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Laura Stacey M.A by Research Thesis

Between Axiomatic Equality and Agonistic Pluralism: reconsidering the interpersonal relations between performer and director roles in performance collaboration

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Abstract

This thesis aims to reconsider the interpersonal relations between performer and director roles through Jacques Ranciere's axiomatic equality and Chantal Mouffe's agonistic pluralism.

The research addresses criticisms of 'collaboration' in theatre making and looks at how collaboration has become an accepted term in contemporary performance discourse. Ideas of freedom and equality formed by the democratic ideologies of the 60s will be questioned to see where democratic strategies may fit within contemporary performance collaboration.

Axiomatic equality and agonistic pluralism will be used interdependently to look at the performer and director roles in performance collaboration.

These ideas have been explored as practical research. Through a 'push-pull' dynamic of the practice-theory paradigm, principles of temporary hegemonic structure, visibility and distance were formed to act as democratic strategies.

The practice was conducted over a four month practical exploration with three core group members at the University of Huddersfield. The thesis will be accompanied by resources of documentation in the form of DVDs and an Artist Box.

The reconstitution of the roles was formed through the design of strategies titled *Open Space, Secret Roles* and *Not in Service.* Ultimately the practice enabled attributes of the performer and director roles to be shared by individuals who made up the collaborative group.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Arriving at the initial questions

December 1st 2010, caught between a megaphone, a thirteen year old boy dithering in a T-shirt and a twenty six year old youth explaining what was going on: the boy said, “shouldn’t a single mum in her thirties be running the country?” I was one of many, running to and running away from the police; the famous streets merged into one. They held no sophistication or glamour anymore, but were our stomping ground of songs, chants and physicalised master plans. As we marched down what I thought was Oxford Street, office workers peered down whilst politely popping Marks and Spencer’s sandwiches into their mouths. I looked up and listened to the bellow of instruction from someone not much older than myself. We turned down a street and fifteen minutes later another command was given out and we did it. A young woman began: "No ifs no buts no education cuts.” We joined in. We all listened and responded, spoke and led. Rules and instructions rung from one person’s mouth to the next. We moved forward, watching and observing the police as we squeezed down a narrow street. The police stood tall, lined up, never once blinking. Three seconds later they darted from their positions, I shouted “Kettle!” along with the other twenty alerting voices. My friend moved back and I ran forward. Others retreated backwards up the street. A split in the group had formed. How was this working? How did we all know what to do and where to go? The potential to move together as one was present; upheld by the trust in each person’s voice and decision.

We arrived three hours later in Trafalgar square: cold, hungry and exhilarated. We met up to explode into dance, fire starting and chant. We were tightly hemmed in

by the police uniforms but through a variety of commands we were united: a shared commonality and ownership of the unpretentious performance we were creating in the square. It was here that I witnessed thousands of students and workers navigated by an array of different voices and bodies in the crowd.

This was my experience of the third Student Protest in 2010 against the University fees. I was already undergoing my master's research, but the experience had a profound effect on my questions on performance collaboration. It reignited concerns which had been at the surface of my professional and undergraduate practice as a performer for the previous four years.

Collaboration had become a familiar word which was passed by the tongues of fellow performance students, graduates and professionals alike. As I stepped out into professional practice, working with different performance companies, the term became cemented onto funding applications, networking events and within the rehearsal space: we were 'collaborating'. I was frequently told that I was collaborating with a director; congratulated that it was a great collaboration, and when things didn't work out that the collaboration needed to function differently. It was a word that was applied by someone else to what we were doing. As the collaborative lingo was adopted, I frantically scribed it onto CVs and laced it into conversations. However, the continuing niggling sensation remained, as I acquiesced with the quotidian of saying yes and no to a director. This pressure increased when I wasn't paid for a project I had been working on for three months and was later evicted from my home: I felt a disempowerment and fragility as a performer. I wondered how this fitted in with discourse on political changes which moved towards a more democratic practice. Where did collaboration and democracy

meet? What was my role in this as a performer? As a professional and a student I was open and willing to speak about ideas, however frequently found there was little place or time for this in the ‘collaborative’ process. I moved through various projects, but I was still being told where to stand and what to say. The final product of the performance remained with the director. The director was able to take the made performance, recast it, change it and take it away from the people who had originally made it. As I began researching further, my place as a performer seemed to fit into descriptions of traditional practice associated with text based performance. Instead of being dictated to by the words on a page, it was words from a mouth. It is not to say that all of my experiences were the same, however similar questions arose from several experiences between me and a director. These questions, however, did subside when I worked as a performer with IOU Theatre on *Electric Fields* (2009). David Wheeler, the artistic director, set us one task for the whole of the performance, which we worked on for four weeks. The task was to move a car from one end of the space to the other using several props. The performers decided how the car moved and what props were used within the scenes. Wheeler would observe what the performers had created and with other members of the company, feedback. There was freedom for our ideas to be enacted in the space, enabling us to have a sense of ownership over what we had made and form the trajectory of the performance.

It is because of these experiences that I wanted to attempt a practice which looked at the performer and director in collaboration; reconsidering the interpersonal relations by egalitarian methods.

Performer and Director Roles

The following research will reconsider the interpersonal relations between the roles of performer and director in performance collaboration. Although there are other roles such as playwright, stage manager and designer which can collaborate to make a performance, this research will look at the two roles which conventionally *create* together through, though not exclusively, voice, thought and body.

Emma Govan, Helen Nicholas & Katie Normington in *Making a Performance: Devising Histories and Contemporary Practice* describe collaborative and devising strategies as fluid (2007:4-7). The fluidity of the strategies can be recognised in the flexibility of the performer and director roles, as roles can change between the company, group and performance. It may, however, be useful to look at some views of the performer and director roles in collaboration to establish how they relate in the process. I am not setting out to diametrically oppose the roles of performer and director but to reconsider the interpersonal relations between the roles.

In the recent publication of *Actors' Voices: The People behind the Performances* (2012), author Patrick O'Kane offers the perspective that the performer can have a silent voice within the making process. Part of the reason for O'Kane's research is to highlight the insecurity of the performer role within the making process: ". . . Some actors were simply too nervous to make a contribution to this book in fear of finding themselves on some sort of creative black list" (O'Kane, 2012:10). Interestingly, a similar thought is articulated in an interview with performer and writer Tim Crouch. Crouch states the lack of input which performers face compared to other members of the company:

> [...] we need to find a practice that enables an actor to feel that they are not purely interpreting other peoples' ideas that they are also owning ideas that

> they might have themselves or that they are entitled to have themselves. (O'Kane, 2012:92)

Similarly an account documented by Lourdes Orozco in *Making Contemporary Theatre: International Rehearsal Processes* (2010) brings to attention the fragility of the performer's position in the making process:

> One performer confessed to me that [...] generating new material on stage had been the hardest part of the process due to the overwhelming fear that the director's negative responses produced in the performers. The shyness and courteousness tinting the performer's general behaviour in the rehearsal room made clear to me that not all of them overcame that fear (Orozco, 2010:126)

In response to these accounts this research aims to find strategies which attempt to avoid performers becoming, as Crouch states "mouth pieces for other people's ideas" (O'Kane, 2012:92). Crouch believes that the role of director should be one which, ". . . empower[s] the actor so that the actor can then have ownership over the project (O'Kane, 2012: 92). Further, Harry Wilson describes the director's role in *Director in Devised Theatre* as a ". . . validator, enabler . . . teacher and co-learner" in a "collective discovery" with the performer (2012:12). Part of my research will look at attributes which are customarily assigned to the role of performer and director; to see if there can be cross overs between the roles when working in collaboration. How may the performer be more flexible in having a voice, a platform for opinion and generating starting points in collaboration?

In *Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical Handbook* Alison Oddey raises the question as to how the performer role may have changed through the rise of collaborative and devising strategies. The performer is described by Oddey as more significant within the making process than the "stereotypes" related to text based theatre (1994:9-11). Oddey outlines that through devising practices the

performer has been invited to an “opportunity and challenge” to make work from a starting point, resulting in **“. . .** greater status and input” (1994: 11). According to Oddey the collaborative and devising process can allow more, “freedom”, “opportunity”, “flexibility,” “integration,” and “exchange of ideas or roles” between individuals in a group (1994:9-11). It is the idea of freedom and opportunity within performance discourse that has become attached to the practice of collaboration. As Jane Milling and Deirdre Heddon, in *Devising Histories: A Critical History,* highlight how the origins of collaboration have been associated with the notions of freedom and ask how possible this really is (2006:4).

Organisational structures in companies and the democratic ideals within performance practice can be said to have brought ambivalence to the roles of performer and director throughout the history of performance collaboration. Alex Mermikides in *Making Contemporary Theatre: International Rehearsal Processes* comments that theatre companies in the 60s and 70s had mistrusted hierarchy and thus looked for alternative democratic strategies (2010:105). However, Mermikides reflects that democratic strategies were all too often difficult to sustain and appeared to create unstable organisations (2010:105). The ideologies of the 60s and 70s have caused a continued struggle to find a way of working which accommodates democratic ideas to include everyone in the process whilst sustaining the viability of the company. As Harry Wilson describes, “. . . companies must balance collectivity with leadership in order for voices to be heard” (2012: 39). Furthermore, Govan et al state:

> The problem of how collaboration works in practice and how companies that are committed to fostering the creativity of the performer manage divisions of labour for theatrical production are recurring issues (2007:38).

The misleading conflation between collaboration and democracy is expressed by Heddon and Milling's "sceptical" attitude surrounding the rhetoric of democracy, equality and freedom (2009:6). But where does this leave collaboration in contemporary discourse?

Collaboration: An empty discourse

Although there is scepticism around the 1960s rhetoric of equality and freedom there was consideration as to 'who' was making the work and the group dynamics: who was leading, who was speaking, who was deciding. It could be argued that there is now little critical discourse relating to the structures and relationships of collaboration; it is "[. . .] so prevalent, so present, that critical enquiry has been so sparse" (Heddon &Milling, 2006:1). This lack of critical analysis has led to an understanding of the term collaboration which is simply accepted; a partnership based on an assumed equality between participants. As Catherine Hale in her thesis *An Agonistic Approach to Democratic Devising: Foursight Theatre, Collaboration and the Creative Process* (2010) states, "equality is not a naturally occurring phenomenon and therefore has to be engineered and regulated at some level" (2010:36). For Heddon and Milling the lack of enquiry into collaboration in contemporary practice inevitably signposts a shared acceptance that collaboration just "is" (2006:1). The acceptance that collaboration "is" can leave individuals in the process somewhat abandoned and disempowered. It is not until recent research, that theorists and practitioners have begun to explore and reflect on the structures and dynamics within their own practice and other theatre companies. Notably Catherine Hale reflects back on her thirty years of creative process with *Foursight Theatre.* The research primarily looks at the differing structures within performance

making, seeking to encourage performer-centric structures and questioning the notion of consensus within the group. It is here that research has begun to explore alternative democratic methods, importantly questioning the structures and individual ownership of participants within a group, asking 'Can devising ever be democratic?' (Hale, 2010). Furthermore Jason. E. Weber, in his essay *Creating Together: Defining Approaches to Collaboratively Generated Devised Theatre* (2010), notes that Heddon and Milling's research contradicts itself through their statement that there has been little discourse, whilst within their own research they fail to give examples of the process and structures of theatre companies. It is fundamental, for Weber, that to gain an in-depth discourse of collaboration, the relationships between roles within the structures of a group need to be investigated: "Focusing on the nature of the collaboration process means focusing on the interpersonal relationships" (Weber, 2010:7).

My practice as research aims to support Hale's and Weber's view by offering a discourse on an alternative method to look at interpersonal relations in performance collaboration; to further explore and offer discourse to what it means to collaborate. To further outline the concerns relating to the acceptance of collaboration in contemporary practice, the idea of circulation from Jodi Dean's *Democracy and other Neo-Liberal Fantasies* (2009) will also be assessed.

<u>The circulation of collaboration</u>

It has been established by Heddon and Milling that the term collaboration has assumed an accepted meaning (2006:1). The meaning of the term is rarely discussed. 'Collaboration' has become an empty buzz-word within contemporary performance practice. To understand how this might have come about, and to assess

what the ramifications are, we might turn to Jodi Dean's concept of 'Communicative Capitalism' which explores contemporary circulation.

Dean argues that within the dominant ideology, there is a dedication to the self over group, or collective, interests. This is encouraged by the open circulation of mass opinion; a component of what Dean refers to as 'Communicative Capitalism', the theory of how technology is used to disseminate ideas and information (Dean, 2009:27). According to Dean, the circulation of a particular term creates a falsified sense of what the term actually means. As a result, the term becomes devoid of meaning and consequently avoids analysis. The meaning becomes emptied and the term becomes either accepted or rejected in contemporary thought (Dean, 2009).

If we take collaboration, the term is now simply accepted in performance vocabulary, while the actual meaning is rarely discussed. What takes place is almost always ignored in favour of the application of the term to the performer and director roles. 'Collaboration' therefore has become adopted in contemporary thought and the original theories have been forgotten: notions of equality and freedom. This leads us to a situation whereby using the term 'collaborating' is more significant than the act itself. As Dean states: "A contribution need not be understood; it need only be repeated, reproduced, forwarded" (Dean, 2009:27). This phenomenon was noticeable in my own early experiences as a performer in a collaborative process. The word collaboration was exchanged between different people inside and outside of the process, but questioning the working relationships and input into the process was absent.

Dean's analysis of circulation centres chiefly on governmental, democratic and societal contexts, but I would argue that they are just as applicable inside

academic and performance making environments. If we accept that these environments can be considered to be micro-societies, with the same methods of communicative exchange as society as a whole, I believe that it is wholly acceptable to use Dean's theories as an explanation for the current use of 'collaboration', where we can see that the term has been passed on, accepted and repeated. The refusal to analyse how something functions, in this case collaboration, creates a prevailing acceptance of the term, and a set of characteristics associated with it. In the case of collaboration, how the performer and director roles are positioned in the collaborative process[1].

There is an undeniable association between collaboration and democracy, but the relationship has often proved itself to be fraught with complications. Unfortunately, we suffer from limited critical discourse, and that which we do have often simply views collaboration and democracy as synonymous. These assumptions, along with my own experiences and the determining political events of our time, lay the foundations for my own research, in which I attempt to use the post-Marxist ideas of axiomatic equality and agonistic pluralism as egalitarian methods for collaboration. Although democracy has been assimilated with collaboration, the thesis will go on to outline the complications this has created. For these reasons, I will use the term egalitarian, rather than democracy, for the kind of collaboration I intend to work towards. In addition to the complications created by assimilating democracy and collaboration, the research will attempt to look at how egalitarian methods of collaboration might be a more appropriate term; to provide opportunity

[1] It is important to note here that it may seem contradictory to use Dean as, though I am generally in favour of democracy, Dean may be seen to be suspicious. Nevertheless, many of her ideas, particularly circulation, are applicable to both mine and her arguments.

for people to offer ideas and generate material within a group. There are various interpretations of Egalitarianism within different social, philosophical, political and economic terms. Stuart White in *Equality* (2007) offers a broad sense of the meaning most appropriate to methods of collaboration: all people should be treated as equals in social status.

These thoughts grounded my practice as research which explores the practical question: To what extent are performers free and equal in performance collaboration to input ideas and generate material?

The thesis aims to reject over-simplistic utopian notions of democracy within rehearsal processes and an attempt to offer two theoretical alternatives for egalitarian methods of collaboration. The thesis attempts to reconsider the performer and director roles chiefly by analysing the interpersonal relations between performer and director when using egalitarian methods. Philosophical and political theories from Jacques Ranciere's axiomatic equality and Chantal Mouffe's agonistic pluralism have been used as theories to inform practical strategies; adding to the discourse on performance collaboration.

Expanding on Hale's research of agonistic pluralism within devising processes, the following research aims to build on the gaps from Chantal Mouffe's agonistic pluralism with Jacques Ranciere's notion of axiomatic equality. I will state that a practice based on axiomatic equality has to be set up first to stabilise trust in order to enable agonistic approaches to occur within a rehearsal space. Thus, axiomatic equality becomes a prerequisite for agonistic pluralism.

The thesis will discuss in each chapter the following:

Chapter two, ‘The origins of performance collaboration: the democratic myth’, aims to contextualise performance collaboration and the changes in organisational structures from the 60s and to look at how collaboration is referred to in contemporary discourse. The chapter outlines how interpretations of democracy, in the form of participation, influenced the structures of theatre companies, aiming to make processes more group-centric and performer controlled. However the chapter will outline *The San Francisco Mime Troupe* (1959) and *Monstrous Regiment* (1968) as companies who were concerned about Liberal traits of individualism and hidden hierarchies forming through democratic alternatives which removed leadership.

Chapter three, ‘Between Axiomatic equality and Agonistic pluralism,’ sets up Jacques Ranciere’s and Chantal Mouffe’s concepts. Axiomatic equality, centered in Ranciere’s *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Emancipation* (1991) acts as an allegory for structures within society and the placement of people within societal structures. Although *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* is conceptually based around the idea of master- pupil, we can look at the notion as an abstract concept. The inferior and superior binary which Ranciere states is present in society is re-contextualised through the *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* allegory to enable inferior positions within a group to be able to have their ideas utilised. The attributes attached to the roles of performer and director can implicate set ways of working in a hierarchal order.

Agonistic pluralism, explored in *On the Political (2005),* is Mouffe’s notion that human relations are intrinsically antagonistic and conflictual due to the structures which people live in. Agonistic pluralism acts as an alternative model to participatory democracy which was prevalent in the theatre organisations of the 60s and 70s. Mouffe (2005) states that human relations are made up of temporary hegemonic

structures. The temporary hegemonic structures should always be visible in order for individuals to contest dominant ideas. Mouffe's suggestion that the hegemonic structure should be contested can challenge a potential performer director relationship (2005).

I outline the theory of axiomatic equality to be a prerequisite for agonistic pluralism. It is this relation which I have called interdependency in this new research of egalitarian methods of collaboration. Although Ranciere's and Mouffe's theories stand alone, for the purpose of this research I used them interdependently with the rehearsal space. The interdependency is based on axiomatic equality being counter-hegemonic and agonistic pluralism being hegemonic. The interdependency attempts to allow individuals to generate ideas and have a voice in the group through the contestation of the dominant order present in the rehearsal space.

Chapter four 'Strategies and tasks to reconsider performer and director roles' will report on the practical project and will illustrate how the practice explored the interdependency of axiomatic equality and agonistic pluralism. The project was focused on making a performance titled *What is problematic?* Working from the ideas of axiomatic equality and agonistic pluralism into practical strategies formed improvisations and tasks called *Open Space, Secret Roles* and *Not in Service.* Through the principles of temporary hegemonic structure, visibility and distance, the tasks enabled a reconstitution of the performer and director roles. Within the practice I considered questions such as: what is my role within the project? How did it affect the research? What are the affects of applying theory to practice and practice to theory? The chapter will be accompanied by DVDs which look at the rehearsal process and document *Individual Reflections* from each of the group members who

participated in the research. In is important to note that an Artist Box was also designed as an additional resource to give an insight into the materials that were used and created by the group members. The scraps of paper, articles and objects are in the original format for the reader to explore accounts of what was being discussed, questioned and debated.

Importantly the chapter will outline the difficulty of staging a performance whilst attempting to work with egalitarian methods; and why the performance did not take place. The performance was abandoned in favour of continuing to work through the strategies we had created. The research was at a fragile point of trying to work through ideas and understand happenings in the process, when new rules were put in place at the Milton Building University of Huddersfield. The group felt, because of outside rules from the University, which disabled two of the participants entering the building at certain times, we did not want to rush our findings for the performance. It left the group lacking in confidence and energy to create a performance under added restrictions. There were tensions between abandoning what we had found and create a performance in a short space of time with ad-hoc rehearsals, or preserve the strategies to work at a time in which we were able to move through the analysis of the methods. The group was at a point, within the making process, of working through ideas of how to structure and organise the performance. The group felt that these workings out could not be hurried for the end product of a performance as it would not leave enough time for critical understanding of the strategies. Equally, this raises the question: under certain external pressures how do egalitarian methods move forward ? It is in light of the research that two performances have gone on to be made with the strategies; *Not in Service, Open Space* and *Secret Roles*: *One Starry Night We Met* by So Many Words (2012) and *Are We Happy Yet*? By Official

Culture (2013). The two performances described worked to a deadline and had outside pressures, but were grounded in thorough methods born from this thesis. It is my belief that the time taken to work through the strategies in the research and a reflection period enabled workable strategies for other performances. Within the research we were at a fragile point which needed time and consideration to work through the strategies in order to see how they may work and how they may fail under the pressures of making a performance. The preservation of the strategies to generate material, were felt to me more important than the performance itself; at this stage at least.

Chapter Two: The origins of performance collaboration: the democratic myth

The following chapter will identify organisational structures which the performer and director roles have existed in and outline the limited critical discourse on contemporary performance collaboration. The chapter will focus on incremental changes to the organisational structures and interpretations of democracy within selected theatre companies from the 1960s to the 1980s; predominantly looking at: *The San Francisco Mime Troupe* (1959) and *Monstrous Regiment* (1968). Examining these organisational changes, I will then ask how collaboration is considered in contemporary discourse.

Definition of collaboration

It is important to note that, throughout the chapter, the term collaboration will not stand for a single act or definition applied to all theatre companies, but is used in reference to the interchangeable methodologies used by specific theatre organisations. As identified by Oddey (1994), collaboration is formed by different strategies and methodologies to suit the specific theatre company, thus making it difficult to define. As previously stated in the introduction, Govan et al (2007), state that there is no definite formula for collaboration; it is subjective to the particular group and how they conceptualise what they are doing. Although collaboration will be seen to have been heavily influenced by the political movement of the 1960s, it did not come with a prescribed set of rules which artists had to adhere to. Although it is widely acknowledged that 1968 was a time when theatre companies reconsidered their organisational structures according to political ideologies, it is important to note that Heddon & Milling (2006) point out that the movement of artistic practice has not always been exclusively connected to historical events and emerging ideologies of

the 60s. For Govan et al it is the “fluidity” of collaboration which defines its properties; different characteristics identified within the collaboration form its interchangeable nature (2007:7).

I define performance collaboration as a process which takes place between individuals in a group. I particularly focus on the working relations between the role of performer and director as they make a performance.

In order to further discuss the problems within collaborative theatre practice it is important to look at how some theatre companies embarked on changing their organisational structures in accordance with ideological changes, particularly post 1968.

Collaboration 1968 to78

The practice of performance collaboration stemmed from a rejection in the 1960s of what Oddey calls “traditional roles in conventional theatre” or “literary theatre traditions” (1994:4-5). During the 1960s, the roles of director, performer, playwright and the use of literary text were reconsidered and a new wave was born from the rejection of conventional practices. Through collaboration the traditional role of playwright and director, previously considered as having primary authority and ownership over both the company and the work, began to be challenged. Oddey (1994) articulates that collaboration and devising began to be terms used to reconsider what was once perceived to be hierarchal roles in the making process, “Devised work is a response and a reaction to the playwright-director relationship” (Oddey: 1994:5). There also began reconsiderations of the role of the performer in relation to the director, as Heddon and Milling state, “scrutinising the aesthetics of *labour* for the creative artist, rather than simply the product” (2006:21). The

reconsidered role can be evidenced by performers' descriptions of the process within the *Theatre du Soleil.*

The *Theatre du Soleil* was founded in 1964 as a worker's cooperative[2]. At the beginning, a particular emphasis on everyone participating was at the foreground of the company. In a 1970 interview, Guy-Claude Francois and Jean Claude-Penchenat state that individuals attempted different tasks and activities within the group, removing the idea of different specialisms (Williams, 1999:31). Penchenat, actor and administrator, describes how all members of the *Soleil* receive equal monthly pay. Samier, an actor for the *Soleil*, expresses how away from theatre he felt an "outsider" and a "visitor", whereas in the *Soleil* he was "accepted" (Williams, 1999:31). In the Soleil's process, Samier not only "improvised" and "criticised" with fellow members, but actively learnt and discovered literature (Williams, 1999:31). Williams states that the *Soleil's* working ethos had a clear sensitivity to the structures in the working group, reflecting on its ever changing dynamics. In a 1975 interview Mnouchkine articulates to the editors of Theatre/Public, the idea of hierarchy in relation to the function of the group: "We want to eliminate all hierarchy, to make sure that each person can develop and contribute his or her best" (Williams, 1999:59-60). These

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[2] *Cooperative*- There are various examples of cooperative s stemming from workers cooperative s, educational cooperatives to the application of cooperatives within businesses. Cooperatives are individuals working together towards a common goal: In context of an agricultural cooperative, Koopmans (2001) states that a cooperative is an organisation which is jointly owned by individuals who also use the services. Cooperatives became poignant the1960s. For Ariane Mnouchkine (Williams,1999:22), devised and collectively created work reflected and fitted to the workers cooperative model most appropriately. Collectives and Cooperatives are generally regarded to be interchangeable. A collective is always a cooperative, but a cooperative doesn't have to be a collective. The collective works without a hierarchy, therefore all members who are involved can make decisions. (www.coop.org/article/cooperative-vs-collective.html) Harrison (1998:56) collective creation is a joint form of making a performance from the beginning through to the end. Harrison also states that like a cooperative, collective stems from the C19 Socialist term.

ideas presented by Mnouchkine began to reflect the ideological attitudes and spirit of the 60s and 70s.

The political shift in the 60s and 70s, within society, was a move away from the establishment; hierarchies and patriarchal values centred on the ideological codes of conduct within the dominant structures of society. Ian Adams, in *Political Ideology Today* highlights these rejections through historical events, such as the 1968 Student Protest in Paris (2001:163). Catherine Itzin, in *Stages of the Revolution: Political Theatre in Britain since 1968* also outlines the rise of the student outcry in Warsaw, Belgrade, Berlin, Tokyo and Milan (1980:2). She notes how the protests represented a dissent from control and authoritarian powers of the leaders and governments internationally. The protests sparked a resistance to traditional structures of *being* in society: hierarchical structures of the authorities ruling the proletariat (Adams, 2001). The authoritarian nature disempowered the voices of groups such as students and workers who witnessed the flaws within the monocratic structures. Rejection of the hierarchies which stifled autonomy in the working class began to materialise, resulting in a movement which questioned the structures of how people worked in relation to each other (Adams, 2001). The wave of protests and revolts reflected a growing desire to move towards a more thorough democratic model. In those countries where democracy was already present, protesters sought a political model which encouraged a greater degree of participation. Itzin lists a culmination of global events (The Cold War, Prague Spring, anti-Vietnam demonstrations, Liberation Movement) which saw a rise in groups of people becoming politicised and questioning government and social structures (1980:1). The movement away from authoritarian structures was not solely reflected in performance contexts: *The Underground Press Syndicate* in America was an

example of a free press cooperative which aimed to re-distribute political information[3]. The growing underground network reflected the evolutionary spirit of the time and began to form cooperative models of work which, along with freedom of information and protest, became significant characteristics of the 60s. Itzin states how students became socially recognisable and perceptible; they began to look at the paradoxes within social structures inherited from previous generations (1980:3). It is the student group which Itzin describes as the “most significant” for theatre companies at the time (1980:2). Furthermore, Oddey (1994) points out that the movement of different groups of people establishing alternative structures, within education and workers’ rights, also filtered into the processes within artistic practice. Practitioners started to reflect a way of working which satisfied a democratic need: a platform which would reconsider the position of people within societal structures. A reconfigured model of working, removed from the authority of the director, emerged as an attempt to actively seek alternative democratic strategies. Oddey states that whether or not practitioners were consciously aware of devising as a means of rearranging or not, devising aimed to democratically reformulate roles within a specific group (1994:154).

The movement away from normative divisions of work, the product being determined by the director’s lone vision, influenced the move to collaborate, in order to create a democratic model. Heddon & Milling (2006) point out that on reflection on this historical period, collaborative practice was formed on the ideology of equal participation for individuals in the creation of performance; thereby, associating

[3] As Barry Miles writes in the foreword of 200 Trips from the counterculture (2006), material on politics, happenings to the avant-garde could be printed and passed freely

collaborative practice with the notion of freedom and equality. It was the emphasis on a democratic model of work, Oddey (1994) points out, within cooperatives, which tried to make new ideals of the socio-political climate, removing itself from the divisions which traditional theatre may have adhered to.

The People Show (1966) are a company who used, and continue to use, alternative structures without the conventional roles of performer and director. The pool of artists from different backgrounds use the act of criticism as a strategy within the decision making part of the process. There is no director present, but communication and criticism act as a platform for the creation of work. Although this is not strictly present in all of their performances, it is an important strategy to reflect on whilst looking at collaboration:

> Without a director, the process of communication and criticism becomes vital with the making of the work. Long believes that the artists themselves are the best critics, and that an inability to criticise each other is an unhealthy option. Artistic decisions are made out of a constant re-assessment by company members of the work, and a ruthless determination to preserve both individual interests and the development of the product. (Oddey 1994:44)

The methodology of *The People Show* is based on criticism, specialisms and reevaluation of work (Oddey 1994:44).The rigorous investment in the group and the work, through the individual attributes of sculptor, painter and designer, acts as a mechanism to concretize the group's structure without the traditional role of the director (Oddey, 1994). It is the use of different specialisms which binds the group and begins to open up questions as to how the different specialisms can create work. The critical focus on the group's structures and the working method establish a strong structure in which there is more than one voice; this opens up critical discourse and dialogue about the work itself.

However, as positive as this model may seem, the restructuring which was inspired by the political movements of the 1960s, for some companies, did not bring about lasting change. By the 1980s, cooperative models, collectives and ideological influences had begun to break down within theatre companies.

Hierarchal reform 1980s

The shift back to conventional, hierarchal structures was on the one hand in response to the lack of funding from Thatcher's Conservative government. Thus, urgency for companies to experiment with specific organisational models became secondary to satisfying funding body requirements. Baz Kershaw highlights in *The Politics of Performance: Radical Theatre as Cultural Intervention* (1992) that the social and economic factors produced by Thatcher's government promoted a particular social ideology based on the individual rather than the ideal of community: "Co-operation was to be supplanted by competition" (1992:168). Government ideology drove entrepreneurial concepts and privatisation, from which the arts could not escape. For artists it brought reform to organisational structures to include management and administration of the arts: increasing efficacy at the price of political ideology. The Arts Council determined the hierarchal reform to make theatre companies more efficient and self- reliant; breeding a particular type of theatre: ". . . neo-conservative values were inscribed deeply into the structures of the state funding and the operations of many of its clients . . . elitist's subsidy superstructure cast long shadows over the arts landscape" (1992:179). The emphasis on experimentation and exploring organisational structures were unable to accommodate the business sustainability of the aims as performances had to be produced to ensure future longevity and validation. The new aims enforced that work

was more efficiently run and produced; with administrators, artistic directors, producers to be more business led. In *The Argument Room* Gillian Hanna from Monstorous Regiment (1968) describes how Arts Council Funding stated that for the company to survive and have funding that they needed to have an assigned Artistic Director:

> We got to a point where the Arts Council said if you want to have the money you can't be collective. . . you have to have an Artistic Director. . .and we were very foolish. At that point we should have said fine take the money back. . .retrospectively it was foolish, we gave in . . . in order to save miniscule arts council funding. (Hanna, 2012)

The new ideas of working encroached on methods of work which had been set up over long periods of time. As Hanna describes it as ''the bedrock of what we did'' (Hanna, 2012). In order to exist as a company, organisational structures were being rearranged which compromised artistic endeavor.

If collaboration's origins can be seen to have stemmed from the radical movement of the 1960s, the reactionary social and economic factors of the 1980s helped to rupture the collective ideology. Theatre companies adopted the new business models, made up of manager, administrator and director; labelled by Heddon and Milling as a "structure of boss and workers" (2006:25). The restrictions on alternative models of work affecting British practitioners were also recognised by Ariane Mnouckine and the *Theatre du Soleil*. French funding bodies expressed overt concerns with the cooperative nature of the *Soleil's* work. As Mnouchkine notes in an interview with Emile Copfermann in *The Search for a Language*:

> […] someone at the Ministry [said,] 'There's no question of you continuing in this way. … We never intervene politically,' he said, 'you can do what you want. But you must understand you and your company constitute a very awkward case.' I didn't understand at all. Then suddenly I understood. I can stage a production that seems totally opposed to them, they couldn't care

> less. But the way in which the company functions and produces its shows, the simple fact that we don't fit ourselves into a pre-existing framework – this throws them and worries them (Williams, 1999:22).

The ministry did not mind funding performances which had historically critiqued the social structures infringed on by the government, but were concerned with the internal structure of the group. The space to explore alternative organisational structures, based on the cooperative , was forced into compliance with managerial structures.

There are examples of companies trying to remain vigilant to the processes that they created, even at the time when Thatcher's government created ambiguity in the arts and forced reform. The Feminist Company *Foursight Theatre* continues to consciously look to a non-hierarchal process of collective responsibility. One of their artistic policies is: "Nurturing individual creative responsibility within a collaborative and non-hierarchical process and structure" (*Foursight Theatre, 1988*). Sarah Thom current artistic director of the company, does speak about the inevitably of hierarchy, in the sense that someone will plan and conduct the rehearsal. It is important, however, that all participants have responsibility within the process, "Foursight strives to honour the input of all participants . . . the amount of responsibility given to all participants when I originally joined the company as a devising performer (included a share of the royalties for each participant on a new piece of work)" (personal communication, 2011). It can be said that the company look to how different models can be used within the processes, but they recognise that, to a degree, hierarchy is a valuable function within a democratic process.

Susan Vaneta Mason (2005) points out that *The San Francisco Mime Troupe* tended to self- fund projects by passing around a hat at the end of the show. This

enabled them to remain autonomous from government subsidy. *The Mime Troupe* are also an important case study in analysing Marxist ideology in order to form democratic structures. This will help to outline the difficulty and concerns attached to democratic organisation.

The implications of Liberal democracy: Imagined Utopias

As previously noted, for many theatre companies, post 1968, group processes needed to be compatible with humanist Marxism. As Barbara Goodwin outlines in *Using Political Ideologies* theories of “means of production”, “appropriation” “alienation” and “subjectivity” were a part of early Marxist ideas (1992:69-74). In 1968, these ideals began to re-emerge, helped in part by a radical wave of student protests and a general re-assessment of Marxist theory, born largely out of the critique of official Communist Parties and their failings (Marxists.org n.d). Catherine Itzin outlines how the peak of global events in 1968 formed responses and interpretations of Marxist ideology within society, describing Marxism as the “symbol of the revolutionary transformation of society” (Itzin 1980:2-3). Questions arose in *The Mime Troupe* with regard to hierarchal connections to the mode of production and a more performer-centric environment. Mason (2005) points out that as the company members increasingly read Marx they began to question their own organisational structures and their placement in the *Troupe*. A member of *The Mime Troupe,* Joan Holden, states, “we just wanted to have more say” (Mason, 2005:78). Arthur Holden describes how *The Mime Troupe* wanted to have more ownership over

decisions and to eradicate the formed hierarchy governed by the position of artistic director; Ronnie Davis: “Ronnie having been the boss was on that side; and all of the others of us were the workers” (Mason, 2005:78). Ronnie Davis, founder of *The Mime Troupe* raised the issue of organisation, informed by the Marxist interpretation of re-distribution of power and collective ownership. Mason articulates Davis’s concern, “Davis believed fervently that collective governance was politically and artistically ineffective” (Mason, 2005:17). The vote to create a defined collective within the *Troupe* resulted in Davis resigning as he believed that the non-hierarchal collective would stifle artistic professionalism. Performer Sandy Archer also believed that the collective eradicated differing labours in the group; resulting in:

> [...] breaking down identities built upon what we would call experienced or professional wisdom. In this way, anyone’s opinions become as valid as anyone else’s. The extreme result of this would be individualism i.e total expression of each in all areas (Heddon & Milling, 2006:108).

What Davis is describing is an interpretation of Marxist ideology in the form of participatory democracy. Cook and Morgan (1971) define participatory democracy as originating from Greek democracy, whereby all citizens are active in decision making, helping to form a consensus. Heddon and Milling tell us that as participatory democracy began to grow internationally, in order to be a part of this new idea of society, collaboration proposed a “political alternative” (2006:17), but also tell us that participatory democracy would result in “congratulatory participation, amateurism and bourgeois choice” (2006:108).

Similar concerns to those articulated by Davis arose for Gillian Hanna of the British Women’s Collective *Monstrous Regiment*. The collective was formed in light of the woman’s movement in the 70s to look at the underrepresentation of women in the work force and women’s roles within theatre. A primary factor for *Monstrous*

Regiment's formation was their aim to form a collective feminist organisation, influenced by socialist politics. Hanna reflects in *Monstrous Regiment: A Collective Celebration* that the idea of the 'collective' generated profound worries about how collaborative ideals were operating in the group (1991: xx). The set of assumptions as to what it meant to collaborate, based on democratic ideals of equality and freedom, began to veil authoritarian voices: ". . . We were aware of the dangers of the 'hidden hierarchy' that can lie beneath the surface of a group, unacknowledged but nonetheless powerful and controlling" (Hanna, 1991: xx). The group was formed as a performer collective aiming not to create a leadership. However, the collective became more aware of the hidden hierarchy which allowed authoritarian voices and consensus to override quieter individuals in group decisions. The attempt to remove hierarchy and leadership could potentially veil hierarchical structures; encouraging strong individuals to lead and take control of the group. There had been an arduous period of discussing the notion of the director in relation to the performance collective, initially set up under the framework of everyone participating and all decisions decided together. Hanna reflects upon this:

> [...] it seems to me that the basic mistake we made was an organisational one. Given that we operated collectively, we went to extraordinary lengths to try and ensure that everyone's voice was given *equal status*. (When we found that some of us were being *silent* in company meetings, we discussed it and looked for strategies that would enable the person to speak. (Hanna, 1991: xxx)

Democratic ideas of freedom and equal status forced the group to concentrate on the forming of consensus and encouraging participation: getting everyone to speak. It is Hanna's comment on the 'hidden hierarchy' 'equal status' and 'silence' which is important to draw out. The implementation of democracy in the group of women encouraged hidden hierarchies to flourish under the surface whilst trying to resolve

the silences of individuals. These characteristics described by Hanna can be said to relate to the prominent populist notion of Deliberative Democracy. Deliberative Democracy described by Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson in *Why Deliberative Democracy?* is to hold a discussion of free and equal status for citizens of a group: "Autonomous agents who take part in the governance of their society" (2004:3). A principle of Deliberative Democracy is that individuals should accept the overall discussed rule to enrich co-operation in spite of differences in identity. There must be an end decision, but Deliberative Democracy does not outline the method for reaching the final consensus. It can be said that the reaching for a consensus allows the dominant voices to finalise decisions for the whole of the group.

Monstrous Regiment aimed to avoid patriarchal and hierarchal structures and deliberated over any silences, in fear of retreating back to past experiences of decisions being made by the most articulate in the group. In fact critics of Deliberative Democracy, such as Chantal Mouffe, argue that deliberation veils the voices that still remain dominant. The most articulate continue to influence and make decisions. Applying structure which attempts to enable freedom for each individual can, as Hanna pointed out, mask authoritarian voices and a hidden hierarchy is played out despite the notion that everybody is free and equal in the group.

In order to look further at the potential problems of individualism and hidden hierarchies, it is necessary to discuss the idea within the context of Liberalist thought.

Individualism in Liberalism

To outline the depth of Liberalist theory within democracy in the Western World, Ian Adams (2001) argues that Liberalism has been engrained and rooted in

the Western World for over three centuries: a broad tradition of thought which has been growing, adapting and evolving. In turn, Andrew Vincent in *Modern Ideologies* (2010) outlines that it is the liberal ideals which Western society is formed on and abides by. It is important to note that the development of Liberalism came from 18th century Enlightenment. The Enlightenment was based on a rejection of the traditional feudal system: religion, government, science and the arts; revolutionising a change in authority (Adams, 2001). Authority became less associated with the monarchy and religion and was placed back into the hands of the people. This indicates that practices, thoughts and ideologies are continuously rejected, rethought and played out in an alternative form. However, Liberalist thought is still very prevalent within contemporary democracy, acting as the main operator for society in the Western World. Goodwin and Adams identify a pinnacle Liberalist theorist, Rousseau, who believed that in order to exercise choice, human beings needed to be free (1992:16 & 2001). Interestingly, Rousseau stated that if people did not directly make the law then they were not free: an individual's freedom would be denied even if someone was elected to make the laws on their behalf. Goodwin (1992) outlines that freedom stems from Liberalism and equality which is advocated by democratic theory and the two have been paired together to form Liberal democracy. It is, however, important to note that Liberalism has been assimilated into democracy as though they work hand in hand to form freedom and equality. Thus, when democratic ideologies begin to merge with liberal traits they become thought of as the "basis of reality" in society (Goodwin, 1992: 35). This provides difficulties and a variety of questions as to how Liberalist democracy should manage equality and freedom. Adams outlines the paradox: if everybody has freedoms, then they will be unequal as different perspectives on what equates to freedom exist, and if you try to

keep everyone equal, you will deny their freedom (2001:37). Heddon and Milling state that collaboration has been wrongly assimilated to these notions of democracy that all members contribute equally, which assumes a sense of freedom in the process (2006:4).

A fundamental trait of Liberalism, which Ronnie Davis was sceptical of, is individualism. Liberalist thought has evolved from the notion of the individual being rational and free to take responsibility. This overarching notion of individualism is what epitomises Liberalist thought:

> Liberals have been, and are, formally committed to individualism. It is the ontological core of liberal thought and the basis of moral, political, economic and cultural existence. The individual is seen as both more real than, and prior to society. . . The individualism is the touchstone for morality and truth (Vincent, 2010:32).

Here, the idea of the self, and self-interest, is placed over that of society. This is why Davis and Archer were sceptical about allowing the voices and opinions of everyone in the group. It offers the possibility of decisions being made on the basis of personal, rather than group interest and can result in the destruction of the group structure and overall aim.

This liberalist tendency towards individualism creates difficulties in trying to apply the democratic ideal to the making process, and may go some way to explaining why many of the early proponents of the democratic model actually failed to truly implement their ideals. There are inevitable complications with the implementation of democracy into the group structure when democracy as we know it is so ingrained with liberalism and liberal individualism.

There are, however, examples where collectivity was sustained in the face of individualism. After Davis' departure from *The Mime Troupe* Joan Holden states that

although it took a lot more time and commitment for the company to work as a collective, there was more room for creativity and roles were not abolished but opportunities created for more people to play these roles (Mason, 2005). In fact Holden describes the reform as a “freedom in adopting unfamiliar roles” (Mason, 2005:79).

In order to investigate the relationships between individuals, we will now turn to a company which has tried to use democratic strategies at the centre of its working ethos. The *Theatre du Soleil* continues to look at the function of collaboration and its structures, continuously questioning collaboration in service of democratic structures as the company progresses into its fiftieth year.

The Theatre du Soleil

The *Theatre du Soleil’s* cooperative model has tried to avoid individualism through advocating difference between individual roles in a continuous reinvention of the group. The re-shaping of the group has allowed the *Soleil*, in particular the founder and director Ariane Mnouchkine, to cultivate the notion of collaboration and to reflect on the strategies of collaboration within the company's practices: asking; what does it mean to collaborate?

At the centre of the cooperative is an astute awareness of the notion of collaboration and the use of Marxist Socialist ideology, according to which, each individual owns both the means of production, via the process, and a stake in the final performances. The differences between individuals are embraced within the totality of the group, forming a shared labour and “. . . a source of creative friction” (Williams, 1999: xiii). In a 1974 interview with Denis Bablet, Mnouchkine observed the difference between the function of roles in a group:

> […] creation can be collective, and absolutely collective, *precisely* if everyone is in his or her place, ensures maximum creativity in each function, and if there's someone who centralises. This does not imply any hierarchical vision. (William, 1999:57)

The visibility of alternating roles acts as a function of the working ideology of ownership within the group. It is the social responsibility of each member to ensure a cycle of renegotiation between the positions of people and their roles. The importance of looking at the group's dynamic comes in the form of re-evaluating a way of work to suit the specific dynamic of the group at that specific time (Williams, 1999). Mnouchkine describes the process as "confronting evidence and solving the puzzle" and not as "collective decision-making" (William, 1999:26). Mnouchkine is aiming for the *Soleil* to constantly search for "other possibilities" and "increasing individual's" capacity within the group. A practical example of the way in which the group work on a performance is illustrated by the movement of the performers alternating different parts, ". . . no four people could work together for longer than a single morning and that each person must be prepared to abandon a part"(William, 1999:27). The above example can illustrate Williams' description that the *Soleil* is made up of the individuals in a temporary, precarious microcosm (1999, xiv). The temporariness suggests that the *Soleil* look to reinventing the democratic practice whilst it is working as a practical strategy in the process.

However, Mnouchkine points out that a fundamental aspect for the group is to make room for dialogue:

> [...] dialogue should become increasingly rich, increasingly equal, but it remains a dialogue between two people who fulfil two different functions. Perhaps we still need to find a certain democratic centralism. The real problem is not for me to diminish but for each individual to increase. (William, 1999:57)

It is evident that the Soleil aim to increase each individual's level of input through dialogue, demonstrating Mnouchkine's resistance to the notion of democratic centralism[4]. If we push the idea of individual input how can we enable individuals to be able to form narratives about collaboration? Is the platform to speak the essence of democracy, or does this fall into participatory and deliberative democratic models? Or should it be recognised as a pluralistic platform for company members to see and hear difference visibly from all roles in the group?

The legitimisation of the collaborative framework usually stems from Mnouchkine as artistic director. Judith Graves Miller (2007) points out that the company has attracted criticism with regards to the dialectic between Mnouchkine's position and the legitimacy of her Socialist ideals. Miller scrutinizes Mnouchkine's ideas, from the position of director, and the actualization of her political ideologies within the group:

> [...] one way to understand the turmoil between Mnouchkine and some of her actors is that she has been living her own utopian dream since 1964. (Miller, 2007:14)

The 'utopian dream' and the reinforcement of her ideals, in relation to the company, emulate a choreographed authority through the sole vision of Mnouchkine. In *Towards a new form,* Denis Bablet foregrounds the criticism of Mnounckine's position in relation to the group:

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[4] *Democratic Centralism*- A Leninist idea of democracy: built on the model of freedom of discussion, however once policy has been made, all members should uphold and support the decision made. This, however, is a very broad term of Democratic Centralism and therefore there are many different and conflicting versions of it. As Waller (1981) comments there has been little thorough Western analysis of the term, due to its association with Soviet Union ideas of autocracy, dictatorship and totalitarianism.

> I was asked this question as it is asked about a traditional theatre where the actors are interpreters directed by a director. Some people will go far as to deny more or less explicitly the group and to consider the Theatre du Soleil to be Mnouchkine. (Williams,1999:57)

Further Williams identifies that the Soleil have an awareness of the notion of utopian inclusiveness that the Soleil's politics which ground them, may create. Within the Solieil they have recognised that over the years there have been "collisions, rifts and ruptures" (William, 1999: xiii). The Soleil have recognised difference and conflict as an important component to the collaborative method:

> The Soleil's continually reinvented brand of collectivism has rarely entailed the erasure of difference and the coercive imposition of some fictional consensus (William, 1999: xiii).

The continued reinventing of the Soleil has been based on a shift of people leaving and entering the collective. The differences and conflicts within the group have become a creative aid for their work (William, 1999: xiii). Williams continues to state that with the continued reviewing of the company there has been a number of different *Soleils*. However Mnouchkine has remained fixed in the position of director. As Miller states there is pressure for the performer to conform to the overall voice of the process. In turn if the performer does not adhere to the overall vision, "[. . .] they are asked to leave" (2007: 67). Miller notes that the *Soleil* is a narration of Mouchkine's utopian dream: the authority of Mnouchkine, as a director, is validated through her voice in the company. Mnouchkine does however comment on the historical identity of the all-powerful director, and indicates that she has tried to move away from this idea:

> Remember that the director has already achieved the greatest degree of power he has ever had in history. And our aim is to move beyond that situation by creating a form of theatre where it will be possible for everyone to

> collaborate without there being directors, technicians and so on, in the old sense. (Williams, 1999: 1)

Again, the paradox and struggle between collectivity and leadership is illustrated within collaboration. It is through contradictions, accounts and experiences which the discourse on collaboration can look at how to develop strategies to review this paradox. The practice-theory dialogue is an important strategy that The *Theatre du* Soleil set up in 1985 between Ariane Mnouchkine and Helene Cixous. Helene Cixous was a French Feminist writer who came into the process to write scripts for the Soleil, but in doing so began to theorise what she saw (McEvoy, 2009). Through Mnouchkine's and Cixous's positions they both begin to establish a dialogue of what is happening between individuals in the group. Although it might be suggested that this should be extended to the performers too, the way the relationship works could act as a potential influence to model a discourse on roles within the process: Can a practice-theory dialogue between members of the group begin to develop collaborative discourse?

Practice-theory dialogue

Mnouchkine and Cixous establish a discourse through the interaction of their individual roles as director and playwright, forming a twofold practice-theory dialogue. The practice is formed from the direction of Mnouchkine, and the theory comes from Cixous. Firstly, Cixous' position in the *Soleil* will be highlighted.

An example of Cixous being a playwright and simultaneously theorising can be seen in her written observations of the physical acts within the performers' improvisations (Williams, 1999). The improvisations by the performers generate the

written material, rather than the writing dictating the performer's actions. Adverse to the traditional role of the playwright, Cixous replaces the isolation of writing with the observation of the performers, meaning that the performers effectively begin to write the text through their improvisations. A two way process begins to occur described by Cixous as anti–hierarchal. William McEvoy articulates Cixous' idea of anti-hierarchy in her practice, stating that, "[...] a more fluid relationship between text, theory and theatre based on mutuality and merging rather than priority and hierarchy [formed]," (McEvoy, 2009:25). An anti-hierarchical framework is in place between the *doing*[5] of the performers and the *theorising* from Cixous.

The relationship and negotiation between Mnouchkine and Cixous' ideas via a dialogical process can help us to understand strategies to comment on manifestations of collaboration. Cixous notes that the very act of trying to analyse theatre is suspended: the anti-theoretical nature of the theatre that Cixous speaks of drives her to try and place a theoretical framework around the creativity of the work (McEvoy, 2009). However, Cixous recognises the struggle to frame the live action and improvisation from the performers in the space. It is not to say that theory provides necessary answers to what is happening, but that it can help establish a discourse to form narratives about the group process. McEvoy (2009) points out that for Mnouchkine defining a working strategy is something she does not wish to participate in. Mnouchkine rejects the theorist's urgency to place practice into a theoretical framework. For Mnouchkine the process is always fluctuating and is determined by the inextricable dynamics of the working group. However, McEvoy

[5] The *doing*: being active in the rehearsal space and the *theorising:* critical reflections and discourse around what is happening- become vigorous in the process between the role of writer, performer and director.

notes that acknowledging the non-theorizable in theatre can be a risk; processes "being left under-analysed" can appear "redundant" or "merely banal" (2009:28).

The relationship between Mnouchkine and Cixous can be described as a push-pull dynamic of practice-theory dialogues. A need from each party to maintain a specific way of viewing the process, which sometimes conflicts with the other, but which can also combine with it to begin to rethink the actuality of the process. The movement of doing and thinking collide together to look at the roles and can interpret what is happening in the space. As Freddie Rokem noted in his 2011 Lecture, *Theatre and Philosophy* at the LICA, the collision of theory and practice can act as a transaction to construct and deconstruct the reading of the theory and the practice itself. Theory and practice work in a twofold system; pushing and pulling, acting as a lens to read each other. It is the differences and the similarities which collide, mould and retract between Mnouchkine and Cixous. The vocalisation of what Mnouchkine and Cixous have actively participated in or observed creates part of the collaborative model for the *Theatre du Soleil.* The practice-theory dialogue can create a critical inquiry within the process; different lenses are able to be applied to the process, along with a continuous shedding of thought and rethinking of the structures and occurrences which make up the process.

In this research I shall try to adopt the push pull dynamic to try and establish a discourse on the performer and director roles in collaboration. The aim is to enable participants in the group to have ownership of the work being made and to co-create a narrative about the process they are taking part in whilst being committed to the group structure: to create an equality of difference and equality of opportunity within the group. It is Mnouchkine and Cixous's relationship which has inspired the

research to look to further ways of establishing a practice-theory dialogue between individuals collaborating. If we are seeing narratives from the director and writer can we begin to form narratives from the performer?

Adopting a practice-theory dialogue may help to enable a genuine and balanced collaboration to take place. The agonistic pluralism model which was used in my practice bears some similarity to Mnouchkine's and Cixous's practice-theory dialogue. The agonistic pluralism aimed to look at difference and value conflict within the group. Combined with the model of axiomatic equality it expanded the investigation of the directorial authority by looking at how the roles can function within performance collaboration.

It is fair to say that Mnouchkine's role is rarely reconsidered by the *Soliel*. Mnouchkine's role of director is fixed and the performers are reconsidered accordingly. In my practical project I attempt to reinvent the group further in order to question how both roles can be reconstituted in the rehearsal space. This, I hoped, would be achieved through offering narrative opportunities to the performers whilst attempting to avoid both the imagined utopias of Mnouchkine's work and the liberal trappings of individualism and hidden hierarchies, as set out by Davis and Hanna, respectively. I will look to philosophical theorist Jacques Ranciere and political theorist Chantal Mouffe: the theories of axiomatic equality and agonistic pluralism. The two theories will be argued to be interdependent on each other and aim to find equality and difference in the space.

Chapter Three: Between Axiomatic Equality and Agonistic Pluralism

As previously stated in the introduction, this thesis is new research following on from Hales' research of using agonistic pluralism within the devising process. The following chapter will look at how Jacques Ranciere's notion of axiomatic equality from his seminal writing, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* (1991) may fill the gaps of Chantal Mouffe's concept of agonistic pluralism, outlined in *On the Political* (Mouffe, 2005) within performance collaboration. Significantly looking at how participants can voice ideas and have ownership over the material in the making process.

I will identify how axiomatic equality has been considered, in this research, to be a prerequisite of agonistic pluralism. Axiomatic equality is the concept that as individuals we should begin from the idea of assumed equality rather than trying to attain it. Nina Power states that *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*'s premise is equality as practice (2010:10). The equality of practice within *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* is formed through the deconstruction of the conventional hierarchal master–pupil relationship to form a non-hierarchal position of knowledge *(*1991:15). However, as pointed out earlier, Hale states that equality needs to be engineered. Therefore Mouffe's (2005) notion of agonistic pluralism can attempt to regulate the equality in the group, through offering the idea that a group structure is intrinsically antagonistic and made up of a hegemonic structure which should always be challenged. The two theories seem to look at how to equality is manifested and monitored in opposing ways. It is from this contradiction of equality needed to be assumed and engineered that I believe that in order for the two theories to work in a rehearsal space; axiomatic equality has to be set up first to stabilise trust for individuals to share

differences and for conflicts to be seen as legitimate. To a degree there will be a level of engineering in describing the tasks which attempt to start from a position of assumed equality. Once these tasks, based on assumed equality, are setup, then agonism can occur.

Although Ranciere and Mouffe, can be seen to be similar in their derivations of Post-Marxist ideologies:[6] Ranciere (1991) looks to radical alternatives of social hierarchy and Mouffe (2005) to radical democracy and its practice in democratic strategies. This research recognises axiomatic equality as counter hegemonic and agonistic pluralism to be reliant on hegemonic structure. Political theorist, David Howarth identifies Ranciere's concepts as counter hegemonic, as he states:

> . . . theorists such as . . . Jacques Ranciere . . . tend to stress the role of counter-hegemonic projects that create equivalential linkages between different demands, interests and identities . . . cast in the form of class struggle (2008:174).

Ranciere's projects look for ways in which to challenge the dominant order to reveal differences within a group. Visibility of differences is also apparent in Mouffe's notion of agonistic pluralism; however it is built on the idea that "difference and otherness" are what constitute a hegemonic structure (Howarth, 2008:174). Mouffe's belief is that a visible hegemonic structure is needed in order to be challenged by counter-hegemonic practices:

> The articulatory practices through which a certain order is established and the meaning of social institutions is fixed are 'hegemonic practices.' Every

[6] Ranciere was once a committed and established student of the Marxist, Louis Althusser. However, after the student-worker protests in Paris in May 1968, Ranciere began to critique the ideas of his former lecturers and collaborators through projects such as *The Ignorant SchoolMaster.* It is important to note that the student-worker protest in 1968 inspired Ranciere to re-evaluate the paradigm of hierarchies, and how they became transposed into societal structures.

> hegemonic order is susceptible of being challenged by counter-hegemonic practices i.e practices which will attempt to disarticulate the existing order so as to install another form of hegemony (Mouffe, 2005:18)

How can a practice which is both counter-hegemonic and hegemonic in structure work? Within the rehearsal space they need to be used at different stages, however be recognised as interdependent within the process overall. The collapse of the hegemonic order contested by the counter-hegemonic practice throughout collaboration creates the two theories interdependency for the purpose of this research. It is from this that the research will look to axiomatic equality and agonistic pluralism as being interdependent: counter hegemonic practice challenges hegemonic structure and hegemonic structure exists to be visibly challenged. Overall, for the hegemonic order to form there must be a verification of equality within the working group in order to gain accessibility to the difference of opinion and perspective between individuals. When the practicing of equality forms it will only last for a short space of time as a new dominant sequence will appear. The research will therefore suggest that the interdependency of axiomatic equality and agonistic pluralism can act as a lens through which the interpersonal relations of performer and director can be reconsidered.

As we have seen in chapter two, there has been a misleading conflation between collaboration and democracy. The two theories can be suggested to correlate to the discourse of performance democracy in performance collaboration. If we refer back to Oddey she outlines the potential for freedom, opportunity and flexibility to exist within collaborative strategies (1994:4). It is here that axiomatic equality lends itself to the idea of freedom which Oddey indicates as an attribute of collaboration. Further, agonistic pluralism will be used as it refutes the ideas

attached to participatory democracy which can be traced throughout historization of performance collaboration.

Axiomatic equality and Agonistic pluralism

The Ignorant Schoolmaster is Ranciere's commentary on the social spectrum of inequality and equality through the empirical findings of the 18th century lecturer Joseph Jacotot *(*1991:1). Jacotot's research was based on a group of Flemish students who did not have an understanding of the French language. The Flemish students, through their own will and the help of an interpreter, were able to understand a bilingual French text: the "Telemaque" (Cornelissen, 2011:17). Ranciere outlines that Jacotot had not taught the pupils how to spell the words in the text or the semantics of the literature (1991:3). Through repetition of writing down the words the pupils were able to understand the Telemaque. The pupils, he argued, had discovered French words that had related to their own vocabulary, and began to produce French sentences. Through removing the master's intelligence, the pupils were able to understand the material. Ranciere states:

> . . . [Jacotot] had allowed their intelligence to grapple with that of the book. Thus, the two functions that link the practice of the master explicator, that of the savant and that of the master, had been dissociated. (Ranciere, 1991:13)

The method allowed the students 'to know' the information because of the distance between the material and the master's knowledge of the material. Through the removal of the predetermined position of master-pupil hierarchy and the will of the pupil, the pupils were able to understand the material (Ranciere, 1991:15). Jacotot concurred that to teach, knowledge was not needed and minimal explication to the student was required (Ranciere, 1991).

For Ranciere the anti-pedagogical accounts of Jacotot's role contest the conventional ideas that equality should be attained and operate instead from the presupposition that individuals are equal (1991:xix). It is Ranciere's overall objective to look at how we can practically dismantle assumptions and reveal hierarchies for individuals to be emancipated.

This evaluation has extended further, to re-evaluate hidden hierarchies in social structures as Ranciere articulates his dissent from the conventional idea of transmission of knowledge (Ranciere and Power, 2010). Ranciere's discourse aims to establish the visibility of groups which are hidden via hierarchies and structures within society; challenging the presupposed attitudes of the superior-inferior binary. It is these structures which Ranciere believes to reinforce inequality within societal structures. Thus, if part of Ranciere's overall discourse is to look at hidden hierarchies and structures, then this discourse can be applied to the structures within performance collaboration.

Although there has been established criticism of ideas of equality and freedom associated to performance collaboration from Heddon and Milling (2006), Hanna (1991) and Govan et al (2007), this research aims to look at how the discourse can be implemented to reconsider the roles in collaboration. The chapter will also refer back to ideas from practitioners such as Ronnie Davis' suspicion of individualism through collective interpretation of equality. The question will be asked: how can the counter-hegemonic practice of axiomatic equality operate within performance collaboration?

The research will look at Chantal Mouffe's theory of agonistic pluralism which contests the Liberalist ideas of consensus and deliberative processes. The chapter will look at the argument for agonistic pluralism based on the acknowledgement of difference between individuals. Mouffe (2005) identifies agonistic pluralism as the inherent agonism existent in human relations. The space where human relations exist is the 'political'. The political is a space made up of, "power, conflict and antagonism" (Mouffe, 2005:9). It is the politics, the practices and conducts, which arrange the political into a particular structure; forming a hegemonic order. The political is the antagonistic dimension and the politics is the set of practices which creates the order of human relations. It is the placement of the politics onto the political which creates antagonism between the differences within the group of people. It is Mouffe's (2005) belief that it is impossible to eliminate antagonism between people who are in relation to one another. The question for Mouffe is how to platform the differences and conflicts within the group to keep them visible and dynamic.

It is these two seemingly opposing notions, built on counter-hegemony and hegemony, which I believe are to be interdependent on each other for the practice of the research. Axiomatic equality is necessary for agonistic pluralism to be legitimised and form a dominant order in turn for axiomatic equality to act as the counter-hegemonic project to challenge the visible dominant order and create a new order. The interdependency between axiomatic equality and agonistic pluralism can inform practical egalitarian methods within the rehearsal space. Such strategies can allow us to reconsider the interpersonal relations of performer and director in terms of temporary hegemonic structure, visibility and distance. The rehearsal space can

readdress the assumptions placed onto both roles of performer and director. A space is formed where individuals can interpret the material and present difference without it being linked or transmitted by the director's knowledge. Chantal Mouffe states that hegemony cannot be dismantled and removed; dialectically retorting Ranciere's concept of non-hierarchy of knowledge within a relationship. It is necessary that spaces are initially set up to allow for individuals the opportunity to think and speak of new ideas whilst generating material. Through seeing people try out ideas, fail and succeed, there becomes an equal footing in order for voices to shares differences and opinions in the group. In Mouffe's view hegemonic order cannot be eliminated, but it can, and should always be, contested. It is the contestation of the hegemonic order which stabilises a dynamic democratic platform within a group; the visibility of questioning, conflicts and opinions. Mouffe points out that within the democratic design, hegemonic structure should be viewed as temporary and dependent on previous practices (2005:17). The previous practice forms the new hegemonic order and rules within the group, revealing that these are not fixed and are always temporary. Ranciere's concept of axiomatic equality can then act as the counter hegemonic device to dismantle temporary hegemony within the group.

The interpersonal relations of performer and director

The master-pupil relationship is not completely comparable to that of the performer and director within performance making. For each theatre company engaging in collaboration, the roles may have different facets relative to the group. It is not the aim to describe the role of director as master-teacher, but to look at the hierarchies within the group through the placement of the performer-director

structure. It has been noted by Performance Ethnographer, Kate Rossmanith, that the role of director has previously been assimilated to the role of master within the discourse of cognitive behaviourism. Rossmanith challenges how the research *Rehearsal as a Subsystem: Transactional Analysis and Role Research* (1988) written by theatre practitioner Stratros Constantinidis, investigates “the director/actor interaction in order to understand the real leadership-style properties of the rehearsal process" and, secondly, "the ways an actor carries out a role" (1988: 66). Rossmanith criticises Constantinidis as he links the performer and director to scientific data in order to rationalise the performer-director interaction as a product which can be reproduced. In turn, reducing the performer and director attributes and negating other creative factors which encompass the roles. The creativity, guidance and imagination which are formed through subtle nuances between performer and director are sometimes difficult to define and thus reducing the role of director to the role of master-teacher can be misleading. However it is also important to be able to create a discourse in order to analyse the structures specifically if the process of collaboration is to be democratically desired. It is therefore useful to use *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, not as an absolute paradigm for the relationship between performer and director, but as a concept which at the very least is relevant to the structures of performance collaboration as an alternative.

Visibility: Equality of intelligences

In Ranciere’s view, the conventional role of master must inhabit an alternative position to the conventional hierarchal master-pupil relationship: “I must teach you that I have nothing to teach you” (Ranciere, 1991:15). However, this can only occur if the pupil is emancipated through using her own intelligence which must be separated

from that of the master's (Ranciere, 1991:15). It is the hierarchal structure of the master and pupil which forms an assumption of intelligence to the particular position. The positions are dependent upon the role that society regards to be of superior and inferior positions; raising the question: What are the possibilities, for the individuals in a particular position, when the structures are made visible?

The master-pupil relationship ultimately aims to make visible the structures which conventionally prevent individuals from understanding the societal structures which form their particular position (Ranciere and Power, 2010:78). Ranciere (1991) believes that assuming equality of intelligence is to dismantle the conventional assumption that the master has more knowledge, and indeed the *correct* knowledge, than the pupil. It is Ranciere's (1991) belief that through the verification of equality, individuals can be emancipated from the structures and hierarchies placed onto them within society. This can relate to Joan Holden's experience with *The Mime Troupe* when individuals took on a different role and therefore position in a group to create; ". . . freedom in adopting unfamiliar roles" (Mason, 2005:79). If we look to performance collaboration, it is not to say the director assumes that the performer is not equal, however does the performer have access to the material and space for interpretation akin to the directors? If we take Ranciere's model, until the structures which reveal individuals positions are made visible, then emancipation for that individual in a group cannot occur. In the instance of Jacotot's students they were able to self-teach; revealing their own knowledge. In order to make visible the structures to the performer and director, some attributes, conventionally assigned to the roles of performer and director, could become interchangeable between

individuals in the group. This inter-changeability may enable a sense of freedom and ownership to generating new material in performance collaboration.

Knowledge is a position: towards a visibility

Ranciere proposes that the conventional role of the master explicates knowledge to pupils by linking the pupil's knowledge to the master's (1991:15). The information is then reformatted into the pupil's vocabulary and imprinted as their knowledge. To Ranciere the conventional idea of transmitting knowledge to a pupil is somewhat dictatorial, "[...] the certifying process is that you must start from this point and go to this point and there is a right way to go from the first point to the last point"(Ranciere and Power, 2010:79). Consequently, the learners have acquired the master's knowledge, rather than directly from the material. Through the assumption that the verbal explanation from the master will make the pupil understand more:

> [...] oral explication is usually necessary to explicate the written explication. This presupposes that reasoning's are clearer, are better imprinted on the mind of the student, when they are conveyed by the speech of the master which dissipates in an instant (Ranciere, 1991:5).

The distance between the material and the pupil is collapsed through the master intercepting and eradicating the distance between the information and the pupil.

The alternative autodidactic[7] process, presented by Jacotot's empirical findings, can stabilise the ability to identify new material through past ways of learning:

[7] When an individual is self-taught.

> [...]by observing and retaining, repeating and verifying, by relating what they were trying to know to what they already knew, by doing and reflecting about what they had done (Ranciere, 1991:10).

If we apply the idea that knowledge is formed through position and position exists in a hierarchy, the question becomes important for the performer and director relation: Is it the position of the director which allows for an ability to transmit knowledge within the collaborative process? Take for example: when there is a script, a director gives instructions and transmits knowledge of the performer's character. If we look to devising; the collaborative process is built on the idea of having a structure which potentially allows individuals to have more freedom. If we look at Ranciere's model, the act of encountering information in relation to past information, and reflecting back onto the material, can create autonomy in deciphering the new material. In turn emancipation from the authority of the master's knowledge occurs. It is only if individuals in defined positions of superiority allow for the verification of equality, that the process of emancipation can occur (Ranciere, 1991). This can be suggested that until the individual in the role of director verifies equality within the group, the individual playing the role of performer will be unable to have a sense of autonomy and ownership to the process.

The autonomy formed from the act of the pupil in relation to the material links back to Ranciere's premise of the axiom of equality. It is the practice of equality which allows for the erasure of a hierarchy of knowledge within a group and the re-distribution of the ownership of ideas and interpretations. Performance discourse implies that collaboration and devising inevitably allow the performer an ability to

have creative freedom, but until there is open access to the material and it understands this can potentially be limited.

Distance: between master, pupil and material

Ranciere further explains the importance of distance between specific individuals in positions within *The Emancipated Spectator* (2009:9). He states when information is transmitted to the pupil, via the explicator, there becomes a disparity of equality. A distance between the individual and material needs to be established in order for equality to be practiced: “Distance is not an evil to be abolished, but the normal condition of any communication” (Ranciere, 2009:10). Jacotot describes “enforced stultification” to be when the master transmits knowledge, that links to the pupil’s, without distance between the material and the pupil (Ranciere,1991:7). The stultification of the pupil can then disable emancipation and autonomy. However, if distance is created between the master and the pupil, the pupil is able to interpret the information; identifying particular meanings away from the master’s knowledge:

> [...] the pupil learns something that the schoolmaster does not know himself. She learns it as an effect of the mastery that forces her to search and verifies this research. But she does not learn the schoolmaster’s knowledge. (Ranciere, 2009:14)

In the context of collaboration the performer can learn how to interpret and articulate through her own method; although not necessarily in line with the director’s. It is not to assume that the director in collaboration believes a performer not to have the necessary knowledge, but that a performer’s knowledge is not always fully utilised in the space; especially when the director uses direct instruction. There can be limited channels through which the performer can speak, interpret and discover material, which forms a lack of ownership and autonomy within some processes. Enabling

distance between the roles of performer and the material through tasks which provide distance to interpret, can allow for a readership of the content, rather than it being transposed via the director.

The research recognises that the role of the director should not be removed, but aims to investigate how attributes of the role may be reconstituted in the space. As Ranciere comments, positions can be reconstructed but the meaning of the position will remain:

> The terms can change their meaning, and the positions can be reserved, but that the main thing is that the structure counter poses two categories; those who possess a capacity and those who do not persist (Ranciere, 1991:13)

The binary that society perpetuates needs to be overturned. Once the superior position of the master is seen to be ignorant and pupil's knowledge to be visible, the idea that one has capacity and one has not becomes irrelevant. The not knowing and the knowing should be visible to enable individuals to discover and learn through their own integrity. In the collaborative process when an individual leads a task and has ideas, the title of director is placed onto the individual. If the group witnesses a different person in the position of leadership combined with distance to interpret and generate new material, the structures which encase the roles of performer and director can become visible. This is outlined in chapter four through a task titled *Secret Roles.* If assumptions around the position of director are unearthed, a freedom of opportunity to lead and to allow room for interpretation of the work may occur. The structures which hold the particular position of performer and director can become unfixed and allow for inter-changeability of attributes assumed onto a particular role.

We must however raise the question; what happens when an individual does not want, or does not have the will to participate at particular points? Is this an example of the participatory model highlighted in chapter two; trying to encourage everyone to participate which can form hidden hierarchies and also push through to individualism? What if an individual does not want to have ownership over the work; what if they want to retain more traditional values of the performer and perform? Ranciere (1991) states that when an individual's will is not strong enough, a teacher may need to step in, in order to keep them focused; to facilitate and support the will of the pupil. In the context of collaboration it can relate to a facilitator role within the group to guide the individual through the process. For the purpose of collaboration, creating a place for an *outside eye* to the process can also add a dynamic to the space which may diffuse the ideology for everyone participating. Thus, not forcing everyone to participate as such, but allowing room for the dynamic of the group to be looked at from a different position and provide a change of direction or commentary on what is happening when necessary. This was set up in and outlined in chapter four as the task titled *Not in Service. Not in Service* formed a space where an individual could remove themselves from active participation and look at what was happening in the process.

Criticisms

Although *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* can be a useful model with which to view hierarchies and structures within performance collaborations, on analysis there are areas of disparity in placing the theory into practice. The political philosopher, Pete Hallward, articulates in *Staging Equalities: On Ranciere's Theatocrocy (2006)* how Ranciere dismisses the operations of inequality within society through the

presumption of verifying axiomatic equality. In turn, raising the question as to how the authentication of equality can be established in contemporary practice. A similar concern is shared by Oliver Davis, in his article, *The Radical Pedagogies of Francois Bon and Jacques Ranciere* (Davis, 2010); stating that Ranciere's theoretical work tends to fall short of contemporary examples of the axiomatic equality within political and cultural practice; questioning whether it can exist or falls under an liberal notion.

If we refer back to David Howarth (2008) articulating that Ranciere's projects aim to be counter hegemonic, it becomes questionable whether axiomatic equality can remain counter-hegemonic: How can axiomatic equality be sustained? For Hallward, Ranciere fails to offer opportunities to sustain axiomatic equality and reads Ranciere's assumptions of inequality to be "simplistic" (2006:9).If we view axiomatic equality as a counter-hegemonic project, existing hegemony can be contested and a new group structure can form: enabling individuals in the group to see the roles and positions to be unfixed. This stands next to Chantal Mouffe and her argument for Agonistic pluralism. If the group is democratized it can attempt to allow the counter hegemonic projects to contest the hegemonic order within a group. Axiomatic equality can be sustained by acting as count-hegemonic process to dominant hegemonic orders.

<u>Agonistic pluralism</u>

Mouffe's work as a political theorist has involved various projects and writings; contesting the Liberal components of consensus, rationalism and deliberation in democracy. Mouffe's work looks at the mis-representation of democracy and its paradoxes in the Modern World: including *The Democratic Paradox (2000) The Return of the Political (1993)* and, alongside Ernesto Laclau, *Hegemony and*

Socialist Strategy (1985). It is *On the Political* (2005) which outlines Agonistic pluralism to be based on intrinsic conflict within human relations.

Mouffe argues for agonistic pluralism which welcomes different perspectives to be visible in order to form a new hegemonic order (2000:52). Mouffe (2005) offers an alternative notion to the Liberal model of consensus and deliberation in democracy; through strategies which acknowledge conflict and difference to be intrinsic to structures within a group. Mouffe argues for the viability of intrinsic antagonism within a pluralist society: “In pluralist democracy such disagreements are not only legitimate but also necessary” (Mouffe, 2005:31). It is Mouffe’s (2005) view that Liberalist ideals of consensus and rationalism destroy democracy, through its aim to eradicate agonism in order to form rational consensus. Consensus homogenises different voices and opinions into a “harmonious ensemble” (2007:3). It is the maintenance of the agonistic dynamic which needs to be advocated within democratic practice, to form a platform of perspectives; to be openly rejected or placed into a new order. Implementing a rational consensus over a group confines conflict into a harmonious ensemble and placed into what Mouffe calls a “natural terrain” (2005:34). It is through the ‘natural terrain’ that the hegemonic order becomes difficult to challenge as it is not made visible. Therefore the hegemonic order is assumed to be fixed.

The argument for the agonistic model is based on enabling conflicting ideas to exist through political association rather than rational consensus. As Mouffe states, “It is [. . .] an illusion to believe in the advent of a society from which antagonism would have been eradicated” (Mouffe, 2005:16). One of the polemic advocators of agonism is the philosopher Nietzsche, from whom Mouffe has further developed

ideas around human relations and group's existing within the political. Nietzche believed that rationalism cannot negate conflict within social structures. In fact, Owen states in *Nietzsche, politics and modernity; a critique of Liberal reason* that Nietzsche claimed that there should be maintenance of agonistic dynamic to form a shared social understanding and symbolic space; "through contestation, we develop our human powers" (1995:139). It is Nietzsche's idea that conflict cannot be reduced only maintained. Through legitimising the group association, "political association" the desire to achieve freedom and equality between individuals can transform antagonism into agonism (Mouffe, 2005). The agonistic pluralistic concept acknowledges that there are differences and conflicts relating to how things should work within democratic practice. However through legitimising the association, the conflict between members can be recognised as adversarial rather than as an enemy to defeat.

Key to democratic design and important to my practice as research is how can antagonism be platformed. Hale notes how Gooch states, in *All Together Now: Community Theatre An Alternative view (1984),* that despite the good intentions of democratic theatre companies, through consensus driven ideologies, voices became veiled through the loudest of group members; predominantly middle class, educated males (2010:40). In Mouffe's abstract in *Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic pluralism (2000),* the Liberalist ideal of forming a rational consensus has shaped the function of democracy; formed through theorists such as John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas. The act of discussion with a group of people, to rationalise and form a consensus, has been prominent throughout the history of political discourse and through how groups make decisions. As outlined in chapter two, the premise of the

Deliberative Model is that conflict within a group should be eliminated, through deliberation, to render the establishment of rational consensus. This can be recognised in how collaborative performance groups have used the act of deliberation to form consensus; noted in Heddon &Milling to be a part of the collaborative epoch of performance (2006:223). For Mouffe, the deliberative, participatory model negates the pluralistic nature of our society, diffusing the active function of democracy into a fixed uncontested hegemonic order. There have been various accounts of the scepticism of consensus focused organisations from *The Monstrous Regiment* which fall in line with Mouffe's problems with how Liberalist thought categorises democracy to be based on rational consensus. The framework seems to negate conflict and contestation, through the ethos of equality for all. In turn consensus veiling and stabilising the dominant voices in the group. As evidenced by Hanna from *The Monstrous Regiment:*

> We wanted no one person to be so important that she could be considered to be the Artistic Director. Once the company had been established and was up and running, this issue of power and hidden hierarchies came up again and again (Hana,1991:Xxi)

Agonistic pluralism places difference and agonism as its main components which are different from the 1960s idea of participation and forming a rational consensus. Agonistic pluralism can also challenge the traditional hierarchy of performer and director relationship and authority with the director through focusing on the notion that hegemonic structure is temporary. As Hale points out the role of performer in collaboration within her research:

> [. . .] within the British theatre industry at large, actors are the most numerous, most controlled and lowly paid, yet essential workers and, as such, equate with the notion of 'the people' or 'the governed', as identified in democratic

> theory. Therefore, for the creative process to be democratic, actors must hold power. (Hale, 2010:117)

If the hegemonic structure is temporary, the dominant structure which can make the hierarchy can change. For the challenge to occur, roles and hegemonic form need to be visible in order to show that there can always be a different order: the individual in the role of performer could execute a different interpretation, indicating that there would always be a temporary hegemonic structure in which different individuals could lead tasks and follow through with ideas.

Positive conflict: association and legitimisation

Through the differences established via the newly formed hegemonic order, a divisive we-they structure begins to form. The relational differences are what Mouffe terms the "we-they relation." Through an establishment of a *we* there becomes a *they* to form individual identities. The formation of the "we" creates the exclusion of the "they" which can fluctuate according to the set of politics present on the political order. It is in relation to how the conflict is acknowledged and used within the political that Mouffe's argument stands: how the excluded are viewed and how we can legitimise the 'they' through the view that the hegemonic order is temporary. In a collaborative model, it would be more appropriate to re-term the *we-they* relation with the *I/they* relation for the roles of director and performer. Through the beginning stages of collaboration, individuals playing the role of performer can be isolated from voicing ideas and knowledge of the material and may have to conform to the set of ideas led by a director. If the individual contests the order there is the potential for them to voice, lead, and have authority to then direct a specific idea in the making

process. Through the practice of axiomatic equality, individuals can challenge the dominant order to offer alternative ideas and potentially generate material.

However, as Mouffe (2005) states all members of the group must have a commitment to the stabilising of a democratic platform which will be in flux and continually contested. In the case of collaboration this can be seen as the: association to the commitment of egalitarian methods whilst having creative freedom. Within the collaborative process difference of opinion and interpretation should be highlighted as a positive component within the group, in order to challenge what is perceived to be the dominant order at the time. In abstract terms, the process attempts to be continually in flux, overlapping ideas, and being able to challenge the perceived consensus in the group. As outlined in chapter two, the *Theatre du Soleil* aim to form an awareness of difference which does not dilute the individual, but allows for conflict. It can be viewed that through vigorous re-evaluation and legitimisation of difference, the *Theatre du Soleil* collaborates through the democratic platform of agonism rather than consensus. The *Soleil* offer a practical example of how Mouffe's concept of agonistic pluralism can work within performance collaboration. It is how we challenge the hegemonic order and how we view its construction which is important in stabilising an agonistic dynamic within a group: to allow for conflict and debate to channel an adversarial partnership.

Temporary Hegemonic Order

To allow for difference to be stabilised, within the political, it needs to be recognised that every hegemonic order is temporary and is based on a form of exclusion. It is the excluded which can and should challenge, by counter hegemonic practice, the existent order to in turn form a new hegemonic order. As Mouffe states,

challenging the hegemonic order should be, “a process of disarticulation of existing practices and creation of new discourses” (2005:33). The hegemonic order, formed via old practices, needs to be viewed as temporary. Hegemony is not fixed or definite. It is the present order formed through a series of struggles which exist in a given moment; as Mouffe states:

> [...] recognizing the hegemonic nature of every kind of social order and the fact that every society is the product of a series of practices attempting to establish order in a context of contingency (Mouffe, 2005:17)

It is the hegemonic order which has been made up through accepted ways and promulgated into the dominant order. The order is not exterior to the structure it is formed via the practices existent within the order. Therefore, as Mouffe states, “Every order is the temporary and precarious articulation of contingent practices . . . things could always be otherwise and therefore every order is predicated on the exclusion of other possibilities” (Mouffe, 2005:18). It is here where difference can provoke integral interpretations of ideas within the making process for the performer to access. If dominant structures which hold ideas and ownership can be seen as temporary, then through this notion, individuals can intervene and access the pockets of authority which usually reside with the director. Looking at how the performer and director roles can both utilise knowledge, creativity and opinion, through the shift of roles. The friction between the collapse and reformation of individuals creating a different order can open up the potential of new ideas and generate material.

The criticisms of Chantal Mouffe’s Agonistic pluralism

Within Chantal’s Mouffe idea of agonistic pluralism there is minimal acknowledgement of groups in society which do not recognise or know how to

articulate a specific point of view. Furthermore, individuals may not have the facilities and voice to assert this opinion. The art critic Grant Kester questions in his book *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art (2009),* the accessibility of having a voice within a space; what happens if this individual does not recognise that they have a voice within this particular order? The political space facilitating a set of voices is something which Mouffe does not provide evidence of how to reach that point of articulation and conflict; asking what happens to individuals who cannot dissent or recognise the hegemonic order? Does hegemony become sustained through a series of popularised ideas, rather than allowing marginalised ideas? Although Chantal Mouffe's theory is centred on political theory there is an assumption that the differing voices already exist in the sphere of the political and thus, have established a voice. In the hegemonic order, individuals have to be established and verified before they enter the position to articulate differing opinions. Therefore, it is fair to say that the hegemonic order could be made up of dominant voices appealing to a certain position. This is important when looking at the interpersonal relations of performance collaboration. There needs to be a consideration to why the group has been bought together and what the groups association is. Mouffe does state that the group has to be formed by a "political association". If we apply this to performance collaboration, the association would be the creating of the performance which is the common ground involved. However, individuals may not have a particular level of understanding; dependent on the individuals involved in the group at the time: professionals; university students; non-professionals. Arguably, a practice based on axiomatic equality has to be set up first to stabilise trust in order to enable individuals to share differences and for conflicts to be legitimate.

Application of Axiomatic equality and Agonistic pluralism to Collaboration

The interdependency of axiomatic equality and agonistic pluralism can enable the collapse and reformation of temporary hegemonic structure, visibility and distance in the space. These principles offer an alternative to performance collaboration. As previously stated, Ranciere and Mouffe recognise the binary in society. Ranciere identifies the binary between master and pupil, and Mouffe in the exclusion of the *we-they* relation. Both theories allude to making the binary visible: For Ranciere it is overturning what the notions of what the 'inferior' position in society is capable of doing. For Mouffe it is reliance on counter-hegeonic projects, such as axiomatic equality, in order to challenge the dominant order; creating a new *we/they* relation. Thus, it is not to remove roles but to re-look at how the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic practice can be used within the frameworks of collaboration. A tentative theory can be placed on providing a space which becomes performer centric and promulgates transparency of the structures which form the working group. Although the individual plays a specific role, the legitimisation that roles are not fixed can be said to utilise the performer's knowledge, enabling ownership of the work and a sense of autonomy within the group.

The aim is to reconsider the performer as more than just a vehicle for the director's ideas; asking where and if the performer can have more ownership over the interpretation and generating of material. It is the aim of the research to investigate strategies to allow the performer to access the information through 'her' own ideas, in relation to the material.

As Ranciere raises the question, "Who would want to begin?" (1991:17) How can axiomatic equality be stabilised in a group unless all individuals believe in it and

place it into practice? The recognition of agonistic pluralism will be proposed to counter-act Ranciere's notion through its temporary hegemonic structure. Through the rise and fall of temporary structures it is proposed that through the visibility between a new person leading and a different person *doing,* the group may become unified and yet simultaneously emancipated from the presupposition of their present role. If the roles are continually in flux, the distance to step out and lead becomes possible, whilst being open to contestation from other group members.

Through enabling two theories which are interdependent, we may stabilise a reading of the actual process through an alternative lens of political and philosophical notions. Through the collision of hegemonic and counter hegemonic practice, moulding and retracting, the actuality of what one has participated in or created can be opened up to a dialogue.

Overall, for the hegemonic order to form there must be a verification of equality within the working group in order to gain accessibility to the difference of opinion and perspective between individuals. When the practicing of equality forms it will only last for a short space of time as a new dominant sequence will appear.

Chapter Four: Strategies and tasks to reconsider performer and director roles

The reconsideration of interpersonal relations will be explored within the chapter, accompanied by the narrative voice of the individuals who participated in the research. The Artist Box and DVDs will also be referenced and are advised to be used as an additional resource to the reading of the chapter. The resources aim to form a narrative and an exploration to the process. I define the interpersonal relations as the 'meeting point' between the performer and director roles. The meeting point between performer and director was formed through the reconstitution of attributes conventionally assigned to the roles.

From the reading of axiomatic equality and agonistic pluralism the following principles were used to design tasks within the practice:

1. Temporary hegemonic structure

2. Distance: between individual, explicator and material

3. Visibility of construction of role

It is important to note that the theories of axiomatic equality and agonistic pluralism acted as a guide to the research, but did not limit the practice. Art theorist Grant Kester, shares the opinion that theory can sometimes overrule practice:

> The risk of going into the project with too many theoretical axioms floating around in your head (i.e "Ranciere says X," and "Mouffe says Y") is that you can end up looking for verification of what the theorist has already said (and often the theorist is relatively ignorant about the specificities of practice), rather than being open to what is unfolding before you. (personal communication, 2011)

The practice did not aim to 'look' for the theory, but used it as an alternative set of principles to discover attributes and relations between individuals playing specific roles. Nevertheless, the manifestation of the practice did, at times, become a

practical representation of the theory. Referring back to chapter two, Freddie Rokem's description of how theory and practice can "push-pull," the group, on occasion, did bring up ideas of freedom and equality in discussions which linked back to the theory that the practice was predicated on: axiomatic equality and agonistic pluralism. For example: individuals in the group raised questions about the process through written and verbal feedback (Appendix 4e & 6a).

What was being made?

In the initial rehearsal, I explained to the group that the research would use the theories of axiomatic equality and agonistic pluralism as benchmarks. I gave an overview of the theories and suggested material that would be available for members to read if they chose to do so. Stemming from this, a discussion emerged within the group surrounding ideas of performance: concerns; current shows; funding and working groups in theatre. The discussion culminated in a resonating question of *What is Problematic?* (Appendix 5 0.00-8.47). This question became the basis of the devising process, explored through the use of newspaper articles, political topics and political events. The content was then worked through tasks formed from the theory, but closely linked to improvisations and post-dramatic tasks familiar to performance practitioners.

The group

The practice as research was conducted from January 20th to May 15th 2011 at the University of Huddersfield in the Milton Building and the Lawrence Batley Theatre. The following group members were involved: Siobhan Crees, Yuki Kondo and Natalie Bangs. The selection of the group members was based on a deliberate

choice to gather people who had trained in different specialisms.[8] The intention of having different specialisms was that there was sufficient difference within the group, yet a commonality, as all individuals were associated to performance discourse. The choice to seek various specialisms attempted to connect to Mouffe's idea of difference and political association. Mouffe's idea of association is that the group's members are looking to the same idea; however they have different ways of getting to that point. The political association of differences would be to encourage various interpretations and perspectives to generate material. I also wanted to avoid prior established working patterns, which may have lent themselves to Gillian Hanna's experience of hidden hierarchies. However due to feasibility, all participants who wanted to be a part of the research were members of Huddersfield University, thus there were already subtle links to working practices. The group was made up of Crees, who had trained as a director, Kondo as a performer and musician, Bangs as a performer and myself as a performer. The prior working patterns of participants differed across the group: Kondo, Bangs and I had worked together within the University: Bangs and I had worked together both professionally and within the University: Crees had previously directed Bangs, but had not worked with me or Kondo. I was initially concerned that the close working relationship between Bangs and I could forge and conceal a hidden authority. The closeness between Bangs and I was also identified by Crees, but also became part of her motive to join the research group: "I had never worked with you guys as a performer (apart from directing Nat in year 2) and admired your performative skills so much and thought

[8] Originally, I asked individuals to join the process who had worked in directing, playwriting, performing and training; across postgraduate studies, professional practice and lecturing positions.

whatever I could learn from you guys would be great" (Appendix 1a). Crees had already placed me and Bangs together in a relationship as she had referred to me and Bangs as, "you guys." I did, at this stage, consider not using Bangs in the research, but due to the practicalities of requiring participants, Bangs remained. On further reflection, it is inevitable that individuals will work together based on prior working relationships, coupled with intrigue and respect of individuals practice. The political association, which Mouffe (2005) describes, will inevitably be made up of individuals who have shared past connections and share similar view-points. It is more important as to how the structures are formed; through a visible new order rather than certain individuals being there or not. How do you create a space where orders are visible and can be challenged?

Using participants with varying specialisms aimed to establish a visible description based on what Mouffe calls the "we/they" relation, but which I re-worded for the purpose of the research as "I/they". Mouffe (2005) describes that, within democratic practice, the channels for expression need to be legitimised in order to allow for conflict and difference to be recognised. It is how the channels are constructed in the space which affects how individuals can express conflict. For Mouffe individuals and their opinions need to be visible and open for the entire group to see.

If the structures aren't visible they can destroy the association and conceal hidden authoritative voices. Therefore there must be an individual to lead, to have responsibility, but whom other members of the group can challenge. I decided that for the channels to be further legitimised, space for reflection and feedback was also

needed. Enabling spaces for thinking and speaking, attempted to instil the potential conflict and difference to be realised as a positive component of the collaboration.

To further cement the group association, it was important that each member felt that they were getting something out of the research for themselves. Kondo's personal desire to join the project was based on, "belonging to some group," which highlighted her own sense of the importance of, and desire for, the group association (Appendix 1b). As Ranciere (1991) pointed out, allowing for an individual's 'will' to be exercised is important for the foundations of axiomatic equality between individuals. The will of the individual, and the importance of being part of the research, helped strengthen the association to the group. Crees wanted to "have the chance to perform more," whilst Bangs expressed a more detailed frustration with her previous experience as a performer within a collaborative context:

> [. . .] Inputting ideas was an easy and comfortable task, however, the argument still remained that your ideas would fall under the ownership of the director. The directors, even within an ensemble or collective, would have the overall control of the decision making process, and there very rarely existed sharing of opinions (Appendix 1c).

Each individual's differing desires to join the group formed an overall association; through the research topic and their own will. However, differences within the group sometimes polarised attitudes. Kondo pointed out that in Japan, where she had first trained, there was little exploration of politics within performance; and thus the research, guided by political and philosophical theory, seemed an awkward concept. At the beginning of the process Kondo became frustrated with questions of equality, freedom and difference within performance collaboration; asking in a rehearsal: "What is the point?" (2011, not recorded). This may have jeopardised the group's

association to the research. However, in the practice I considered that it enabled the other individuals to work alongside a resistant attitude.

Although each individual had their own motivations for being involved in the research, it became unavoidable that the research resided with me. I was the one setting the majority of tasks and facilitating the research. The question recurred at several points during the process of: *What is Laura's role in the process?* (Appendix 4i 4:42-6:56, 5h 6:22 & 6a). Frequent questions about my role in the process became present, as Bangs comments, " . . . I'm aware that it is her project. . . ideas rooted in her ideas, opinions, head when she facilitates it's all through the research, the theories the M.A writing" (Appendix 4g 15:32). The recurring issue of my role in relation to my research, from the point of view of group members, is very important as it illustrated that the research may have been more successfully conducted through a different approach. It is these variables which expose developments in the research as well as flaws which will be later explored. At this point I will move on to the methodology of the process.

Methodology

To further encourage the individual's ideas and opinions I decided to use video documentation[9]. The use of video documentation was intended to capture what was happening between individuals in the rehearsals: silences, dominant voices, laughter, moments of leadership, conflict. *Individual Reflection* was recorded on video; aimed to enable the members to speak as they wanted and to comment on

[9] The camera was actively used in the rehearsal space but was not dictated by it. Therefore at times actions from the rehearsal would knock the camera over and the camera did run out of battery

what had happened within the process. Questions were written by all members to aid reflection. Interestingly the selection of particular questions revealed trends of concerns and positives within the group. For example: The reoccurring question towards my role in the group and the success of the task, *Not in Service.* Discussing outcomes of the tasks opened up room for further interpretation and encouraged individuals to invent new tasks in the process. As the process moved forward there became less reflection, however, individuals did initiate time for reflection if they felt it necessary to talk about an idea or a concern.

Furthermore, a principle was formed that when anybody in the group felt there was an interesting part, they could move the camera to capture what was happening, thus the documentation never became mediated through one vision i.e. from me or a director etc. A similar idea was suggested on the use of music in the rehearsal. From the second rehearsal it was established that members could bring in their own music and were able to change it at any point within the warm up. The tasks of changing music and focusing the camera were small choices, but ones which allowed a breaking down of the authority of one person in the space. Usually music and use of the camera resides with the director, but here the principle of choice enabled a sense of shared ownership.

The initial working structures were established by me; however, the group established checks and balances three weeks into the process. The checks and balances were formed by each person writing down a principle for the group which would enable us to work in a particular way (Appendix 6i). The writing down became an active declaration to the group of our positions and what we wanted to happen.

However, as the rehearsals developed the checks and balances were not always achieved as the drive to create work became more urgent.

Why there was no performance?

The tensions between exploring the egalitarian methods in the research and putting on the performance of “What is Problematic?” became apparent towards the end of the process. Primarily the research was concerned with how the material is generated in relation to re-considering the inter-personal relations of performer and director. However it is unrealistic to dismiss the end product of putting on a performance which can be argued is one of the main purposes of making a performance. We had already begun to notice that areas such as checks and balances, that we had focused on had become less important to the process as the performance date approached. However, there were various external limitations placed onto the group towards the latter end of the process which created difficult decisions as to what should happen. New rules placed on the use of rehearsal space disenabled two members of the group being able to use the building at certain times. The new rules were placed onto the group three weeks before the performance was to be shown. We felt there was no feasible way of working to the new rules as the two members of the group had to be at work and had other commitments. As the research was also un-paid and the group participants were providing free- labour, the welfare and the financial implications this would have on the group had to take precedence. Furthermore, because the practice relied heavily on the exploration of finding different strategies and analysing how they worked the group were at a fragile point of working through strategies to move to the next stage of the performance making: organisation and structure. We were at the point where we were trying out

different ways to organise and structure the material. For Example: we looked at alternating directors: selecting scenes which individuals wanted to direct, perform in and fitting it to a decided overall aim of the piece 'What is Problematic?' This process was new to everyone and we needed to work out if it was practical. Alongside this exploration, we were having conversations about one person being able to direct the performance as the group had reached a position where there was a shared sense ownership of the work and at this point it didn't really matter who directed it because it felt like 'ours.' These were two areas that needed further exploration. We were trying out ways of how to work through these strategies and felt that hurrying them through to stage a performance would be counter-productive. Within the group there were frustrated conversations with regards to the external frameworks of the University and a sense of no confidence and lack of support. It is understandable that often companies have to rush through scenes to work to a deadline, but because this was in context of research and exploration, it seemed that if we did not work through the strategies in this way, having the critical reflection, then what we had discovered would not have been thoroughly worked. A decision to come back to the making of "What is Problematic?" outside the University, was decided due to an importance placed on what we had already found and the practicalities that participants had -jobs, rent and other commitments to attend to that they could not change at such late notice.

Between axiomatic equality and agonistic pluralism in tasks

The following section will set up the movement between the three principles in the rehearsal space. Examples will be taken from *Open Space* and *Copying* to show the principles of visibility and distance (Appendix 3d).

The section will reveal how axiomatic equality from *Open Space* subsequently became punctured with the temporary hegemonic structure with *Teaching task (*Appendix 4*).* The section aims to outline the constant flux between temporary structure, visibility and distance which became significant for opinion to be channelled and ownership of work to emerge. Opinion and ownership will be highlighted and referenced by a debate on March 17th 2011.

Open Space

Each rehearsal began with an *Open Space* where together we would carry out our individual warm ups. The intention was for each individual to warm up, to be present in the space, but also to maintain a distance to observe one another's warm up styles. I interjected in the task through asking the group to *Copy* someone's movement which they found interesting and to then use it as their own. The decision to offer the *Copy* task to the group was based on my observation that individuals were already beginning to take on the idea of copying each other's movements; having witnessed individuals move into this I wanted to encourage it further. Creating a space which validated individual's interpretation and creation to the warm up, allowed distance and time where individuals could choose to enhance their own warm up. The tasks were designed to see individual interpretations, providing distance to select and develop particular movements from other individuals in the rehearsal space. The aim of allowing distance for interpretation was to verify the difference of movement in the space. For Ranciere, the importance of distance was to enable individuals to develop their own 'will' and to detach from the master's knowledge of how to do or learn something. The difference of interpretation of the warm up encompassed different speeds, shapes, playfulness and rigidity. The

observation of individuals interpreting and allowing distance to move autonomously without direct instruction became a ritual at the beginning of each rehearsal.

The copy task allowed individuals to take on different positions within the space. Subsequently, building confidence within the group to improvise and try out various combinations without direct instruction. For example, in one rehearsal during *Open Space,* Crees placed a chair in the middle of the room and began to move in relation to it. Bangs copied the movement and placed a chair near to Crees. They began to improvise in relation to the chair and each other. At the same time, Kondo and I carried on with our own individual warm up and gradually moved to improvising with the chairs. Crees' subtle choice to use a chair in the space provoked and influenced Bangs to opt into a mini improvisation. As previously noted, Ranciere (1991) states that allowing distance to interpret, away from the master's knowledge, will separate individuals' willingness to make decisions within the group; reiterating their own motivation to the idea of what Mouffe articulates as the political association. This can be identified in the structure of the warm-up which allowed individuals to operate in this way prior to any work with material, thus acting as a preparation to the following tasks. The distance for interpretation aimed to contribute each individual's creativity, physical ideas and body to be legitimised in the space. The *Open Space* at times became playful through the spontaneity and change of direction within the group.

Teaching Task

Difference was further explored by tasks which established the temporary structure of leader and follower. The *Teaching task* is an example where different people led the rest of the group in teaching something which may or may not have

been practiced before. The task could be something familiar or something different to encourage interpretation and delivery of the task, opening out the choice of what to teach and how to lead it. It established a visible new leadership in the group through the new person teaching the task and allowing their ideas to be dominant. The ability to interpret the task in their own way was important to enable the individual to teach something to the rest of the group in a way that they chose; verbally; non-verbally; something familiar; something different. For example, Crees taught the group a choreographed movement piece set to music, made up of six movements which we learnt and practiced together (Appendix 4c). Kondo, incidentally, picked this up very quickly and also moved into a leadership role with Crees, to help teach Bangs and I. Kondo moved into a position to show us the movements by standing at the front facing the group. I was the last to pick up the routine. My struggle to learn the task helped to challenge the original notion that I was a 'better performer' (Crees, 2011), and that I had authority over the research. A different temporary hierarchy had emerged. The shared laughter at my struggle to pick the routine up dismantled pre-associated thoughts of my performance ability. It also revealed Kondo's fast response to picking up the routine and her comfort to move into a position of leadership to help me out. The differences in ability and the movement between the individuals leading the task dismantled pre-asserted ideas from the group. The inter-changeability of the leadership, laced with laughter and the interpretation of the task, related itself to what Mouffe calls an agonistic dynamic in the group. There was room for interpretation, articulation and for failure. The differences between each of the members enabled the group to see the shift between individuals taking on the role of 'performer,' moving into a 'directing' role and moving back into 'performer.'

It is the legitimisation of difference provided by the individuals, through dismantling and reforming the principles based on temporary hegemonic structure which helped create channels for the difference to exist. The opening of these channels allowed an equality of influence within the group: space to interpret and articulate a specific idea to the rest of the group.

Possible Tasks

It is important to note that many of the tasks were initiated by me. Each task attempted to allow fellow group members and I to interpret something; to have the distance to create something. In turn encouraging distance to interpret through individuals' own ideas and thoughts prompted group members to openly suggest ideas to explore. *Possible Tasks* was formed through a comment which Kondo made during a feedback session from a previous *Impossible Task*[10], which I had established. Kondo suggested that each member write down overtly simple tasks, such as opening a door. It was essential however that we place great emphasis on the task. The emphasis manifested itself into verbally and physically drawn out ideas relating to how to open a door to very slow movements of jumping in the air. The task, again, is an example where within the space we visibly witnessed Kondo establishing a position of authority and leadership on the task. As a consequence of seeing different people present ideas vocally and physically, and for them to be legitimised, participants, in this case Kondo, became comfortable in moving forward to develop ideas. The continuous shift of the hierarchal structure and dominant ideas

[10] The exercise and name was taken from the theatre company Goat Island, however it was adapted within the rehearsal to be staged and performed to music. Individuals could opt in and opt of their presentation of the impossible task

began to enable individuals to push tasks in a different direction from that which the originator of the task thought would be successful. Through discussion ideas would be pushed and further explored. However, this can also be questioned as potentially problematic: Kondo led the task to a place not envisioned by the initiator of the task. This poses the question, when does room for difference and freedom to explore and take leadership become an inability for a leader to follow something through? When the aim is to create a performance when do we stop ideas in order to structure a performance?

The movement between the visibility and distance of individuals in the space, dismantling and replaying structure, created a sense of trust. This allowed the individuals to feel comfortable in the space, and difference of opinion and direction within the devising process to occur. As Mouffe (2005) articulated, if there are channels which verify difference and conflict, conflict is less likely to occur and destroy the group. Through the interdependency and movement between temporary structure, visibility and distance, an establishment of difference can be seen as a positive component to the collaboration; born from the stabilising of trust and ownership within the group. Individuals began to theorise, as performers began to look back in on the process and to comment in a way which offered alternative directions for the work. This was highlighted during the kill team debate.

The Kill Team Debate

Throughout the rehearsals *Feedback* was introduced which provoked various debates about *What is problematic?* I instigated that individuals would bring in articles, objects and material to define what they felt was problematic. Once it was established that conflict was a positive component of the process debates around

subject matter became dynamic and at times heated. To illustrate the conflicting opinions, a rehearsal on March 17th 2011, revealed and acknowledged the agonistic dynamic in the group. The task was to present a discussion on *What is Problematic* in a performative style. I presented an article based on the atrocities of *The Kill Team* (Appendix 6m & 6 1:14-26). The information was presented to the group who were sat on four chairs in a semi-circle, in a matter of fact persona. The monotonous presentation was intentionally performative and somewhat proactive through the dead pan use of expression. On reflection, this may have provoked an intentional antagonism to the group, although the choice was a performative one. The presentation was monitored by an egg timer; thus giving a performative quality to the material. I sat and read in a presentational manner quoting comments on the insensitivity of publishing a horrific article on *The Kill Team*: “I think it’s really important to highlight the nature of the material and that people are aware of what they’re going to read, in case it’s too upsetting for people” (Appendix 6m). Towards the end the presentation, a heavy debate began, predominantly between me and Kondo. Kondo believed the information analysing The Kill Team to be inappropriate for a performance. At the beginning of the rehearsal we had been involved in *Open Space* where it had been playful and various improvisations had materialised with different objects, and a sense of togetherness had formed (Appendix 3c). However, this task had punctured the togetherness and individuals moved to form different opinions and establish their own position within the group. Crees retreated from the debate, as she reflects:

> I positioned myself on one of the outer chairs which further placed me outside the conversation and it was noted I was a lot quieter then I usually am in group discussions. I was also fiddling with some paper from a previous task in the session (Crees, 2011).

Kondo's behaviour expresses the idea that the space for conflict can enable individuals to speak and deliver their opinion and interpretation on subject matter. Or alternatively choose to remove themselves from the debate, as Crees did. Kondo, in this instance, had disagreed with my opinion and was vocal whereas Crees was non-verbal: showing the difference within the group. Kondo's comments opened up an alternative approach to staging the material, more significantly a platform and the ability to speak changed the direction of the presentation. The shift between me delivering the task to the rest of the group via the presentation enabled my position and my idea of the presentation of *The Kill Team* to be challenged. As Mouffe states, "Every hegemonic order is susceptible of being challenged by counter-hegemonic practices, i.e. practices which will attempt to disarticulate the existing order so as to install another form of hegemony" (Mouffe, 2007:2). The continuous hierarchal flux allowed for Kondo to offer opinion on the content verbally. As the debate became dynamic, responses to the information and to people's opinions were visibly open to the group. In the early stages of the research, Kondo had asked what is the point of questioning, demonstrating her acceptance of the conventional idea of consent in the space. On her reflection of *The Kill Team* debate in relation to other collaborations, Kondo comments, ". . . however maybe in task, depending on what we are doing I sometimes try to . . . I try harder to explain things to people. I think generally, performer can be passive" (Appendix 4i 3:30). The attention to her position in relation to the material stabilised the channels for the conflict and validated the difference within the group. It also revealed what I name the *Fallacy of the Group*: the playfulness and togetherness formed through tasks and warm ups were quickly dismantled through *The Kill Team* debate. It is not to say, however, that the warm ups and tasks were not necessary as they were needed to allow for the fallacy to

appear; to allow and legitimise conflict; for dissent to occur. This highlights the importance the use of Open Space and Copying to enable a trust within the group to be able to reach a point of conflict. The interdependency and the fluctuation between the principles enabled the verification and axiomatic equality to exist in the group and to then be replaced with an agonistic dynamic. To acknowledge the legitimisation of agonism, tasks such as *Open Space, Copying* and the playful improvisations, were fundamental to allow for dissent and conflict to be legitimised and be active.

The articulation from Kondo of her different opinion and how my presentation was not appropriate for the theatre brought about an interesting debate. It challenged my position as leader of the task and opened up various conversations on the topic. When individuals feel they have ownership over the material they have created they can begin to offer a different opinion and this allows for the creation of an agonistic space. To enable a conflict and difference to be visible in a group, it is reliant on the setting up and verification of all participants in the space. However, one might ask whether there could be a point at which the director is completely derailed and the project can't move forward at all? Does this conflict break the group association of creating a performance? It is important to discuss the point that the group were never able to stage the performance and what this may say about the practice. I will explore these points at a later stage.

The movement between the three principles within the process enabled the roles to become unfixed, in turn opening up space for the individuals within the roles to speak, debate and question their position and the process. It is not the case to remove the roles, but rather to extract the individual from the role; to encourage inter-changeability of roles and remove predetermined assumptions as to how each

role would work. This lends itself to Ranciere's notion of knowing and not knowing; sharing attributes of leadership and ownership between individuals in performer and director roles (1991:15).

The movement between the temporary structure, visibility and distance became most significant in the tasks of *Secret Roles* and *Not in Service*, because all three principles were working in each of the tasks.

Secret Roles

In *Secret Roles,* each participant selected a role which was unknown to the individual as it was folded up in a piece of paper. Each individual was unable to disclose any details to other members until the role was played out in the next rehearsal. The roles were director, critic and performer. The added role of critic was selected to further place an ‘outside eye’ on the rehearsal. A date set for the delivery of *Secret Roles* was previously confirmed and we then had to prepare for the task. It was up to the individual how long they wanted to direct for, what they wanted to deliver, in relation to *What is Problematic?* The distance between the individual’s taking on the specific role and the role they have played before, was to encourage a sense of emancipation for the individual, free from their usual role of performer or director. This aimed to allow the individual to lead and input ideas in a particular way and see other individuals take on the role of performer and interpret the work. The temporary structure of individuals in the roles highlighted the positions being a construction and thus unfixed. In reference to Ranciere’s practice, Peter Hallward states in *Staging the Equalities,* “. . .This is what emancipation means: the blurring of the opposition between they who look and they who act, between those who are trapped by their function or identity and those who are not” (2006:3). The visibility of

a different individual playing the role and the individual interpretation of the way a role is played out generated a visibility of the coded practices of the role in the space. These assumed rules created an identity for each group member bound by the labels 'performer', 'director' or 'critic'. Allowing the role to be redefined by a new performer or director, blurring who is seen as a performer or director, prompted a sense of emancipation. Further, the exercise created ownership of the work since it allowed it to be reinterpreted from being seen from a different perspective within a different role. The principle of a temporary hegemonic structure prompted the positivity of individuals to be able to place ideas in the space, and for them in turn to be challenged.

I believe that *Secret Roles* may have encouraged people to *play* the roles; to view them as performed, constructed and interchangeable. One instance in particular comes to mind, when Bangs was the director, Crees the critic, and Kondo and I were performers (Appendix 3e & Figure 1):

After *Open Space* had taken place Bangs began to give instructions to come and gather in a circle, where she then ran a further warm up. Her role as director was then established. At this point Crees was quite resistant to the instruction and separated herself from the group. The roles in the room had been redistributed and we began to see each other playing something different in the space. At this point I was not facilitating any longer and Bangs had taken over the director role. Bangs ran a task called *Unspeakable thoughts* whereby we walked around the room speaking our thoughts into the space (Appendix 2). The exercise then moved onto throwing a ball to individuals in the circle whilst articulating what was in our minds. At this point Crees decided to join in. Bangs then ran feedback with the group, and Kondo raised

the point that, ". . . it is impossible to say all things" (Appendix 3e 11:25). This created a debate about ourselves in relation to others; something which I found to be particularly important as we still, at this point, occupied our 'roles'. Crees was out of the circle, watching and observing. Bangs set the main task of the rehearsal which was to write down rules and instructions of something i.e rules of a school, of a community (Appendix 3e 12:30 &Figure 2). We all participated in writing down the rules. Bangs told us to place the pieces of paper around the room on the floor and to stand up and make a three minute performance, and gave us rules for reading out information i.e in move in slow motion. Kondo and I moved through the exercise resulting in a mini performance. At the end of the session I asked people to write down how it felt to be in their role (Appendix 6j). Crees was the critic and she chose to move in and out of exercises; she chose to sit out on feedback and the actual performance of the tasks. The main task was based around structures and rules which indirectly helped as a task to review the performer and director roles. The form and content of the performative action began to allow us to see the rules which made up the roles of performer and director in the space.

Figure One *Secret Roles* Rehearsal:

Figure 2 *Secret Roles* Rehearsal 2:

The showing of the different interpretations of, and similarities in, the ways of playing out the roles in the group, not only revealed the constructed practices and assumptions attached to the role, but also revealed a different set of interpretations of the material of *What is Problematic?* The interpretation of the role of performer or director held a different set of ideologies of how to perform the role, forming a distance between the given role of performer in relation to the role of director. The visibility and inter-changeability of the roles allowed the group to see the construction of the role in the space. The roles were being played out by different individuals and allowed the construction of the role from an individual's perspective: how to interpret how to direct something and how to interpret how to perform something. In turn this created a sense of redistribution of the content and thus contested particular ideas as they were not owned by one person.

<u>Not in Service</u>

Not in Service was a strategy to allow and encourage individuals to opt out of exercises within the rehearsals. *Not in Service* was a stool placed in the rehearsal space where the individuals could sit and observe what was happening to other individuals in the space. . Crees describes this as, ". . . a space or piece of furniture, allows freedom, escape" (Appendix 4h 7:50). Opting out of an exercise allowed the individual to choose to retreat from an exercise and potentially alter the action in the space. Observing the other group members enabled the individual to see the structural formation of leadership in the group in relation to others. As Kondo describes, *Not in Service* affects the space and oneself within it: ". . . being a performer, being on that chair I am changing my point of view . . . being outside of everything in that room" (Appendix 4i 8:34).

On March 17th *Not in Service* was used (Appendix 3b). The stool was set up and we worked through our warm ups in the *Open Space*. Kondo began to throw a ball around, starting an improvisation when a specific song came on which had been used in an earlier rehearsal. Crees had previously taught the group a movement piece to this song. There was laughter in recognition of the song and we began to use the movement individually; initiated by Crees and Kondo (Appendix 3b 0:59). I chose to be *Not in Service* and Crees, Kondo and Bangs came closely together to carry on performing the movement. There was a sense of fun and exploration; moving in and out familiar tasks, copying each other's movement, dropping out of the movement and back into an individual warm ups (Appendix 3b 11:50). Crees decided to opt out but not on the stool, to sit and watch. Bangs joined her and began to change the structure again (Appendix 3b, 9:05). The movement between opting in and opting out allowed individuals to add and change direction. Crees began to

touch the arm of each person and Bangs spotted this whilst sitting on the stool. Bangs then intervened and revisited a previous task based on movement and name calling (not recorded).

Figure 3 *Not in Service*: Taken from a rehearsal 17th March 2011

The agonistic dynamic, reliant on exclusion, should always be legitimised by all participants, yet understood that the formed structure is temporary and can always be challenged. *Not in Service* allowed the group too openly and visibly change and fluctuate between the structure of leadership and dominant ideas in the group and prepared individuals to advance in leadership in other tasks such as *Secret Roles* and *Teaching Tasks.* It also aimed to prepare the individuals for their leadership to be challenged within the task and for the direction to take a different trajectory. It stimulated playfulness and the ability to opt in and opt out and allowed

time to watch other members work; from a particular position to then move into a physically active position in the space.

Figure 4 Not in Service: Taken from a rehearsal 7th March 2011

Not in Service also highlighted the need for distance, most significantly when working with material. Illustrated in the picture above, we ran an exercise called *Trivial vs Political* whereby each of us would write something trivial and then political, on different pieces of paper (Appendix 2). We then moved the different pieces of paper around the room and wrote a response to that which the previous person had said. There was a dual necessity for the distance in the task; one being the distance between an individual and the material itself, and also the distance between the individual in relation to the other group members. *Not in Service* allowed individuals to observe other people's interpretation and to watch the material manifest in the group; to then move back into the exercise or move the exercise onto something different. It allowed time for reflection in order to change the course of the action.

Through sitting out the individual could see the material and determine specific decisions.

Overall outcomes

The practice created various strategies which reconstituted the performer and director roles; the most significant being *Open Space, Secret Roles* and *Not in Service*. They revealed attributes associated conventionally to the roles of performer and director to be inter-changeable between different individuals. The practice provided opportunities for the associations of ownership, interpretation and leadership to be redistributed between the roles at given times. The meeting point, the interpersonal relations, between performer and director blurred. The individuals playing the role of performer and director, at given times, became shared through the inter-changeability and visibility of individuals playing the roles.

Axiomatic equality and agonistic pluralism were used as a benchmark, but were abstract within the space therefore did not necessarily regulate what was happening between individuals. Therefore the research became reliant on *Individual Reflection*, feedback amongst the group and documentation. There was a sense that the group did not realise democracy within the space, but used the strategies to look for points at which the work could be created in such a way. When the individual moved in and out of certain assumptions attached to their role then it encouraged more ownership of the work. Consequently it highlighted the important skills of people in the group i.e Bangs and me as improvisers, Yuki as a musician, Siobhan as a director, whilst revealing spaces for them to also cross over: Yuki and Bangs had many times in which they successfully directed and developed pivotal ideas for the formation of scenes. Showing and

experimenting in the safe space allowed skills to develop and be appreciated whilst revealing new ideas and exciting material. The practice, did however, highlight the importance of the roles and specialisms whilst working in collaboration; specifically the importance of having someone to assemble the created scenes together for a performance.

Although it has been pointed out that there was no performance of " What is Problematic?" and why it could not take place. It is important to refer back to two questions I asked earlier on in the chapter:

> When does room for difference and freedom to explore and take leadership become an inability for a leader to follow something through? When the aim is to create a performance when do we stop ideas in order to structure a performance?

These are important questions to ask when attempting to make a performance through egalitarian methods. From the research I believe that we had reached a point where the group would have felt comfortable taking direction in the organising and structuring for the performance. The group had reached a point that, through the safe space, trust and challenging, there was a shared ownership of the material. It would have been interesting to see how the alternating of directors would have worked, however I think we would need a clear aim for the piece to constantly review what was happening on stage against the aim. "What is Problematic?" proved to be a good starting point to generate material, but was too broad for an overall aim. If the group has a strong overall aim of what they want to make then the alternating of directorion has the potential to work. It is important to note that the time spent on working through the strategies and not rushing to stage a performance enabled the strategies to work successfully on two other projects. There have been two significant cases where *Open Space, Secret Roles* and *Not in Service* have been

used. One being with *So Many Words Theatre Company*: A disabled youth theatre which looked at identity and the 2011 Riots. *Not in Service* and *Secret Roles* was made as part of the generating material and the organisation and structuring was led by a director. *Open Space, Secret Roles* and *Not in Service* became integral components to a devised performance of 'Are we Happy Yet?' with Performance Collective *Official Culture*. Egalitarian methods in collaboration, thus far, have been used in the generating of material and structuring scenes up to performance mode. The difference being for Official Culture compared to the Research of "What is Problematic?" is that there has been an overall dedication and view to making a performance on a shared Marxist politic which creates a strong aim and reference point when alternating the direction. This concrete aim has been vital to creating the work as it acts as a mark to review what is happening on stage against the aim of what needs to be shown. These two performances are, however to the debt of the in-depth, integrative research formed by the group members of "What is Problematic?"

Conclusion

I believe that in order to look at the interpersonal relations of performer and director roles it was necessary that there was a movement of hierarchies. Referring back to Hale, she states in the conclusion to her research that: "Perhaps the best that can be hoped for is perpetual changes in hierarchy: a constant state of revolution?" (2010:149). For this to exist within practice, a period of time was needed to gain the trust and to stabilise the group through the strategy of *Open Space*. *Open Space* allowed the group to be able to have the space to find their own warm up and present it in front of the other group members. To begin with *Open Space* at each

rehearsal set up a safe space and informed a preparation for tasks which would destabilise the performer and director role and disrupt the safe space. The time and space to feel comfortable and explore was built from the notion of axiomatic equality. Without this initial stage of trust and safety the movement and association to reveal conflict and difference could not occur. It is on analysis that the visibility of opinions and differences were established because of the safety and ability to look and share from *Open Space, Copying* and *Not in Service*.

The significance of *Not in Service* and *Secret Roles* seemed to be in the fact that they allowed for visibility and distance without explicit reference to the fact that they were destabilising the roles. The poetic terms lent themselves to creative actions. They became active strategies which creatively satisfied and developed material, whilst enabling gaps for the inter-changeability of roles in the group. The movement of individuals between roles, including that of introducing ideas, enabled temporary structures to form. The visibility of someone taking on a moment of leadership with an idea to move back into performing began to concretise and unify the group. The dominant ideas held by individuals at different point in the process could also be carried out and then challenged.

Secret Roles deliberately disrupted some aspects of the stability through the visibility of the changing temporary structures. The dominant ideas within the group order were challenged, allowing other people to take on characteristics of the director: teaching, leading and instructing.

Not in Service altered the rehearsal space through enabling a station to observe, reflect and add something. The choice to observe the group also

engineered a form of empowerment as they could develop the improvisation that was occurring.

It is my belief that through these initial exercises which stabilised trust and ownership, individuals were able to form ideas for new tasks: for example, Yuki and *Possible Tasks*. Furthermore we were able to have debate and feedback which encouraged difference of opinion and reflection, as identified within *The Kill Team* debate and through *Individual Reflection*. Bangs commented in an *Individual Reflection* (Appendix 4g 7:05) ". . . [Feedback] really allows you to know what you are doing . . . to understand where you are going with things." The group had created a strategy and a shared vocabulary which enabled individuals to speak and reflect as a component in the making process.

However, trying to continuously stabilise and disrupt the space through tasks over a long period of time became difficult to sustain. The group began to fit comfortably into a working pattern and thus the disruption of roles became normalised. *Free Range*[11] did, however, become useful as a creative testing ground; not only for ideas, but to show how individual's roles and positions changed when different people entered the process. In one session where there were more individuals than the core research group, it created an initial "we/they" relation between the participants and the research group (Mouffe, 2005). It challenged the individuals to rethink their position in relation to other group members, revealing the movement and frictions between other individuals entering positions of leadership and leaving them.

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[11] Participants who attended *Free Range*: Chris Mckenna, Jared Rogers, Lauren Barkes, Jamie Ashworth, Daniel Oldroyd, Heather Leonard, Laura McQue, Emma Lambe

The above strategies work on the basis of people coming together through a desire to make work and not necessarily when an individual wants to explore a specific concept. The movement between the strategies is predicated on an individual within the group taking the process forward to ensure cohesiveness and continuity to the end product of the performance. However, through these initial strategies individuals in the group would hopefully be able to have ownership over what has been made.

Researchers' place

My role in the group was complicated because I not only initiated the process, but also had an on-going role within the group as a researcher. As Kondo describes my role from her view point:

> . . .she prepares for each session. If it seems its part of a director job, but it's not exactly a director job . . .so the bit she's doing, bit different position from us to hers. . . Can we really run these sessions without her? . . . there are differences.(Appendix 4i 4:45)

An ethnographic approach may have been more suitable for the research. Gay McAuley and Kate Rossmanith are researchers who use ethnographic approaches in rehearsal room studies and most recently Jen Harvie and Andy Lavender looked in on a process rather than being directly involved in it. There was never any required right way of working; however at times individuals were confused to my position and thus were grappling with the correct way of working in the group. Trying to encourage conflict as a positive component whilst being in the process may have created confusion. Conflict could have been forced in order to reflect the theories and to fit in with the research. Simultaneously, comments and questionings as to what my role was, from individuals in the group, reiterated the importance of creating

channels which enabled individuals to respond with feedback and to reflect their own thoughts and opinions. The group was drawn to an interlocution of tasks and what was happening; which at the time I felt was a sign of individuals being able to suggest and execute ideas. On reflection questioning may have come from insecurity and confusion as to what they should or should not be doing or saying in the process: a way of clarifying with the group a particular way to behave. Kondo states in the *Individual reflection* that she felt she couldn't say the word director and did not know what to call this position, or even if this position existed (Appendix 4i 05.00-10.00). This highlights the difficulty when being in research and approaching the work from a different position to the other group members. I had assumed that in order to address the research and due to my past experiences as a performer that I needed to be actively involved in the process. I almost separated the two positions of researcher and role. I had forgotten the impact of the researcher in the group. My lack of neutrality compared to the other members, i.e I am just a performer or I am a director, may have determined specific responses and confusion from individuals to *get it right*.

The feedback and discussion of the tasks and work made can link to consensus and deliberative models. These conversations manifested themselves over time and it became a struggle to prevent this as I felt it had become a component to the work, although I was aware of the potential behind the act of deliberation, however, I did not want to remove a strategy which the group found accessible and which became a part of a shared vocabulary. I did ask the following questions to myself: who initiates the discussion? Who speaks most in the group? Does the feedback interfere too much in the making of the work? In an attempt to

answer these questions I used strategies to break up the deliberative model of discussion through feedback within the *Free Range* sessions: speed dating and written forms (Appendix 3b 20:10-29:14 & Appendix 6l). They both aimed to break up dominant voices in the group through speaking to different people on a one to one basis.

Through the setting up of tasks which enabled visibility and distance, dominants orders appeared and could be actively challenged. For Agonistic Pluralism to be visible and active, Axiomatic Equality needed to be set up initialling for participants to have the safe space and trust to challenge ideas. A reconstitution of the performer and director through these strategies enabled different attributes to be taken on by individuals. The interpersonal relations between the roles once reconstituted can be outlined in Bangs response to the question, what has my position in rehearsals been? (Appendix 6a):

Contributor, negotiator, deliverer, facilitator, going forward with a task, doer, maker, a player on a team (Appendix 4g 12:37-15:34).

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Appendix 1-Individual reasons for joining the group via email

". . .I wanted to be part of your MA project because it seemed natural for me to be there. When you find something interesting, why would you even consider if you do or not? I do. normally.

...addition to what I wrote above, missing of belonging to some group might be another cause.
Yuki x"

"Firstly you bringing together a collective of people who were experiencing the same new experiences of ma study, which was negative and positive. secondly I had never worked with you guys as a performer (apart from directing Nat in year 2) and admired your performative skills so much and thought whatever i could learn from you guys would be a great thing to learn. and thirdly, it was a relief to be involved in a project that i wasn't in charge of, a sense of less responsibility on the project, which sounds quite selfish but it offered a relief against my own responsibility to my work.

Siobhan"

Throughout the last two years of my undergraduate study as a Drama and Theatre Studies student, I felt progressively frustrated with specific structures and 'flaws' that I'd experienced within performance making processes. Dissatisfaction developed with the restrictions that were placed upon us as 'actors', 'directors' and 'writers'; these titles seemed to determine a set of behaviours that we were to undertake whilst within these roles. As a student which took on many of these roles within one performance making process, our responsibilities and tasks became fragmented and jolted as they crossed between various 'titles/roles'. Our *identity*, so to speak, became blurred within the making process; who were we? I didn't want to restrict myself solely to 'actor' as I had a large interest for other elements of performance making. Running alongside these qualms were the structural politics inherent within the making processes: I felt continually frustrated that the ownership of the work remained in the hands of the director or writer; hierarchies began to form within the group of people involved in the performance. It seemed impossible to voice concerns or opinions, or to even disagree with the content of the performance. Inputting ideas was an easy and comfortable task, however, the argument still remained that your ideas would fall under the ownership of the director. The directors, even within an ensemble or collective, would have the overall control of the decision making process, and there very rarely existed any conflict or sharing of opinions.

I thus wanted to embark on a practical research project which sought to explore and address the individual neither as 'actor/performer' or 'director', but as a theatre maker whose role encapsulates the whole process of devising, training, directing, writing, tailoring the dramaturgy of the piece etc. I wanted to formulate a discourse/critical dialogue through which we could discuss and contextualise roles/methods/processes and ideas inside of the theatre making process. Laura's MA research practice set out to explore very similar ideas that I felt were fundamental to a making process. The ideas that Laura proposed outlined a view to creating a democratic performance making process that would find alternatives to previous flawed methods (methods which would stifle the 'thinking performer', take

away ownership and create unnecessary hierarchies) and move towards a process where conflict occurred, roles were shared and a true collective could be formed.

Appendix 2 -Outline of other tasks used in the process

Each task was developed in relation to a question around the particular role in the group. The following tasks will be grouped accordingly to the question and aim.

The tasks will also be identified by individuals who suggested and developed the working tasks.

The task will also be evidenced by material from the artist's box (Appendix 6).

1. *How far can the performer create material?*

Impossible Task

The name of the task was taken from an exercise which theatre company Goat Island use, however adapted specifically for the rehearsal.

Each person was asked to write down an Impossible Task i.e Drink the whole of Ocean. Once written down, the paper would be folded and placed into the middle of the circle.

Individuals were then asked to select a piece of paper at random.

Each person had ten minutes to try out and explore the written task.

Individuals chose to use materials from around the room i.e chairs, paper, and scissor's. Through the initial set up of allowing change/use music, individuals also chose to use specific music at points.

Not in Service was actively used during Impossible Tasks. Enabling space to observe and adapt movements and ideas according to other individuals in the room. If individuals had completed the task they would observe others and then go back to their task changing it in a specific way: speeding it up, slowing it down, standing next to a different person, integrating their movement with another person.

The tasks were then shown to the rest of the group on a rotational basis starting with three individuals. The individuals could choose when to leave, to repeat the task or not repeat it.

Possible Task

Possible Task was thought up by Kondo in response to Impossible Tasks. Kondo set up the rules that each individual would write down an everyday task i.e opening a door, jumping, and breathing.

Based on the same principle of Impossible Task each individual would fold it and place it into the circle for each person to pick.

Each individual would then have to perform it in their chosen space.

Trivial vs Political

Trivial vs Political as a task derives from a training process in the third year of undergraduate study in response to the devising process of *Iraq with a Q*, directed by Josh Guiry. The task then culminated in a work demonstration of training for a performer in a devised process.

There were four sheets attached to a wall or the floor. Two of the sheets headed trivial and one headed political.

Each individual would stand at one of the sheets. A song would be selected, an egg timer or an alarm set by an individual so the other individuals did not know how long they would have to run for.

The group had to run to each sheet and write down a response to what was written on the sheet by the previous person in accordance to Trivial vs Political.

Dependent on how far apart the sheets were placed in the room would depend on how far we would have to run.

If a person had not finished writing the person had to move onto the next sheet.

Once the song, timer or alarm had finished pens had to be put down.

The group would then walk around the sheets and look at what had been written.

We would turn the sheets over and write what we could remember from the written content of the exercise into a text.

Feeder game

There were two sets of coloured paper.

On one set the person wrote down a topic and on the other an emotion, character, object i.e Gaza strip - a baby crying, globalization -jam.

The paper was then spread across the space and individuals had to pick up two of the cards and improvise what that meant to them.

This then moved into pairs: one person was the feeder of information and the other person improvises what they were given.

Mapping

There are sheets of paper placed around the room with specific questions on which have been written by the group and also information: what is the worst piece of advice? What is your earliest memory? And newspaper articles/objects/ drawings.

In the middle of the room a big piece of paper with information which we brought in was placed onto the paper.

The sheets of paper with the questions are then brought into the middle of the room.

The individuals can then choose to link up what they think has links to each other.

Then each person sat and wrote down what they thought were the most significant points of content.

Optionally, two people can then sit in the space one chair down stage right and the other chair down stage left. They read out what they have written in relation to the other person.

This led to people reading at the same time, setting a conversation, or reading it quickly and leaving the other person on the stage.

Music

Each individual brought in an instrument or something to make a sound with i.e bassoon, sweetener capsule, a bag of crisps, voice.

Using the form of the feeder game topics would be written out and the individual would be passed the information to improvise how they seemed fitting.

A chair was placed in the space where the improviser would sit. At any time they could leave and someone else would have to occupy the chair.

The other individuals would then add their instrument to this improvisation.

Unspeakable Thoughts

Unspeakable Thought's was devised by Bangs during her session where she led on Secret Roles. The beginning of the task can be linked closely to John Britton's psychophysical training of the bag game. Consequently, the task was used in future rehearsals as a familiar warm up for the group.

Standing in a circle a ball would be passed around the group: catching and throwing. This could then lead to two or three balls being passed around the group.

Each individual was then asked to listen to what they were thinking and to note what their bodies were doing. What were our habitual movements? Did we cough? Laugh out loud?

The ball would then be taken out of the circle and we were asked to face a part of the room and to speak out loud what came to us.

Individuals opted to do this in specific ways and at different times. There were long pauses where people did not speak, laughter, mumblings and sometimes silences for the whole of the task.

The group was then asked to move around the space whilst speaking.

As the individual passed another individual in the space snippets of their thoughts would be picked up and intercepted by people answering a question or responding.

The group was then asked to re-join the circle and the ball would be thrown again and the thoughts would continue to be spoken aloud.

Then the group was asked to stop speaking and then ball continued to be passed around.

Free Range

Attended sessions: Siobhan Crees, Yuki Kondo, Natalie Bangs, Laura Stacey, Dan Oldroyd, Lauren Barkes, Chris Mckenna, Heather Leonard, Jamie Ashforth, Laura Mcque , Jared Rogers

Tasks explored

Open space, Not in Service, Impossible Tasks, Unspeakable Thoughts, Trivial vs political

Who lead tasks/ideas?

Crees, Bangs, Leonard, Mckenna, Stacey, Mcque

Feedback

- Speed dating
- Write and pick

What was shown?

Mcque, Barkes, Mckenna, Leonard and Rogers showed a working progress of *Swear to God* for their final third year performance.

Crees, Stacey, Bangs and Kondo showed the development of chess scenes and 99 problems.

Appendix 3- DVD 1

a) Improvisations and task

b) Free Range

c) Not in service

d) Open space

e) Secret roles

Appendix 4–DVD 2

Teaching Tasks

a) Laura

b) Nat

c) Siobhan

d) Yuki

e) Individual Reflection

f) Laura

g) Nat

h) Siobhan

i) Yuki

Appendix 5 –DVD 3

What is problematic?

Appendix 6- The Box

a) Questions Inside of lid
b) Articles a selection which were used in rehearsals- Exterior of the box
c) Mapping- Large Bundle
d) Impossible Tasks- Small Box
e) Feeder Game- Small Box
f) What is Problematic? Chess Scenes- Small Box 2
g) What is Problematic Stimuli- Long Box
h) Free Range- Shoe Box
i) Checks and Balances- Shoe Box
j) Secret Roles- Shoe Box
k) Feedback- Shoe Box
l) Trivial vs. Political- Shoe Box
m) The Kill Team- Shoe Box