthetic form and experience is inter-related with artistic intention. Three inter-related intentions in the three cases were

identified, in content and form, related to what mattered for the devisers in the creative process. Eco (1989: 160) argues that these terms collapse into one, in and through the artist herself. The analysis reveals that the deviser develops and defines the different parts of the artistic intention and articulates the parts separately, yet also in connection to one another. Following Vygotsky's thinking, this finding is essential and case specific, since intentions are not given any specific attention in Vygotsky's work on creativity.

The development and articulation of artistic intention at an early stage of the process is central because it leads to closure or openness, which continues to inform the work throughout the process. For example, when Nancy defines her form intentions (to use the stand-up form), she is, at the same time, closing the process to further investigation of other forms. The decision to work with a certain aesthetic form at an early stage in the process influences the rest of the process. The practical implication from this finding is that if the facilitator wants the devisers to experiment with different aesthetic forms this must be articulated before the process starts, since the first closure of the process takes place at a very early stage.

9.2.2 Thinking and Feeling: lived emotional experience

The devisers' affective memories and felt experiences were used as a vital inspiration at the beginning of the process. This gave the creative process a certain direction and affected the development of the aesthetic form. The feelings involved at the beginning of the process in the three case studies were heightened and intensified because they were related to experiences from the participants' lifeworlds. For example, in Case Printer HPXX11: How does it feel to live in a war zone? In Case Nancy: How did it feel to be bullied by fellow dancers? In Case Sarah: How does it feel to be lonely and isolated in public spaces? At the same time, the devisers reflected on how these feelings

could be materialized into a performance. The analysis shows that an interplay and unification between feeling and thinking occurred. This process confirms Vygotsky's concept of *perhezivane* as "an intensely-emotional-lived-through-experience", a way in which we experience our experiences. It is a unit of personal experience always related to the individual's surroundings, the environment. This kind of meaning-making process was identified in this research study. The devised work was created through the lens of previous experiences, and emotional aspects of these experiences were aroused and reflected upon. This kind of process was identified in all of the cases, in Chapter 6.

The analysis further revealed that feelings were essential in inspiring the devisers' work in several respects:

- The devised performance-making practice allowed for engaging strong feelings from the deviser's lifeworld, and these became a driving force in their creative work.
- The feeling-thinking process allowed for a critical engagement with the self. Nancy defined a self who *was* and a self who *is*, Sarah investigated different parts of her self through the making of different personas, Printer HPXX11 developed an emphatic self that critically investigated the feelings of being helpless witnesses to war crimes.
- Subjective feelings were linked to cultural circumstances. Case Nancy: the world of ballet and cultural notions of the body; Case Sarah: introverted behavior in public spaces - feeling of isolation and loneliness; Case Printer HPXX11: Mohammed drawings, war, feeling of fear.

These processes can be described as lived emotional experience. Hence, the creative devising process allows for feelings and reflection to occur, and feelings are recognized as an important aspect of the creative dynamic. However, whereas Vygotsky's work is strongly cognitive oriented, this study

shows another adjustment of Vygotsky's model; that embodiment and materialization are vital in the creative devising process, as the next section shows.

9.2.3 Embodiment and materialization

When the devisers improvised, the elements of embodiment, materialization and intuition were the driving forces in the creative process. During improvisations, the creative experience is generated through the moving body and the process of materialization. The thinking-feeling process continues in this phase of the work when intuition becomes a central motor of the improvisation. Intuition was referred to and described by the devisers as "just a feeling" (Nancy, Appendix 3.1); "It's intuition, I just know it fits" (Andrea, Appendix 3.4.2); "These words keep coming up; it seems right. Your intuition says it seems right" (Sarah, Appendix 3.2). Intuition seems to guide creative choices during improvisation and the analysis reveals that during improvisation, embodied knowledge is activated in the form of somatic²⁹, affective, cognitive and intuitive knowledge, and guides the creative choice. Intuition is closely related to lived experience and is described by Sarah (Interview, Appendix 3.2) as "something I was looking for, but not totally conscious of". However, it is difficult to know whether what Sarah described as a new connection in her material, something recognized by her subconsciousness, was a repeated pattern of earlier behavior, identified in the creative moment as something intuitively 'known', or whether it was a substantially new connection. The body stores experiences and memories and such embodied memories might guide intuition during improvisation. However, rather than looking at this process as merely a repetition of acts, or "reproduction", the analysis of Case Nancy (Chapter 7.2.1) shows that she was both reproducing and recreating her memory in an embodied and

²⁹ E.g. case Sarah describes that she experienced having physical "nerve-battles" during improvisation, see section 7.3.2

reflective creative process, where embodiment and reflection occurred simultaneously.

Intuition, embodiment and materialization turn out to be central in all cases. Vygotsky (1930/2004: 29) acknowledges that embodiment and materialization are central factors in the mechanism of creative imagination, yet they are “so obvious and simple” that he does not pursue them in his writing, which is oriented towards the psychological aspects of the creative process. However, this study, with its explicit focus on both personal psychological aspects *and* aesthetic forming, shows that embodiment and materialization are cornerstones of the creative process of devising. It is through improvisations, the moving body and working with concrete material that the creative experience is developed and transformed into a performance and new lived experiences. The process of creative imagination is an aesthetic form-giving process where the creative work is “formed matter” as Dewey (1934/2005: 118) calls it, and experience and form are deeply inter-related in the act of embodiment and materialization. It might be obvious and simple, but it is also an extremely complex process, where internal processes are mediated in order to develop and communicate aesthetic experience. There occurs a mediation of both lived experience and aesthetic form in the process of embodiment and materialization. The next section elaborates on this.

9.2.4 Mediation of lived experience and aesthetic form

The performance work is analyzed through the lenses of narrative, space and time, and body-character. These lenses have a double focus: the theatrical aspect and the aspect of subjective experience. The bond between them is the main focus of the study. In the analysis, two different uses of the term mediation are applied. One is related to a mediation of the theatrical material, the development of narratives, space and time, and body-character, and the other is the mediation of experience and meaning-making. The devisers’

conscious reflection on this meaning-making process took place to varying degrees in different phases of the creative work in each case.

In the process of shaping narratives into a performance, creating a certain space and time, and the development of body-characters, the deviser's experience is embodied and materialized in conscious ways in order to offer perceptual possibilities for an audience. At the same time, devisers gain new insights into their own history, their feelings, self-worth, self-understanding and social understanding. As such, the creative process makes an impact on, and is closely linked to, lived experience.

In the analysis of the narratives, in Chapter 7.2, it was interesting to interrogate if each creative process took a similar circular shape, as in Vygotsky's creative circle. The analysis of narrative intertextuality in the middle phase of the process revealed that the three cases differed in this aspect. These differences relate to the creative dynamics between experiences, the aesthetic forms, and the structure of the process that lie at the heart of the devising model for the study³⁰. The creative dynamics in the three cases is displayed in the following table.

³⁰ see Chapter 1.6

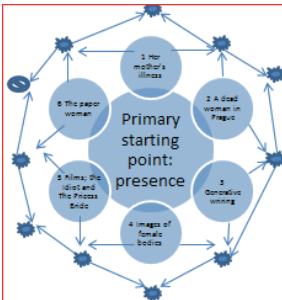
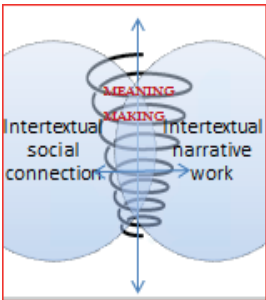
	Case Nancy	Case Sarah	Case Printer HPXX11
PROCESS	<p>Personal narrative (memory)</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Intra-personal texts</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Inter-personal texts</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Theatrical narrative</p> <p>Linear process</p>	 <p>Process web</p>	 <p>Process spiral</p>
FORM	Traditional, linear, logical, closed	Fragmented and open	Meta-fictional and open
EXPERIENCE	Regeneration of personal experience	Making multiple new connections between personal experience	Secondary collaborative experience

Table 2: The creative dynamics in the case studies.

This shows that different processes take on different shapes as devisers form their experiences into a performance. In the creative dynamics aesthetic form, experience and creative process are inter-related in particular ways, linked to the artistic intention and developed into the performance. In this way, the case studies dealt with the creative circle differently. The starting point intention of the aesthetic form and the lived experience, as personal experience or secondary experience, impacted on the development of the creative work. This is further described in section 9.3.

Aesthetic form is both personal and historically/culturally contingent; narrative is a way we organize and structure personal experience, but the available ways of structuring experiences are determined by cultural and

historical possibilities and limitation. The analysis shows that the devisers applied different narrative and processual structures: linear (Case Nancy), fragmented (Case Sarah) and meta-fictional (Case Printer HPXX11) in the shaping of theatrical narratives. Hence, the devisers experienced a range of possibilities in their structuring of narratives, and not just post-modern forms such as the ones described at Chapter 4.3. This aligns, however, with the devising theory (Chapter 3) that confirms that contemporary devising allows for such a variety. But the devisers did meet resistance within the cultural context of their schools in the form of what their teachers considered to be appropriate narrative forms (fragmented and open narratives). The devisers in this study experienced both a personal freedom, to use different narrative and processual structures, and a cultural restriction, in using linear narratives in the educational context.

9.2.5 Performing: new lived experience

Communicating with the audience is an experience that adds meaning to the deviser's creative work. This part of the process is essential in several ways. The performance was the product planned for and dreamed of for weeks, and when it finally happened it stirred feelings of contentment. Performing was the part of the process where they experienced communication and energy between themselves and the audience. In this phase, they experienced having their expectations confirmed (audience as witnesses) and they were surprised by the direction the work took in the meeting with the audience (Chapter 8.3) as new living experiences were created.

The devisers received new insights into their embodied feelings, their history and lifeworld during this process, and that they developed as artists and improved their theatrical skills. Nancy closed her bad childhood memory and replaced it with a good performance experience and tried out the stand-up genre for the first time. Sarah found new experiences in the interaction with

strangers, and developed and explored different facets of her self. Printer HPXX11 experienced a positive group process and managed to give theatrical expression to a secondary experience and turn it into a new personal experience. All participants gained new theatrical insights and new lived experiences, two aspects that are inter-related and can sometimes be hard to separate.

9.2.6 A model of the creative devising process

Vygotsky explained the creative process as a circular process; experience-separation into single elements-change-associations and disassociations-combinations of elements-external pictures. This study of the creative process shows that the model needs to be revised in order to express other characteristics relevant in devising. Although there are differences in the structural shapes in the creative dynamics in the three cases, they all went through some sequential steps in their investigation of experience and creative material. For the deviser, the creative process is a hermeneutical investigation of the materialization and embodiment of experience through/into narrative, space and time, and body-character. It is a subjective and social experience closely related to the cultural, social and historical context in which it appears. In the creative devising process, the deviser's lived experience is activated simultaneously with the creation and the emergence of aesthetic form. The hermeneutical devising process related to lived experience is displayed below:

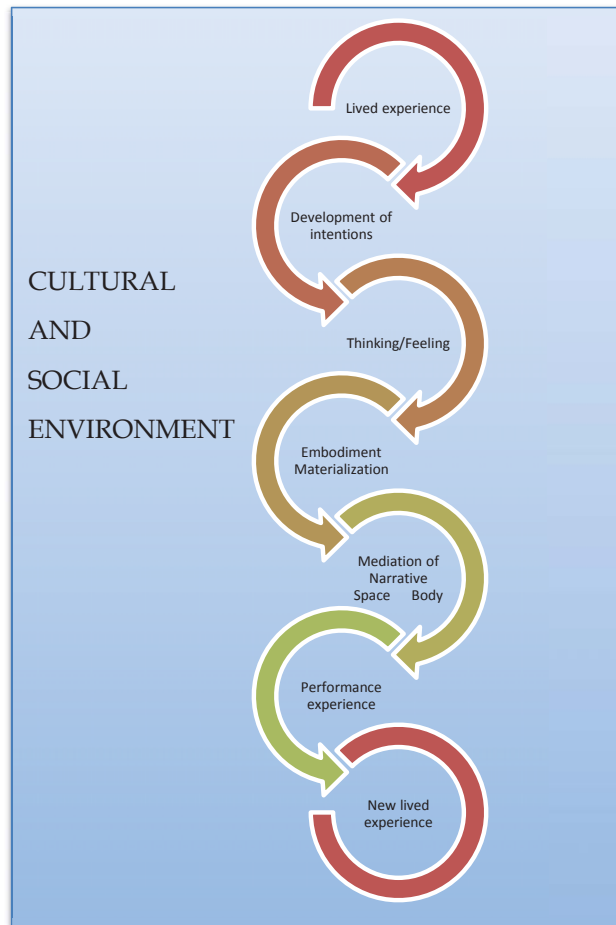


Figure 11: The devising process.

The model identifies the significant elements in generalizing about new experience and form in the creative process. In the first phase of the devising process lived experiences, intentions and the process of thinking/feeling are central. The element of intentions was not included in Vygotsky's theory. In the second phase, materialization and embodiment are crucial in the creative devising process. These elements were not given attention in Vygotsky's framework. The analysis of the middle phase in this study focused on the process of change in both the lived experience and the aesthetic form as a processual mediation of narratives, space and time, and body-character. In the

last phase of the process new experiences were created through communication with an audience.

9.2.7 Model confinement

The creative devising experience is complex, and a model can hardly visualize and incorporate this complexity, yet some vital steps in the devising processes have been identified and visualized in the model above. The arrow displays the chronology of the devising process, and the structure of the analysis in this study follows this temporal linearity. The concepts that describe the different steps in the process should not be considered as static concepts restricted to a certain phase in the process only. Rather, they must be considered dynamic, as they develop and occur in all the phases of the process. For example, "Thinking and Feeling" was analyzed in the first phase of the work, but the experience of thinking and feeling continues to develop throughout the whole process, as thinking and feeling are decisive for both meaning-making and the totality of the creative experience. Another example is the formation of narrative, space and time, and body-character, which is displayed in the model as the fifth step. However, the devisers already had ideas about these formations in the first starting point phase of the process when they developed their artistic intention, though the concrete making of narrative, space and body-character happened later in the process.

There is an essential experience not displayed in the model that needs to be described in order to give a more complete picture of the devising experience. The feeling of catharsis, described by Vygotsky (1925/1971: 249) as "an explosive and sudden expenditure of strength" which gives a new "order in the psychic household" was identified in the devisers' creative experiences. This feeling of catharsis occurred in different phases of the devising processes, and at different times. Nancy experienced a feeling of catharsis when she performed in front of an audience and had her story confirmed by the

audience as witnesses. Sarah had a cathartic experience during improvisations on the floor in the rehearsal space; she felt she had found connections in the material and had no more “nerve battles” with the material. Printer HPXX11 had a collective feeling of catharsis as they watched Pinter’s Nobel Prize speech and felt a great relief and excitement when confronted with the words that gave them an artistic vision for their own work. Such feelings of catharsis (which also has much in common with Dewey’s notion of having *an* experience) is at the heart of the creative devising experience. In these moments of catharsis, new insights, perspectives and meanings arise, which gives new knowledge and self understanding. This study shows that the cathartic experience can happen in all phases of the creative process and is a vital experience for devisers.

9.3 INTER-RELATIONS BETWEEN AESTHETIC FORM AND EXPERIENCE

This section ties back to the sub-question: How is experience and aesthetic form inter-related in the devising process? It also develops a Norwegian vocabulary for devising based on the analysis of the case studies and shows how this knowledge can have significance for understanding the difference between different devising processes. The section starts by addressing the research question in a broader cultural context, looking at how aesthetic form and the deviser’s personal experience are inter-related in a historical time where identity formation is individualized.

9.3.1 Form and identity in a cultural-historical context

When Sarah and Nancy worked with aesthetic form and content they simultaneously worked with experiences related to their identity. Nancy created a new touchstone experience that affected her feeling of self-worth and Sarah explored aspects of her self by developing personas. Their creative work with form was developed from lived experience, but their aesthetic

creative work also formed their experience and their identity. Singer and Blagov (2004: 121) argue that: “identity is synonymous with the autobiographical narrative individuals construct to weave together their past, present, and anticipated future into a unified whole”. However, this study shows that the narrative work did not necessarily have to be autobiographical in nature in order to engage with identity. Case Sarah did not work in an autobiographical way; rather, she worked in an improvisational and fragmented way to construct her fragmented narrative. She experienced her work as both closely related to, and affected by, her identity. This shows that identity work is not restricted to a particular narrative form but can be developed in a variety of ways depending on the deviser’s personal intention.

The cultural-historical climate in which young theatre students lived at the beginning of the new century was different from that of the 1960s, and cultural changes affect the way we look at identity formation. Young people today are forced to develop and express an interesting and appealing identity, and even gender, which was earlier taken for granted, is today considered a performative expression. The important work of creating one’s identity, instead of inheriting it, is a serious job for young people, generally and in this study.

It is an imperative for students to work with important existential matters such as presence and personas (Case Sarah), exploring and developing the self through autobiographical narrative (Case Nancy) and mediating secondary moral experiences of war (Case Printer HPXX11). By giving experiences an aesthetic form, students explore and mediate their perception of parts of their lifeworld. The analysis shows that aesthetic form and meaning-making is synthesized in the creative process. This is important for students in this phase of their life for creating an identity. It can be considered narcissistic and narrow, or it can be seen as essential identity work due to

present historical condition³¹, where the effort to construct identity and make meaning in the world is a fundamental part of being a young person.

9.3.2 Form as personal commitment

Compared to some of the devising processes during the 1960s, which had social-political development as an imperative (Chapter 3.5), the *personal-political* seems to be particularly important in the devising processes in this research study. The devisers perceived their work as political in their own ways. The students were 'normal' young people with no big personal issues (except Nancy) or clearly articulated political oppression to fight against, but they still insisted on their right to communicate the insights of their lifeworld. As Nancy put it: "Not everyone has been raped or experienced war... I want to make a performance about small things of life. I want it to be casual... I'm still dancing; it's a triumph" (Interview Nancy, Appendix 3.1). If we consider the students as creators of not only aesthetic expressions but also as identity creators, it is easy to understand their desire for their creative project.

Social dimensions and personal development are just as important as the aesthetic dimension in devised performance-making in the educational context. The two dimensions (the aesthetic and the experiential) were thoroughly inter-related in the devised work; aesthetic expressions were used in order to articulate personal and social measurements, and personal and social experiences were developed during the creation of aesthetic expressions. In some of the cases (Case Sarah and Case Nancy) there seems to be a particularly strong connection between creative practice and experiences connected to the deviser's subjective lifeworld. Therefore they might be described as life-based since the process is based on lived experience rather than on the ideological intent expressed in some of the avant-garde

³¹ Referring to Ziehe's (2009: 184) view on "youth and education in modern society".

movements. Rather, the life-based theatrical practice in this study might be described as a successor to the practitioners found in the area of cultural performance identified in the genesis of devising, like Evreinov (the theatrical instinct) and was developed by the avant-garde expressionists. Life-based practice will be further described in section 9.3.5 (life-based or self-made practice).

The devisers in this research study were politically engaged, but without the explicit political intent seen in the political agit-prop theatre movement, for instance. In Chapter 4.2.2 we saw that Eco (1989) argued that modern open work has a special political function, in that it breaks with formal traditional art and unlocks the audience's habitual thinking and doing because it offers fragmentation and complexity through the formal properties that correspond to the contemporary world. This study, with its explicit focus on the performance-maker's experience, shows that the political aspect does not reside in the aesthetic forms per se, but in the maker's experience with aesthetic form. Aesthetic form and experience is inter-related through the deviser's personal commitment with form and not through the forms themselves. This becomes evident in the analysis of Case Nancy, whose traditional stand-up performance can be considered a closed work in Eco's sense, yet from the perspective of the deviser the performance was considered a political statement.

From a performer-maker's perspective, personal experience and apprehension of form is more important than form as political expression per se. Aesthetic form in this context is not a "social commitment" in Eco's sense, aesthetic form is, rather, a "personal commitment" closely connected to the deviser's personal experience and intentions with the work.

9.3.3 A move from irony to honesty

The devising processes and the devised cultural expressions in the cases identified as meta-fictional work and autobiographical work are different today than they were in the 1960s. They also tend to be different from much of the devised work described in postmodernism. Pickering (1997: 82) argues that in postmodernism “individuality is self-parody; and the idea of honesty in self-expression is replaced by the self-bemused pose”. The cases in this research study show a move from postmodernism’s irony and self-parody towards honesty and sincerity. All of the students were investigating their life experiences during the creative process in a serious and post-ironic way. They entered personal experiences without ironic distance, letting their embodied emotions and instincts guide the creative process. Sarah said “I have become bored of the non-theatricality in a lot of post dramatic performance. It’s too ‘advanced’ to make-believe with imaginary characters and stories, but it risks being cold and arrogant” (Sarah’s reflection paper, Appendix 3.2.1). She longed for a more honest and warm communication, both in the performance space and in life in general, which facilitated people coming closer to one another, without ironic distance. This shows that her aesthetic performance work was closely linked to her lifeworld and by making an art work based on her experiences she was able to address matters from her lifeworld in an honest and post-ironic way.

9.3.4 Life-based or self-made aesthetic practice

In Chapter 3 we saw that the English term “devising” is used to describe a variety of practices that exist within different cultural fields. The English term is now being applied by Norwegian devisers, even though it needs explanation for most people. It is difficult to give the practice a specific Norwegian name since the term “devising” is very unspecific and is already applied in the Norwegian language. But this study has shown that there exist two meanings of “devising”, that might be given Norwegian names and

definitions, and which may add understanding to, and help specify, the nature of the different processes.

The analysis in Chapter 6.5 identified the development of form in Case Sarah and Case Nancy as being closely linked to primary experiences from their lifeworld, whereas Case Printer HPXX11 used mainly secondary or borrowed experience as a source for their theatrical work. The artistic intention in the devising process in Case Nancy and Case Sarah was mainly connected to the deviser's subjective lifeworld and can therefore be given the Norwegian name "*livsbasert*" devising, which means "life-based" in English. In Case Nancy and Case Sarah the process started with personal experience or memories as primary resources. In life-based/*livsbasert* devising, therefore, personal experiences is used as the primary source for the work and for aesthetic forms to express and develop personal experience.

It is also evident that some devising processes do not start with personal material. They may start with borrowed or appropriated material (including concrete material as props, scenographic elements, texts) not directly experienced by the performer, as demonstrated in Case Pinter. The material was interesting to them but the students had no experience of war themselves and therefore 'borrowed' the experience. This kind of devising process can be called "*egenskapt*" in Norwegian, which means "self-made" in English. It refers to the process where the performer is a total-creator and the performance is made by the devisers themselves, but the experience used as the stimulus is not a primary experience. In self-made/*egenskapt* devising, secondary experiences and appropriation of aesthetic forms are used as the main source for the work. The notion self-made/*egenskapt* stresses the inventive aspect of devising.

The two different devising processes are demonstrated in the model that follows:

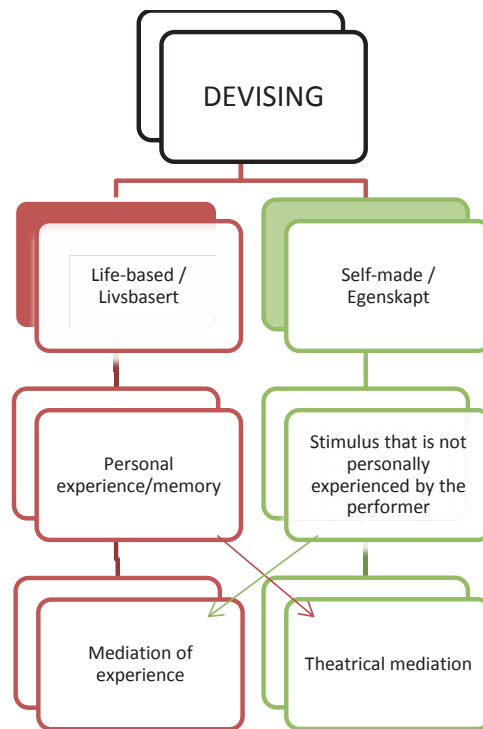


Figure 12: Model of “life-based” and “self-made” devising.

The analysis has shown that there are different levels of meaning-making in creative work. In life-based devising, mediation of experience can be described as primary, whereas mediation of theatrical form is key matter in self-made devising.

Having said this, it needs to be emphasized that there is no clear cut distinction between these two types of devising, as the arrow in the model illustrates. It can easily be argued that all devising is connected to the deviser’s lifeworld, and all devising processes are, in a sense, life-based. Still, this research finds that there is a difference in the way experience is used and developed, either as personal experience or as borrowed experience.

All life-based devising includes theatrical mediation; however, the life-based devised works of Case Sarah and Case Nancy had strong personal benefits for

the deviser as their creative work was so closely linked to their personal experiences. Case Printer HPXX11, on the other hand, started with a secondary experience and had a stronger focus on the theatrical mediation of Pinter's texts. However, during the creative process, the secondary experience turned into a new primary experience for the devisers, displayed by the second arrow in the model above. This shows that in a self-made devising process, secondary experiences can be developed into new primary experiences, and important mediations of experience can be achieved in addition to the theatrical mediation.

9.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This section shows how the study has significance for the theory and practice in the field of devising, in the educational context, and also for other creative processes.

The terms "life-based" and "self-made" devising might be a useful distinction in theatre education when deciding the kind of process desired in a devising production. That is to say, are we planning a process where life-based material is prime matter or will the process be based on borrowed material or task and formula-based exercises? The two different approaches can cause significant differences in how the working process is facilitated, supervised and assessed. In the analysis, we saw that in all of the cases of this study the students were allowed to do anything they wanted in the production. Yet, as the process developed, it was clear that this freedom was limited to work with experimental form only, which led to some frustration for the devisers. If a distinction between life-based and self-made devising is applied, such confusion might be decreased, thus the distinction can be used as a tool for planning and framing a devising process with more specificity for the facilitator and for the students. The division between different processes

might also affect the way feedback is provided and how the work is assessed. Works that are based on the deviser's lived experience "are often deeply personal expressions by artists and can pose special challenges for directors", as Lazarus (2012: 85) argues. If the teacher or director facilitates a life-based work, the feedback and the assessment should consider such "special challenges" as described by Lazarus. Within the educational field, directors and teachers must "allow students freedom of expression while also helping them develop their own aesthetics in relation to the range of critical standards in our field" (ibid). It might be more challenging to give feedback to life-based work than self-made work that is not closely connected to the deviser's personal experiences.

The students' devised work lay in the intersection between their subjective work in exploring their identities and in creating a work that was interesting for an audience. The analysis of Case Sarah showed that the performer sometimes walked on the edge between narcissism (fueling her performance ego in front of an audience) and creating performances with general public interest. The role of the teacher is to guide the students so that they manage to walk on this edge and, ideally, accomplish the difficult task of both using lived experience and developing human and creative experiences that can be recognized and perceived by the audience. How this can be accomplished didactically and pedagogically is not the main theme of this thesis and other studies might reveal whether this finding applies to a broader spectrum of theatre education. The division between life-based and self-made processes is, however, an interesting field for further studies related to the educational context.

The distinction between life-based and self-made creative work might also be useful for professional devising companies or in other creative art forms, such as dance, music and painting, in fact in all creative practices where the creative process can take its lead from either personally experienced material

or from appropriated material (both in aesthetic forms and experiences). Consciousness of direction for the starting point material and the artistic intention in the beginning of the process could be valuable for avoiding automatized behavior in the creation of art. Whereas Eco (1989) warned that traditional art produced “habitual thinking” and automatized behavior for the audience, the perspective in this study is from the maker of the work. Avoiding automatized behavior (meaning repetition of earlier patterns or borrowed expressions in an unconscious way) might be achieved if there is a heightened awareness of the different processes, and this needs to include the relationship between aesthetic form and experience in the creative processes (self-made or life-based). This will allow the creative person to develop her self and create new (to her) expression and experiences.

9.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study started with an engagement in young people’s performance-making and I wondered if under certain circumstances performance-making has the potential to not only express changes in the world, but also change and redirect our experiences, our lives, as we are practicing theatre. From my own experience with performance and young people and from an overall view on the genre devised theatre, the research focus eventually appeared and was framed in the following question:

What influence does young people’s lived experience have on the creative dynamics in devised performance practice?

A new *devising model* was developed and used as a tool when interrogating the creative dynamics connecting aesthetic form, creative process and lived experience. By establishing an insight in the history/genesis of devised performance the devising model became helpful to inquire significant features

and current characteristics of devising. These were identified to be *non-hierarchic organization of the process, equality between aesthetic forms and everyday experiences as source for performance-making*.

Three case studies were carried out in Norway and Australia at colleges where skilled theatre students were allowed to devise their own works. In this context the creative dynamics were analyzed looking at how experience and aesthetic form was used and developed in the devising process.

Vygotsky's creative circle was applied as framework for interpretation and the devising processes were analyzed in three phases; *the starting point phase, the exploration and mediation phase, the performing phase*. In the selected theory, the connection between phenomenological lifeworld existentials and the coinciding theatrical categories was studied, and they were found to be related to three categories; *narratives, space and time and the body-character*. These categories were used to analyze the case studies.

The relationship between the theatrical and experiential in the categories was at the heart of the research, since it allows for an inquiry into the influence of lived experience on theatrical practice and vice versa. The study finds that the connection between the theatrical and the experiential makes devising a unique art form; *it allows a person's primary and secondary experience to be the main resource, reasoned upon, developed and created into a new theatrical expression, and new life experience*.

A related sub-question was developed: **How is the creative devising process developed from experience, and which elements are significant in generalizing new experience and aesthetic form?** Conclusively, the following insights and findings can be drawn from the study:

- The creative devising process is developed from experience in three main ways: *past experiences, secondary experiences and emotions*.
- The significant elements in generalizing new experience and form are found to be: *intentions, embodiment and materialization, mediation of experience and aesthetic form, and communicating with audience in a hermeneutical devising process* (Figure 10). Hence, Vygotsky's circle was revised.
- In the creative dynamics *aesthetic form, experience and creative processes are inter-related in particular ways. They are linked to the artistic intention and its development into the performance*. The study finds that all case studies dealt with the creative circle differently.

A second sub-question was developed: **How is experience and aesthetic form inter-related in the devising process?** The study finds that experience and aesthetic form are inter-related in two main ways:

- Some devising processes use personal material as the main source for the performance-making process, and the material is formed and mediated in ways that have strong personal benefits for the devisers. This is *life-based* devising.
- Other devising processes use secondary material and appropriation of forms as the main approach, and the mediation of aesthetic form is crucial in this process rather than the mediation of personal experience. This is *self-made* devising.

Finally, this study has methodologically offered a new epistemological approach for studying performance and devising in the way it connects lifeworld research to aesthetic, theatrical research. The cross-disciplinary approach breaks with traditional borders between aesthetic and social studies. It can hopefully show the way to further studies in the context of performance studies, education and humanistic research.

The devising model in this study may have practical implications and relevance for future devising processes. Understanding devising as a creative practice closely linked to the deviser's lifeworld may inspire and become useful to future directors, performers, theatre educators and researchers.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX 1: OVERVIEW DATA MATERIAL DVD

DVD VICTORIAN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS:

DVD NR	PLACE	DATE	TIME	CONTENT
DVD 1	Melbourne, VCA	14.03.07	120 min	Showings 'Family Task'; A: Christine and Claudia, B: Maria and Emmaline, C: Nancy and Brigid, D: Garry and Sarah + 1.interview Sarah and Gary,1. interview Brigid and Nancy
DVD 2	Melbourne, VCA	15.03.07	120min	Improvisation and 2.interview 'Light task' Gary and Nancy, 2.Interview 'Family task' Gary and Sarah
DVD 3	Melbourne, VCA	14.03.07	120min	Interview Leisa Shelton
DVD 4	Melbourne, VCA	16.03.07	120min	Interview Richard Murphet
DVD 5	Melbourne, VCA	22.05.07	120min	Solo work Performance: 1 Gary, 2 Claudia
DVD 6	Melbourne, VCA	21.05.07	120min	Solo work Performance: 1 Brigid, 2 Sarah, 3 Nancy, 4 Maria
DVD 7	Melbourne, VCA	23.05.07	80min	3.Interview Sarah, part one
DVD	Melbourne,	23.05.07	120min	3.Interview Sarah part two,3.

8	VCA			Interview Brigid part one
DVD 9	Melbourne, VCA	23.05.07	120min	3.Interview Brigid part two, 3.Interview Nancy

Total 17 hours video recordings, three different interviews with three students: Sarah, Nancy and Brigid. Interviews of two teachers. Recordings of improvisations, showings and performances.

DVD NORWEGIAN THEATRE ACADEMY:

DVD NR	PLACE	DATE	TIME	CONTENT
DVD 1	Fredrikstad, NTA	08.02.06	120min	1.interview Karen part one
DVD 2	Fredrikstad, NTA	09.02.06	115 min	1.interview Karen part two, Choreography, text work, discussion aesthetics Karen, Andrea, Elvira part one
DVD 3	Fredrikstad, NTA	09.02.06	120 min	Discussion continues part two, 1.interview Andrea part one
DVD 4	Fredrikstad, NTA	10.02.06	110 min	1.interview Andrea part two, New ideas discussions at Elvira's place the whole group, showing
DVD 5	Fredrikstad, NTA	13.02.06	120 min	1.interview Tim part one
DVD 6	Fredrikstad, NTA	13., 14., 15.02.06	115 min	1.interview Tim part two, First day impro on the floor, discussion the room
DVD 7	Fredrikstad, NTA	15.02.06	120 min	First run-through, Group discussion; the concept
DVD 8	Fredrikstad, NTA	15.02.06	100 min	Run-through continues, First comments Tutor Torunn

DVD 9	Fredrikstad, NTA	17.02.06	120 min	comments Tutor Torunn continues, Discussion the filmset idea, Improvisations filmset
DVD 10	Fredrikstad, NTA	18.02.06	115 min	Improvisations filmset, run- through
DVD 11	Fredrikstad, NTA	18.02.06	120 min	Run-through filmset idea, discussion afterwords whole group
DVD 12	Fredrikstad, NTA	19.02.06	30 min	Tim and Andrea dialog work
DVD 13	Fredrikstad, NTA	20.02.06	110 min	2.interview Karen, 2.interview Tim
DVD 14	Fredrikstad, NTA	20.- 21.02.06	120 min	2.interview Andrea, Impro without the filmset idea, spontaneous interview whole group, run- through
DVD 15	Fredrikstad, NTA	21.02.06	80 min	Run-through continues, tutoring Torunn
DVD 16	Fredrikstad, NTA	23.- 24.02.06	65min	3.interview Karen, 3.interview Andrea,
DVD 17	Fredrikstad, NTA	23.02.06	35 min	3.interview Tim
DVD 18	Fredrikstad, NTA	23.02.06	30 min	Performance Printer HPXX11

Total 29 hours video recordings, three different interviews with three students; Tim, Karen and Andrea. Recordings from two tutor sessions. Recordings of improvisations, run-through, discussions and performance.

APPENDIX 2: MANUSCRIPTS

2.1 Manuscript "5,6,7,8 A Ballet Odyssey"

When I was eight years old, I started jazz ballet classes.

I thought it was important to have a skill.

Arrangements were made. A leotard was bought. I was soon to be a student of Pania's Dance Connection, the hottest dance school in town. The school, where all the cool girls went. Indeed, for the small fee of seventy dollars a term, I was to be given the key to future stardom. A paltry exchange surely, for riches beyond measure?

I was so excited. I was going to be a beautiful, graceful, poised and lovely *dancer*. I was going to float through the air with the greatest of ease. I was going to melt weightlessly into the arms of my strong and handsome partner while we danced a pas de deux. I was going to be able to kick my leg *really* high. All of these things were very important to me.

At long last the time came for my first class. My teacher was Pania Broadway. I swear to God that that was her name. She was a goddess who danced like an angel. She had creamy olive skin, long lustrous black hair, pearly white teeth and parachute pants. To my eight-year-old mind, she was it. She was the ultimate. I wanted to be *her*.

I stood there nervously in my brand new pink leotard, white stick legs shivering as all the greatest hits of 1992 echoed around the draughty basketball hall. I was absolutely scared out of my wits. But I needn't have worried. The classes were better than my wildest dreams. We did turns. We did jumps. We did kick-ball-changes. I came home on a cloud every Tuesday night and danced up and down the hallway before I went to bed. I was in love.

And my first love's name was jazz ballet.

Cue boogie shoes

Jazz ballet was my whole world. At eight years old I had found my calling. And the best thing was, my calling involved regular application of lycra and false eyelashes. I had entered a world where running around and showing off wasn't just encouraged, it was the whole point. I'd just never had a legitimate outlet before. But it wasn't only Pania that ran the school, oh no. In my town, Pania's family were about as close to showbiz royalty as you could get.

Pania had a mother called Gwen. She looked like an elderly clown. Gwen had a white powdery face, red blush cheeks and drawn on eyebrows. Her fingers dripped with chunky gold jewellery and she consistently got my name wrong for eight years.

Pania also had a sister called Maree. Maree looked like Gwen might have twenty years ago- except that she still had her own eyebrows. Maree was a duplicitous woman who constantly set new records in the areas of homophobia and interior design involving leopard print.

1

Maree had a son called Stormy. Stormy Shepherd. I swear to god that was his name. He was one of only three boys in town that did jazz ballet- thus making him one of the most picked on boys in town. He was a pioneer in the use of hair gel and clothing depicting the American flag. Stormy was a metro-sexual before metro-sexuals existed. Of course now he's a homosexual... but if you think about it- not really that surprising.

Backstage was my favourite place. All the hustle and bustle, sequins and scrunchies and enough hairspray fumes to kill a small jungle animal. We would all line up in front of the mirrors fussing and preening like dainty birds on a wire. Rainbow coloured parrots, waiting excitedly for the moment we'd be free to spread our wings and shake our tail feathers.

At least some of us were dainty parrots. I was always somewhere between a cockatoo and a budgie.

Gwen and Maree would sit in the corner during classes and discuss, in minute detail the physical shortcomings of every tender adolescent body wiggling about in front of them.

Sarah Fitzgibbon's arse was too fat. Evie Slessar's boobs were too big and because Narelle Gibson had a perfect body, she was simply a bitch. Actually the discussions about Evie Slessar's breasts were probably justified- they were truly enormous. It's a wonder she managed side-ball change without serious spinal damage. In fact a malfunctioning high kick could have stranded her on her back like a turtle.

Anyway, around and around and around and around the hall we'd go, like parading cattle, their heavily made up eyes upon us. It didn't bother me at first. Let them talk, I was a flat chested eight year old with nothing to wobble.

As the years went on, I grew bigger and the costumes didn't. The covert conversations from the corner of the basketball hall started to ring louder in my ears. I was now a hot topic. It's funny how something that makes you so happy can also make you desperately unhappy. Slowly but surely little bits of joy began to leak out and I started to realise, like so many other things in life, simple love and devotion for something just isn't quite enough.

Cue Am I Not Pretty Enough

I stopped dancing when I was fifteen. Other things took over. I got a part time job, I started to notice boys and I discovered amateur musical theatre. Don't worry, that's a whole other show.

I tried to forget. Like a jaded lover I tried to forget all the passion, joy and happiness that I'd felt and move on. But I couldn't. Not really. Every so often I'd get a pang in my chest when I watched a spectacular dance number on TV. Or revel in taking over a dance floor at a party. But the dominant voice of practicality and reality always won out. I was never going to be a dancer.

2

So why bother?

So why did I keep doing it for so long? I always had a choice. I could have escaped those horror women with their novelty names and fake eyebrows before the passive aggressive psychological torture had a chance to stick. I suppose... I suppose it was dancing. I mean, you remember what you wanted to be when you were little? I love it- and they never managed to completely extinguish that. Ohh It flickered, it wavered and wobbled, it was blown flat in the wind, it had sequins and self-doubt piled on top of it-

But it never went out.

I saw Gwen a little while ago. She looked exactly the same. She still had her ridiculous red clown hair and her freaky drawn on eyebrows. I saw her coming on the street and the fifteen-year-old girl inside me cowered and shrivelled and searched desperately for a way out. The adult I'd become however, stood her ground. She looked me up and down as we faked pleasantries and she asked me what I was doing at the moment. She wasn't quick enough to disguise her surprise that I was pursuing dance as a major in my undergraduate degree- if indeed she tried at all.

"Oh!" she said, painted eyebrows shooting so far up her forehead that they almost disappeared under the frizzy red cloud that sat perched upon her head.

"You're still dancing are you?"

And I thought "Fuck it." And I looked her square in the eye and I said "Yes. Yes I am."

"Because I'm a dancer."

2.2 Manuscript "The Paper Woman"

Score for *The Paper Woman*

The Paper Woman

The set-up

Space

The windows are not blacked out. It is a semi-permeable membrane to the outside world. The external is present inside. Five pearl and clear light bulbs are hanging throughout the space, from the ceiling and resting against the walls.

Ingredients

five extension cords, two pearl lights, three clear lights, bench seat, sheet of black plastic, green light bulb on an extension cord, tea pot, tea cups, small table cloth, black box, plate, 2 slices of bread, large sharp knife, jar of peanut butter, 5 hot red chilies, toaster attached to an extension cord, plastic bucket half full of water, small portable radio, wig, red embroidery thread, needle, red dress, CD player

Costume

The performer wears normal clothing. She should not appear unusual. She wears a black skirt and a blue long sleeve top. Her hair is neat. She does not wear shoes. She does not wear make-up.

The Performance Score

The Performance space is empty. It is in darkness. Music plays soundtrack from Somersault.

Audience enters the space. Door is closed when they have entered. Music fades off. Silence.

The performer needs to have a welcoming inviting presence to the audience. At all times she considers the audience as her friends and guests. She must guide their attention carefully and gently through the performance. Keeping her demeanor open and inviting to the audience. There should be no hierarchy in the space between the audience, objects or performer. Most actions are tasks. It is essential with all task based actions that no overacting occurs otherwise the interpretation and emotional response of the audience will be limited and closed down. The events will cease to be real. They will become pretend. If this happens the audience will not then be witnesses to a 'real' event or a lived experience.

Performer enters through the door pushing a black box across space. Box is placed. Performer hesitates to speak to audience. Walks to door. Hesitates at door handle. Exits the space. Re-enters space with wooden bench, black sheet of plastic and green light bulb attached to extension cord. Performer carefully places bench in space. Places plastic carefully against ground with a small hole for performer to enter through later. Plugs in green bulb to power point. Holds bulb in hand as if not sure what to do with it. Stands in a strong position looking at bench in front.

Clicks bulb on and speaks into it as if it is a microphone:

It is a pleasure to meet you madwoman.

(Click off bulb, change position, display self on bench another position to speak into the bulb, click on)

It is a pleasure to be seated on a seat that does not exist fuckface!

(Click off, change position standing between two previous poses, click on, Looking between the two poses just occurred, click on)

Well, how delightful.

(Click off, change mode, place bulb against wall)

Standing against wall. Performer looks at audience as if daring them to stop her. Gently she turns two lights on. She takes in all of the audience with her gaze. She travels to the next switch. Again looking at audience as if daring them to stop her. Gently she turns on two more bulbs. She takes the audience in again with her gaze. She travels across the space to the other light switch. As she is crossing the space she addresses the whole audience, gently but with concern for them as if passing on some wisdom, she may need to walk amongst them. She has a genuine concern and equal investment for all amongst the audience:

At times it may feel like the next step may never come but you must remember to take only one step at a time otherwise falling is inevitable. Keep your eyes constantly open. Looking above you, below you, behind and in front. On the look out for the unforeseeable. To collide with another body can be fatal. Two bodies collide and then start pounding one other with

Score for *The Paper Woman*

their fists, or else they fall to the ground and do not try to get up again

She finishes the text. It finishes with a serious sense of concern and foreboding in her voice. This is essential to juxtaposition with the next moment.

She turns on the last switch. Takes in the audience with a generous gaze and smile.

She bends down (the timing is essential here. Too soon and it is an obvious forced comic moment, too late and she risks dropping the rhythm of the piece) picking up tea pot, tea cups, table cloth speaking:

Would anyone like a cup of tea?

She openly invites some audience members to sit and have tea with her.

Once they are seated and she has placed table cloth, tea pot and cups. She says to them:

I've forgotten something

(She goes back to the place the objects are lined up)

She bends over and goes to pick up bucket with water. As her hands touch the bucket she changes persona. She is now fearful, timid, shy. She timidly shuffles in the corner against the wall and door.

Then travels into space amongst audience. Head bowed. Careful attention to shuffle of feet and

carrying the bucket. She speaks in an exited whisper:

This is a grotesque character.

She is tearing apart her clothes.

Her voice is 100 cicadas.

Her breath acid and roast chicken.

Her eyes never stop, twisting into her skull.

She sees more than anyone we have ever met.

She approaches the bench. Her excitement and shyness ready to be cast away.

She is threatening to sing. She is threatening to sing. Chocolate soup pours out of her mouth.

In a movement of three beats. She stands on top of the bench placing the bucket on her head.

Her persona is now powerful like a queen addressing peasants. With the bucket on her head. She

speaks out across the audience addressing them. Powerfully, mocking, teasing, accusing, attacking

them. Her gestures are grotesque, large and violent.

Bow! Bow! Bow down to me! You kings of filth! Queens of Misery! What has brought you

her tonight?

Do you have maggots infested in your brains? Are red backs nesting in your hair, biting you

and sending you delirious?

There will be an uproar, when it is discovered you have traveled here tonight looking like

that!

Performer pauses. Silence. She takes off the bucket. She gets off bench and stands next to the bench.

Always looking down. She touches her wet chest. Slowly places bucket next to the bench. The only

sound heard should be her feet squelching in the water. In stillness she says:

I've had an accident. Pause.

She walks back to have the tea party, regathers her guests.

She takes the tea pot. She and her guests are sitting.

She places it on top of the black box. She reaches into the box to get something. Nothing.

She stands behind the box. She takes off the tea pot lid. Places the tea pot on the ground.

She takes off her underpants. Squats over tea pot. Starts weeing into it. She smiles gently at the tea

party guests as she wees, also smiling across the rest of the audience.

She wees for a long time. Finished. She places lid on tea pot. Puts in on top of the box. She takes

her time to get back into her underpants and adjusts her skirt. Carefully she carries the tea pot back

to her guests. She places it on the ground and sits with them. She pours the wee into the tea cups

delicately as if it were tea. Placing the tea pot down but still holding it. Ready to drink. She looks at

her guests earnestly and speaks to them: I've had an accident.

2

Score for *The Paper Woman*

She changes mode and increases her space. She returns to the place where the objects are kept. She bends over. She puts on a wig carefully. Her persona, changes. She is very happy, smiling, bubbly. She picks up the toaster attached to extension cord. She confidently and happily walks back through audience. Plugs in toaster and places it on the ground in the space near the bench. She returns to places where objects are kept. She picks up plate with bread, peanut butter, radio, knife, and chillies.

She walks matter of factly back to bench. Places objects on bench. Puts bread in toaster. Sits on bench. Switches on radio. Finds a station. Places it on opposite side of bench. Starts to eat chillies. She eats chillies paying attention to each bite. Her gaze is amongst the audience as she eats them. As she chews she focuses on individual audience members. Smiling with them as she eats, often waiting for them to laugh. Always placing the stem of the chilly back on the plate. She changes the radio station throughout the eating. When she has finished. She takes the knife and walks over to the toaster. Standing over it with the knife as if she will stick it into the toaster. Pop the toast will emerge cooked. She takes out the pieces. Walks back to the bench. And uses knife to put peanut butter on them resting the pieces on her thighs. She offers a piece to the audience:

Would anyone like a piece of toast? She invites the person who accepts to sit with her on the bench. She hands them the toast. They sit together to eat. She pushes the toast against her lips at different angles. She does not eat it. Peanut butter is smeared across her face. The toast drops to the ground. She speaks in an urgent alarming voice. Straight out in front of her. She does not catch the gaze of the audience but focuses straight ahead.

I can't chew.

I can't chew.

I forget how to chew.

"Just bring your teeth down"

I am trying. I am trying!

Take a deep breath.

I take a deep breath. I can't breath. I can't breath. I can't sleep. I can't sleep. I can't chew. I can't chew *(She cuts herself off and stops speaking) She drops the toast to the ground. She takes off her shirt. She sits there with a naked torso. Heavily breathing after the sudden violent outburst of the text. She gently wipes off the peanut butter with her shirt. Slowly and in detail. She lets the top gently fall to the ground. She sits still and exposed on the bench. Breathing.*

She turns slowly to the person sitting on the bench with her.

She speaks as if to reveal an important secret about herself, she confides in them:

I've had an accident

She shifts mode. Quickens the person to get off the bench. She slides under the bench. The sound of her body adjusting itself in the water under the bench should be heard. She lies under the bench.

She lifts it with her feet on top of her body. She lies with the bench on top of her as if pinned to the ground by the bench. She pulls the wig away from her head across the ground so it sits next to the head. Her face and hair in the puddle. She pauses as if dead. She speaks from this position:

I've had an accident

She starts to groan an unconvincing pathetic groan (like a child pretending it has been hurt.)

She moves out off the bench. She slides across the space on her belly like a caterpillar. She uses a lot of breath to do this. The sound of her real breath (not acted) and her flesh travelling through the puddles should be heard. She travels in straight lines through the space. She lines her head up with the hole in the plastic. As soon as she touches the plastic she quickens her speed and buries into the plastic. Getting lost inside it.

She emerges head first from the plastic holding it around her like a sheet. To cover her naked torso. She speaks out to the audience. As she speaks she adjusts the plastic. Gathering it in different ways around her body. Playing with its texture. Changing the position of body as she speaks. Into and out

Score for *The Paper Woman*

of the ground. Playing with the perspective and angles she looks up and out at the audience. She speaks this text to the audience. Gazing out at them almost pleading with them, inviting them to play, inviting them towards her as she speaks, genuinely inviting them to do the actions she suggests in the text. The sounds of the plastic being squeezed are heard throughout the text:

**I am a cardboard cut out.
You can squeeze me.
You can push me down.
You can knock me over. You can run over the top of me.
Maybe I'll cough.
But it won't be your fault
Maybe I'll cry.
But the tears won't be real tears. They'll be dust, card board dust.
I am a cardboard queen!**

(From playful to a more serious tone, as if an end point is approaching, punctuated with a beats of silence)

**Get your scissors out.
Scissors ready? Aim.
Cut off my right hand.
Snip! Snip! Snip off my chin.
Put a piece of me in the bin.
Put me away
with your Scissors.**

*She drops to the ground violently. Throws up the black plastic over her body. Lands in a distressed position as if hit by a car. In a moment of stillness she speaks dramatically announcing: **I've had an accident.** She repeats this action four times. Each time finding a dramatic position to land in and speak from her naked torso should be splayed out and dramatically exposed. The rhythm is fast paced.*

After the final position. She changes her state. She breathes. She gathers herself. She gathers the plastic around her torso to protect her nakedness. She stands up and walks matter of factly back through audience as if about to speak. Just before she reaches the other side of the room she addresses the audience with her back to them. As if finishing the previous section of text where she warned them to keep their eyes open constantly, this is like an after thought:

You must also learn to manage the unseen furrows, the sudden clusters of rocks and shallow ruts. So that you do not fall or stumble and hurt yourself.

She places the plastic down. Picks up needle, thread and red dress,

She walks back into the audience. Holding these objects out in front of her. Walking amongst audience as if asking for help but not finding it. She finds an audience member in a central place in the space or guides them into a central place. She offers them her dress so they can dress her. She waits as she is dressed. She threads the needle taking her time. She touches the person's chest with her fingers who has just dressed her. She waits for their consent and then starts to sew herself to them. Chest to chest. She speaks slowly as she sews:

**Inside my mouth splinters glass wool. Slipping out of the corners of my mouth.
I want to kiss you. I am thinking. I am kissing you. Glass scratches your face. Blood trembles then falls. I feel glass crawling up my throat-a gush. I can't control. My lips slip along your cheeks.**

She finishes the sewing. Placing the pin onto their shirt. In stillness looking down she says: I am

Score for *The Paper Woman*

burning an insidious whole through your flesh. I am eating you.
There is a moment of stillness and silence.

Music starts. She starts to dance in the dress connected too the other person. She cannot. She is trapped She starts to slip out of her dress. To the ground. The dress stays attached to the person. She lands kneeling on the ground. She gets up. She walks through the room. Gently turning off lights. And exits the space. She walks outside, past the windows of the space down the street. The audience is left in the dark with the music. As she walks she has a silent determination. She does not take their gaze, she no longer sees them. She has a clear intentionality. She leaves the space with a sense of purpose, a duty to fulfill.
The end

2.3 Manuscript "Printer HPXX11"

HAROLD PINTER

Ashes to ashes
Lecture Nobel price

1.scene

and sit on stage
Beep-people prepare square

: This square is a square.

: It represents nothing.

: We are nobody.

and dance.

Beep-people enter.

: I say to the beep people, it is time to pray. (going down)
It is time to pray and to defend the rights of the beep people and I ask the
beep people to trust their president in the action he is about to take on behalf
of the beep people.
Time? Now.

Beep-people prayer: Before I come back to the present I would like to look
at the recent past. It was conducted throughout the world. It was never-
ending. And it is as if it never happened. It never happened. Nothing ever
happened. Even while it was happening it wasn't happening. It didn't
matter. It was of no interest. But, as I told myself at that time, our
beginnings never know our ends.

Beep people fall

2.scene

Rebecca: Do you mind if I change the subject?

Well...for example...he would stand over me and clench his fist. And then he'd put his other hand on my neck and grip it and bring my head towards him. His fist...grazed my mouth. And he'd say, Kiss my fist.

Devlin: and did you?

Rebecca: oh yes. I kissed his fist. The knuckles. And then he'd open his hand and give me the palm of his hand...to kiss...which I kissed.

Pause

And then I would speak.

Devlin: what did you say? You said what? What did you say?

Pause

Rebecca: I said, put your hand round my throat. I murmured it through his hand, as I was kissing it, but he heard my voice, he heard it through his hand, he felt my voice in his hand, he heard it there.

Silence

Devlin: and did he? Did he put his hand round your throat?

Rebecca: oh yes. He did. He did. And he held it there, very gently, very gently, so gently. He adored me, you see.

Devlin: he adored you?

Pause

What do you mean, he adored you? What do you mean?

Pause

Are you saying he put no pressure on your throat? Is that what you are saying?

Rebecca: no

Devlin: What then? What are you saying?

Reb: he put a little...pressure...on my throat, yes. So that my head started to go back, gently, but truly.

Devlin: and your body? Where did your body go?

Reb: my body went back, slowly but truly.

Devl: so your legs were opening?

Reb: yes

Pause

Devlin: your legs were opening?

Rebecca: yes

Beep-people sit up.

Elvira: Full spectrum dominance means control of land, sea, air and space and all attendant resources.

(others playback)

Rebecca: You don't need to think. Just lie back on the cushion. The cushion may be suffocating your intelligence and your critical faculties but it's very comfortable.

(others playback)

Devlin: do you feel you're being hypnotized?

Beep-people watch each other in the eyes (two by two).

Reb: when?

Devl: now

Reb: no

Devl: really?

Reb: no.

Devl: why not?

Reb: who by?

Devl: by me.

Reb: you?

Devl: what do you think?

Reb: I think you're a fuckpig.

Devl: Me a fuckpig? Me! You must be joking.

Reb: me joking? You must be joking.

Pause

Devl: you understand why I'm asking you these questions. (*beep-people watch HUY*) Don't you? Put yourself in my place. I'm compelled to ask you questions. There are so many things I don't know. I know nothing...about any of this. Nothing. I'm in the dark. I need light. Or do you think my questions are illegitimate?

Pause.

Reb: what questions?

3.scene

Rebecca and Veronika go to microphone, Elvira "dies", F. starts dance

Rebecca:

Where was the dead body found?
Who found the dead body?
Was the dead body dead when found?
How was the dead body found?

Vero: What will I have for breakfast?

Rebekka: Who was the dead body?

Who was the father or daughter or brother
Or uncle or sister or mother or son
Of the dead and abandoned body?

When did I first find my gray hair?
When did I hear the
last time the words I love you

Vero: Why did he never call again?

Rebekka: Was the dead body dead when abandoned? Do you really get gray hair through
Was the body abandoned? emotional stress?
By whom had it been abandoned? How was his telephone number?

Reb/Vero: Was the dead body naked or dressed for a journey?

What made you declare the dead body dead?
Did you declare the dead body dead? How many minutes are 2006 seconds?
How well did you know the dead body? Where was the restaurant with the good sushi?

Reb/Vero: How did you know Reb: the dead body was dead?
Vero: my kisses taste like candy?

Rebekka: Did you wash the dead body

Vero: Are mushrooms still radioactive

Did you close both its eyes
Does the word mushroom have anything to do with "room"?

Did you bury the body

Would you die for anything?

Did you leave it abandoned

Would you die for anybody?

Did you kiss the dead body

Veronika parallel "daily life questions)

4.scene

Filipe and Rebecca dance, Vero and Elvira take pictures of male audience hands until "shape for me..."

Devlin (in Devlins pauses, Filipe dances):

Physically. I mean, what did he actually look like? If you see what I mean? Length, breadth... that sort of thing. Height, width. I mean, quite apart from his...disposition, whatever that may have been...or his character...or his spiritual standing...I just want, well, I need...to have a clearer idea of him well, not a clearer idea...just an idea, in fact....because I have absolutely no idea...as things stand of what he looked like.

I mean, what did he *look like*? Can't you give him a shape for me, a concrete shape? I want a concrete image of him, you see... an image I can carry about with me. I mean, all you can talk of are his hands, one hand over your face, the other on the back of your neck, then the first one on your throat. There must be more to him than hands. What about eyes? Did he have any eyes?

Rebecca and Filipe leave stage

5.scene

Rebecca: did I ever tell you about that place... about the time he took me to that place?

Devlin: What place?

Rebecca: I'm sure I told you.

Devlin: No. You never told me.

Rebecca: How funny. I could swear I had. Told you.

Devlin: You haven't told me anything. You've never spoken about him before. You haven't told me anything.

Pause.

Rebecca: They had total faith in him. They respected his...purity, his...conviction. They would follow him over a cliff and into the sea (*beeps enter*), if he had asked them, he said. And sing in a chorus, as long as he led them. They were in fact very musical, he said.

Choir: God is good. God is great. God is good. My God is good. His God is bad. His is a bad God. His God was bad, except he didn't have one. He was a barbarian. We are not barbarians. We don't chop peoples heads off. We believe in freedom. So does God. I am not a barbarian. I am the democratically elected leader of a freedom loving democracy. We are a compassionate society. We give compassionate electrocution and compassionate lethal injections. We are a great nation. I am not a dictator. He is. I am not a barbarian. He is. And he is. They all are. And don't you forget it.

Elvira: I know that the president has many extremely competent speech writers but I would like to volunteer for the job myself.

Rebecca: I smiled at them. And immediately every single one of them smiled back. (*beeps smile*)

He was a guide. He used to go to the local railway station and walk down the platform and tear all the babies from the arms of their screaming mothers.

Vero: I need to take a shit.

Goes out.

Pause.

*Rebecca: What has happened to our moral sensibility?
Filipe: Did we ever have any?*

Pause

6.scene

Rebecca: By the way, I'm terribly upset.

(beeps start with choreography on the spot)

Devlin: Are you? Why?

Rebecca: Well, it's about that police siren we heard a couple of minutes ago.

Devlin: What police siren?

Rebecca: Didn't you hear it? You must have heard it. Just a couple of minutes ago.

Devlin: What about it?

Rebecca: Well, I'm just terribly upset.

Pause

I'm just incredibly upset.

Pause

Don't you want to know why? Well, I'm going to tell you anyway. If I can't tell you who can I tell? Well, I'll tell you anyway. It just hit me so hard. You see...as the siren faded away in my ears I knew it was becoming louder and louder for somebody else.

Devl: you mean that it's always being heard by somebody, somewhere? Is that what you're saying?

Reb: yes. Always. Forever.

Devl: does that make you feel secure?

Reb: no! it makes me feel insecure! Terribly insecure.

Vero: Why don't you buy a dog than? 2006 is the year of the dog!

Devl: why?

Reb: I hate it fading away. I hate it echoing away. I hate it leaving me. I hate losing it. I hate somebody else possessing it. I want it to be mine, all the time. It's such a beautiful sound. Don't you think?

Devl: don't worry, there'll be always be another one. There's one on its way to you now. Believe me. You'll hear it again soon. Any minute.

Reb: will I?

7.scene

Reb: by the way, there's something I've been dying to tell you:

Filipe: By the way there is something I!!!! Have been dying to tell you – 2006 is the year of the printer .bla bla
Beeps go down

Devlin: I'm letting you off the hook. Have you noticed? I'm letting you slip. Or perhaps it's me who's slipping. It's dangerous. Do you notice? I'm in a quicksand.

Reb: like God.

Beeps: God.

*"praying" position
Huy in the middle*

Devl: God? God? You think God is sinking into a quicksand? That's what I would call a truly disgusting perception. If it can be dignified by the word perception. Be careful how you talk about God. He's the only God we have. If you let him go he won't come back. He won't even look back over his shoulder. And then what will you do? You know what it'll be like, such a vacuum? It'll be like England playing Brazil at Wembley and not a soul in the stadium. Can you imagine? Playing both halves to a totally empty house. The game of the century. Absolute silence. Not a soul watching. Absolute silence. Apart from the referee's whistle and a fair bit of fucking and blinding. If you turn away from god it means that the great and noble game of soccer will fall into permanent oblivion. No score for extra time after

extra time after extra time, no score for time, everlasting, for time without end. Absence. Stalemate. Paralysis. A world without a winner.

Beeps get up

C: self love, it's a winner.

Pause.

Devlin: I hope you get the picture.

Beeps dance and walk

8.scene

Devlin: He suffocated you and strangled you. *(strangle position)*

As near as makes no difference. According to your account. Didn't he?

Rebecca: no, no. he felt compassion for me. He adored me.

Elvira: the leader of the free world

Vero: a man who doesn't give a shit

Rebecca: a man with a rigid sense of duty

Pause

Filipe: there's no contradiction between those last two statements. Believe me.

Rebecca: What authority do you think you yourself possess which would give you the right to discuss such an atrocity?

I have no such authority. Nothing has ever happened to me. Nothing has ever happened to any of my friends. I have never suffered. Nor have my friend.

C: let me tell you something. In war innocent people always suffer.

D: innocent people indeed always suffer.

Devlin: Good.

Beeps get out

Pause

Devlin: do you follow the drift of my argument?

8.scene

Beeps Come in slowly in cluster

Rebecca: Oh yes, there's something I've forgotten to tell you. It was funny. I looked out of the garden window, out of the window into the garden, in the middle of summer, in that house in Dorset, do you remember? Oh no, you weren't there. I don't think anyone else was there. No. I was all by myself. I was alone. I was looking out of the window and I saw a whole crowd of people walking through the woods, on their way to the sea, in the direction of the sea. They seemed to be very cold, they were wearing coats, although it was such a beautiful day. A beautiful, warm, Dorset day. They were carrying bags. There were...guides...ushering them, guiding them along. They walked through the woods and I could see them in the distance walking across the cliff and down to the sea. Then I lost sight of them. *(cue for line)* I was really quite curious so I went upstairs to the highest window in the house and I looked way over the top of the treetops and I could see down to the beach. The guides... *(start going down on knees)* were ushering all these people across the beach. It was such a lovely day. It was so still *(putting hands up)* and the sun was shining. And I saw all these people walk into the sea. The tide covered them slowly. *(going down in wave-position)* Their bags bobbed about in the waves.

Vero:: Why were they killed?

Elvira: They were killed because they believed a better life was possible and should be achieved.

Vero: how many people do you have to kill before you qualify to be described as a mass murderer and a war criminal?

Elvira: One hundred thousand? death in this context is irrelevant. We don't do body counts.

Devlin: What do you mean,

Vero: Tchernobyl! 2006 is the 20th anniversary of tchernobyl!

Devlin: ...what do you mean? What are you talking about?

Rebecca: This mental elephantiasis means that when you spill an ounce of gravy, for example, it immediately expands and becomes a vast sea of gravy. It becomes a sea of gravy which surrounds you on all sides and you suffocate in a voluminous sea of gravy. It's terrible. But is all you own fault. You brought it upon yourself. You are not the *victim* of it, you are the *cause* of it.

Devlin: So what's the question? Are you prepared to drown in your own gravy? Or are you prepared to die for your country? Look. What do you say, sweetheart?

Vero: AND at the very same day it is my brothers 20th birthday. My half-brother!

10.scene

Devlin: Did you see Kim and the kids.

(beeps fall asleep)

You where going to see Kim and the kids today.

She stares at him

Starts walking quickly over beeps

Your sister Kim and the kids.

Rebecca: yes, of course I saw them. I had tea with them. Guess where I went after tea? To the cinema. I saw a film.

Devlin: oh? What?

Rebecca: a comedy.

Devlin: uh-huh? Was it funny? Did you laugh?

Rebecca: other people laughed. Other members of the audience. It was funny.

Devlin: but you didn't laugh?

Rebecca: other people did. It was a comedy. There was a girl... you know...and a man. They were having lunch in a smart New York restaurant. He made her smile.

Devlin: How?

Rebecca: well...he told her jokes.

Devlin: oh, I see.

Rebecca: And then in the next scene he took her on an expedition to the desert, in a caravan. She'd never lived in a desert before, you see. She had to learn how to do it.

Filipe: 2006 is the International Year of desert and desertification!

Devlin: sounds very funny.

Beeps out

Pause

11.scene

Devlin: now look, let's start again. We live here. We don't live...*anywhere else.* (*Filipe enters*) You live here with me. This is our house. (*ELivira enters*) You have a very nice sister. She lives close to you. (*V and R enter*)She has two lovely kids. You're their aunt. You like that.

Pause

You have a wonderful garden. You love your garden. You created it all by yourself. You have truly green fingers. . *(here all beeps have to be at Marianas side)* You also have beautiful fingers.

Pause

Did you hear what I said? I've just paid you a compliment. In fact I've just paid you a number of compliments.

12.scene

(F. crying, E. laughing, V. angry, R. bored sitting beside M.)

Devlin: Let's start again.

Rebecca: I don't think we can start again. We started... a long time ago. We started. We can't start *again*. We can end again.

Devlin: but we've never ended.

Rebecca: Oh, we have. Again and again and again. And we can end again. And again and again. And again.

Devlin: Aren't you misusing the word end? End means end. You can't end again. You can only end once.

Rebecca: No. You can end once, and then you can end again.

(This part is repeated from let's start again at least 3 times).

13.scene

Devlin: I have the right to be very angry indeed. Do you realize that?
I have the right to be very angry indeed. Do you understand that?

Silence

Rebecca: Oh by the way there's something I meant to tell you.

Vero: 2006 is the international year of studying abroad!

Rebecca: She stood still. She kissed her baby. The baby was a girl.

Pause

She kissed her.

Pause.

She listened to the baby's heartbeat. The baby's heart was beating.

The baby was breathing.

Pause

I held her to me. She was breathing. Her heart was beating.

Devlin: Kiss my fist.

Speak. Say it. Say 'Put your hand round my throat.'

Ask me to put my hand round my throat.

(
15.scene

Rebecca: They took us to the trains

Beeps start getting in prayer position

Choir: the trains

Rebecca: They were taking the babies away

Choir: the babies away

Rebecca: I took my baby and wrapped it in my shawl

Choir: my shawl

Rebecca: And I made it into a bundle

Choir: a bundle

Rebecca: And I held it under my left arm

Choir: my left arm

Rebecca: And I went through with my baby

Choir: my baby

Pause

Rebecca: But the baby cried out

Choir: cried out

Rebecca: And the man called me back

Choir: called me back

Rebecca: And he said what do you have there

Choir: have there

Rebecca: He stretched out his hand for the bundle

Choir: for the bundle

Rebecca: And I gave him the bundle

Choir: the bundle

Rebecca: And that's the last time I held the bundle

Choir: the bundle

Silence

Rebecca: And we got on the train

Choir: the train

Rebecca: And we arrived at this place

Choir: this place

Rebecca: And I met a woman I knew

Choir: I knew

Rebecca: And she said what happened to your baby

Choir: your baby

Rebecca: Where is your baby

Choir: your baby

Rebecca: And I said what baby

Choir: what baby

Rebecca: I don't have a baby

Choir: a baby

Rebecca: I don't know of any baby

Choir: of any baby

Pause

Rebecca: I don't know of any baby

Long silence

APPENDIX 3 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

3.1 Sample interview transcript Nancy

Name of interviewee: Nancy

Data material: DVD 8 and 9, VCA

Date of interview: 23.05.2007

Place: VCA, Melbourne, Australia

Researcher: So, you said your story is autobiographical?

Nancy: Yeah, it's all true. I didn't make anything up (laughing).

R: "I swear to God" (quoting Nancy's script). How did you make the piece?

N: So, how I made it was I wrote a monologue. I started with writing. I first looked at my dance videos. I have them at home. The opening dance is actually Pania's choreography. It was kind of painful to re-watch them. It is the same music, costume, choreography. The little hat was actually the hat I wore when I was eight. It's a remake, but the same design. I made the choreography on the two next dances. Made 4-5 drafts, had really trouble with the middle section. The end section - I really love that song. It's a cover of 'Let's Dance' by David Bowie. When you have such a great song you just have to do a great job, otherwise it is horrific. All the songs are about dancing, so it is kind of furthering the narrative. The middle section caused me a bit of trouble because Lisa, she didn't want it to be standard delivery, she did not want it to be like comedy or standard monolog so. Which was probably a valuable point but, you know, in this project I wanted simple, really simple. See if I could engage the audience for the amount of time. To see if me telling the story was enough.

R: What was Lisa's suggestion?

N: Lisa's suggestion was that the physical language had to be hot in the middle section, where I describe Marie and Gwenn, which I am glad it did, but it was a lot of resistance in me, to do all the poses. I think I will cut a few of them away tonight, at least that was what I was thinking in bed this morning.

Well, it started with the writing and then the dances sort of developed separately and I wanted it to be quite episodic. Lights up that part, dance, lights down, lights up, new part. I wanted to do that structure in a knowing way. And to play with theatrical conventions. I created this thing and wanted it to be quite deliberately theatrical.

R: How did you reconstruct what happened from when you were eight or something?

N: I re-watched the videos and looked at what the kids do when they go onstage. They're moving, not aware their bodies. I copied their postures, and also being real happy at stage, look at their feet. I went back through my dairies, when I was little and I wrote down everything that referred to dancing in any way, it started at ten. Started out - I want to be a dancer, dreaming, then as I got older it started to be more like: I can't be a dancer, I am too fat, and it really turned. It was not about dancing anymore, but about everything else. But I did not want it to be all didactic - get on my high horse, you know; love your body and all that. I get uncomfortable when female performers do that. I wanted to present my story, and to be really honest and say what happened. So many girls have come to me and said: that just happened to me in my childhood or in my dancing career. And I knew that in this particular context people would react like that. It is a common experience. So many girls and actors have come up to me and said thank you. I've got lots

of positive feedback: thanks for being honest. That's what I wanted to do.
That's me, just saying it.

R: How was it to make a solo work?

N: Making a solo piece is daunting because you can do everything you want. If you're told to do a fairytale at least you have somewhere to start. You can do anything – it's challenging. The task was to make a solo piece. It could be about anything. It would have been easier if we had some kind of framework, because at least we would have had some kind of starting point.

R: How did you get the idea?

N: So, I thought about what I like to see when I go to see shows and my show hopefully has got a lot of those in it, you know, storytelling, dance and comedy, physical theatre, monologue, a sort of pathos as well, it is funny or I hope it is funny, and it is quite sad as well. People have said "oh I laughed and I cried". I think that if I've made my audience laugh they are more willing to go to a darker place. If they laugh, you've got them, and they go if you want to go. It is kind of that bitter-sweet melancholy, cause it's me and you can see where I started and what happened. I wanted it to go like that (drawing an upside down trajectory). So when I say "I am still dancing", it is a triumph. It's a kind of happy thing so that people leave with a happy face. I really like theatre that is about small human stuff. My friend put it really well. He said not everyone has been raped or experienced war. A lot of people have and if you go to see theatre about that you can get an insight into that experience. But you know everybody has paid a phone bill or waited in line at the bank, so why not put that on stage? I want it to be casual. Want to make a performance about small things of life.

R: What kind of feedback did you get?

N: Lisa has given some feedback and also Richard. Richard came to see a Tec round last Thursday. It's been a little bit of discussion amongst ourselves. And I've spoken to friends outside VCA. No one read the manuscript. It has been hard, like one day it's been-yeah, and the next day oh my God, what am I doing? From disaster to happy.

R: You wanted to make something funny?

N: Yes, I did want to make something funny cause people laugh at my anyway, so I could make something funny anyway. I wrote this piece earlier and I thought it was really sad and then people came out like "that was hilarious".

R: Why is it like that you think?

N: I don't know. No one else have made a comedy so it has been a certain kind of resistance that I felt bad about. There has been moments too where I felt: that didn't land very well..

R: It was really funny when you said "Well that worked the other night".

N: Yes, I wanted it to be quite casual. If something fucks up I don't really care. The lights came on too early and I just said "just imagine it's black". The audience love that stuff cause they get so see in behind.

R: It is a contrast between those ballet dancers who act like they are having a string through their bodies, and your body, which is very relaxed, calm.

N: Yes, cause I've moved on to contemporary dance and it's all about release. Being soft through your body. When I started undergraduate dance I had to

re-learn all these bad habits that I'd been taught, that I'd learnt at the ballet. I look back at my early dance training and oh my God it was so dangerous in a way, cause we were not taught how to take care of our bodies at all. And sort of no connection or listening to what your body was telling you. I was like dirge when that solitude sank in and I started to ... oh I really get it now.

R: How was it to look back?

N: It's been strange going back doing all these routines. Number one: I'm not fourteen anymore (puffs heavily) this is really tiring... so getting that kind of fitness back up in the rehearsal process has been quite hard.

So, yeah, I also like when it looks a bit shit, it looks a bit dodgy, both the dance and the set and the costume. I wanted to have a big cardboard flat as well, but I ran out of time. I wanted the audience to enter a world, to go back to my memory and my world and what it meant to me at that time.

R: Has it been hard?

N: Yes, it made me a bit upset to go back to it, remember the feelings, what happened. Remember how that feels. In a way it has been really cleansing or cathartic, cause you get to examine those feelings and work out how you're feeling now about that. Cause dancers are really notoriously... they all hate their bodies, or they have these tortured relationships with their bodies because of what dance is and the expectations...

R: Who is this?

N: Dancers in general or the dancers I've met in school. Everybody is having the same demons: You're too big, your legs don't look good or your arms are too big or... And, you know, contemporary dance is great in a way cause

there is not a ballet body, there is not a stereotype or an archetype of how what a contemporary dancer should look like, in the way there is for a ballet dancer. Everybody knows how a ballet dancer should look like. And this was part of what I wanted to say.

R: Are these feminine issues or general issues for men as well?

N: Male dancers aren't that bad, but there are certain attitudes that prevail. Everybody knows that dancers should be thin and pretty and beautiful. But if you are not that, but love dancing, that's hard, and this is what this piece is about in another way.

R: How was it wearing the costume?

N: It's like, you know, getting dressed, seeing everybody in their costumes. I could have worn any kind of costume, but, you know, here I am in this fucking leotard looking like a dickhead. I just don't look down, it's just ughuuu. I look so ridiculous. But if you are willing to take the piss out of yourself, the audiences is like that too. Not taking yourself too seriously, which I don't think I could even do if I tried.

R: Did you know right away what you wanted to do in this production?

N: Yeah,. well, I started with other things. I started to construct the piece in my brain, at the bus, on the tram and in bed before I go to sleep. I start to make it, and how it goes, mentally. I don't write things down; it's not what I want to say. As soon as I put it on paper it's just: no. But I wrote the text down, so I could learn it, but in terms of what I wanted the piece to be about I was thinking all the time. Five weeks work. I'm still not happy with the middle section, but what can you do?

I had the music quite early. I knew the opening dance; it was still in my body. So I just had to re-find it again. Started on the floor by making the dances from when I was ten or twelve. They were longer, but I had to cut them down through the process. Did you feel it was too long?

R: The dances?

N: Yes.

R: No

N: Good. Good to hear that. And Lisa wanted the dances to be shorter. And that's true cause if they are not furthering the joke or telling something, the audience gets it very quickly and loses interest in a while. I was on the floor pretty much from the beginning, looking at the videos, rehearsing the dances, learning the text on the tram and at home. We had a weekly session with viewing in class. I did not want to show that much in class cause it's really hard to get a sense of how it's gonna work without a bigger audience. That's really important with comedy. You need someone to bounce at. Just Lisa sitting there is not ideal. I have done some serious dancing shows earlier. I have performed with Caravan of Love. I wanted to make something funny which had the other side as well. It's a lot of stand ups that do stuff like that. There is a movement now, influenced by Daniel Kitzen from England, he won the Barry Award. I saw his show C-90. It was theatrical, it was comedy, but it was him standing on stage telling these stories. It was really sad, but it was also very funny. It's probably one of the most remarkable things I've ever seen. It's really simple and incredibly beautiful.

R: You like comedies?

N: Yeah. If theatre is made to make people feel something, then why don't you make them happy? If I go on stage trying to do something that wasn't me, they would be able to see straight through me. The audience is really smart. If I did something that wasn't honest, then I would be uncomfortable and they would be uncomfortable, so I've endeavored to be me just as much as I can.

R: And since there is some sad things in this, you said you have gone through catharsis.

N: Yes, sort of.

R: Did you talk to anyone?

N: Throughout my undergrad I was kind of dealing with that part of my history. And as you get older and you get perspective you... When you are fourteen you can't, and you can't see the way out because you are there. And when you get older you look and go 'that was fucked'. Why did I let them do that to me? That was really awful and they were really horrible women. It wasn't just me; it was a lot of girls at my school that still remember what happened.

R: What if Gwen had seen the piece?

N: Yes, I kind of wondered about that, cause they are in Warrnambool and there is a certain amount of safety. I did wonder about changing their names. I did think about the fact that everything is true and how would they feel if they saw it, but I thought 'Fuck it! They deserve it'. Actually I thought about starting the show with: Are there anyone from Pania's here tonight? No? Good!

R: Is it a lot of serious stuff at VCA?

N: Yeah, but at the heart of it is quite serious, in a funny way. Comedy is a better way to present something serious. There are heaps of examples. The Office, Satire, I've always loved satire. And I guess it is a reaction to the tendency here to make really serious work. If all the others made comedy I may have made something else, I don't know. The last six months I have been really interested in stand-up and seen some shows. I wanted to see if I could do it. I made a cabaret before in a troupe of four girls. This is my first solo comedy.

R: You do everything yourself. What does that do to you?

N: It stresses you out. I didn't spend as much time rehearsing as I would like because I had to focus on lights, fetch material.

R: Is it good in any way?

N: It is good because it is yours. But regarding stress and time, I would have liked someone to be there.

R: So that's what you missed?

N: Yes, the production side. Roan and I have helped and supported each other. Practical things alone have been hard and also having no one there reassuring you, having to tell yourself that this is good, not shit, no one to motivate you. I've been quite strict on myself.

R: Anything else?

N: No.

R: So you have had a good process?

N: Yeah, relatively. I met a bump last week. Last week I had a meeting with Lisa. It did not go very well. I kind of got very upset, very doubtful whether this was going to work. She did not think comedy was a valid thing to do. She said to me that in terms of subject matter this was not what I should be doing in postgraduate.

R: Comedy?

N: Everything. I got upset. That night I had the space booked and I stood there thinking: I can't do anything, paralyzed by doubt. That was pretty hard. And so Richard watched a round with Lisa and I was terrified - this is stupid, shit, won't do it. But he was really encouraging, helpful, wonderful in his feedback. And that encouraged me. Lifted me out of it. Helped me to go forward with it. So that's one thing having just one person as a mentor, if she doesn't like it, yeah, then there is no one to offer an alternative.

R: Why did she react like that?

N: Don't know. This is not her thing. She doesn't get what I do and that is quite hard when she is my only lecturer. That was probably the hardest thing in the process. It happened a week ago. It has been increasing. I wanted to have fun performing it. But I did the show on Friday. I got out of the tunnel. And she said she liked it, so...

R: Did you get help from others?

N: Richard helped with practical things: go there, come out from here and so on, directorial things. That helped. Rather than: "I think the physical language

should be more hot". It's just artistic differences. She is quite particular in what she likes. What she likes, makes, goes to see. That's ok. But I want to make a piece that my friends would like. And last night they really loved it so,..YEAHH! That's how magic happens!

3.2 Sample interview transcript Sarah

Name of interviewee: Sarah

Data material: DVD 7 and 8, VCA

Date: 23.05.07

Place: VCA, Melbourne, Australia

Sarah: I love that space.

Researcher: How did you find the space?

S: I didn't want a theatre space, a space that has a kind of ghosting or a feeling of other former performances. I wanted to try to make it a new space. I wanted to create another kind of presence. And the wooden floor, like an old room. And how you've got the outside so present as well and the audience comes through being outside to get there.

R: What matters to you in this performance?

S: A lot of things. I started this process. I wrote down all the things that mattered to me in general in life, the things that upset me, being outside in the street or in the city, and bumping into people, or you feel a tunnel vision when you're through, just the absence of contact and touch in public spaces. Things like that came when I wrote down what mattered to me a lot. Being in such busy places, yet feeling alone or a sense of loneliness when there is people passing by you all the time, and everyone is so enclosed in their own little worlds. That upsets me. I wanted to have quite a strong presence in the space, not having a particular hierarchy between the audience and me in the space. Wanted to try to make something that is joyous in a way, just fun, something that is something they could laugh at, also find something unexpected or excitement, and interesting. I guess something that mattered to a lot was to sharing my perception of the everyday world for an audience.

Also I sent e-mails to friends asking them to give me ideas of intimate interactions in public space.

R: How did you start this process?

S: I sat on the bench outside Melbourne Modern Town Hall for an hour and a half, with a paper bag on my head. It was fascinating. People came to me all the time, laughed and found it funny. They took photographs, and one person sent it to me. People took photographs and they found it really funny. That's kind of a starting point for this piece. Just doing something peculiar in public space which brings people out of the ordinary.

R: It is a kind of an introductory improvisation?

S: Yes.

R: Did you start by writing something or on the floor?

S: I guess I started this last year, writing a lot of stuff. But for this particular piece I did a lot of work on the floor. I decided in this process to really trust the connections between the thinking and the writing and the movements would happen. And it did, I was really surprised. Sometimes on the floor, I was doing an action like (presses her shoulders backwards several times) and then I look back at some of the photographs I had brought in and the movement had grown out of that, had got the essence of that image.

R: What kind of work on the floor did you do? Physical movements?

S: Yeah, physical movement, first two hours random movements. Opened different movements.

R: Writing texts?

S: I had written most of the texts before the process, but I reworked them. We did a workshop with Jenny Kemp, you know, Richard's partner, in generative writing. A lot of the texts came from that. And some of it came from a book by Paul Auster, do you know Paul Auster?

R: Yes, what book?

S: I have written it down somewhere (looking in her book).

R: So, you read his book?

S: No, somebody found the text in a book for about a year ago and I have been interested in it. It was a page and a half and I took three lines out of it.

R: How did you choose the texts, what were you looking for?

S: I guess for the whole piece I was looking for the female character, and I looked for the writing that clearly came from that woman. I could hear and feel that it came from her and chose those texts. I took texts to the floor and found movements that could go with them. If I couldn't find any movement I let them go. A two ways elimination.

R: So you had the movements and the texts and you put them together?

S: Yes, for instance I was playing with a plastic bag on the ground and the movement was not enough, it wasn't going anywhere, but then I had this bit of text lying on the floor and suddenly started to speak the text and heard that yes, these two would work together. And sometimes I had some interesting movements, but I didn't find text that would go with it so I got rid of the

movement. A two ways elimination. It is funny to see how these connections seem to happen themselves in a way.

R: And when you find the connections you know it is the right one?

S: Yes, I guess it must have been something I was looking for but not totally conscious of.

R: Is it just a feeling or intuition?

S: Yes. And I was never certain that that plastic or the text on the ground made the paper woman, when I thought it was a bit melodramatic or pathetic. Was the paper woman on the ground trying to say too much?

R: Is this a story of that paper woman?

S: The whole thing?

R: Yes.

S: Well I think it is different personas, they are not whole people. It's not meant to be a full character. This is a pretty strong image from the start for me in the whole work. (Finds a picture from Hiroshima comparing them with pictures of women with eating disorders). I'm comparing these people's bodies being destroyed by the atomic bomb with people with eating disorders.

It is something with the materiality of the flesh. Flesh can be so easily destroyed. To find these connections is really a kind of basis in my work and I don't quite understand what it is. Someone chooses to destruct themselves, but others are being destructed like in Hiroshima. They are made of the same

material. The flesh is being so perusable, so ... It's not infinite, it is treated in a way as it will last forever and it doesn't, so...

R: How did this influence your work?

S: In my movement, I started to investigate my skin, feel it, smell it, touch it, move ... I'm not sure it came through in the end of the piece, but I guess it came through in my interest in the fragility, or the importance of the unimportant of everyday life, how we observe the body and at the same time try to conceive in one moment. Trying to capture people in moments, laughing or sad or embody them.

R: The chillis?

S: I am not sure of the beginning. I wanted to create a thrill for someone watching me doing that. I am questioning what these entertainment values are.

R: You did the teapot and the chillis in the family task for the first time?

S: Yes, these are intimate acts, actions. It is silly, but I try to do it in a way that is graceful at the same time. I researched what is an intimate action, what is a violent action.

Intimate acts: like weeing: the smell of it; it's warm; no one touches it except your mum when you are little..

I found these photographs (Hiroshima). They are so horrific, but also beautiful in a way. It is the horror and the beauty of things that I find interesting.

The chillis... they are all over the world, we touch them and we cry ... also perhaps the closeness to danger. It hurts when you get it in the eyes, it hurts your body.

R: How did you get the idea for the tea party?

S: A friend had been talking about it; he had seen someone weeing in someone's hands.

R: You said you were nervous before doing the performance. Why?

S: Cause the present side of performing, I like to be very alive, I want to see who the audience are and to see their reaction and my interpretation of their reactions. I want to be alive and present, it takes time for me to warm up and get to that state, a lot of warm up and attention. If I don't have that presence or perform that presence, I get really disappointed. I am nervous I will not have that presence. That they come in to a space that is ordinary, if I am not super ready and super alive, it's not worth it, it's a waste of time.

R: Are you nervous of the reactions from the audience?

S: Yes, always, even if I am doing a set show, dancing, I will be similarly nervous. I really really hate performing in a way; it is really terrifying being in front of an audience, assuming they are judging me, particularly through this work, I have tried to let go of their judgments.

R: When you take off your clothes the reactions from the men in the two performances I have seen ...

S: You missed the reactions from another performance with sixteen year old boys. One of the boys was obviously very hungry and ate all the toasts, desperately. Very funny. I tried to do it (taking her clothes off) in a way that was not offensive, tried to do it in a gentle way. I think if it doesn't bother me, it doesn't bother them.

R: Are the reactions from the audience different from one show to another?

S: Yes, the middle night when you weren't there, it was a lot of laughter, it was chaos and out of control. My attention changes, it changes in a huge way.

R: You wanted to make something funny. What else did you want to pass on?

S: The strangeness I guess. Something seemingly normal, quite obviously and every day, but, something is a bit odd. A woman sitting without her top on next to a man, eating toast ... it is quite a strange image.
Maybe I would like a sense of sadness as well.

R: What kind of state do you think the audience is in while you are leaving?

S: In the space there is these objects, it has just happened, an intimate action (sewing), and the music ... guess the feeling might be that the beautiful and the empty space ... I do not know how they feel. Do you have any sense of what they felt like?

R: Mmm. They did not know what to do when you left the space and didn't come back. Suddenly a man started to clap and everybody joined him, clapping excitedly, cheering and whistling, hoping for you to return.

S: To leave and then come back makes me feel really awful. I hate applause. I don't like that sense of ... the audience has brought something and expect something and you give it to them and they have to thank you.

R: Did anyone get frustrated or upset?

S: No, not yet. It is a particular audience here. It would be interesting to do it for another audience. People want to perform as well, sometimes audience members want to interact and drink the wee.

I wouldn't mind playing it for my parents. I find it easier to perform when they are not there.

S: That is something I have learnt more and more: to trust to get lost in all that and learn that it's ok. Earlier I thought it was terrible getting lost - what was going to happen? You get used to the lostness and trust that it will come together. But there is always this fear it might not come together, it might not come together.

R: How many solo works have you done?

S: Three main ones, but in collaborative projects I have learnt to trust that it will come together. People get mad and nervous. And I can't stand it. I can't work like that. I have to get rid of that fear and madness because it's not productive.

R: What is the difference between making a collaborative work and a solo work?

S: In the solo work I can be in my head a lot more. I can keep going on and on and on and on and work the connections out through my intuition or through my head. In a collaborative work you will always have to fight for things more, be on the floor and show more. There's a lot of differences, but I find that's the main one. I like doing everything myself. I make a lot of connections through intuitions and I am more likely to trust that when I am by myself than with a group. A solo offers the time I need to make the connections. But

when I've been playing around in the room by myself for a couple of hours and I sit down and wonder: what was that all about?

R: When do you feel satisfied during your work?

S: When I am persisting on things, even though they didn't work, I peruse them and see if they can work.

R: How do you know they don't work?

S: It's just a feeling. A feeling that it's... I don't know really. I've got an idea in my head of what I want to and it doesn't fit. Is that what your thesis is about? Those sorts of questions?

R: I'm interested in that. Trying to find words for what's going on.

S: When you are absolute sure you've got nerve battles against material. Like when text meets other material and you have no more questions, they seem to be right. Those words keep coming up. It seems right. Your intuition says it seems right.

R: Can it be that this happens because you have been in this place before, a recognition of something you are familiar with? Because we have certain experiences. But often this kind of connection can work for the audience as well.

When I look at your play it reminds me of children playing; a series of actions which is interesting to investigate as long as the form is interesting.

S: Yes!

DVD 8:

R: Did you have any viewers to look at your work during the process?

S: No. I always plan to, but I get too scared. We had two sessions in class and that was interesting. But that was mainly trying to sort out what kind of presence I would like to have and how it worked with an audience.

R: Did Leisa come to see?

S: She was at those sessions. And she came for a one hour session the day before.

R: How did she respond?

S: It was quite difficult because there was no audience, so I sort of mapped her through it. She was really supportive. She helped me see the audience there. It was quite a quick session. Talking of how the audience would travel through the space and how we could use the outside a little bit. In earlier collaborative processes, a lot of people are asking questions, and in the past I have given up ideas, things that are important to me, because I couldn't justify why I wanted that action in space. But working by myself I've had the time to figure out what these things were and keep them in the work, which was a lot better for me.

R: Do you prefer to work on your own?

S: Yes, sort of.

...

S: It was good to have the response to the work (in sessions)

R: The response was good?

S: Yes, they seemed to understand what I was trying to do.

R: And what were you trying to do?

S: In what I was showing them, I had series of actions which didn't necessarily make sense. I was happy with the fact that they didn't nail the actor to understand that, and I was trying to offer something that had no character, but events popping up. And they stayed engaged, so that's good.

R: Why is it important to you that the events don't connect?

S: Cause I find narratives really boring, not really, not always. For me doing narratives, I'm just not interested in why the person got there. More interested in being, in that 'having it happening, having it happening, having it happening'. I feel it's so much to do that I don't have the time to explain, to pretend I'm interested in how they've got there. In my head I know, but...

R: And what does it do when you don't explain and make a series of actions instead?

S: I hope that it gets the imagination working, so that they ... perhaps cause they're not connected to... the trick is to let them imagine for themselves, make the connections themselves instead of explaining too much.

R: What did you like about the Idiots?

S: I have some caviar in the fridge, wanting to use it. Have you seen when they eat caviar in the film? Splashing it in their face and bodies and at each other. Those sort of events, just ... treating everyday social conventions and rules and just discarding them. It's such a terrible thing to do, pretending you are mad. It is so terrible yet I think it's great to challenge how societies decide

to live and decide to do things. It's provoking questions on what is right and what is wrong. That's what I like about it.

R: Would you say that your work is political in a way?

S: I like to think it is. I ask questions on how things are done and why.

R: When you pull the water over you, it reminds of a mad person.

S: Yeah, when I'm in public places I sometimes do things, like the other day me and some friends just lay down on the pavement for quite a long time, that's just a simple thing. There are so many rules about how you should behave in those spaces.

R: Have you experienced people getting angry?

S: No, people can ask if we're ok. That feels awful, when we are just playing and people get worried

R: Cause that's not your intention? Your intention is to ...

S: Just playing with it, in a funny sort of way, instead of aggression. I really hate political performances that tell you how you should do things

R: What work do you admire?

S: Neil Thomas. I did a major work with him.

R: How did you structure your day?

S: I make a structure each day, write it down, but I never follow it. Generally I stay in the space. I've got it for three hours. But cause I was playing all the time, just having fun..

R: You were having fun?

S: Yes, I tried to always be having fun. If not, I tried to change my material and try something else. I guess I tried to keep open all the possible ways I could get into it. And if something wasn't fun I could go to another place and then come back.

R: Did you laugh?

S: Yes, that was my intention all the time: to make myself laugh. It must have looked ... when I was playing with that bench on top of me, I started laughing. It's a bit funny.

R: The images when you lie on the floor in 'dead' posture and say: 'I had an accident', it reminds of a crime scene.

S: I guess that what's happening when you start with all that material and make connections in the work. It takes funny ways.

3.3 Sample interview transcript Tim

Name of interviewee: Tim

Data material: DVD 5 and 6 NTA

Date of interview: 13.02.2006

Place: NTA, Fredrikstad, Norway

R: What are your expectations for this production?

T: I always think these projects are exciting. I have high expectations for this group, earlier I'd had bad experiences with big groups. But we have many coinciding references; we are going in the same direction.

R: Why are you going in the same direction?

T: Earlier we have worked in different directions, but now we have Pinter, who all of us have a relationship to. The fascination of him has become something we have in common.

R: What is this fascination?

T: The way he is political, without being stereotypically political. He has solved it. You are not afraid to dramatize Pinter, because of the way he depicts the political. It is something underlying, not so direct. He has some of the same effects as Fosse and Becket. The dialogue is very well written and composed. It is possible to tug it a bit.

R: Are you making political theatre now?

T: I hope we can find a way to do it. It is important to have something to say. Theatre must compete with other media. One cannot give up the theatre, for there is so much to say.

R: How do you relate to war and the theme 'feeling of 2006'?

T: I grew up with war without actually experiencing it. My parents were refugees, but I grew up in a peaceful and quiet country. I have heard all the stories of escaping the war and so on. I alternate between believing that it concerns me and not caring at all. We have actually a choice in this country: we can pretend war and suffering does not exist and read celebrity news instead.

Original Norwegian transcript sample, first interview Tim

R: Hvilke forventninger har du til denne produksjonen?

T: Jeg synes alltid det er spennende med slike prosjekt. Nå har jeg stor tro på denne gruppa, tidligere har jeg hatt dårlige opplevelser med store grupper. Men vi har mye av de samme tingene å hente fra, vi går i samme retning.

R: Hvorfor går dere i samme retning?

T: Vi har tidligere gått i veldig forskjellig retning, men nå har vi Pinter, som vi alle har fått et forhold til. Og fascinasjonen for ham har blitt noe felles.

R: Hva er den fascinasjonskraften?

T: Måten han er politisk på, uten å være klisjepolitisk. Men han har løst dette, en blir ikke redd for å gjøre Pinter, på grunn av den måten han fremstiller det politiske. Det ligger under, ikke så direkte. Han har litt samme virkning som

Fosse og Becket. Dialogene er veldig godt skrevet og sammensatt. Det går an å røske litt tak i det.

R: Lager dere politisk teater nå?

T: Jeg håper at vi finner en måte å gjøre det. Det er viktig å ha noe å si, teateret må konkurrere med andre medier. En kan ikke gi opp teateret, for det er så mye å si.

R: Hvordan er ditt forhold til krig, og tematikken i "feeling of 2006"?

T: Jeg har jo vokst opp med krig uten å egentlig ha gjort det, foreldrene mine var flyktninger, men selv har jeg vokst opp i et fredelig og rolig land. Har alltid hørt historiene om det å flykte, krig og lignende. Jeg skifter mellom å tro at det angår meg veldig, og at jeg ikke bryr meg i det hele tatt. Vi har faktisk et valg her i landet; vi kan late som at krig og elendighet ikke finnes, og sitte å lese kjendisnytt i stedet.

3.4 Sample interview transcript Andrea

3.4.1 First interview Andrea

Name of interviewee: Andrea

Data material: DVD 4 NTA

Date of interview: 10.02.2006

Place: NTA, Fredrikstad, Norway

R: How did you get the idea to use Pinter?

A: I was very moved! Not so much.. well of course by his words, but, in fact, this man: he looked at the camera, his experience, he looked at the camera and he didn't blink. We see all the misery on TV, the killing, death, war, suffering, and we can't handle it, but Pinter presented the conflicts it in a very clear way. This really touched me. In a clear way. This speech made me curious about his work, although I had seen a few of his plays before, I was more interested in them now. The speech put it all into perspective. I gained a new understanding for what he had done. I watched the speech on television, and it was inspiring, especially the last poem, because it had so many questions concerning the media: "Did you see the dead body? Was the dead body naked? Was it dressed for a journey?" We see dead people all the time, but we don't really see them.

R: It seems like you and the group is fascinated by speeches: George Bush's speeches, Pinter's speech?

A: Yes, because they have an incredible power, and the way they hook people with their theatricality. Bush might not be so smart, but he has a tremendous impact on people.

R: Why is this interesting for you?

A: Because people need a guide, someone who can show them how to get involved, to stop being impartial, to choose sides. It's not a good attitude not to care. People need a pioneer who drives them. Like Pinter. He is over 80 and is still engaged. It is important to be able to admire someone like him.

How can I influence the world around me, to make it better for just a few?

...

A: In the beginning I wanted to make the piece very buffoon-like, but then I forgot about that and it became very Pinter-like.

R: So now you combine the buffoon-like with Pinter?

A: Yes, the contrasts become very buffoon-like. It is such a big contrast that it is difficult not to think of buffoonery; it is like putting the beautiful parts of the drama together with the strong opinions from the speech.

R: Yes.

A: As Shakespeare says: "Beautiful is horrible and horrible is beautiful". If you try to show these two images and combine them it will make an impact. We want a combination of the beautiful dialogue in his play and then the brutality in his speech, his clarity. We are combining two different worlds, created by the same author. And they comment on each other when we put them together. In "Ashes to Ashes", this woman is living in internal fear and guilt. At the end of the play you realize that she is drowning in her own guilt, her own fear. What Pinter says in his speech, is: "don't fall asleep, wake up. You can always do something". You know, it's a kind of human dignity. It's not easy, but you should try to be truthful, not only to yourself, but to others as well.

R: Mmm..

A: In this way, the audience must think about what is being said and done on stage, like: was it funny? Was it a joke? Are we supposed to laugh now?

R: So, combining "Ashes to Ashes" and the speech is like combining two different worlds?

A: Yes, because in the drama, Pinter lets Rebecca drown in her own guilt, whereas in the speech he says that people must wake up and start realizing what is going on in this world.

R: How did you start to combine the speech and the drama? What were you looking for?

A: We had picked the parts from the drama that we wanted to include, so I thought about how to use the piece as a reference. And when I started to read the parts from the drama we had chosen, I thought that here and here we could break it up and add parts from the speech. We wanted to make an intersection of it, so we found scenes that could break it up and make a new world that combined the two; a new tapestry of life! I've read it, I've selected it, so the words are in the back of my head. That is what decides what is good together. It is instinct. After discussions in the group, I know what fits.

R: I see.

A: It seems like Pinter, during the writing process, stops and asks himself whether the characters are trustworthy. They are tested. He also asks simple questions in his dramas.

R: So you do something similar to Pinter when you combine the drama and the speech? You question the characters by using the speech?

A: Yes, and the juxtaposition, that there are two different worlds, a woman's world and a man's world, they can be completely asexual, it is people who meet. And so it is with the speech, the world he's talking about there. The man who does not care in the speech is actually Bush! When Rebecca is talking about her former lover, who was her master of the free world, it can almost be compared to Bush who is the master of the free world, where happiness exists apparently.

R: So you have the big picture in the little picture?

A: Yes, with bridges between. It is the big picture in the little picture, with bridges between.

R: So this is what you are looking for when you select the pieces in the texts?

A: Yes, and the musicality in it, like when you read Bush's speech, "God is good, God is good", and if you repeat it, it gets its own sound and rhythm. When Bush says "our God is good, their God is bad" it is not as serious as when Pinter says it, with the seriousness he had in his speech.

R: What do you think when you listen to a speech from Bush?

A: Before I used to think he was an idiot, but the war started when I was there. And I said: how can you let this guy rule the world? They didn't have any conscience of what was going on. The information is so different there. I went to demonstrations with thousands of people. But what for? Nothing really happened. This is a man who doesn't give a shit! He doesn't listen to

his own people. Why should he listen to the rest of the world? So it makes me feel angry when I see his speech. But I never ever underestimate him anymore. I really think: watch out! The speech has enormous power. I have seen it.

Original Norwegian transcript sample, first interview Andrea

R: Hvordan fikk dere ideen til å bruke Pinter?

A: Jeg ble veldig rørt, beveget av talen hans da han fikk Nobelprisen! Ikke så mye... selvfølgelig av ordene hans, men denne mannen, han så rett i kamera, hans erfaring, han så inn i kamera og blinket ikke. Vi ser all elendigheten på TV, drap, død, krig, lidelse, og vi kan ikke håndtere det, men Pinter presenterte det på en klar måte, konfliktene. Denne talen fikk meg til å bli nysgjerrig på arbeidet hans, selv om jeg hadde sett noe av ham fra før, ble det mer interessant nå. Talen satte det litt mer i perspektiv, jeg fikk mer forståelse for hva han hadde gjort.

Jeg så talen på tv, og det var veldig triggende, spesielt det siste diktet, for det hadde så mange spørsmål som angikk mediaverden, "did you see the dead body?, was the dead body naked? was it dressed for a journey?". Vi ser hele tiden døde mennesker i media, og ser dem egentlig ikke.

R: Det virker som du og gruppa er fascinert av taler: George Bush sine taler, Pinter's tale?

A: Ja, for de har en utrolig makt, og måten de fanger folk med sin teatraliskhet i talen, Bush er kanskje ikke så smart, men han har en enorm påvirkning på folk.

R: Hvorfor er dette interessant for deg?

A: Folk trenger en "guide", noen som kan vise en annen vei til hvordan en kan bli engasjert, slutte å være upartisk, velge side. Det er ingen god holdning å ikke bry seg, folk trenger en foregangsmann som driver en. Som Pinter, han er over 80, og er fortsatt engasjert. Det er viktig å kunne beundre noen på denne måten.

Hvordan kan jeg selv påvirke verden rundt meg, til å gjøre den bedre for bare noen få?

...

A: Først hadde jeg tenkt å gjøre det veldig gjøgler -aktig, men så glemte jeg det og ble veldig 'pintersk'.

R: Så nå kombinerer du denne gjøgler -aktigheten med Pinter?

A: Ja, kontrastene blir veldig gjøgler -aktig. Det er så sterke kontraster, at det blir vanskelig å ikke tenke gjøgler , som å sette sammen vakre deler av skuespillet med de sterke meningene fra talen.

R: Ja..

A: Som Shakespeare sier; "Skjønnheten er grusom og grusomheten er skjønn". Hvis du prøver å vise disse to bildene og kombinere dem, vil det gjøre et inntrykk. Vi ønsker en kombinasjon av den vakre dialogen i stykket hans, og så brutaliteten i talen, hans klarhet .Vi blander to forskjellige verdener, skapt av samme forfatter. Og de kommenterer hverandre når vi setter dem sammen. I "Ashes to Ashes", møter vi denne kvinnen som lever i indre frykt og skyld. På slutten av stykket innser du at hun holder på å drukne i sin egen skyld, hennes egen frykt. Det Pinter sier i sin tale, er: "Du må ikke sovne. Du kan alltid gjøre noe.". Du vet, det er en slags menneskelig verdighet. Det er ikke lett, men du må prøve å være sannferdig, ikke bare mot deg selv, men mot andre også.

R: Mmm..

A: På denne måten må publikum selv tenke over hva det er som blir sagt og gjort på scenen, som å tenke på om det var morsomt, om det var en spøk, er det meningen at vi skal le nå?

R: Så det å sette sammen "Ashes to Ashes" og talen, blir som å sette sammen to forskjellige verdener?

A: Ja, for i stykket lar Pinter Rebecca drukne i skyldfølelse, mens i talen sier han at folk må våkne opp, og skjønne hva det er som foregår i denne verden.

R: Hvordan startet dere da dere begynte å sette sammen stykket og talen? Hva var det dere så etter?

A: Vi hadde tatt ut av stykket de delene vi ikke ville ha med, så tenkte jeg på hvordan kan jeg bruke stykket som referanse. Og da jeg begynte å lese de delene av stykket som vi hadde valgt, tenkte jeg at her, og her, kan det brytes, og settes inn fra talen. Vi ønsket å lage en krysning mellom de to. Så vi fant scener som kan bryte. En ny verden som kombinerer disse to; Et nytt billedvev av liv! Jeg har lest det, jeg har valgt det slik at ordene er i bakhodet mitt. Det er det som bestemmer hva som er bra sammen. Det er instinkt. Etter alle diskusjonene i gruppa vet jeg hva som passer.

R: Sånn ja.

A: Det virker som at Pinter under skriveprosessen stopper opp og spør seg selv om karakterene er troverdige, de blir satt på prøve. Og om de gjør seg forstått.

Han stiller også enkle spørsmål gjennom stykkene sine.

R: Så du gjør noe lignende som Pinter, når du kombinerer stykket og talen?
Du setter spørsmål ved karakterene med å bruke talen?

A: Ja, og sidestillingen av at det er to forskjellige verdener, en kvinneverden og en mannsverden, de kan være helt aseksuelle, det er mennesker som møtes. Og det samme blir det med talen, den verdenen han snakker om der. Mannen som ikke bryr seg i talen, er jo Bush! Når Rebecka snakker om hennes tidligere elsker, som var hennes herre over den frie verden, så kan det nesten sammenlignes med Bush som er herre over den frie verden, det er tilsynelatende lykke tilstede

R: Så du har det "store bildet" i "det lille bildet"?

A: Ja, med broer mellom. Det er det store bildet i det lille bildet. Med broer mellom.

R: Så det er dette du ser etter, når du plukker ut deler?

A: Ja, og musikaliteten i det, som når du leser talen til Bush, "God is good, God is good", og hvis du repeterer det så blir det en egen klang og rytme. Når Bush sier «vår gud er god, deres gud er slem», blir det ikke like seriøst som når Pinter sier det, med alvoret han hadde i talen.

R: Hva tenker du når du hører en tale av Bush?

A: Tidligere tenkte jeg at denne mannen er jo en idiot, men krigen startet da jeg var i USA. Og jeg sa; hvordan kan dere la denne mannen styre verden? De hadde ingen bevissthet med hva som foregikk. Informasjonen er så forskjellig der. Jeg gikk i demonstrasjonstog sammen med tusener av mennesker. Men for hva da? Ingenting skjedde egentlig. Dette er en mann som gir totalt faen!

Han hører ikke på sitt eget folk... Hvorfor skulle han høre på resten av verden? Så jeg blir sint når jeg hører talen hans. Men jeg undervurderer han ikke mer. Jeg tenker virkelig; se opp! Talen har enorm kraft. Jeg har sett det.

3.4.2 Second interview Andrea

Name of interviewee: Andrea

Data material: DVD 14 NTA

Date of interview: 20.02.2006

Place: NTA, Fredrikstad, Norway

R: What is happening?

A: Midlife crisis! I don't know. I think we realize that the script that we wrote does not fit any kind of universe that we can realize. The film set does not fit. What fits is the script, the junction.

R: You have tried to make a film set to conceptualize the performance, but it didn't work very well?

A: No, because it isn't possible to realize it with the Beep People.

R: Why did this happen?

A: Don't know. Too many heads in the project maybe. We don't get to any resolutions, and when someone tells us that we need a universe, we just say: Yes, we need a universe! Maybe it would have been better if one of us saw it from the outside and wasn't involved in the process, a kind of guide.

R: Like an instructor?

R: Not quite like an instructor, but one who can see it from the outside and yet also play one of the Beep People, who could have told us what worked and what didn't work.

R: How does it feel now?

A: After working all day, we had a run through with a scenographer on Saturday, and we didn't get the response we wanted, it felt almost as collective drowning, desperation, we did not know what to do.

R: How has the last days been for you?

A: Difficult. All of us have worked so hard lately, we are almost overloaded with work. Maybe when we made the script, we should have found a theatrical way to stage it. Maybe that would have helped. Cause we made the script and jumped on the floor. And then from the floor it was very difficult to get out again. Maybe then we could have fulfilled the stage ideas we had.

3.5 Sample interview transcript Karen

3.5.1 First interview Karen

Name of interviewee: Karen

Data material: DVD 1 NTA

Date of interview: 08.02.2006

Place: NTA, Fredrikstad, Norway

K: People die every day in war, and there are children who have no arms and legs, for example, and all of these things are important to reflect upon. Even though we may not want to relate to it, or we don't want to know.

R: Are these things important to you in your daily life?

K: Yes, absolutely.

R: These are things that you think about?

K: Yes, absolutely. And that is why I think it is so fantastic to work in this group which has become, in a way, a way to talk about things that matter to us. And, of course, it is naive to say it, but none of us have experienced war, none of us have experienced those things, and there are many things you can do instead of making a performance, in a way. But at the same time I think that one ... I do not think we can lose faith in its value.

R: Is this project different, compared to other projects?

K: Yes, I would say so, because it has become ... we have talked about this project for a couple of weeks, but since we started, and really started to work on it, yesterday, it became a matter close to our hearts.

R: It seems so when you are discussing it.

K: That is why we can't sleep at night, for example. It is important to me that we make a good show, but it's important to me that it will be good because it is such an important issue, not because I might make a fool out of myself. Because it is something that is important, it has suddenly become important to do a performance about it.

R: Do you usually sleep well at night when you are making productions?

K: Usually I sleep very well.

...

K: I'm tired of being impersonal, not caring. I don't think it is a good attitude to have. Even though we live in the Western world, full of goodies, I think that people need to have someone, speech or person or living being, that drives them. Like Pinter, a good man, can do. It is important nowadays .

Original Norwegian transcript sample, first interview Karen

K: Folk dør hver dag, i krig, og det er unger som er fri for armer og føtter, for eksempel, alle disse tingene tror jeg det er viktig å oppdatere seg på. Selv om, selv om, selv om man gjerne, man vil ikke vite om det .

R: Er dette ting du er opptatt av i ditt liv, til daglig?

K: Ja, absolutt!

R: Det er ting du går og tenker på?

K: Ja, absolutt! Og det er derfor jeg synes det er fantastisk å få jobbe med den gruppa som vi har blitt, på en måte, der man sitter og snakker om ting som er viktig for oss. Og som selvfølgelig, det blir naivt å si det, men ingen av oss har opplevd krig, ingen av oss har opplevd disse tingene, og det er mange ting man kan gjøre istedenfor å gjøre en forestilling utav det, på en måte. Men samtidig så tror jeg at man.., jeg tror ikke man kan miste troen på at det har en verdi for det.

R: Dette prosjektet er annerledes da i så måte, i forhold til tidligere prosjekt?

K: Ja, altså jeg vil si det, fordi at dette har plutselig blitt...vi har snakket om dette prosjektet i noen uker, men etter at vi begynte, og virkelig har jobbet med det, i går, liksom, så har det blitt en sånn hjertesak.

R: Det virker sånn når dere møtes og snakker om det.

K: Og det er det som, det er det som gjør at man ikke får sove om natta, for eksempel. Det er viktig for meg at det blir en bra forestilling, men det er viktig for meg at det blir en bra forestilling fordi at det er et viktig tema, ikke fordi at jeg kan komme til å dumme meg ut. Men fordi at det er noe som er viktig, som plutselig har blitt så viktig å gjøre en forestilling om.

R: Sover ellers når dere har produksjoner og sånt?

K: Stort sett så sover jeg veldig godt.

...

K: Jeg er lei av å være upersonlig, ikke bry seg, tror jeg ikke det er en god holdning å ha. Selv om vi lever i den vestlige verden .. full av godbiter. Jeg tror at folk trenger å ha noen ... tale, eller person, eller levende vesen som

driver deg gjennom. Som Pinter, en god mann, kan gjøre. Det er viktig nå til dags.

3.5.2 Third interview Karen

Name of interviewee: Karen

Data material: DVD 13 NTA

Date of interview: 23.02.2006

Place: NTA, Fredrikstad, Norway

R: How was it to play?

K: It was great having the audience there. Many of the things I hoped would work actually did.

R: For example?

K: All the comments and the logic. When we worked with it for so many weeks it seemed so logical. But then when people are watching it only once, will it still be logical to them? So, yes it was great fun performing it and many people liked it. It was great fun.

R: Fine.

K: It is exciting to see the role of the audience in this. We do not pretend anything, or of course we do that too, but I think it is exciting to play with the audience. Who is the audience in all this? Do they realize that they are Beep People? And is that what they are?

R: Where you surprised by anything?

K: I did not expect there to be so much humor in the performance. It is a humoristic performance, there was much laughter.

R: What are you most satisfied with in this production?

K: There are different levels, but I am very satisfied with the group; it has turned out to work in a great way that was not obvious, and to work with a project that is so important to you is a good thing. This is a project I feel such great passion for. Some of our previous projects were done because we were told to do them, because you go to this school. This project is different. I like the combination of serious moments that I am allowed to enter into, and at the same time I know that there is someone there who will get me out of it. It has been great to play with that in this process

R: The Devlin and Rebecca story, what is it about?

K: It is about needing each other, needing other people. One needs to be understood. And it does not apply to these two characters only; it is about me and us. Interpersonal problems are world problems.

R: Can you elaborate on that?

K: What happens to me, to my body is more important to me than what happens elsewhere in the world, war for example. Yesterday I had a toothache and had to pull a tooth. Then, I thought that this was more important to me than people dying of hunger in the world. This contrast between the serious happenings in the world, like hunger, war, suffering, and the little things that happen to oneself is what makes the humor in the performance.

R: What does this performance tell?

K: I think this performance says a lot about how I feel in relation to the United States, for example, how can we influence those who decide that a war should start?

R: Mmm

K: It is strange to talk about this now after performing. I remember the first time I sat in this chair and you interviewed me, when we had just started and had all the ideas. I feel completely empty now. It is an incredibly good feeling, such an incredibly good feeling, because we have done something that is so important for all of us to do.

R: Who are you playing in this performance?

K: I am me, who has a function in this performance more than me as a character. But I do not feel private, so I play the role, but I do not play a character. I have a function. In some scenes I am a voice, in some scenes I am a moving image. I have a function.

R: On a scale from 1-10, how satisfied are you with this performance?

K: Right now I would say 10, I am very satisfied with the process. It is something we are proud of, it is our, more than anything we have made earlier.

Original Norwegian transcript sample, third interview Karen

R: Hvordan var det å spille?

K: Det var veldig artig å spille for publikum. Mange av de tingene jeg hadde håpet skulle fungere gjorde faktisk det.

R: Hva da for eksempel?

K: Alle kommentarene og logikken, når en har jobbet med noe i tre uker så blir alt så logisk, og det blir bra å se at det fungerer på et publikum som skal se det bare en gang. Så, ja det var artig å spille og mange folk likte det. Det var veldig artig

R: Fint.

K: Det er spennende å se hvilken rolle publikum har i dette. Vi later ikke som noen ting, eller selvfølgelig gjør man det også, men jeg synes det er spennende å leke med publikum; hvem er publikum oppi dette? Skjønner de at de er Beep People? Er det de er? (tvetydigheten i arbeidet med manuset, forsetter i spillet i forestillingen)

R: Ble du overrasket over noe?

K: Jeg forventet ikke at det skulle være så mye latter i forestillinga. Det er en humoristisk forestilling, det er mye latter.

R: Hva er du mest fornøyd med? I løpet av denne produksjonen?

K: Der er det forskjellige nivå, men jeg er veldig fornøyd med gruppa, den har fungert veldig bra. Det var ikke noen selvfølge. Ellers er det veldig artig å jobbe med et prosjekt en har så lyst til å gjennomføre, som er så viktig for en. Dette er et prosjekt jeg føler så sterkt for. Noen prosjekter gjør man for at man blir bedt om det, for at man går på skole og sånt, mens dette prosjektet er noe

annet. Jeg liker blandingen av de seriøse øyeblikkene jeg opplevde og på samme tid visste jeg at det var noen der som kunne ta meg ut av det igjen. Det har vært deilig å leke med kombinasjonen av det i prosessen.

R: Devlin og Rebekka historien; hva handler den om?

K: Den handler om at man trenger hverandre, man trenger andre menneske. Man trenger å bli forstått. Og dette handler ikke om de to men om meg og oss. Mellommenneskelige problem er verdensproblem.

R: Kan du si mer rom det?

K: Det som skjer med meg med kroppen min er viktigere for meg enn det som skjer ellers i verden, krig for eksempel. I går hadde jeg tannverk og måtte trekke en tann. Da tenkte jeg på at dette er viktigere for meg enn at folk dør av sult i resten av verden. Denne kontrasten mellom det alvorlige som skjer i verden med sult, krig, lidelse og det lille som skjer med en selv er det som lager humoren i forestillinga.

R: Hva forteller forestillingen?

K: Jeg synes denne forestillingen sier mye om hvordan jeg føler meg i forhold til USA for eksempel; hva skal til for at man føler at man når inn til de som bestemmer at det skal være krig?

R: Mmm..

K: Det er rart å snakke om dette nå etter å ha spilt. Jeg husker første gang jeg satt i denne stolen og du intervjuet meg da vi startet og hadde alle ideene. Føler meg helt tømt nå. Det er en så utrolig god følelse. En så utrolig god følelse. Fordi vi har fått gjort noe som er så viktig for oss alle å gjøre. Jeg liker

blandingen av de seriøse øyeblikkene som jeg får lov til å gå inn i, samtidig vet jeg at det kommer noen og henter meg ut derifra. Det har vært artig å leke seg med det i prosessen.

R: Hvem spiller du i denne forestillingen?

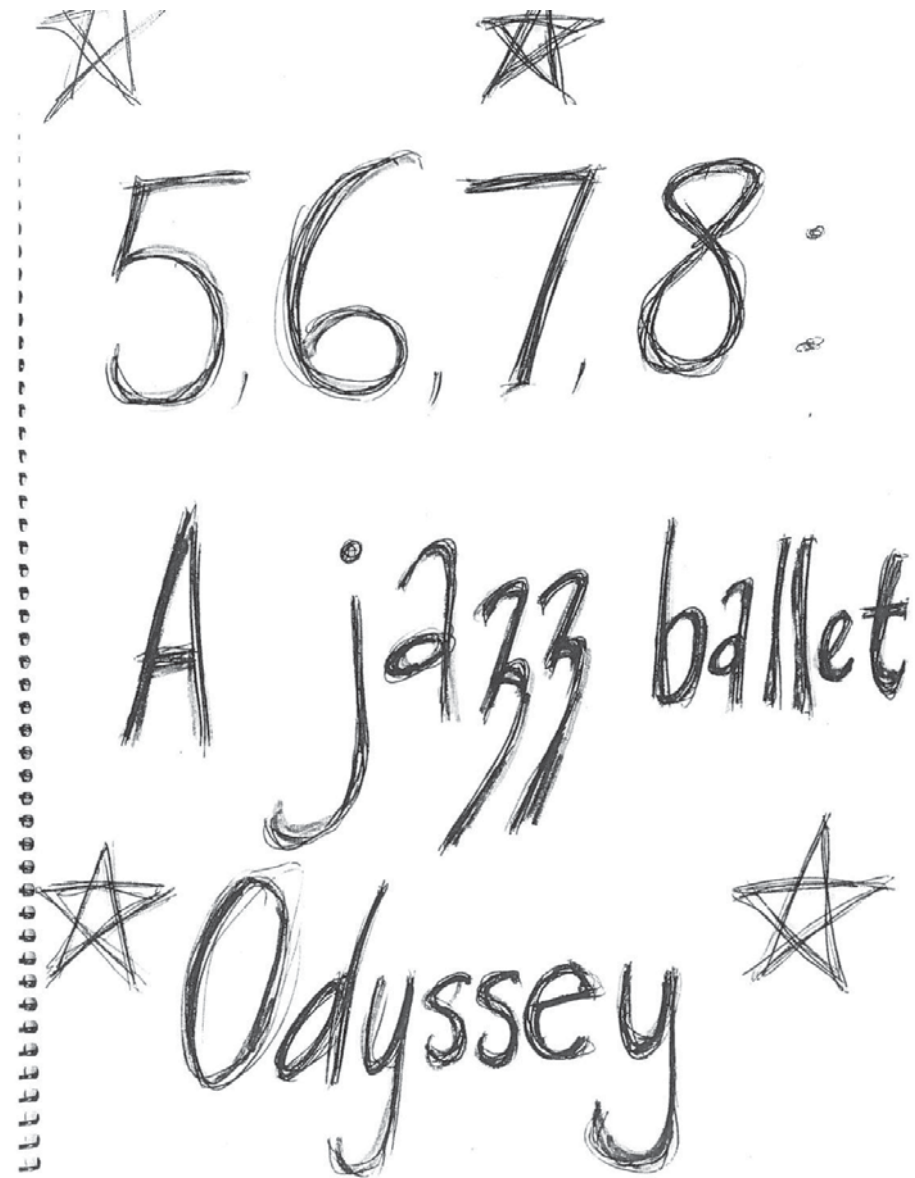
K: Jeg er meg selv som har en funksjon i denne forestillinga mer enn at jeg er en karakter. Men jeg føler meg ikke privat, så jeg spiller jo en rolle, men jeg spiller ikke en karakter. Jeg er en funksjon. I noen scener er jeg en stemme, i noen sener er jeg bevegelse.

R: På en skala fra 1-10, hvor fornøyd er du med denne forestillinga?

K: Akkurat nå vil jeg si 10, jeg er veldig fornøyd med prosessen. Den er noe vi er stolt av, den er mer vår, enn noe annet vi har vært med på.

APPENDIX 4 PROCESS NOTES AND REFLECTION PAPER

4.1. Sample Nancy's process notes



☆ ☆

5, 6, 7, 8:

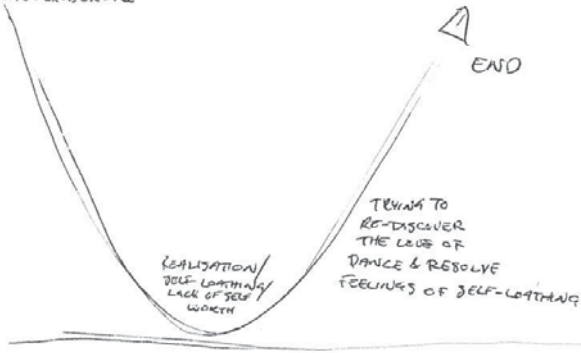
A jazz ballet

☆ Odyssey ☆

START
OPTIMISM &
YOUTHFUL EXUBERANCE

PERFORMANCE TRAJECTORY

END



Pania had a mother called Gwen. ^{she looked like an elderly clown} ~~in my memory she appears as~~ ~~white powdered face~~ ^{and bright red} ~~with~~ ^{blush on her cheeks}. ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~the had eyebrows, that~~ ^{Gwen's} ~~wee drawn on eyebrows.~~ ^{her} ~~the~~ ^{fingers} ~~dropped~~ ^{dripped} ~~with~~ ^{with} ~~gold~~ ^{gold} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~jewellery~~ ^{jewellery} and she consistently got my name wrong for 8 years.

Pania also had a sister called Maree. ~~She~~ ^{she} looked like what Gwen might've 20 years ago - except ^{that} she still had her own eyebrows. Maree was a ~~delicious~~ ^{delicious} woman who classic stage mother who set new records in homophobia and interior ~~design~~ ^{design} involving leopard ~~skin~~ ^{print}.

Maree and Gwen ^{would sit} ~~sat~~ in the corner of ~~at~~ ^{during classes} and discussed ~~in minute detail~~ ^{in minute detail}; ~~to minute detail~~ ^{to minute detail}, ~~exactly what was wrong~~ ^{exactly what was wrong} the first curvings of every ^{tender} adolescent body ^{whispering about} before them. ~~to minute detail~~. Somehow, despite I'm sure, every effort to the contrary; the content of these ~~conversations~~ ^{discussions} would "somehow" make it back to the ~~subject~~ ^{subject} in question, ~~the~~ ^{the} founding a lifelong fixation the size and shape of ^{particular} body parts depending of ^{on} who ^{ever} was the topic ~~of conversation~~ ^{of conversation} that week.

~~One~~ ^{One} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~girls~~ ^{girls} Sarah Fitzgibbons once was ^{104 that} ~~104~~ ¹⁰⁴ ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~27~~ ²⁷ ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~because~~ ^{because} ~~Nardelle~~ ^{Nardelle} ~~Gibson~~ ^{Gibson} ~~had~~ ^{had} ~~a~~ ^a ~~perfect~~ ^{perfect} ~~body~~ ^{body} she was simply a bitch.

What is it like?

Having something destroyed that you loved and cared about. That was full of innocent joy.

- * like a flame being extinguished
- * something being tucked away/shit up
- * crushed
- * smashed
- * destroyed
- * deflated - popped like a balloon
- * shutting something
- * something being torn out
- * forgotten
- * denied - pushed down,
- * A betrayal - by your body / teachers
- * loss of belief in self & others.
- * fading.
- * Realising / being told that Santa doesn't exist.
- * loss of innocence

The liner came for our first concert

Backstage was my favourite place. We, all lined up in front of the mirrors, ^{passing and preening} perched like ~~multi-coloured parrots~~ ^{multi-coloured parrots} on a wire, ^{waiting for the moment} when we'd be free ~~to spread our wings~~ to spread our wings and shake our tail feathers. At least some of us were dainty parrots. I was always somewhere between a cockatoo and a budgie.

~~Orphan~~ One day I overheard ^{a gaggle of stage} some snotters talking about the 'orphan' backstage. I was very independent and ~~unlike~~ unlike everyone else, I didn't need my Mum backstage to help me put on my costumes. I'd pretty much been managing to dress myself for quite some

WHAT I WANT TO DO: VISION & CONCEPT

I want to present an autobiographical piece about my difficult relationship with dance and of how that early exposure to training and performance shaped a somewhat warped personal perception of dance, theatre and my body.

It developed in me a feeling of worthlessness and a deeply held belief that I would never measure up to an unattainable ideal. It also established a very narrow definition of what dance and a dancer is and can be.

The piece will be presented through a series of personal anecdotal monologues, as well as a recreation of some of the dance performances from my formative years.

MAGIC
REALISM

- WILL ALSO INCLUDE - STORY TELLING, AUTOBIOGRAPHY, DANCE, PHYSICAL THEATRE, COMEDY & PATHOS.
- How I developed a feeling ~~that~~ that I would never be a dancer because I didn't look right
- Heartwarming and optimistic - in the end.
- Will hopefully exercise some of the elements that ~~will~~ still exist.
- My early exposure to performance was very limited, when I first started dancing I loved it, Adored it, but as I continued, it became less about how good I was - as puberty set in and my body started changing - but more about how I looked.
- I don't want it to be a preachy, to be didactic - the kind of show you'd tour through the theatre in education scheme to stimulate the self esteem of teenagers.
- I want to present my personal story with humour and pathos and hopefully it will be something that people can identify with - as well as being entertaining.
- In the end a realisation

3

What is the piece about?

- innocence lost.
- following your dreams
- believing in yourself.
- Not letting what other people say bother you.
- Holding onto the things you love.
- Having fun performing.

Dancing Memories

- Not wearing any knickers underneath my costume at the church Christmas concert
- Holding Stormy's hand and realising it was covered in warts - falling in love?
- Coming home after the first concert after the Men's had made fun of me
- Kara Smith's Mom putting her hands down my feet
- Maree's ~~the~~ house covered in leopard skin with puddles.
- Maree & Gwen sitting in the corner talking about how each of us are too fat & what was wrong with us.
- Never being picked to be on the posters
- NOT WEARING ANY KNICKERS UNDER MY COSTUME AT THE SALVATION ARMY CHRISTMAS CONCERT.
- BOOBS NEARLY FALLING OUT AT MORTUARY BUSKERS FEST.
- CHEER LEADING
- Practising side ball change all holidays and then never doing it again in class.

13/5/95 EXCERPTS FROM MY
DIARY 1995-1998

GUESS WHAT!! I... have... been... moved... up... into...
advanced!! I was really pleased that Pania thinks I'm
good enough to dance in advanced.

19/5/95

I feel special about dancing because nobody in my family
does it. I also like the excitement on opening night,
the glitz and glamour of it all. Trying on costumes
and Mum getting mad because I'm in so many dances.

16/8/95

But I haven't even got up to the bad and sad bit yet this-
tonight is my last Wednesday night lesson at Pania's.

It was really sad. We're going to have classes on Saturdays
now I'm 12:00 till 1:30, 3:00 till 4 and 4 till 5. it totally

sucks. Pania was someone I looked up to, my hero. I know it
sounds corny but just tonight I said "Some day I'm gonna
dance as well as Pania" She says it's gonna be the
same nothing going to change but I think it will. She is
moving because there isn't enough work to go around
at pathology at the Base hospital where she works.

So she thought she had better look for a new job. And
she found one. YAY! In Melbourne. Boo hisssss. I think
I'll miss her. like I said before she was is and
always will be my hero.

b

Also see 16/1/91

11/8/96

But you know I could lose a few kilos. I mean I'm a dancer. I'm supposed to be thin and I'm not really am I? I mean I'm thin enough but I do have a bit of fat on me. If I wasn't a dancer I wouldn't have this problem would I? ... least I don't have a costume that'll show off how fat I am. Oh stop it. I am not fat. I am not fat. I am not fat. I am not fat. B. Am too. Are not!

18/11/96

Marcelle. Not that I'd want to. Stupid bitch. She's come back to tap. Tap dancing was my class. I know Paris likes her better than me plus she gets her own solo with the little kids. I'm being a stupid jealous bitch but I don't care.

7/7/99

The concert's been and gone. "The Twitlight Dancer Zone" you know I thought I did OK until I saw the video. I looked really fat. It was taped by Mr Shortall so he was only taping our asses anyway. On the second concert I ripped my thumb nail off so I couldn't get changed by myself. But I managed to get on stage (late) We had heaps of make-up on. We were aliens after all.

8

22/2/98

I also did the buskers festival on the 7/2. In mistake.
It was raining like you wouldn't believe. But it stopped
before we went on. We went on at 10.45 pm. Pania
made me wear this ~~tiny~~ little tiny top. Half my
boobos were hanging out. The dickheads of the front
loved that.

9



CC







PRESENTS



DANGEROUS DANCING



PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE
Friday October 23rd - 8.00 p.m.
Saturday October 24th - 8.00 p.m.
Sunday October 25th - 2.00 p.m.

- All that jazz and more :- the complete book of jazz dancing
Christy Lane. UniMERCf 793.3 LAN1
- Anthology of American jazz dance / Gus Giordano 793.32 ANTI
- Between classes: shaping your technique and body by Gloria York
793.3 YOK
- Jazz dance: an adult beginners guide / Helene Andrien
793.3 AND1

the physics of dance.

792.801 Law/0005 acn 55808

VCA ↑

Advice for dancers: emotional counsel & practical strategies
Baillieu 796.72 Ham1

VCA psychology of dance 792.801 Tay/0007 acn 112074

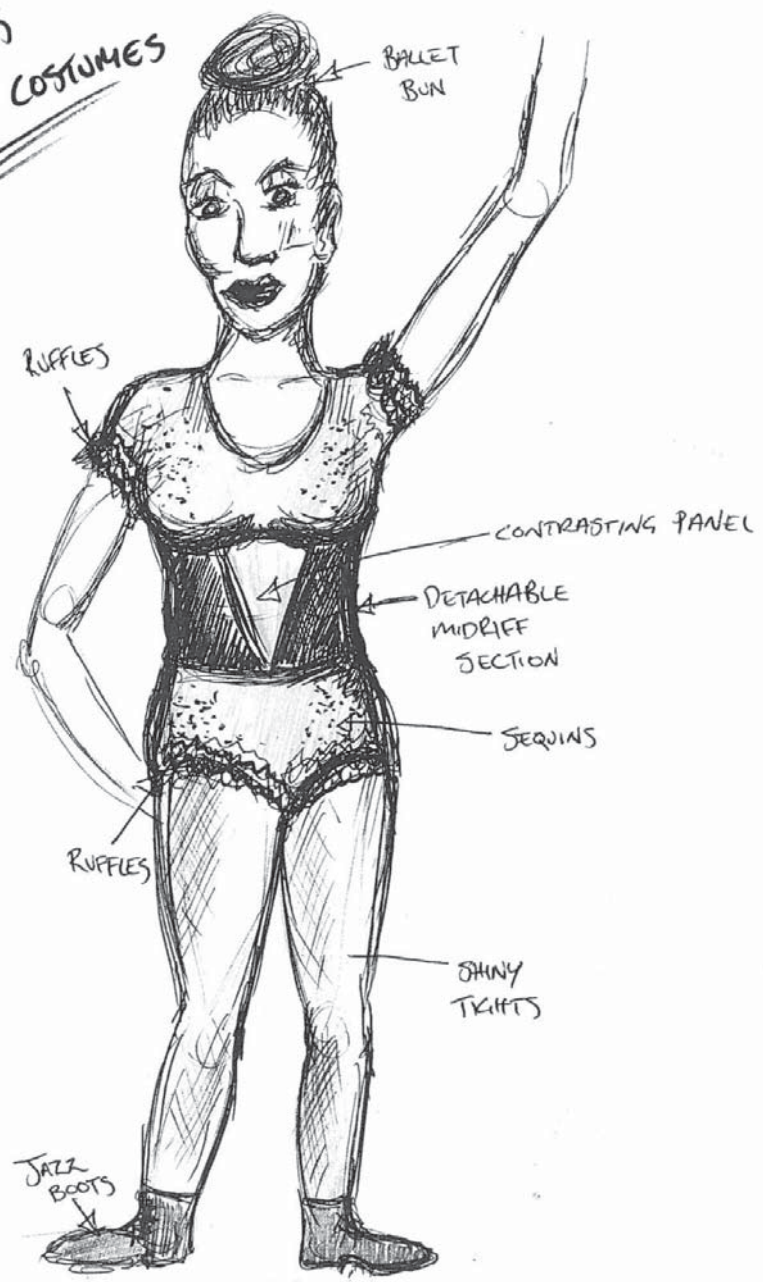
VCA The performer audience connection 793.301 Ham/0009
acn 15651

DESIGN -

- Handmade / clodgy aesthetic. small town theatre.
- manipulating theatrical decorations - Sp. Va. Dugg
- Showbiz / theatrical look - slightly grotesque eg. Richard Braham
- Michel Gondrie
- Alan Ball
- Heightened so as to be a bit sinister - smoke machine
- Cartoon like?
- Red curtains, fairy lights, colored gels,
Painted flat back drop.

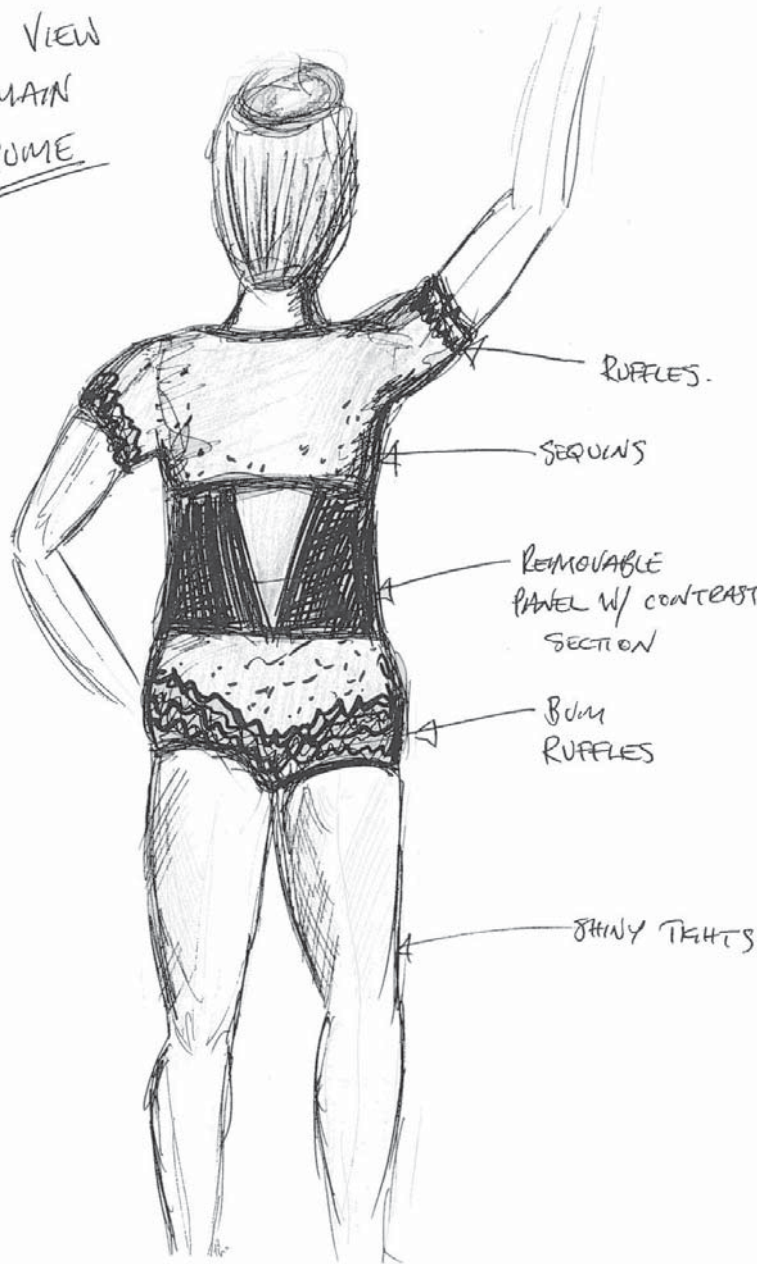
↳ Influenced by Spalding Gray, Barry Humphries & Leah
Purcell's work 'Box the Pony'

IDEAS
FOR COSTUMES



5

BACK VIEW
OF MAIN
COSTUME



17

JAZZ BALLET CONVENTIONS

- The run through of the space - completing dodgy jump sequence.
- Dodgy start/finish positions
- Mr Shortal
- FORWARD/BACK ROLLS
- forward split jumps
- can can turns
- walk on & off
- bows - ballet walking - reaching out to the sun, pulling back to body with fist
- Running with ~~the~~ Material

-
- TAKING OFF MAKE-UP. FOR END.
 - CATTLE PARADE - SIDE BALL CHANGE

SONGS WITH DANCING IN THEM

- Let's Dance - David Bowie/M Ward
- Dancing Queen - Abba
- Shall we dance - The King and I - Fred Astaire?
- Let's start the music and dance? " "
- Boogie Shoes - Saturday Night Fever
- You make me feel like dancing - Leo Sayer
- Shake your groove thing -
- I could have danced all night - My Fair Lady
- Doya, do ya do ya do ya wanna dance?
- Dance to the music - Sly & Family Stone.

4.2 Sample Sarah's process notes

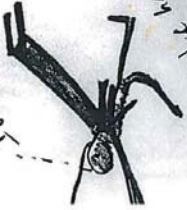
She plays with her feet on her thighs at Martin's place.
 She squeezes the fat on her thighs at Martin's place.
 She eats a child's packed lunch instead of T/away.
 She is the Paperbag Princess.

La Belle dans sans Merci:
 Family Mother: La Belle dans sans Merci

Material from working on floor.
 open play & impro

"I've had an accident"

I've had an accident twisted underneath



side ways
 pegged inside the table/chair

wrapped around it

late in godards Movie - Car crash -
 a model faced in position of car crash

I've had an accident



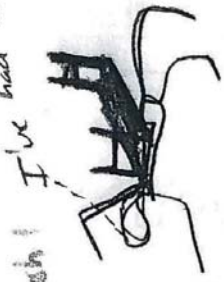
I've had an accident

Sequence on chair

I've had an accident



I've had an accident



wilderness and violence.
illness and seriousness
sensible and irresponsible
wildness and subduer
domestic and wilderness
fear +

→ An investigation through every
· space
· action
· text

working title:
To my mother

who have I become.

- * Lunig cartoons - The idiots
- * Quintan Blake
- * Roald Dahl.



→ Live sound:
trumpet - grand scale / thunder
piano.

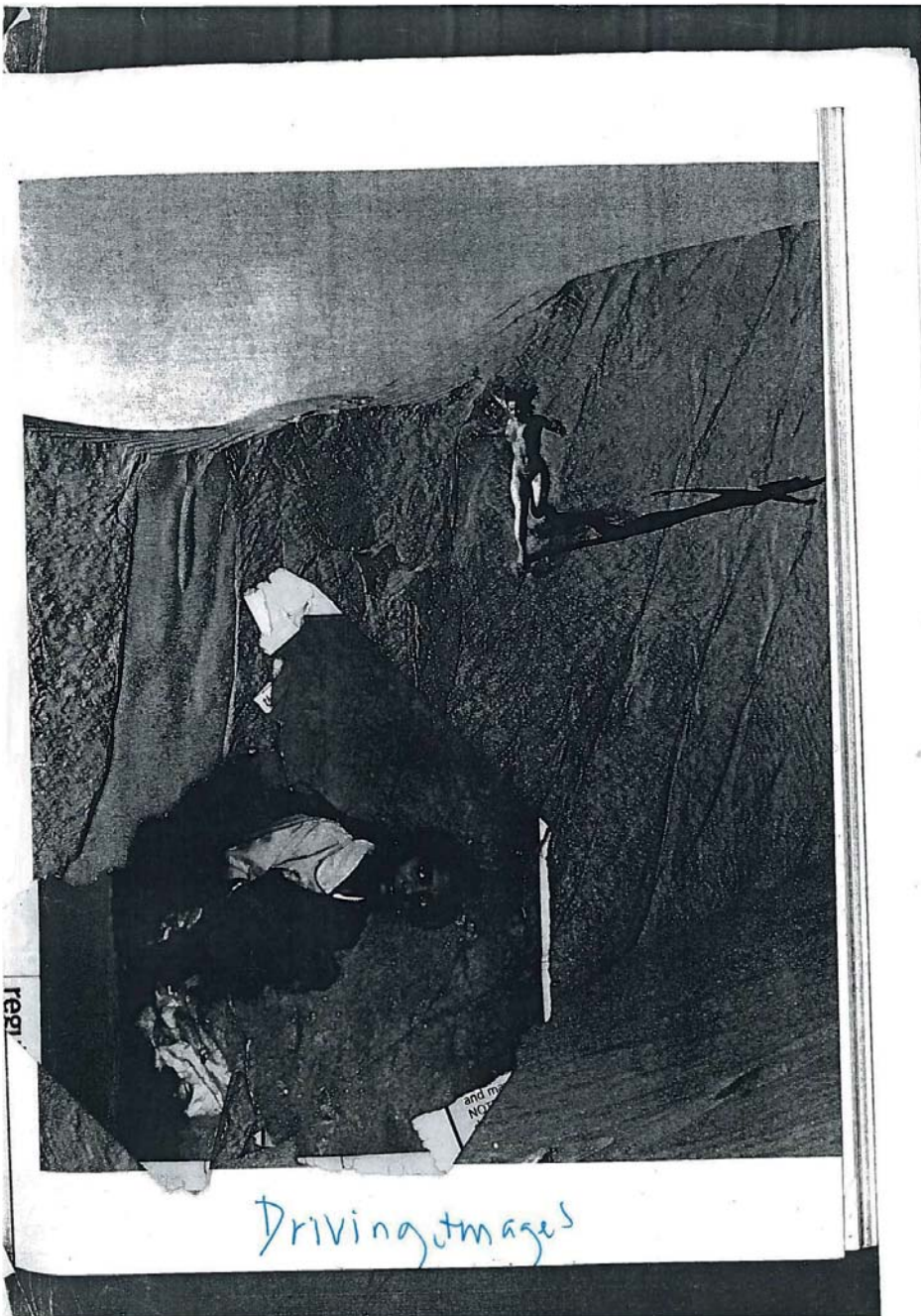
→ suicide bombers -
strong female speechy
voices
the action.

→ erry & melancholy
grand / pompous.

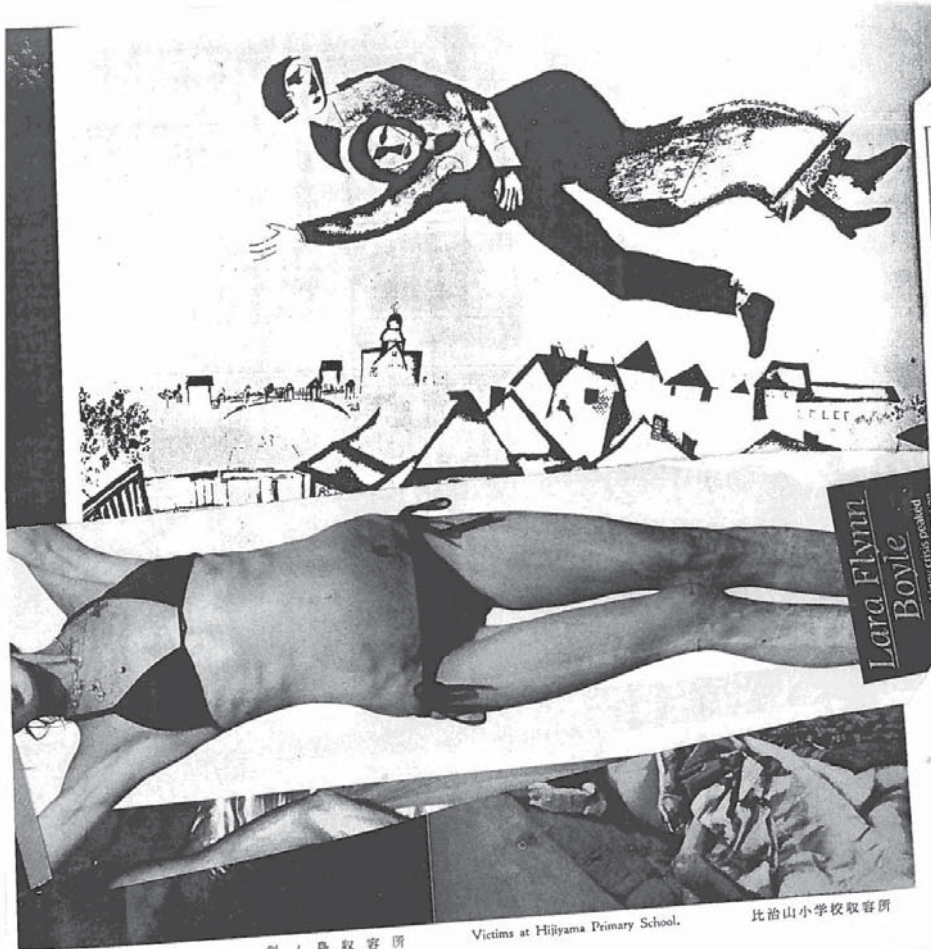
Hiroshima → injured bodies
disused body

→ craching of ribs

→ Becoming Animal



Driving images



Lara Flynn
Bowie
...from crisis postcard

Victims at Ninoshima camp.

似ノ島収容所

Victims at Hijiya Primary School.

比治山小学校収容所



Victims on the street near

本川小学校前道路

Victims at Honkawa Primary School.

本川小学校収容所

April 8th

it is important to me? (100 point firm swers)

- o experience breathing
- o appreciate breath
- o see my surrounds hear people
- o Physically Touch people
- o bring Lightness, laughter into every day situations.
- o share and to give generously
- o use as little things as possible
- o be happy
- o share happiness
- o take everyday actions for granted

A small intimate pocket sized note book.

Process Notes.

- * To take time
- * To consider things genuinely
- * To use my body physically
- * To follow my intuition
- * To be near with animals
- * To be open to the unexpected
- * To allow wildness and gentleness
- * To give things time
- * To do things properly
- * To be honest
- * To support people who I need to support
- * To support those whose beliefs I wish to support.
- * To support people's right to speak
- * To listen to people around me.
- * To listen to my inner voice.

- * To enjoy lightness in being
- * To take things seriously
- * To trust people
- * To take care
- * To respect people's space
- * To give / acknowledge people's own space for any thing
- * To be open and ready to change judgement
- * To fight for what you believe in
- * To observe what is fashion and popular
- * To observe what is universal and fundamental
- * To be present
- * To give time to not be here
- * To be generous

Writing down the Principles so far present in this work:

- * different character, persona, intermixing
- * really strong female characters
- * A woman in a gigantic dress
- * something Epic
- * something sung
- * changes in modes
- * something visceral & fluid
- * something present and alive
- * other media perhaps
- * A strong, healthy, flexible flat alive body - transforming through space - driving the performance
- * fluid movement
- * Lighting - to create spaces through

Monday 3am 09/10/17

- * spoken text
- * always something - something edible
- * always moving.
- * about the seen, observed and watching

Tuesday 10th April 11pm

children's texts

"his father was a magician & his mother was a doctor"

Fairy tale as a twisted everyday story almost in everyday. something surreal. Something not quite right (anchored) in the everyday

Monday 30th April

Intimate actions:

- Kiss hands
- hold hands
- pat - to offer
- stroke - give preference + hold
- cuddle
- feed
- allow touch
- give something
- heaven/pet/fuss over
- Sing to
- perform to
- let hold something special
- look at
- Surrender
- allow touch
- hold gently
- + dance

Violent actions

- hit
- ~~poke~~ away
- to give then hole
- force
- scream
- dismiss
- forget
- abandon
- deny
- shut out
- humiliate
- disrespect
- deny
- force
- stiff
- humiliate

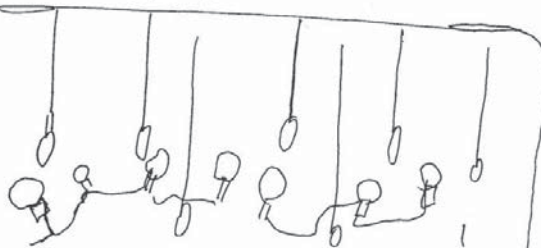
What would you do if you would not fail?
 always be happy/light/generous - dance be giving
 always offering not being afraid of denial.
 making things for people, special things.
 make cakes with bright (ing) pink pollyanna cakes.
 fluffy beautiful.
 and make beautiful objects
 give people songs/services
 (make dances)
 surrounded by animals, horses, children, Rhinos,
 hippos.
 fairy tales and plants.
 Costumes, dresses.
 Beautiful lights.
 Never say nasty things + people, about people, against people.
 Dear Hallucinating Angel,
 how are you?
 my friend.

like a Rose:
 stunningly beautiful
 and fake | disintegrating

It is very easy to be cross and
 Angry and to make people feel bad.
 so how do you want them to
 feel.

[uplifted, bizarre, complex, confused.
 Intrigued, happy, joyous, laughing]

The space



A Cathedral of Lights.

tombs fairy hidden delicate space.

4.2.1 Sarah's reflection paper

Reflection Paper *The Paper Woman*

'What Matters?': Reflecting on The Creative Process for the Making of The Paper Woman

This writing, inspired by the book by Paul Carter on *Material Thinking*, is the putting into words of the creative process of the making of *The Paper Woman*. The purpose of this is to make transparent a creative process. When artists speak about their work they often reduce the components of their work into a singular literal definition. An art work, however, is often a complex cultural product created through amalgamating a variety of materials and ideas that should not be reduced to one definition. An artist's work is an act of invention. The artist alloys together a series of heterogeneous ideas or materials. They create a new cultural product from a class of formless matter: "a rubbish hill of earlier fragments, first dismembered and scattered, then gathered again and remembered in a different form"¹. It is through these acts of invention that new ways of seeing and perceiving may come into being. This, I believe, should be aim of art.

The Paper Woman:

Principles leading into the work

- 2005 I finish my solo honours performance (it is an intense serious experience for an audience) saying: "My next solo will be comedy".
- 2005-2007 I struggle to communicate my humour to an audience. I don't know how to offer an audience permission to laugh (awkward uncertain silences, confused communication). Or I openly entertain, and feel like a commodity not an artist. **In this work I seek to find a meeting point for these two extremes.**
- I cultivate a grotesque female persona. She is a stallion. She is Medea. She is restless. She is violent, tender and unpredictable. I see her stamping across the stage in a Pina Baush work eating an apple in a tutu. **She has a non-negotiable female presence.** She asks to appear in this work. I have to tame her so she doesn't scare away my audience.
- I want to make work **unique and honest to my perception of the world.** I want to make work about 'what matters' to me. I question what a young, white, middle class female could say that would have any value to others? Around me work is being made about social and political injustices. I want to believe that **all voices have value, even my own.** I write down a 100 point list of **everything that matters to me in my life** and try to figure out how to embody these points through process and product. of course it had value!
- Artist Neil Thomas, who I admire, says he wants to make warm work full of humanity. He believes the creative process should be similar to how a pumpkin grows. It needs sun and rain and time. It can't be forced. I try to embody this. I pursue what I enjoy in the making process. I try to bring myself pleasure otherwise I switch my materials and focus on my work in a different way. I try to sustain myself by making myself laugh on the floor.
Friday 20th April 9pm Movement Studio: I am alone, pinned under a bench on the floor in darkness, laughing hysterically.
- 2006 I make a work about violence between women. I no longer know why I would want to create such an experience for an audience. **I don't need to ram more violence into the lives of an audience. I want to pursue something more joyous.** Something that makes them feel happy and uplifted but not frivolous.
- **I don't want to be the sole focus of the performance.** I am tired of the set up of expectations of entering a space and waiting for a performance to unfold. I want to recreate the audience's expectations in the moments of the performing. I want the event to be an intimate transaction of

¹Carter, Paul. *Material Thinking*-p.191

Reflection Paper *The Paper Woman*

events. I want to engage with my audience at a personal level. I want to be excited and surprised by what the audience may do in the performance. **I want the audience to enjoy watching each other perform. I want beautiful gentle interactions between strangers**

- I am interested in investigating performer presence. **The type of presence I seek in performance embodies my beliefs and ideas of what I want theatre to be.** In this performance I wanted to explore theatrical and pedestrian presences in the space.

Driving Images or Starting points from the beginning of the Process

These provide an anchor and continual point of reference throughout the making of the work. The work is about these things, the relationship between them, and what I discover through them. I don't want to introduce any new material, only what develops from them. Otherwise the work will risk **being about everything and nothing**. From the start I feel a strong connection between these things. Through making the work I am seeking out this connection. The connection is the final creative product. It may be an atmosphere, a world, or an experience. **Can I name it now in retrospect? In one word? In one sentence? No, not just yet.**

The following are the driving images behind *The Paper Woman*:

• An incident

One morning I walk out of my friends flat in Prague. I see the body of a naked woman with black high heel shoes still on. Her flesh is white and beautiful. It is 0c. **Her body lies on the green wet grass next to the children's play ground.** She has been raped and murdered. Her face unrecognizable, battered with knuckle busters. **How could anyone do this to another human being?** How could it happen here in an overpopulated housing block?

• Does Your Mother Love You? Does my mother love me? Do I love my mother?

Just before I begin I am overcome by this question. My mother is ill, she has never been ill. She didn't tell me. On the phone she sounds like a machine. I don't know her anymore. I spend three days crying in an empty house far from my home. I fly home for her birthday but she has gone away. We don't speak. We have nothing to say. I contemplate this question. What does it mean to everyone? All the different facets of our lives that our mothers never know about? What would they think? My mother and I do not contact each other for five weeks. The duration of this process. I have a deep sense of loneliness, isolation but also freedom in her absence. I allow this feeling to inform the work. **And I exploit the different personas, the people in me she will never meet.**

• Strong Women's Voices

Over the past four years through my writings a particular female character has been present in my movement and writings. This voice was prevalent in the generative writing workshop. I wanted to give this character a whole performance. **She never wanted to be cute. Rosa Parks is her hero.**

Generative Writing

My generative writing is consumed with key images and themes I am obsessed with. It also encompasses all of the issues presented in these other key images. Such as loneliness, calling for help but never being heard and everyday actions being subverted.

A small child falls/in the city/in the city/ a small child falls/ a black man falls/ a fat woman falls/ an asian falls...I am falling. I was reaching up/ I was falling/my teeth are smashed in my mouth/I am tasting blood/I wear a suit/my head is

Reflection Paper *The Paper Woman*

in the bitumen path/It is Martin Place/ It is midday/My head in the ground/ Pouring over my knees.

• **The Idiots and The Princess Bride**

I am inspired by *The Idiots*. I enjoy the edge it plays between the outrageous and unethical to a much needed interrogation and questioning of social ways of being and living. I am inspired to poke fun at everyday life in this way. I enact peculiar actions in space but do them in a matter of fact way. Weeing in a tea pot, eating chillies, pouring water over my head. They can become everyday actions. **What happens when an adult woman plays like a child?**

The Princess Bride is a fairy tale adventure that pokes fun at it self. It delves into the imaginary then laughs at itself. I wanted to have this twist in my work. The magical and everyday. The theatrical and the non-theatrical.

• **A series of images**

Images of victims from the atomic bomb juxtaposition against images of emaciated female models. I am curious, these bodies look the same. What are the differences and the similarities? Images of half, and fully nude female bodies in everyday situations. Images of female suicide bombers (with bombs attached to their chests) juxtaposition against females sitting sewing in strands of wool and threads surrounding their chests.

These key images and starting points are used as impetus to create material in a variety of ways.

I start the process knowing what my key images are. I then begin the work on the floor. I start each session with a two hour movement improvisation. My key images are layed out. They have been circulating in my thoughts. **I don't want a literal re-presentation of these key images. I want them to resort themselves in my subconscious. I forget them momentarily.** I keep dancing and playing, they re-emerge in new forms. Such as placing my body in a series of accidents that are potentially tragic and real or silly jokes. I also bring in objects to play with.

Key images may also be used directly:

For instance, from my generative writing text:

She listens to static/she watches static on TV/Listens to static on the radio/she's always busy/But actually it's all white noise/White noise everywhere/She's the white noise woman
Informed my use of the live radio in the space.

I also used two actions I had already experimented with because they related to these themes, and they had the potential to create emotional reactions in the audience that I desired for the work.

Once I had gathered a series of actions and texts I experimented with ways of placing and layering different material together. As well as exploring the **tone, colour and intention** behind each action. This continued until I had developed an overall structure for this material.

Performing *The Paper Woman*: a list of ingredients to consult before entering the space

- **Invite and allow myself to be seen 100 percent**
- **Don't forget to breathe through all surfaces of my skin.**
- **Every movement is hard. Every action is being done for the first time**
- **Each night add a new challenge to the performance score**
- **The audience is my friend. There is no hierarchy between us. Invite them into the performance. Keep pulling them into the actions of the piece. Be generous to them and guide them through the piece.**
- **Do not Judge the audience**

Reflection Paper *The Paper Woman*

- **Keep ahead of the audience. Try to be aware of where they are spatially and emotionally**
- **Give myself and the audience time. Do not hurry action. Open discription to change the score if it serves the work best in that moment.**
- **This is my work do not apologize; stick by the actions I perform.**

Reflection and Evaluation

The Paper Woman embodies my aesthetic. I wish to pursue and work into the aesthetic, and process of this work. I was overwhelmed by the positive feed back to the work. I need to remember that the work wasn't being shown to a public audience. This would have a different outcome. There was one particular performance that stood out, and two nights when the performance was very disappointing. I feel like I really failed my audience on those two nights. I need to understand why, it sometimes didn't work, and what made it work when it did. I want it to become less of a hit and miss event. I also think the structure of the performance could be made more affective and supportive to the overall aesthetic of the work. When I look at the myriad of elements that went into the making of *The Paper Woman*, I am surprised by the actual creative product that emerged. At the same time it seems to make sense.

The most encouraging aspect from the work is feedback from a spectator who said he felt a desire to reach out and help the persona but at the same time a resistance inside him not to do so. This informs me that the driving images behind the work, the murdered Prague woman, questions about being cared for and loved and the vulnerability of the human body, were carried through into another form. The creative process can indeed be a process of alloying. It is about trusting that the starting points behind a work, if pursued, will inform and bare significance for the creative product.

4.2.2 Sarah's reflection paper: seeking presence

Reflection Paper: Seeking Presence

"Theatre means the collectively spent and used up lifetime in the collectively breathed air of that space in which the performing and the spectating take place".

Spectator and Performer Presence: This is the primary focus and research of my work, and my interest in performance. The kernel of my arts practice is **an inquiry into the absurdity and preciousness of everyday life**. With the audience I am grappling with my own inquiry into **what it means to be a human being, and the ethical, social and political duties that bind me to being human**. It makes sense to explore these concerns in theatre because present time and space is being shared by live material bodies, the performance can not be repeated and it is open to human error, which means the event is always being marked by traits that define the human condition. It is through this shared experience of present time that the finitude of each being can potentially be brought to attention. As Heiner Muller said *"The specificity of theatre is precisely not the presence of the live actor but the presence of the one who is potentially dying"*¹. **An investigation into the actions and circumstances of everyday life** (which is my inquiry) should be much deeper if one is **reminded of their own finitude** (this may be a subconscious or conscious experience).

It is deep concern of mine that theatre makes the most of the shared breathing space between the spectator and performer. I find it upsetting when performers refuse to acknowledge this shared space. **It is a blatant denial of the passing of real time**. This can happen when the actor, as Romeo Castellucci says, is *'deliberately confident...as if the alienation from the stage were only an embarrassing effect to be anesthetized and overcome'*². I see this happening when the actor's body becomes **poor -to the world**. They appear to be hermetically sealed from events happening in the moment of live performance. These may be sensory elements or certain incidents such as the crying of a child or thunder and rain. They may also negate my presence as a spectator, always gazing through me or avoiding my eye line as if I do not exist. Performers can also appear to negate their own presence. This happens when they do not bring to bare on their performance their own everyday life. This happens when the performer forgets to ask themselves *'what matters'* to them, and *'what is at stake for them'* in the role they are playing.

These experiences happen all too much in everyday life. For instance, when I move through most public spaces I feel like an object, devoid of individuality. **People look through me, or they look down so they don't have to address me or they watch me as an object** (a young female body). I am tired of this. It is a sad dangerous problem for humanity that we become **automatons**. It is even worse if this way of being is perpetuated in the theatre. When I enter a theatre space, if the makers want me to be moved by their work as the living human being I am, and **to bring my experience as a human being to bare on their work** then they at least need to acknowledge my presence in the space, they at least need to establish the common ground of humanity. I don't mean this needs to happen literally. The world of the performance doesn't have to be broken to do this. At the most simple level, to do this a performer could take in the audience with their gaze or extend their breath into the space of the audience. **If the performer references neither their lived experience nor the spectators then it is a stupid lie and I don't ever feel invited into the work.**

The deliberate choice I make in regard to **how I will exist and allow myself to be seen** in the performance by the audience starts from the beginning of the creative process. It is informed by what I am currently physically or vocally capable of, or what I can train my body to be able to do in the time I have available, my current thoughts about performance and spectator and performer relationships, my current political and social concerns, and what will best serve the performative material and concerns within the work I am investigating.

¹Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Postdramatic Theatre*. Routledge 2006. p.17

²Ibid.p.144

³Castellucci, Romeo. 'The Animal Being on Stage'. *Performance Research* 5(2), pp23-28

In this creative process I sought a presence which addressed the following issues:

Body as antennae: a body that breathed through all of its pores, almost animalistic, a body with a heightened sensitivity to all sensory stimuli and events taking place in the space. This was cultivated by using some bodyweather principles to train my body. **This could have been taken much further.** This type of presence was essential because I needed the audiences attention to follow me throughout a series of task based actions and with my back to them (when the whole body is alive simple actions can be engaging because the body's actual weight, mass and mobility is brought to attention) I needed the audience to trust I was in control of my body's movement through the space, and I didn't want the audience to be able to predict actions or movement through my body (a body alive in the moment doesn't indicate where it is traveling) **as I wanted the unexpected to happen.**

A theatrical presence: I have become bored of the non-theatricality in lot of post dramatic performance. It's too 'advanced' to play make-believe with imaginary characters and stories but it risks being cold and arrogant. **I do want to be entertained.** I don't just want to see people being themselves. I do find it difficult to pretend to be someone else, however, like an actor does. So I performed a series of persona. By persona I mean the definition created by Rachel Rosenthal: "*a facet, a fragment, and using that as a seed to elaborate on. It is you and yet not you-a part of you but not the whole. It is neither a lie but neither the full truth*"⁴.

Exhibiting myself: At times when I have been performing or watching a performer I have been **repulsed by the performer's narcissistic pleasure in performing.** The pleasure taken in exhibiting oneself to an audience at times explodes the ego and presence of a performer. The performance material is forgotten, all that can be seen is the performer exhibiting themselves. At times I have also felt repulsed by the commodity of theatre. **The audience comes to watch me in a space. I feel like I am prostituting myself.** I just have to push their buttons.

It was important for me in making this work that I overcome these personal obstacles. **I wanted to be unafraid of exhibiting myself. A strong female body with a non-negotiable presence. I didn't want to be hiding in the space.** To do this I had moments of presenting exhibitionist like persona. I also worked to create a series of events in space with particular timings where the audience had to make up their own thoughts about the actions. **I refused to code for them when, or if they should laugh or how they should react.** This meant they should be divided in their reactions. They would therefore not be fueling my ego because I would be less in control of how they responded. There was one night of performance, however, where I lost confidence in the timing of the actions. I panicked and lost hold of the work. The ambiguity of the actions in the space disappeared. **In desperation I became a poor comedian constantly setting up events and cuing the audience to laugh.** I used their laughter to support my performance ego. My work became everything I did not want it to be.

In the next stages of my work I wish to pursue a performer presence that is **both more theatrical and more pedestrian.** I am inspired by the purity and clarity of the actions of performance artists such as Keira O'Reilly, Mona Hatoum and Marina Abramovic. I want to find a way of combining the theatrical and outrageously joyful with pure task based action. **Lucile Ball meets Linda Montano perhaps???**

⁴Acting (Re) Considered. Routledge 1995. p.297

Feedback comments from The Paper Woman. VCA May 2007 Solo Animateur season

I have included these notes because there are some points made that suggest I did achieve some things I aimed to do from the start of the process (I have highlighted these). I understand that it is very positive feedback. This would be different in a public showing. I also know that there was hardly any feedback from the performances I was dissatisfied with.

Wonderful. Such pose and grace mixed with such joyous debauchery. A joy to behold. **Great to feel so implicated, yet be beyond any sense of literal narrative.**

_____ was brilliant. **I was thoroughly engaged, I laughed a lot, the energy in the room was palpable**, and in the end I nearly cried from how profound it became. Her comfort with staring down the crowd, shock tactics and good spirit were invaluable. _____ was brilliant. I won't forget that one.

The audience involvement made me feel truly privileged to be witnessing your piece. Your imagination is wild and wonderful and truly enviable. Images from your piece will stay with me forever. Thank you for your art.

I can't believe I was so moved by something that made so little sense. Extremely courageous and generous. **Left me with the strange feeling of needing to laugh and cry with the ridiculousness of our existence.** Inspirational. Thank you.

Thank you for that **incandescently simple, abundantly spare, grippingly quiet piece of imagining.** You have opened me out quite a bit. Please don't change a thing. I hope your mouth is okay.

Amazing! I really loved this piece. So brave + fantastic use of space + displacement (of stage/audience) **Lovely presence in the space both welcoming and alarming.**

Dear The last piece in program yellow, Brilliant...**I don't know why exactly...But it just really made me happy...**So free...So open...So bizarre...I didn't think anyone could piss in a pot so elegantly...haha..And I loved the use of space! Yeah I don't know if I have any constructive criticism..So I am not really much use to you..sorry..Well done! A+

It's so rare to see 'tone' (rather than cohesive theme) carried with such control to underpin a whole performance. The fact that you didn't let what you were doing become too important made it all the more touching and beautiful. (See Claire from Forced Entertainment I think you're amazing

Tc _____ Really liked what you did with the audience-don't know about the cardboard cut-out business-felt like you were trying to put meaning into something wonderfully absurd-And you should have drunk the tea w/ that guy. Good Luck

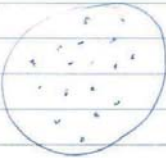
I found _____ piece to be most engaging, impressive in diversity and style, in humour and boldness. **The piece was a great example of the intimacy of theatre.** From my first impressions of _____ as a person, she seems very open and warm/ and now very unpredictable. There is this gorgeous smile behind her eyes which has been taken into performance. It's the quiet ones you've got to watch out for. This quality had both an attractive and sinister quality to _____ piece. I was blown away by its boldness, unpredictability, humour, freshness, beauty and love. I look forward to seeing what _____ has install for the 1st years. Well done

: Feedback

4.3 Sample Researcher's Journal

1.06

KATEGORIER FOR BESKRIVELSE AV ET KULTUR-ESTETISK FELT



Inspirasjonskilder

privat / Kunstnerisk

Estetisk / Kunstnerisk identifikasjon
(type teater) man er kjent av

hvordan teaterarbeidet gir mening
bruk av livsverden, popularkultur, teaterkonvensj. i arbeidet

→ Transformasjonsprosessen
livsverden → teater
popkult

Type forestilling man produserer

Arbeidemetode

Foret. beskrivelse

Gruppe — Individ

- impro
- research
- startpunkt. - idégr. lag
- bruk av ord
- bruk av lyd
- bruk av billed/musikk
- strukturering av arb. prosess
- bruk av eget liv
- bruk av kunstkonvensj.
- bruk av kulturer/popkult

◦ skriking
◦ form
◦ politikk
◦ program
◦ østetikk
◦ video

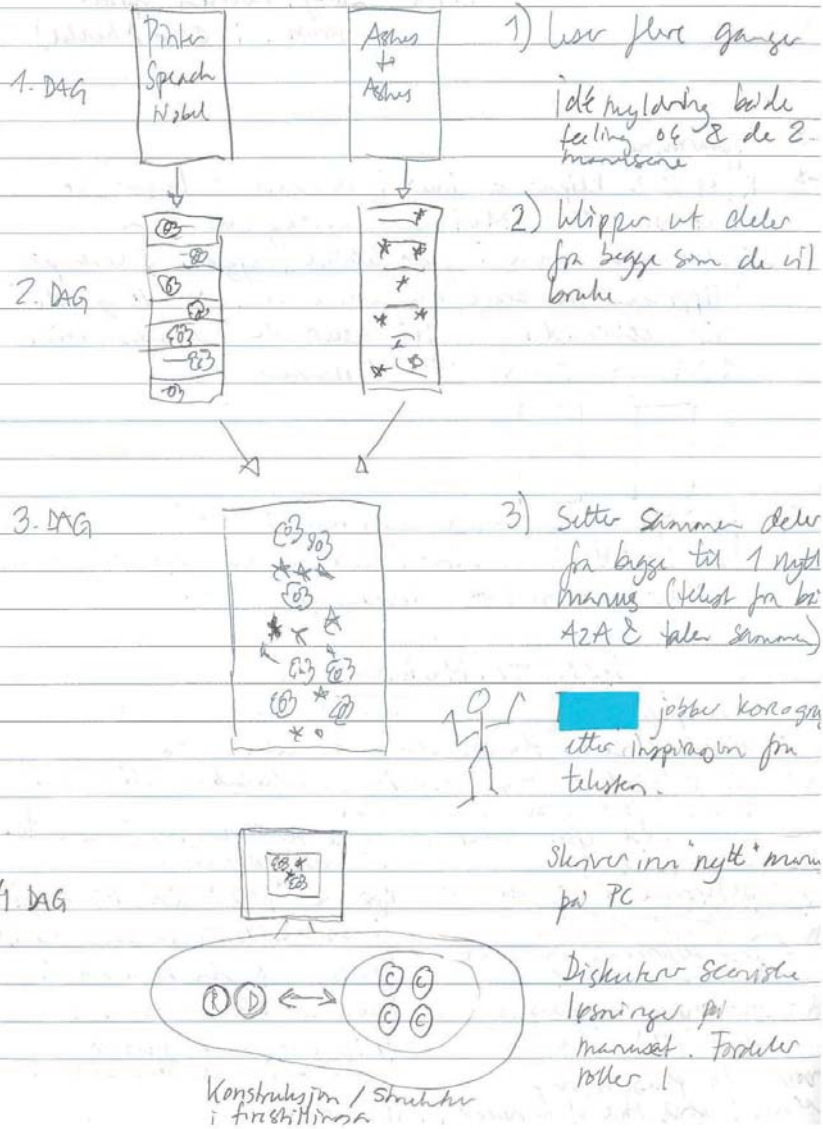
Stor link idé verden
↑↓
livsverden

idéene når ikke alltid frem til forestillingen

9/2

ARBEIDSPROSSE - TEKSTARBEID

FEELING OF ZOO



begynner å bli litt vandubelig: "Sorry + this doesn't work"
 eller bare "yes, yes" som i går da de gikk fra de to manusene
 Prever å lage en sammenheng - "then it makes sense"
 Spm til Marina: Hvordan blir det mening - hva ser
 de etter "what do you look for when you are
 trying to make sense of this (new manuscript)"

"Good is good" fra Bush's tale - barnelur
 - transformasjon fra tale → teater
 - som å høre et barn snakke - na na na
 - tale blir et barnelur
 Kaug: hente noe fra len stjanger og plukke det
 i en annen → ny mening, perspektiv og
 oppstår

9/2

1 tekstarb. snakker de ikke om karakterer.

- Har tidligere snakket om at [redacted] spiller en karakter basert på "Devlin" i A2A og de 4 jentene spiller ulike deler av "Rebecca", men de snakker ikke om at "jy vil spille...."

Ma er det fokus på innholdet - ja tekst fagmerket til å fungere sammen - gi mening - lage et nytt uttrykk (sitt eget) basert på teksten - det politiske - diskusjonene de først 2 dager om Bush, krig, media, 2006 valg ligger som en show over/under det de gjør.

(3. DAG) FØRSTE GANG PÅ GULVET - KOREOGRAFI

→ [redacted] kommer inn i rommet mens jentene klipper og limer: "May I have you"
Har har laget en koreografi basert på

Telest- " clench his fist, he put his other hand on my neck
35,7 and grip it and bring my head towards him
A2A I kissed his fist, the knuckles, he opened his hand and give me the palm of his hand to kiss, which I kissed. Put your hand round my throat

"

og vise de andre - get approval of de går i gang i gjøre koreografi sammen. 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8
Vant til å danse - fulles dansesystem / tellesystem

9.2.06

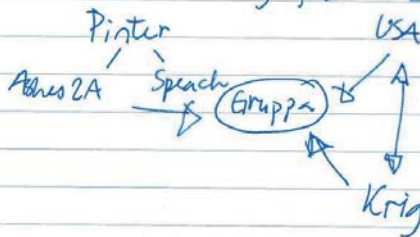
Står sammen fram spillet - teller og gjentar koreografi.
Etter noe stunder gir P. fram, ser de andre
og instruerer hver enkelt. Positivt - han gjør
det fint og de mottar instruksjonen fint.
Ber meg om å filme (!) slik at de kan se

TEKSTARBEID

- "I can't believe we use a Chœur again?" (R) - Ja, men ikke for
å kommentere denne gangen, men for å si tekst (M)
→ Kunnsk. bevissthet om bruk av uttrykk
- Studier om at de vil bruke USA - måke de snakker på
"The US-Style" - big words, TV style, bush speech
(USA aesthetics?) store show, peep-people
↳ hvordan vises dette i forestillingen?
- It's very "da da" what we are doing! (M)
→ referanse til teaterhist.?
Sitter og klipper tekst.

Inspirasjon

Feeling of 2006 [hva er det koblet i forestillingen]



- Første gjennomlesning tar ca. 20 min.
De er fornyede (A⁰³) 1. utkast mixed months 9.2.06

14/2-06

Koret jobber m. "head body"

V's ide m. Karan, prøver, diskuterer, bli for mye m. karan hele tiden, velster mellom 1-1 og karan


Karan gir en "TV-effekt" sier E:

"all these voices all the time - like the feeling of 2006 - word bombs - all the time"

"I like the ~~the~~ multiplicity that all these voices ^{make} represent, the image it makes" M.

Diskuterer rommet

Publikum i sirkel rundt "scener" ? 

Klassisk fremover? Frontalt Spill? 

Publikum i en sirkel rundt? 

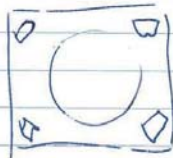
Vil gjerne bestemme det nei slik at de kan gjøre koreografiene ++ i "rett retning"

Sirkus, arena-feeding
"total surveillance feeling"
"Some shamesp. - "Big Brother"

What do you get with the



Solution



keil ide!

Dag 11

19.2.06

Feltarb. 1 - Innhold

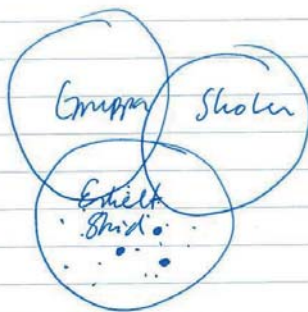
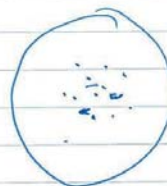
- A Beskrivelse av ^{arb}prosessen, gruppeprosessen
- Arb. struktur
 - Politisk teater osv
 - ideene
 - Talen som form
- B Førestillingsbeskrivelse
- Beskrivelse av forest.
 - Hvordan ble den i forhold til visjonen?
 - Hvordan kommuniserer den m. publikum?
 - Hva har de lært på veien?
(fra ideene kom til forest., hvorfor?)
- forhold til teaterkonvensjon
fra skolen og forhold egne ideer
- utledning
- Informasjonens opplevelse og prosess

Skolens K-E

~~Skolens~~ Gruppas K-E

Endultskol's KE

↳ mering



DAG 14

22.2.06 Tilbakemeld. fra Torunn etter gjennomgang

- + progresjonen fra sist, valg
kostymier, start, this is nothing
- ∴ flow mangler, flow & rytme
mer lys
→ this is a □ it means nothing - -
start gir publ. kontakt:
- Konseptuell kunst, Margritte

D&R - jobb m. artikulasjonen
Gjør noen gj. ganger og lett m. sth,
gjør det lettere
Budsh. blir skure hvis det
oppr. sth. lettere - veldig sent !!

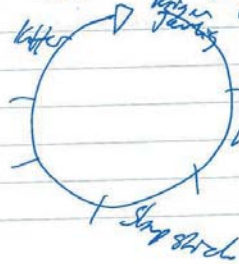
Tittel "Zoo 6 seconds"

25.25.26 Mars - presentasjon av "kjeller",
"skulesongbok", disse 4
sth., Parkila

Tips arb. metode sth

Hva vil man at publ.-skul. forstå?

Hva vil man oppnå
kreativ (f.eks. krig er jevlig)



Hva vil man oppnå
for i "oppnå" det?

APPENDIX 5 INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear students!

My name is Cecilie Haagenen and I am a PhD student at NTNU, University of Trondheim. I have just started a research project about young people's theatre practice. My particular interest is "self-made" theatre, projects where the performers are making their own performances with no pre-written manuscripts, where the performers have the ideas for the performance and take all decisions during the production, with no external instructors. Quite like your "independent projects", I assume.

There are not many places in Norway where you can obtain training in this kind of independent production. "Akademi for scenkunst" is quite unique in this manner. I would like to observe your independent production February 7-23. I am interested to see what kind of performances you are making, what are you inspired by, what kind of methods you are using, how you use your own "material", what kind of creative process leads to the performance. How can I do this? By following your working process from the start when you get the ideas, during the production period till February 23, when you give your performance. I would like to observe your work by sitting at the back of the room, taking notes. I would also like to see your logbooks and to interview some of you before, during and after the production. Hopefully I can videotape the performance and maybe some of your improvisations. If you would allow me, I would also like to take some pictures for my doctoral dissertation.

The photographs and video recordings will not be deleted when the project is finished because they will appear in the final thesis, which is public. However, all other gathered data material will be made anonymous before publishing and will be destroyed at the end of the project.

Sensitive information can be revealed during creative processes and the material will be treated accordingly, to international standards of ethical clearance. The project is assessed by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). NSD is the Norwegian resource centre servicing the research community. NSD assess projects in relation to the license requirement. You can contact NSD; Tel: +47-55 58 21 17 - Fax: +47-55 58 96 50 or Data Protection Official for Research: personvernombudet@nsd.uib.no.

I will do similar fieldwork in Australia this autumn (2006) at the University of Queensland, Brisbane. I will investigate similarities, differences and links between theatre productions in the two countries. There have not been many PhDs on theatre science in Norway, so a PhD project like this will bring

attention to this kind of independent theatre production. Hopefully it can provide some attention to a field of theatre research which has not yet been illuminated. The results of this research project will be published in a public doctoral dissertation.

I sincerely hope you will be interested in participating in this research project. Your cooperation is voluntary. You are free to withdraw as informants at any time. If you want to be a part of this project, please complete the form.

Please contact me at any time if you have any questions or would like to talk to me. My mobile number is (+47) 98 02 10 63. E-mail: cecilie.haagensen@hf.ntnu.no

Yours sincerely

Cecilie Haagensen

Declaration of mutual consent:

I have received information about the PhD project concerning young people's theatre practice and I accept the presence of Cecilie Haagensen during this independent project. I will write a logbook and accept the request to be interviewed. I give my approval to videotape the performance and some of the improvisations during the production. I also accept that there will be photographs of the performance taken for use in the doctoral dissertation. I am free to withdraw from the research study at any time.

Signature_____

Telephone_____

E-mail_____

Fredrikstad February 7, 2006

APPENDIX 6 COLLEGE DESCRIPTIONS

In order to contextualize the field of study, this appendix provides a description of the two colleges where the data was collected: The Norwegian Theatre Academy (NTA) and Victorian College of the Arts (VCA). These colleges framed and influenced the work of the students. The intention is not to evaluate the quality of the education institutions or the work of the teachers, but to provide a description of them in order to clarify the conditions which frame the theatrical practice.

6.1 The Norwegian Theatre Academy, Østfold College, Fredrikstad, Norway

The Norwegian Theatre Academy (NTA) is situated in an old fortress town in Fredrikstad. Fredrikstad has about 73 000 inhabitants (2006) and is located in the southern part of Norway.



Foto from Fredrikstad, NTA

The NTA offers an undergraduate education in theatre through two bachelor degree programs, one in scenography and one in acting. The Academy emphasizes the collaboration between the two programs and focuses on physical theatre, devised performance, conceptual art and multi-disciplinary work. The Academy has only 25 students, divided into two acting classes and two scenography classes (February 2006). New students are admitted for two years in a row and none for the third year.

The Academy presents their aspirations on their website;

The aim is to train specialized theatre artists who can combine skills, knowledge and methods from conceptual visual art with skills, techniques and methods from contemporary theatre and performance. The programmes require the students to participate in and devise complex theatre productions and to continuously train their skills. The students are expected to develop a strong awareness with respect to methods and production strategies. It is an important goal to educate professional artists who can work both in ensembles and independently (Retrieved from <http://www.hiof.no/index.php?ID=9675&lang=eng>).

The college specializes their education in devising and conceptual visual art and is the only educational institution in Norway with this specific profile. They emphasize the desire that their students be able to work both independently and collaboratively and in various contexts. The Academy welcomes foreign students and market the Academy in England, Portugal, Netherlands, the USA and Germany.

The site of investigation in this project was a devised collaborative performance-making process with students from the second year acting class. The production was carried out in January 2006 and the class consisted of four students from Norway, one from Germany, one from Ireland, one from Belgium and two from Portugal. The teaching language at the school is English.

In the second year of the bachelor degree the students make two productions: one independent production (which is the focus in this fieldwork) and one directed production, where the students work closely with a director, this year it was US director Jay Scheib. Throughout the year students take classes in dance and voice, and they are offered laboratory courses with different teachers who are engaged for a period of one to three weeks in acrobatics, singing, text work, improvisation, multimedia and composition.

The college has lived through some changes regarding profile and curriculum since the start in the late 1980s. The college was established as an education in puppet theatre before broadening its profile to figurative theatre education. From 2003 they

have offered a bachelor degree in acting and scenography and emphasize the aspect of conceptual art in both programs. At the same time, they changed the name of the school to The Norwegian Theatre Academy. In 2006, at the time when the fieldwork of this project was carried out, the bachelor degree in acting focused on the visual arts, in which the perception of images, space, sound and bodily awareness were central elements. The curriculum and content of the education depended to a large extent on the personnel involved at the time. Head of the Acting Department, Head of the Scenography Department and the Dean/Artistic Leader defined and produced the school's profile, consequently as the personnel alters, so does the profile of the school. At the time when this research study was carried out, the Head of the Acting Department was Torunn Kjølner.. Her artistic and professional partner was Head of the Scenography Department Rolf Alme, who has since left the school for another position. As has the Artistic Director Carl Lange. These three made up the team that developed the Academy into an institution that emphasized devising and the visual arts. The students at the Academy were exposed to these people's visions and artistic preferences. During the time there, there was a shift in personnel, which affected the school's profile and which has also affected the students because they were uncertain who would fill the vacant positions.

Torunn Kjølner became the Head of Acting and responsible for the students observed in this project. She followed their work closely during the year and integrated and framed the different visiting teachers' contributions to the students' curriculum. She was also their assessor and tutor. Kjølner was previously employed as Associate Professor at the Institute for Aesthetic Studies, Department of Dramaturgy, at the University of Aarhus, Denmark, but was offered the position as Head of the Acting Department at NTA for a period of four years. Kjølner is trained as an actor from Dartington College of the Arts (UK) and has devised and directed several professional performances. She is one of only a few in the Nordic research community who has written scholarly about devising. In the article "Devised Theatre - Experimental Drama", she introduced the concept of devising in the Nordic context for the first time (Kjølner 2001). In the book *Space and Composition* she contributed the article "Conceptual thinking and theatre making" together with her collaborator Rolf Alme. Here they outlined their understanding of the concepts of composition,

conceptual thinking and devising (Kjølner and Alme 2009). Kjølner was about to finish a book presenting her devising method called "Conceptual Devising", but sadly she passed away in 2008, before the book was published.

In January 2006 Torunn Kjølner met the second class acting students in order to discuss the independent production which was about to begin. She presented the intentions for the process, which was written into the plan for the spring term:

Independent productions are based on competence from all the areas of study and are intended to provide the students with experience in working independently on stage productions. The aim is to teach students how to devise and realize a production, for example by directing fellow students, making a video, writing a play, composing a site-specific work or producing some other kind of artistic product.

Tuition form: Self-study under supervision.

Assessment: Passed/failed - based on the presentation

Plan for the spring term 2006

The students were free to divide themselves into groups and make the independent production based on their own ideas. There was no tutoring unless they sent the tutor an e-mail where they explained their needs. There was a production meeting at the beginning of the process where the students presented their ideas and their technical needs for their teacher and Head of Department. They could receive some help with lighting, if desired, from the scenography students. If they were in need of buying costumes, stage properties, special scenography, etc.. they were required to send a request to Head of Department for financial support.

The class decided on finding a common heading for the project. A heading they could all use as an inspiration, regardless of who they worked with and what projects they were interested in. Since they were doing an independent project at the very start of a new year, the class agreed to use the heading: "The feeling of 2006" as an inspiration and as a starting point for the process. This title was very open, they said, and they could put almost anything they liked into it (Researchers journal 2006). It could lead to a variety of performances with different content and they

could focus on any theatrical form they wanted to explore. It also made them focus on what was going on in society and the world they lived in here and now. The teacher approved the idea.

Together with their teacher they decided to make some “devising dogmas” to help them “frame” the work; “rules as tools”, as Kjølner put it (Researchers journal 2006). They made a long list of possible dogmas and from this list they chose ten dogmas to guide their work:

2006

Visual recurring elements

Made for an European audience

Fit for festivals

Verfremdungs-effect, meta-theatrical comment

Elements of improvisation

A formal element to be decided

One real action

English only

Everything should be portable/exchangeable

You have to break one dogma

The students had one month to carry out the independent production before the opening night, which would take place at NTA in Fredrikstad. In March, however, they had an excursion to Berlin, where they were invited to perform their work. They were offered rehearsal space at the school and the process began.

Three students decided to make solo works; one examined the life and work of US poet Sylvia Plath, who committed suicide at the age of thirty-one; one student made a storytelling performance based on the Norwegian poet Lars Saabye Christensen’s novel “The Pig”; and one student made a solo performance called “Metamorphosis”, with acrobatics, mime and juggling as central elements in the performance. A group of six students, two male and four female, decided to make a collaborative work. The fieldwork in this project was concentrated on the collaborative work. Their making

process was observed, one male student from Norway, one female from Portugal and one female from Norway were interviewed (three interviews with each), and group discussions were video recorded, as were improvisations and performances. One of the students wrote a process protocol which was included in the data material, as were photographs and an interview with the teacher, Torunn Kjølnær.

6.2 Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne, Australia

Victorian College of the Arts is beautifully located at Southbank, the heart of the arts precinct in Melbourne, Australia. Melbourne's population at the time (2007) of the study was approximately 3.8 million.



Researcher's photograph of VCA, School of Drama.

The school presents itself as "Australia's leading visual and arts training institution" (see appendix 7.2). The College consists of six academic disciplines; Art, Dance, Drama, Music, Film and Television, Production.

At the time of the study VCA offered a one year postgraduate course in Theatre Animateuring, as part of their School of Drama. The course was described as follows on VCA's website;

Animateuring involves the creation of new performances through the mobilisation of expressive, artistic and imaginative faculties in a variety of artistic and community contexts, the ability to work individually or in small groups, the capacity to work within and across art forms, community

ownership of process and performance outcomes and collaboration within communities interested in developing and realising various forms of artistic performance. The animateur is a skilled performance artist (Dance and/or Theatre) with a central commitment to artistic leadership. He or she may be involved in various ways with the processes of creation, direction, facilitation, and performance. The role played is a pivotal one, with the success measured not only in artistic terms, but also by other indicators such as level of community support, participation, ownership and achievement of social and political goals (Retrieved from <https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2008/Q02>).

The role of the animateur is a pivotal one and is historically closely linked to the school's development of community theatre in Australia. The School of Drama was founded in 1976 and was a major force in the development of community theatre (Heddon and Milling 2006). Peter Oyston and Richard Murphet, who headed the programme, formed the students into small theatre companies. The animateurs were described as "primary creators who could make new theatre works of various kinds in various conditions" (Milne 2004:161). Animateur literally means "to breathe new life into" and the animateurs were trained to work in different communities in various ways using the process of creation, direction, facilitation and performance. The pivotal role of the animateur goes beyond artistic measures, although the animateur is also a skilled performance artist. The role includes community support, participation and achievement of social and political goals within the community. Although it is twenty years since the school was established and started to interact with communities in various ways, VCA still presented their aim on their website in 2008 as:

Nurturing and developing arts practitioners who will contribute through leadership, research, performance development and/or pedagogy to Australian culture in the arts, in particular those aspects of culture and society that lie outside the dominant paradigms (Retrieved from: <http://www.vca.unimelb.edu.au>).

The students are required to investigate form and meaning and expand the boundaries of all aspects of the art of drama whilst integrating their work with creative collaborators (ibid).

In 2007 there were eight positions available, and for the previous few years there had been five to six hundred applications. The entry requirements demanded at least five years of relevant documented professional experience in an area relevant to the animateuring specialization. The applicants were required to demonstrate previous artistic work in the form of a portfolio, PAL/CD/DVD and/or other relevant material.

Throughout the year of the study, the focus of the course changed. In term one the centre of attention was on the maker-performer aspect, where the animateurs were introduced to artistic project planning and to different laboratory work. The laboratory work started with an intensive course before they began a weekly task based on the intensive course. The week ended with a showing of a duet performance, developed with other members of the group, in a studio performance format. For instance, they worked with light design one week. At the beginning of the week they got a light- and design intensive with artist Ben Cobham and Helen Herbertson, demonstrating experimental work with light and design. Subsequently the animateurs got a follow-up task: "Apply these ideas/principles/notions of light as language to the extract of the drama play Quick Death". They worked in pairs on this task and at the end of the week there was a showing of the work.

Term two was focused on devising a solo performance. This became the field work material of this project. The students devised a solo work developed for a short season in a studio performance format.

In term three the animateurs worked as maker-directors where they directed and ran the whole theatre -making process with a group of first year acting students.

In the final term they worked as generator performers, where they made a big scale performance together with their teachers, a composer, film makers and other actors from the school.

Throughout the year, the students collaborated with other students at the school, such as choreographers, scenographers, pedagogues, and they formed close

relationships with those they worked with throughout the year. They received voice training, physical movement training, dance training and a course in generative writing.

At the time there was one male and seven female students in the Postgraduate Theatre Animateuring course, aged twenty-two to thirty-three. There were several international students: one from South Africa, one from Germany and one from Columbia. The rest were from Australia.

I followed the students work partly in term one and two, using the solo performances as the main source of data collection. Interviews with three of the students (all aged 23) were undertaken, two interviews of each student. I had access to the students' process protocols, took video recordings of performances and also of some of the improvisations from term one. I also did interviews with the Head of School and Postgraduate studies, Richard Murphet, and Head of the Theatre Making Department, Leisa Shelton.

Leisa Shelton was the main lecturer for the theatre animateurs; she also lectured at the Centre for Ideas, at VCA. She met the animateurs on a daily basis throughout the year and was their tutor and assessor. Shelton trained and worked in Paris (1983-89), at the Ecole de Mime Corporel Dramatique, where she was teaching assistant and company member. She returned to Australia in 1989 and joined the Meryl Tankard Company, participating in the creation and performance of several devised works that toured nationally and internationally until 1993. Shelton has been Physical Text consultant for productions with several Australian companies, such as Company B. Belvoir, Sydney Theatre Co., Blueprints and the Malthouse. She has run physical theatre and director's courses at the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) and was Head of Physical Performance at the VCA School of Drama 1998-2003. In 2006 she ran a one year performance training program in Melbourne called "Embodiment of the Actor". This practice integrated the spirit of the training developed by Etienne Decroux (Mime Corporeal), alongside physical training drawn from Vinyasa yoga, gymnastic and Eastern methodologies, drawn together with improvisation to create a path toward contemporary theatre practice in which the physical language of the

performer is pre-eminent. In 2007 she was appointed head of the post-graduate Animateuring department at VCA.

As the animateurs and Leisa Shelton started the solo work in term two the students were told to do anything they liked in their solo work. The teacher did not put any limitations to their work, but challenged them to do something they had not done before in their career. Also they were encouraged to examine their work from term one, when they have been introduced to different intensive courses and subsequent workshop tasks. They were encouraged to invite fellow students at the school of drama, and directors, to discuss and observe their work. Every Monday the class and their teacher met and presented their work-in-progress, verbally or on the floor. The students were responsible for scenography, lighting and technique and had to contact the production staff if they needed space and technical equipment to realize their scenic ideas. They were on a low budget and had to make use of whatever was available at the school regarding costumes, scenography, props and lighting. There are several performance spaces at the campus and they were encouraged to consider different sites at an early stage of the process. They were requested to keep a protocol of their working process, where they were to reflect upon their solo work process.

6.3 Similarities and differences in the fieldwork

The two fieldworks in this study had similarities and differences. Obviously the two schools were located in different countries on the opposite side of the world. Nevertheless, they both belonged to the Western society and its experimental theatre traditions. NTA offered a bachelor program while the VCA study was a postgraduate course. The different degree levels indicate that the postgraduate students were more experienced and skilled than the Norwegian bachelor students. But, despite the different degree levels at the two schools, all of the students were trained and experienced with regard to performance-making, and the students' curriculum vitae show that the differences were more noticeable on a subjective level than on a degree level.

The curriculums at the two schools showed similarities; they both offered extensive laboratory work, they introduced the students to different experimental artists' work

during the year and used artists as lecturers. They both made the students produce several devised performances and workshop showings throughout the year and they had one teacher who followed the students' work closely. The two schools offered similar quality location and economic and technical conditions for the performance-making process. However, the two schools have different histories and VCA belongs to a bigger university (Melbourne University) than NTA does, which means that VCA have access to many other disciplines and specialist environments and can collaborate with other departments. VCA has existed for thirty years, while NTA has a ten year history. This means that VCA has twenty years of experience with running the school and developing different profiles and curriculums.

Whereas NTA today has a conceptual art profile, VCA has traditionally focused on community work, and this focus is evident in their appropriation of the French term *animateurs* (which means to "breathe new life into") into a community theatre context. Despite these differences, both schools emphasize the importance of teaching their students to be able to work in different theatrical contexts, to manage multiple tasks, to inhabit different roles and be able to work both collaboratively and independently.

The data collection at VCA was focused on three solo works while the field work at NTA concerned a single collaborative work. Devised solo work and collaborative work are different with regards to processes and collaboration. In a solo show the performance is written, directed and performed by a single person and this puts lots of responsibility on the student regarding self-discipline in the process, much work (having to do most tasks on her own) and fewer people to discuss and collaborate with in the process. At the same time, solo work gives the maker a great deal of control over the process, since she is not forced to make a fusion of ideas with somebody else. Nevertheless, a solo deviser does not work totally on her own or without influences from others. The VCA students in the study collaborated with each other and with director students and scenographers. They received tutoring from their teacher, and other staff members were asked to comment on their work.

A group devised process includes extensive discussions, negotiations and co-operations. The group dynamic is an important part of the process, as different people with different experiences and interests must co-create a performance together as a group.

While acknowledging the differences between solo work and collaborative work, the focus of this study is not on these differences. Rather the diverse formats serve as examples of different ways to devise theatrical work. The emphasis in both sites of investigation was on how experience is connected to the devised practice, irrespective of whether it is a solo work format or a collaborative format.

APPENDIX 7 DATA MATERIAL ANALYSIS FORM (SAMPLE)

This is an excerpt from the researchers working paper with the data material. It shows how the data was organized into essential themes emerging from the nature of the data.

ESSENS IN THE DATA MATERIAL

	SARAH	NANCY	PRINTER
<p>The most important-what matters to the students in this project</p> <p>Feeling/emotion</p>	<p>Investigating presence /.../when I move through most public spaces I feel like an object, devoid of individuality. People look through me, or they look down so they don't have to address me or they watch me as an object (a young female body). I am tired of this. It is a sad dangerous problem for humanity that we become automatons. It is even worse if this way of being is perpetuated in the theatre. (Sarah reflection paper: seeking presence, page 1)</p>	<p>Telling her story Autobiographic "I want to present an autobiographical piece about my difficult relationship with dance and of how that early exposure to training and performance shaped a somewhat warped personal perception of dance, theater and my body. It developed in me a feeling of worthlessness and a deeply held belief that I would never measure up to an unattainable ideal. It also established a very narrow definition of what dance and a dancer is and can be". Wants to try out the stand up form; to see if she can manage it</p>	<p>Presenting perceptions of war Cultural Aesthetic Perspective; Mohammed drawings, Norway at 'war' in papers - the common matter. Other personal matters; Tim wants to work with text, Andrea wants to make text, Rebecca wants to direct Feeling of 2006: Fear Wants to say that war is wrong, save the world,</p>
<p>Intentions</p>	<p>Investigate intimate interactions between humans in public space in everyday life. 'Pedestrian and Theatrical presence in space Journal notes;3</p>	<p>Want's to be honest, tell her true story: content; wants to tell her autobiographical ballet story, Form; wants to make a Stand up with dance, comedy, and physical movement</p>	<p>Searching for ways of staging aspects of war (the dilemmas, its ontology and cruelty). Use Pinter as material and medium.</p>

<p>Lived experience starting point and Material</p>	<p>6 starting points: 1 Dead woman in Prague, 2 Relation to her mother, 3 The paper woman, 4 Generative writing, 5 The Idiots and the Princess Bride, Holocaust Images</p> <p>Objects, former work, residues</p>	<p>-Her ballet story -Her body -Biographical material; programmes, costumes, videos, pictures, posters, music, dances from her childhood. Real people and real happenings. - Try out a form; herself in the form</p>	<p>3 driving forces: 1 Harold Pinters speech, 2 Ashes to Ashes, 3 personal material, Internet search</p> <p>Collective impulse; say something about war</p> <p>Private interests (directing, acting, choreographing, text, witness to war)</p>
<p>Organizing And method</p>	<p>Working method; reminds of children playing; action based, explores objects, flow experience (afterwards; what was that all about?), form-seeking, having fun. Makes a plan each day, which she never follows No external guide, her intuition is her guide. Her intention is an open investigation of the multiple material.</p>	<p>Working method; works as a researcher (on her own life) re-constructing real events, staging the linear story and her feelings.</p> <p>Her story is her guide. Intends to tell her story.</p>	<p>Working method: like an ant hill, dividing tasks and roles organically. No formal leader, but Andrea started the process and gives incentives to her idea world during the process.</p> <p>Pinter is the guide They throw the material on the floor and start to pick up the pieces and put them together anew. They use the Pinter material in many different ways; makes a new script, choreography, creates a sense of "underlying fear" as they identify in the play and the speech, same political message as Pinter. Intends to use Pinter a guide.</p>
<p>Select and compose</p>	<p><i>S: It's just a feeling. A feeling that it's... I don't know really. I've got an idea in my head of what I want to and it doesn't fit..</i> <i>S: When you are absolute sure you've got nerve battles against material. Like when text meets other material and you have no more questions, they seem to be right. Those words keep coming up; it seems right. Your intuition says it seems right</i> .Interview Sarah, page 5. Composed as a series of action. Wants the audience to be co-creators of the work; <i>G: I hope that it gets the imagination working, so that they perhaps..cause they're not connected to...the trick is to let</i></p>	<p>Composes the material in order to make a linear story. Starts in the beginning of her childhood, develops negative and ends well; her inverted dramaturgical curve (see interview). The music are chosen in order to further the narratives.</p>	<p><i>Hvordan startet dere da dere begynte å sette sammen stykket og talen? Hva var det dere så etter?</i> /.../mye av forarbeidet er gjort på bordet, når vi har diskutert og snakket om hva vi alle ville jobbe med. /.../ Andrea 1.interview, page 6</p> <p>/.../Det er så sterke kontraster,.. vi setter sammen vakre deler av skuespillet med de sterke meningene fra talen. På denne måten må publikum selv tenke over hva det er som blir sagt og gjort på scenen, som å tenke på om det var</p>

	<p><i>them imagine for themselves, make the connections themselves. Instead of explaining too much.</i> Interview Sarah, page 6.</p>	<p>Wants to tell her story, make the audience understand her story. Many audiences have familiar experiences and can connect to it in that way.</p>	<p>morsomt, om det var en spøk, er det meningen at vi skal le nå? / ... / Andrea 1.interview, page 5</p>
<p>Political Testemonial times</p>	<p>Shares her perception of the world. <i>/ ... / the absence of contact and touch in public spaces. Being in such busy places, yet feeling alone or a sense of loneliness when there is people passing by you all the time and everyone is so enclosed in their own little worlds. That upsets me.</i> Sarah Interview, page 1</p> <p>C: Would you say that your work is political in a way? S: I like to think it is. I ask questions on how thing are done and why. Sarah Interview, page 7 and 8</p> <p>A white, middleclass female's right to share her perception of the world (see quote in the confirmation tape)</p>	<p>Coming-out story (Heddon autobio). Tells how she has experienced injustice and overcome it.</p> <p>Also political regarding her being a student at VCA; Acting against her teachers advice in order to manifest her right to use the form she finds best for telling her story.</p>	<p>A message; war is terrible and war has its own paradoxes and its own discourse/logic/(how USA treats the rest of the world in order to maintain power). Treat/adapt bearbeide their experiences as witnesses to war – what can we do about it? The helplessness in being a passive witness. –see Heddon autobi.: <i>The affect of traumatic historical experience extends also to those 'who have not stood directly in the path of historical trauma, who do not share bloodlines with its victims</i> (Miller and Tougaw in Heddon 2008:69) Karen quote; We can change the world if you help me.. we can make this performance</p>
<p>Form Key words to describe the performance</p>	<p>Series of actions Playful Different personas Strong presence – strong absence when she left Circular, organic form Circulation of states The performance is 'becoming' in the meeting with audience (could not have been played without audience) Audience co-players Theatrical and everyday expressions Everyday objects Funny Unpredictable Displacement / defamiliarisation Happening - Event</p>	<p>Autobiographic Stand up form Linear story Dance (ballet and physical movements) Clear story – clear message Humoristic Reversed Aristotelian curve (up side down) Relaxed, casual acting style A bit dodgy (scenography, dance, lightning, scratchy loud speakers) Coming out story</p>	<p>Fragmented Intertextual Non Linear Open ended Creates feelings and pictures, no singular message or story Rhizomatic Contrasts (leads to humor) Doubling Blurring Presentation</p>

Cultural influence	Popular culture; Films; The Idiots and The Princess Bride Human behavior in social space Female bodies	Stand up form; reality/autobiographical Ballet/Dance How the body should look	War; Mohammad drawings Pinter's Nobel peace prize speech
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APPENDIX 8 SUMMARY OF THE ANALYSIS

8.1 Summary of the analysis of the first phase of the creative process (Chapter 6).

	Case Nancy	Case Sarah	Case Printer HPXX11
NARRATIVE	<p>Starts with a strong personal past experience</p> <p>↓</p> <p>An autobiographical memory</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Touchstone experience</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Self-defining memory</p>	<p>Starts by defining what matters to her</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Multiple and varied experiences</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Particular interest; Investigating presence</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Three modes of presence; social/theatrical/subjective</p>	<p>Starts by a facination of Harold Pinter's speech;</p> <p>↓</p> <p>A secondary/social experience</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Links to a primary feeling of helplessness/emphaty</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Different layers of the social experience</p>
SPACE AND TIME	<p>Closed formal space: stand-up</p> <p>Unity of time</p>	<p>Open space: Open work</p> <p>Heterogenous time</p>	<p>Open space: Open work</p> <p>Heterogenous time</p>
BODY	<p>The self who was and the self who is</p>	<p>A play with the self</p>	<p>Empathic self</p>
INTENTION	<p><u>Primary intention:</u> To tell her true story</p>	<p><u>Primary intention:</u> To investigate presence</p>	<p><u>Primary intention:</u> Processing their perceptions of war</p>

Summary of the analysis of the first phase of the creative process.

8.2 Summary of the analysis of the second phase of the creative process (Chapter 7).

	Case Nancy	Case Sarah	Case Printer HPXX11
NARRATIVE	<pre> graph TD A[Primary intention: tell her autobiographical memory] --> B[Separation of the memory into elements: dance, photos, posters, costumes] B --> C[Performance] C --> D[Change: new movements, new reflections] D --> E[Combines the material and re-structures the memory] E --> A </pre>	<pre> graph TD A[Primary intention: investigate presence] --> B[Separation into elements: six starting points] B --> C[Performance] C --> D[Change the material through improvisation] D --> E[Make new connections through intuition] E --> A </pre>	<pre> graph TD A[Primary intention: Explore perceptions of war] --> B[Separation into Pinter's speech, Pinter's drama, internet search] B --> C[Performance] C --> D[Cuts and glues the elements in to a new play] D --> E[Interdependent intertextual meaning making process] E --> A </pre>
SPACE AND TIME	Closed space and time causes conflict within her cultural context.	Creates an appropriate space for investigating presence. Ideas are travelling through space and time.	Lack of theatrical space and time leads to “Agonies of creation”.
BODY	Develops an embodied autobiographical character; a version of her self.	Develops different personae; different facets of her self.	Social intertextuality more important than individual body-characters.
INTUITION	Intuition tells her how to structure the story.	Works with unconscious material until her intuition tells her a connection is there.	Know when there is a intertextual connection between the texts by intuition.

Summary of the analysis of the second phase of the creative process.

8.3 Summary of the analysis of the third phase of the creative process (Chapter 8).

	Case Nancy	Case Sarah	Case Printer HPXX11
NARRATIVE	<pre> graph TD A[Linear narrative] --> B[Coming-out story Audience as witness] B --> C[A new touchstone experience] C --> D[Closure of the memory] </pre>	<pre> graph TD A[Action based event] --> B[Creating social awareness] B --> C[Estranging everyday experiences] C --> D[Creates existential presence] </pre>	<pre> graph TD A[Metafictional narrative] --> B[Multiple voices and in epretations] B --> C[Fragmented and ambiguous world] C --> D[Open but closed work] </pre>
SPACE AND TIME	<p>Cathartic experience : (for herself and confronted with the cultural context). Bridge between childhood and the present through time and space.</p>	<p>Open, mobile, free and risky space. Invites to physical interaction where the audience becomes co-makers in the performance.</p>	<p>Open space which in tegrates the audience in the powergame.</p>
BODY	<p>Presenting an embodied autobiographical character; a telling body with different layers of the self.</p>	<p>Exploring facets of her selves in the meeting with the audience in the social performance space.</p>	<p>Different acting styles which are juxtaposed. Embodied message; Shold all voices have equal status?</p>

Summary of the analysis of the third phase of the creative process.

APPENDIX 9 PHASES IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS

PHASES IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS

G. Wallas	L. Vygotsky	H. Aaltonen
<p>“The art of thought” (1926/1945: 51-76)</p>	<p>«Imagination and Creativity in Childhood» (1930/2004: 25-31)</p>	<p>«Intercultural Bridges» (2006: 163)</p>
<p><u>Phase 1 PREPARATION</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p><u>Phase 2 INCUBATION</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p><u>Phase 3 INSIGHT</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p><u>Phase 4 VALIDATION</u></p>	<p>1. Experience 2. Separation into single elements; Disassociations 3. Change; enlargement or decreasing 4. Associations 5. Combinations of elements 6. External Pictures</p>	<p>1. Seduction 2. Theme and Form 3. Negotiation and combination of parts 4. Rehearsing 5. Performing</p>

Mermikides and Smart	R. Mock
«Devising in process» (2010: 22-28)	«Performing Processes» (2000: 5)
1 Generation of Ideas/ Initial ideas and starting points 2 Exploration and development 3 Shaping the material into a structured piece 4 Performance and production 5 Reflection	5 processes fundamental to the creation of performance: 1 Processes of <u>Conception</u> 2 Processes of <u>Development</u> 3 Processes of <u>Presentation</u> 4 Processes of <u>Reception</u> 5 Processes of <u>Reflection</u>

T. Kjølner	T. Kjølner	T. Kjølner
«Being and Acting» (1994: 199-205)	«A Handbook for Devising» (2003: 1)	Konseptuell Devising (Unpublished 2009: 9)
1. Seduction (forlokkelse) 2. Exercising 3. Devising 4. Rehearsing	Most devised processes are divided into distinct phases, each with specific focus; 1 Generate material 2 Select and compose material 3 Rehearse and perform	Metoden koseptuell devising har tre helt adskilte prosessfaser: A) Materialproduksjons fasen B) Komposisjonsfasen C) Iscenesettelsesfasen

APPENDIX 10 INTERVIEW-GUIDE

1. INTERVIEW (in the beginning of the production)

- What are your expectations for this production?
- What is your favorite performance so far?
- Why do you want to work with theatre?
- Why are you studying at VCA? How do you like it here?
- Have you applied for other theatre educations?

- What are your ideas for this production?
- How did you get the idea?
- What do you want to investigate in this production? Why?
- Do you feel that you are being heard and understood by the others?
- Could you describe the working process so far?
- What methods do you use?

2. INTERVIEW (midway in the production)

- What is happening right now?
- Can you describe the working process so far?
- How would you describe your working method?

3. INTERVIEW (after the show)

- How was it to perform?
- Can you describe your performance?
- How do you think it worked?
- What are you most satisfied with?
- What could have been done differently?
- How was the working process?
- What method did you use?
- Did it fulfill your expectations?

THE NORWEGIAN INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. INTERVJU (starten av produksjonen)

- Hvilke forventninger har du til "independent production"?
 - Hva er din beste teateropplevelse som utøver, hvorfor?
 - Hvorfor vil du jobbe med teater?
 - Hvorfor går du på Akademi for scenekunst? Hvordan liker du deg her?
 - Har du søkt teaterhøgskolen?
 - Hvordan foregikk inndelingen i grupper?
 - Hvilke ideer hadde du til denne produksjonen?
 - Hvordan fikk/får du ideen?
 - Hva vil du med denne produksjonen? - hvorfor?
-
- Hvordan går arbeidet i gruppa?
 - Føler du at du blir hørt og forstått?
 - Kan du beskrive arbeidsprosessen så langt?
 - Hvilke metoder bruker du/dere?

2. INTERVJU (underveis i produksjonen)

- Hva skjer nå?
- Kan du beskrive arbeidsprosessen så langt?
- Hvilke metoder bruker du/dere?
- Hvordan fungerer samarbeidet på gruppa?

3. INTERVJU (etter produksjonen)

- Hvordan var det å spille?
- Kan du beskrive forestillinga?
- Hvordan synes du forestillinga ble?

- Hva er du mest fornøyd med?
- Hva kunne vært gjort annerledes?
- Hvordan var arbeidsprosessen
- Hvilken metode brukte dere?
- Hvordan fungerte samarbeidet med de andre?
- Svarte produksjonen til forventningene du hadde?

The interviews took the form of a conversation, which gave the opportunity for gathering detailed information about the process and for participants to reflect on that process. The first interview sought to identify who the expert informant was; his/her theatrical and social background, especially focusing on when and how their interest in performance-making started, what education they had, what theatrical experience they had, what kind of theatre they liked to see and what kind of theatre they had made earlier. It also focused on how they found the school, the other students and the teacher, but most of all it focused on why they found it important to make theatre.

When the working process continued and the researcher started to reflect on what the students were doing and what they were thinking in the rehearsal space, the middle interviews were used to confront them with the researcher's interpretations of their activities. By doing so the researcher's interpretations were sometimes confirmed, sometimes adjusted and sometimes the researcher realized that she had interpreted a session or a comment in a completely different manner to the student's perception of their own experience. The midway interview also tried to take the pulse on how the students experienced the working process. The students were asked to comment and elaborate on particular events or phenomena observed in the process which the researcher had found unclear or especially interesting.

The final interviews were carried out after the opening night and focused on the feelings the students had after performing, how they experienced the interaction and response from the audience, how they liked the performance and if the performance fulfilled their expectations and intentions.

APPENDIX 11 SUMMARY OF THE DEVISING PROCESSES

This appendix provides a short description of the devising process for each devised production (Case Nancy, Case Sarah, Case Printer HPXX11), summarized by the researcher. This provides an introduction and initial insight into the devising processes, which represents the data used in the study.

“It’s all about release ”

Describing Nancy’s process

Nancy had an idea from the start that she wanted to make an autobiographic stand-up comedy based on a strong experience from her childhood. She danced ballet from when she was a little girl until she was fifteen. She was bullied by her fellow dancers because they considered her to be too fat to be a ballet dancer and this made her stop dancing. In this performance work she uses the opportunity to go back to these childhood memories and make a stand-up dance show based on these memories. She starts the process by looking at her diaries from her childhood and this makes her remember how she felt at that age. It is urgent for her to tell a true story based on her autobiographic material.

The process runs smooth until she hits a bump towards the end of the process, when her teacher does not approve her working with a standard stand-up format. She loses confidence and wants to give up the show. But another teacher from the school sees a rehearsal and he approves her work and helps her improve the show. She works mostly alone, creating the show in the rehearsal space, writing and thinking on the pram or in bed. She goes through the text-in-progress with her friends and discusses it with her fellow students, but she does not show it to an audience until the opening night. The audience gives her a great response and there is a lot of laughter during the performance.

She starts the process with an idea of working with a fixed or “closed” format (stand-up comedy), and she experiences personal release in being able to re-work her bad

memories into a new experience by using the stand-up format. She is inspired by the work of Daniel Kitzen (Researchers résumé of the process).

“Investigating presence ”

Describing Sarah’s process

Sarah’s artistic work can be described as ongoing process where experiences from her earlier performance work are used as the impetus for the next work. She starts this particular process by writing a list of hundred things that matter to her at the moment in her life in general. Her work is marked by a magnitude of influences and experiences which she investigates during the process. She is particularly concerned with presence in public and theatrical spaces. Her experience of absence of contact with other people in public spaces; being in busy places feeling lonely; everyone being enclosed in their own world, is important for her to explore in this process.

Sarah is having an open process in that she allows for several different experiences to connect during improvisations on the floor, she has not decided the outcome of the performance process in advance and she clearly articulates that the performance will be influenced and created by the participation and presence of the audience.

She uses physical improvisations on the floor as her main working method, or “playing around- having fun” as she says (Interview Sarah, Appendix 3.2) and starts every session with a two hour physical and improvisational training where she develops a physical method (“Body as antennae”, Appendix 4.2.1) for creating personal awareness and presence.

She works on her own in the space, but gets feedback from the class and her tutor three times during the process. She is very devoted to the work, uses many personal experiences and develops her own working method for this particular process in an autonomous way. During the process she is often thinking of how the audience will react and hopes they will interact with her in order to create theatrical and human presence. During the performances she experiences that the audience is drawn into the performance and their active participation makes the project successful to her in

that both she and many of the audience alike are having an experience of presence (Appendix 4.2.2). She is inspired by the work of artists like Keira O'Reilly, Mona Hatoum and Marina Abramovic (Researchers résumé of the process).

“Processing perceptions of war ”

Describing the group Printer HPXX11's process

The collective process is different from the other solo cases in that several different ideas have to be negotiated and developed collaboratively in the group. The group hits a common nerve when they see Harold Pinter's speech which he gave when he received the Nobel Peace Prize in Literature in 2005. His thoughts about war and politics inspire the group to investigate their own perceptions of war. None of them have experienced war themselves, but all of them would like to contribute to a more peaceful world and they would like to make a performance based on this aspiration. The group process is dynamic and democratic without a defined leader. They share tasks and responsibility based on personal wishes and aspirations.

Pinter's speech and also his dramatic work are used as inspiration for creating text, making choreography, visual and physical images and characters. The process runs smooth without many obstacles until they are having a showing for their teacher in the middle of the process. The teacher thinks they are banging on open doors when they attack media for presenting unimportant matters and she also thinks the show lacks a visual concept. The group gets frustrated and tries out different conceptual ideas without finding a solution. They go back to where they were before the tutoring and land the project without ever finding a real solution to the challenge from the teacher. They create an experimental performance open for audience interpretation and they experience good feedback from the audience.

But the group is first and foremost concerned about the group process which they consider a success. Earlier they have had many experiences with uncreative collective work, but this time they feel they have created a good working environment and the thing they appreciate the most is the ability this project gives them to discuss a matter close to their hearts; their perceptions of war (Researchers résumé of the process).