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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITIES AND
THEIR FORMATION THROUGH POSTDRAMATIC PERFORMANCE

JENNIFER KATHRYN WILLETT

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master in Research

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Abstract

The hypothesis that postdramatic theatre can provoke a need for people to communicate and form a community is explored through observation of a given audience of 24 people, examined through the theories of Zygmunt Bauman, Gerard Delanty and Jean-Luc Nancy: The focus of the investigation was whether there was, or was not, an indication of community forming. Bauman's theories were used to explore the role of freedom and security and the effect these can have on the formation of community. Delanty's theories were drawn upon to consider the effect of postmodernism on community and identity, along with Nancy's suggestion that the postmodern sensibility has constructed a desire to recover community. The project was undertaken with the intention of generating a hypothesis that considered whether the postdramatic performance had an effect on the audience and why and how this may, or may not, have occurred in relation to the given theories. The practical element of the research project required the creation of a piece of postdramatic theatre and therefore, firstly, I directed and devised a postdramatic performance, *Twenty Feet Wide*. This performance consisted of unnecessarily complex tasks, working towards the creation of a miniature beach. The performance used postdramatic devices, such as repetition and a non-linear structure, to offer the audience the opportunity to negotiate individual meanings. Recordings of the three performances and edited clips can be found on the accompanying DVDs. The first part of the written submission introduces the concepts of community, identity and postmodernism in relation to the theories of Bauman, Delanty and Nancy. The second part of the written submission offers a reflection of the creation of the postdramatic performance *Twenty Feet Wide*, linking the creative process with the theories. The third section of the written submission evaluates the data gained obtained from observations of audience members when watching *Twenty Feet Wide*, thus allowing for a consideration of the audiences' responses and whether these could be seen as community forming, or indeed not, when drawing from the theories. Data was also gained from the use of a questionnaire which investigated the role of the individual in relation to the theory of community. The thesis ultimately proposes that the performance provoked a desire for community, when analysed in relation to the given framework and theories, suggesting that the postdramatic performance when combined with the task did in fact create fleeting moments of community.

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Chapter One

An examination of the interface between notions of identity and the concept of community with reference to Zygmunt Bauman, Gerard Delanty and Jean-Luc Nancy.

Introduction

Zygmunt Bauman, Gerard Delanty and Jean-Luc Nancy have all been involved in discussions about identity and community, generating many theories surrounding their sustainability and relevance within a postmodern society. This therefore allows for a potential interface between postmodernist notions of identity and community to develop. Zygmunt Bauman (2001a) states that identity is forming to replace community as a result of the freedom of postmodernity, Gerard Delanty (2003) discusses the effect of postmodernity on community and identity, and Jean-Luc Nancy (1991) puts forward the theory that postmodern sensibility has constructed a desire to recover community. These theories facilitate an exploration of the relationship between postmodernity, identity, and community where it becomes possible to discuss whether postmodernist concepts of community and identity are sustainable. Within this context the term postmodernity draws from Delanty's conception that postmodern society permits and encourages fluidity and change which, he claims, has resulted in a lack of unity and stable identities (2003). In order to add to this definition Bauman states that the freedom experienced in the postmodern society has created a desire for security (2001a); both Bauman and Delanty believe that this desire for security has led to the 'ideal' of community.

The first section addresses Identity and Postmodernism, looking at Delanty's theories as he begins to argue that postmodernity has destroyed stable identities as the self becomes 'fractured' (Delanty, 2003:104). This notion is then expanded with Bauman's theory that the enhanced postmodern feeling of freedom has created a sense of insecurity, as he argues that insecurity is the inevitable by-product of fractured selves and globalisation. The second section explores the notion of Community and Postmodernism, focusing on the concept that community has become an 'ideal', allowing an expansion of Bauman's theory of security and freedom; Nancy and Delanty are drawn upon to suggest that this is a result of the postmodern sensibility creating a desire to recover community and a sense of security. The third section takes both Identity and Community and explores them in relation to the new cultural and identity politics and the effect that this has on identity and community; Bauman suggests that identity is forming to replace community. Nancy's concept of 'plural identity' (2000:125) within communities is explored, questioning the disorienting effect this has on the sense of self. Using Delanty's concept that changing methods of communication have further facilitated the concept of 'plural identity' (2000:125), allows for an examination of the interface between community and identity. Examining theories of postmodernism regarding community and identity in relation to Delanty, Nancy and Bauman allows for a wide examination, but as the discussions surrounding their notions of identity, community and postmodernism are continually moving, the debate continues.

Identity and Postmodernism

Delanty (2000:106) suggests that due to the lack of fixed reference points such as, gender, class and race, reference points have been called in to question and

there is no longer a powerful necessity to select one over the other, resulting in people being unable to experience themselves as unitary beings and thus creating an age in which group membership is more fluid and porous. This has resulted in the possibility that a person's identity is 'continuously emergent, reformed and redirected' (Gergen, 1991:139); the objectivity of the self recedes from view and what is left is perceptivity itself, a product not of the individual but of the surroundings in which the self is embedded. Delanty (2000) argues that personal identities are essentially forms of social construction and one can be anything at any time as long as the settings have been 'commodiously arranged' (Gergen, 1991:184); transitions are possible when individuals are formed from the postmodern perspective. The terminology 'commodiously arranged' (Gergen,1991:184) brings to mind the globalisation of society that characterises postmodernity, where the common ground and role based identities have all but disappeared, adopting any number of roles at any given time. The individual has become accustomed to what Kenneth Gergen, psychologist and author of *The Saturated Self* (1991) refers to as the 'postmodern consciousness', a sense of impermanence and disunity (Cited in Turner, 2008:43).

The inability to see the self as a unitary being, which has led to the notion of 'multiple beings' and 'fractured selves' (Delanty, 2003:105), is intensified by the globalising technologies which facilitate instantaneous interpersonal communication, and these factors have significant destabilising effects upon the formation of individual identity. It could be argued that this is leading to the blurring of cultural boundaries, resulting in a reduction in local social coherence where fragmentation is the unavoidable result. Baudrillard, Gergen, Bauman and

Giddens have all explored the effects of the global media in relation to social fragmentation. Bauman, for instance, writes:

[T]he message conveyed today with great power of persuasion by the most effective cultural media, the message easily read out by its recipients against the background of their own experience, is a message of the essential indeterminacy and softness of the world: in this world, everything may happen and everything may be done, but nothing can be done once and for all – and whatever it is that happens comes unannounced and goes away without notice. (Bauman 2001b:83)

David Rasmussen, author of *Reading Habermas* (1991) puts forward that it is possible to create a contemporary view of the individual self, with the capacity to have a relationship or social impact in more than one place at a time; we are becoming less and less restricted. Self-multiplication is not only becoming common place but it is through this that our self-identity manifests before our very eyes and we are no longer confined within the boundaries of here and now; there is as Gergen states 'an acceleration of the future' (Gergen, 1991:184). Conventional assessments of postmodern culture suggest that we are now all at the mercy of advertisers as the multiplicity of products emphasises the significance of novelty and above all, change. Modernisation enables a continuous torrent of transient and superficial information, encouraging transience and the participation in a plurality. The concept of self-multiplication or multiple identities at the personal level, according to Delanty (2003), has triggered a reflex reaction to reach out for offerings of security. The human necessity to grow and develop allows us to be freer and more advanced than ever before, the result being that options are seemingly continuously emerging and shifting, moving the boundaries for identification. It could, therefore, be suggested that self-identity survives and grows only in its capacity to multiply in a bed of insecurity.

The absence of constraints and limits has resulted according to Bauman (2005) in a lack of security, which he dubs '*unsicherheit*', a more complex level of discomfort, uncertainty and insecurity (Bauman, 2000:5). It therefore becomes unclear who to trust since no one seems to be in control and there is no guarantee that choices will have the anticipated results, and therefore choices become harder to make as outcomes cannot be anticipated. Herbert Billing and Michael Simons (1994) put this down to the lack of control conceptualised in terms of later consumer global capitalism which has resulted in a hyper-modern culture or a post-industrial information society embodying a postmodern sensibility. Delanty (2000) adds to this by indicating that the lack of control is also accompanied by a lack of cohesion, attachment, bond and a crises of personal identity; everything is now seen as at risk resulting in a situation where,

Loss of values and orientation leads to insecurity, anxiety and suffering as a general phenomenon... [and] there is a loss of social hope. (Hope, T. and Sparks, R. 180:2000)

An atmosphere of scepticism grows from an understandable disillusionment with an environment that still perpetuates war, environmental destruction and economic exploitation. Feelings of insecurity and uncertainty increase as we continue to satisfy human needs to the detriment of human dignity (Smith, 1999). The central argument behind this claim, as highlighted by Kenneth Gergen (1991), is that the contemporary or postmodern world becomes problematical to the formation of a unified personal identity to the extent that we must all now live with a plurality of inner voices. When placed in a social world engaged in continual reconstruction, further change and social upheaval is inevitable, and uncertainty and anxiety are unavoidable by-products of the fractured self in and through multiple identities.

Community and Postmodernism

Bauman remarks that postmodernity is becoming the 'age of community: the lust for community, search for community, invention community' (Bauman, 1992:134). Delanty (2003) would argue that the 'age of community' has arisen as a result of the 'fractured' nature associated with the postmodern (Delanty, 2003:105). Delanty clarifies this by stating that communities are less rooted in stable social relations and becoming,

Nomadic, highly mobile, emotional and communicative...sustained by mass culture and aesthetic sensibilities...rather than symbolic battles between self and other. (Delanty, 2003:104)

Delanty believes that it is these feelings associated with postmodernity that have created the desire to recover the notion of community, brought about because the basic institutions of modernity, state, family and industrial work are seen to have dissolved under postmodernity. From this it becomes possible to apply Bauman's theory that community invokes an 'ideal' of everything that is missing from society (2001a). The term 'ideal', in the context of Bauman's theories can be understood in relation to community as a search for a utopian vision of community which allows for balance of security and freedom to be realised. The reality of this 'ideal', however, allows the conflict between freedom and security to be exposed; the 'ideal' community offering security whilst fuelling the desire for freedom. Nancy places the term 'ideal' inside the 'consciousness of the lost community' (Nancy, 1991:10) stating that 'we' should be suspicious of the retrospective consciousness of the lost community for, he believes, it constructs images of the past for the sake of an 'ideal' creating a nostalgia for a 'lost' community which he defines as 'nothing other than a belated invention that tried to respond to the harsh reality of modern experience' (Nancy, 1991:10). The

term 'ideal' community therefore becomes fictional and unattainable. Community is, therefore, seen as a way of providing an environment in which a sense of security, confidence and trust are provided, an idea that is seen to be more appealing as we move further into a postmodern sensibility.

Bauman (2001) states that this notion of security is an 'ideal' built on the notion that community will provide the elements missing from a postmodern society. However, he argues that this notion is flawed as security and freedom 'are two equally fundamental values which could be precious and converted values...but hardly ever reconciled without friction.' (Bauman, 2001a:4). Bauman states that the 'ideal' of community that has been created calls for the expense of security at the expense of freedom, and believes that in order for the 'ideal' of community to really exist it would require the members of the community not to engage with anyone outside their own community, and inevitably this becomes a struggle to keep the 'others' away (Bauman, 2001a:17). The identification of the community relies only on those within the community and the removal of the 'outside' or the 'others' (Bauman, 2001a:14), yet this soon becomes oppressive as security is provided only at the expense of freedom. Without an injection of freedom into security it proves to create an insecure kind of security, whilst freedom without security equals feelings of abandonment and loss, as Bauman puts it a very 'un-free freedom' (Bauman, 2001a:20). The 'ideal' community in this context calls for the sacrifice of freedom to choose our own reference points such as gender, class and race, the very thing that Delanty suggests postmodernity has provided. Bauman suggests that we cannot be human without freedom and security but are unable to have both in amounts that we find satisfactory:

Because we have freed ourselves of the older overt form of authority we do not see that we have become the prey of a new kind of authority. We have become automatons who live under the illusion of being self-willing individuals. This illusion helps the individual to remain unaware of his insecurity, but this is all the help such an illusion can give. Basically the self of the individual self is weakened so that he feels powerless and extremely insecure. (Formm, 2001:218)

However, it is unclear whether the 'ideal' of community ever really existed and this poses a dilemma. Linda Hutchison (1989) suggests that the characteristics of postmodernism always involve 'a critical revisiting of the past, but never a nostalgic return' (Duvall & Abadie, 2009:97). If the 'ideal' of community is built on a 'fictional ideal' it would mean that a reconstruction of community cannot be reached, for it has never taken place. It could therefore be seen that community 'has always been' and is 'becoming a paradise lost' and one that we hope to return to (Bauman, 2001a:3). Jean-Luc Nancy expresses suspicion of the retrospective conscious of the 'lost' community, arguing that it creates an image of the past for the sake of an 'ideal' (Nancy, 1991:10); this 'ideal' he claims has always accompanied the western world, thus allowing us to give in to the nostalgia for an archaic community (Nancy, 1991:10). He goes further to state that the desire for community might as well be nothing other than a belated invention that tried to respond to the 'harsh' reality of modern experience, or cognition, suggesting that the 'ideal' of community constitutes the limits of humanity (Nancy, 1991:10). This would suggest that society was not built on the ruins of community, but that it emerged from the disappearance, or the conservation, of 'something' just as unrelated to what we call 'community' as to what we call 'society'. As a result of this theory, community turns out to be what is happening to us in the wake of society. By removing the idea that community is, or has been, crushed or lost by society, the result is that nothing is lost, but it is humanity alone that is lost in the social bonds of the weight and descent upon

us of economic, technical, political and cultural developments, creating, as Nancy puts it, 'the phantasms of the lost community'. (Nancy, 1991:12). Hankering after 'Community' and a craved sense of shared humanity that never actually existed, permits theorists such as Baz Kershaw to see community as 'a disease of the imagination' (Kershaw 1999:192). The irony of this, as Bauman puts it, is that it is only the 'ideal' of being in a community that allows for the possibility of an 'ideal' community to linger and be protected from evaporation; we are propelled further into the search and 'we can neither *fulfil the hope* nor *cease hoping*' (Bauman, 2001:5).

Identity and Community

Nancy (1991) defends the idea of community as relevant not only to modern but also to postmodern society, stating that community is the basis of human experience and the foundation for the identity of the self as a social being. Identity plays a key part in Nancy's theories surrounding community and he comments that it is the experience of 'otherness' as an absence, rather than a 'non-identity', that allows the individual to be seen as an invention of culture, or possibly personal identity is seen as a cult built around the individual (Nancy, 1991:3) . Nancy used the concept of the residue of community to develop his theory of the *Atom*, where he refers to the individual seen as the indivisible (Nancy, 1991:3-4). The *Atom* therefore becomes absolutely detached, taken as an origin and as a certainty; he believes that as a result individual identity cannot be the origin and the certainty of anything, except its own death (Nancy, 1991:3-4).

Nancy takes the notion of the *Atom* and suggests that you cannot build a world based on the *Atom*, the individual (Nancy, 1991:3-4). To solve this he proposes

a *Clinamen* (Nancy, 1991:3-6), which is a movement from one atom to the other, an inclining from one towards the other; this is the notion that there needs to be a gravitational pull towards 'others' in order to form a community. Nancy states that community is at the very least a *Clinamen* (Nancy, 1991:3-6) of the individual; it is an inclination or event without cause. He also draws attention to the fact that there is no theory, ethics, politics or metaphysics to show that the individual is capable of envisaging this *Clinamen*, suggesting that this has quite possibly resulted in the decline of individual identity within community (Nancy, 1991:3-6). Bauman alternatively, would suggest that individual identity 'sprouts on the graveyard of communities, but flourishes thanks to its promise to resurrect the dead' (Bauman, 2001b:151).

Applying the rise of the new politics of identity and culture to the concept of community allows for a better understanding, not only of the politics of recognition but also of the response to the disruptive and disintegrative features of postmodernity. This disorientation has resulted in individual identification with membership within various groups and communities. The struggle for a singular identity in a consumer culture is ultimately dependent on the capacity to overcome the fragmentariness and distance built into a continually expanding system of market oriented production. Kenneth Gergen's vision of postmodern identity argues that postmodernity is having an 'apocalyptic' impact:

The very concept of personal essence is thrown into doubt...selves as possessors of real and identifiable characteristics-such as rationalist emotion, inspiration and will are dismantled...in a postmodern world there is no individual essence...one's identity is continuously emergent, reformed and redirected as one moves through the sea of ever changing relationships... [In] the final stage in this transition to the postmodern...the self vanishes fully into a state of relatedness. (Gergen, 1991:7-146)

This notion of identity being 'continuously emergent [and] reformed' (Gergen,1991:7-146) suggests the precariousness of individual identity, becoming incredibly vulnerable, prompting what Bauman (2000) calls 'identity builders' to seek 'pegs' (Bauman, 2000:16) upon which they can group their individual fears and anxieties, forming what he dubs 'Peg communities' (Bauman, 2000:16). These offer a collective insurance against individually confronted insecurities and an escape from the feelings of being alone, allowing for Jock Young to state that, 'just as community collapses, identity is invented' (Cited in Bauman, 2001b:151). In response to this statement Bauman claims that identity is becoming the surrogate for community whilst neither identity nor community are available in our,

rapidly privatized and individualized, fast globalizing WORLD, AND FOR THAT REASON each of the two can be safely, with no fear of practical test, imagined as a cosy shelter of security and confidence and...desired. (Bauman, 2000:15)

Here Bauman is highlighting the challenge of being one and the same person in each and every relationship.

Nancy (2000) argues that community goes in all directions only as far as it goes from one point to the other; it therefore becomes singular and plural in its very principle. This suggests that community does not have final fulfilment any more than it has a point of origin. Nancy puts forward that the ideal of the 'lost' community confirms that it is the tendency of community to become 'inoperative', or undermine and interrupt itself in the assertion of its members, reaffirming it as 'lost' (Nancy, 2000:25-35). The 'ideal' of the 'lost' community in theory would create a community with intimate communication between its members, each member identifying themselves only through the mediation of their identification with the living body of the community: individual identity

existing from a plurality (Nancy, 1991:36). Nancy believes that this results in the "we" becoming "we others" (Nancy, 2000:5), whilst always being charged with the truth of this paradoxical 'first person plural': ' "we" says (and "we say") the unique event whose uniqueness and unity [only occurs]...in multiplicity' (Nancy, 2000:5). Here Nancy is speaking of plurality and the profound effect it has on the meaning of identity and community. This would imply that community is not only an intimate communication between its members, but also an organic communication with its own essence or impregnation of an identity by plurality; each member only identifies themselves through the supplementary mediation of his identification with the community. Nancy (2000), it would seem, is suggesting that identity and community are possible when identity becomes plural, but due to postmodern fluidity the plural identity is continually shifting encapsulated by the increasing methods of communication. The immersion into a communicative social world provides the opportunity to experience more options, values and life choices. Globalisation through its compression of time and space offers fluid and seemingly invisible transitions, resulting in communities that Delanty describes as 'emotional and communicative' (Delanty, 2003:104). This allows for the 'fluidity' apparent in postmodern society to transcend into and form 'communication communities' (Delanty, 2010:104) which consequently functions to create social relations organised around communication rather than other media such as authority, status or ritual. They are,

Understood as an expression of a highly fluid ... mode of belonging that is symbolic and communicative-rather than an actual institutional arrangement, and [one] that is variable, capable of sustaining modern and radical social relationships as well as traditional ones. (Delanty, 2003:20)

A form of belonging that is communicative rather than institutional is echoed in Robert Redfield's theory of 'Little Communities' (1989). Redfield's theory of 'Little Communities' is built on the concept that community is possible when channels of communication are blocked out. These communities crumble when the balance of 'inside' and 'outside' communication shifts from internal to external, when the world 'outside' of the 'Little Community' carries more weight than that of the mutual exchanges between the people inside, thus blurring the distinction between 'us' and 'them' (Redfield, 1989:4). The ability to shut out external communication is improbable in a postmodern society, as methods of communication have become more mechanical and therefore information is travelling faster, having a profound effect on the way in which we communicate. The notion that information now has the ability to travel independently from its carriers is becoming even more prominent as information becomes emancipated (Ranciere, 2008). There is less distinction between 'inside' and 'outside', creating a situation where boundaries are harder to draw. Communication moves freely and we are continually aware of 'others', and the result is that the walls of unity and the 'ideal' concept of community is weakened by the disillusion of the singular identity. This quest for the 'ideal' community becomes circular, striving for an unattainable 'ideal' without final fulfilment, fuelled by postmodern insecurity.

Conclusion

It becomes possible to argue that should globalisation encapsulate society it would allow and promote multiplicity, encouraging movement from one commodity to another; this provides the conceptualisation of Delanty's notion of the reduction of stable identities and the increase in available options that

provides the overwhelming individual freedom of choice. It is no wonder that Bauman believes there is a growing desire to seek security in the form of community, an ideal that provides an image of safety and security providing an 'idealised image of the past, as Nancy states, 'for the sake of an ideal' (Nancy, 1991:10). If this 'ideal' is unattainable as it may never have existed, except in humanity's mind, this would undoubtedly create a circular quest striving for a balance between freedom and security that can never be found, for the 'ideal' is fundamentally flawed. This 'ideal' is unattainable and unsustainable as modern life continues to develop and move forward, as communication methods develop in a way that encourage the postmodern fluidity that Delanty comments on. Therefore, the increasing movement between social groupings would suggest that the only way that community can survive is through Nancy's theory of 'plural identity' (2000:125). It is however, as Bauman states, the idea that community can exist that propels individuals into the search for a notion of community, a notion that may never have been.

Chapter Two

A reflection of the postdramatic performance *Twenty Feet Wide* through the lens of the theories of Bauman, Delanty and Nancy

The performance of *Twenty Feet Wide* was developed in relation to the community theories discussed in Chapter One. *Twenty Feet Wide* was devised and performed by a cast of five and directed by myself, consisting of six disjointed fragments and an overarching theme that entwined the fragments together retrospectively. The decision to develop the performance of *Twenty Feet Wide* and to use practice based research was made as it allowed us to explore, test and extend the methodologies of Bauman, Delanty and Nancy; Paul Clarke writes in *An experiential Approach to Theory from within Performance* that a communicative exchange can exist between theories and performance practice and can be 'informed by theory' (Clarke, 2004:2-3). It has been noted in *Practice as Research- Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry* that the emergence of practice based research highlights the interrelation that exists between theory and practice 'and the relevance of theoretical and philosophical paradigms' (Barrett, 2007:1). The practical exploration of Bauman's theories of the ideal, freedom and security provided a practical framework for performance allowing the devising process to develop in accordance with theories of community. Nancy's theory of the 'ideal' provided a theoretical framework that could be applied when analysing and observing the audiences' responses to the performance and whether this could be understood as community forming or indeed not, thus allowing an understanding to be gained as to how these theories surrounding community might be realised among audience members, whilst contextualising the methodologies. By interchanging and integrating the

practice with the theory it became possible to generate a combined and reflective research practice, as distinguished from theory: 'the unique combination of creative practice and research can...result in distinctive methodological approaches, as well as exhilarating findings and artworks' (Smith, 2009:5).

The postdramatic principles of Lehmann were applied to the development of *Twenty Feet Wide* as it allowed for a consideration of what might be meant by postdramatic in terms of the aesthetic. Broadly speaking Lehmann (2006) states that theatre can be understood as postdramatic when it redefines the structural and conceptual underpinning, which both constitutes and frames the theatre event. By redefining the framing of the performance *Twenty Feet Wide* through the structure, the performance was able to metaphorically embody the conflict between the desire for freedom and security, as outlined by Bauman, thus attempting to effect the reception of the work. Within *Twenty Feet Wide* the relationship between the spectator and the actor was placed at the centre of the performance. The audience were asked to reassess their understanding of the relationship between themselves and the performers, that would potentially result in an expression of 'peg communities' that runs parallel to Bauman's definition that as a result of insecurity, 'others' may reach out to 'others' on which to 'peg' their insecurities. Lehmann acknowledges and indicates the changes of direction of theatre developments post 1960s, in that mainly experimental theatre makers' interest shifted to focus on redesigning the terms of engagement between the performer and spectator. This was embodied in *Twenty Feet Wide* through the shape and size of the performance space which placed the audience and performer in close proximity to each other, meaning that the performers' physical bodies' instinctive presence took precedence over

any spoken narrative or plot. As Lehmann states, when referring to the communication of meaning, it has been readjusted within postdramatic performances commenting that 'it is no longer the case that a meaning is communicated from A (stage) to B (spectator)' (Lehmann, 1999:145), thus the audience are asked to readjust where the sense of meaning derived from. Lehmann states that the postdramatic aesthetic of real time signifies that the scenic process cannot be separated from the time of the audience, thus utilising theatre as a mode of presentation to turn time into an object of the aesthetic experience (Lehmann, 1999:156). Therefore, within the creation of *Twenty Feet Wide* the aesthetic decision to place all actions and tasks within a real time frame was made to create a sense of 'Shared time' (Lehmann, 1999:155), resulting in a time based experience existing only in the moment in which it is taking place; this also allows an exploration as to whether the desire for the 'ideal' community as discussed by Nancy is also time based existing only in the moment of connection, of leaning towards another (Nancy, 1991:3-6). By using the principles of Lehmann the performance of *Twenty Feet Wide* was able to establish a postdramatic framework that challenged the conventional frame of stage-spectator relationships, and facilitates the practical exploration of the theories of communities.

A strong aesthetic influence during the devising process of *Twenty Feet Wide* came from the theatre company Goat Island, whose use of time, space, body and environment within performance moves through performer and audience member, which as Bailes comments on Goat Island's work, '[is] refining the spectator's understanding of language and activity. These works invite the onlooker to question the ways in which meaning is arrived at' (Bailes, 2011:114). Therefore understanding and taking influence from the aesthetics of

Goat Island's work provided a supporting and complementing framework for the practical embodiment of Bauman's theories. The devising process of *Twenty Feet Wide* was not set out with identified objectives of meaning, but instead involved a negotiation of intentions and knowledge through a collaborative practice; this is something that Bailes states is inherent within Goat Island's work: 'the group has always worked as a collective that values the individual' (Bailes, 2011:111). By working in this way the creation of *Twenty Feet Wide* was able to develop in such a way that allowed for the negotiation of each task to be continually moving. Goat Island works with aesthetics that are deep and complex, promoting feelings of self-consciousness, physical discomfort, confusion, frustration and a sense of déjà-vu, leading the audience to ask questions such as what the meaning is of the performance and why they are watching the performance. Bailes states that Goat Island's work invites an engagement with impossibility, which in turn begins to refine the terms and conventions that construct the theatre exchange, and Bailes questions the role of the audience in the production value through the reciprocal exchange live performance demands (Bailes, 2011:114). This element of performance was harnessed and held central to the creation of *Twenty Feet Wide* as the audience were asked to suspend their method of understanding and develop alternative approaches; this is also something Bailes states is required when watching a Goat Island performance: 'one cannot simply interpret or ingest the work; one must instead understand how to imagine alongside them' (Bailes, 2011:120). This approach was employed in *Twenty Feet Wide* exploring whether the need to develop alternative methods of understanding would, or would not, create moments of community forming. The performances offered numerous distractions and possible readings, thus the audience were asked to engage with these feelings

and negotiate them, within the space and with each other. Goat Island, as Bailes states, 'redefine the terms and conditions of the experience of the individual' and within *Twenty Feet Wide* the performance aimed to challenge the experience of the individual through the use of changing rhythms and patterns and aesthetics, to explore if the experience shifts from individual to collective. Within the performance of *Twenty Feet Wide* the performers pushed their bodies to the limits of their capabilities to complete a task. An example of this can be found in the opening scene during which the performers pushed their bodies to the physical limits as they sprinted across the space. As the performers sought ways to imagine and push the body, the physicality functioned to draw the audience's attention to smaller inconsequential objectives and behaviours. Bailes states, when discussing Goat Island, that,

Devotion to the demonstration of disciplined attention applied to an activity shifts the emphasis in these performances away from an outcome, and instead roots us (performers and spectators) firmly in the practice of learning an inconclusive end in itself. (Bailes, 2011:119)

Goat Island as underscored by Bailes allowed for grounding in aesthetics that could potentially provide a space that opens up the possibility for response to *Twenty Feet Wide*, that is founded in self-consciousness, physical discomfort, confusion, frustration, a sense of déjà-vu and drawn from the complex aesthetics that entice the audience's attention away from the everyday and into the inconsequential.

The performance of *Twenty Feet Wide* adopted the notion of the 'ideal' as inherent within the performance. The ideal was metaphorically embodied in the performance of *Twenty Feet Wide* through the construction of a miniature beach, which in retrospect intertwined the fragments of the performance into a whole.

The beach consisted of a base of sand and a small pool of water surrounded by pebbles; in addition to this there were miniature objects that represented and held connotations of a beach scene: a lighthouse, a beach ball, parasols, two people, two beach towels, a duck and a crab. As the performance developed and time passed, the construction of the beach was revealed. This metaphorically represented an 'ideal'; a beach scene which has connotations of holidays, respite and a perfect place, utopia:

The perfect holiday might provide out-of-the-ordinary experiences which are exciting and stylish, other feelings such as those associated with nostalgia and place may also create pleasure...the seaside is pleasurable because it is linked with holidays which are, in turn, about feeling carefree...normal constraints do not impose and a holiday may even seem emancipatory ...the 'ideal' seaside holiday. (Hassan, 2003: 75-252)

The term 'ideal' as demonstrated within the performance functioned to highlight the endless struggle to achieve an ideal community represented as the performers were working to achieve the unattainable, and Bauman states that the 'ideal' community, in which there is an equal balance of freedom and security, is unattainable in its very nature. Therefore aesthetically the tasks that lead to the construction of the ideal were physically demanding and seemingly unattainable, yet the performers continued to work toward achieving the task and placing the objects on the beach; each fragment of the performance worked towards adding or measuring an object in an unnecessarily complex manner, before it could be placed on the beach. The Nostalgia associated with the ideal holiday experience places Nancy's theory of the quest for a lost community as central within the construction of *Twenty Feet Wide*, for he claims that the 'retrospective consciousness of the lost community...constructs images of the past for the sake of an ideal... [allow] the Occident [to give] itself over to the nostalgia for a more archaic community that has disappeared'

(Nancy, 1991; 10). Thus not only the beach held within it connotations of nostalgia and an ideal, the ideal was also intrinsic in the performance via the endless, convoluted and complex tasks which in turn represented the metaphorical embodiment of the endless quest for an ideal community.

An example of one of the endless, convoluted and complex tasks from the performance of *Twenty Feet Wide* can be taken from a fragment in which each performer had ten foam cups arranged in a line, where under one of their cups they each hid a different object that needed to be placed on the beach. The performers then moved around the space switching and shuffling the cups, so that the performers and audience no longer knew which cups the objects were under. The performers then had to carry out a movement score where each cycle of the movement score allowed them to lift a cup at random. This was repeated until the performer had found their object, and at this point the individual object was placed on the beach. The performers then waited until all objects were placed on the beach. The tasks within the performance were carried out in such a way that it became far more complex and convoluted than necessary; this convolution was echoed throughout all the fragments. Thus the audience were left to ask why the tasks were being carried out and for what reason, and then left to discover the answer on their own.

The idea that the 'ideal', as distinguished by Bauman, is unattainable was embodied as the tasks undertaken were seemingly unachievable, but nevertheless the performers continued to focus their time and energy on working to construct the 'ideal'. The endless quest was represented as there was not any enjoyment or reflection exhibited by the performers when placing the objects on the beach or when completing the beach; as soon as the object was

on the beach the quest and task for the next object begins, the performer is always on the move. This was further highlighted as the project is never fully completed, and once the performance finishes the beach is dismantled in a matter of minutes and then taken off stage, thus leaving a space for a new 'ideal'. Metaphorically the endless struggle to consume is represented, the desire for a consumer always to 'have' the next thing or object without necessarily appreciating or enjoying the moment of 'having'. As the performer continually moves from task to task and object to object, it becomes the life of the performer metaphorically reflecting the life of the consumer:

The life of a consumer, the consuming life, is not about acquiring and possessing. It is not even about getting rid of what was acquired the day before yesterday and proudly paraded around a day later. It is instead, first and foremost, about being on the move. (Bauman, 2007:98)

The audience are witnessing the performance, watching the performers work towards the 'ideal', without actively taking part. Therefore it could be argued that they are witnessing a metaphorical representation of consumerism, whilst personifying what Bailes identifies as an expression of 'passivity of consumer culture' (Bailes 2011:6).

Twenty Feet Wide works to weaken the audience's sense of security by providing them with freedom to generate individual meaning and understanding. When exploring this in relation to postdramatic theory Lehmann states that postdramatic performance promotes 'the frustration of realizing the exclusive and *limiting character of... freedom*' (Lehmann, 2008:88), as the audience begin to process the performance by means of their own selection. Structuring is only possible through individual substructure or microstructures, resulting in the staging and the totality never being fully grasped; Lehmann states that 'it becomes crucial that the abandonment of totality be understood not as deficit

but instead as a liberating possibility of ongoing (re)-writing' (Lehmann, 2006:88). This can be seen in *Twenty Feet Wide* in the pebbles scene as this scene consists of the performers standing both in front and behind the audience, resulting in each audience member having different and varying viewpoints, requiring them to develop individual substructures. The audience were given the freedom to abandon totality and generate meaning; however, this lack of totality could result in frustration and desire for complete understanding and consequently the limitation derives from the insecurity in these responses, exposing freedom and its '*limiting character*' (Lehmann, 2006:88).

Bailes states that Goat Island's work is working to achieve 'a different kind of comprehension... [redefining] the terms and conditions of the experience of the individual and the social, upon grounds that are indeterminate' (Bailes, 2011:114). The performance of *Twenty Feet Wide* similarly asks the spectator to make a choice: to engage and seek understanding or to become a spectator engaged in passivity; both choices offer numerous options, distractions and flickers of potential. Bailes notes that 'at times the state of not knowing supersedes the consciousness produced by more deliberate states of understanding' (Bailes, 2011:165). This choice derives from the physical bodies in the performance space, and is instantaneous, involuntary and reactive as there is little or no narrative offered. Matthew Goulsh comments that this is attempted within Goat Island's work through,

thought, and conjunction of thoughts; process and combinations of process, and combinations of processes; structure, and a collection of structures- a meeting place where facts, numbers, the complex and simple, and the possibility of escape might coexist (Matthew Goulsh cited in Bailes, 2011:125)

The seeming lack of narrative or logical patterns within *Twenty Feet Wide* prompts the audience to find or construct an individual meaning. Goat Island

also uses physical movement, stillness, language and rhythm with equal weighting to generate meanings, which simultaneously point in different directions of meaning.

Lehmann is distinct from this in that he states that postdramatic performance is working to create feelings associated with confusion, frustration, near boredom and self-consciousness, commenting that 'Postdramatic theatre effects a displacement of theatrical perception - for many provocative, incomprehensible, or boring' (Lehmann, 2006:157). Thus the changing rhythm and patterns within *Twenty Feet Wide* promote audience observation that is based on altering and conflicting moments, removing the security of logic which results in what Lehmann refers to as, 'a changed attitude on the part of the spectator' (Lehmann, 2006:87). The method of understanding is not immediate and everything within the performance depends on not understanding immediately, rather 'perception has to remain open for connections [and] correspondence' (Lehmann, 2006:87). The audience needs to remain free to accept 'clues at completely unexpected moments...Thus, meaning remains in principle postponed' (Lehmann, 2006:87). It becomes a struggle to comprehend the significance and the value of the complex time consuming tasks; this inhibits the possibility of placing together the 'organic' connection of the fragments of the performance, yet as the performance continues the audience becomes increasingly aware of the construction of the beach. A potential route of understanding is therefore provided, but as this is combined with the varying and shifting directions of meaning, demonstrated through the altering rhythms and patterns, the shifting directions function to cloud and confuse the overall unity of understanding, thus fracturing the narrative.

The notion of performance existing within a temporal time frame draws parallels with Nancy's notion of the 'ideal' and also aligns with the concept of the ideal holiday only existing within the moment, unable to support itself outside of the time frame of the idealised construct. The performance of *Twenty Feet Wide* stepped away from time as regulated by the clock and became regulated by the time it takes for a task to be completed, dictated by stillness and sweat, as a result slowing down the creation of meaning; time functions once more to alter the audience's perception as 'time slows or quickens depending on the density or shallowness of what can be perceived' (Bailes, 2011:165). Prolonging time becomes a prominent feature as performance is signified by 'real time actions' (Bailes, 2011:9) rather than framed in fictive events or narratives; the focus is on actions that take place in real time:

The durational performances and real time actions can create the effect of real things happening because the event appears, paradoxically, to unfold in real time as opposed to fictional time, despite the evidence of a fictional frame (Bailes, 2011:190).

By placing bodies performing composed functions in real time, whilst framed by the temporal and spatial demarcations of a performance event, Bailes states it can render it more difficult to draw a clear distinction between an event's real or fictional status. The blurring of fictional and real time can therefore metaphorically draw a parallel between the blurring between the idealised construct of community that Nancy believes to be fictional, and existing only in humanity's mind, and the really existing community as distinguished by Bauman.

There remains an atmosphere of choice and decision for the spectators within the performance of *Twenty Feet Wide*, illustrating Lehmann's (2006) earlier comment that the choice conflicts, resulting in frustration as spectators 'feel the frustration of realising the exclusive and *limiting character of this*

freedom'(Lehmann, 2006:88). The audience are faced with the process of interrogating the performance, creating an unavoidable experience of processing by means of their own selection and structuring. In return the audience are given the freedom to develop an individual understanding or meaning, attaching an individual value to the performance. Meanwhile Bailes offers an extension of this theory as she states that the performance of Goat Island is 'upholding a resistance to the economy of capitalist exchange and the commerce of images it produces' (Bailes, 2011:120), working within and outside the pre-determined theatre environment. The performance of *Twenty Feet Wide* is working within the system of exchange, however, the audience are not provided with an easily consumable commodity. The audience are instead asked to question the way that meaning is generated and the way in which value is attributed, therefore questioning the theatre exchange (Bailes, 2011). The aesthetic cannot be understood by recognising the content, as the content of the performance is fragmented, no longer working with form and content but combining real time actions and a staged frame. Awareness is developed that allows the audience the freedom to contemplate the value, inner necessity and significance of the performance.

The use of real time actions within a staged frame can be seen in the opening scene of the production, in which the audience witness seemingly illogical physical movement. The fragment opened with a performer walking to a small table whilst carrying a cardboard box and placing the box on the table, then walking back to the starting point and winding up a small gold timer and placing it high up on a shelf; this created a 'staged' frame as this action is consciously performed and choreographed, with a clear sense that it is has been rehearsed and is now being performed. This action signalled the start of the illogical

physical action: sprinting; all five performers began to sprint from one end of the predetermined performance space, in between the two single rows of chairs, to the other and back again. These chairs were placed in very close proximity to each other and the action, creating a deliberately unnecessarily small space. The sprinting was undertaken with complete focus and commitment and as the sprinting continued, it was punctuated with changes to the rhythm and movement that were periodic and without connotation; these variations consisted of star jumps, forward rolls, cartwheels, teddy bear rolls, jumping, hopping and crawling. The only sound during this time was feet hitting the floor, breath, and the bodies in the space. The persistent commitment to task and speed resulted in excessive exhaustion, and as the action was carried out in real time the result was real exhaustion. The performers did not stop sprinting until a timer rang, jolting the space into silence. During this fragment the performer is placed at the centre of the performance as well as at the centre of the audience's attention. The performer's physicality is central in proximity yet it refuses to carry any instantly accessible meaning; this aligns with Lehmann's comment that during postdramatic performance 'the body refuses to serve as signification' (Lehmann, 2006:95). As a result the individual audience member is left to find their own meaning based on their own political or cultural understanding.

When exploring the aesthetic of the physical performer's body when placed at the centre of the performance, by exhausting the body through repetition of a physically imposed situation of duress or duration, Bailes states that it may not intensify the experience of reality but function more as 'reality-effects' (Bailes, 2011:8). Thus it is possible to draw from Bailes once again to explore the effect that the central body has on the audience's ability to understand:

The physical limits and extensions of the body... the physical body which remains central as a means to explore different conceptions of the term limit and limit-experience in relation to the materiality of the body and the politics and production of identity, of liveness and of gaze and objecthood. (Bailes, 2011:8)

The aimless physicality of the performers and their physical exhaustion invites the audience away from the consumption and availability of information, asking the audience to recognise something new and functioning to 'bring [them] further from...The materiality of the world' (*Frakcij*, 2004a). Due to the close proximity of the action the audience are unable to see all of the action at once, which challenges the audience's reading skills once more as the reading is not only on an individual basis but also derived from an individual view of the performance space.

In this exploration of space and physicality the audience are exposed to, and asked to recognise, their freedom, the freedom to develop and negotiate an individual meaning and understanding. The size of the space compared with the physicality and speed of the performers placed the audience at very close proximity to the action, which allowed the notion of freedom and security to be explored. The audience's physical proximity to the action theoretically prompted a realisation that the space may not be big enough to contain both the speed and performer, pushing them back into their seat and challenging their security as their expectations are challenged. The audience are compelled to move out of the way, therefore heightening the audience's awareness of their physical location in relation to the stage (Goulish and Bottoms, 2006) and forcing a physical and mental reaction. The audience's physical proximity to performance has also been noted to result in 'the mental distance afforded by the avoidance

of direct audience-performer contact [and as a result] critical awareness and critical self-awareness are practically unavoidable (Goulish and Bottoms, 2006:37).

When examining the audience and their spacing in relation to the action, it is possible to look at another fragment of the performance, which for the purpose of this essay shall be referred to as 'juggling'. This fragment of the performance consisted of one performer juggling with rubber ducks in the predetermined performance space, between the rows of chairs and with three performers crouched down at the opposite end of the predetermined performance space facing the juggler. Meanwhile, outside the performance space a single performer stands with a bucket suspended from the ceiling and a jug of water which is placed on the floor; she was standing behind row B. The juggling signified the start of the fragment and simultaneously the performer outside the performance space began to slowly and carefully move the water from the jug to the bucket, using a very small spoon. If the juggler dropped a duck the moving of water from jug to bucket instantaneously stopped. The three crouched performers who had been watching, each called out a number, which triggered a physical response to return the duck to the juggler as quickly as possible. The number called determined the method of returning the duck, so that the water pouring could continue. This laboured process continued until the counter weight was balanced and the bucket lowered to reach the floor.

This fragment was created in such a way that not all the action could be seen by all the audience, requiring the members of the audience in row B to move around in their seats if they wished to see the bucket; however, this depended on whether the audience members were aware of the action happening behind

them. There were many potential clues, one of which was the sound of the bucket moving and tapping on the floor. However if this was the only clue the audience in row B might have missed the action, and therefore a secondary visual clue was given by the performers as they also looked towards the bucket, watching and waiting for it to arrive at the floor. It is the combination of these potential clues that asks the audience to engage in 'seeing', a characteristic of the postdramatic in Lehmann's terms, thus turning the space into 'the arena of reflection on the spectators' act of seeing' (Lehmann, 2006:157). The audience are asked not only to watch the performance and develop meaning, but are also invited to watch each other and engage in the task of finding visual and oral clues to develop their own meaning. The repetition of the fragment and the steady pace at which it develops works to create a gap in time, in which the audience have the space and time to fill this gap with their individual understanding. They can reflect and 'see' not only what is 'performed' but also what the environment is demonstrating:

It is the spectators' impatience or their indifference that becomes visible in the process of repetition, their paying attention or their reluctance to delve deeper into time; their inclination or disinclination to do justice to make space for differences, for the smallest thing, and for the phenomenon of time by immersing themselves into the self alienating act of seeing (Lehmann, 2006:157).

This notion that the meaning and action is not readily available, or easy to consume, is reminiscent of Bauman's theory that, 'freedom means precisely the ability to decide and to choose' (Bauman, 2008:74). In this case the audience are given the freedom to choose where they wish to focus their attention and which part of the fragment they wish to watch; even if the audience choose to disengage and not develop meaning it will still be a choice, an individual choice, as there is no set meaning or reading. Bauman suggests in *Postmodernity and*

Its Discontents (1997) that postmodern times have witnessed postmodern consumers that now demand ever greater freedom at the expense of security. In spite of this the insecurities of freedom have become too agonising for the individual to stand and, as such, the desire for greater security has become paramount. This tension and sense of agony is reflected in this fragment of *Twenty Feet Wide*, as the audience watch performers endure physical exhaustion, endless repetition of a monotonous task and continually endure physical agony to provide the audience with freedom. The audience are thus faced with freedom that permits them to individually develop meaning and understanding at the expense of the performer.

The sense of loss of unity and wholeness could be expected to expose and create the desire for security through understanding, generating insecurity:

The observers find that the sense of unity and wholeness is lost from their observation...the long-incontestable criteria of unity and syntheses abandons itself to the chance (and risk) of trusting individual impulses, fragments and microstructures (Lehmann,2006:57-159)

The audience members were asked to abandon a sense of unity and understanding and engage in risk, inviting them to participate in a new way of understanding, one that embraces and accepts the possibility that understanding may not derive from logical explanations. This new method of thinking could potentially cause a sense of insecurity around their ability to generate meaning.

Throughout the performance of *Twenty Feet Wide* the audience were asked to recognise that they have entered the performance space; this is realised as the performers greet the audience members and acknowledge their presence, and the lighting and staging allows the audience members, performers, and space to be seen and present at all times. The audience are invited to recognise that the

performance is happening in real time and their presence is important, and through this the rules of exchange alter (Bailes, 2011). This instantaneously asked the audience to become a part of the development and creation of a new set of rules as they are asked to develop a new understanding. This creation was borne from the individual audience members' development of meaning and the negotiation between audience members, both verbally and non-verbally. The audience begin to assign worth and value to the performance, and this value is also influenced by the deliberately unhurried attitude to time, an attitude that is seen as redundant in a late capitalist society: '... the accelerated time of late capitalism that wags its finger and speaks its slogan that time wasted is money lost' (Goulish and Bottoms, 2006:183). This further invited the audience to suspend their conception of what it is to understand. The information was not necessarily interchangeable; the challenge of understanding and the laboured process increased the potential for the audience to develop a new method of understanding that allowed value to be attributed to time, as the audience entered into a new unpredictable space where chance, time and risk are embraced over linear narrative. Bauman states that a kind of uncertainty that allows the rules of the games to change in the middle without warning creates an environment that is both 'fluid, [and] perpetually changing' (Bauman, 2001a:48), continually on the move searching for the 'ideal' and working towards its construction.

The construction of *Twenty Feet Wide* considered the principles of the postdramatic in accordance with Lehmann's understanding of what constitutes postdramatic, embodying and utilising his theories. The performance also took aesthetic influence from Goat Island to consider the effects of time and space on the audience, to create an aesthetic founded in self-consciousness and self-

awareness which attempted to draw the audience towards the inconsequential. This framework allowed for Bauman's theories of freedom and security to be practically explored and embodied throughout the construction of the performance of *Twenty Feet Wide*. The audience, through the aesthetics, are asked to confront both freedom and security, highlighting the paradox between both states and allowing for a potential reading of the audience's responses that aligns with Nancy's theory of community and the ideal. The changing rhythms and fragmented nature of the performance has been designed to challenge the audience's methods of understanding and thus encourage the audience to seek meaning within a fragmented context; the performance attempts to provoke a verbal and non-verbal dialogue between the audience members to allow for an exploration of Delanty's theories of communication communities. By metaphorically representing the 'ideal' through the performance, the audience are engaged in an out of the ordinary experience, a time based representation of an ideal, a holiday.

Chapter Three

A consideration of the data gained from the performance of *Twenty Feet Wide*, analysed in relation to the theories of Bauman, Delanty and Nancy.

Introduction

This report is an exploration of the outcome of the performance of *Twenty Feet Wide* as performed over three nights: Wednesday 8th June 2011, Thursday 9th June 2011 and Friday 10th June 2011, and a solo questionnaire and short group task. Each night *Twenty Feet Wide* was performed to eight preselected audience members, consisting of theatre professionals, students, parents, retired people and those in employment, each with different skill sets and varied expectations and experience of postdramatic theatre. However, the only requirements were that the audience members had not seen the performance before, were not related to the performers and had not been in dialogue about the performance.

The primary form of research is the video observations taken from the performance and group task; the group task required the audience to reconstruct the beach in the same order as constructed during the performance. Examples of the observations are referred to as clips 1-21 and these are taken from all three performances (*Twenty Feet Wide*). The observations were carried out to investigate the audience's reactions and consider if the responses to either the performance or the group task could be seen as community forming, or indeed not; this is carried out in relation to the theories of Bauman and Nancy. Using these theories it becomes possible to explore whether the audience sought security in their responses. The audience, however, may have leant towards individual responses that demonstrate a desire for freedom and

thus individuality, rejecting community. The observations also take into consideration the theory of communication as outlined by Delanty, which allows communication amongst the audience, should it take place, to be understood as an expression of community.

The secondary form of research derives from the use of a solo questionnaire (Appendix 1), in which the audience were asked to rank their confidence in their own ability to respond correctly to the questions, on a scale of 1 to 10, without attempting to answer the questions. The solo questionnaire was given to the audience before the performance and then returned to them after the performance and group task, at which point they were provided with the opportunity to revise their original answers. The questionnaires were carried out to explore if the audience members' own individual sense of security, in their original answers, changed after watching the performance and taking part in the group task, thus allowing for a measurement of the audience's own perception of their security or confidence in their ability to answer a question. This opened up potential insights into whether the performance and group task increased, decreased or had no effect on each spectator's individual perception of their confidence to answer a question. Any change in the perceived level of confidence across the two questionnaires could therefore indicate whether the performance and group task affected the individual's sense of security. This information could provide a further insight as to the possible relationships between an individual sense of security, or insecurity, and any observable formation of community.

The first section of the report considers the observations, analysing whether an engagement or disengagement with freedom and security can be seen in relation

to the theories of Bauman and Nancy, whilst also exploring the communication, or indeed lack of communication, between audience members in relation to Delanty's theories. The second section of the report analyses the results from the questionnaires, investigating Bauman and Nancy's notion surrounding the struggle between individuality and community.

This framework allows for a hypothesis to be drawn as to whether there was, or was not, a suggestion of community forming as expressed through freedom, security and communication. As this research was carried out on twenty-four people over three nights, it limits the conclusiveness of the results, and thus this hypothesis applies only to the audience members that took part on the given nights and when watching *Twenty Feet Wide*; to prove or disprove this hypothesis further testing on additional people over a greater extent of time would need to be carried out.

This report analyses the video footage of three key fragments out of a potential six, chosen because these fragments in particular were created using devices, such as repetition, physical exhaustion and a non-linear structure. These three fragments allow the audience's reaction to be gauged across a variety of moments. The audience's reactions from these key moments are analysed, exploring whether they can or cannot be understood as community forming, by comparing them to the theories.

These three fragments shall be referred to as: The Pebbles, in which the performers stood on one leg reciting a nonsensical list which when completed allowed for a pebble to be placed next to a tape measure; The Windmills, which consisted of the performers blowing a small windmill using various patterns in an attempt to blow a large windmill; The Juggling, in which a performer juggled

with rubber ducks inside the performance space whilst simultaneously a jug of water was being filled outside the performance space. If a duck was dropped the water movement stopped until the duck was returned and the juggling resumed.

When analysing the video footage the audience's body language was observed to explore whether non-verbal body language did, or did not, take place. Body language is a term for communication which means the use of body movements or gestures; non-verbal communication messages can convey thoughts and feelings by means of physical posture, gestures, facial expressions and body language to form part of the category of paralanguage (Makodia, 2009). It has been noted in *The Role of Body Language in Communication* by Vipul Makodia, that posture and gesture accounts for approximately fifty-five percent of the messages communicated, including the most subtle movements that many people are not aware of (Ribbens, 2001). It has been noted in *Communication Under the Microscope* by Peter Bull that communication can also take place without conscious awareness, meaning that neither encoder nor decoder need to be able to identify the specific nonverbal cues through which messages are transmitted. The audience's reactions during *Twenty Feet Wide* therefore are interpreted in accordance with the non-verbal communication, should it be seen, displayed through the audience's body language.

The Observations

The first points of analysis are The Pebble and Windmill fragments, as these both offered the audience a choice of where to focus their attention. During these fragments there was action taking place both within the predetermined performance space and outside it. The action outside the predetermined performance space offered the audience freedom to move in their seats. The

action inside allowed the audience members to remain passive and fulfil the predetermined role of an audience member, offering safety through the convention. When observing the video footage during The Pebble and Windmill fragments it is possible to see that the audience predominantly faced the predetermined performance space, which was noticeable as a common theme (Clip 1). This would seem to imply that their desire for security was stronger than their desire to explore their freedom, as they remained facing the predetermined performance space even when provided with the opportunity to watch action taking place outside of this area. The audience chose to disregard the option of freedom, instead remaining within their predetermined parameters of safety, indicated by the refusal to look outside of the predetermined performance space (Clip 3). It is possible that as the performance offered little security through understanding, the audience tried to find it by remaining within the convention of performance. Therefore within the framework of community, it can be understood that the refusal of freedom and individuality resulted in an expression of communal activity conveyed through security, represented through the conventional frame of stage-spectator relationship. This communal activity expressed through a desire for security and rejection of freedom, aligns with Bauman's theory that the 'ideal' of community will momentarily bring with it security. Alternatively it is possible to analyse this moment through Nancy's theory of the individual and the 'Atom' and it is possible to see this moment as pre-community. The audience members are functioning on an individual level as there has not been any expression of the audience members coming together, there has not been an 'inclination or an inclining' (Nancy, 1991:3) to indicate a *Clinamen*; as Nancy states: 'Community is at least the *Clinamen* of the individual' (Nancy, 1991:3-4). The audience members have not moved towards

an expression of community and therefore they are functioning as identifiable, if not identical identities: Atoms.

However, it is possible to see that at moments during the performance deviation from this theme did occur, when audience members did in fact shift their focus. This can be seen when observing the theatre professionals within the audience when they move their heads slightly and alter their line of vision (Clip 2). It appears during this clip that this action was carried out quickly and decisively, indicating confidence and commitment which could suggest that this action is not suggestive of freedom but rather an expression of security; the familiar environment of the theatre inspired a greater sense of security than that instilled in the non-theatre professionals. Therefore, it is possible that within the framework this could be understood as the formation of a sub community, forming from a familiar sense of security. This observation therefore conflicts with Bauman's theory in which he suggests that it is a sense of security that indicates community, whereas here it is potentially possible to witness in this moment a sense of freedom derived from security, and this freedom indicating community.

When watching the theatre professionals change and alter their line of vision (Clip 2), it is also possible to notice that their sense of security resonated through the non-theatre professionals, affecting their actions. The non-theatre professionals begin to mirror the theatre professionals' form of body language (Clips 4&5). This observation demonstrates an expression of Nancy's theory of the *Clinamen* as the physical mirroring of body language could be understood as an inclination, or an inclining from one toward the other, of atoms moving together and moving apart. There is therefore in these moments the existence of

an Atom plus the *Clinamen*, for Nancy states that one cannot exist without the other; there cannot be a *Clinamen* without atoms: 'the *Clinamen* is not something else, another element outside of the atoms; it is not in addition to them; it is the "more" of their exposition' (Nancy, 2000:39). Consequently, the audience are moving towards Nancy's conception of singularity, as Nancy states community 'happens to the singular being' (Nancy, 1991:7) and that singularity cannot take place at the level of atoms, but only at the level of the *Clinamen* (Nancy, 1991:6). An alternative reading of this moment of mirroring the theatre professional body language, these moments could also be understood through Bauman's theory of 'peg communities' (Bauman, 2001a:16) in which individuals seek others on which to 'peg' their individual insecurities, by mirroring the physical actions of those that are seemingly secure in their actions; the non-theatre professionals could be seen to be 'pegging' their insecurities allowing a feeling of security to develop and thus a community.

During the third fragment selected for analysis, *The Juggling*, the audience reaction differed to that of *The Pebbles* and *Windmill* fragments. The audience, it can be seen, over all three nights chose to engage with their freedom as expressed through movement. The movement in this case was carried out freely by all audience members whether theatre professionals, students, parents, retired people or those in employment. During this fragment action took place both inside and outside the predetermined performance space. As the audience were placed in traverse, and the action outside of the predetermined performance space only took place on one side of the traverse, this resulted in only one side of the audience being able to see the action. For the purpose of this report the side that could see is referred to as row A and the side that could not see, row B. As row A could see all the action, both within and outside of the

predetermined performance space, these audience members were not required to move in their seats, whereas row B needed to look behind if they wished to see the action outside of the predetermined performance space; this undoubtedly had a profound effect on the audience's reactions. However, it can be seen on the video footage from all three nights that audience members from row A, despite being able to see, moved in their seats (Clips 6&7), leaning to the side in order to gain a better viewpoint. As well as the movement from audience members from row A it can also be seen that over all three nights audience members from row B also moved in their seats to look behind (Clips 11, 12 & 13). Although this movement from row B was delayed, as at the start of the fragment the audience members predominantly remained facing the predetermined performance space (Clips 8,9 &10), as the fragment progressed and a sense of repetition was established audience members on row B looked behind to see the action outside the predetermined performance space (Clips 11,12&13). This movement can be understood as an engagement with freedom, where the desire to explore the space and freedom could potentially have been provoked as the action within the predetermined performance space was highly repetitive, creating a safe environment in which the audience felt able to explore the action outside the performance space, moving beyond the conventional frame of stage-spectator relationships. It is possible that the formation of community expressed through communication and security was disrupted during this fragment, as the audience was split, with half seeing and half not. Despite this divide both rows explored their freedom, therefore demonstrating individuality and a lesser need for community. The repetition within the fragment potentially encouraged an engagement with a sense of security, thus provoking the desire for freedom, emphasising the paradox between both states.

Throughout the performance of *Twenty Feet Wide* there are moments where the audience comes together and moments when they break apart, which can be seen when the audience members mirror each other's body language. Mirroring body language is also known as postural mirroring, where two people share the same posture (Beattie, 2003). The occurrence and reoccurrence of the mirroring suggests a nonverbal communication between audience members, which indicates a level of understanding (Beattie, 2003). It has been noted that moving in harmony with another person's 'vibration' demonstrates a very high level of communication (Paret, 2007). Another reading of the body language among the audience members could be that the audience members in these moments are functioning as atoms moving toward the *Clinamen*, working towards becoming a singular being, but in this very moment of connection becoming 'Inoperative' as the audience lose the 'in of being-in-common' (Nancy, 1991:xxxix). The audience continually move together and instantaneously break apart at the moment of connection, repeatedly leaning towards each other and pulling apart, functioning as *Atoms plus a Clinamen*, rather than as a singular being.

An illustration of this can be seen on Wednesday 8th 2011 (Clip 14) during the Pebble fragment when two audience members on opposite rows begin to break in and out of mirroring each other's upper body language, shortly followed by a third member. This upper body language consists of placing the left arm across the body, supporting the right arm as the hand is placed under the chin with the fingers placed around the lips. A further example of this can be seen during the Windmill fragment on Friday 10th June 2011 (Clip 15), when two audience members flicker in and out of mirroring each other's body language for approximately fifty-five seconds. It is also possible to witness the audience

members sitting with their arms crossed, and this could be read as either a demonstration of insecurity or as a result of the temperature in the room. However as this was not the only expression of mirroring as the audience members engaged in both open and closed body language throughout the performance, the audience's body language demonstrates both security and insecurity. This example of mirroring each other's body language was of importance during the observations of *Twenty Feet Wide* as it suggested that there was a non-verbal expression of mutual agreement taking place between the audience members. During the observations the audience can be observed apparently non-verbally agreeing or disagreeing with each other, negotiating meaning and understanding, expressed through mirroring. This is particularly interesting as these individuals did not have a pre-existing relationship, which allows us to note that the dialogue was as a response to the performance and not a result of pre-existing forms of communication. It is through the framework of communication, with reference to the theory of Delanty, that the mirroring of body language can be understood to be community forming. Another reading of this moment provides a further example of Nancy's 'Inoperative Communities' (1991), as he states that it is when the community becomes singular that it loses the common connection that defines it, interrupting the self-assertion of its members:

The community that becomes *a single thing* (body, mind, fatherland, Leader...) ...necessarily loses the *in* of being-*in*-common. Or, it loses the *with* or the *together* that defines it. It yields its being-together to a being *of* togetherness...
(Nancy, 1991: xxxix)

This can be seen in the audience's reactions as the audience members find moments of connection but instantaneously reject them as they break apart and

cease mirroring each other, and in this moment community could be seen to be continually forming, disintegrating and reforming, becoming 'Inoperative'.

After the performance the audience were invited to take part in a short group task where they were given the task of reconstructing the miniature beach in the same order as witnessed during the performance. The audience were given this task as it offered the audience members a chance to reflect on the performance, talk or simply complete the task. Over all three nights all audience members chose to take part in the group task with little or no hesitance (clips 16&17). When observing the audience members over all three nights the primary discussions centred around the task itself, discussing the order of the objects and the amount of sand and water to place on the beach. As the task time passed the discussions began to develop to include conversations about the context of the performance (Clip 18 & 19). It is possible to observe among the audience members a strong attention to detail when carrying out the task, as time and consideration were given to the order of objects and the quantity. This attention to detail and consideration provided a space in which the audience members reflected on the performance and drew from their individual experience and viewpoints to create a collective decision. The communication seen during the task allows for an observation that aligns with Delanty's theory of communication communities, as the audience members engaged in communication, 'based on new kinds of belonging', a sense of belonging that is particular to the circumstances (Delanty, 2003:i). This notion was reflected by the audience members during the group discussion, from Wednesday 8th June 2011 (Clip 20), as an audience member commented that 'it was social, when you come to a piece of theatre you don't generally chat with the other people, it is quite a privilege actually, really nice, quiet bonding.' Alongside this, another

member from Friday 10th June 2011 (Clip 21) also commented on the experience: 'It was a community effort it really was wasn't it? To do it, between us we remembered it!'. Delanty maintains that 'the vitality of community is...its imagined capacity...found as much in the search and desire for it...[community] has to be imagined and does not simply reproduce meaning, but it is productive of meaning' (Delanty, 2003: 188-189). Therefore the comments from the audience members offer the potential to understand the experience of communication as an experience of community, derived from a sense of belonging originating from the ability or opportunity to communicate.

The group task, it has been established, provided the audience members with an opportunity to communicate. When speaking of communication Nancy states that 'community is not a gathering of individuals, for individuality...can be given only within such a gathering' (Nancy, 1993:153) meaning that community and communication are constitutive of individuality. Nancy therefore states that community does not consist of anything other than the communication of separate beings: 'communication is always disappointing, because no subject...comes in touch with another subject' (cited in Sheppard, 1997:97). However, during the performance of *Twenty Feet Wide* it has been noted that the audience members potentially achieved this sense of 'touch' through the leaning towards and pulling apart from each other, suggesting that the combination of 'Inoperative Community' and Nancy's understanding of communication created a sensation that they, the audience members, could relate to a sense of community expressed through their own admissions of feelings, such as 'bonding' and 'community'. It was not until the audience were provided with an opportunity to communicate that they were able to realise a feeling of belonging and being *in* community.

The Questionnaires

The secondary form of research was the use of questionnaires which were used to explore whether witnessing the postdramatic performance and carrying out the task would have any effect on the audience members' answers, and whether this could or could not be understood as expressing community in relation to the theories of Bauman and Nancy. (Appendix 1). The solo questionnaires were first given to the audience before they witnessed the postdramatic performance of *Twenty Feet Wide* and then again immediately after the group task.

The results from the questionnaires have been analysed by occupation and date, and all three nights have been cross-referenced to allow for further analysis (Appendix 2a). The results are shown in scatter graphs as this allows a line of best fit to be given, and best demonstrates the results; as with any set of results there are some anomalies.

When exploring the results from the different occupations, starting with those in employment, the results suggest the confidence levels generally remained the same, with the only noticeable pattern being that the higher ranking markings decreased slightly after the performance and task. When looking at the results of those who were retired it was very clear that the confidence levels remained exactly the same. It is possible that there are a variety of reasons for this: the performance simply had no effect, they did not associate the performance or task with the questionnaire, or it could indicate that they were simply more confident in their original answers and therefore felt no desire to alter them. The students' results indicated that their confidence levels altered slightly to find a middle ground, as their lower marks increased and their higher marks decreased. The Theatre Professionals' results show that the higher end markings

remained in the same area, however, the lower end markings show an interesting trend as they increased, indicating that the Theatre Professionals felt more secure in their answers (Appendix 2b). This suggests that the performance increased their sense of security, possibly due to the previously stated sense of security derived from being in a performance space.

When reviewing the results from the individual nights and looking at the scatter graph for Wednesday 8th June 2011, it is possible to see that there was little or no effect on the results, as the line of best fit seen on the graph shows that the confidence levels of the audience members generally remained the same on both the questionnaires, whether before or after the performance; the only noticeable change was that the answers at the lower end of the scale rose very slightly (Appendix 2c). When looking at the graph for Thursday 9th June 2011 it can be noted that the results are very similar, with the line of best fit again showing that the confidence levels remained the same both before and after the performance, with the only difference being that the audience marked themselves slightly lower on questions with a higher original ranking; the results of Friday 10th June 2011 echo the findings from Thursday 9th June 2011.

These results allow for several observations to be drawn, one of which is that they indicate that the performance had little or no effect on the audience's confidence levels and sense of security, which suggests that despite the postdramatic performance destabilising techniques, the audience's confidence and security remained the same on an individual level; the exception is the Theatre Professionals, whose results suggest a very slight increase in confidence. This expression of individuality contrasts with the observations drawn from the video footage, suggesting that the desire for community and

security in response to the performance of *Twenty Feet Wide* was functioning on a subconscious level.

Conclusion

Throughout the performance of *Twenty Feet Wide*, the audience's responses have been analysed in relation to the theories exploring whether these moments can be seen as forming, or indeed not forming, community. As previously stated, due to the small cross section of participants it only allows for a tentative hypothesis to be drawn, and in order to prove or disprove this hypothesis further testing would need to be done; to do this it would require both a wider sample of participants and a greater expanse of time. However it is possible to offer a hypothesis that the performance of *Twenty Feet Wide* created fleeting moments of community. This can firstly be seen through the audiences' desire for security as demonstrated through the mirroring seen in their body language; this expression of security is consistent with Bauman's theory that freedom results in a desire for security. However, there was a contradiction as Bauman's theory states that freedom creates a desire for security and therefore community, yet the audience members that felt secure in their environment, namely the theatre professionals, in fact embraced freedom because they felt secure. Alongside this hypothesis it is also possible to propose that the group task, through the availability of the opportunity for communication, provided the audience with a sense of community that they were able to identify with and recognise through their own admissions of experience such as 'bonding' and 'community'. It is Nancy's theory of 'Inoperative Communities' (1991), however, that most consistently provides a framework that allows the forming and reforming of community to be continually witnessed, through both the performance and

group task, thus allowing the hypothesis to be drawn that the combination of leaning towards 'others', as witnessed during the performance, and the communication during the group task created moments that could be recognised as community forming. Therefore through the theories of Bauman, Delanty and Nancy it is possible to state that the performance of *Twenty Feet Wide*, when combined with the group task, created fleeting moments of community forming.

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Appendix One



Please provide your name

Instructions for the main body of the questionnaire

Please take your time with the questionnaire and thank you for your time. Please read the questions carefully and rate your answer on the scale of 1 -10, with 10 being the most confident and 1 the least confident. Please note you are only asked to rate how confident or sure you are that you could answer the question; you do not have to answer the question. Once you have answered the question please do not return to or modify your answer. Please continue when you are ready.

1. On a scale of 1- 10 how confident are you that you could do 150 sit up?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. On a scale of 1-10 how confident are you that you could solve this?

Mary is 54 years old, and her mother is 80. How many years ago was her mother three times the age of her daughter Mary?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. On a scale of 1-10 how sure are you that these are all capital cities?

Copenhagen, Moscow, Reykjavik, Brussels, Santiago, Cairo, Budapest, Tripoli, Oslo, Lisbon, Singapore

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. On a scale of 1-10 how confident are you that you order these presidents of America

Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, James Monroe and John Adams

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. On a scale of 1-10 how confident are you that you could solve this riddle?

A man and his son were in a car accident. The man died on the way to the hospital, but the boy was rushed into surgery. The surgeon said "I can't operate, for that's my son!" How is this possible?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. How confident are you on a scale of 1-10 that you can place these words in alphabetical order, in 10 seconds?

Material, Iron, Punishment, Green, Silver

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. How confident are you that you could name these four athletes?



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. On a scale of 1-10 how confident are you that you could add the following fractions?

$$4^3/5 + 2^3/4$$

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. On a scale of 1-10 how sure are you that you that this sentence is spelt correctly?

Thousands of incredibly intelligent scientists swarmed, excitedly towards the incredible microscope.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

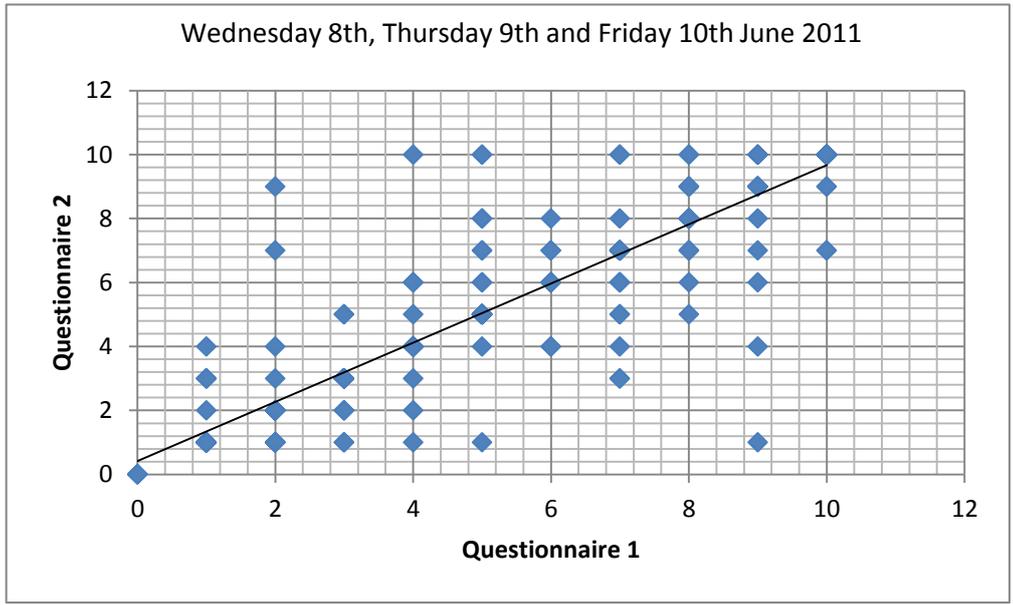
10. On a scale of 1-10 how sure are you that you could name five members of the current English government?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

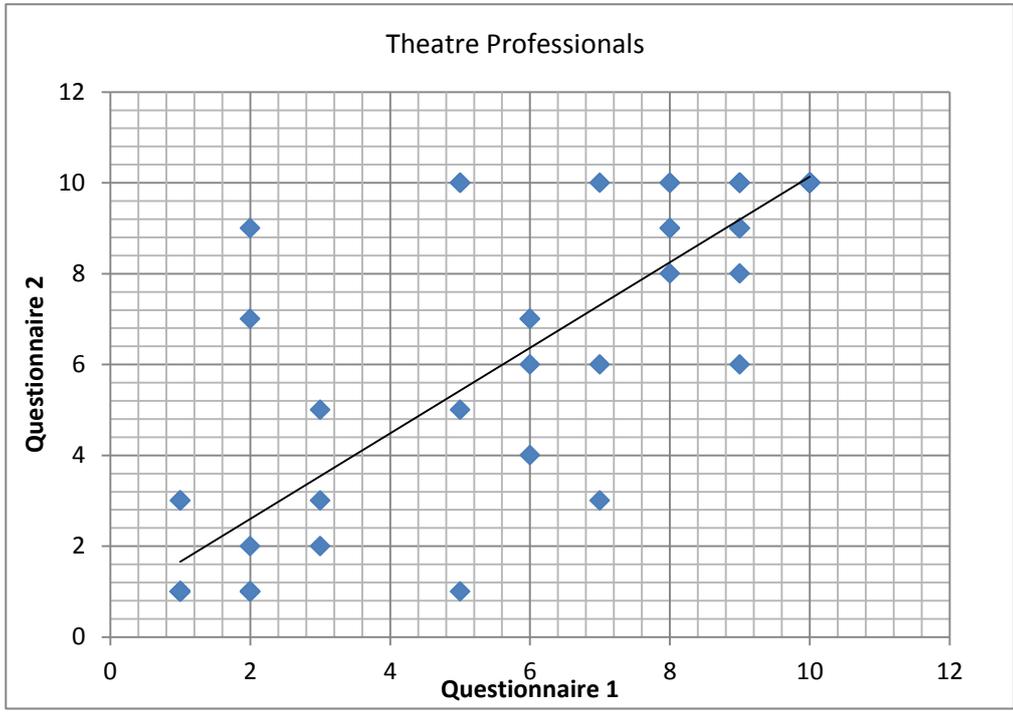
Thank you for your time, please return your questionnaire.

Appendix Two

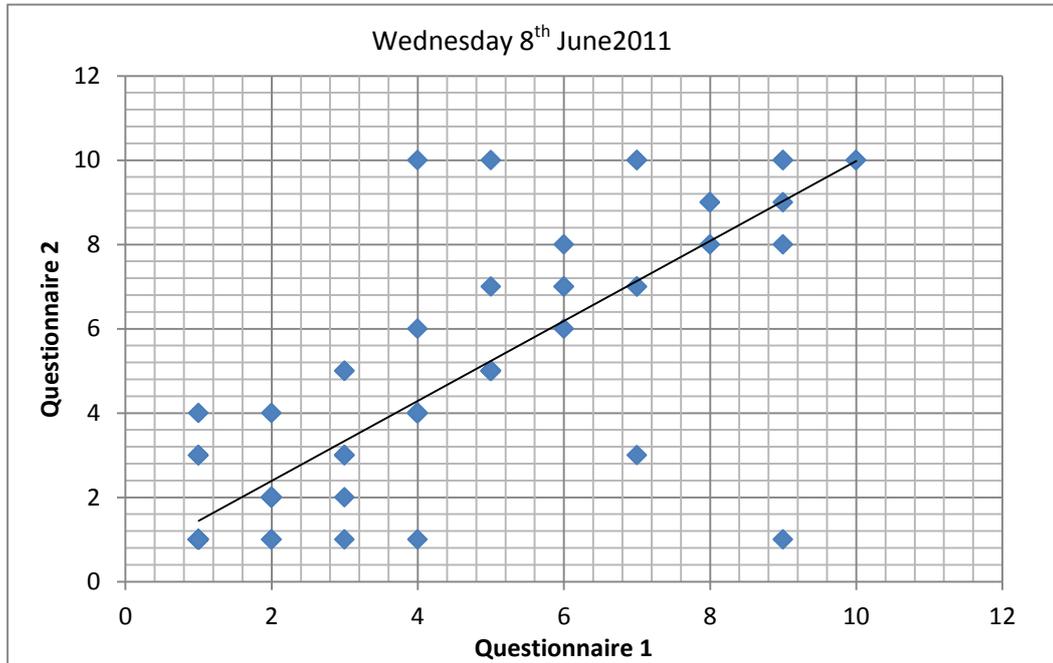
2a.



2b.



2c.



Appendix Three

