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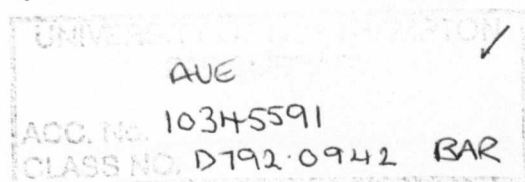


Apocryphal Theatre: Practicing Philosophies

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor  
At the University of Northampton

2009

Julia Lee Barclay





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## Abstract

Apocryphal Theatre: Practicing Philosophies is a practice-based research project that consists of examples of my theatre practice (as research) and a written thesis. In this thesis, I argue that theatre can be seen to be an act of philosophy, by tessellating Maurice Merleau-Ponty's definition of philosophy as consisting of relearning to look at the world and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's proposition that philosophy is the creation of concepts, and pointing to post-WWII theatre artists whose work both fulfill this definition of philosophy and have informed Apocryphal Theatre's work. Included is an analysis of interviews with three contemporary theatre artists, Richard Foreman, Chris Goode and Ivana Müller, which explore their relationship with philosophical ideas in their work and how that informs their ability to create acts of philosophy.

In practice, the research questions that underpin Apocryphal Theatre's research in labs, rehearsals and performance, are philosophical and create the potential for collective acts of philosophy. Apocryphal's practice as research as manifest in its ongoing lab and in the two productions included as part of this thesis, *The Jesus Guy* and *Besides, you lose your soul or the History of Western Civilisation*, will be analyzed for the historical and philosophical bases of the primary concepts we have created through our research and the tools with which we embody them. The concepts and tools, which are used to address the research questions, are the witness, the grid, cutting up, levels of address and levels of presence.

This thesis concludes that theatre and philosophy whilst separate disciplines can overlap in such a way that acts of philosophy can occur in the theatre, and that Apocryphal's theatrical project, which is collaborative, polyvocal and in performance invites the audience to be active witness/participants in the creation of the event, can be viewed as a collective act of philosophy.

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## Apocryphal Theatre: a brief overview

Apocryphal Theatre is a professional theatre company that was forged in 2004 out of our ongoing research labs, which meet once a week in London at Camden People's Theatre. The core company, an international group of artists from multiple disciplines, has been working together consistently since 2005. These members are Bill Aitchison, Lukas Angelini, Lucy Avery, Zoe Bouras, Rachel Ellis, Birthe Jorgensen and Theron Schmidt. New members from 2006 are Alison Blunt and Boris Kahnert. Whilst I am the director of the company and have written texts for our two recent shows, we create our work collaboratively in labs, rehearsals and in performance. The authors of any Apocryphal event are multiple and include, in performance, the audience.

The two shows submitted as part of this thesis are *The Jesus Guy*, originally performed in 2006 at Camden People's Theatre and *Besides, you lose your soul or the History of Western Civilisation* in 2009 at the same venue. Details of these productions can be found in Appendix D; performance texts are attached as Appendices E & F (and interspersed throughout this text) and DVDs of the two shows are attached as Appendices G & H.

In addition to our productions, we do lab showings during which we invite audiences to engage with our latest work in many different environments including art and music venues such as Tate Modern, Lorem Ipsum Gallery and 2:13 Club.

Right, the nephew. But so did *he*. Kierkegaard, that is. Tried. He really did *try* to get heard even though he wasn't *saying anything* - that is saying anything anyone wanted to hear.

What was he trying to say?

That's a little hard to explain actually.

Well, try.

OK.

OK.

OK.

## Introduction

Watching Richard Foreman's play *Lava* at The Performing Garage in New York (1989), I spent the whole time waiting for some kind of narrative or at least logical coherence. I wanted it to *stay still* and tell me what it was doing. The work did not do this and frustrated my expectations at every turn.

Two years later, I was invited to an open dress rehearsal of Foreman's *Eddie Goes to Poetry City: Part 2* (1991). The first half of the show I squirmed with frustration as before, and then suddenly, I stopped fighting what was there and started watching it. As soon as I let go of my need for it to make recognizable sense, it started making all the sense in the world, from moment to moment, a series of becomings, lines of flight as Deleuze and Guattari (2003a) call them, one moment undercutting another and somehow enhancing it, resonances of meaning then their opposite. Each moment both necessary and unfamiliar created a multiplicitous dance of paradox.<sup>1</sup>

One moment amidst the blizzard of images and words stands out (and this may be the moment when I accepted the invitation): an enormous cardboard hand comes out of a doorway and an actor says God is here and I think, yes God is here. God meaning a sense of something extraordinary, powerful, way larger than anyone in the room, an awareness of which was brought about by this absurd cardboard hand and the simple statement "God is here." From that moment, I saw theatre and the world differently. The effect of leaving

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<sup>1</sup> These are all elements of Deleuze's definition of a philosophical concept (1995:136).

Foreman's shows since that time has usually been one of my brain and heart functioning on a different level, having shifted, made lighter, less burdened, somehow less rusty, less rigidly constructed.

I later read Deleuze and Guattari (2003a) whose words articulated this experience in a philosophical context, but my receptivity to their ideas was paved by the lived experience in the theatre. Because of this experience, amongst many others that will be discussed in this thesis, I propose theatre has the potential to be an act of philosophy. Theatre can offer experiences that give us a way of "relearning to look at the world" (Merleau-Ponty 2004: 77) so that we re-examine our assumptions about reality, which is the goal of most philosophical writing.

Philosophy also can influence how we as theatre artists create our work. This territory has been covered extensively from the critical perspective on extant theatrical events, and an excellent overview of contemporary thinking in this regard can be found in *Staging Philosophy* (Krasner & Saltz 2006). The intersection of theatre and philosophy is spoken of eloquently in their introduction, in particular when quoting Tassi who sees philosophy as:

an activity that seeks to transport us to the place where boundaries are established so that we may "see" how things come to be. Like the theatrical stage, the theatre of the mind is a place for seeing, and it is philosophy's task to bring to light and allow us to see what usually remains obscure or hidden in our perceptual dealings with things.  
(Tassi in Krasner and Saltz 2006: 3)

He goes on to refer to theatre and philosophy as engaged in an "unconcealment process" (*ibid.*), which resonates with Apocryphal's practical research, which involves locating and undermining a "reality grid" and our "assumptions/investments" (see p. 9).

Whilst this is an excellent book from a critical perspective, there is very little written from the point of view of the artists themselves as to how they actually work with philosophical ideas and even less about how their creations could in themselves be considered acts of philosophy. Foreman talks briefly about his relation to Lacan and how he reads in *Unbalancing Acts* (1992), Chaikin refers to studying philosophy in and out of university in *The Presence of the Actor* (1984) and Cage refers to the influence of D.T. Suzuki in his own writing (Cage 1973, 1973a, 1985). However, in most cases they only refer to their influences obliquely (with the exception of Cage) and none of them address the possibility that their creative work itself could be considered philosophy. The recently published *Deleuze and Performance* (Cull 2009) begins to rectify this gap. Though most of the essays are still from the point of view of critical theorists using Deleuze to interpret performance events, there are

references to how Deleuze (and Guattari) point to ways in which theatrical practice can be considered as a way of thinking and cross into philosophy.

The crossover between the two worlds of philosophy and theatre from the point of view of theatre artists is the primary focus of this thesis. Whilst theatre does not supersede philosophy as its own discipline, given that poststructuralist philosophy has left us with a radical critique of any kind of stable base from which to analyze the world, theatre offers a place<sup>2</sup> where embodied concepts can shift and stumble and contradict one another without having to resolve into an argument to be defended and yet with the rigor (i.e., the necessity) that the concepts must engage with living bodies in a room in a specific shared moment in time.



Theron Schmidt, Rachel Ellis, Bill Aitchison and Zoe Bouras in *The Jesus Guy* at Camden People's Theatre, London with photograph taken by Birthe Jorgensen.<sup>3</sup>

The document that still functions as the most concise guide to Apocryphal's research focus was originally written in 1999<sup>4</sup> and summarizes the goals of the theatre labs,

<sup>2</sup> Theatre has offered this place for millennia within different philosophical contexts, but this thesis focuses on the post-structuralist philosophical field as it relates to contemporary theatre practice.

<sup>3</sup> All subsequent photos, unless indicated otherwise, were taken by Birthe Jorgensen during labs, rehearsals or performances at Camden People's Theatre. When taking photos Jorgensen is visible and a participant in the action (see pp. 143-146).

<sup>4</sup> John Clancy then the Artistic Director of The Present Company in New York had asked me to put in writing what I wanted to do in theater so they could help me do it, and this was written in response to that request. Clancy had also given the lab free space in the Theatorium after having watched our initial experiments. I had



productions, writing and research I have created or initiated since the mid-1990s. This document was published in the introduction to my first stage text *Word to Your Mama*.

What I have striven to do in theater is undermine the reality-grid of right now - meaning that which we say "that's the way it is" about, either publicly or privately, regarding, e.g., class/money, race/ethnicity, gender/sex, religion/God, realpolitik/politics, nationalism/patriotism, etc. – through the creation of theatrical work that challenges these assumptions by, first, owning them as our own (not pawning it off on an "other" which somehow creates a world in which we live as victims), and, second, exploring the depths of our own assumptions/investments and investigating our own "desiring machines" (a concept from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's from their book *Anti-Oedipus*). The Deleuze/Guattari theory is that we all, to some extent carry within us fascistic investments (meaning investments in a state of "being") and revolutionary investments (meaning investments in the process of "becoming"). Their desire was to enact a kind of radical psychology wherein our fascistic investments could be examined, owned and somehow uprooted to bring about a social investment in something other than "being" - i.e., a static, repressive environment which rewards conformity and a certain kind of subservience to an other-centered order of things as they are. I believe their vision has to do with a more revolutionary social body - one in which the process of becoming itself is integral to living, and there is no need to impose a hegemonic force onto other living creatures (examples of this now and in the past: capital, Christianity and other Evangelical/missionary religions, slavery, women as property, man's dominion over/destruction of nature, psychology, "the Big Bang", etc.) This is an incredible reduction of everything they said, but serves as a (hopefully) useful starting point for the goals of the theatrical endeavors on which I want to spend the rest of my foreseeable life.

I have tried to do this by creating theatrical pieces that uproot the static nature of language, gesture, character, etc. in such a way as to bring about this process of becoming. If the work is successful, this "becoming" flows through our own bodies/souls/minds as players/writers/directors and thence into the bodies/minds/souls of the audience.

(Barclay 2001: 149)

Implied in this statement are three practical research questions:

1. If we can locate *the reality-grid of right now*, and make it visible in the room, is it then rendered mutable?
2. How can we challenge our core assumptions, personal and political, by *owning them as our own ...exploring the depths of our own assumptions/investments and investigating our own "desiring machines"?*
3. How can we create *theatrical pieces that uproot the static nature of language, gesture, character, etc. in such a way as to bring about this process of becoming?*

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read Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* (2003a) in the mid-1990s in the context of working as a director with writer C.J. Hopkins in our company Monkey Wrench Theater (1994-1998). We were searching for ways of engaging with actors in such a way that they could hear and play the music of language based on an idea of a multiplying symbolic code rather than as an expressive tool in reference to a literal object or thought.

As these questions are as philosophical as they are theatrical and as I used Deleuze and Guattari to frame these goals (at that time outside of any academic context), I use them to examine how Apocryphal Theatre's practice is related to philosophy, if we have embodied our conscious intentions and, if our work can therefore be seen as a collective act of philosophy.



**Alison Blunt and Bouras in *Besides, you lose your soul* at Rose Bruford College.**

As this written thesis is part of a practice-based PhD, its form as well as the content holds certain tensions. The primary tension is between (1) the playfulness and non-linearity of the process and production of the work created by Apocryphal Theatre and (2) the need to write about this practice and its relationship to philosophy in such a way that it can be of use to people engaged in creating and/or writing about theatre practice. In order to honor both necessities, I have engaged a number of strategies:

1. Cutting up excerpts of the stage texts *The Jesus Guy* and *Besides, you lose your soul or the History of Western Civilisation* into the body of the thesis.<sup>5</sup> The way in which these cut-ups were decided is described below.
2. Examining the relationship between Apocryphal's work and philosophers that have influenced us (primarily Deleuze and Guattari, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche) through the filter of five key concepts and tools used in our labs and with which we have created the two performances *The Jesus Guy* and *Besides*. These concepts and tools, namely: the witness, the grid, cutting up, levels of address and levels of presence will be defined in Chapter 3 as they relate to our research questions and their manifestation in our practice.
3. Analyzing the rehearsal and lab notes of Apocryphal company members and my own notes and texts written over 26 years of practice (as they relate to the key concepts and tools).
4. Analyzing interviews with theatre artists (Richard Foreman, Chris Goode and Ivana Müller) and the work of artists influential to Apocryphal (with a focus on John Cage and Joseph Chaikin), to discuss how this work and Apocryphal's can be considered acts of philosophy.

As the practical research to be assessed includes *Besides* and *The Jesus Guy*, using a John Cage-inspired random chance technique, excerpts from pages of these texts are interspersed throughout this thesis in shaded text boxes.<sup>6</sup> So that it is clear when text falls next

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<sup>5</sup> The full performance stage texts are attached as Appendices E and F. In the case of *Besides* the text includes interventions from the show itself consisting of my typed changes to the text during each performance to reflect what was said when that differed from or was in addition to the pre-written text. The text and the process of changing it was projected onto a wall in the theatre space.

<sup>6</sup> For readers who cannot see the live performances, DVDs of each are attached as Appendices G and H. There are DVDs of full performances and edited highlights. As the performances are improvised and as the audience is seated throughout the space thereby having very different viewpoints on the show, the full-length DVDs should in no way be considered definitive, instead they document a certain show on a certain day from one point of view. The DVDs with excerpts have samples from different shows, and in the case of *The Jesus Guy* DVD include samples of process, which in some ways are more accurate re-presentations of the work as a whole.

to each other that they may come from two different sources, the *Besides* text is printed in Didot and *The Jesus Guy* is printed in Garamond. The decision about where pages of the text go was determined by bird sightings marked on a list of page numbers. Each page of text was then randomly assigned a tarot card, and where each page was inserted was determined by which card was chosen from the reshuffled deck. This technique allows an associative dynamic between ideas that is not controlled by any ‘author’ and throws into question from whence the origin of the meaning the reader may discover emerges. This process is in one sense a cut-up and instances one of the key tools Apocryphal Theatre uses to put into radical doubt the authenticity of the author and the source of meaning creation. As this random-chance operation was enacted for the first draft of the thesis, the rewrites have necessitated that the pages move once more. This process resonates with how Apocryphal improvises within the scores and structures we create for performance, wherein these scores function as guidelines that are not necessarily determinative and indeed need to shift to accommodate the realities of each performance. I intervened further in this process by editing each predetermined page down to an excerpt. I decided on which text of each page should be included according to the flow of the whole thesis in order to create the maximum possible associative resonances between the stage texts and the thesis. However, I never changed pages themselves or edited within the text. This instances the way in which Apocryphal listens for multiplicities of meanings when cutting up text and so holds the tension between pure random chance and the Burroughs/Gysin method (1982) of cutting up<sup>7</sup> which allows for authorial intervention. Finally, the intervention of the stage texts into the thesis, even where it may seem awkward, embodies my experience with attempting to write about Apocryphal’s work within the academic frame: slippery, inconvenient and not behaving according to plan.

As to the overall structure of the thesis, Chapter 1 introduces the aims and methodologies of the thesis. Chapter 2 opens with an overview of the context of Apocryphal’s practical research, which is located primarily within the post-WWII New York avant-garde, and in the second section introduces the work and ideas of three contemporary artists interviewed who I argue create theatrical acts of philosophy: Richard Foreman, Chris Goode and Ivana Müller.

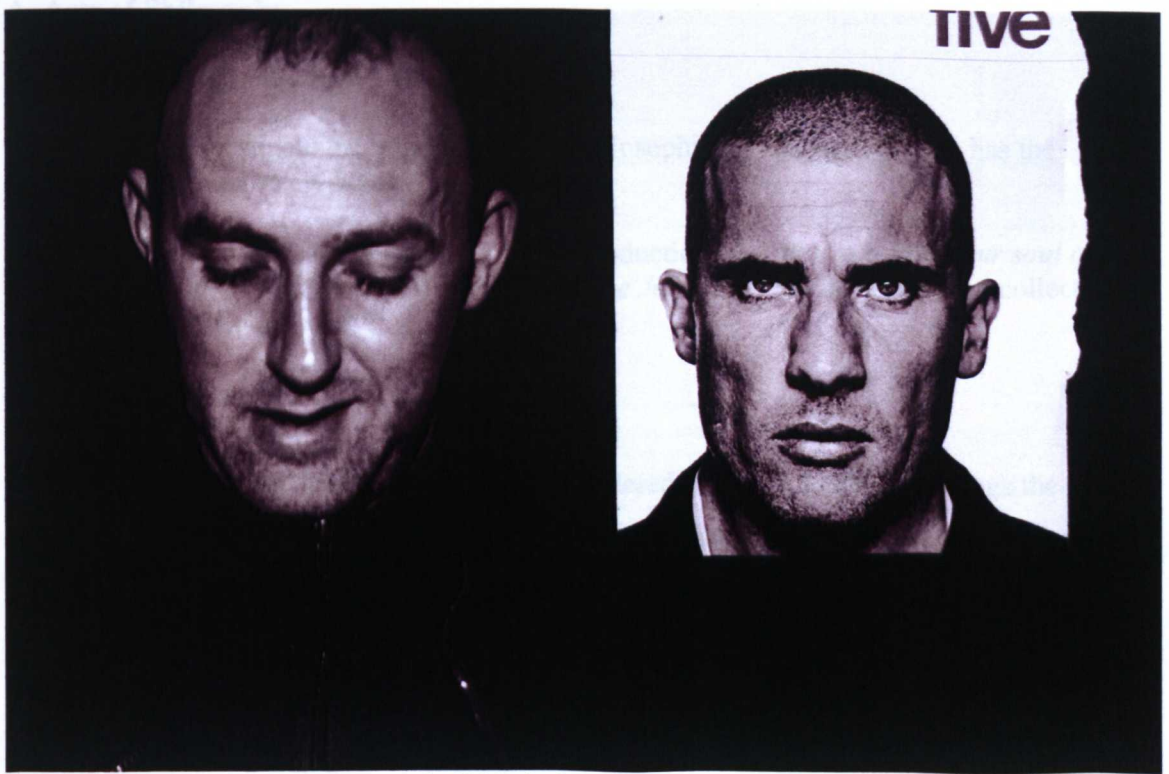
In Chapter 3, Apocryphal’s three practical research questions are addressed in relation to the five key concepts and tools, as mentioned earlier, the grid, the witness, cutting up,

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<sup>7</sup> As cutting up is one of our key conceptual tools, their technique is described in detail in Chapter 2 and our version of that technique is described in Chapter 3.

levels of address and levels of presence. They will act as a filter through which to examine Apocryphal's relationship to the philosophy and the work of the artists introduced in Chapter 2. Through this filter, I also examine the on-going lab process and how we discover the terms we use, and finally how these concepts and tools manifest in *The Jesus Guy* and *Besides as Text*.<sup>8</sup>

In Chapter 4, I evaluate Apocryphal's productions of *Besides* and *The Jesus Guy*, analyzing if we have addressed our research questions and if either show can be considered an act of philosophy. I then argue that the theatre artists examined herein create acts of philosophy and that Apocryphal's larger theatrical project, including the lab, can be considered a collective act of philosophy.



Audience member next to Metro page in 2006 lab showing.

<sup>8</sup> 'Text' borrowed from Barthes' notion of a Text that is "that *social* space which leaves no language safe." (Barthes 1977: 164) as distinct from work, which "is caught up in a process of filiation...and a *conformity* of the work to the author" (*ibid.*: 160). I use the term Text to describe Apocryphal's whole process that includes improvising with a prewritten text, however the stage texts I write are in themselves more Text than text as defined by Barthes, especially as he defines it as "very much a score...it asks of its reader a practical collaboration. Which is an important change, because who executes the work?" (*ibid.*: 163).

## **Chapter I: Aims and Methodologies**

This chapter introduces the basic definitions and methodologies informing this thesis. Section A in outlining the aims for the thesis, proposes definitions for theatre and acts of philosophy and lays out the initial arguments for how theatre can be an act of philosophy. Section B explains Apocryphal Theatre's name and its relationship to our practice. Section C outlines the methodologies used to write the thesis and how that has been influenced by, and has had an effect on, Apocryphal's practice. Section D explores the conflicting linguistic/symbolic demands experienced in being an American artist in the British academy and how conflicts like these are embodied in Apocryphal.

### **A. Acts of Philosophy**

The two primary aims of this thesis are

1. To investigate the proposition that philosophically engaged theatre has the potential to create an act of philosophy.
2. To demonstrate how Apocryphal's productions *Besides, you lose your soul or the History of Western Civilisation* and *The Jesus Guy* can be considered collective acts of philosophy.

#### **1.**

If certain philosophical texts can be considered an act of theatre<sup>9</sup>, this begs the question: can a theatre event be considered an act of philosophy? I propose in this thesis that philosophically engaged theatre can create acts of philosophy in their own right, rather than only being available to be framed critically by 'authorized' philosophers. In the same way that proposing that philosophical texts can be seen as theatrical does not make philosophy subservient to theatre in terms of its goals, this proposition in no way attempts to make theatre subservient to philosophy but rather to see where the two cross over into and can perhaps shine new light on each other.

This means defining what is meant by theatre<sup>10</sup> and act of philosophy. The definition of act of philosophy tessellates Merleau-Ponty's idea that "[t]rue philosophy consists in

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<sup>9</sup> This is the lead question of the 2009 TaPRA (Theatre and Performance Research Association) working group on Theatre, Performance and Philosophy. TaPRA is a British research organisation set up to enhance cooperation amongst researchers throughout the UK.

<sup>10</sup> Theatre will be spelled 're' when referring to UK theatre and in general and 'er' when referring to specific US theater practice. This locates the spelling and the practice most accurately. As an American artist, my theater

relearning to look at the world” (Merleau-Ponty, 2004: 77) with Deleuze and Guattari’s idea that philosophy consists of the creation of concepts. Philosophical concepts are born of attempts to solve ‘real problems’ and emerge as a paradox (Deleuze 1995: 136). Deleuze himself proposes that theatre can potentially be considered an act of philosophy when he writes in *Difference and Repetition*:

The search for new means of philosophical expression was begun by Nietzsche and must be pursued today in relation to the renewal of other arts, such as the theatre or the cinema.

(Deleuze 2004: xx)

We can define theatre using John Cage’s definition as “something which engages both the eye and ear” (Kirby 1965: 50). If we accept this definition, theatre can also include live events such as dance, performance or live art or music, which is useful as Apocryphal incorporates all of these elements into its performances and whilst Cage is considered a composer, he engaged with his own work as theatre. I want to refine this definition by suggesting that philosophically engaged theatre directly addresses the perceptual and/or actual space in which we frame the theatrical events. This frame, and the rules with which it is created, can be seen as a metaphor for how we perceive life. This frame can be as rigid as a proscenium arch or as fluid as a site-specific piece in which the performers do not announce themselves, so that the audience members look at one another wondering whom the performers are.

There are many ideas about what can or cannot be included in this frame, but for the purposes of this thesis the focus on the frame of the theatrical event is most useful, as what is being discussed is the nature of the frame itself and how that frame is perceived and created by both the creators and spectators of the theatrical event. Hans-Thies Lehmann writes in describing what he has named postdramatic theatre:

The theatre performance turns the behaviour onstage and in the auditorium into a *joint text*, a ‘text’ even if there is no spoken dialogue on stage or between the actors and audience...the *theatre situation* forms a whole made up of evident and hidden communicative processes...since the 1970s [scenic practice] has made use of this basic given of theatre, has specifically reflected on it and directly turned it into the content and theme of its presentation.

(Lehmann 2006: 17)



This description of the theatrical event that reflects upon itself and includes the audience in creation of a “*joint text*” describes all of the work referred to herein, so we can narrow the theatrical field to which this thesis is concerned to this postdramatic frame.<sup>11</sup> If the frame of those events is questioned, either within a traditional theatrical space or a more open public space, the act can also be considered political. If the frame of those events is re-conceptualized in some way (or ‘re-framed’), then the act can also be considered philosophical.<sup>12</sup>

A theatrical event that offers its audience an opportunity to relearn to look at the world can in Merleau-Ponty’s definition (2004: 77) be considered an act of philosophy. However, it is possible for the invitation to that opportunity to be missed. As my description in the introduction of watching Foreman’s work illustrates, it is possible to not even see the invitation one time but then see and accept it the next. Therefore, it is better to say that theatre events have the capacity to be acts of philosophy, but there is no guarantee they will be received that way.

If, as Deleuze says, his philosophy is “by nature creative or even revolutionary, because it’s always creating concepts” (Deleuze, 1995: 136), so too, I would argue, can artistic works whose object and results include the creation of concepts be considered philosophical or even revolutionary. The image is of two interlocked circles and the space wherein they overlap being the place where certain philosophical texts can be considered artistic and certain theatrical events can be considered acts of philosophy. They are not identical but interpenetrate.

In the same interview Deleuze says:

I think concepts involve two other dimensions, percepts and affects...Affects, percepts and concepts are three inseparable forces, running from art into philosophy and from philosophy into art.

(*ibid.*: 137)

In regard to both the relation between philosophy and performance and the distinctions between them, Ivana Müller said in a recent interview in which we discussed the unique way that artists work with philosophical concepts:

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<sup>11</sup> Cage, Chaikin and Foreman however began their projects before the 1970s, prefiguring this broader development.

<sup>12</sup> Whilst this movement is related to the larger postmodern movement of undermining grand narratives, authorship and singular location of meaning-making, within the context of this thesis, I am pointing to the philosophical and political implications of the theatrical frame as it can relate to how we perceive issues of meaning and authority outside of the theatre space itself.



...I think we as artists, I think we have to make our own theory, we are the thinkers, so I think it's fantastic that we do it differently than those that are called philosophers or people from academia and I think actually that's our contribution [to] the general mode of thinking and acting in society...

(Müller 2008: 221)

When speaking about the overlap and the difference, she went onto say:

I don't have any responsibility to produce anything that is true, right, I just have to make something that makes sense in a performative system, you know, *a system of thought that I propose* ... Deleuze is saying that he is a concept maker, he's proposing concepts whether or not they are true or good or bad it doesn't matter, in that sense yes I guess we all do that... I can be stupid and that's fine. I can be ridiculous and that's even good. I can be the idiot and I like to be that because it gives me another space I can inhabit or I can propose a dialogue, something a serious philosopher or a serious thinker could never afford, so if I have that space I go there, you know.

(*ibid*: 222, *emphasis mine*)

A Letter from A Gentleman to his Friend in Edinburgh.

What?

An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding!

Oh.

We have already observed, that nature has established connexions among particular ideas, and that no sooner one idea occurs to our thoughts than it introduces its correlative, and carries our attention towards it, by a gentle and insensible movement.

Kind of like this?

RULES!!!! I want some fucking RULES!!!!

Ok, Ok...

Thou shalt not kill.

That's a start. How we doing on that one?

Hmmm.

Not so well. Next!

She mentions the paradox of the artistic process in relation to philosophy and why certain types of theatre can at the very least act as a metaphor for philosophy or add to philosophy.

...were we to attempt a *definition* of this sentiment, we should, perhaps, find it a very difficult, if not an impossible task.

Yeah.

Kant's own attempt to get out of this difficulty often appears to his readers an addition of insult to injury.

Kant? I thought it was Hume.

Yeah, yeah...

It's kind of a collage, don't you see???

Kind of a way to get At something, you know, Larger than the individual thoughts...

A kind of connection?

Yeah, a kind of connection.

When you say 'larger', what do you mean?

I mean larger.

But larger than what!

Larger than individual ideas.

What makes you think there is something Larger than individual ideas?

I don't know, um, intuition? Life? Something like that.

Sounds fuzzy.

Fuzzy?

Yeah, fuzzy.

Fuzzy wuzzy was a bear. Fuzzy wuzzy had no hair. Fuzzy wasn't very fuzzy wuz he?

In action we are, as we never are in scientific research, 'up against reality'

Do we have a choice?

Not really...

Because it both has to work within “a system of thought” that the artist herself proposes and *also* because the artist can be “the idiot” and inhabit or “propose a dialogue, something a serious philosopher or a serious thinker could never afford” (*ibid.*). Maaïke Bleeker has recently written an article for the book *Deleuze and Performance* (Bleeker 2009: 147-160) about the implications of Müller’s *How Heavy Are My Thoughts* (2003) vis-à-vis Deleuze and Guattari’s definition of “the Idiot.” Müller had not thought of this as a metaphor until Bleeker wrote the article, but now she uses the metaphor herself, which is an example of philosophy and theatre crossing over fruitfully (2008: 228). Bleeker, quoting Deleuze and Guattari as they describe the Cartesian “Idiot”, offers another space where theatre and philosophy can meet:

The Idiot is the private thinker, in contrast to the public teacher (the school-man): the teacher refers constantly to taught concepts, whereas the private thinker forms a concept with innate forces that everyone possesses on their own account by right (‘I think’). Here is a very strange type of persona who wants to think and who thinks for himself...

(Deleuze & Guattari in Bleeker 2009: 150)

The freedom of the artist to play, to be inconsistent, to be “the Idiot” is the space which opens up possible places, becomings or lines of flight, or as Deleuze and Guattari put it in *Anti-Oedipus* (2003a) “the schizo out for a walk.” Whilst philosophers historically have written about artists and interpreted them, should it not also be admitted that the artist<sup>13</sup> as ‘schizo out for a walk’ has also added to the body of philosophical knowledge? Why else would Deleuze and Guattari be bringing their acts of artistic production into their dialogue, along with countless other philosophers who invoke art and theatre going back at least as far back as Aristotle? The artists who they claim embody the processes they describe, especially in relation to the schizo-analytic process as proof of desiring production in the unconscious, have found these places not without painstaking effort or a philosophical frame of mind. These artists have allowed themselves the space to be “the Idiot” in order to wander on their schizo journeys but their ability to come back from those journeys and write, create, compose, choreograph, enact what they have found offers something to philosophical knowledge which

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<sup>13</sup> Artists influential to Apocryphal referred to in *Anti-Oedipus* include, for example, Antonin Artaud, Samuel Beckett, Burroughs and Cage.

perhaps could not be found in more ‘serious’ philosophical discourse wherein a system must be created and defended.

Finally, when the creation process involves more than one person (as it does with Deleuze and Guattari themselves<sup>14</sup>), this act I propose can be considered a collective act of philosophy, undermining the great singular author idea or the individualization of ideas in general. A truly collaborative theatrical process is an excellent metaphor for collective philosophy, especially when, as with Apocryphal Theatre, it extends out to include the audience as participants in the creation of the concepts and in this collective act we (rather than ‘I’) can begin to relearn to look at the world.

A critique of the diminution of the active artist’s role to that of the interpreted other rather than active philosopher on her own terms comes from Susan Melrose. Quoting the sociologist Bourdieu, she writes of the habitus<sup>15</sup> of the ‘expert-spectator’ and the habitus of the ‘expert-practitioner’ (Melrose 2005) as being quite different. However, she also writes of the possibility of a meeting place in the moment of ‘intuition’ involved in both original academic/theoretical writing (she cites Bourdieu’s creation of the word habitus itself as such an instance, though Bourdieu himself does not describe his use of this word as intuitive) and the moment of ‘intuition’ in the artistic practitioner’s practice.

Her use of the word ‘intuitive’ seems to be pointing to a level of creativity in all writing and practice, whether it is ‘academic’ or ‘artistic’. However, she is also tracing the *manifestation* of those intuitions, which are multiple, and some are not necessarily discursive and thereby can be more easily dismissed by an academy or any other institution, which relies on the discursive as a mode of communication and validation.

As Melrose said in the keynote address at Centre for Performance Research (CPR)<sup>16</sup>:

“...I was hinting at the possibility that....***Elizabeth LeCompte, and Robert Wilson and Ariane Mouchkine might theorise as mise en scene***, without any of these expert practitioners needing to write, either literally or metaphorically.

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<sup>14</sup> William Burroughs and Brion Gysin also co-created *The Third Mind* (1982), which lays out their cutting up method, which, as mentioned in the introduction, inspired one of Apocryphal’s key conceptual tools. The cutting up process itself undermines single authorship even when one person makes a cut-up. Their ideas and our process will be described in Chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>15</sup> Bourdieu’s use of habitus can be defined as

a set of *dispositions* which incline agents to act and react in certain ways. The dispositions generate practices, perceptions and attitudes, which are ‘regular’ without being consciously co-ordinated or governed by any ‘rule’.

(Thompson 1992/2005: 12)

<sup>16</sup> This CPR conference was held in April 2005 at University of Aberystwyth, Wales. CPR is an institute devoted to performance research.

What my question concealed was the suggestion that *the writerly habitus* of many of us in the university, a complex mind-set enabling and applauding certain sorts of actions, and not others, actually prevents many of *us* who are already professional writers and educators *from contemplating that the expert-arts-practitioner-other might theorise in modes and registers of complex practice which operate wholly or in significant part outside of writing*. I wanted to suggest that we try out the notion that in the field of professional or expert performance-making, only *some* theoretical practices are writing-based.

(Melrose 2005: 2 *emphasis mine*)

Melrose's insight points to the possibility of considering theatrical live events *themselves* (not necessarily theorized in writing) as acts of philosophy when they create new (embodied) concepts that invite us to relearn to look at the world.

Yeah, well we are here, aren't we!

Whilst in ordinary life every shopkeeper is very well able to distinguish between what somebody professes to be and what he really is, our historians have not yet won even this trivial insight. They take every epoch at its word and believe that everything it says and imagines about itself is true.

Marx, right!

Yes!

Bracing stuff.

However, one could say that there is an unacknowledged "habitus" in Melrose's assertions, which gives her the authority to label someone as an "expert-practitioner" or "expert-spectator." The context of this language of 'expert' valuation is what Bourdieu himself interrogates in *Language and Symbolic Power* (Bourdieu, 2005). Artistic judgments are based on many factors, which Bourdieu also examines at length in his books *Distinction* (2005a) and *The Field of Cultural Production* (1999), and can be held so tightly by the designated authorities as to deny their own historicity or influences. He especially takes issue with the deconstructionist claim of doing away with these values:

...its implied critique of the institution remains half-baked, although well-enough done to arouse delicious shudders of a bogus revolution...by claiming a radical break with the ambition of uncovering ahistorical and ontologically found essences, this critique

is likely to discourage the search for the foundation of the aesthetic disposition and of the work of art where it is truly located, namely, in the *history* of the artistic institution. (*ibid.*: 255)<sup>17</sup>

Merleau-Ponty's critique of 'pure' philosophy anticipates Bourdieu when he says:

...a historical account can give meaning to the world quite as 'deeply' as a philosophical treatise. We take our fate in our hands, we become responsible for our history through reflection, but equally by a decision on which we stake our life, and in both cases what is involved is a violent act **which is validated by being performed.** (Merleau-Ponty 2004:77 *emphasis mine*)

He locates philosophy within the world of both history and action. He traces phenomenology's origins back to the work of "Balzac, Proust, Valery or Cezanne – by reason of the same kind of attentiveness and wonder, the same demand for awareness..." (*ibid.*). This observation along with his statement that "phenomenology was a movement before becoming a doctrine or a philosophical system" (*ibid.*) implies that the artists got there first. The choice of the word "movement" by Merleau-Ponty is particularly apt as it implies something alive, moving and not yet systematized. Whilst artists do not systematize knowledge, Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze and Guattari and many other philosophers, as stated earlier, point to artists as forerunners of the ideas (movements) they do elucidate. This movement, this very existence in the world of action and history, is the precondition for an act of philosophy to manifest. I propose further that this act of philosophy *cannot* be created simultaneous to attempting to systematize it. In other words, that which makes artistic processes unique from philosophy (its *lack* of systematization) is the very quality that makes it possible to create new 'movements', or acts of philosophy.

## 2.

This leads to the second aim of the thesis in which Apocryphal's theatre project as manifest in the shows *Besides, you lose your soul* or *the History of Western Civilisation* and *The Jesus Guy* are demonstrated to be collective acts of philosophy. However, it should be made clear that this is the aim of the *thesis* not the two shows themselves. In 1965, writer Alain Robbe-Grillet made a brilliant distinction between the writer who is aware of himself

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<sup>17</sup> Bourdieu's clear-eyed critique of cultural capital within his idea of habitus resonates with Apocryphal's key concept of the grid. The grid is described in depth in Chapter 3 but I note here this insight as relating to it. Bourdieu's critique must be engaged regarding the history of any artistic (or academic) institutions in which artists work and how that may affect artistic choices and/or critical reception if we are interested in the political implications of our work. Apocryphal's strategy is to address these realities through locating the grid.

and his craft but who nonetheless cannot be pinned down as to a specific question or answer in relation to his own creations in advance of its creation.

For the function of art is never to illustrate a truth – *or even a question* – known beforehand, but to give birth to questions (and also perhaps at the appointed time, to answers) *not previously formulated*.

(Robbe-Grillet 1965: 48, *emphasis mine*)

What makes this a pertinent observation in relation to Practice as Research is that in his essay he has insisted on the artist's right to be critically aware of what he is doing and in fact is quite contemptuous of what he calls the myth of the unconscious author taking dictation from larger forces. However, he makes a critical distinction about the awareness:

The novelist's critical awareness can be of use to him only on the level of choice, not on the level of justification of his choice.

(*ibid.*)

Earlier in the essay he also says

At the same time as we claim for the novelist the right to be aware of what he is creating, and while we insist on the interest to himself of this awareness of his own research, we are conscious of the fact that it is more particularly in the actual writing that this research begins to take effect and that everything is not clear at the moment of decision.

(*ibid.*: 47-48)

In other words, there is the moment of creation itself, which not only supercedes but also generally destroys this framework, so that the creation of the work itself shows what the questions are that it wants to ask rather than the questions one may have asked at the outset. When asked why he has written a book, Robbe-Grillet replies: "To try to find out why I wanted to write it" (*ibid.*).

This description of the relation of the artist to her work accords with my own experience. Therefore, what is more relevant than research questions in discussing the creative process itself is the philosophical and theatrical ideas surrounding the writing and directing of these productions, in other words what were the ideas in the air, how did they manifest, what were the many inevitable contradictions between intentions or ideas and realities that occurred in the lab, rehearsal and performance process? These ideas will be discussed in Chapter 3 using the five key concepts and tools developed in our labs and used in performance: the witness, grid, cutting up, levels of address and presence. These concepts and tools will function as a filter through which to view this work, bearing in mind the relationship of these tools to the original research questions.

However, this should not serve as a stand-in for the lived experience of viewing the work itself nor in any way appear to preclude or even privilege that way of experiencing each show. This point is crucial because Apocryphal Theatre creates shows, which intentionally leave open space for each audience member to have his or her own experience of each show. We set up and use the theatrical space in such a way that no two audience members can even view the same show (chairs scattered throughout the space (*Besides*) or in traverse (*The Jesus Guy*), with performers moving fluidly between what appear to be performance areas and what appear to be audience areas), nor hear the same words (because some may be whispered to one audience member, for example). The text is written without narrative structure and the lines are not pre-assigned, instead taken up differently each night by the performers. Audience member Alice Williams described her experience watching our performances to me this way: It is like you have taken away all the sense and so there is non-sense but in this space of non-sense there is room for a different kind of sense - something real happens. In other words, she is not watching a show that is attempting to tell her something or *represent* something, but she is within an experience in which she is an active participant. She is not being *given meaning* but instead having her own experience to which she will ascribe whatever meaning she desires and she is aware of her power to do that. Apocryphal wants to create these openings but does not want to predetermine what emerges from them, so anyone who watches one of our shows and reads this thesis, should understand their own experience of watching the show as more important and ‘authoritative’ than what is written here.

Williams’ experience tessellates nicely with Deleuze’s desire to get beyond representation in theatre and philosophy. Laura Cull in her introduction to *Deleuze and Performance* analyzes the essay ‘One Last Manifesto’ on Carmelo Bene’s theatrical project as a call to arms against representation, which itself functions “as power” (Cull 2009: 5). She writes:

Following in the tradition of philosophically minded performance theory from Artaud to Grotowski, Deleuze suggests that theatre might be a vehicle or machine that puts us in contact with the real. Deleuze’s concept of *theatrical* presence, as a non-representational relation between audience and event, suggests one context in which we might apprehend *ontological* presence as becoming – the perpetual variation or difference-in-itself that, for Deleuze, constitutes the real.

(*ibid.*)

Later, Cull quotes Deleuze describing Nietzsche and Kierkegaard as founders of a ‘theatre of the future’ who

want to put metaphysics in motion...to make it act, and make it carry out immediate acts...It is a question of producing within the work a movement capable of affecting



the mind *outside all representation*...of inventing vibrations, rotations, whirlings, gravitations, dances or leaps which directly touch the mind.

(Deleuze in Cull 2009: 6 *emphasis mine*)

This relationship between Deleuze's project and Nietzsche and Kierkegaard is important as all three are influential to Apocryphal's work and Nietzsche and Kierkegaard feature in the stage texts for *The Jesus Guy* and *Besides*. I wrote those texts before reading Deleuze's ideas about these two philosophers, and I mention this because it can be easy to assume that an artist, especially one engaged in practice-based research, has made decisions based on a philosophical idea, when in fact that is not the reality of the experience. Instead, my recent discovery of Deleuze's location of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard within a theatrical frame makes visible what Deleuze would refer to as a network of complicities (Deleuze in Stivale 2004: <http://www.langlab.wayne.edu/CStivale/D-G/ABC3.html>) that functions more rhizomatically than causally. Deleuze and Guattari refer to the rhizome as a structure in which "any point of the rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be" (2003: 7). A rhizome is a weed that grows laterally and cannot easily be killed because if one part is cut off the rest of the plant can re-grow. They use the rhizome as a metaphor for their own ideas and collaboration, and it is a useful image for how work is created and the influences that go into any piece of art. It allows for the paradox that the creative process is not linear but nor is it random, there are relationships between artistic production and (in this case) philosophical influences but they are not necessarily causal.

As Vida Midgelow says about the creation of her work *footnotes* which involves engagement with feminist dance scholars:

...rather than theory being causal, the processes of making performance means that this reworking follows its own logic, its own trajectory for it is not a demonstration of a pre-theorised position.

(Midgelow 1997: 99)

Even having engaged these scholars consciously in the creation of this work, she stakes a claim for the creative process. She also discusses her 'real' body which "brings to the fore the potential risk of discourse in which the body might be lost altogether" (*ibid.*). This is an equally important point that will be taken up in Chapter 2 in interviews with other practitioners especially Chris Goode when he speaks of the "gap" between ideas and bodies in space (Goode 2008: 213-4) and Müller's work in which she plays with the use of the body as unreliable metaphor for ideas. Location of bodies in space and physicalized response is crucial to Apocryphal's work, too, and will be taken up in Chapter 3 in relation primarily to

the witness. Our lived experience happens in the body, which can be easily dismissed in relation to theory and the need to codify experience neatly into conceptual frames where it generally rests uneasily. Somewhere “in our heart” or “in the pit of our stomach” or “in our bones” or even “at the back of our minds” we know that even that wonderful idea we had or read or heard does not quite encompass all of life or even a creative process. Listening to one’s own body for clues as to how to describe experiences also relates to what Eugene Gendlin calls the *felt sense* (Gendlin 2003: 126) which will be discussed later in this chapter in relation to methodologies.



The whole company (Aitchison, Lukas Angelini, Bouras, Ellis, Schmidt) in *The Jesus Guy* 2006

George Perec wrote, “The submission to experience is a work of meticulous description” (Perec 1997: 128). As what is being described herein is the relationship between the lived experience of creating theatre and philosophical ideas and whether artists engaged with philosophical ideas can create acts of philosophy, the attempt is to find a way to clarify what can be known about this process and equally what *cannot be known* about this process. This is not an attempt to mystify the creative process but simply to advocate humility in terms of what can be determined and what cannot be seen in terms of motives, ideas, reasons, etc. As Richard Foreman said in our interview “I don’t trust what I say” (Foreman 2008: 197). This statement is not false modesty, but instead an acknowledgement of reality – the streaming of experience as Massumi says (in Melrose 2005a: 1(iv)) is incredibly fast and one

must always acknowledge the immediate failure of words to capture it. One can only hope, as Beckett said, to “Try again. Fail again. Fail better” (Beckett in Knowlson 1997: 674).

This attempt to describe lived experience relates intimately with Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophies as they are less concerned with creating systems than with undermining them, seeing how one can use philosophical tools to unhinge meaning rather than stabilize it into any kind of coherent narrative whether it is the Oedipus complex trapping desiring machines or market value imposed on a deterritorialized body (Deleuze and Guattari 2003a); in order to do this perhaps one has to submit to the actual experience of things rather than following a system into which those actions should cohere.

In *Apocryphal* we submit to the paradox of consciously attempting to create lines of flight and allow for moments of becoming (as outlined in our research questions), whilst by definition needing to let go of control not only of how an audience will perceive our shows but also how we create them. We focus on the tools we have created, the written text and a high level of attentiveness to the moment (or witnessing), which includes one’s self, each other, the audience, objects in space, the architecture of the space, sound, temperature, smell, taste, emotional and physical states, the rules that make up that room, which we call the grid and then the harder-to-name other sense that has to do with the feeling of a room in a moment that can shift quite radically and which we have attempted to locate with our work on levels of presence.<sup>18</sup> So, whilst we may consciously believe we are laying the groundwork for moments of becoming, we may also be laying the groundwork for something else entirely and to attempt to control this outcome would be to subvert the very creative (and revolutionary) process in which becoming is possible.

Equally true is that if we did attempt to control a specific area of research that would mean systematizing our process in such a way that creating an act of philosophy would be impossible. Therefore, we need to hold the tension between an awareness of our conscious intentions and an ability to let them go in the “movement” (after Merleau-Ponty) of creation, which includes, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, the writing of the texts, labs, rehearsals and performances.

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<sup>18</sup> Again, all of these tools and concepts will be discussed in depth in Chapter 3.

## B. Apocryphal Theatre: what's in a name?

### apocryphal

Writings that scholars consider to be of dubious authorship or authenticity (not genuine), for example, the 14 to 15 books of the Greek translations of the Old Testament (Septuagint), known as the *Apocrypha*... Compare with anonymous. *See also*: spurious work.

(Reitz 2009)



Ellis in *Besides, you lose your soul...* 2009

Apocryphal's means 'of dubious authenticity or authorship' and can refer to anything from urban legends to the unattributed (and therefore of dubious authenticity) gospels of the bible. These gospels are referred to as the Apocrypha, and include the Gnostic Gospels,

which advocate direct spiritual experience unmediated by the Church and are associated with the more mystical branch of early Christianity. Therefore, the term ‘apocryphal’ is usually used as a term of derision to taint any narrative, especially of any sort of fantastical or spiritual experience, with doubt.

For that reason, it is evocative of our work, as Apocryphal’s process willfully puts into doubt notions of authorship and authenticity by embodying texts and/or scores in multiplicitous and contradictory ways by a group of artists in such a way that many different meanings emerge in any given performance. Whilst improvising, the players are following, for most of the time, a prewritten text, all of which they have memorized but without any specific lines assigned. Using tools developed during rehearsals, which are themselves outgrowths of tools discovered in a laboratory process, the performers pick and choose ways of approaching this text each night.

The idea of dubiousness works for us because being untrustworthy can perhaps get us closer to the truth, meaning the paradox of lived experience – that which is not stable or definable but acts more like sub-atomic particles, unpredictable, outside of easily discernible patterns but nonetheless real. Perhaps if we can resist the notion of obvious authorship, we can allow our audience and ourselves closer contact with a conscious awareness of lived experience in all its complexity rather than reducing it into bite-sized ‘artful’ portions.

As mentioned in the introduction in regard to Apocryphal’s work as a whole, when writing the texts, I undermine my own ‘author/ity’ by writing ‘Text’ as Barthes defines it as “that *social* space which leaves no language safe, outside, nor any subject of the enunciation in position as judge, master, analyst, confessor, decoder” (Barthes 1977: 164).<sup>19</sup> These texts emerge from such diverse sources as found text, bulletin board images, idiosyncratic phrases, dreams, rants, theories, memories, overheard bus monologues, philosophies, religious poetry, quotes, cod psychology, bad jokes and puns, which can take forms ranging from dialogic, monologic, poetic, cut-up and musical. Barthes’ definition of the word Text is also useful to describe Apocryphal’s performances, if we use it to refer not only to written words, but also the body of the performers, objects they use, the space itself and any sounds that emerge from their interaction with this space (including music), or that intervene from the outside (such as voices, car horns or sirens).

Therefore, as the author(s) of any performance, given the multiple possibilities inherent in each show, cannot be authenticated, and in this polyglot experience we hope to

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<sup>19</sup> Whilst certain philosophers have directly impacted my artistic process, some, like Barthes are being mentioned to elucidate a process that predates an awareness of the theory; again, I mention this to avoid an inaccurate cause and effect being inferred.

create, with our audience, collective acts of philosophy, these events are best described as apocryphal.

You know, they kill people now for breaking the Rules. All over the place. Different rules, but death seems to be the normal sanction. Feloniously female. Feloniously anti-capitalist. Feloniously anti-American.

Shush! Don't bring POLITICS into this for Christsakes.

Yeah, *Sorry*. I didn't mean to mention the Irregular Combatants who don't need to be treated according to any Rule of Law or anything. I have no Idea what I was thinking.

Irregular Combatants.

God forbid you should be an Irregular combatant.

Love comes on strong,

consuming

her  
Self

She risks

Everything and

Asks for

Nothing

Without cause,

Give it back.

Again.

### **C. Methodologies of Witnessing: where do you stand?**

The responsibility of a creative process is to create something, not to prove something right or wrong or even to test a philosophy. In any creative process, however, one brings in multiple ideological and methodological concerns without worries about consistency or ideological interrogation.

Having said that, there are of course certain States and political systems where art is judged quite overtly against certain ideological concerns, and the artist is valued or reviled in

accordance with these systems. Also, in a free-market or welfare capitalist state there are other forms of judgment that are more covert but equally ideological that lead to judgments of taste, which Bourdieu outlines in *Distinction* (2005a). However, these issues are more to do with how the artistic work is received rather than how it is created. One could argue that there is no such thing as a creative process at all outside of these concerns, but I contend that there is such a process which has its own set of preconditions and possibilities, whilst acknowledging that as many overt and covert ideological forces can and do operate within an artistic process as in any other habitus. However, whilst affected by these forces, a creative process cannot be *summed up* by any of these forces or seen simply as the inevitable result of them. If that were so, no art would ever have shifted anyone's worldview or had an affect on the larger habitus surrounding it, which is clearly not the case. Also, there would be no explaining why some art created and rejected in one generation is celebrated in later generations. Joseph Chaikin wrote: "When the theater is limited to the socially possible, it is confined by the same forces which limit society" (Chaikin 1984: 23). Put another way the "ideologically possible" or "methodologically consistent" can confine the creative process in the same way and can equally limit some new thing, some new way of thinking/feeling/sensing from emerging, in other words limit the creation of an act of philosophy.

Perhaps therefore it is more useful to ask of creative work, as Massumi requests of readers of Deleuze and Guattari:

Let's keep pretending stuff, it's fun.

OK, I'll pretend that we're leaving too. Here I am, waving goodbye.

Goodbye!

Goodbye!

Goodbye!

[*another person walks out*]

Exit a player.

I am the King:

Stay, give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine.  
Here's to thy health. Give him the cup.

I am Hamlet:

I'll play this bout first; set I by awhile.  
Come. [*They play*] Another hit. What say you?

I am Laertes:

A touch, a touch; I do confess't

I am the Queen:

He's fat and scant of breath.  
Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows.  
The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

...does it work? What new thoughts does it make it possible to think? What new emotions does it make it possible to feel? What new sensations and perceptions does it open in the body? ...

(Massumi in Deleuze & Guattari 2003: xv)

As to where I am situated as researcher, it is similar to looking at myself in a dressing room with three mirrors in which I can watch myself watching myself in a series of images that keeps stretching back until it is out of sight (and can cause the same sense of vertigo). I am taking a step outside of myself in order to better witness my own artistic process, whilst simultaneously needing to define a methodology for how I have taken that step outside of myself.

But we're just pretending.

Right.

...

Right, I forgot about that.

Hmm...

Ouch. That hurts.

Sorry.

As a methodology of stepping outside of myself, I propose a 'hermeneutics of humility' to distinguish it from Gadamer's 'hermeneutics of suspicion' (Moustakas 1994: 9)



but also to point to principles of hermeneutics as a research guideline since all of our actions, perceptions and artistic creations are influenced by outside forces, including inherited historical, intellectual, political, cultural, national, gender, sociological, religious, economic, familial-personal, inter-personal, educational, psychological, physical and environmental conditions. Gadamer concurs when he says:

We can never be sure, and have no proofs, of rightly understanding the individual utterance of another. However...it was never doubted that *behind* a person's individuality something common and intelligible could be reenacted.

(Gadamer in Moustakas 1994: 9)

I disagree with Gadamer here in his faith that there is something "common" that lies "behind" human actions and utterances that can be discovered. Whilst it may be possible, as Gadamer hopes, through looking reflectively at text or a theatre process, to see "something that otherwise might happen '*behind my back*'" (*ibid.*: 10), that does not mean there is always something to be found *beneath* words or actions that can be unmasked, or even if I believe I have done that, there is a good chance I am wrong, hence the hermeneutics of humility, wherein any claim of interpretation even when interpreting my own actions and words must be considered only one possible interpretation and not a claim to truth. The postmodern condition assumes a skepticism of universals since that concept is usually accompanied by a set of unconscious prejudgments that set as normative some part of one's own cultural framework. The 'hermeneutics of humility' operates from the place of awareness that we cannot see our own blind spots or have the super-human ability to understand the entirety of the multiplicitous influences on any given moment in our lives, including our own neurological filters, which decide a split second before we perceive anything what it is we are perceiving. We live, in a sense (in 'sense'), in a fiction. We can attempt through reflexivity to see more of who we are and what we do, but that awareness alone does not guarantee we are correct in what we find. Whilst we have the power re-create our own habitus, and many of the above conditions are mutable, until the forces that create us are brought into awareness, we are controlled by them. The hermeneutics of humility attempts to hold the tension between these conflicting ideas.

Look. Look at me like this.

He was massaging my hand. Then the cops showed up.

They are always asking for identification.

They want to know who you are.

Why are you here?

Who brought you to this place?

What boat did you arrive on?

Whose boat?

Who needs a Boat?

I don't know. Do you?

As to the situation of researcher-as-artist-and-analyzer-of-process, Deleuze and Guattari capture some of the difficulty of interpreting any artistic process in the traditional sense, when they say:

She's out dancing now.

Dancing or dancing?

You decide.

And is she the one walking on....

You decide.

Who *Is* she?

You decide.

...the value of art is no longer measured except in terms of the decoded and deterritorialized flows...It is here that art accedes to its authentic modernity ... – art as “experimentation”\*

\*...See ...John Cage's work... “The word *experimental* is apt, providing it is understood not as descriptive of an act to be later judged in terms of success or failure, but simply as of an act the outcome of which is unknown.”

(Deleuze & Guattari 2003a: 370-371)

As our work does function as experiment, one strategy Apocryphal has is to ask if we are following our own *intentions* as outlined in our mission statement:

To make visible the received reality grid of our daily lives, in other words anything about which we say 'that's the way it is,' regarding issues personal and political, through creating work which aims to

enact a process of becoming rather than represent a static nature of being, the hope being we can see how we construct the very language with which we create the world around us, listening for the voices which have not yet formed, not yet been heard but nonetheless can call to us in an as yet undefined language which is perhaps no less real or pressing to our unsaid experience of this life.

During 2006 rehearsals for *The Jesus Guy*, I went back to these ideas and my original artist's statement (quoted on p. 9) to ask are we doing this now? Is this decision about how to structure the next rehearsal, text, lab, idea in line with the above mission or not. If not, how can we make it more so? Or, if not and we want to continue this new way, do we need to change the mission statement? This was an on-going self-reflexive process, which had become more conscious during the doctoral research period. The act of witnessing myself work shifted the way in which I articulated my practice and described the practical tools created in Apocryphal's labs and rehearsals.



Angelini and Bouras in *The Jesus Guy* 2006

However, throughout the 2007-2008 labs and the 2009 rehearsal period for *Besides, you lose your soul*, I made a conscious decision to stop looking at any past stated intentions or to make the work fit into any preconceived mission statement, as I wanted to see what would happen if I (consciously) let go of my own ideas about what should or should not happen in the theatre. I stopped taking notes except as I would have done prior to the formal research

period and let myself have more latitude to step away from any preconceived ideas. The witnessing still occurred because it has been ingrained, but there was much less documentation of the process. In contrast *The Jesus Guy* was documented very fully and at every angle, including journals from all the company. The irony here is that through intensive conscious witnessing brought about because of doing this research, I have let go of a kind of surveillance<sup>20</sup> that used to unconsciously limit my practice by attempting to conform to a certain idea of what kind of theatre we *should* be making.

The first practical methodology for finding a language to address my dual role of maker and witness emerged whilst working in dialogue with Josiah Hincks. Hincks is a practitioner of Eugene Gendlin's methods of focusing (2003), wherein one searches for the '*felt sense*' behind words or ideas. A felt sense has been located when "what is there is more than words and thoughts, when something is quite definitely experienced but is not yet clear" (2003: 126). Gendlin also talks about a 'shift' that happens when one articulates a felt sense, where something that has been stuck can 'carry forward.' To give a feel for how to see if this carrying forward or 'maximizing' has happened or not, Gendlin suggests:

"We need not wait till the end of a long sequence of thinking. *We can know whether silencing or maximizing is happening, by sensing how each little step affects the unarticulated experience ..... with which we began.* If it shrivels, we can quickly discard the thought and remain with ..... waiting for a step of thought that will carry it forward and maximize it"

(Gendlin 1997a: 18)

Gendlin uses the five dots (.....) to indicate that which has not been articulated but is no less real for that, and functions to allow a space for something potentially new to emerge. This use of (.....) relates directly to the aim in Apocryphal Theatre's mission statement of

listening for the voices which have not yet formed, not yet been heard but nonetheless can call to us in an as yet undefined language which is perhaps no less real or pressing to our unsaid experience of this life.

This mission statement was written before reading Gendlin, yet sounds as if it was written as a response to it. Both imply a level of witnessing ones' self and its relationship to the moment, which can perhaps open up a space that was not there originally. The difference of course with Apocryphal is that we are doing this in public and the space being opened is communal, not individual. This idea of witnessing relates directly to the focus of our creative process,

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<sup>20</sup> Surveillance is different than witnessing as surveillance implies control whereas witness implies an opening up process, which can, as here, liberate the subject (usually oneself) from surveillance.

which attempts to create moments in a room, wherein the audience and performers can simultaneously witness a moment of becoming, a shared recognition of the mutability of what is usually perceived as unshakable reality.

Working with Hincks using Gendlin's ideas helped to ground theoretically-based philosophy into lived experience and offered a way to discover and articulate a resonant language in the gap between philosophy and practice. For instance, the specific usage of 'the gap' as used here came through this work with Hincks, while groping for words to describe a *felt sense* rather than attempting to analyze the problem.

Hmmm, thought so. Eastern Guys?

Yeah.

Thought so.

Doesn't mean it can't be true.

I guess.

Doesn't mean it is true.

Duh.

Right, yes, like that guy in college who told her she shouldn't be playing that Rolling Stones song because it was misogynist.

Yeah he just came into her room uninvited, to tell her she was a victim of false-consciousness.

And thank God, he did. I mean, what would have become of her otherwise?

Yeah.

...

It's truly incredible how everyone seems to know what's best for womenandchildren.

Right womenandchildren.

Watch out, here come some Womenandchildren, be careful, don't say anything too loudly or they might just all Fall Apart or get blown up or corrupted or something...

Unless of course she's prime minister. Right unless she's prime minister. But then she is a man-woman, you know, not quite right. Something's wrong. Plus she was a victim of False Consciousness.

Right, right. Of course she was.

Whenever a woman acts like a human being she is accused of acting like a man.

Simone, Simone, Simone...

Gendlin's philosophical and psychological insights can shine a light into the unconscious filtering process that happens between the reading of philosophy and artistic decisions. The two worlds when looked at from this perspective are not antagonistic, but symbiotic, not on one side of the divide or the other, but instead in between, *inside the gap*. If I stand between the two cliffs and clap, we can both hear a resonant sound. We can witness the gap and hear and feel how what is unknown and unarticulated can be filled with vibrations that can echo into our deepest experience, if we are willing to walk into the middle of the gap rather than clinging to one side of the cliff or the other.

Indeed, when one begins to focus within the gap between the two words philosophy and theatre, one begins to see and feel that there isn't such a gaping chasm after all, and that indeed behind every philosophy there is lived experience, some practical experience of the world which informs the ideas and the words we give to them and vice-versa that behind every theatrical practice, no matter how seemingly intuitive and free, there are philosophical assumptions guiding our smallest decisions. Gendlin himself would argue that lived experience is far more intricate than any philosophy, even if there are many unconscious assumptions we can unearth in our actions or beliefs (Gendlin 1997a).

One of the strategies I use that can resonate in the gap between the methodology of the thesis and the creative process is the idea of *working definitions*. How we create definitions relates both to the practice and its discursive articulation. Over the years of working in a laboratory process in search of new forms and techniques, new or altered definitions of words arise as a way to point to what is happening or being formed. Sometimes these definitions may gain precision as they develop and sometimes they keep a 'fuzzy edge' to them even as they evolve, so that they can embrace new ways of looking at an old concept and include new discoveries in the lab and in rehearsals for performance. In this way they are working definitions. The examination of the two key concepts in Chapter 3, the witness and the grid,



is an example of how working definitions function, both in the praxis of the creative process and its relation to philosophical, artistic and political concerns.



“I have had my vision” written by Jorgensen in Danish and costumes on floor at end of *Besides* 2009.

Whilst this examination will be done in depth in Chapter 3, as the term witness is key to the methodology of the whole thesis, below is a brief sketch of how a working definition can evolve and function in the gap between the creative process and the thesis methodology.

The word first appeared in my working vocabulary as part of a Kierkegaard quotation that I handed out to actors:

***The true knight of faith is a witness, never a teacher***, and in this lies the deep humanity in him which is more worth [sic] than this foolish concern for others' weal and woe which is honoured under the name of sympathy, but which is really nothing but vanity. A person who wants only to be a witness confesses thereby that no one, not even the least, needs another person's sympathy, or is to be put down so another can raise himself up. But because what he himself won he did not win on the cheap, so neither does he sell it on the cheap; he is not so pitiable as to accept people's admiration and pay for it with silent contempt; ***he knows that whatever truly is great is available equally for all.***

(Kierkegaard 2006: 96 *emphasis mine*)

And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust?

What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba,  
That he should weep for her?

And for my soul, what can it do to that,  
Being a thing immortal as itself?

Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust; the dust  
is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam whereto he was  
converted might they not stop a beer barrel?

Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf? *[if only four players, Lucy write this on the  
board]*

From handing out this quotation to actors (from 1998) to using witness as a performance mode that can attempt to break down the performer/audience binary (2002) and then as a methodological tool for the thesis and new lab experiments (2005) to the creation of more active invitations for witnessing to our audiences (2009) has been a long journey for one word, which in practice is still evolving. For the creative process, the notion of witness works as a modality for performers and a goal for the performer/audience relationship. For the thesis, witness relates to the hermeneutics of humility in that I can only witness myself within the limits of my ability to see. Further, in order to direct the creation of Apocryphal's work, I have had to be careful about how to document a process in such a way that it does not hinder the liveliness of its creation, so that witnessing does not subtly turn into surveillance.

The key to using Gendlin's ideas was in helping me learn to witness myself whilst creating ideas and artistic work, and working with Hincks for over a year using these methods influenced the development of the methodology of my practice as well as this thesis.<sup>21</sup> In the practical research, the reflection that happened in dialogue with Hincks now happens in an altered form in dialogue with the other members of Apocryphal during evaluation periods and whilst making artistic decisions in rehearsal, in my own notes and in my pauses during working periods to respond to a personal witnessing process before leaping into re-action, and

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<sup>21</sup> Whilst I no longer work with Hincks, Jane Bacon has been supervising this thesis using these techniques so that work has continued in my on-going conversation with her. Bacon has published writing about her use of focusing twinned with Jung's active imagination as a technique for facilitating her own and others' creative work in an artistic and therapeutic context (Bacon 2007: 17-28).



finally in conversation with our audience, which we encourage through after-show discussions and soliciting written responses.<sup>22</sup>

Back to the dressing room, having another human being holding a mirror is like having someone in that dressing room with me who has a hand held mirror that can focus on parts I might not see but in such a way as I can then see them, not as something external but as integral to me. Seeing one's own process from a different vantage point can shift the awareness and "carry it forward" (Gendlin 1997a: 18) thereby creating a new dimension to the whole process. Apocryphal has now introduced this self-reflexive practice into the decision-making processes within labs and rehearsals themselves and that has shifted the way we work, slowing it down, allowing for longer moments of confusion and not knowing and for answers to emerge, not only from me but also the other participants in the process.



Aitchison during first lab including Jorgensen participating with her camera 2005

#### **D. Habitus: Situation - an American theater/re artist in the British academy**

Produced by authors who have the authority to write, fixed and codified by grammarians and teachers who are charged with the task of inculcating its mastery, the language is a *code*, in the sense of a cipher enabling equivalences to be established between sounds and meanings, but also in the sense of a system of norms regulating linguistic practice.

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<sup>22</sup> Apocryphal's evaluation process as it relates to the witness is described in detail in an article about post-secular performance (Chamberlain 2009: 61-64).

The official language is bound up with the state, both in its genesis and in its social uses...Ignorance is no excuse; this linguistic law has its body of jurists – the grammarians – and its agents of regulation and imposition – the teachers – who are empowered *universally* to subject the linguistic performance of speaking subjects to examination and to the legal sanction of academic qualifications.

(Bourdieu 2005: 45)

Bourdieu here articulates the power relations inherent in the acquisition of language. He speaks of the ways in which we take on different modes of speech and writing on a preconscious level, so that the dispensation of the rules of this speech are given with ‘sincerity’ and without duplicity or cynicism, as the dominant speaker is not conscious of the origin of their corrections other than to have a ‘feel’ for the rightness of the speech or not. The ability to see that these rules are a game does not take the players out of this habitus if the dominant speaker and the ‘intimidated’ speaker agree to and are invested in the rules of the game that is being played, in this case, the quest for a PhD. I say this to make explicit the symbolic power situation as it exists within this academic framework, and to point out that there is a preexisting writerly habitus in which I need to fit in order to be heard within the context of the British academy.

Given the usual unconsciousness of this activity as outlined by Bourdieu, perhaps I would not be so acutely aware of this form of symbolic power if I had not ‘moved habitus’ so abruptly from that of artist-practitioner in New York to artist-academic in the UK. There were no graduated steps to become habituated. The rupture of coming from a place where I had essentially mastered, with some effort, the linguistic habitus from time spent (on scholarship) at university and boarding school (what Bourdieu would refer to as my absorption of ‘cultural capital’ in order to make up for my lack of ‘economic capital’), was powerfully felt and somewhat painful. I had taught myself in the US a ‘rich person drag’, which did not consist of getting everything correct (which Bourdieu observes is what is attempted by aspirants to the dominant class), but instead a practiced insouciance, and the show of lack of concern about the rules, which is the true mark of distinction amongst the privileged in the US.<sup>23</sup> In this sense I have been holding the tension between classes and modes of speech long before entering the UK. However, in New York City, I developed fluency in moving between my multiple class and educational backgrounds especially as it related to the downtown experimental theater. I was not alone in having a multiple-class background and the ability to move between worlds in New York was considered an asset.

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<sup>23</sup> I was most likely able to do this because I was raised in many places, in many different socio-economic backgrounds, and by many different people, so out of necessity became an adept chameleon.

Also, I was being judged as a writer and director not as an academic. None of this matters in the UK, as here the subtleties of those exchanges are lost in the fact I am ‘American’ and therefore need to prove my abilities on another plane, especially with regard to the English language, which I am helpfully reminded is called ‘English’ not ‘American’.

There are many paradoxes – or tensions – being held not only in my artistic process but also in my relationship to the British academic habitus. As an initial matter, I am asked to spell theatre with an ‘re’, whereas in the US that is considered pretentious, so I spelled it theater, which was a correction I made from my secondary school days, which derived from the British (i.e., better): theatre. I was informed that my first attempts at writing for this thesis sounded ‘too American’, ‘too much like my own voice’ and was ‘too autobiographical.’

Ah.

Perhaps we should try that.

Compose silence?

Among other things, yes.

OK.

*[perhaps here you do this, in whatever form that makes sense, if the ‘opposite’ of classical music is silence, what are other ways of ‘acting’, ‘art’, ‘dance’, ‘writing’, ‘speaking’, etc...that do not give us the illusion of being able to own our own home...]*

In order to write a thesis, I was told I needed to adopt the British academic way of writing, or if not, I needed to sign-post the deviation as such and state the intent of this deviation, which of course normalizes the former and brands the latter a deviant. I do not say this as an excuse, but to point out how an alien language is imposed, with an awareness that this process happens in all walks of life, especially when one moves from one habitus to another, and is not a particular to academia. In academia however one is judged explicitly in terms of this symbolic power but hopefully one has the parallel freedom, within this writerly habitus, to point out that this is happening.

Deleuze and Guattari weigh in on this issue of whose language is in charge when they say in their description of the rhizome:

There is no mother tongue, only a power takeover by a dominant language within a political multiplicity.

(2003: 7)

And then double back around, as they often do, by showing the escape route:

It forms a bulb. It evolves by subterranean stems and flows, along river valleys or train tracks.

(*ibid.*)

In other words, this movement between and amongst these different languages can be seen as part of the evolution of the language itself, which is of course not a fixed state. Having created Apocryphal Theatre and writing this thesis are both attempts at deterritorializing and reterritorializing a new language as one's own as part of the evolution of this language.



Schmidt rehearsing *The Jesus Guy*

Bourdieu describes how the habitus is inculcated in children, structured depending on class and other external circumstances, durable in that they are ingrained in the body “in such a way that they endure through the life history of the individual, operating in a way that is pre-conscious and hence not readily amenable to conscious reflection and modification” (Thompson in Bourdieu 2005: 13) and finally that they are generative and transposable, so therefore can generate “a multiplicity of practices and perceptions in fields other than those in which they were originally acquired” (*ibid.*). Crucially, he locates the habitus of everyday life in the body itself, eloquently summarized in the phrase: “The body is the site of incorporated history” (*ibid.*).

This relates to Gendlin's concept of the 'situation' (Gendlin 2003a: 44-57) wherein he discusses the 'implied intricacy' of any human situation, which emerges from a bodily sense rather than universals or patterns. Whilst he is aware that many external factors contribute to a situation, he argues that "the implicit intricacy of a situation exceeds the cultural story" (*ibid.*: 48). By situation he does not mean every event that we ever experience, but those which imply "a change in the stories that it now implies" (*ibid.*: 48-49). Gendlin's model, which he refers to as a 'process model,' always implies change through bodily awareness. I mention Gendlin here as a corrective to what might appear to be a dead-end, as the language of 'habitus' can sometimes seem almost like fate rather than a situation that implies change, and the language of sociology can bring about generalities within which Gendlin's philosophy will answer with specific human experience which happens first in the body. Here, Gendlin and Bourdieu cross ('crossing' being a Gendlin concept) in their understanding of bodily experience as being the primary location of thought, though with differing ideas of how to access this experience and its possibilities for change.

World without end...

-ing.

Right "-ing." End-ing.

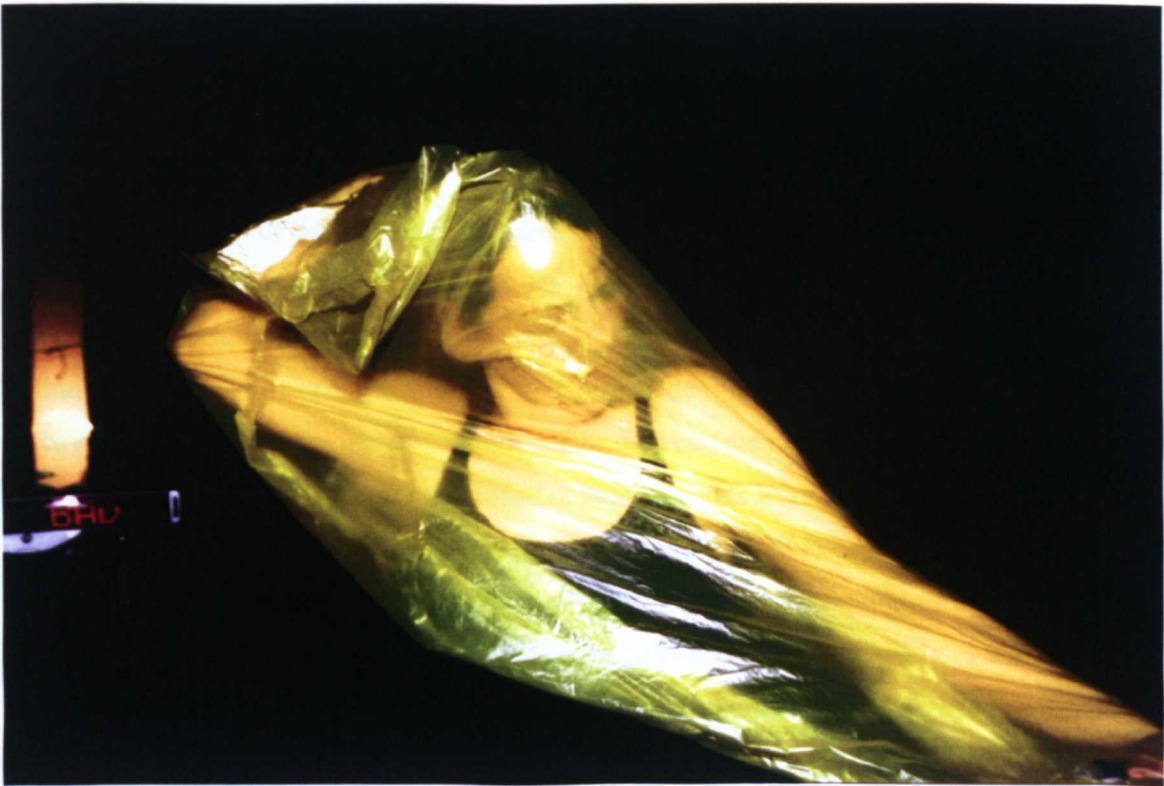
Not quite the way it used to sound, but then what is?

Apocryphal's work, my written stage texts and this thesis hold the tension between these two points of view, moving from the external larger social view implied by Bourdieu's vision and the implied intricacy of the felt (body) sense implied by Gendlin. However, both ideas cross into one another and should not be seen as a dualism but rather like two sides of Möbius strip, intimately linked and as necessary to one another as the body and the mind.<sup>24</sup>

For me to resolve the intellectual difficulties of how to negotiate the language of all my different seemingly conflicting worlds, I have had to return to the body, searching for words by focusing (or careful witnessing), to describe these crossings, to feel into the gap between creator and researcher, between the US and the UK, between the professional and academic theatre worlds and between the felt sense and the ethical sense (an example of such

<sup>24</sup> This is not meant to imply that Gendlin's idea of the 'felt sense' is only related to the body or Bourdieu only to the mind. As mentioned earlier, Gendlin's focusing method (2003) works with an intimate relationship between body and mind feeding back to each other, and Bourdieu's idea of habitus includes the way our external circumstances affect our bodies "as the site of incorporated history" (Thompson in Bourdieu 2005: 13) and vice-versa (*ibid.*).

a conflict is on p. 98 in relation to a deeply-felt spiritual experience and its conflict with my ethical thoughts). These conflicts are visible in all of Apocryphal's work, sometimes emerging in a satisfying way as paradox and sometimes uncomfortably as awkward edges, which seems rough and somehow unfinished. The temptation in the work has been to smooth out those rough spots, as they can seem embarrassing and unseemly, but a greater desire and commitment in Apocryphal to not rule out this part of life and art, has allowed them to stay. When performing at our best, we embrace these moments and take an invaluable piece of advice from my university directing teacher Bill Francisco, namely: if you can't mask it, spotlight it.



Ellis in *The Jesus Guy*



## Chapter II: Practicing Philosophies

In Section A of this chapter, I will locate Apocryphal within its artistic “networks of complicities” (Deleuze in Stivale 2004). The first English translation of Artaud’s *Theatre and Its Double* (1981) having become available in the US and its influence on John Cage, Robert Rauschenberg and The Living Theatre will be the starting point for this brief, subjective history.<sup>25</sup> The artists focused on represent an idiosyncratic and highly biased network and are chosen because of (1) their influence on the development of the central concepts and tools Apocryphal use to create our work and (2) their examples as creators of acts of philosophy. Some of the artists mentioned are not theatre practitioners, but their work has directly impacted Apocryphal, so they are included. Their work too can be seen as acts of philosophy, but as the thesis is focused on theatre, I will only draw this argument where their work meets theatre as defined herein (as with artist Robert Rauschenberg’s performances with Judson Dance Theater) or where the artist defines their own work as theatre (as with composer John Cage).

In Section B of the chapter, I will analyze interviews with three contemporary theatre makers (Richard Foreman,<sup>26</sup> Chris Goode and Ivana Müller), who I chose because I know and respect their work, and because they are professional practitioners who, whilst not working within in any academic body, read philosophy alongside their theatre practice.<sup>27</sup> I wanted to discover how other theatre makers integrate their own engagement with philosophical ideas with their work to see how similar or different their methods were and how they related to my own experience with Apocryphal. In analyzing the interviews it became clear how similar their methods are of integrating philosophy into their work even though they are from different generations and countries and their work manifests very differently. I will argue in this section that these very methods, some of which are inconsistent and at times contradictory yet informed by a desire to create something somehow larger than themselves (and therefore

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<sup>25</sup> There are many books written that cover this history comprehensively, for instance *Judith Malina’s Diaries 1947-1957* (Malina 1984) covers an extraordinarily fertile and little-known period of time of The Living Theatre’s early days, which includes their relationship with Cage and Cunningham and many of the Black Mountain College composers; *Greenwich Village 1963* (Banes 1999), which surveys the whole downtown New York arts scene in 1963 and examines how they intersect, including Cage, Living Theatre, Rauschenberg and Judson Dance Theater; and *The Death of Character* (Fuchs 1996), a series of critical essays charting developments in the New York scene from the 1960s to the 1990s, including The Living Theatre, Chaikin’s Open Theater and Foreman’s Ontological-Hysteric Theater.

<sup>26</sup> Foreman is also included in Section A and acts as a bridge from the influential to the contemporary.

<sup>27</sup> They all have taught workshops or been visiting artists at universities but they function primarily as independent artists.

what they already ‘know’), allow them to create acts of philosophy. The connection between their work and Apocryphal’s will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

### **A. Locating the Field**

The ideal would be to create a rhizomatic network as Deleuze and Guattari (2003: 3-25) envision, but I imagine this will fall short of that ideal. However, Deleuze and Guattari refer in one paragraph (quoted with a different emphasis in Chapter 1) to Burroughs, Cage and Artaud, which gives credence to the Deleuzian concept of networks of complicity as regards the various artists and philosophers influencing Apocryphal’s work that operate in what Deleuze and Guattari refer to here as the “schizorevolutionary pole” which

...embrac[es] all that flows and counterflows, the gushings of mercy and pity knowing nothing of meaning and aims (*the Artaud experiment, the Burroughs experiment*). It is here that art accedes to its authentic modernity... the pure process that fulfills itself, and that never ceases to reach fulfillment as it proceeds – art as “experimentation.”\* ...

*\*See all of John Cage’s work...*

(Deleuze & Guattari 2003a: 370-1)

This also supports the larger argument that certain artists can also be considered to be creating acts of philosophy as they are referred to as living examples of what Deleuze and Guattari are proposing. In other words, if the artists were not enacting the states of becoming they propose, what would they be pointing to otherwise? And if the artists are experimenting on this level, cannot they too be considered to be creating acts of philosophy? One of Deleuze and Guattari’s most well known concepts of the body without organs derives from their reading of Artaud.

### **1952 – the ‘Artaud experiment’ via John Cage**

Artaud’s influence can be felt in most avant-garde performance work post-WWII in the US, however the focus here will be on Cage, Chaikin, Foreman, Rauschenberg and The Living Theatre. The first English translation of *The Theater and Its Double* (Artaud 1981) available in the US was created and discussed by M.C. Richards when both Cage and Rauschenberg were at Black Mountain College in the summer of 1952 (Joseph 2003: 258). Cage’s engagement with what he understood as Artaud’s call for a “non-hierarchical, indeterminate and hence nonexpressive performance syntax” (*ibid.*) influenced his creation of what has been called the first postwar ‘happening’ in that same summer in which:



Cage's performance took place around and among the audience. Each participant engaged in an activity unrelated to the others, in a sequence of independent and overlapping time allotments: Tudor played Cage's *Water Music*, Merce Cunningham improvised a dance down the aisles, Nick Cercovich projected a series of slides, and Cage, Richards, and the poet Charles Olson all read from atop ladders situated throughout the audience. Rauschenberg, whose *White Paintings* were hung from the ceiling in formation, occupied his time by playing old records on a Victrola in the corner.

(*ibid.*)

Erika Fischer-Lichte refers to this performance as seminal to Western culture in returning performativity to the theatre and links it to J.L. Austin's speech-act theory, which he delineated in 1955 in his William James Lectures at Harvard (and to Barthes' *Le Degré zero de l'écriture*, published in 1953). She writes that, "Austin's theory of speech act accomplished with regard to the knowledge of language, Cage's 'untitled event' realized for theatre" (Fischer-Lichte in Auslander 2003: 231). Austin and Cage both brought to the forefront the performativity of language and theatre, which before then she speaks of as having been considered primarily referential, though those who spoke or participated in theatre "have always known intuitively and practiced for ages" (*ibid.*) the performativity of both. This distinction between what is "known" in a formally codified way and how people know "intuitively" is an interesting one and is important when deciding where philosophy and knowledge begins and ends. Perhaps we can think of "knowledge" as not only located when it has been described in an officially sanctioned discursive way.

That same summer at Black Mountain College Cage met Rauschenberg for the first time and saw his *White Paintings* (Tomkins 2005: 65), which he credits with having inspired the writing of *4'33"*, his famous silent piece. David Tudor's first performance of Cage's *4'33"* in Woodstock, New York (1952) is of course a seminal theatrical act of philosophy. An act of philosophy may or may not be discursive, but it should have the potential to reorient our way of witnessing in some significant way. In the performance, when people have the choice to listen to the rain outside or the wind in the trees or to each other muttering under their breaths about what they were watching or deciding if this is music or not, then it becomes theatre that does not remain something to be viewed and examined but encompasses the players and audience as active witnesses in which "*each human being is at the best point for reception*" (Cage 1973: 14). The audience, even though knowledgeable of experimental music were "infuriated" (Yates in Revill: 166). Yates goes on to recount "the audience had come prepared to be shocked but not to be dismayed" (*ibid.*). In other words, Cage created something so new that even a sophisticated music audience could not comprehend it.

Cage uses language that resonates with Deleuze and Guattari to describe the theatre he is interested in as “*continually becoming that it is becoming*” (*ibid.*). It does not stay still, nor does it *represent* becoming but it instead *is* becoming (that it is becoming). These ideas also echo Artaud’s call for a more immediate and less representational theatre, one that calls to us directly rather than talking meekly through its Double. Most likely, had Artaud been in the audience in 1952 for 4’33”, he would have been delighted. Deleuze and Guattari referring to 4’33” declare that:

It is undoubtedly John Cage ***who first and most perfectly deployed the fixed sound plane***, which affirms a process against all structure and genesis, a floating time against pulsed time or tempo, ***experimentation against any kind of interpretation***, and ***in which silence as sonorous rest also marks the absolute state of movement***.

(2003: 267 ***emphasis mine***)

Once again, they credit an artist with an act of philosophy, as 4’33” *creates* and embodies a new concept: “the fixed sound plane” that affirms “experimentation against any kind of interpretation” and redefines silence as movement, in other words as performance created by the listeners rather than the players.

The most well known philosophical influence on Cage is Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki from whom he learned the principles of Zen Buddhism, whilst Suzuki was giving open lectures at Columbia University from the late 1940s to 1957 (Revill 1992: 108). The two most important principles he took into his composition and life were those of “interpenetration,” that everything relates to everything else (which will be discussed more in Chapter 3) and that paradise is immanent rather than transcendent. Therefore, the most important thing is to find a way to be awake to the here and now without allowing one’s mind to argue for or against what exists.<sup>28</sup>

Cage never claimed however to illustrate or explicate Buddhism in his musical compositions. In his biography of Cage, Revill says, after spending an entire chapter explaining how important Zen was to Cage:

It would be erroneous, however, to reduce Cage’s work to such categories. He was adamant that he did not want Zen to be held responsible – blamed – for what he did after coming into contact with it. The attempt to explain most things which happen to human beings in terms of a single cause is the kiss of death to the usefulness or accuracy of any theory. ***There are many reasons why a person does something and it is not unusual for these motivations to sit uneasily together or to conflict...*** The most interesting work is simply itself before it is exemplar of a category...***His inclinations***, moreover – for instance the tendency to see art as capable of integrating

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<sup>28</sup> For an excellent summary of Cage’s relation to Suzuki, read the chapter on Zen in *The Roaring Silence* (Revill 1992: 107-125).

people into daily life – *exist before the terms used to categorize them, and before studies, notably here of Zen, by which he clarifies them.*

(*ibid.*: 125 *emphasis mine*)

I would argue that Zen whilst important to Cage in terms of articulating his ideas about life and art to himself instead became a part of a larger stew of influences that allowed him to create his own acts of philosophy, such as 4'33''.

I first heard Cage speak at the Exploratorium in San Francisco (1987). His ideas made a deep impression, but functioned like a series of time bombs, their impact exploding into my life at various stages. The clearest example of this is his idea (as manifest most obviously in 4'33'') that all sound is music and it is a matter of listening that makes it so. I understood that intellectually in 1987 but it was not until many years later in 2001 whilst walking through the very crowded subway interchange at 53<sup>rd</sup> Street and Lexington Avenue in New York that, instead of being angry at the amount of people, the slowness of my progress and the noise, I suddenly heard everyone's footfalls as music and the whole experience became a symphony. I laughed out loud and thought oh, this is what Cage meant, and ever since then, whenever I find myself at this interchange, I hear a symphony. This experience has permanently changed my way of hearing sound in theatre (and life) and has influenced Apocryphal's work profoundly, as will be explored in Chapter 3. Therefore, Cage's ideas as manifest in his life and his music can be said to have had the effect of an act of philosophy.

### **1959 – the 'Burroughs experiment'**

Deleuze and Guattari when referring to the "Burroughs experiment" are referring to the cut-up method discovered by Brion Gysin in 1959 and expanded upon by William Burroughs (Burroughs & Gysin 1982). Burroughs gives credit when describing Gysin's discovery to the origin of their method when he writes:

At a surrealist rally in the 1920s Tristan Tzara the man from nowhere proposed to create a poem on the spot by pulling words out of a hat. A riot ensued wrecked the theater. André Breton expelled Tristan Tzara from the movement and grounded the cut-ups on the Freudian couch.

(Burroughs & Gysin 1982: 29)

Tzara in this case could be considered the first creator of this particular language-as-performance act of philosophy as he introduced the new concept of random words creating poetry and thereby offering a new way to look at the world of language and art. As appears usual when radical shifts manifest as performance "a riot ensued."

Gysin and Burroughs renovated the cut-up idea and expanded it to include cutting up pre-existing texts. Gysin, a painter, discovered this method whilst working on a painting and looking down at the newspapers covering the floor of his work area. He began reading across and allowing the phrases from one article to interrupt another and discovered to his delight that the news stories that emerged seemed even truer than the ‘official’ news. He showed the method to Burroughs who deployed it in many ways in subsequent writing. Their book *The Third Mind* (1982) details the many possible ways to use cut-ups in writing and visual art. The most important act of philosophy here is the creation of the concept that “all writing is in fact cut-ups” (*ibid*: 29). In other words, we are always already when writing using words and ideas we have heard or learned, but usually straining to ‘be original.’ As Burroughs writes:

The best writing seems to be done almost by accident but writers until the cut-up method was made explicit...had no way to produce the accident of spontaneity. You cannot *will* spontaneity. But you can introduce the unpredictable spontaneous factor with a pair of scissors.

(*ibid.*)

The cut-up method offers another strategy for getting outside of the strangle-hold of what Burroughs refers to as the “Word Virus” (Burroughs 1986: 47)<sup>29</sup> and can make manifest the linguistic mechanisms of reality-creation. Burroughs says in an interview after talking about how when we go out on the street we are always seeing in cut-ups, signs, newspapers, overheard conversations, sounds, visual material:

Either-or thinking is just not accurate thinking. That’s not the way things occur, and I feel the Aristotelian construct is one the great shackles of Western civilization. Cut-ups are a movement towards breaking this down.

(Burroughs & Gysin 1982: 5-6)

Burroughs’ cut-up methods perhaps answer a call Artaud makes for theatrical language:

To make metaphysics out of spoken language is to make language convey what it does not normally convey. That is to use it in a new, exceptional and unusual way, to give it its full, physical shock potential, ***to split it up and distribute it actively in space***, to treat inflexions in a completely tangible manner and restore their shattering power and

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<sup>29</sup> I first heard Burroughs’ voice and ideas about the word virus at a Laurie Anderson concert (1984) in which his voice had been recorded narrating some of the lyrics and Anderson used in a song his phrase (which she attributed to him) “Language is a virus from outer space”, adding to it “and hearing your name is better than seeing your face” (Anderson 1986). Anderson’s darkly humorous use of simple phrases to evoke multiple possible meanings resonates with how I hear cliché phrases in my own stage texts and even more so in how we work with clichés through levels of address and cutting up (discussed in Chapter 3).

really to manifest something; to turn against language and its basely utilitarian, one might also say alimentary, sources, against its origins as a hunted beast, and finally to consider language in the form of *Incantation*.

(Artaud 1981: 35 *emphasis mine*)

Like Burroughs, Artaud sees the need to use language in alternative ways to save language from “its origins as a hunted beast.” Chaikin and Foreman, we will see subsequently, also find strategies to incorporate writing into theater without the words falling into utilitarian, representational modes. Apocryphal, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, transplants the cutting-up technique into live performance wherein written and spoken text, as well as gestures, sounds, space and objects are “split up and distribute[d]...actively in space.”

Burroughs makes a connection between the cut-up method and Cage’s compositional techniques when he says “John Cage...[has] carried the cut-up method much further in music than I have in writing” (Burroughs & Oldier 1989: 33). Cage’s influence cannot be overestimated in terms of many New York postwar avant-garde artists. He had a direct influence on the creation of theater, art, dance, music and the creation of what would be called performance art when he taught composition in the late-50s in the New School to many artists including members of The Living Theatre where he taught elements of his random-chance compositional techniques and his ideas about Zen (and Artaud) (Joseph 2003: 368n99).

The Living Theatre’s exposure to *Theatre and Its Double* (1981) eventually led to the creation of a theatre scene called ‘the Plague’ after Artaud’s visceral description in his book of the plague. In the summer of 1984 I was part of their troupe in San Francisco and performed this piece with them as street theatre. We began by showing up unannounced in a park and snapping dollar bills. We would suddenly have everyone’s attention in an unnerving kind of way. As soon as people were watching, we contract ‘the plague.’ We mimed having red spots all over our bodies, which we would helplessly try to rid ourselves of using the dollar bill. Then we would mime all the other symptoms of plague including blisters and internal rupture until we would ‘die’ by falling on the ground. Others in the company put us into a pyramid of bodies and would ask people watching to join them in a circle to a kind of humming chant. When this happened we could ‘wake up’ and join the circle. I was always surprised by how many people, none of whom appeared to fit the experimental theater audience profile and most of whom appeared either poor or homeless, had joined the circle. We would then all hold hands and continue the humming chant, which was quite an extraordinary feeling of the healing of some kind of normally invisible yet clearly painful wound of separation.

This ‘plague’ scene originally ended a theatre performance called *The Mysteries* (1964) (Innes 1984: 187). From descriptions of how this scene worked in front of an experimental theatre audience versus my experience performing it unauthorized and outside, appears to confirm Deleuze and Guattari’s observation when referring to Burroughs and Artaud that their work “appears all the more difficult and intellectual to intellectuals as it is accessible to the infirm, the illiterate and the schizos...” (2003a: 370). In the theatre audience members apparently taunted ‘the dead’ and in some cases tickling them or even attempting to set Malina’s hair on fire (Innes 1984: 197).

### **1963-70 – Joseph Chaikin’s Open Theater – repudiating the icons**

As he tells the story, Chaikin was an up and coming actor in New York with an agent and a personal manager and a plan to get to Broadway, when he got the role of Gala Gay in The Living Theatre’s production of Brecht’s *Man is Man* (2000). At the time, Off-Broadway was gaining in prominence so this was considered a good step on the ladder to higher visibility and better jobs. He had been working with The Living Theatre since 1960 and arguing with Malina and Beck about the political goals of their theatre company, asking them if they were “a theatre or...a political movement” (Chaikin 1984: 51). However, Chaikin found:

in doing the role every night, saying the lines, finding my own involvement with the play, I changed little by little. Like Gala Gay in the play, it came mostly from considering the lines of the play, night after night after night... Studying them and saying them: there is a time when he turns to the audience and says, “Who am I? If I cut off my arm and my head, would the arm recognize the head?” ***It was particularly the responsibility of coming out to the audience and talking directly to them – something I had never had to do before – knowing that what I said to the audience I didn’t believe, and then coming to believe what I was saying.***

(*ibid.*: 49-51 ***emphasis mine***)

He changed his feelings about political commitment and became involved in demonstrations, getting arrested and going to jail. This led him to feel “that the political aspect of The Living Theater, which had looked so ridiculous, was very necessary. And the fact that it *was* ridiculous didn’t make it any less necessary” (*ibid.*: 52).

However, Chaikin felt that the Living Theater did not put enough emphasis on the potential power of the actor or the ensemble mostly because of its “constant state of emergency” (*ibid.*) and decided in 1963 to explore this with other actors in a lab that originally met twice a week. This group became The Open Theater. The model of this lab

was important to me when I started the first lab in New York in 1997 and continues to influence Apocryphal.<sup>30</sup> As Chaikin writes:

Julian Beck said that actor has to be like Columbus: he has to go out and discover something, and come back and report on what he discovers. Voyages have to be taken, but there has to be a place to come back to, and this place has to be different from the established theater. It is not likely to be a business place.

(*ibid.*: 54)

Chaikin's life was changed by Brecht's ideas as much as the Living Theater's, and the other person of note teaching at The New School in postwar New York was Brecht's disciple Erwin Piscator. Malina studied with him and both she and Beck were highly influenced by Brecht's ideas of creating a politically engaged theater (Willett 1986: 166). The dual influence of the cool analysis of Brecht and hot urgency of Artaud is one of the main through-lines of Western postwar experimental theatre.<sup>31</sup>

Chaikin explored Brecht's focus on the level of witness of the actor, from where the actor makes his report. He writes:

The first requisite for an actor approaching Brecht is to accept Brecht's assumption that what takes place in the world is taking place within himself, and that the actor is connected to whatever takes place in the world.

(1984: 39)

His focus on *the actor* as active witness of her own connection to the world and thereby to the theatrical moment is echoed in Apocryphal's work. The Open Theater's commitment to

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<sup>30</sup> Jerzy Grotowski also had his famous lab in Poland, but as that lab was government funded and was designed to lead to productions, this model did not work as well for us (Grotowski 1984). Richard Schechner gives an overview of the idea and limitations of 'the lab' as an idea along with an interesting lineage of labs (Schechner 2004: [http://www.odinteatret.dk/CTLS\\_web/presentation%20ramme3.htm](http://www.odinteatret.dk/CTLS_web/presentation%20ramme3.htm)). In speaking of his own lab, East Coast Artists, he discusses work with an Eastern-inspired technique of 'rasa boxes', which he explores in relation to Artaud's idea of actors as "athletes of the emotions" (*ibid.*). These explorations, which some members of my New York lab had explored as members of East Coast Artists, whilst of general interest, were not sufficient for what we were searching for in New York or in Apocryphal, as our concerns are more socially than privately framed (detailed in Chapter 3).

<sup>31</sup> One place this tension is played out explicitly is in Peter Weiss' *Marat/Sade* (1965), which was performed as an example of the Theatre of Cruelty directed by Peter Brooke opening in 1966 on Broadway. The conceit of this play is that the Marquis de Sade is directing a play about the assassination of Jean-Paul Marat, which he has written for the inmates of Charenton, where he himself is incarcerated, in Napoleonic France. I directed this play in 1986 at university and wrote a thesis about the challenge of remaining true to the Artaudian undercurrent represented by Sade and the mental institution and the Brechtian analysis implied by the alienation techniques, such as signage for each scene, interventions into the 'action' and the lines given to Marat (Barclay 1986). Whilst Weiss later in life decided he was a Marxist and resisted Brooke's more Artaudian interpretation, the play itself does not fall on either side of the line easily. The uneasy tension set up between Brecht and Artaud (which arguably echo the tension between Marx and Nietzsche) continue to pervade my work with Apocryphal and will be discussed with reference to the witness and the grid in Chapter 3.

ensemble creation and the Brechtian idea that the actor should understand the whole of what is being created is also influential, especially “the astonishing power there is in a performance of an actor who is actually playing out an image which he himself introduced” (*ibid.*: 64).

I first became aware of Chaikin in 1983 at university when directing *The Serpent* (van Itallie 1969), the first theater piece created by The Open Theater as an ensemble, and the influence of that experience on Apocryphal is detailed in Chapter 3. However, one of Chaikin’s goals for this production is relevant to the way in which the dual influence of Artaud and Brecht can be successfully intertwined:

I think the theater could erase and repudiate the icons. It could do this by making them visible, by showing people they are the face of a body, and by showing the body of which they are the face.

(1984: 96)

Apocryphal’s research into unearthing the “reality grid of right-now” relates to Chaikin’s strategy of repudiation of the icons by “making them visible.” The desire to show people that “they are the face of a body” relates directly to Artaud’s desire that theatre connect the audience to forces larger than themselves, whereas “by showing the body of which they are the face” relates directly to Brecht’s desire that we see clearly that of which we are a part and therefore help sustain and create. This then links back to Artaud’s concern that:

...rarely does the debate rise to a social level or do we question our social or ethical system. Out theatre never goes so far as to ask itself whether by chance this social or ethical system is iniquitous or not.

(1981: 30-31)

Chaikin’s concerns, however, were as philosophical as they were directly political. He studied philosophy at university and yet says that he got more out of reading on his own and studying independently with Dr. Julius Portnoy “who was able to talk in the first person about each philosopher we studied” (1984: 46). And there “I experienced a joy of learning as opposed to the task of passing a course...I learned that it was all right to think of the inconceivable...a space without boundary” (*ibid.*: 47). He quotes many philosophers in *The Presence of the Actor* (*ibid.*) including Plato, Schopenhauer, Marcuse and Merleau-Ponty. He does not expand upon the quotations but instead allows them to resonate associatively with his own writing. Whilst he is aware he is deeply influenced by this reading, he also insists throughout his writing, in what may seem a contradiction to his Brechtian sensibilities, that:



We ask questions in words, and in response we experience a dynamic silence. In effect we are joined together (to all living creatures) by what we do not understand. (ibid. 12)

His desire to move beyond utilitarian and constricting language links him to Artaud, Burroughs and Cage, as does his desire that what he creates *do* something rather than represent something.

I was only ever able to see The Open Theater's work on video<sup>32</sup>, so cannot report on the effect of being in the audience. However, the influence that The Open Theater has had on the way ensemble theater (or what is termed devised theatre in the UK) is created is enormous. Before Chaikin started creating work with The Open Theater, the idea that actors could be active participants in the creative process of the substance of a production was virtually unknown. In theater in the US, ensemble creation itself was a radical notion. In other words, his influence is so pervasive it is hard to see, as it is almost impossible to imagine the theatrical landscape without group creation, bodily-centered anti-psychological acting techniques, and the idea that all participants should be aware of the whole project they are creating. Specifically, his writing and example taught me to re-learn to look at the world and, similar to the seminal influence of his experience playing Gala Gay in changing the course of his life, my experience directing *The Serpent* fundamentally changed my goals and the course of my life in the theatre.

### **1952 redux: Beckett changes everything, too.**

Chaikin writes about acting and directing Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* (1958), especially the effect it had being performed in prison, wherein the inmates identified Clov as one of them and Hamm, who Chaikin was playing, as the prison warden. One of the inmates said afterwards that if the prison warden had realized what the play was really about, he never would have let them come in to perform it (1984: 148). Beckett's landscapes created by both a mise-en-scène and a language that operates explicitly more like open code than expression,

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<sup>32</sup> I watched the videos with Chaikin in 1988. I quit my job to take a workshop with him on directing Greek tragedy in Marin outside of San Francisco. He was aphasic from a stroke, so struck me like the Oracle at Delphi. He kindly let me spend time with him where he was staying and together we watched *The Serpent* and *Nightwalk* (Open Theater Papers 1973: Box 7) on old black and white video. I mostly remember the image of Paul Zimet as a bird and a family making grotesque grunts and squawks instead of words around a dinner table. The physical presence of the actors was palpable. Chaikin's use of words however was what was most striking in a live performance he gave at the festival of *The War in Heaven* (*Angel's Monologue*) that Sam Shepherd (an original Open Theater member) wrote with him before and after his stroke (Chaikin & Shepherd 1989: 158-175). Each word he struggled for yet also sang, it was language as incantation, his sense of humor and (dis)belief summed up in such lines, as "sometimes God/God/sometimes nothing" (162) and "maybe not human/maybe turtle/I can't tell/maybe some wonder" (169).

imply multiple possible worlds that can be encoded into many different environments. All that is ever being discussed or embodied is the nature of being and becoming with no way out of the conversation or the scene. His writing can almost be seen therefore as pure literary and theatrical acts of philosophy, which is perhaps why Deleuze and Guattari repeatedly reference Beckett in their writing (2003, 2003a).

Beckett spent many years in the 1930s in the British Museum reading room, systematically reading philosophy from the pre-Socratic Greeks onward (Beckett 2009: 156n.8), which means that the way in which his plays engage philosophical ideas was informed by this reading and he was most likely aware of this engagement. His other obsession was painting. Eleanor Fuchs points to Beckett's 'landscapes' as prefiguring the landscape theatre of, amongst others, the Wooster Group and Richard Foreman. Whilst landscape plays is a term originally used by Gertrude Stein to describe her own work, Fuchs adds:

***An important epistemological role must be assigned to Beckett***, who in *Godot* and then *Endgame*, pushed to almost their parodic conclusions (implosions one might say) the two dramaturgical and staging models – panoramic and concentrated – of the Western tradition.

(Fuchs 1996: 92)

She refers later to the “post-Beckett spectator” who has “grasped the groundlessness that so discomfited the early Beckett audience” (*ibid.*: 93) and the ways that experimental theatre artists, “After Beckett...turn increasingly to staging theatrical worlds that no longer define themselves spatially against an unseen outside, or a fictive temporal progression” (*ibid.*). In other words, the appearance of his work, like Cage, changed everything, and like Cage, his seminal theatrical debut was in 1952.<sup>33</sup> The postwar landscape seems to have been a fertile time for new ideas to emerge as embodied performance, which prefigured much of the phenomenological and poststructuralist philosophical writing that followed.

Deleuze and Guattari mostly refer to Beckett's fiction, but when they do mention that he creates theatre, too, they make an interesting observation, that introduces the necessity of the performance of his texts:

...when one submits linguistic elements to a treatment producing continuous variation, when one introduces an internal pragmatics into language, ***one is led to treat***

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<sup>33</sup> February 1952 was the first radio performance of *En attendant Godot* that led to its famous theatrical debut at Théâtre de Babylone in January 1953, and which caused violent disagreements between supporters and detractors (Knowlson 1997: 386).

*nonlinguistic elements such as gestures and instruments in the same fashion*, as if the two aspects of pragmatics joined in the same line of variation, in the same continuum. Moreover, *the idea perhaps comes first from outside, the language following only later*, as the necessarily exterior sources of style.  
(2003: 98 *emphasis mine*)

This implies that not only does Beckett's writing lead to a certain kind of gestural economy similar to the linguistic one, but that perhaps the idea comes first and the language follows that idea. However, this Möbius strip logic also implies that if the language contains a "line of variation" other elements need to be treated in the same way. In other words, neither the language nor the gesture needs to predominate or be subsumed in one another. In Beckett's world in *Endgame* and *Godot* the performative element of vaudeville is as important as the words, as the tragedy of the scenarios cannot be taken seriously without also being experienced as absurd. In other words, this philosophical vision can only exist as an *act* of philosophy.

### **1968 - Richard Foreman's Ontological-Hysteric Theater**

Deleuze and Guattari's suggestion of the idea preceding the language is echoed by Richard Foreman's description of a vision he had that led him to write his own stage texts:

I remember coming home you know every year I was trying to write a play like Arthur Miller or like Brecht or whoever it was and one day sitting at my table I remember pulling myself back from the table and saying you know this is ridiculous. If you walk into a theatre tonight, what would you really like to see happening? *And I just had this vision of two performers sort of looking at each other across the stage with just a certain kind of tension and nothing else happening and I started at that moment writing a very different kind of play which was vaguely akin to what I've been doing ever since for years.*

(Foreman 2008: 198 *emphasis mine*)

Foreman writes, directs and designs his work. He has done so since 1968 when he founded Ontological-Hysteric Theater in downtown New York. His ideas about theater have evolved over the years since he presented his first production *Angelface* (1968), but in every show of his I have seen there exists that "certain kind of tension" between two performers, which is so palpable it is almost as if there is an elastic band attaching each performer to the other, which is in fact one of the general stage directions he gives his actors (Foreman 1992: 42).

Foreman is incredibly articulate about the relation of his work to philosophy and theory. As his ideas will be discussed at length in the next section, here I will discuss his

work in context and some of his writing about it. The experience I had watching *Eddie Goes to Poetry City* (1991) mirrors almost precisely his own vision for what he is doing in theater:

I like to think of my plays as an hour and a half in which you see the world through a special pair of eyeglasses. These glasses may not block out all narrative coherence, but they magnify so many other aspects of experience that *you simply lose interest in trying to hold onto narrative coherence, and instead, allow yourself to become absorbed in the moment-to-moment representation of psychic freedom.*

(1992: 5 *emphasis mine*)

His desire is to unhinge the impulse from the object, which he sees as limiting the impulse to the cultural “straightjacket” of already named feelings and ideas.

It is the impulse that is your deepest truth, not the object that seems to call it forth. *The impulse is the vibrating lively thing that you really are.* And that is what I want to return to: this very thing you really are.

(*ibid.*: 4 *emphasis mine*)

This desire could be seen to relate to Gendlin’s notion of a felt sense described in Chapter 1 on page 36 and also Artaud’s description of life *not* “as we know it from its surface of fact, but to that fragile, fluctuating center which forms never reach” (Artaud in Joseph 2006: 255). And all of these ideas relate to the notion in Deleuze and Guattari of states of becoming in which a static “being” (form) is undermined by the awareness *and* acceptance of its “fluctuating” (Artaud) “vibrating” (Foreman) reality. Foreman’s theatrical project undermines any static state of being, whether it is in his writing, directing or design, through the sheer proliferation of contradictory impulses and his resistance always to any coherent narrative structure or even his own ideas. He speaks in his interview about deciding against any staging that makes him think “oh, that’ll get ‘em, that’ll please ‘em” (2008: 204) in an attempt to avoid any kind of pandering to audience taste or thinking of himself as creating “great art,” which echoes Artaud’s manifesto “No More Masterpieces” (1981: 55-63).

As the readers of this thesis in the UK may not be familiar with Foreman’s work, this description of how he might work with only one line with an actor can offer an idea of how he puts his ideas into practice.<sup>34</sup>

Suppose I have a line of dialogue which a character delivers in response to another who has just attacked him. “I think I’d like to have a headache and now I don’t have a headache.” Let us assume I want to deemphasize the possibility that he is simply reacting sarcastically to the one who attacked him. I might say to the actor, As you

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<sup>34</sup> The chapter on Foreman in *Systems of Rehearsal* (Cole 1992) gives an excellent view of his practical methods.

speaking, back up so that by the end of the line you are leaning against the wall in an awkward position. How might that movement suggest other reasons he would like to have a headache? Perhaps because he hopes the headache will change the way his mind works, forcing him into other patterns of thinking that are suggested by his awkward position against the wall. Obviously that is not a realistic action, yet it seems psychologically relevant to the kind of breakthrough that any attempt to manipulate the head, including willed headaches, might anticipate. I often think of my work as an attempt to crack open the prisonlike [sic] shell of the particular reality we have convinced ourselves imprisons us. Backing up, slamming against the wall, and striking an odd position is an attempt physically to crack that shell.

(1992: 46-47)

Foreman works for three months in rehearsals to create each one of his pieces, which start with writing he has done without pre-assigned lines taken from his endless notebooks.<sup>35</sup> He changes the staging many times, but in the end the actors have a very precise physical and verbal score from which they do not deviate. As there are so many layers of movement, words, sound and design, even though the staging does not vary, it generates so many multiplicities that the shows bear repeat viewings in the same way a dense text bears rereading. Each time there is something new to see, because in the initial viewing there is no way to absorb it all. His works are acts of philosophy in the way he writes, directs, designs and writes about his work as they reframe every moment and question that framing simultaneously. To accept his invitation is one way to relearn to look at the world.

When Foreman first started showing his work in 1968 his invitation was not generally accepted in the theater world. His friends in experimental cinema and the downtown arts scene liked it, but even some of his artistic heroes walked out. For the first six years, most people walked out leaving at times only two audience members. He says the only reason he had the courage to still make theater was that Arthur Sainer, then a critic with *The Village Voice*, attended his third play and wrote a positive review about why it was hard to take but that it was important work. However, he also admits he felt heroic, like van Gogh being misunderstood (1992: 74).

The same year I saw *Eddie Goes to Poetry City*, I also saw Pina Bausch's work for the first time (*Paloma, Paloma* 1991). I mention this within the context of Foreman because her use of images, objects, people and words collided with each other in a way that had nothing to do with narrative but everything to do with the "lively vibrating impulse" he writes about. The difference is in her work there can be a direct address to the audience whereas with Foreman this address is implied but remains ambiguous and there is a direct appeal to the

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<sup>35</sup> See [www.ontological.com](http://www.ontological.com) for samples of his raw texts, which he makes available online for anyone to read or use for free.

emotions whereas Foreman works to avoid empathy at all costs. However, they both share a dark sense of humor and fearless vision. I was incredibly moved by Bausch's work without having any words to describe it. As emotionally-based as the images and movements created by the dancers were, they did not appear to me to be manipulative in any way, but instead functioned in the way perhaps dreams do without being any way "dreamy."

In terms of her work as act of philosophy, Lloyd Newson of DV8 wrote:

***Her work truly allowed people to see the world from another perspective that, had she not been around, we would never have known.*** Her legacy is monumental.

(Newson 2009: [www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2009/jul/03/pina-bausch-tributes](http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2009/jul/03/pina-bausch-tributes))

In other words, she created a new concept of what dance and theatre could be through her idiosyncratic choreography, which she created through questioning her dancers about their own lives and ideas and working with their images. In so doing, she taught us who experienced her work to relearn to look at what constitutes dance, theatre and the world.<sup>36</sup>

Foreman's relationship to his performers is almost precisely the opposite of Bausch and Chaikin in that he does not engage with their process at all except to make concrete requests (as described earlier). Apocryphal leans more towards the Bausch/Chaikin model of bringing in collaborative frames of reference, yet the performers, even if bringing themselves to bear in the process, in the end have to confront a text I have written, which in this sense relates to Foreman's model of bringing in material which, whilst rigorously undermined as purely expressive or linear by his own process, is his own.

Also in relation to Foreman, I want to mention another influence on my work, the Polish director/writer/artist Tadeusz Kantor, who can also be considered creating "landscape" theatre (referred to in earlier in reference to Beckett), which Fuchs says, referencing Gertrude Stein and her relation to contemporary artists such as Foreman and Elizabeth LeCompte,<sup>37</sup> "asserts itself when spatiality begins to emerge over temporality as a theatrical value" (1996: 107). Whilst Kantor used autobiographical memory as material for his productions, they were re-enacted consciously as a kind of ghostly reappearance in the present. He always remained

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<sup>36</sup> Re-seeing her work when danced by those who did not create the original choreography can be disappointing, probably because it loses what Chaikin described as "the astonishing power" of an actor performing an image she created (1984: 64). However, this does not take away from what Bausch created in terms of re-visioning the world of dance and theatre.

<sup>37</sup> LeCompte is the Artistic Director of The Wooster Group, whose work is typically associated in New York with Foreman's. Their work is generally well-known in the UK, so I will not describe it here, except to say their influence can be seen in the work of Forced Entertainment and other groups that work with technologically mediated performance, the counter-point of high and low culture, and the quotation of multiple found texts and images. The Wooster Group and Forced Entertainment are not included in this survey as their concerns strike me as more aesthetic than philosophical and therefore not of direct relevance to this thesis.

visibly directing during his performances,<sup>38</sup> which makes it explicitly a performance that, judging from the anxious look on his face one sees in the video documentation, was apparently always going wrong. Kantor was searching for what he referred to as “The Zero Theatre” (Kantor 1993: 59-70) wherein he wanted to walk away from naturalism and make a

...movement in the opposite direction: *downwards* into the sphere  
*below* THE ACCEPTED WAY OF LIFE  
which is possible by elimination,  
destruction  
misshaping,  
reduction of energy,  
cooling;  
[the movement] in the direction of *emptiness*,  
DEFORMITY,  
*nonform*  
*is an ILLUSION CRUSHING process*  
*and the only way to touch on reality!*

(*ibid.*: 59-60 *emphasis mine*)

This attempt to get past existing forms into what Kantor here refers to as “nonform” relates to all of the practitioners mentioned leading back to Artaud attempting to locate the “fragile, fluctuating center” that is life. Their innovations and acts of philosophy emerge from this place, which can be felt and sensed but not described directly in words nor found in pre-existing forms. Their strategies are different and what they discover on their way offers us different ways to re-look at the world, but they all appear to have sought a mode of becoming which can undermine a static sense of being which then traps us into a more blinkered way of seeing the world as pre-existing and solid rather than “vibrant” and “lively.”

## **B. Interviews on Practicing Philosophies**

Foreman’s relationship to philosophy has both breadth and depth (walking into his apartment is like walking into a large, well-stocked used bookstore), however he refers to himself in *Unbalancing Acts* as a “stupid reader” of Lacan (1992: 14). His description of how he integrated his reading of Lacan into his work is what inspired me to explore the whole area of how artists work with philosophical ideas, which in turn led to the idea of seeing theatre as a potential act of philosophy.

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<sup>38</sup> Foreman used to be more explicitly visible running the sound and lights of his shows and the taped voice that can be heard in all of his shows is his own. Also, as described in Chapter 3, I have become increasingly visible in Apocryphal’s performances, inspired in part by the boldness and vulnerability of Kantor’s visible presence.

Referring to how Lacan's ideas manifest in what he referred to as his "bad writing" he says:

The syntactical, rhythmic form reflected the fact that I was not a well-tooled Lacanian machine, able to spout the jargon and follow the subtlest ins and outs of Lacanian discourse. Rather, I was someone who delighted in struggling with that material. (*ibid.*)

Foreman writes that his desire to avoid "good writing" as inspired by his reading of Barthes who "maintained that "good writing" is a manifestation of power exercised by a certain class, and to be recognized as a "good writer" you must think and perform in accordance with the habits of that class – the exploitative class" (*ibid.*: 13). He is however aware that his attempt to write "bad" is a choice from an educated writer and discusses his conflicts with this idea (*ibid.*).

However, when interviewed, Foreman backed away from his statement about being a "stupid" reader of Lacan and said he had read an entire bookcase worth of his philosophies and secondary sources (2008: 201). This kind of contradiction was humorously normal in our interview so, when reading or speaking with Foreman, it is good to remember that no matter what he says, he generally returns this basic point:

I've never adhered one hundred percent to the writing programs I created...There are people who make art in which every moment of creation is governed by the rules of the game they've decided to play, whereas I always allow my rules to be disrupted by my own free impulses...The conceptual universe that governs a work of art should always be under attack by personal impulses that break into and interfere with that conceptual universe.

(1992: 12)

Got a flag somewhere we could put up just in case anyone was, you know, confused as to where we Stood or anything? Or, was perhaps, even confused as to where we Are...cause I know if I don't see a flag for a few minutes or so I do start feeling awfully Confused about where I Am, who's in Charge...that kind of thing...oh and while you're at it could you find one of those Guys with Big Guns to guard the door outside, cause I'm feeling a little, you know, Unsafe what with all the Confusion here and the freedom and the lack of Rules...and I kind of need some Order... Don't you agree?

Absolutely.

Why are we torturing people? Why is that?

I'm not torturing anyone.

Yes you are.



No, I'm not. I'm here with you, right now. Not torturing anyone. None of us in this room is torturing anyone.

But we are.

Oh, come on!

I'm serious.

You mean self-righteous.

But this is a digression, isn't it?

Isn't all of it?

Well, yeah...

But the torture thing.

What about it?

Why are we torturing people?

Don't we have to agree it's 'we' first?

Yes, but where do we get if we say 'they'?

Somewhere else?

Right, we get to a place where they are they and we are we and can pretend 'they' torture while we sit around and deconstruct, as it were. Fiddling with semiotics while Rome burns and all that.

Is Rome burning?

...

It's hard to stay here, isn't it?

Yes.

OK, so let's try. Let's take a moment and consider that at this very moment someone is being tortured, having their toenails pulled out, or their genitals electrocuted or their teeth pulled or almost drowned in the name of 'democracy' and 'freedom' and perhaps the person doing the torturing believes he or she is doing the will of God. The person being tortured may believe the same. The person being tortured may be completely innocent or may be planning to blow up the Tube or Eiffel Tower or New York. Either way, they are being held without trial or recourse to any outside justice. You probably have a better chance of knowing or recognizing the torturer than the one being tortured. The person being tortured may die and be thrown into a shallow grave and we'll never know. Or even if we do know, we probably won't care for very long. It'll be a news photo, a momentary 'tragedy'. *A pathos*, 'that sort of thing.'

See if it's possible.

I interviewed three artists, including Foreman, to get a sense of how they integrated their philosophical understandings with their work and whether they felt their own work or theatre in general could be seen as philosophy. I chose artists who I felt shared with Apocryphal a similar contextual field of philosophical inquiry embedded within their artistic practice. As Foreman has already been introduced, Goode and Müller are briefly introduced here. I then outline the ideas the three artists agreed upon before examining what is unique to each of them as relates to their work as acts of philosophy. The interview transcripts can be read in full in Appendices A-C.<sup>39</sup>

Chris Goode is a theatre director, writer, poet, sound artist and actor based in London. His work bears witness to the most vulnerable parts of the self. Goode said in his interview that philosophy is not the primary motivator behind his practice and yet spoke primarily in philosophical terms about the creation of a recent show *Hey Matthew* (2008a), which does draw more explicitly on philosophy than his previous work. Goode's work and his writing about theatre focus on the transformative act of witnessing and being witnessed. His desire is to allow events into theatre that he defines as "real" and "larger than" performance, which is where he locates theatre's potential philosophical cogency (Goode 2008: 217).<sup>40</sup>

Ivana Müller is a Croatian choreographer/dancer/dance-theatre artist who lives in Paris and Amsterdam. Müller creates pieces that straddle the world of dance and theatre and now considers her work theatre, though different countries classify it differently (in Germany she is considered a theatre director, in Netherlands a choreographer, for example). Müller creates

<sup>39</sup> The pages of transcripts relate to their placement in the thesis as Appendices, but to avoid repetition, I do not reference them as such, giving instead only the relevant page number.

<sup>40</sup> Goode's many ideas about his and others' theatre can be read on his blog Thompson's Bank of Communicable Desire on <http://beescope.blogspot.com/>.

work that draws from specific philosophical inquiries and considers her work to be a form of conceptual ‘proposition.’ In her interview, she made a distinction between philosophical books and what artists do whilst insisting that artists must create new concepts (in reference to Deleuze) to make interesting work (Müller 2008: 221).

The artists interviewed all said that some philosophy they read had impacted on their work. They also all agreed that when it comes to creating their work, they are not thinking consciously about any of these philosophies. There is a tendency to have absorbed philosophical ideas through more of a “grab bag” approach (Goode 2008: 211), for instance watching a documentary about a philosopher (Müller 2008: 222) or skimming books for ideas that act as “booster rockets” (Goode 2008: 213-4), “hints” (Foreman 2008: 200, 202) or “food” (Müller 2008: 221). All agree that they are promiscuous in their use of ideas and none of them feel impelled to know more about any philosopher than they do. Even Foreman whose apartment is so crowded with books there is barely room for a small table and chairs says, apparently to justify his own approach of skimming books, that Wittgenstein claimed to have never read any book the whole way through (2008: 200). This was the way I read philosophy before engaging in formal practice-based research, which demanded a more rigorous understanding of certain philosophers. However, I have attempted to maintain the light approach implied by these artists in terms of how those philosophies affect Apocryphal’s working process.

Müller refers to her relationship with specific philosophers, primarily Deleuze, Zizek and Nietzsche as if they were friends. She refers to how “our circle of people” refers to these philosophers like they are our friends:

and that’s also the difference between like the academic way of studying you know – I get inspired by them but I don’t study them, you know I don’t examine them, no, they are just like fresh air and I don’t have to – I’ve never read a whole philosophical book...

(2008: 223)

Goode uses philosophical concepts to further explore an initial idea. He does not seem to be interested in any one philosopher as much as he follows trails where they lead. For instance for *Hey Matthew* (2008a) he started with *Growing Up Absurd* (Goodman 1970) and the fact of Goodman’s son’s death whilst climbing a mountain, along with the need to stay in one room with a simple technical set-up and that led him to Locke which led him to Kant which led him to Deleuze (2008: 211). His relationship to philosophy is that of using it to articulate something he is sensing but needs words to explain, because once he can say what something is *like* he can “access the ideas in it” (2008: 219).

Foreman cites his first philosophy teacher at university who had been a student of Ortega as particularly influential. The two philosophers (who may not technically be called philosophers) who are the primary focus for Foreman are Lacan and Gurdjieff. However, he makes clear that he is never trying to explicate their ideas on the stage. Still, as he reads all the time and makes his “interminable jottings” on those readings (2008: 203) these ideas do affect his work. In terms of his own perception of his work, he says that many of the philosophers he has read in the last twenty years help him to justify his work.

...I think they were convincing that what I was doing was right...the main trends, certainly of 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy – a lot of it is very much related - even very secular philosophers are still talking about consciousness in a way that is very similar to the way spiritual and religious thinkers talk about it.

(2008: 199)

Everyone interviewed said that when creating work any type of system or attempt at a system crumbles at the moment of creation, and that has been my experience as well. They would most likely agree with Chaikin (as I do) when he writes:

All prepared systems fail. They fail when they are applied, except as examples of a process which was significant, at some time, for someone or some group. ***Process is dynamic***: it's the evolution that takes place during work. Systems are recorded as ground plans, not to be followed any more than rules of courtship can be followed. ***We can get clues from others, but our own culture and sensibility and aesthetic will lead us into a totally new kind of expression***, unless we simply imitate the process and the findings of another. ***The aesthetic remakes the system***.

(1984: 21 *emphasis mine*)

This of course echoes Robbe-Grillet's insight from Chapter 1 that “each new book tends to establish its own functional laws at the same time as it brings about their destruction” (1965: 47).

They all made a distinction between their conscious and unconscious selves. The idea of being able to speak of one's unconscious desires is of course a logical impossibility, yet probably should be viewed as a statement of humility that refers to decisions and ideas that emerge without conscious intent. This refers back to the hermeneutics of humility mentioned in Chapter 1 and also accords with my experience of both knowing and not knowing what the motivations are behind my own work.

Goode speaks of *Hey Matthew* (2008a) as a “thought experiment” and yet says he feels:

cautious because I didn't set out to make a piece about these different philosophers' portraits and questions...but there is something about having that apparatus even if it means translating it into other forms...

(2008: 212)

This sense of caution is echoed by Foreman and Müller as a desire not to get caught in any one system. Müller keeps herself from getting “inhibited” by not reading philosophy when she is creating work (2008: 221) and in general to shy away from books that are “super solid” and that have:

the power to seduce you to think that's the way to think and no matter how fantastic I think it is, I think once you become an addict, you're not speaking it you're just approving it.

(2008: 224)

Foreman, on the other hand, enjoys reading dense texts because:

I like the style of the riddle or the enigma or the oracle because it frees you to get that first lightening flash that reveals something that you don't develop... I try not to develop things because I think the minute you start developing things and elaborating on things you get trapped in the system.

(2008: 201)

Whilst Müller and Foreman's approach to dense philosophical texts is different, when it comes to how they create their work in the moment, they sound remarkably similar to each other. Foreman refers in his interview about the need to “blank out” and do “what something is telling you to do” (2008: 198, 204). Müller refers to the state she needs to be in when working as “present and alert to the here and now in what's happening, with these people in these conditions” (2008: 224). However, she refers to having a starting concept and Foreman readily admits that he is a very “conditioned” person whose ‘blank’ state is obviously affected by all he has read (2008: 198, 200). My experience of working with philosophical ideas is somewhere between these two, as I can enjoy dense texts, but also can understand Müller's fear of seduction of the “super solid” ideas. Working through my relationship with philosophical ideas in this way is discussed in Chapter 3 especially in relation to the difference in relationship to ideas between working on *The Jesus Guy* and *Besides* (and in the methodologies section of Chapter 1 in relation to witnessing versus surveillance).

Everyone interviewed said that any philosophical ideas that manifest in their work happen in some unconscious way whilst they are creating. They believe their exposure to philosophical ideas have affected them as people and therefore their work, but no one uses

any particular philosopher or philosophy to guide their practical decisions. However, everyone did say they had some kind of system for correcting what seemed to “not work” and that there were certain aesthetic or conceptual ideas favoured over others at these moments in time. They all insisted that the artistic space was a place to allow for all kinds of contradictions, impulses and intuitions some of which may or may not make sense.

At a conference in 2006 in Loughborough to inaugurate their Foreman archive, I asked Foreman what he thought about taking guidance from any type of philosophical or political idea, to which he replied emphatically: No, *No*, you can’t worry about any of that! Even if you look like a reactionary, you can’t let that affect you. You have to let all of that go!

However, everyone has elements of reflection built into their working process, and each artist’s balancing or unbalancing act emerged in the interviews. When I asked them to describe how they made artistic decisions with a focus on those moments wherein they think yes that works or no, that does not work, they all gave remarkably similar responses, especially given how different their work is from each other. In terms of what works everyone mentioned multiplicities and/or ambiguity of possible readings either directly or indirectly in what they are looking for though Goode and Foreman were more concrete about that than Müller. There was also a distinction between a larger idea that does seem to enter into the rehearsal room and the smaller decisions that get made in the moment. This accords with my experience working with Apocryphal, and the details of our working and evaluative processes will be discussed in depth in Chapter 3 and 4.

Goode when asked what makes a moment resonant for him mentions multiplicity explicitly: “working in theatre has always been about being a technician of that kind of multiplicity” which he defines as:

...about the phrase that you can work from and represent in different contexts and in different ways and it will be available for that and no single presentation will ever present the whole of the content or the implication of that phrase....

(2008: 216)

Foreman refers to moments he likes as “really dense, really tricky and hard to get your head around but very clear” (2008: 205). He does not like things that are “stupid” by which he means “something obvious, banal, too one-dimensional” (*ibid.*). Müller talks about her initial task when devising as having to

find something very simple but that can include all sorts of questions about body, movement, collective imagination, you know things like that...

(2008: 225)

She is glad when after seeing a show many times she sees something new that she had not intended “and that’s also a moment when you think, yes, I made good choices, you know, I made choices that allow other things to happen (*ibid.*). Whilst she does focus on creating resonant moments in rehearsals, she believes to start multiplicity “has to be there. Or it is a tyrant proposal, which is kind of stupid, just one line of thinking” (*ibid.*).

OK: despite the improvised character of these forces, with handmaids bearing loaves, ending the Inquisition, during the seven years that I taught Greek, Men will know that I am the LORD, the eating of the bleeding goblets, those “things utterly non-human and immoral” knows that an annunciation is sometimes true.

Therefore, the knowledge of God is not speculative.

The ship sailed on, out of the Ocean Stream, then stood by weeping while the flame burnt through The way of heaven-

That wasn’t Western!

What!

The last bit, “the way of heaven”.

How do you know?

Trust me. She tells me things.

She *tells* you things?

Yeah.

OK, so where is it from then?

Lao Tzu. Eastern guy.

Right. Eastern guy.

But Jesus was supposedly influenced by –

Yeah, yeah, Buddhism, we know, we know...

For both Müller and Goode the body is a central location for where philosophy and theatre meet, though they have very different ways of negotiating this. When Goode speaks about the translation of a text onto a body, bodies, he says:

*...what is missing for me in the philosophical text is the body...I have to translate those ideas onto a visible body in a visible space before I understand what that might mean and it doesn't have to be for me a kind of accurate mapping and I think that's really important as well...reading Sarah Armand's work which I find kind of fascinating but difficult to read and kind of dense ... the way that that word spills out in various directions I am immediately mapping that onto at least the idea of a body and the idea of a space and ...then the inquiry for me in a way lets that text drift away – it's been a booster rocket and the inquiry for me is about the travel between the idea of the body and the idea of the room and the body in the room.*

(2008: 213)

Goode gets to the crux of the issue here in terms of philosophical texts as they relate to creating live performance events. The gap he senses between written philosophy and how to translate it into an actual room or a body resonates with everyone interviewed. In this gap is where theatre has the potential to become act as philosophy.

Goode's focus on the body in the room in *Hey Matthew* also uses the room as body whilst focusing on bodies in the room. One performing body, Liron's, predominates, though Goode becomes visible and at one point quite vulnerable to Liron. Liron is visible in the room we share, and we are invited to follow him as he plays in and between three different types of 'rooms' (areas that indicate separate rooms contained in one larger room), one having a bed, another area covered with science-fiction cartoons and another one plastered with pictures of movie stars. He is also visible on a video projection naked in a hotel room in which a camera follows him as he masturbates in a mirror. A recording weaves a narration of the death whilst mountain climbing of Paul Goodman's 21-year old son, Matthew with Goodman's philosophical texts. Goode described the 'engine' of this piece in the interview as:

*a series of five readings of rooms, an idea of a room, the room that everyone is in in a performance and the room that that room occupies and the other rooms that are legible in that room conceptually and otherwise and one of the things that I'm doing is drawing on the way that philosophers have also drawn on the idea of a room to also represent a speculative space...*

(2008: 211)

*Hey Matthew* breaks not only the stage frame but also Goode's own role as safe director/writer. Whilst Liron is made vulnerable through his raw presence and the lack of



boundaries between him and the audience, Goode makes himself even more vulnerable through a kind of confessional love letter written the night before to Liron that he expects to fail. Goode moves from the sidelines in the room where he has sat behind a computer to stand in the middle of the room with him on the verge of fighting or tenderness. Whether this is a repeatable event is not clear as the night I saw it, it appeared to be a real encounter. There are implicit questions of who we are witnessing this event, what the power relationship is between Goode and Liron and the nature of authorship. Therefore, the work raises ethical questions that have philosophical implications, which is where Goode sees his work in relationship to philosophy in the theatre.

What about Lucretius?

What about him?

He didn't believe in a soul.

True. It didn't exist yet. At least not written down anyway, at least according to Wikipedia (and other sources that shall remain nameless, until they are deemed nameable, because I – I mean 'we' – decide that – but of course as 'we' all know there is no 'real' anyway, so citation is like, fascistic or something, right...?)

Right?

Right?

Um, I'm not sure.

I wish you'd get over your patriarchal need for Definition!

Yeah, I'll work on it.

Nice?

Yeah.

Nice?!

Yeah. Nice.

Well, O.K.

O.K.

Yeah.

The deep blue and purple sea. The kind you can't even believe is real when you first see it, but there it is underneath the Boat, lapping up and around the prow, so seductively, so invitingly, so menacingly....saying:

Yes, yes, come in and see if you can Swim here....I know your boat might've cost a lot of Money....I know it might have cost a lot time and effort and time is, of course, Money ...but maybe, it's Time, you know, to Let it Go...just, kinda, really, you know, just Let it Go....see what the Water feels like. See how it is to swim in the water. All by yourself. No life boat. No life raft. Nothing but you and the Deep Blue Sea.

This territory of ethics and philosophy is that which Müller explicitly covers in her work. Her work addresses the material role of the performer on stage, the authority of who is speaking and the issue of who gets to be the philosopher in the room. In *How Heavy Are My Thoughts?* (2003),<sup>41</sup> she interviews on video an academic philosopher, a physicist and a biologist asking them, in her role as I.M. (a humorous pun, using her own initials, on Descartes' famous "I think therefore I am"): If my thoughts are heavy, will my head be heavier too? The philosopher interviewed, Dr. Bojana Kunst, speaks about lighter and heavier thoughts and how light thoughts are better (making references to both Descartes and Deleuze). In the live performance, Bill Aitchison appears on stage as a scientist apologizing for Müller's absence and attempts to explain to the audience what has become of her since she left behind this video footage and increasingly bizarre diary entries about her futile search for the answer to her question (which includes weighing people's heads on a scale, asking them to think happy or sad thoughts and seeing if the scale changes). As Bleeker writes:

*How Heavy Are My Thoughts?* shows thinking in Deleuzian terms as something that happens 'in between': between people, and between people and the things they find themselves confronted with. It is precisely the attempt at excluding the rest of the world that results in Ivana Müller's increasing madness.

(Bleeker in Cull 2009: 157)

Müller, the artist (not I.M.) works in dialogue with other people when she creates work and prefers to think in conversation (2008: 221), so Bleeker's comments are particularly apt in relation to how she works, and also serves to undermine the great singular author myth. As

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<sup>41</sup> An excellent description of this piece and analysis of its relation to Deleuze and Guattari's idea of 'The Idiot' in relation to Descartes is Maïke Bleeker's article "Thinking Through Theatre" (Bleeker in Cull 2009: 147-160).

Bleeker says in relation to Deleuze and Guattari's critique of the Cartesian conflation of the thinker with the thought: "We are being thought rather than thinking" (2009: 157).

Müller says of the creation of this piece:

I was thinking and concretely working on the knowledge as power position you know because in the piece there's Bill, he's not exactly a professor but he has a position that is a little bit like that. You know, do we trust him, do we take it for granted because he's a male, it's someone who is well-spoken, the way how he speaks, I think we can recognize from the world of academia and so I wanted to ... shake all those ... ideas because it's really like that ... because a lot of people you know they were not sure if she [the philosopher] was a real philosopher or not, because ... if you put these ideas in this context they start to be very poetic you know almost funny, or, so this I think is very interesting and I think this is in pretty much all of my work.

(2008: 221)

She insists as mentioned in Chapter 1 that artists are the thinkers and do create concepts, and references Deleuze's in this regard. She questions in her work the authority of the official philosopher, which implies a challenge to the larger grid of authorities.

But as he said about classical music once:

It gives you the illusion that you can own your own home.

Right he did say that. And so what did *he* do?

Composed silence.

Among other things.

Müller's relationship to the body is informed by her dance background and she considers her use of text choreographic. She likes to play with language puns especially turning common phrases having to do with the body on their head so to speak, for instance over-literalizing a common saying with *How Heavy Are My Thoughts?* She speaks in the interview of the body as thinking when it is in motion and thought also being embodied as illustrated by the phrase "a body of ideas" and "a body of thought." She goes on to say it is important to:

***try to think about the text as a body, a physical body and the theatre as a body***, and we apply this idea about movement in it, then everything starts to be part of the story and then you know we are very much observing the interconnection and things that are taken for granted, all kinds of conventions that are there, if you start to examine them and ***use them as metaphors for conventions, we have so many of them in life ...it*** starts to create some kind of thinking that comes a little bit out of ordinary...

(2008: 227 ***emphasis mine***)

Her use of the theatre as body is an apt metaphor and one that she uses continually in her work, which locates not only the performers but also the audience in a body which is then looked at from the inside. This concept relates to Apocryphal's idea of the grid, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3, but is noted here because of the striking similarity of the idea whilst using a metaphor we have not used in Apocryphal. Her piece *Under My Skin* (2005) took this metaphor literally as the audience was taken through part of a body created through uses of shifting flats, sound, projections and people declaring themselves body parts or in charge of body parts.

Speaking of inconsistencies, why isn't the soul mentioned in the Bible?

Didn't exist yet.

Oh.

Who invented it?

In the most concrete way, Müller is engaged with movement (and theatre) as *a way of thinking*:

because *I think if you think you do move*, you are alert, you are in contact, you interact *and when you move you can see better*, because you can turn around you can see some angles then when you are static uh...so I think that for me there is a direct link between thinking and dancing...

(2008: 227 *emphasis mine*)

For Müller the gap between philosophy and practice only exists if she is trying to consciously use an "official philosopher" in her work, but as she does not do that, instead allowing herself to feel the direct link between thinking and moving, in her work she does not feel a conflict.

Watching the two men rub their hands all over her body, like they owned her. She sat there stoically looking forward, I think pretending she wasn't there. She was older, not young anymore but not old either. This was clearly her life. This was clearly not the life she had intended. You feel a shame in the memory because you too were crossing boundaries as you watched her being groped. You were ashamed of your actions and felt about as helpless as she looked, but you weren't. You just felt that way. Or maybe you were. A life-size picture of Duke Ellington smiling over the whole scene. Lots of cigarette smoke, and a very tired jazz set playing. It was about 5:00 a.m. You were Not drunk at the time. You had thrown the dice, or so you said to yourself. And you had. And you did.

She did.

Yes.

Good Friday.

Always another fucking crucifixion.

You'd think we'd be sick of them by now, wouldn't you?

You can set your watch by them these days.

Good Friday.

Good for Whom exactly?

Did he Want to be sacrificed? Does Anyone Ever?

Did anyone want that kind of Guilt?

Who has sinned against whom?

Hey, you, could you get Down from the Fucking Cross????

Could we try this, you know, a Different Way?

I consider it a great privilege to have had such a father -

Oh stop quoting Nietzsche, it's tiresome, and well, all of them and their Father this, Father that business....

You're being quite literal. You do know that, don't you? I mean this tiresome cod feminism...

Cod feminism?

Well, yeah.  
COD Feminism???

You heard me. It's boring, B O R I N G...boring.

The cracks in Foreman's system are embedded within his own contradictions. For example, Foreman answered a question about how he started writing and what its relationship was to philosophy initially this way:

I remember starting to write a different kind of play at a certain point – ***basically on the basis of having a slightly mystical experience but also coincidentally thinking that I wanted the experience of watching a play to have something to do with the reading experience...***

(2008: 197 *emphasis mine*)

Since the mention of a mystical experience surprised me<sup>42</sup>, I asked him to elaborate. He then said:

My one main mystical experience and I don't claim it's special I know that many, many people have similar experiences was one time when in frustration I threw myself plop down on the bed and at the moment I hit the bed it was as if my head turned into this globe that was about 6 feet in diameter, 8 feet in diameter I don't know but ***everything inside of me was on this transparent globe and everything in the outside world was in this transparent globe so they were in the same place, and they were all there everything was there at once*** it was all perfect and it was just ecstatic and I felt that way for maybe 20 minutes, which is a long time for an experience like that, and then it gradually faded and I could remember that night what it was like and the next day I couldn't remember the feeling anymore, I could remember that it happened, but I couldn't feel it, ***but you know that didn't directly seem to influence what I was writing.***

(*ibid.*: 197-8 *emphasis mine*)

The mystical experience Foreman refers to twice within a very short period of time, and yet re-orientates in terms of whether it did or did not influence his writing, is important in terms of both contradiction and the emergence of a worldview, which can embrace contradiction. In describing the mystical experience he changes his story and says that this experience did not directly cause the shift in his writing, which appears to contradict what he said moments before. A few moments later in the interview he says that he does not trust what he says about his own work, but then adds that he has been saying the same kind of things for over 40 years so there may be some truth in it (*ibid.*: 197).

The reality shift caused by the mystical experience can perhaps be seen to give a way of seeing what appear as contradictions as simply part of the same thing. If “everything inside of me...and everything in the outside world...were in the same place...and everything was there at once it was all perfect” then simple cause and effect no longer holds. If “everything” is in the same place, then that “everything” has to include both all ideas about causality and their contradiction. Foreman's mystical experience dominates his insights and makes sense of what on the surface appear to be incompatible ideas.

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<sup>42</sup> The reason for my interest in his mystical experience is explained in Chapter 3 (pp.97-99).

Yes.

No.

Maybe.

That's the problem right there!

It's where it all goes Wrong.

Choice?

Yes. Choice, the illusion of, p. 94.

What book is that?

It's figurative for Christsakes. Jesus.

Oh, that again.

It's a Figure of Speech.

It's a damn sight more than that!

OK, OK...

Think about what you say, for Once, just Think first before saying, writing, whatever the fuck it is you're doing.

Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust.

Nietzsche. Yes.

What? That was Shakespeare.

It was Nietzsche. He said that thing, in that last thing he wrote about the Four Great Errors, that you can't condemn anyone for anything they've done because it's never actually a choice.

Nietzsche said that?

Yeah, something like that....wait here it is:

The error of false causality.

What?

You know when you think a caused b because they happen one after the other, but they might not have anything to do with each other....

No, no you mean the Other error...here it is:

*The error of free will.*

Yeah, yeah, that's the one...where he talks about how the will to hold accountable by intentions is the will to punish, right, that one!

One is necessary, one is a piece of fate, one belongs to the whole, one *is* in the whole – there exists nothing which could judge, measure, compare or condemn our being, for that would be to judge, measure, compare, condemn the whole...*But nothing exists apart from the whole!*

Hard to argue with that.

Yes, it is.

Hard to argue.

With that.

....thus alone is the innocence of becoming restored.

But what about the torturers?

What about them?

Can't we judge them?

Isn't that what they're doing?

What?

The torturers are judging. That's what they are doing. They are part of that 'moral order', aren't they?

But what about us?

What about us?

Shouldn't we judge them?



From where?

From here!

But Nietzsche said it already, we are *part* of the whole. How can we *judge* any of it if we're *in* it?

So we just accept it, just let people do horrible things and sit around and agree with Nietzsche?!

When I asked him if he worked with contradictory philosophies, his answer is typical Foreman, namely: yes, maybe, no, well kind of, but no:

Yeah, probably...I don't think about it in those terms, because I'm looking for you know I remember Wittgenstein saying that he doesn't read books, he just looks through them for hints and I'm looking for hints. So *they may be contradictory if you place them properly in the context of the whole system but they're not contradictory in terms of my choices.*

(*ibid.*: 200 *emphasis mine*)

Foreman is correct that he does in the end create a world in which those contradictions do not remain contradictory. However, when speaking, he does contradict himself and acknowledges his own internal conflicts. As the following section of my interview with Foreman shows the extent to which he speaks in apparent contradiction and gives a flavour of our conversation, it is quoted here in its entirety:

J: Right, right, but I guess what I'm getting at is that when I see your work, and I've seen a lot of it, that it seems like one of the things I like about it a lot actually is that it seems like you've got, it's almost like you're arguing with yourself, there's a lot of arguments going on as opposed to resolving them and saying blah blah blah.

R: Oh no, but I think less argument but more rather saying you know life is such and such, but you take that seriously? It's trying also to indicate ironically that it's just anything that is said, you know the selection of one possibility out of a million and different perspectives and in the end they are all equally relevant which I do believe.

J: So is that one of the reasons why you're trying to move now into that more of a seeing place in a sense or from what you said getting out of what you said the great art mode or whatever?

R: Yeah, but not consciously, and I'm having difficulty and I probably won't escape it but I've been always drifting that way for many years or trying to drift that way but I always get pulled back because in a way I have been conditioned by something else by another kind of psychological upbringing, psychological orientation that I've always been trying to escape but I suspect I never will.

J: Do you really want to?

R: Maybe not, I don't know, I mean I say that I want to. And the pole that the alternative way provides keeps me going in a way.

J: Which is the alternative, I'm sorry I got lost there?

R: The alternative is the totally more open neutral way, like Barthes' book that just came out in English a couple years ago called *The Neutral*, which was a wonderful book I thought, talking about just about the whiteness of things, the blankness of things and the neutrality of things as the source of great psychic energy, but all those people – all the people that everybody always talks about –

J: The French men.

R: Yeah, and there are some German guys, some British, you know everywhere, there are even a few Americans!

J: Yeah, I know, heaven forefend...oh yeah, I was just thinking of - in terms of a specific philosopher in your actual experience back to that quote that – I know you're not into Lacan right now – but what you wrote about in *Unbalancing Acts* about being a dumb reader of Lacan and the sense of looking at it – it seemed like what you were saying, my understanding of it was that you were writing – that the writing was dealing with the difficulty you had with it somehow, I don't know if that's a misunderstanding on my part –

Why do you think they did that?

Who?

Whoever – invented the soul?

I don't know if anyone invented it. Maybe it was there all along and then discovered!

Like America?

Right, like America.

Be serious.

What?

America was already here.

I know that's my point.

But it wasn't 'America' was it?

Sure it was.

No it wasn't. It was just a bunch of land with some people here and it was not called 'America'. Get it?

Ummm.

Like with Freud and the idea of psychology, same thing. Dreams used to be visitations, messages, whatever, then they became something to be interpreted. Looked at. *Used*.

R: Well, maybe, I'm not sure that's true. I think I said that but it may or may not be true. I mean I've read a ton of Lacan, a lot of secondary stuff. I have a whole bookcase full of books on Lacan. There's Lacan also but again I read –I'm looking for hints, and I've never felt guilty about skimming through books until something caught my eye and marking that and sometimes getting caught and reading a little more densely.

(2008: 200-1)

The way Foreman speaks here is indicative of the way he makes theater and what makes his theater so rich, dense, funny and sad. It is also important for this thesis to acknowledge that his written idea of his relation to Lacan as a "stupid reader" is also contradicted. Creative processes and the way they are viewed by the artist are always subject to change and simply cannot be pinned down into a system, not even one which appears to open a door.

Finally, in terms of how Foreman actually works with others in the theatre, whilst he gives himself a lot of latitude when writing or designing, when working with actors, he says:

I think a more reactionary self takes over to be in charge to show people I know what I'm doing and I find it very difficult to sit there and let anything happen because I'm not particularly interested in what the actors will invent.

(2008: 198)

He does not work with designers anymore because he could not "be as sloppy and stupid at certain moments" (*ibid.*) when working with his own models. With his writing he feels complete freedom to just allow what comes. However, having watched him rehearse briefly with actors, it is clear he allows himself that freedom as a director as well. He does not leave much room for actor improvisation but he changes his own staging ideas in a split second, following his own intuitive process.

This points to the overriding contradiction in Foreman's process, especially in light of his mystical experience, which is between his stated desire to question why this moment rather than another and his artistic method in which he does precisely that (controlling the writing, directing, stage design, lighting and sound of all of his work). One could call this hypocritical if he was claiming to have a consistent philosophy, but it is this very contradiction which makes his theater what it is, a tightly controlled event that nonetheless has the effect of opening a door for the viewer to let go of control of the need for narrative or the need to see any one moment as more important than another. His philosophical concerns manifest in the effect of the shows rather than in the process by which he creates them. This is the greatest distinction between his work and mine, in that when I work with other members of Apocryphal it is in complete collaboration and the players ultimately make all their own decisions in performance, so I cannot control the outcome of our work.

Everyone interviewed agreed that theatre can be philosophy and that their work could be seen as a form of philosophy. They made distinctions between theatre and philosophy, but all agree that the two cross over into each other. Foreman at first said no but then said:

though what I'm doing is trying to make an object that reflects the truth in some way as I experience it, I don't know if experience is a good word, but I'm trying to reflect something about the truth so I guess in a sense that's philosophy.

(2008: 203)

Whilst the idea of truth may be considered questionable in contemporary philosophy, having seen Foreman's work, the truth he is pointing to is not stable but has to do with an awareness of flux, yet which resonates with the reader/creator/audience member in some way that leads us to relearn to look at the world. It is not arbitrary but points to the gap between that which is happening outside of the direct control of an individual's experience and that individual's perception of that which is happening. Foreman echoes Merleau-Ponty's definition of philosophy when he says:

I wanted the experience of watching a play to have something to do with the reading experience – *to get the same kind of... aesthetic kick that I got from reading a dense text that would continually flip me around and reintroduce me into seeing the world in a different way.*

(2008: 197 *emphasis mine*)

Müller believes that in creating new work "what is very exciting is somehow when making work to make your own philosophy" (2008: 221). She spoke about theatre as a form of philosophy and insisted that artists should create their own philosophy and concepts and that the act of proposing concepts creates a kind of energy whether correct or not.

Determining whether a proposition is right or not implies some authority you can go to which can answer that question for you. Müller enjoys reading philosophy, but it is the issue of who is authorized to be a philosopher with which she has the argument. For instance when discussing her working process, she says, in relation to believing certain philosophical propositions are right or wrong:

maybe we are coming down to the area of authorities and things like that, I think when you are working and you are creating you have to drop all that to be present and alert in here and now in what's happening, with these people in these conditions...  
(*ibid*: 224)

Goode says the theatre he thinks about now “begins more and more to feel like a species of philosophical thinking” (2008: 211). He speaks later of his work as a fundamentally ethical practice, which is “available for a philosophical reading” (Goode 2008: 217) but then goes on to say what he considers unique to theatre itself that implies an act of philosophy:

...that distinctiveness of the theatrical transaction how opposed to anything else we might do in a room together ...theatre exceeds performance and I'm very interested in that whatever it is around that kind of performative situation... all the other things that theatre is that are not performed ...that we can call real or whatever and I kind of feel like ***the philosophical cogency of theatre probably resides as much in that moat area which .. is suffused with those ethical commitments that isn't speculative, that is a practice rather than a conceptualization*** ...that might be as available to a kind of philosophical condensation as the performance ...is about the what if, it's as much about the what is that is...

(*ibid. emphasis mine*)

Goode's argument for a kind of practice-based philosophy here is important for the argument of this thesis, especially as he locates it in a “theatre that exceeds performance.”

We then discussed Aristotle and how theatre has been used as a metaphor by philosophy for a long time because the theatrical space is as much conceptual as it is real. Goode articulated the fiction of the theatrical space as “the place we go in order to have a theatrical experience but it's different from the show, you know ***the theatrical experience is not the show***” (2008: 218 *emphasis mine*).

This led to my speculation as a ‘dumb reader’ of Deleuze and Guattari that perhaps they were pointing to embodying concepts that are molecular and multiplicitous rather than a conceptualization that stays still and perhaps in this way theatre can point to a necessary correction of philosophy as a stable concept. In other words, if most contemporary philosophers agree that reality is not a fixed state, then how can an essay get anywhere close to that reality? The idea is fixed on paper, it is stable and argued and therefore already a

fiction. Theatre too is a fiction but one that offers itself as such (along with creating these “moat areas” that exceed that fiction) and therefore perhaps can offer a unique space for acts of philosophy that can only happen within this shared space in time.

Müller also made reference to this shared time as distinct from books “that make such an incredible impact you can feel it almost everywhere” but that

the difference...here is that everyone is present in the same space...although you are an individual I think your perception of what is offered there is...different and you also question differently... also the space of ambiguity and position taking for the spectator is created and I love that...I think it's interesting when you say, did she say that, is that what she meant...

(2008: 229-30)

Most striking in the similarities between them, they all have a method to make things not too smooth or easily digestible. For Goode the term he refers to is “scuffing” which he uses “to reduce the pristine-ness of an idea or a presentation of an image...it's about making a kind of jaggedness or a kind of roughness something that snags the attention and that doesn't...play well with the other kids” (2008: 216); for Müller it has to do with allowing in initially accidental misspellings and misinterpretations because “the best inventions happen by mistake” (2008: 228); and for Foreman it has to do with getting rid of anything about which he catches himself thinking “wow, that'll get 'em, that'll please 'em” (2008: 206).

This desire to make things somehow less than perfect appears to emerge comes from a conscious or unconscious idea about philosophy itself. In Müller's case it has to do with her feeling that to think you understand a certain philosophy “is even dangerous and you might go a little wrong” (2008: 228). Foreman does not want to develop ideas because “I suppose the people who don't develop things are poets” (2008: 201). Goode identifies his use of philosophical stimulus as unreliable like memory and

it kind of gets traded off at the point that it comes through the door a kind of availability to a promiscuity of ideas is kind of more interesting to me than ...what would be an academic-y thing of rendering those ideas into a kind of a staged delivery.

(Goode 2008: 216)

There appears to be a relationship between the kinds of philosophies that interest these artists (most of which have to do with multiplicity and distrust of systems), their attraction to and suspicion of getting too involved in understanding even these philosophical systems and their artistic choices, all of which lead to a dynamic relationship between themselves and their work, their collaborators, their audiences and to philosophy itself. Apocryphal's work also

embodies philosophical contradictions and has many rough edges (in our case not all intentional, however, except inasmuch as the structures we create inevitably lead to this roughness), as is clear when watching our shows.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, I propose it is here in the cracks between any philosophies and smooth systems in this dynamic of lively imperfection, where an act of philosophy can take place.

As Bleeker says in her essay on Müller, Deleuze and Guattari themselves offer the prospect of art, philosophy and science becoming indistinguishable wherein they “share the same shadow,” which is constituted of that which they are not. In reference to the shadow of the three distinguishable planes, she goes on to propose that “‘this that which they are not’ ... is *theatricality*: as constitutive of modern thinking, but also that which has to go unnoticed in order for the cogito to appear as the origin of his own thoughts” (Bleeker 2009: 159).

Fuchs prefigures this proposal when she writes:

...postmodernism is that moment in culture when the last ontological defenses crumble into theatre. It is in that space, in that *scene*, that a poststructuralism that risks giving up politics in order to jettison metaphysical binaries coincides with a feminism throwing over the patriarchal binary in order to make a new politics. It is the intersection where once more the Sphinx and “man” confront each other.  
(Fuchs 1996: 155)

In other words, as with the iconographic Oedipus, we must give up on the “cogito,” the safe place of viewing from a seemingly stable “I” platform, in order to see and hear what is in front of us.

Where do we go from here? Towards theatre ... We have eyes as well as ears, and it is our business while we are alive to use them.

(Cage 1973: 12)

Without allowing for the shadow we are blind and deaf and it is in the theatre that we are allowed to practice becoming not “I.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The concepts and tools for creating this work and their relationship to the artists and philosophers mentioned are outlined in detail in Chapter 3.

<sup>44</sup> *Not I* (Beckett 1984: 216-223) is the title of Beckett’s play which is embodied only by a mouth who refers to itself as ‘she’ never “I.” Less well known is that the staging includes a person in a “full loose black djellaba with hood” standing in silence witnessing the mouth. ‘She’ is not ‘I’ but nor is she alone, this witness intended to be a stand-in for the audience who has crossed the threshold of the stage, making less discernible the category between spectators and actors, between ‘us’ and ‘them.’

Great

But then he kept saying things like - yeah, if I Knew I was going to die, then I'd want to jump from a plane, ya know, jump without a parachute....I mean Imagine the Rush. You know you're going to die soon, but right before that, woah, that'd be the Ultimate Rush. Man. I've bunge jumped before, ya know. And man, I was on the platform and this guy is like, are you ready, and I'm like, no, man, I'm not *ready* and then I'm on the Edge and he kinda like Pushes me and I'm falling forward and I'm so fucking scared and I think I'm going to die, but then I don't and Man - the Total Fucking Rush. That fucking high was so fucking high man. I can't even explain how high. Yeah, man, that's the high I want to go out on. The rush, man. The high. The Rush. Fuck yeah. Ya know? Maybe shoot up and smoke some crack, too, man. Yeah. Get as high as you fucking can, then like, jump out of a plane or off a cliff or some shit. Yeah. Get as High as you Can....

Yeah.

What does She think?

Oh, not Her again.

Well, She does creep into it now and again, doesn't she?

Why?

Because it's *unavoidable*.

Why?

Because she's *here*.

She's here?!

Yes. Always.

Like the Soul???

Kind of. Yeah, like the *soul*.

That's different.

Yes.

We're not coming up with a consistent thing here, are we?

*[long pause to stare at whoever said that (or wrote that, esp. if you are the person who got stuck saying it)]*



Jesus Wept.

All those colors darting across the screen. Pinks, reds, oranges, purples. Each tiny film strip painted meticulously with his soul. No mere representation enough, but instead his Soul splayed out there for all to see, one frame at a time. A miracle really. And real, too. And no miracle, but hour upon hour of devotion to his Work.

So anyway, the little girl goes into little Bobby's room and the parents are listening over the walkie talkie thing and she says to him "Hey, Bobby, can you tell me about God again, I forgot."

Wow....She forgot?

Yeah, she forgot.

But then how did she know to ask?

I guess because she hadn't quite forgotten but was afraid she would, or maybe she had a *feeling* of something she couldn't remember.

Did the baby tell her anything?

I don't know. They didn't get that part on the walkie talkie bit.

Thank God.

You can say that again.

I mean it.

You are moving away from us. You are wondering what's going on. You don't know what's going on. You Shouldn't know what's going on. No one Ever Knows what's going on.

Ever.

Remember when the woman who looked like your Barbie Doll was yelling at you because her two children were in the burning building and you couldn't rescue them? Remember how you woke up screaming and even the ocean outside, the bell-buoy and all the stars in the world that were visible in the sky could not comfort you? You were maybe five I think.

You don't remember the famous words or the flag or the golf balls...you only remember a grainy black and white picture and your mother gently waking you up over and over again to watch it. The man stepping on the moon for the first time. The astronauts spoke through microphones which sounded like walky-talkies. They walked on air. They looked like fragile snowmen who would float away. You were tired mostly, but could feel in the electric air that it was important. The adults were very excited.

She was speaking about her experiences, and then these guys started interjecting with their stories, about beautiful Views they had seen. Her story got lost in the discussion of Scenery, and she interjected, and said, you know, I'm not Finished yet. And they said, oh, sorry and let her go on, but by then of course, she didn't know what else to say and felt guilty. She said that instead, that she felt guilty. One of the older men smiled at her knowingly. She was grateful.

Should she have been Grateful?

Well, that's how she Felt.

Great. For what? A connection.

I guess, yeah, the connection.

With the Older Man.

Yes. It felt nice to her. Yes.

Back to nice.

Well, yeah.

Pussyfairycocksuckermotherfuckercunt.

You gotta break some eggs.....

Yeah, yeah.

Different guy.

Same guy.

Same guy. Different guy.

One guy. Another guy.

Same guy.

When a bookstore decided to add to its "women's literature" section a "men's literature" section (which of course included most of the classics) everyone got really upset and they changed it back to "women's literature" and "literature".

Oh well.

A lot of words.

Words?

Words words words

Yeah, a lot of words. Quoting other people, and then what was true is not, and what is true now won't be later. That kind of thing.

Great.

It gets better...Apparently, according to the same guy, "God is not operable."

Wow, like there's a problem?

He doesn't seem to think so.

But it sounds like a toy that doesn't work right when you buy it. Like that Mister Potato Head she got for her birthday once that didn't have the plastic potato. Remember?

Yeah, that was a drag.

All those little parts, noses and eyes and whatnot and no potato.

Right, no potato.

Like God?

Yeah, lots of little parts, something you can guess about maybe – some ornamentation at best, but no Potato. In the end, He's not operable.

Do we want the eggy-weggy to become a baby-boo?

Hmmmm?

Somehow that question never made it into any of the classics.

Oh well.

Thoreau's Mother. Why is she never mentioned in the famed Thoreauvian economics. The woman who baked pies for the saint of Walden Pond. Probably gave him socks, too. Why is she never mentioned? Why does Jesus foresake his mother? What IS that all about? What's the problem with Mothers? Why so much shame? Bodies? The Mess of it? Mortality? What?! We are not born of fathers or even Fathers, but instead this very fleshy, flesh that gets born and gets sick and gets healthy again and then ages and eventually dies. No philosophy, no economics, no sociology, no religion, will ever be complete until Mothers can simply exist. The body exists. We are Here, and then we are Not here. We come into the world vulnerable and someone has to take care of us or we are Fucked. Period. Perhaps this is the issue...perhaps the problem is not so much of gender even but just the God-awful sense of Oh, No, I'm Dependent on Something Outside of Me. Somehow that is Unacceptable to the Mind...the Mind of One Who Writes Stuff Down. And not just in some kind of Abstract Spiritual Sense as an adult, but in a very real, tangible sense as a baby, as a child....You Had to be Taken Care of..... AAAAAAHHHHHHH. Nooooooooooooo. Very scary.

Is biology destiny?

Oh God, I hope not.

But, there are the phone calls and the gynecologists and the questions and the concerns about all the Internal Functions.

I mean, I even LIKE Thoreau. I think he was Right about – well – practically everything. It just really bugs me that he never mentions his Mother's Pies in his incredibly detailed Economy.



**Fred Backus as special guest and Bouras in *Besides, you lose your soul* 2009.**

### Chapter III: Apocryphal Theatre: Practicing Philosophies

This chapter introduces multiple concepts created by and employed in Apocryphal Theatre's work and will therefore be broken down into sub-sections. Section A will focus on Apocryphal's lab in the context of the creation of two primary concepts: the **witness** and the **grid**, and the three primary tools with which we put these concepts into practice: **cutting up**, **levels of address** and **levels of presence**. How these concepts and tools were created and how they relate to the philosophers and artists discussed in the previous chapter will be discussed. Sections B and C will focus on how these concepts and tools have been used and have evolved in the process of creating *The Jesus Guy* and *Besides, you lose your soul or the History of Western Civilisation* respectively. For the two shows (Sections B and C) there will be two additional subsections: **text** (in order to discuss the relation of written text to the research) and **other tools** (to briefly describe tools created for each show that do not fit into any one category and were created for needs of that show). A chronology with details of who was involved in the labs and shows and where these took place is attached as Appendix D.



Ellis in *Besides, you lose your soul...* 2009

Each concept and tool is related to one or more of the three research questions outlined in the introduction, as follows:

1. If we can locate (**witness**) *the reality-grid of right now* (**the grid**), and make it visible (**cutting up, levels of address and presence**) in the room, is it then rendered mutable?

2. How can we challenge our core assumptions, personal and political, by *owning them as our own ...exploring the depths of our own assumptions/investments and investigating our own “desiring machines”?* (**witnessing the grid, cutting up levels of address**)
3. How can we create *theatrical pieces that uproot the static nature of language, gesture, character, etc. in such a way as to bring about this process of becoming?* (**cutting up levels of address and levels of presence / witnessing the grid**)

This chapter will look at Apocryphal’s practice in general through the working definitions of these concepts and tools and then how they are applied in the following sections. An evaluation of the practice as related to the larger question of if Apocryphal can be seen to be creating acts of philosophy is the focus of Chapter 4. This chapter is focused more on the how and what of the practice as it relates to our own working definitions and tools.

#### **A. The Lab: playing with concepts.**

The lab can be seen as a kind of philosophical testing ground wherein we are continually seeking to relearn to look at the world. In this attempt, concepts emerge, such as the grid, the witness, cutting up levels of address and presence, which contain within them paradoxes that are not necessarily resolved but are somehow embodied in practice (such as Ellis’ experience in the lab showing). We know we are in fruitful territory when we are seeing new things and the world becomes unfamiliar again, lighter, more molecular. When working in a way that is not useful, the whole room can feel heavy and stuck. Sometimes, we need to work through these darker times and there is something to learn through sheer repetition of an exercise for example, or sometimes we need to let a new concept go and shift course. We evaluate our work periodically as a group, so that no matter where we have gone, we can get back on track and even if we have gone ‘off track’ we can discuss what we have learned about where we do not want to go. Sometimes, being on track can feel like being back in territory we have experienced, hearing familiar music composed of resonances and multiplicities, like greeting an old friend but in some new way, and other times we find something completely new which shifts our whole way of seeing and then follow that trail.

The original inspiration for working in a lab came from rereading *The Presence of the Actor* (Chaikin 1984) about how The Open Theater had started as a lab to explore ways in which acting training could be deepened to include political and philosophical engagement and in which politically and philosophically engaged theater could be deepened to include what the actor could bring to the theater with their bodies, voices and presence. As mentioned

in Chapter 2 (p. 55n29), whilst I had read of Grotowski's Theatre Laboratory (Grotowski 1984), that state-funded model did not work because of the lack of money for a research lab in New York City in the 1990s. Like Chaikin in 1963, we would have to work once or twice a week in cheap or donated space.

The first lab started in 1997 in New York City and did not have a name. We only had some big goals: to find out why we did theater in 1997 and if we could make something that could get at the many unexamined assumptions of American culture in general and in us in particular, specifically about class, religion and gender. The Apocryphal lab picked up in 2004 where this work left off, and as the big questions emerged then before any of the concepts or tools had been yet discovered and as this work is the foundation of Apocryphal's lab and performances, some of what will be discussed in this section relates to that first lab.

The work and questions asked in both labs are detailed here as they relate to the question of how theatre can be seen as an act of philosophy, specifically in relation to the grid and the witness, which then further clarify our explorations in the lab. These concepts create the space for lab members and then audiences to witness the grid as a mutable set of rules both internal and external to us which, when it happens, offer way to re-learn to look at the world. The concepts embody paradox and are born out of necessity so satisfy Deleuze's criterion for a philosophical concept.

### **Witness:**

A philosophical and artistic focus for Apocryphal has to do with the idea of the witness, both in terms of creating space for players to witness the event and also to share this psychic space with the audience thereby blurring the boundaries between subject and object. There is also within this the goal of *acting as* a witness by Kierkegaard, excerpting the full quotation from Chapter 1:

The true knight of faith is a witness, never a teacher... A person who wants only to be a witness confesses thereby that no one, not even the least needs another person's sympathy, or is to be put down so another can raise himself up...he knows that whatever truly is great is available equally for all.

(Kierkegaard 2006: 96)

The distinction here between being a witness rather than a teacher is crucial to both the choices Apocryphal makes in our work and if when evaluating our work whether the invitation to re-learn to look at the world is enough or if the reception of that invitation is



necessary for us to believe our work has succeeded. If we want to be witnesses then we *must surrender the outcome* of our act or else we have fallen into the realm of teaching, wherein we are attempting to communicate x and if x is not communicated then the act is a failure. The act of witness, devoid of vanity or self-seeking, is itself the invitation. This is the paradox of the ‘true knight of faith’ and to act in this way requires an almost impossible level of self-discipline that can only be practiced and is rarely achieved.

Deleuze & Guattari consider Kierkegaard’s true knight of faith as a “man of becoming” and say that this faith is a “plane of immanence...[wherein]...Perception will no longer reside in the relation between subject and object, but rather in the movement serving as the limit of that relation...” (Deleuze & Guattari 2003: 279-282). In other words through the knight of faith’s act of witness, the binary of subject and object dissolves into the movement between the two, showing the limit of this identity. Therefore, a theatrical event created as an act of witness has the potential to embody this idea better than any words can.

Merleau-Ponty considers Kierkegaard one of the precursors of phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty 2004: 64), which, as mentioned earlier, he defines as having been a movement before a codified philosophy (*ibid.*). Like Kierkegaard speaking of the true knight of faith’s self-recognition, he says that phenomenology can only be discovered through phenomenological method “in ourselves”, not through “counting up quotations” (*ibid.*). He writes that, “Philosophy is not the reflection of a pre-existing truth, but, *like art, the act of bringing the truth into being*” (*ibid.*: 77). As with Foreman earlier, I would argue that the truth he is pointing to is lively and multiple rather than a stable pre-existent being.

Kierkegaard’s distinction between a witness and a teacher is crucial to an understanding of what we mean by ‘witness’ in Apocryphal, as we are referring to ourselves as creators in this instance as the witnesses rather than to audience members. There is the dual implication of ‘bearing witness’ and ‘witnessing’ as in active attention, a form of listening that implies more than passive attention but a holding of the space for what is happening in the room to be heard or seen. We hope thereby to invite the audience to witness as well, but the responsibility for creating this space lies with us. We have to witness whilst in action to open up this space where the audience can join us. This idea of the witness is influenced by the yogic idea of witness consciousness. Stephen Cope, a trained psychoanalyst and yoga teacher, outlines aspects of the witness that relate to all areas of Apocryphal’s practice and philosophy and make the bridge between this Eastern practice, Kierkegaard and Deleuze and Guattari.



The most important aspect of the witness is “choiceless awareness” that “does not split life into good and bad, right and wrong, high and low, or spiritual and non-spiritual” (Cope 2001: 179). It is not judgmental in any way. The witness is also crucially a “whole body experience...not an intellectual exercise” (*ibid.*). Even whilst the witness can stand still in the midst of a storm, it is still present to all activity in the mind, heart and body.

In direct relation to Kierkegaard:

***Witness consciousness is always present at least in its potential form in every human being at every moment...*** We don't have to create the witness. This quality of consciousness needs only to be recognized, evoked and claimed.

(Cope 2000: 179)

It does not need to be taught and indeed cannot be taught because “whatever truly is great is available equally to all” (Kierkegaard 2006: 96).

In relation to Deleuze and Guattari (and their reading of Artaud), the witness can be seen as a kind of body without organs as, “Witness consciousness is the quality of the self-aware universe. It is the intelligence, the “sight without a seer,” that saturates the whole quantum field of mind and matter” (Cope 2000:180).

In the Movie a man sits in a wheelchair. He has had a stroke and can barely speak, but is watching coal miners being rescued from a collapsed tunnel. As they emerge from the mine alive, he whispers to his son,

the deconstructionist,

God is here.

God is Here.

Again with nothing.

I saw-

Don't say it!

Don't say it! I saw God while I was waiting at a bus stop.

For a moment.

Blasted out of the universe,

like in the last scene of 2001 -

faster than the speed of anything -

I was shot up off the planet,

saw the stars and the rest of the universe disappear rapidly behind me -

then I was outside of everything -

for a moment -

and I was shot back as quickly as I left.

My body never left the ground.

At the bus stop, a Mother was yelling at her Son - a scene that usually disturbs me, but didn't.

It all had to happen that way.

I could see that.

Even as my thoughts said otherwise.

I don't like this part of the story.

And I got on the next bus.

(Barclay 2001: 158)

The above excerpt from my first stage text *Word to Your Mama* describes my own "mystical experience" (to use Foreman's phrase from Chapter 2). I mention this within the context of the witness as I believe these kinds of experiences shift the way we see things, in other words from where we witness, for the rest of our lives. As with Foreman's experience, this caused a radical shift in perspective.

What's Nietzsche to Her or She to Nietzsche

That she should weep for him?

This experience also relates to witness consciousness in that I had the experience of being "outside of everything" and yet "[m]y body never left the ground." The paradox was that through being shot outside of everything I felt a connection to everything upon my return.

Unlike Foreman's experience, mine lasted only a short time (though I cannot say how long as time felt suspended, but as I was at a bus stop it could not have been very long). I felt deep calm and, as with Foreman's experience, that everything was exactly as it should be.

However, as it says in the excerpt above, whilst this happened a mother was yelling at her son. My thoughts said that this cannot be right, and yet I felt on the deepest possible level that this was exactly what was supposed to be happening. The conflict I experienced between my head and my deeper and irrefutable experience echoes the conflicts that develop further in Apocryphal's work (both in its production and in my writing). The paradox of the grid more than the witness embodies this conflict and this experience will be discussed within that context in the next section.

Like Foreman, I cannot say if this experience directly affected my writing or theatre practice, but it did have a direct impact on leading me out of an academic setting where I asked about how one could discuss experiences one could not logically explain and was told with a snicker that I should "beware of Gnostic thinking." I withdrew from that postgraduate

program as it was clear that within that context there was no room to explore this undeniable event.

God *is* that all things are possible and that all things are possible *is* God.  
(Kierkegaard 2008: 33)

The epiphany that led me to write *Word* (many years later) was remarkably similar to Foreman's epiphany that led him to write a new kind of play in that it just struck me suddenly whilst watching an informal staged reading one night at Mabou Mines in New York, anything is possible, you don't have to write a 'normal' play. I started writing that text the next morning. This vivid dream described in *Word* happened before I started writing, which may have been a nudge from the unconscious:

In the dream, we were in a space ship -  
in Zero Gravity.  
I saw pictures from my past on video cameras - a blurry step-father on one screen -  
a small child on another -  
me, probably -  
very colorful  
but hazy.

And outside?

Outside the window, the planets were  
Exploding, yellow, pink, orange, purple,  
Red gasses forming a new universe.

Right before our eyes.

She said to me:  
anything is possible.

She said: let's go there....instead.

She asked me:  
Are you ready?

(Barclay 2001: 158)

In practice in the Apocryphal lab, we focused from the beginning on levels of witnessing in the labs and performance.<sup>45</sup> Initially, this took the form of witnessing other players doing exercises, as this lab was large enough, as distinct from the New York lab, for

<sup>45</sup> I first began working with a "witness zone" in New York in performances of *No One* (2001b). Players took up an audience point of view, either from the audience or onstage. The idea was to be an audience surrogate, looking at the action from the point of view of someone watching, usually with some level of skepticism, rather than participating.

people to watch as well as do. The ability to see others do exercises and feedback has added more directorial eyes to our process, along with the ability to see how the work is experienced from the audience point of view not only what it is like to be performing it.

During the year 2005-2006, I was working with Josiah Hincks on Gendlin's focusing techniques, as discussed in Chapter 1, and this affected the way I was witnessing myself in labs and therefore the way I worked. I allowed more time for ideas to materialize, listened more intently to others and became less interested in instant results in exercises than what we could learn from them. There was in some profound way, more *room*, more room to explore, to fail, to discuss what we were doing and allow for different ways of interacting.

We work with formal evaluation processes at intervals (mentioned in Chapter 1), which adds to the level of witnessing of our work. In these evaluations, everyone has a chance to speak uninterrupted before we ask any questions or have a dialogue. This way we all have a designated witness time, where we are listening to each other rather than speaking. This level of respect then affects the way we all work with each other in the moment, making decisions, during exercises and rehearsals and in performance.

The witness idea itself became formalized as a concept in a new set of exercises in response to an evaluation session in which lab member Lukas Angelini expressed concern that our work focused too much on individual actions rather than the interaction between us. We decided to break down interaction into four main verbs: witness, support, disrupt, ignore.

Initially, these verbs were added to whatever other exercise we might be doing, such as working with levels of address or presence. A player would enter into the action with the idea that they were witnessing, supporting, disrupting or ignoring what was happening. Having this specificity clarified interactions without having to add a story onto the actions. In terms of the witness, we worked on many variations of this idea, including watching action on stage as if from the audience point of view, joining the audience physically and somehow witnessing whilst in action (as Ellis refers to on p. 129). We continue to work with these verbs in various combinations with other exercises and in performance. How we use the witness in performance will be discussed in Sections B and C.

A newer exploration, which relates to the witness, is working with the difference between reaction and response. A player makes an offer of some kind, whether it is an action or a gesture, a piece of writing or an artwork, and other players will react or respond to this offer, and then the original player will react and respond to that and so forth so that this series of reactions and responses continues. The main rule is that the player has to say before reacting or responding "reaction" or "response." This has led to attempting to define the

difference between a reaction and a response, with the main focus being that a reaction is a more knee-jerk, habitual way of reacting and a response has more to do with witness consciousness, in other words is a more creative, perhaps surprising response to an action. By focusing so intently on each action in this way, habitual patterns are revealed quite quickly and it allows players (and those of us watching) to see our reactions and responses. During these exercises, whenever I would laugh or find myself judging something in a familiar way, for example, I would say “reaction,” which added my presence into the exercise in a way that was new and affected the way we created *Besides* and my active role in that show (discussed in Section C).

Finally, the witness clearly relates to the audience role. Apocryphal is always developing new ways to invite the audience to participate in their own experience of our work without demanding “audience interaction”, which generally means asking people to do things they do not necessarily want to do in the name of participation. In all of our shows, the players are present in the same room with audience members who are also visibly present to the players and each other. In *Besides* we have gone further in that the physical set up in the space between the audience and performers opens up and falls away so that the rules of that room in shifting physically become as present as the room itself. We do not use narrative structures or solicit any particular emotional response from the audience, but rather by witnessing ourselves witnessing the room in such a way as to include the audience, we allow whatever kind of connection to occur from that action that will. One of the biggest distinctions between Apocryphal’s work and the other artists mentioned (with the possible exception of Cage when he was creating his random-chance structures<sup>46</sup>) is that we do not attempt to control the results of our actions or the audience’s response. Whilst we work with scores and tools and have a guiding set of principles in terms of improvisation and our work in general (as can be seen in the research questions), those principles include *not* predetermining outcomes. We instead allow for each show to evolve in the way it will given the text, tools, scores and players available and for the audience to respond to this, from whatever location they find themselves (and in the case of *Besides* they can physically move their location at any time), in whatever way they will. In this way, true lines of flight can

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<sup>46</sup> In performance, however, Cage’s work manifests as it has been determined by random chance, with the exception of the work that includes such random factors as radio transmissions or conch shells that do not make sounds according to a predetermined pattern. This random factor in performance is true always with Apocryphal as all of our structures include variations and cannot be predetermined in terms of outcome in the performance moment. However, when I first heard Cage speak (1987), he said that he hoped his work would render the need for a composer obsolete. This struck me as quite a serendipitous coincidence because my hope as a theater director even back then had been to render the director obsolete.

occur outside of any one person's control and each person, player or audience member, knows that she is responsible for her own perceptions and actions in response to the moment.

In this way, the witness relates to how Cage locates the moment of theatre as when it is being perceived as such (not as a stable thing to be read but an event that is "*continually becoming that it is becoming*" (1973: 14). The witness in his definition must be active in deciding what is or is not theatre. In the context of an Apocryphal show, the witness must choose where to focus attention and how, or if, to create meaning as there are generally multiple focuses and no linear story line to follow. Cage's response to the concern of what it is or is not important to pay attention would most likely be that everything is important. Apocryphal's focus is on the choice itself and what guides that choice.

### **Grid:**

What we choose to witness and what informs that choice points to the grid. The grid can be seen as the (normally) unacknowledged yet dominant 'rules of the room', in other words that which we say 'that's the way it is' about without thinking why it is that way and what we may be doing consciously or unconsciously to contribute to this reality. This idea is used in practice in Apocryphal's work and has philosophical implications as where one is locating oneself in terms of witness has a lot to do with one's ability to locate the grid and vice-versa, so they are interlinked. The grid is the 'every/no place' where Apocryphal players address their words and actions, it is neither inside nor outside of us, neither created by us nor can be maintained without our consent (as a group). It is a paradoxical place, which can only be changed through first locating and accepting it. However, to locate it means finding ways to see behind your own head, hence the necessity of a discipline training to find it and then learn how to play with it.

The question of choice relates to the question of desire, and Deleuze and Guattari address this in their evocation of 'desiring machines' in *Anti-Oedipus* (2003a). In reference to the grid, desire, especially as they describe it, is an operative term, as there is desire built into the very nature of the mechanism. The way we construct the world, our various habits, is guided by desire, however unconscious. Deleuze and Guattari, as mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, refer to our desires as investments, and diagnose them as primarily divided between two poles: the revolutionary, manifesting its desire in molecular multiplicities, or the fascistic, manifesting as molar aggregates. This is important in terms of understanding the grid as the grid itself can manifest in many ways and be invested with molecular multiplicities or molar aggregates. The grid is not in itself negative or positive,

fascistic or revolutionary, but instead as a concept points to that mechanism which embodies these investments in any given room. The way Deleuze and Guattari define the grid in relation to their “plane of consistency” is useful in this regard:

Multiplicities are defined by the outside: by the abstract line, the line of flight or deterritorialization according to which they change in nature and connect with other multiplicities. The plane of consistency (*grid*) is the *outside of all multiplicities*.  
(Deleuze and Guattari 2003: 7 *emphasis mine*)



Aitchison in lab playing with grid of sacred/secular 2006

The first philosopher who influenced my understanding of what would become the grid was Nietzsche<sup>47</sup> in *On The Genealogy of Morals* (1969) wherein he tears apart the basis

<sup>47</sup> Though most philosophers can be said to be working with this territory, Nietzsche's critique seemed more directly relevant to my own thinking about the world. That many artists, including Müller and Foreman draw

of all presumed morality by historicizing it and showing it not as eternal but as constructed. He locates the self-consciousness of the ‘will to truth’ as that force which will in the end destroy all morality, predicting:

This is the spectacle in a hundred acts reserved for the next two centuries in Europe – the most terrible, the most questionable, and perhaps the most hopeful of all spectacles. (*ibid.*: 161)

Reading Deleuze’s book *Nietzsche & Philosophy* (1983) deepened my understanding of his philosophies as they related to the idea of the eternal return, which then shows up in an understanding of the grid as that which is both of us and larger than us simultaneously. Nietzsche’s writing in *Twilight of the Idols* (2006) regarding the Four Great Errors influenced ideas of witnessing the grid, and these ideas are discussed further in the next sections in relation to *The Jesus Guy* and *Besides*.

As an example of how awareness of the grid can affect the witness, I return to the story of the ‘mystical experience’ that led me out of the postgraduate university program. I could no longer accept the grid of my surroundings, which were based entirely on rationality and the scientifically provable (even if what was ‘provable’ had at its core an axiom with which one had to agree). What followed was a series of jobs at the clerk and secretarial level that provided much of the content for *Word to Your Mama*, the primary voices in which were a multiplicity of night secretaries. Working in offices as a secretary, having come from elite academic settings, was also a radical shift in perspective and I felt impelled to bear witness to the experience of being rendered invisible whilst simultaneously having a front-row seat for the relentless expansion of global capitalism from the point of view of working at an international trademark law firm.

The economic status of artists is rarely mentioned but is a subject that can shine light on many more decisions and points of view than is generally acknowledged (as Bourdieu would most likely agree). Foreman, for instance, has a trust fund, which means he has never had to have a job and could spend his days reading and writing and working on his theater projects without interference. He has always been upfront about this, which is quite

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from Nietzsche is not a surprise as Nietzsche writes in aphorisms and in a poetic way, which is sympathetic to creative processes. For example, one of Foreman’s best-known plays is *Bad Boy Nietzsche* (2000). When I asked him why Nietzsche instead of Lacan, he said because Nietzsche is better known and more resonant. He added that he was not an expert on Nietzsche but had certain images of him in his mind that he used (2008: 205). Müller who does not like dense difficult texts (perhaps because she is often reading them in her second or third language) says she likes Nietzsche “because he writes relatively simple, you know – very easy. His concepts are complex but it’s very easy to read” (2008: 222).



refreshing. However, his work has only recently become even obliquely political in tone and that could have something to do with his not having to engage in the world of wage slavery. The grid of politics and economics is easier to ignore if you do not have to struggle with it. Foreman does however address an existential grid if not an overtly political one.

Chris Goode's transformational experience, on the other hand, was born out of poverty:

*...the best thing that happened in my life was stealing a book when I had no money and nowhere to live and was trying awfully hard reading a book that kind of just explained the chemical composition of the soil or air and gave me a different sense of the planet I was standing on and of the air I was breathing and those sorts of things and I think there is something about this kind of shift into a different register, pretty much the moment I walk into a rehearsal room...*

(Goode 2008: 218 *emphasis mine*)

Goode mentioned this experience in relation to a question I had asked about whether he felt theatre could act as a kind of corrective to stable philosophical ideas. He had said that he goes to theatre for spiritual reasons as someone who does not want anything to do with the words "spiritual" or "truth" or "faith" (*ibid.*). Still, the experience he describes speaks of a radical shift of point of view from broke, homeless individual to someone who is connected to the chemical composition of the soil and the air. From outside and apart, he becomes connected to something far larger than himself. This is the experience of the witness. He then relates this experience to what he brings to the rehearsal room:

*...that kind of sense...being tuned into, attentiveness and discretion and being able to give space to bring to bear the kind of discriminating apparatus that gets beaten out of us otherwise.*

(*ibid.*)

In other words, the place of making theatre gives us the space to witness and, in the case of Apocryphal, locate the grid, so we can remain awake to what is creating our reality.

This level of attentiveness and desire to remain awake relates to Cage's work. However, we distinguish our work from Cage when we enter into the more overtly political concern of locating the grid in order to rattle its cage (no pun intended) rather than being satisfied with acceptance of everything as it is. Cage however may have that as his goal too, when he says:

*The function of art at the present time is to preserve us from all the logical minimizations that we are at each instant tempted to apply to the flux of events. To draw us nearer to the process which is the world we live in.*

(Cage in Revill 1992: 122-3)

If we become awake to the flux, perhaps Cage would say we cannot be stuck in a grid. However, if as with Foreman's earlier work, there is no interest in this level, then it may not be addressed at all, especially in relation to audience composition and issues of access having to do with class distinctions or cultural capital (following Bourdieu).

Possible ways to go:

Naming all that is nameable –  
Getting to wall of what is  
Unnameable –  
Breaking through that wall into  
A plane of "non-recognition"

...

What has not yet been named?

**Purpose:**    *what is nameable is marketable*  
                 *What is marketable will be sold and bought*  
                 *What is sold and bought loses all value*  
   (1997: unpublished notes)

Sold.

You sold it?

Yes.

I mean no.

I mean.

Mean?

Mean.

Quintessence of dust.

Soul. A mean soul, sold for cheap.

Mean as in *mean*?

Yes, as in 'mean'.

In these early notes written for the first New York lab, the need to push past the nameable to the unnamed here clearly relates to the desire to get past the market and what can be bought

and sold. In the US in the late 90s with the end of the Cold War and absolutely no idea other than late-capitalism as a political and economic reality, nothing seemed more urgent. Everything was up for sale, including one's 'lifestyle choices' and indeed one's life. I worked as a night secretary for an international trademark law firm at the time and watched as large corporations dove into former Soviet-bloc countries with a vengeance to trademark their logos. A line from *Word to Your Mama* was a direct quote from a letter an attorney dictated to one of our corporate clients in 1992 on the day the US invaded Somalia:

"We have reason to believe that the Trademark Office in Somalia is not operational at this time."

(2001: 157)

This corporation was only concerned that their logo would not be stolen in all the commotion and was upset they could not protect it. This was the late-capitalist grid in which we started the lab.

***the room – how else can it be structured?***

moments of sheer amazement and transformation now  
ways of exploring the unknown and presenting them as such  
symbolology as action  
tragedy outside the classics – and melodrama

***how to present/embody a moment as complex  
as life – not a replica or referent – not  
behind a 4<sup>th</sup> wall – a moment which includes  
the audience in its discovery – not an  
announcement.***

(unpublished notes: 1997)

The idea from these notes of creating something as complex as life resonate with Cage's ideas to which I had first been exposed in 1987, as mentioned in Chapter 2, and a visit near the start of the New York lab to the Guggenheim to see a Robert Rauschenberg retrospective (1997) re-acquainted me with that field, as Cage famously said Rauschenberg's white paintings inspired *4'33"* (1973: 98). Rauschenberg's collage paintings and combines had a huge impact as they were a visual manifestation of what I hoped to do in the theater. Rauschenberg had also created performances with Judson Dance Theater, and this observation about his performances relates to our goals as a lab and in our performances:

Meaning and intelligence come into play in the interpretation that Rauschenberg's performance images, as signs, call forth, but they do not do so from *before*; they do not rely on the realms where signification has already been determined, with the already existent, co-opted, and restricted economy of totalized representation. Instead,

they come into play only *after* – after they have been opened to the outside by the contact or encounter with difference. *It is from the perspective of a totalized, late-capitalist social sphere ruled over by preset, commodified pseudo-difference that the impulse of an encounter that forces a creative thinking – a mobile “act of thinking” – becomes the basis of a profound critique.*

(Joesph 2003: 272-273, *emphasis mine*)

The context of a “totalized late-capitalist sphere ruled over by preset, commodified pseudo-difference” is another way of saying we felt trapped in the American culture of marketing everything. And this idea of a critique in the form of a “mobile “act of thinking”” is another way of saying an act of philosophy. His paintings inspired the New York lab and still influence Apocryphal (especially in the relationship between his work and the role of artist Birthe Jorgensen, which is discussed more in Section B in relation to *The Jesus Guy*).

Painting relates to both art and life. Neither can be made. (I try to act in the gap between the two.)

(Rauschenberg in Cage 1973: 105)

It was difficult.

I had dreams and they were of no use then. Simply chattering dreams. Dreams of no consequence. Dreams which didn't fit together At All....almost like they were Someone Else's Dreams....

The beginning of a strategy to locate the grid emerges in notes written for the first New York lab. These ideas are made concrete in the levels of address and cutting up exercises (as described in those sections):

start by naming what is articulated  
then what is unarticulated  
then find through this process what  
is inarticulable in common language  
both verbal + theatrical

look for alternate languages:  
verbal  
physical  
spiritual  
theatrical  
which point  
to the soup

**Start w/clichés of every variety –**  
**Ask: What is nameable + simple**  
“ “ + **complex/unsaid**

\*\*\*

Start w/our own assumptions

what is “common sense” –  
where does it come from?  
look at nameable issues:

women  
race  
class  
religion, etc...

(1997: unpublished notes)

The use of clichés has become a key element in our levels of address/cutting up exercises (see pp. 122-3), as they function as the easiest way to locate the grid of the room. The idea of critiquing that which we say “that’s the way it is about” begins here in questioning “common sense.” Also the location of the primary grids we would investigate for two years, especially: gender, class and religion.

As early as 1983, writing notes for directing *The Serpent* (van Itallie 1969) an idea of the grid within clichés is emerging, however in the context of this play it was in an attempt to discover what the modern equivalent was of a curse.

A CURSE – nowadays  
Something we feel condemned to –  
War “always had it –  
Always will...etc.”  
Women “can’t live with ‘em...”

GHOSTS – we are ghosts +  
Ghosts are within  
us

RECREATING MYTH IN  
OUR OWN IMAGE –  
using the words – but  
expanding the story

(1983: unpublished notes)

Again, here I am drawn to the clichés as a way of getting at the larger cultural story. The desire to get underneath this and re-create the myth is also evident. At the time, of course, I was still thinking in terms of writing another story, whereas now of course we are attempting to get out of the story-telling business altogether. We prefer to investigate the mechanisms of story formation and surrender control of the narrative in favor of the moment of becoming as it creates a moment of being, but one that is manifestly always, already changing. However, it was reading Chaikin’s writing whilst directing *The Serpent* that gave me a new

understanding of what we would later call the grid (and he refers to as “the set up”), when he insists that the more important question is not what do I want but instead “[w]hat makes me want what I want?” (Chaikin 1984: 75). In other words, what is it that creates our desires in the first place, who sets these rules and why do we follow them without question?

Chaikin locates the beginning of the problem in the theater with character and the fictions we tell ourselves about who we are. He begins the section “On Character...and the Set Up” (*ibid.*: 11) with Merleau-Ponty’s observation that “we struggle with dream figures and our blows falling on living faces” (*ibid.*). He rejects character because it is based on a fictional I, which does not take into account the “observable political-social forces” (*ibid.*) that join us, along with “unanswerable questions to do with being alive at all” (*ibid.*: 12).

The paradox of living connected by forces one does and does not understand speaks to the space interlinking the witness and the grid. When his Open Theater created *The Serpent* (van-Itallie 1969) in the late 1960s, they explored the enduring Christian myth and how this related to current U.S. political events, especially with regard to assassinations and war and the mythology of America’s lost innocence, echoing the Eden story with its implication of desire for a return. Chaikin insisted that no matter how intellectual or secular anyone was that these Judeo-Christian myths underpinning America endured within each of us and needed to be unearthed and owned to be truly exorcised or even examined. In our production in 1983, we added another level, of the nostalgia in our generation for what appeared to us as the lost innocence of the 1960s, mixing in 60s and 80s music and aesthetic sensibilities, which was arguably a way of locating our political-mythological grid at the time.

To remove the mystical appearance of this “self-determining concept” it is changed into a person – “Self-Consciousness” – or, to appear thoroughly materialistic, into a series of persons, who represent the “concept” in history....Thus the whole body of materialistic elements has been removed from history and now full rein can be given to the speculative steed.

That’s nice: speculative steed.

But somehow it all feels oppressive.

Yes, it does. Like a well-constructed prison almost.

Yes.

Almost exactly.

Almost exactly.

Identical even.

Perhaps, yes.

Any escape routes?

Let's check.

OK.

To further understand the paradox of the grid, we can refer back to Gendlin and Bourdieu and where they cross. Gendlin would say that we can have a felt sense outside of patterns and assumptions, that lived experience is more intricate than any 'grid', and that may be true. However, I appeal to Bourdieu's concept of the habitus to argue that point with Gendlin in relation to our idea of the grid.

What do pigs mean?

Mean?

You know, Jung, whoever, what do pigs Mean?

How the hell should I know?

I don't know, maybe we should look it up.

Maybe.

Later.

Yeah.

Later.

Pigs are clean animals you know. People tend to think they are-

Yes, we know.

Pigs mean cops.

Yes, that's true...very 60's, but true.

As in, Hey, Pig, Man, etc.

Right.

So you think Cops were busting up Our Show?

Not really.

But it's a thought. Seeing as there are so many Cops around these days, like everywhere you look and their Guns keep getting Bigger and Bigger.

Stop.

O.K. Sorry. My mistake. Move on...images, art, non-threatening, etc...yes, yes....

Whilst it is possible to know we are inside of a habitus, and there is lived experience that is larger than any of these ideas or else we could not conceptualize them in the first place, that does not mean this insight alone gets us closer to an awareness of the grid, as we cannot be aware of our specific unconscious assumptions, even if we acknowledge they are there, as by definition they are unconscious. That does not mean that they cannot be brought into consciousness or that the mechanism by which the grid operates (the reality formation machinery that creates the habitus in which we live) cannot be made visible, even if only momentarily (for instance through the act of cutting-up text or gesture, which will be discussed in the next section). One such moment is enough to create a way of re-learning to look at the world, as that one moment of *conscious* awareness cannot be made entirely unconscious again. The knowledge that our world is constructed in a certain way, and that there are certain unacknowledged rules governing our behaviour including our use of language is enough to undermine any habitus within which we might have been unconsciously living. This one moment of awareness is enough to make the person or persons, players or audience, who have experienced it, question the basis of their assumptions, now made visible, as not only assumptions, but also mutable, therefore changeable. This can allow someone who perhaps has considered herself until that moment a passive witness of the performance event (and perhaps her own life), to see herself as actively responsible for the construction of her own habitus.

Whilst Gendlin's technique of focusing, which involves an intense witnessing of oneself and the language we use to articulate what we are experiencing in the bodily felt sense, is useful in practice as a way to feel into and find language for that which eludes habitual thought and yet can be experienced, the manifestation of the grid is not created by any one individual, therefore one person's felt sense alone cannot connect with the grid. The grid is created from moment to moment by the collective consciousness (and unconsciousness) of the group of people in any given room, or if there is only one person in the room, between her and



all that she has experienced in regard to the rules of her own macro-political and micro-personal experience thus far until that moment in time and the many forces that brought her into that room. The grid is not random, but nor is it fixed. Getting at it, towards it, pointing to it, or speaking from it, implies an action that must be taken sideways, as we live inside of it and therefore cannot see it directly.

In practice, the grid is activated and discovered within the three primary tools of cutting up, levels of address and levels of presence. As stated at the beginning of this section, the grid can be described as the rules of the room, especially the unacknowledged rules of the room. Any actions that the players take which make these rules visible can be considered locating the grid.

As language is part of the grid, using language to describe it, when it encompasses experience outside of language, is always going to fail on some level. Our specific strategies to attempt to locate the more subtle grids of class, gender and religion are described in the following sections. However, in an attempt to make the grid clearer on a practical level, perhaps it is best to point to the grid of theatrical expectation. An audience walks into a theatre space generally expecting a story<sup>48</sup>. Even if this story may be told in an interesting way, or have surreal aspects, there is a desire for some type of narrative that will eventually cohere, whereas, as stated earlier, we are more interested in making visible the mechanisms of narrative/meaning formation. When an audience walks into an Apocryphal show, they will see aspects of what they expect: people who appear to be performing, some in obvious costume saying words that could have been written, engaged in some kind of gesture made visible in a space that has theatrical lights, chairs in which the audience can sit (even if they are able to choose where in the space to sit or have permission to move), etc. However, instead of these impressions cohering into a story, it becomes apparent that these impressions are not necessarily going to create a unified whole and that each audience member will have to decide for herself what to make of what she sees. In a designated theatre space, this kind of event challenges the theatre grid, as it both uses elements of the rules of that room, including aspects of storytelling, whilst simultaneously deconstructing them.

One specific example of making this grid of expectations visible happened during the showing of *The Jesus Guy* in Northampton wherein the players engaged with the whole space, including the areas and objects that are usually masked and with the loud voices coming from the bar outside that were audible to everyone watching. Rather than attempting to limit the

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<sup>48</sup> Performance studies departments and some experimental theatre artists notwithstanding, this is still the predominant expectation amongst general audiences and most drama students and practitioners (including mine when I first encountered Foreman's work).

focus of attention to the designated theatre space, we allowed our attention and the audience's to embrace the space as a place located in a world broader than the central playing area, and allowed this larger area to be considered as important as any intended actions or visual elements we had placed in the room. In this action, the rules of the room regarding where the theatre space itself begins and ends, both visibly and audibly, is made visible by expanding it outside of its normative parameters, which then renders the normative expectation mutable. If the expectation in the audience on the other hand is for our type of response to the space, the grid is a different one.

For instance, as there is a history of performance/live art in galleries, especially non-linear performance, unless we challenge the rules of the art gallery room, we have not located that grid. In our gallery showing *Cut Up Close Up* at Lorem Ipsum Gallery in London (2007a) we did attempt to locate this grid. Apocryphal players paired up with visual artists (including Jorgensen) who had works exhibited in the gallery space. The Apocryphal players responded to the visual objects using an improvisational score and in response the artists changed the exhibition and in some cases their art works themselves. The handwritten notes that Lucy Avery took recording what people were saying and doing were framed by Jorgensen and hung in the space as each page was completed. When the artists and players were re-installing sculptures and re-hanging paintings with people watching, we had begun to locate the gallery grid wherein all that work is supposed to happen outside of public view, be owned exclusively by the artist and certainly not be created or exhibited in response to a performance.



Jane Munro playing between two artists' works and another artist re-hanging her picture at Lorem Ipsum Gallery during *Cut Up Close Up* 2007 Photo: Alex Kent

In other words, the rules of any room need to be broken to be made visible. In the next sections, some of the strategies we have discovered for doing this are outlined.

### **Cutting Up:**

Well then we can't know if you fly or not, then, can we?

Right. You just have to Trust me.

TRUST you?

Yes, Trust me.

The cutting up method has been one of the most significant tools to locate the grid and render it mutable. The word grid itself was borrowed from William Burroughs who refers to a grid system as a way of cutting up text in *The Third Mind* (Burroughs & Gysin 1982). Their cutting up system is discussed earlier in Chapter 2 (pp. 51-53). Using cut-ups allows a narrative of any type to be upended and another type of listening (witnessing) to become possible, one that does not embrace singular meanings or simple either/or binaries. The how of cut-ups is very important for understanding what they are so will be discussed and demonstrated throughout in relation to our practical work. As outlined in the introduction, for instance, the text of *The Jesus Guy* and *Besides* is cut into this thesis in part to demonstrate the cutting up method, how it can interfere with authorial control and create associative connections, lines of flight outside of predetermined outcomes.

The cutting up process seemed like a good place to start in the first New York lab to locate what we would end up calling the grid. As none of us in the lab considered ourselves writers at the time and yet we wanted to work with text, our first task was to create cut-up texts from found material. We created the first cut-ups from articles, pages of books or anything else that we thought related to the three main themes of gender, class and religion in America. We then added into this pool of text our own first memories of gender, class and religion and the first dream we could remember.

The only rule in creating the cut-ups was that we take something from each article or piece of writing we all gave each other. Also, we could not add any words or change tenses of verbs to make sentences flow better. How we wanted to arrange the texts was left to each of us to decide. Each person's cut-up had the paradoxical qualities of both being idiosyncratic yet linked to the larger group. Using the same base text and a guiding set of ideas helped with this outcome. The excerpts below from our cut-ups are linked by the repetition of a phrase in

another person's cut-up (and each repeated phrase is bolded within the excerpts). These repetitions occurred without prior knowledge.

**But then I stopped once more.** Opinions exchanged to break down the concept of life. **What in the hell is going on that a man has to turn himself into a living freak out of sheer hunger?** The middle of the city of Christiania sets fire to fetished words. I flew my fantasies out of my hands between external conformity and subversive escape...**was there any sense or reason in that?**

(Backus 1998: unpublished text)

I'M IN GRAVITY **COOKING A DINNER** LIKE A  
MINISTERS MARE EXCEPT SILENCE  
HOW THAT WILL DISTRACT ME FROM THE FOOD  
INSIDE SEEN ON THE BODY SPIRIT PURITY  
THEY BOTH LAUGH  
WE GO TO JUST FALL DOWN **BUT THEN I STOPPED**  
THE EFFORT LED BY IGNORANCE

(Campbell 1998: unpublished text)

"Mom's home **cooking dinner**, when her eggs are ripe, the tango begins  
Down from the waist they are centaurs,  
Though simp'ring dames all above.

unable to respond, I cried and laughed myself back to sleep ... I slept till it hits me

**"What's wrong with your face, eh?"**

**What in the hell is going on that a man has to turn himself into a living freak**

He is such a flamboyant specimen of devotion, such an  
exemplary

puppet for ANY MAN'S WISHING.

**Was there any sense or reason in that?**

(Bucciarelli 1998: unpublished text)

**What's wrong with your face?**

I must be unbelievably **cooking**. How do  
I actually look **out of sheer hunger?**

men of devotion despair with sobs

Because of its structure, isolates her  
from any meaningful-

**but then I stopped once** the way  
through my head

I don't have enough time to fill them all

(Barclay 1998: unpublished text)

Aren't we kind of, well, repeating ourselves a lot here?

Well, yeah. But some things, you know, well, they kinda, well, *bear repeating* don't you think?

Maybe.

Yeah, maybe.

The articles and memories were transformed from seemingly stable realities into cut-up text, which made visible the mechanism that created those realities in the first place. The cut-ups allow in both the larger context of the culture and our own deeply personal responses, which manifest in how we re-construct the cut-up words. In addition, the experience of finding each other's phrases in each other's cut-ups created something like a secret, yet communicable, language between each other, as well as a way to allow each person's voice *as a writer* to be heard, whilst at the same time being part of a whole. Whilst we used the same material, it is clear from the excerpts above that we put them together differently.

By cutting up words, we were liberated to own them. This is the great paradox of the cut-up. As Gysin wrote:

Cut-ups are for everyone. Anyone can do a cut up. It is experimental in the sense of being *something to do*. Right here write now. Not something to talk and argue about.  
(Burroughs & Gysin 1982: 31)

Taking Gysin's advice, I have cut up the preceding paragraph to show how cutting up can work in relation to original text, allowing for more multiplicities than are available in the original and in some way getting even more to the point:

The articles and memories were visible  
our own deeply personal experience of finding  
that we put them together differently  
this is the great secret  
liberated to own them  
being part of a whole  
that created those realities in the first place.

Having used this method in various workshop situations, I have discovered that repetition of certain phrases from a shared pool of text to be a common phenomenon, both in groups of people that know each other in advance and those that do not. This could be

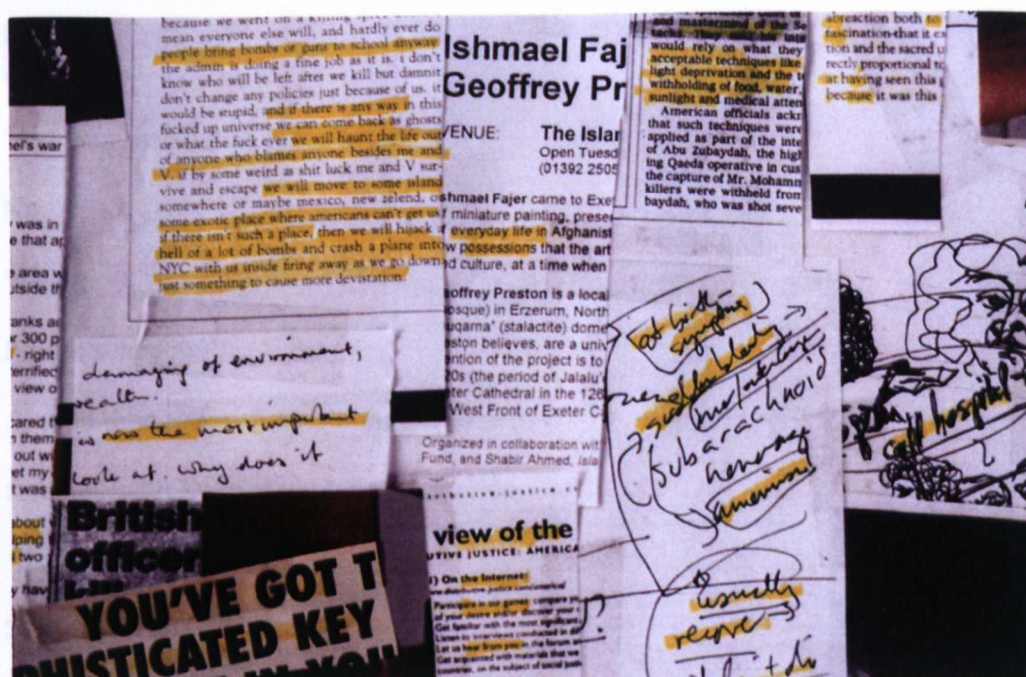


perhaps because of the shared experience of doing the workshop/lab and conversations held before the cut-ups are requested, but from experience of working with varying groups in varying contexts (dance, theatre, performance art, university, fringe venues, American, European), perhaps this could also be because these certain phrases touch the 'grid' of that group, the rules that govern that social unit in that specific space and time, however temporary it may be.

During the first lab, cutting up text offered us a way to touch the micro and macrocosm, from the intimacy of memory to the anonymity of a newspaper article, which was then fused into a kind of private-public language we could share. Most importantly, this tool gave us a way to write without being bound to narrative but which did not dispense with the multiple resonances surrounding specific themes.

All writing is in fact cut-ups. A collage of words read heard overheard. What else? Use of scissors renders the process explicit.

(Burroughs & Gysin 1982: 32)



close-up of cut-up used for *An Alliance* at Exeter University, UK (2003) photo: J. Barclay

This liberation of words from the illusion of originality allowed me to begin writing other texts, too, as I was no longer afraid of facing a blank page. The first writing, as excerpted above on p. 116, was a 'pure' cut-up, meaning all the words were taken from found text. I used a mixture of Burroughs' grid (cutting texts into squares and setting them next to each other) and fold-in (putting columns of text next to each other and reading across)

methods, and then edited, using a highlighter and pen (as in photo on p. 118, except in this much later example I have added images as well). This text can then be edited and typed up on a separate sheet or used as a kind of anarchic score improvisationally. I have used both methods.

When discussing how he makes decisions about where certain texts should intersect Burroughs writes of listening “for that click” (*ibid.*: 135). The “click” in my case when writing and with the company when improvising has to do with listening for the grid, where a word or phrase resonates past its literal meaning and can suddenly have multiple meanings, it becomes detached from its original role as signifier and instead becomes symbolic, representative of many possible realities, and yet also grounded in the literal.

An excerpt from the opening sequence of *Word* offers a first example of how this method can work as a way to start a stage text:

A Man Can't Know What It's Like To Be a  
true knight of faith.

Mother  
is a witness.

That was such a nice letter to get.

No.

Wrong.

Revise schedule.

A good time to finish up old tasks.

Get sublet for Struggling Artist Magazine.

1962-1978

Someone's childhood.

Don't think about that.

Fear and Trembling.

I don't know if I'll be alive.

But, we're here.

(Barclay 2001: 152)

This text cuts up a number of items visible from my desk at that moment of writing, including the Kierkegaard quotation about the “true knight of faith” being “a witness never a teacher.” However, when I started writing (by cutting up) myself, I was able to make the true knight of faith female, a mother even, as this seemed like a nice subversion of the seemingly impenetrable male religious order wherein God is He and Man obeys God whereas Women obey Man, etc. These themes are revisited in *The Jesus Guy* and *Besides*, but this short excerpt shows the power of cut-ups to undermine strong reality grids relatively quickly by simply shifting some words around from a bulletin board.

Apocryphal also works with cutting up improvisationally, cutting up not only text, but also gesture, space, objects, levels of address and levels of presence in the moment of performance. These practices will be outlined in the next sections. The most important thing about the cutting up process is that it happens within the context of having located the grid, which is the zone in which one can hear “the click” that Burroughs mentions. It is not a random exercise in this context but one that requires intense listening and discipline.

### Levels of Address:

Chaikin used the phrase “levels of address” to refer to ways an actor could dedicate a performance to a specific person or quality that she wanted to draw out in the audience (1984: 141-44). We use the same phrase to distinguish between various levels of address by the performers, only one of which deals directly with the audience. However, the goal of making specific to where one’s attention is focused is similar.

The levels of address exercise as we use it was invented in the New York lab on November 15, 1998. A description of the first exercise is quoted from my lab journal:

Prior to the more “open” exercise, Fred, Dan, Chris and Renee did an exercise using three phrases, moving from saying them to themselves, to each other, to the audience and to “the grid”. We discussed the resonance of symbols versus metaphor. ***The exercise was extraordinary in that they began, from the outset, listening intently to the phrases, then by the time they had located “the grid”, they continued on with their phrases, riffing off of each other’s resonances.*** They cut up their cut-ups and brought the language to a whole other level. ***The level of listening was quite high and the sense of tapping something larger than themselves quite palpable. Renee mentioned that for her “the grid” was better defined as “collective mind”, which I thought was also a good image, because it does implicate us as well as something “larger”.***

We discussed, after the “open” exercise the idea of using this type of exercise, with limited phrases, to start that as well, to get the words “hot” and the listening on a high level, and then to break off from that. I think that is probably a good idea, since creative limits can channel the energy in the room and then create a kind of ranging



freedom that has its foundation in the “heat” of the language. Also, prior to the open exercise, ***Chris suggested that we start whatever we show with the prosaic use of the language and let the audience see the transition from talking to themselves, to each other, to the audience and then to the “grid”. I think this is also an excellent idea. Watching the evolution as it happens, watching the language change and energy change in the room in the moment. I think that could be an exciting process to watch as it happens. It puts the audience in collusion with us*** in a sense and I think that’s a good idea.

(1998: unpublished notes)

Some of the terms the New York lab members use to discuss the exercise are relevant to our work in Apocryphal, along with giving a flavour of how we would discuss ideas and evolve working definitions. Renée Bucciarelli’s suggestion of the “collective unconscious” as a way of considering the grid added to our understanding of it, especially in that it implicated us as well. Before then, the “grid” as we were thinking of it had a more external feel to it, something we were oppressed by in some way more than something which we were creating. Chris Campbell’s suggestion that we start our show with the “more prosaic use of language” and then bring it through the transitions of levels of address we decided was a good one. The audience for our lab showing was enthusiastic about having been allowed in on the rules of the game and, as I guessed, they did feel they were in collusion with us. Up until this exercise was invented, our explorations had been vivid and in some cases interesting, but somehow scattered. This exercise gave the work focus and has remained the cornerstone of my work ever since.

As for the terms regarding heat, in our New York lab as in Apocryphal, we were and are generally looking for multiple resonances, ways of ‘heating up’ spaces, words, gestures and finding a way to not lose the music for the notes. Heat has to do with multiplicity and the kind of molecular lightness mentioned earlier. Another image we use is to ‘keep the ball up in the air,’ so, if there are multiple meanings coming off the word ‘car,’ for example, to keep going with this and not allow ourselves to diffuse the tension, likewise in performance if someone has used a gesture or phrase in a certain part of the room, to echo this in different levels of address and presence to ‘heat up the space.’ The lab itself can be seen as a bubbling cauldron out of which we create things (performances) and then put them back in and melt them down so they can become something else.

The exercise we created is best witnessed (and ideally attempted) rather than explained. As Chaikin observes about documented exercises:

I feel that I am reading a book of recipes, whether they are exercises by Stanislavski, Viola Spolin, or The Open Theater. The reason they cannot be documented is because it is an internal territory. If the actor could explain it, the exercise would be

unnecessary. The exercise is an agreed-upon structure. The structure can be explained yet it is empty of content. An exercise is untranslatable.

(1984: 134-135)

With this caveat in mind, where the structures can be outlined, they will, so in its barest structural terms, this is how this exercise is taught to beginners:

1. Participants are asked to write down three clichés, one each about gender, class and religion (if nationality or race are relevant because of make-up of the group, they will also be included).
2. 3-5 participants stand in a line and are asked to repeat these phrases one a time in four levels of address:
  - a. to yourself
  - b. to each other
  - c. to the audience
  - d. to the grid \*

\* Some examples of the terms used to describe the grid are those already discussed here, for example, the rules of the room. This can be described as linking into the gender, class and religion rules, along with the theatrical rules themselves. In terms of an action, the performers are asked to listen intently, especially to hear the possible symbolic resonance in the literal. One example of this is the phrase 'My car needs to be fixed.' Said in a simple, literal way, it can be heard as if one simply has an automobile that needs repair. If said with a different tone and a focus on each word's possibilities, it can be heard as 'My *car* needs to be *fixed*' signaling perhaps that the 'car' might refer to something other than a literal 'car' and what needs to be 'fixed' is something larger than an automobile. A similar move can happen in 'to the audience' where that which has a literal meaning can have a metaphoric resonance where in the 'car' for example could stand in for the exercise itself that needs to somehow be 'fixed', allowing a kind of complicity in the room between the audience and the player hearing and playing the phrase on that level. However, the same phrase can be said 'to the grid' in such a way as to imply that the 'car' stands in symbolically for something which cannot be named and therefore what needs to be 'fixed' is a mystery and the focus becomes on the 'need to be fixed' by something which cannot be described adequately in words rather than a literal car or a simple theatrical exercise.

3. After having done this, participants are asked to:
  - a. repeat your own and each other's phrases
  - b. after you have learned everyone's, then you can cut them up (for instance, 'Jesus was the King of the Jews' and 'Art is for the rich' can become 'The

King of the Jews is for the rich’). The only rule is you cannot add new words or change tenses of verbs.

Apocryphal lab members Bill Aitchison and Zoe Bouras described their experience locating the grid in this exercise in this way:

Bill described it as a secret language where something else is communicated through the words being spoken. Zoe however described it as “lifting your head open”, on a more martial plane...

(Avery 2005: unpublished notes)

The fact that both Aitchison and Bouras can work on the grid level and yet describe it very differently, is not surprising as the very language we have to describe the grid comes from the grid itself, so that what each player brings to their verbal description are their own set of references. Bouras has a lot of martial arts training, for instance, whereas Aitchison creates his own performances, which tend to work on different levels of code. What is important is that each player has a handle to focus on, not what the handle is, since when they get to the place where it “clicks” they know they will have already let go of it.

We did a version of this exercise in a kind of slow motion, freeze-frame version to begin the Apocryphal labs as a way to reinvestigate all the terms and see where that would lead. When I have worked with this exercise over the years, I have included gesture, space and objects. We have also added different kinds of text and gestures. Rather than attempt to list all of these variations, I will discuss the ones that are relevant to *The Jesus Guy* and *Besides* in Sections B and C. In both shows players use a variation of this exercise with certain bits of text and gesture either from the prewritten or improvised text. When the audience feeds text into *Besides*, the players take that text and bring it ‘to the grid’ in order to cut it up. Some audience members will do the same whether or not they know the ‘rules.’

The exercise only works when there is a high level of listening and the attention stays focused on the grid, regardless of what that means to anyone. The focus itself can usually carry the attention to where it needs to be. The exercise can be expanded to include gestures, different types of text, different parts of the room, objects and any combinations thereof. We use aspects of this exercise in every show we do, and the ways in which we put together scores and associative gestures are built on this basic foundation. When the exercise works the words from the phrases begin to take on additional resonance, the psychic wallpaper comes off the walls and the constructed nature of the language and the clichés becomes evident, as do uncomfortable rules of the room, which get touched by cut-up clichés that

perhaps get to something less obvious but that resonates as quite true in that moment. This is when the laughter gets uproarious, on the edge of discomfort and relief.

An example of the political implications of this exercise emerged when I taught this workshop to a multiracial group of students at Brunel University. One phrase “Ethnic minorities can’t get ahead” in the process of repetition was repeatedly mis-stated, by the only two Caucasian people in the group, both young men. One said, for example, “Ethnic minorities don’t go anywhere” and the other said “Ethnic minorities can’t go anywhere.” In the exercise the participants are encouraged to correct people who get their phrases wrong, so the woman whose phrase it was kept having to repeat the correct phrase, which caused much hilarity in the group, and much embarrassment to the young men. However, it was so obvious that it was neither intended nor ‘personal’ but instead a product of the rules of the room itself, that there was no personal hostility towards them. As the cutting up began, many other phrases emerged which spoke to a world of frustration and confusion about class, gender and race and religion, but the words and phrases danced instead of getting stuck which made the rules of the room feel malleable, changeable and the mood joyous rather than stuck and dark and gloomy. There is a giddiness that comes from seeing the mechanism of the grid and a world of possibilities seems to open. However, this world can close just as quickly when the participants are not listening and so the words are not dancing and get leaden and heavy.

The combined notion of the grid and the act of cutting up makes the discomfort of the revelation of unconscious racism possible to bear, because it adds an ‘it-ness’ to the rules of the room, so rather than individuals being accused of racism, for example, or a lecture being given about it, the mechanism itself is activated in the room, among a group and so becomes clearly an it rather than a personal issue. The absurdity of the clichés becomes apparent and so there is a kind of healing that seems to take place here as well.

When this exercise works, it begins to address our practical research questions in terms of offering tools to (1) locate the reality-grid and render it mutable and (2) investigate our own core assumptions and own them as our own, whilst also showing that what it is “our own” is something which is also created by the “rules of the room” and is larger than us individually. It also offers a foundation stone to (3) create performances to make visible a process of becoming, wherein we have the potential to create a collective act of philosophy.

Quick.

Now.

NOW?

Well, yeah. Now.

O.K.

Yes, the train...the one where the compartments keep shifting and you've left your luggage on the other train and you're trying to get back to the First Station... Someone really Important to you has gone onto the Other train, and you missed the connection, and the sense of being lost and alone is all you know, but the train just keeps moving relentlessly forward away from your Luggage and all your Money and Identification?

Yeah, that train.

The one that's left the station.

Yeah.

What about the other Trains? The ones interrupted by bombs? By dust and rubble? By frantic phone calls? The ones you can't ride because of the men dressed in green with machine guns outside your Hometown Train.

When were we put in jail? When did that happen?

Was it only last night I tried to escape from jail? Yes, it was. With a friend. She was trying to escape and I was helping her, but there were all these Men in Suits sitting around, looking like a mixture of Shrinks and undercover Cops, and I was trying to signal her, and then she was trying to get down a Hole or something, but one of the Men slipped in past me to go down with her, and I thought, well, maybe she's Escaped anyhow, but then a bit later we were in a bathroom and she was telling me, no, I didn't get away. He got me. They've got me. Now, I'm fucked.

She was going to be kicked out of School. But, I thought, wait, she's a writer. She doesn't need a certificate. She'll be o.k.

Will she?

Train. Training. Train.

De-train.

Un-train.

Get off the fucking Train.

### **Levels of Presence:**

After leaving a rehearsal room having asked performers in the workshop to take 15 minutes of quiet time to warm up, I walked back into the room a few minutes later and the energy of the room had shifted markedly to focused and quiet. The air seemed calmer, the

light and smell had changed. When I had left the room the energy was quite frenetic and diffuse, people chatting and eating, full of the energy of the day. When I returned, nothing had changed in the room except the presence of the people in it, but that shift had the effect of changing the quality of the room itself, its presence. So, from the start, when speaking of levels of presence we can easily slip into the use of the word 'space' as the presence of the space in which we are working is as much the focus as the presence of the performers. This kind of slippage of terms is common in our working process, so rather than tidy it up, I instead point to the slippage to witness how working definitions function in practice.

The working definition of presence in this thesis is distinguished from the way it has been framed recently in contrast to absence especially in relation to digital technologies (as is the primary focus of the Performing Presence research project, which can be found at <http://presence.stanford.edu:3455/Collaboratory/Home>) or to do with 'liveness' as defined by Philip Auslander (Auslander 2008). In order to distinguish what we are exploring with presence, the key word is levels. We are examining the levels of presence in the room, with the assumption that we, performers and audience, are in the same room at the same time, or at least in some reasonable proximity (on the other side of a door for instance). In *Besides*, whilst we do use recorded voices, the focus is on time (the recording as past event) rather than issues of presence and absence.

Writing about Goat Island's performance *Creature from the Black Lagoon*, Laura Cull<sup>49</sup> sees Deleuze & Guattari's idea of becoming as a way to reconceive performance "as this universal becoming" (Cull in Watt & Meyer-Dinkgräff 2008: 27). Rather than a static molar subjectivity, their idea allows presence to become "the meeting with new ways of speaking and moving that resist recognition; a connection to new ways of seeing and feeling beyond identification and naming" (*ibid.*). This definition of presence comes closer to what we are attempting than traditional binary notions of absence and presence, as it is through the shifting levels of presence that we propose to destabilize any definitions in the room of, for instance, performer and audience or sacred and secular space. It is another strategy to create the moments of becoming, as in research question (3). The difference in our work, though, is that we *do* want to name and identify that which remains willfully obscure in order to show it as mutable rather than attempting to "resist recognition." In our view there are many forces

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<sup>49</sup> Cull's work with Goat Island in relation to Deleuze, which is included in the Exeter/Stanford Performing Presence research project, is an exception to that project in that she addresses presence in relation to itself rather than as a binary of absence or a correlative of mediation.

that control us that are not recognized well enough, so we attempt first to locate the grid and make it visible and *then* make it dance.

Chaikin's idea about presence in his book *The Presence of the Actor* (1984) has to do with the ways in which an actor can become in some way more present, more available to herself and the moment, and how theater pieces created by actors can allow for a more intensified ownership of the work by those actors. However, he begins to speak of "realms" in relation to playing Beckett (1984: 138), which in many ways begin to touch on both levels of address and what we are exploring with levels of presence.

In discussing Beckett's *Endgame* (1958), Chaikin distinguishes between the vaudeville "for the audience" where the actor is entertaining the audience explicitly. He then talks about a level, which relates to witnessing the grid, "**where *the actor, as a person, is talking to each of the people in the audience, as a person***, on that level where each is absolutely and completely alone" (1984:138 *emphasis mine*). This level can also be seen as related to the level of addressing "oneself" and perhaps entering the realm of levels of presence such as personal and sacred (discussed below). Another level he points to is "talk from the heart", which he associates with such lines as "'the earth is extinguished, though I never saw it lit'" (*ibid.*). However, he emphasizes that "[n]othing stays. Everything, everything turns again into the realm of the performer, the audience and the show" (*ibid.*). This realm, which includes the whole room and everyone in it, relates very much to witnessing the grid, which is another precondition for creating moments of becoming.

What we mean in our working definition of levels of presence is whatever happened between walking out of a room which existed one way and then returning to find it another way, nothing having shifted but the focus of the people in that room. Therefore, this presence is both personal and social (if only one person had been engaged in quiet warm-ups and others were still talking, the quality of the room would have remained the same) and has something to do with focus and energy. There is a level of witnessing implicit in this work as one must be sensitive to the molecular make-up of the room, especially if there is an exercise that involves shifting levels of presence with no outside cue.

Not sure I follow you...

You know like maybe it was more secure then, that idea about souls...that they kind of couldn't get you know lost...but then they were suddenly kind of well more you know less um well I don't know, less like fixed or something?

Um, maybe...I guess...

As with levels of address, the levels of presence were discovered in action, so I will outline the first basic exercise:

1. Lab members were asked to find a deeply felt gesture. I defined deeply felt gesture as a gesture (or movement sequence) that embodies something within you that cannot be translated into words.
2. Once they had found this, I asked them to take these gestures through five levels of presence, which I did not define in any way, other than to give them the words as prompts. They were:

On stage  
Off stage  
Warm up  
Personal  
Sacred

3. After time given for discovering each level of presence, each lab member showed her gesture through these levels to the rest of us. The only 'rule' was that the actual gesture should not change, only the focus, volume or rhythm.
4. We then discussed what we had seen that distinguished each person's gesture through these levels. Each lab member's role as witness was as important as player because the feedback was very important as to what came across in these shifts.
5. We then tried to do more than one at the same time such as on stage-personal to see how each level of presence would shift the other.

We have explored other levels (which will be discussed in context of labs and shows), but these are the basic ones. A big distinction between levels of presence and levels of address is that we shy away from defining them, especially 'sacred.' The names of each level of presence are meant to act as stimulus for what this could mean rather than a confining idea. This reflects our desire to allow multiple impulses, which sometimes contradict one another, instead of creating a 'house style' or group think<sup>50</sup>.

At the time of these exercises, I was thinking of Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomes (2003), and searching for a way to unhinge presence from its root-tree, allowing it to have horizontal rhizomatic root-stems that shoot off into unexpected territories. Whilst the reality of the live performer remains intact, the energy quality of the room seems to shift, so a multiplicity of moments is allowed to emerge, which can shed light on the flux of the reality

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<sup>50</sup> By group think, I mean a way in which groups can begin to take on a group identity, which can subtly or overtly silence difference within and between members of that group. All of our work attempts to leave space for this difference to not only exist but to be given voice rather than be smoothed over, even if this creates awkwardness between us or within the shows themselves.



of that moment, showing the manner in which it is constructed. These exercises also showed us as witnesses where we cling to certain realities and presence as more or less real or constructed, giving us a moment to see the fleeting trace of our own investments.

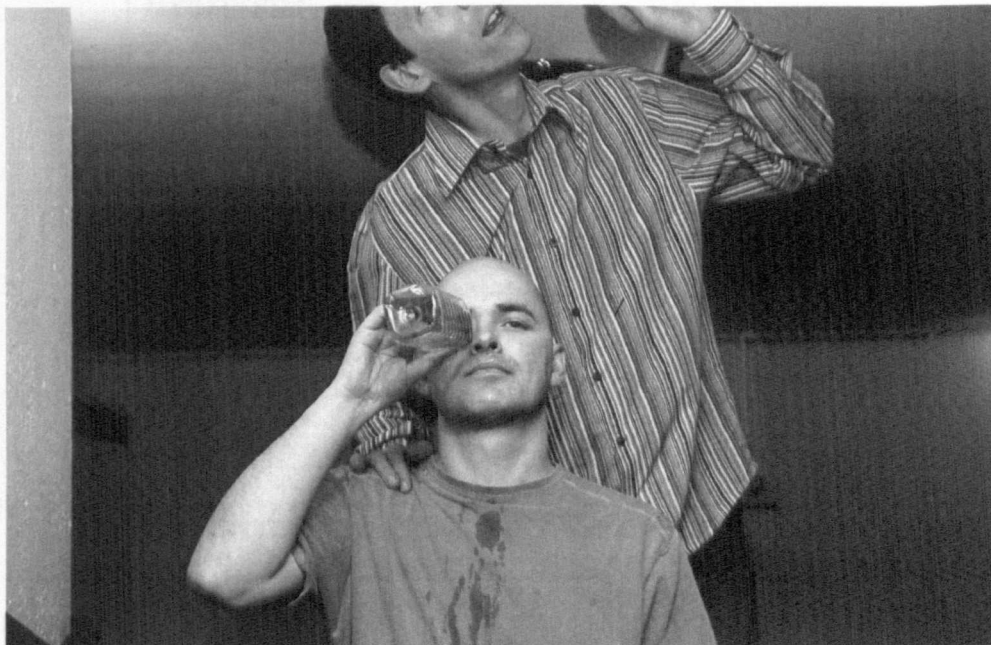
As an example of how these exercises can come together in performance, I note here an observation by lab member Rachel Ellis. Her insight into this experience has become crucial to our understanding of both the witness and the grid and their inter-relationship with shifting levels of presence:

Because my back was feeling quite stressed and vulnerable I had to adapt how I played physically and so was more controlled, whereas the night before I had been a bit chaotic and clumsy. ***I think by listening to my body more it made me more aware of everything and my relationship to everyone else...***

***I really got a sense of the levels of presence and the shifting between them. I felt like I was witnessing almost all the time, whilst doing everything else.***

(Ellis 2007: unpublished email ***emphasis mine***)

Ellis's experience here of being more aware of her own body leads her to be more aware of "everything and my relationship to everyone else" (i.e., the grid) and through that awareness she is liberated to simultaneously witness and shift her levels of presence. This state allowed her to be incredibly responsive to both the room and the exercise and offered an embodiment of a paradox between awareness of oneself, the grid and the ability to perform from this place simultaneously.<sup>51</sup>



Aitchison and Angelini playing with levels of presence in lab 2005

<sup>51</sup> From a director's perspective, I should add that since that performance, she has had access to tremendous power as a performer and an almost uncanny ability to bring the energies of any room into herself and embody them in such a way as to both manifest the grid of that room and make it dance.

Since 2005, Lucy Avery has participated in the labs as witness-in-chief, writing down her observations (which she now publishes on <http://apocryphaltheatrelaboratory.blog.com/>) and as assistant director. Her eye has been a crucial and steady one since she joined us, and her notes are what we refer to in moments of confusion or amnesia. Her notes are often far more coherent than mine, as she is witnessing a process that I am in the midst of creating and therefore cannot keep track of with notes in real time. Below is Avery's notation of the structure of a level of presence exercise, which had evolved from the original exercise and was being taught in a workshop to potential new members of the lab.

*Focus of session: To introduce prospective new members to her work on Levels of Presence*

- The workshop started with the actor's individually warming up and once this is finished we are told that this is one of the levels of presence. This will be discussed later.
- Short introductions to each other and the general backgrounds of the group are in experimental and devised performance, which gives the workshop a concentrated research atmosphere. Most of us come from a theatre background, but there is also a dancer in the group.

***Exercises***

- For 15 minutes, on their own the actors must find a "deep level gesture"<sup>52</sup> – something that can't be done in words. Could be from or inspired by a dream. Can use the architecture of the room.
- Once you've found one you like play with its "volume" or a part of it. Incorporate a word can be from a dream or a sound.
- Now go back to just the gesture and find one you'd like to repeat.

The Levels of Presence are introduced:

*Onstage, Offstage, Warm up, Personal, Sacred.*

(When presented in this order the levels of presence seemed to be going inward. Yet the challenge was to find a way of performing them on stage. This immediately looks to problematise the state in which the actor gives their performance and keeps it alive and present for their audience).

<sup>52</sup> This refers to 'deeply felt' gestures. I may have referred that day to 'deep level' gestures or maybe that is what Lucy heard, in either case it points to the fluidity of the terms in the reality of the working moment.

This then gave us all a common vocabulary with in which to work for the rest of the workshop.

Two actors at a time presented us with their gesture operating it through the different levels of presence as Julia instructs. They can use their sounds but not their words.

***Note: This system of Levels of Presence seems to be a purer and more concentrated form of the Levels of Address we worked with in the Cutting It Up workshop. It is interesting that the actors who haven't worked on the Levels of Address previously, don't seem to be as clear with their movement as those who have.***

- The actors are encouraged to find out what these levels of presence mean to them and to work with the rhythms with in the gestures.

Note: It is interesting to see the way in which the dancer in the group is reacting to the tasks set. Her awareness of space seems to operate on a different level to the actors'. She leads the audience's eye to what was going on within the space and she seems to respond to it on a more open physical level. She is definitely present on stage the whole time.<sup>53</sup>

- Now working in different groups the actors present their gestures and sounds moving through the levels of presence on their own. The audience at the end has to guess what order they moved through.

Note: The architecture takes on a different level now, as the audience attempts to make significance of what is being presented. This highlights the ways that as an audience we attempt to put meaning, or some kind of narrative on anything. This is also reflected in the work of the actor as they attempt to order their work to present certain values for us to understand.

- In pairs the actors present their gestures, sounds and words and anyone from the audience can suggest a new level of presence. The actors are to cut their gestures and words up and borrow from the other performers they are with.

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<sup>53</sup> This type of difference in levels of presence was being noted in 2005, and was actively engaged in the lab in 2007, when we worked with different inspirational moments in training within different disciplines and teaching each other what can be transmitted from these moments. This highlighted each person's expert practice and helps us all engage with each different presence, not to smooth over differences, but to both highlight them and play within the margins between each other's practice and presence. This led to our ability to work with different disciplines in *Besides* with a greater awareness of each others' practices and more integration between us.

**Note: Because the level of concentration and focus was so high in the room there came to be moments of synchronisation of gestures, shapes and sounds and some of the groups really used the space and jammed with each other to create something that became very performative. Some of the actors not aware of Julia's Cutting It Up process were not as free as the other performers, and felt that they couldn't go beyond their own gestures, as it may "feel forced".**

### **Reflection**

**The workshop proved an interesting introduction into the way Julia's work has developed from the Cutting It Up process and seems to present a much more focused level of performance.** The playfulness of the work however was still maintained and the work generated was very rich. **The format of watching each other opens up the process to more discussion and discovery and activates the performer to be more aware of the work they are producing and how their audience receives it. Their onstage awareness then works on two levels.**

(Avery 2005: unpublished notes *emphasis mine*)

In her observations, she notices that the levels of presence create a new clarity to the work, but *also* that people new to the work, who have not been exposed to the levels of address and cutting up process, feel less free to play within the structure. This could, of course, be because they are new to the group, but it also points to the necessity of knowing the underlying tools in order to work with the new tools with more ease. However, as we continued working in the lab, we discovered that the people who joined us from this open-lab, were more adept at working from levels of presence and entered the work more easily from a gestural rather than verbal base.

who can tap you on the shoulder and say: yes, that was the Right Thing to Do. Someone might, but it doesn't matter. Because you still don't know. But you can't spend your whole life staring at that moment of decision, either. So you move on, but certain things remind you about it and the whole process begins again. Someday, you think you might be forgiven. Some days you think you are. Some days you really, really fucking wish someone else could do it for you.

You hope it was worth it.  
You really, really do.

I don't know, I thought maybe you had, you know, like, a *theory* or something...

A *theory*?

You know how Sometimes the water is nice and clear and you can see all the way to the Bottom and it's white sand and it's warm and beautiful?

Yes.

And then sometimes the water is murky and there might be God knows What underneath it and you're swimming in it anyway, and you're trying to get to shore because there might be Sharks there and it's fucking scary?

Yes.

Avery also observes that during deep focus and concentration, "there came to be moments of synchronisation ... some of the groups really used the space and jammed<sup>54</sup> with each other to create something that became very performative" (*ibid.*). These moments of synchronization generally occur when the performers are focused and playing to or with the grid in some way. However, in this instance, we did not bring in the levels of address, which shows that the grid, whether named or not, can be accessed through deep listening. These moments highlight a kind of awareness that is possible outside of conscious effort and therefore make manifest something that is hard to put into words but which seems palpable at the time.

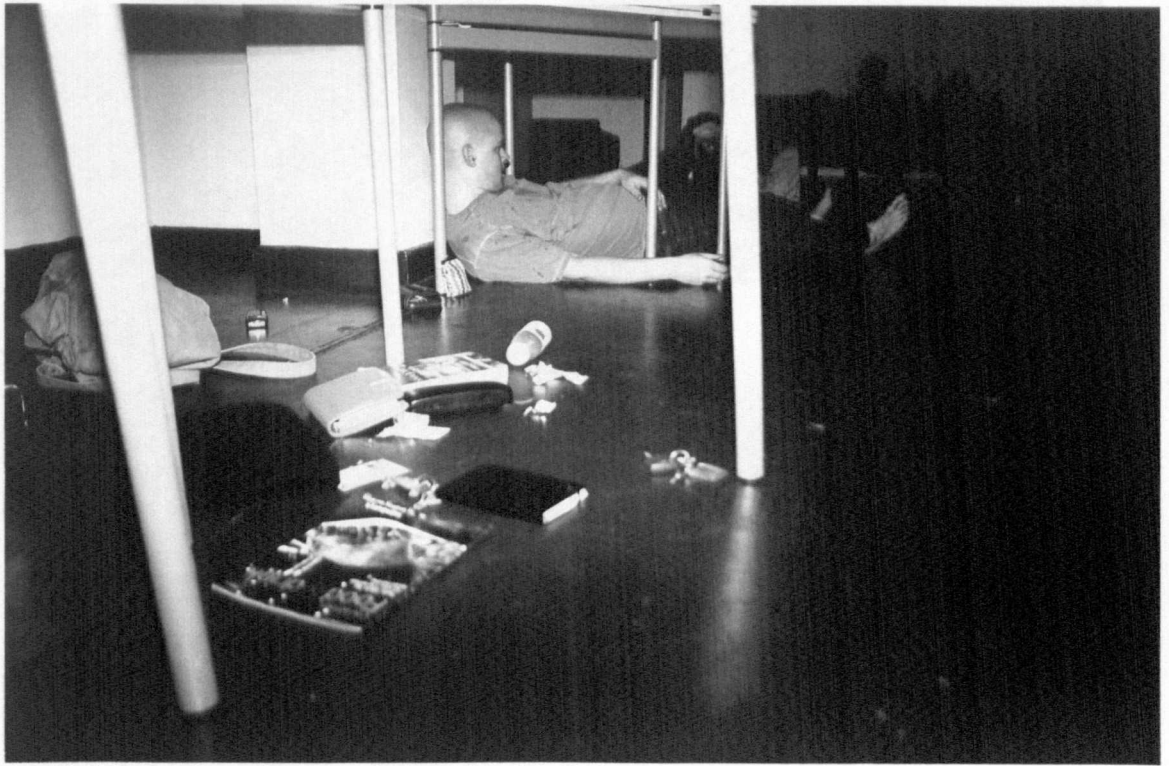
Witnessing here again was as important as performing, as the witnesses could say whether or not the level of presence had shifted perceptibly. When discussing the success or failure of these levels of presence shifts, the performer would generally accord with the witnesses as to the fuzziness of her own focus, so we discovered that the person's own focus on the level of presence was predictive in many cases of whether we would experience it or not. Thus the performer begins through this process of witnessing to see that as a performer she can affect the presence of the room through her own level of focus on presence.

So far the work with levels of presence remains delicate, powerful when it works, but can easily slip and slide into non-coherence. We do use these levels in *The Jesus Guy* and *Besides* but the work may be subtle in terms of audience perception. Levels of address have a sharpness and an edge to them which levels of presence, most likely because of the area of exploration itself, which involves the energy of a social space as much as it does an individual, has many more variables and ways of falling off of itself. However, for that very reason, we

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<sup>54</sup> 'Jammed' here refers to when the players are letting each other's actions affect each other, a version of cutting up. We generally use words associated with jazz, like jamming, riff and the like, as the way we work can be likened more easily to jazz, with its associative musical logic than to traditional narrative-based theatre. When working with improvisation or text, as we are never attempting to create a story, we are instead listening out for resonances that allow for multiplicities of meanings rather than searching for a narrative hook or through line.

will continue to explore these levels as they have the power to embody concepts that can help us relearn to look at the world as multiple and ever-shifting.



Angelini playing in secular space (presence) in lab 2005.

### B. *The Jesus Guy*

When walking into the performing space for *The Jesus Guy*, what is seen on any given night will vary, but there are certain elements that remain the same and to give an idea of what the visual and spatial set-up is like, I will give a brief sketch. The seating is usually in traverse (though we experimented with end-on and giving audience chairs to seat themselves) and the seating area is lit along with what appear to be playing areas. Any areas considered ugly (and are therefore usually masked) wherever we are performing are made visible and sometimes lit quite strongly. There is a rack of clothing and a board with string and a bucket full of green plastic soldiers beneath it. There is a separate area where a woman appears to be occupied with making something, and a lot of photocopies of photos taped on the wall, mostly childhood photos of the players and some of past shows. The players who have been visible since the audience arrived are occupied with some gesture most likely involving an object or clothes, which changes gradually in intensity as the audience enters as they take these gestures through levels of address (to themselves, to each other, to the audience, to the grid). There are



two people who share a visible technical desk, one of whom may be somewhere in the playing area adjusting the lights. The other person is holding a book and may be writing.



Ellis rehearsing *The Jesus Guy* 2006

### **Grid/JG:**

When discussing what any Apocryphal show is about, we are always talking about some aspect of the grid, and in the case of *The Jesus Guy*, the aspect it is concerned primarily with is why we feel impelled to name nameless experience and the seemingly irresistible desire to have Someone in charge. The grid we were examining as a group had to do with unconscious desires as manifest in personal (with no attempt at being logical) associations with the written text and associative gestures created from those associations (discussed below in **Other Tools/JG**). We were looking for a collective unconscious through the ways in which seemingly disparate associations resonated between people in the group especially when creating the associative gestures, and in the conscious use of dream material to inform our process.

### **Text/JG:**

When writing *The Jesus Guy*, I began thinking about these ideas, but the thoughts coincided with the writing of the text. As Barthes says, when discussing writerly Text that

does not attempt to give a singular authorized meaning, “The theory of the Text can coincide only with a practice of writing” (Barthes 1977: 164). This is a very important insight, especially in the way that I write, as I am never attempting to control the process, except to find ways of intervening on my own logic if I sense an attempt to control the meaning.

The strategies for this, as with *Word*, included a process of cutting up myself, my ideas, over-heard conversations, dreams, nightmares, remembered or apocryphal bits of philosophy, arguments, memories, the radio, my bulletin board, books and newspaper headlines. The way in which the text moved was not in my conscious control, though as it evolved, the concerns about naming nameless experience and looking for Someone in charge became clear. About midway through, I think, I decided to call it *The Jesus Guy*. Once this happened, I was more aware of the frame of the piece and this most likely affected what I was hearing and writing. I made more use of dream material than in any of my other texts, and this is what most likely led to the idea of working with collective unconscious desires.

Another important context is that I wrote the text in New York in 2003 when the so-called ‘war on terror’ had begun in earnest in Iraq and the use of fear as a tool to silence a population, in tandem with religious rhetoric, was at a fever pitch. As I allow in what is happening in the so-called ‘outside world’ into whatever I am writing, this atmosphere permeates the text.

This stage-text relates to the research questions in that they are written attempts to create moments of becoming, by locating the reality-grid, not by writing *about* it, but through a process of cutting up and self-interference, arriving at it in such a way that it can be shared but is not dictatorial in terms of what it should *mean*, as much as it attempts to evoke, in this case, unconscious desires and thereby undermine, by making visible, my own fascistic assumptions.

The players memorize the whole text for the performance, but there are no lines pre-assigned so that each night they create a new show. This prevents us from creating a particular something and helps the player/creators awaken to the possibilities of the moment as that is all they have to hold onto: the moment, the tools, the text, each other and the rules of this room.

And then sometimes it’s a mixture of both.

Yes.

And then sometimes the shore is close and other times it keeps drifting away further and further.

Yes.



And then there was that time...yes, there was that Time when you were having all those dreams about someone trying to kill you or rape you and no one was helping-

Yes-

but then you were reading about Buffalo Bill - of all things - and how he could stop an Indian in his tracks by looking at him.

Right.

And then there was that night when That Guy was chasing you with a gun, and you were cornered but then you turned around and looked him in the eye and he put the gun down and walked away.

Right.

And then you never saw him again.

Right.

Right.

Right.

Just turn around and look Him in the eye. Look the Man with the Gun in the Eye.

Chris Goode, who saw four performances of *The Jesus Guy* was able to appreciate the level of variation that this text made possible, writing:

...because the only constant is the text, and the text is so brilliantly supportive of almost infinitely multiple readings, it really can feel like a different piece each night, rather than (even) a series of extreme variations in the performance of a single piece. So the text isn't even a score, really, the change quotient is so high: which is funny – it's all words but it works like a graphic score.

(Goode in Apocryphal 2006: 16)

### **Witness/JG:**

These were my first notes in preparation for *The Jesus Guy*:

to submit to a moment  
of complete awareness  
in order to do this, need to  
**“undermine” false Gods of**  
**Now – show them for**  
**what they are:**  
**constructions we**  
**rely upon –**

out of fear of the unknown +  
awareness of our  
complete selves –  
especially our dark  
side (or in some  
cases, light side)

complete awareness: being able to hear,  
see,  
smell,  
touch, feel;  
think – sense –  
**new stuff that doesn't**  
**fall into old patterns or even**  
**more important: old stuff in a new way**  
open – senses – aware – allow –  
**witness – witness this – submission**  
**to complete awareness –**  
**we, audience – all – submit +**  
**witness**

(Barclay in Apocryphal 2006: 14)

No, it's just, you know, *fact*.

Fact? You're joking, right...I mean we, the people *we* know, do you think *we* believe in simple 'fact' anymore?

Um, maybe? And who do you think I know that you know that makes us a 'we'? Just out of curiosity, you know, *Idle Speculation*...

Well, I think you do, I mean *we* do...it's all of us, those of us who find ourselves *here*. And those we *already know*. The people who count. The people who *know things*. Them, who of course are now we, or at least I hope so...I mean, I think, really, I've done enough work here by *now* to be counted one of *we* rather than *them*. Don't you think? I mean, really?

In other words the goal is to witness the grid so that in this witnessing the grid will be undermined. The other goal that is now explicit is that the audience too be involved as witnesses. However, the assumption here is that we, the creators of *The Jesus Guy*, need to do this first (as in research question (2) about unearthing our own fascistic investments) so that this experience is available to the audience, not forced on them, but offered as an invitation.



Angelini rehearsing *The Jesus Guy* 2006

An example of how we attempt this has to do with the way we work with associative gestures (discussed below), which in many cases are quite grotesque and unflattering and open up a world of resonances that the audience can make their own. One audience member said in relation to the associative gestures (without knowing the term and referring to them as ‘episodes’):

The different ‘episodes’ (is that the right word?) had different effects on me, but there was none of it that left me unmoved. Certain moments like...when everyone with the pig snouts on ganged up against the one woman (in a negative way) took me away from the performance into my own memories – they were evocative moments.

(Copson 2006: unpublished email)

Luis Sotelo in an article about *The Jesus Guy* wrote of his response to another associative gesture, which included the players handing audience members little green plastic soldiers (though in the full article he traces the multiple ways in which these same soldiers are used in other gestures, including marking the deaths on stage symbolically and as soldiers drummed to death on green plastic buckets):

...at one point a bunch of those soldiers ended up in my hands. *Young Man Three*, the same entomologist who had collected them when he cleaned the battlefield produced by *Young Man One and Two* had given them to me and I had accepted them, yes, the same chap who had designed and built the memorial made up of strings and plastic soldiers, that young and bald man had taken the soldiers from the wall and planted them in people’s hands; my hands became a cemetery; my hands were suddenly a portion of

planet earth, they were earth indeed and the soldiers were seeds that had been planted in my hands, the same body parts used by *Young Man One* to heal *Young Man Two* a couple of minutes (or had it been millennia?) ago; my hands as a common grave as a garden; there was heat in those soldiers in my hands; they were so cold that heat was activated in response.

(Sotelo 2006: <http://people.brunel.ac.uk/bst/vol06/luissotelo/home.html> )

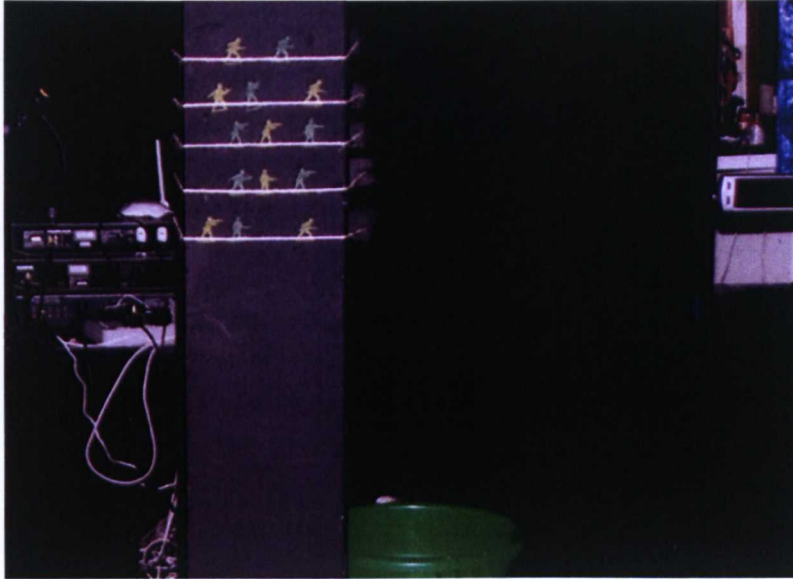


Angelini giving audience member green plastic soldiers *The Jesus Guy* 2006



Schmidt, Angelini, Aitchison and Bouras in *The Jesus Guy* 2006

In performance if the moment of witness is shared between the audience and performers, we are witnessing the grid and thereby undermining its power in the room together as a social body. These moments of witness have the power to open up new possibilities for relearning to look at and conceptualize the world, even if the world at that moment is framed by the theatre space itself.



plastic soldiers marking deaths on stage *The Jesus Guy* 2006

As mentioned at the beginning, the audience can be seated in a number of ways during this show, but generally it is in traverse, so that the audience is watching each other watching the show. Players can and do end up in audience areas and the sense is that we are all in the same room.

### **Witnessing the Process**

At our first meeting in January 2006, two months before rehearsals began, I asked everyone to begin keeping journals of this process. We discussed how to witness ourselves as we were working, and Theron Schmidt said he hoped that the journal writing could happen within the rehearsals themselves as well as outside so that the act of witnessing occurred within the framework of the process itself and was not only reflecting in hindsight. This suggestion led to the idea of everyone listening for their own associations in the text, which was written down in journals and also directly onto scripts. Whilst deciding which associations to turn into gestures, the players recorded this process, too. We all wrote reflections after rehearsals and performances with some more diligent than others. We also



recorded our dreams. In the end, we each wrote some form of evaluation, which we shared with each other two months after the initial run of the show had closed.

10.3.06

'People of the Abyss' – documentary – radio 4

Drawn to this – why?

Words popped out as I listened;

- whale
- underwater
- 'seeing' by sounds
- trying to get/feel at home
- all male places/all female places
- hiding under ice/ a veneer of cold
- cold war

These phrases/images captured feelings/sensations I had from the script and even what to work on (all male/female becoming a theme for certain gestures later). Getting to underlying beliefs requires some deep diving...

(Bouras 2006: unpublished notes)

My intention was to compile as diverse a record as possible of the process of rehearsing and performing *The Jesus Guy*. Having these documents available offers the reader of this thesis a broader view of what was created, how it was created and with whom it was created, as well as giving me a variety of mirrors with which to view the process. By having these multiple points of view, the polyvocality of the process will hopefully become clear. Pointing to a single author of the Text of *The Jesus Guy* is impossible. However, I am the author of this thesis, wrote the stage text and directed the process, no matter how improvisational and collaborative. I want to hold the tension here, as I do not believe that this undermines the claim of co-authoring the Text of *The Jesus Guy*, as the Text I envisioned is polyvocal.

Avery's rehearsal role was to observe and notate in real time, as none of the rest of us could both do this and participate simultaneously. Her notes show the details of the process that my notes could only trace retrospectively. Avery, as mentioned earlier, had practice in her role as an observer who had notated the process in the labs for nine months prior to her role as assistant director with *The Jesus Guy*. She wrote a disclaimer on the first page of her notes:

With this journal I tried to document our rehearsal process, through transcription, description and observation. When looking back over my notes I realise that they are incomplete. They only tell a minor part of the story. I've tried to keep them consistent in the way I have documented, but realise how with the evolution of the piece and a discovery of a way of working as an ensemble how hard that is. In the end, I feel that this journal is like an audience member's response to watching the final show: I can not get away from my

subjectivity, the personal associations I bring to the process, and however hard I tried to attain a total awareness, I could not see it all. This is an attempt only to catch the fingerprints that made the show the experience that it became, and like fingerprints not every line is complete.

(Avery 2006: unpublished notes)

Excuse me.

Yes?

Who are you?

I am he who tells stuff that ye shall believe what I say because I said  
so....Amen

Do you really think that stuff works anymore? I mean aren't we kind of like, well, beyond that?

Avery eloquently describes the problematic issue of documenting any living process for future readers. The best we can hope to do is collate all of our multiple points of view and ways of documenting, written and visual, and hold the tension between the past and the present, not ignoring the difference between the points in time, but hopefully being able to gain a different insight into the process through retrospectively reading, viewing and digesting all of the documentation.

### **Witnessing in Performance: Photographs & Video Documentation**



Ellis and Angelini rehearsing *The Jesus Guy* 2006

*BR: You really have a desire to try and see and include everything.*

RR: I think that's what everything is about.

*BR: But there is a desire to not shut anything out. Everything has to be brought into it – inclusion and not exclusion.*

RR: Well, you shouldn't be able to just presume. I don't want you to be able to just figure that the image is all that there is supposed to be. I always like one-to-one confrontation in nearly everything there is.

(Rauschenberg and Rose 1987:75)

Jorgensen's role as photographer and the players' roles as videographers in rehearsals and performance operate outside traditional parameters where the documenter positions herself in some discrete part of the space in order not to disturb the work or be noticed and became part of the performance itself. When Jorgensen shoots photos, she positions herself in the space in direct relation to one or more players.

Her presence as a photographer is meant to disrupt, witness, support or ignore the actions of the players. As the players themselves can, for example, be disrupting one another, Jorgensen's presence can support one player whilst disrupting another. In performance, Jorgensen creates sculptural objects that she interjects into the space at various intervals with the same possible four intents: to witness, support, disrupt or ignore the action. She can for instance enter the space with one of her objects, place it somewhere and photograph this whilst ignoring all the action around her.

The guiding principle in all these decisions was to create a lively map in the Deleuze and Guattari sense rather than a trace:

Make a map, not a tracing... What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real... It is itself part of the rhizome... is open and connectable to all of its dimensions... The map has to do with performance, where as the tracing always involves an alleged "competence".  
(2003: 12)

In other words, she creates documentation that instances itself as such during rehearsals and performance, which is shown both during performance and when viewed afterwards to be subjective and performative rather than offering a fictional objective view from an all-seeing competent eye. When we perform *The Jesus Guy* now she distributes photos from old shows to the audience, creating a loop from past to present.



No - she had her eyes closed remember...

Yes, her eyes were closed and she couldn't Open them. Right.

And she was in a Bad Part of Town.

Right - a bad part of town. And she felt this Man's presence...no, not a man, but a dark presence-

And then she finally opened her eyes, and she was in her Own Room, and there was a man with a black hat but she couldn't see his face. He walked over to her bed, lay down next to her-

She was terrified, couldn't breathe -

-And disappeared.

Into Thin Air.

Vanished.

And she got up quickly and turned on All the Lights.

No one there.

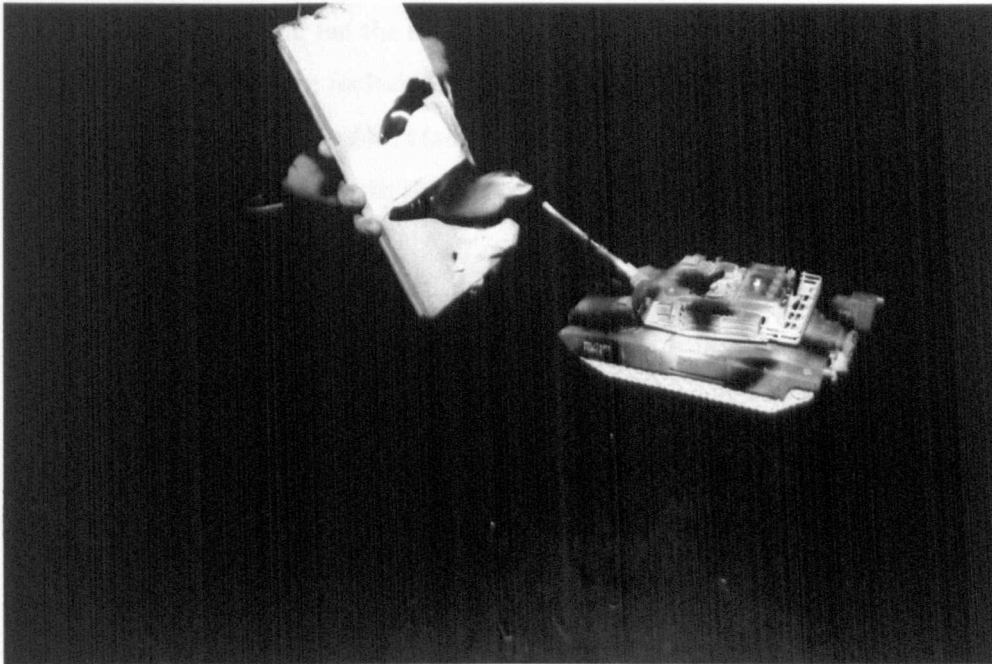
No one.



Angelini performing in Jorgensen's 'studio' in *The Jesus Guy*

We created her role together as we are both interested in undermining the power dynamic inherent in being the 'outside eye'. We discussed how the photograph or the videotape makes

history and perhaps we could show how history is made if rendered explicit whilst happening. Someone is deciding moment by moment what is important, what is worth keeping and what can be ignored. Sometimes that person is frustrated to have missed something that seemed important a moment ago.



An object created by Jorgensen in *The Jesus Guy* 2006

Who says?

They do.

Who is they?

Them, you fool. *Them.*

Oh, come on, who cares about *them*???

Well, we should.

Do you think so, I mean really? Isn't this one of those, you're either *on* the bus or you're not kind of things? Or shouldn't it be? I mean aren't *they* supposed to be part of *we*, I mean seeing as we're in the same room and all? Like you said before?

This approach to the documentation relates to witnessing the grid of history (through documentation). By making this grid explicit, we aim to shift its power so we can re-look at this relationship.

We attempted to use this same theory with the video documentation of the show, having an intern, Joanna Bone, shoot video throughout shows as if she were a war correspondent with freedom to roam amidst the action. However, unedited video footage taken in this way is more interesting in theory than it is in fact. In live performance, her presence was interesting but the resulting documentation is difficult to watch all the way through. I have therefore included both an edited DVD with highlights from various shows with a focus on two pages of text (so the variation between shows is visible), in addition to a DVD of an unedited full-length show (both in Appendix G).

### **Cutting Up/JG:**

Cutting up happens in many ways during *The Jesus Guy*. First, in the text as mentioned earlier, I am cutting up my own trains of thought and arguments along with text. In terms of performance, within the text are directions for players to improvise working with clichés or dreams, for example, in a way that encourages them to work through levels of address or cut them up in the moment (see, e.g., the performance text in Appendix E: 251, 252). In these moments, the players drawing from the lab work we have done improvising with levels of address, clichés and gestures, bring in material relevant to the subject matter and to what is happening in the room at the moment and eventually cut into each other's words and actions. Through this cutting up process, especially if the grid has been located before it has begun, the players find one another, the room and the audience and transmute it into something else. An example of one of the improvisations (*ibid.*: 265) as it happened in rehearsals and in different shows can be seen on the edited DVD (Appendix G). In the example of the last performance excerpt on the DVD in particular, the gender grid has been located and shown as both scary and funny, funny because we can laugh at the players, but scary because it feels very real. The sense I had watching it live, and there is some sense of on the DVD, is of a kind of exorcism of stubborn ghosts, which of course resonates back to directing *The Serpent* (1969), except that in this case it is improvised and happens in that moment, not to be repeated in that way ever again.

The other cutting up that happens throughout *The Jesus Guy* relates to the associative gestures and the use of the space itself. Throughout the show, players pay attention to one another's actions and incorporate aspects of them into their own, including ways of using the space. In this way, the entire performance can be seen as a cut-up. We have begun for instance to limit the amount of gestures (from our pre-existing vocabulary of over 100 gestures) brought into the show, and then using that more limited gestural vocabulary,

repeating it through different levels of address and presence and cutting them up. In this way, we are able to destabilize any one meaning from being attached to a gesture and heat them up, so they gain in resonance and multiplicity.

### **Levels of Address/JG:**

The levels of address are used throughout all of our performances. Each player should be aware at all times to whom or what she is addressing, either to herself, to another player, to the audience or the grid. When the audience enters the playing space of the *The Jesus Guy*, the players are repeating a gesture through levels of address and only begin speaking once they feel they have located the grid level. In performance our goal is to always be addressing the grid once it has been located. All the other levels of address are considered masks that are used to vary the intensity and possible meanings of words and gestures, but the point is always to be addressing the grid. When players feel diffuse, the first direction is to find out what one's relation is to the grid. If that connection is lost, the next direction is to step back and witness, to combat the usual reaction of attempting to 'act' one's way out of it. When this connection is lost, it is palpable in the room as everything feels quite scattered and the invisible threads that seem to link the players to each other, the audience and the room when the grid has been located feel broken or somehow slack. This can and generally does happen a few times during any show, as keeping the focus on the grid is a very disciplined practice, especially in an environment of continual flux with multiple bodies and voices.

### **Levels of Presence/JG:**

The four primary levels of presence we use now for *The Jesus Guy* are dream, awake, waking dream and asleep. We originally used the basic levels of presence of onstage, offstage, warm up, personal and sacred, having added 'secular' in as a way to contrast with 'sacred.' The beginning of the show is structured in such a way that the players and the lights work their way through the levels of presence. Once they have reached the last level, the players and lighting designer cut in and between these levels from then on.

As mentioned earlier in regards to the lab, the levels of presence work can be slippery, so the more resonant the descriptor is to with the movements of the event, the better they work. Whilst the basic levels of presence are clear in terms of theatre itself, they were not quite resonant enough with the specificity of the more emotional, associative level on which *The Jesus Guy* was both written and created. We did a lot of work in labs and in rehearsals on

finding ways of creating sacred and secular spaces (and in search of a sacred secular or a secular sacred), and this work has created a kind of substratum throughout the piece. However, the active moves between waking, sleeping, waking dreams and dreaming resonate more with the text and the gestures we created.

The text includes a lot of dream imagery, and also a lot of direct references to being asleep, awake and in some type of waking dream state. The gestural vocabulary, which is described below, originated from each person's associations with words and phrases in the text. These associations were not necessarily linear so the process by which they were found created a kind of waking dream state within the group itself. As mentioned below, we even started entering each other's dreams. Because we all shared this process, this most likely accounts for the resonance of these levels of presence within and between each player. In shifting the levels of presence for *The Jesus Guy*, we discovered that these levels are perhaps more keyed into the emotional subconscious of an event more than the conscious content. The naming of the levels of presence, when we have found the right names for the event, become a shorthand way of getting to difficult to explain emotional and psychic states, which can then affect the feel, appearance and even smell of a whole room.

### **Additional Tools/JG:**

#### **Associations**

Names and words are sorry husks, yet they indicate the quality of what we have experienced.

(Jung in Hauke 2003: 213)

Dreams last night of offices and people with wings, people running from the law, doing strange gestures with tennis racquets, tiring but exciting dreams...running into therapy too, this image, of Zoe, of Theron, with the little angel wings...guardian angels, standing there, just doing their job.

(Barclay in Apocryphal 2006: 15)

We spent the first two weeks of rehearsals going through the text one page at a time for everyone's associations with the text. I said very little about my own associations with the text, as I was afraid they would gain precedence or seem like the 'real' meaning. I did however clarify the intended syntactical meanings and 'Americanisms', qualified with the phrase like: that's the major chord – the music I hear, however you can do something else with it. Sometimes if a performer happened to catch an association that was my original

intent, I would mention that as it seemed uncanny (as my associations were not obvious in many instances). Everyone's individual associations are recorded in their rehearsal journals, whilst Avery recorded the process. Excerpts of our work on associations, recorded by Avery, can be seen on edited DVD (Appendix G).

Julia reminds the cast that they don't need to rationalise any of their associations. She also suggests that the performers could write down their dreams, and in the ways we create sacred and secular spaces, you can create a dream space. Not all responses have to be verbal. She also mentions Gendlin's idea of 'focusing': felt sense of thinking, if you feel something you [don't need to] name it right away... instead, find the fuzzy edges of it and go through it, going beyond that named thing, but checking with yourself. Move [sic] reason to get out of narrative.

(Avery 2006: unpublished notes)

What more can I say?

I don't know. Something.

SOMETHING?!

Yeah, well, something.

Oh Christ.

NOT that.

Well, What then?

An Explanation.

AN EXPLANATION???!!!!

Whilst we have many pages of associations, I will give an example from a page of notes with associations, one of which led to an associative gesture that will be described later. Where a dream is described, as below, it was shared with the group and may have been used in rehearsal or performance in an improvisation called for in *The Jesus Guy*, which begins with someone telling their dream. All the dreams and associations that were not made into gestures existed as a kind of shadow process, emerging in gestures and throughout performances as distant echoes, the space between one gesture and the other, the way a certain sound was heard. We had made conscious some of our unconscious through this process and in some invisible way this bound us together during each rehearsal and continues to bind us together in performance. We invaded each other's dreams.



Schmidt performing in *The Jesus Guy* 2006

*Dream: I was in bed in the house where we rehearse. I heard the doorbell. It was Zoe completely stressed out about her yellow Travelcard. The others were already rehearsing. I was late but stayed in bed and felt bad about it.*

Associations: dance yourself dizzy, Jesus in the bus, **kittens killed by an axe on good Friday.**

Good to talk about syntax and cynics and that it seems easy to sell a text with cynicism. Where are we now with the text. Listen out. What are our beliefs, my beliefs, your beliefs. Want to [hear] more about peoples hopes and feelings not just their opinion.

(Angelini 2006: unpublished notes)

The process of sharing associations allowed space for performers to create their own Text so there would not be a slavish adherence to a *writer's text* (mine) that had secret meanings to be uncovered by clever performers. Avery referred to the performers' associations in her notes as a "shadow play" (2006: unpublished notes).

### Associative Gestures

When creating associative gestures, players looked over their associations for a particular page of text, and then mentioned any particularly resonant association. If that association either resonated with another performer or one of the tools, that performer would work either alone or with however many people she thought she would need to create a

gesture for that association, *gesture* meaning anything from a relatively simple movement to a synchronized dance routine. Players worked on gestures simultaneously and then showed them to each other and me. We discussed what worked with that gesture, what tools it embodied and made suggestions if the gesture was not resonating past the creator/s.

Why?

Because it's not moving anything forward, not getting us anywhere.

Where on earth do you want to GO?

I don't know, somewhere.

WHERE?

Well, somewhere.

Somewhere BETTER?

Well, yeah, maybe somewhere better. Is that so bad?

Could be. Could be one of those horrible utopian type things that leads to fascism and world wars and god knows what else!

Or not.

How do you know?

I don't. I'm just saying, sometimes wanting to go somewhere better can be, you know, good. It's not always bad. It could mean getting out of somewhere bad and going somewhere, you know, better.

But do you really think it's a matter of going somewhere???

Maybe.

I'm not so sure. I think that usually makes things worse.

Maybe.





Rehearsal of “Kittens” associative gesture for *The Jesus Guy*

Below is a genealogy of the associative gesture “Kittens” to give a sense of how this process worked.

**Associative Gesture creation:**

a. For line on p. 21 of *The Jesus Guy* (Appendix E: 253):

Good Friday.

Angelini’s association was

‘kittens killed by an axe on Good Friday’ (Angelini 2006: unpublished notes)

b. Angelini mentions this is a resonant association, and asks for two people to help him create the gesture. Bouras and Schmidt want to help as this resonates with them. This association begins with ideas of cleanliness and torture, stemming from other associations.

c. They take time to create a gesture, which at first seems too vague. I suggest they add a camera.

d. They finalize the gesture, which includes one person hooded holding a cross made of sticks (made by Jorgensen), leading another by a leash attached to a dog collar whilst another videotapes.

e. Those of us watching notice the power dynamics shift markedly if it is a man or a woman being led on the dog collar and different grid rules are being tapped. We note that the tools being used are 'big mask', level of address to the grid and sacred presence. It is a 'big mask' because the performers are not pretending to be these people but are putting on a big dark mask. The level of address is to the 'grid' as the image touches on the political, gender and religious imagery of now (two days after creating this gesture, an article in *New York Times* (Schmitt 2006) appears about a man who is torturing people with a dog and a camera).

f. Discussion about how this scary image could be 'sacred':

....talking about ... hooded gestures, ... Theron said could it be demonic and I said no sacred could have dark in it and Zoe mentioned the idea of using the dark to scare the darkness away and I mentioned the issue of if you are only trying to shine light all you will attract is darkness, and ... realized why I liked the dark stuff...

(Barclay 2006: unpublished notes)

g. Gesture is given the name: Kittens, after its original impetus. This name is put on a piece of paper and tacked to the wall.

h. Gesture is added to the process whereby we integrate each one with the text working with improvisational structures. Gesture will not remain related to p. 21, but can be used anywhere in the show. Any three performers can enact this gesture.

i. We create over 100 gestures, which are used throughout the course of the performances.

### **Associative objects/images**

Jorgensen created a journal, which included words, drawings and photographs, some she had shot and others that were found. She was finding associations too but many of the times they were associative images and objects, or she would add objects to gestures being created.

Remember that time when we were walking down to that shack...and for some reason you were talking about physics with that Guy and you Knew what you were talking about even though it was something insane like Super String Theory?

Yeah.

That was cool.

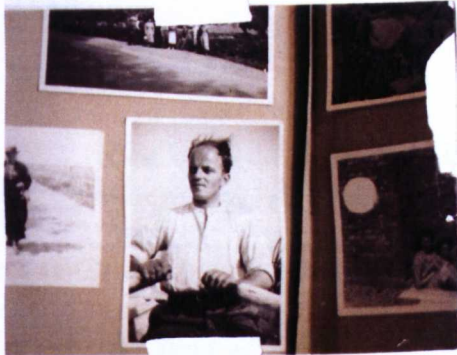
Yeah.

Can't we keep walking up that mountain?

What mountain?

You know, The Mountain.

Well, yeah, I guess.



First Associative

- Writing on <sup>a stone</sup> beach

SOLO  
SACRED  
To YOURSELF  
Witnessing

INTERIGATION

- BOATS → POLICE INTERIGATION - IDENTITY  
- VERBS - SECULAR

STREETS OF AMERICA

SECULAR  
EVERYONE

Page of Jorgensen's journal from the first day of creating associative gestures for *The Jesus Guy*. These photos were visible in her space during performances at CPT.

and purged his irrational impulses, or directed them into a special channel... Yeah, I know, I know...but listen to this, it gets better: These were the times when the religious sanction had become guilt instead of shame (page 167)-

So what's on page 167?

OK, here's something: Clytemnestra, tormented by a snake-dream that is a gift to psychoanalysts-

Excuse me? Were there psychoanalysts in ancient Greece?

Well, no.

So what's That all about?

One way not to notice a big hole in the sky....

Wow.

Yeah.

Wow.

Men will know that I am the LORD  
when I execute judgment upon her  
and thereby prove my holiness,  
I will let loose pestilence upon her  
and bloodshed in her streets;  
the slain will fall in her streets,  
beset on all sides by the sword;  
then men will know that I am the LORD.

Lord is always in all caps, isn't it?

Yes.

So, is this it then? How they justify the torture and all, do you think? God's will, that kind of thing?

Some believe this to be the case yes.

Some? Is 'some' different than 'we'?

But of course.

So 'we' don't believe this then, am I to presume?

Right. 'We' are smarter than that.

Oh, good, well, that's a relief.

So, what is it that 'we' believe then? Just you know again, out of *idle curiosity*?

Oh, we! We don't believe Anything!

We don't believe in Anything?!



## Readings

I handed out articles on subjects related to religion and politics<sup>55</sup> and one philosophical text: Nietzsche's *Four Great Errors* (2003: 58-65). As some of these ideas ended up being influential to *Besides*, this journal entry is included:

Also offered idea of conflicting POV's: especially, spiritual, emotional and intellectual and how they can battle it out, in oneself and in the work and between people...gave example of Nietzsche bit about how because of all the things that go into the circumstance of any individual's actions and how interconnected they all are, it is impossible to judge anyone's actions, as no one is individually 'responsible' for that action as a pure individual outside of all these circumstances...spiritually, I completely relate to that, intellectually I balk and think of needs for 'justice', etc. and fears of people taking license and abusing this notion (e.g. Crime and Punishment, etc.), emotionally I balk because some part of me just wants revenge against certain assholes on a personal and political level...so all these various parts of me are at war...and see some of these conflicts played out in the script...

(2006: unpublished notes)

This conflict, which is made explicit in *Besides*, is perhaps not as obvious in *The Jesus Guy*.

### *C. Besides, you lose your soul or the History of Western Civilisation*



Blunt, Backus, Aitchison and Ellis in last Hamlet scene of *Besides* 2009

Before the audience enter the theatre to see *Besides*, I tell them that they can sit anywhere, move around at any time during the show and that they can feel free at any time to

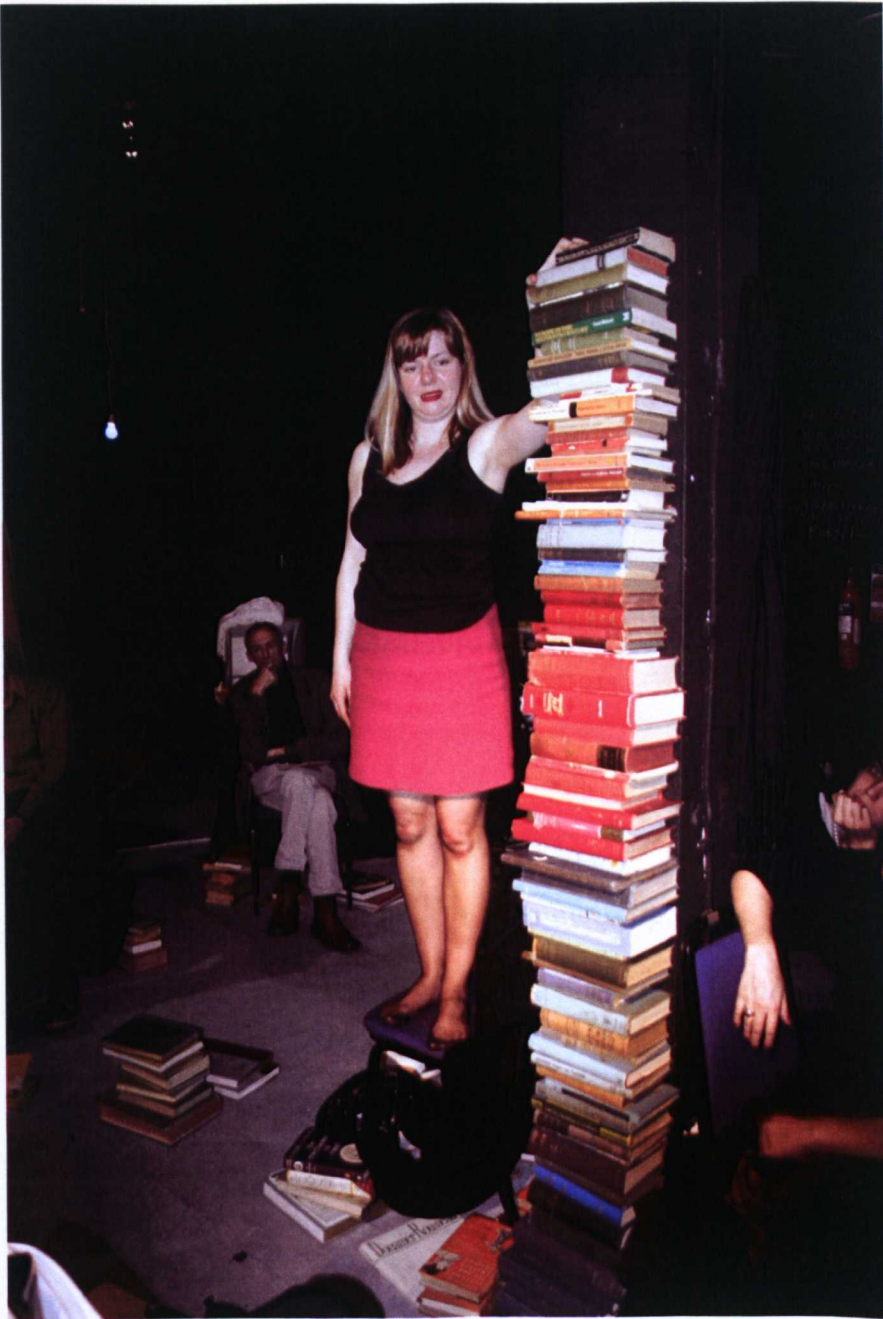
<sup>55</sup> The most significant articles are listed in bibliography: Cheng (2006), Reece (2005) and Schmitt (2006).

look at the many books that are on the floor and all throughout the room. When the audience walks into the space, they will see chairs throughout the space and littered amongst these chairs over 1,000 books. These books upon further inspection are all pre-WWII or written about pre-WWII literature, philosophy, politics or history. There are a few books that do not fall into that category but relate in some way to the show. One row of books, each in a plastic bag, is set apart and should appear forensic in some way. There are two levels of rostra without any chairs on them on one end of the space, a small platform in the middle of the space with nothing on it, and a large table at the other end of the space. Beneath this table are burnt books and ash lit by a fluorescent light. On the wall next to the table is a projection of the performance text. I am visible, after the audience has entered, sitting at the rostra end of the space scrolling the introductory text. There is a visible tech desk where Avery controls sound and lights, and near that desk is a microphone. On the walls written in chalk in different places are a series of numbers with words next to them, which whilst not ever made explicit, are the scores for each player. All the scores will be visible even if all the players are not performing that night. Everyone in the company, including me, is dressed in whatever image we have of a detective. The players who will be speaking most of the time have copies of Hamlet in their hands when the audience enters, as they read that text or sift through the other books looking for clues. Jorgensen is moving books around, in the process of creating her ever-shifting installation.

### **Grid/*Besides*:**

The grid *Besides* attempts to locate is that of Western philosophy and its relation to gender and religion. In locating these aspects of the grid, it aims to interrogate our ability to judge anyone or anything from a stable platform of belief (including the erroneous belief that one can believe nothing). This interrogation takes the form of a search for the individual soul as defined by Western philosophy. Using ourselves as the detectives, we ask: does the soul exist, who invented it and have we lost it? The many philosophers quoted in the *Besides* text are not explicated in any formal way, but their ideas are brought into play through their words and cut up into each other as resonators, ways of attempting to get at, as the text says, “something, you know, larger than individual ideas” (Appendix E: 309).





Ellis and audience in *Besides* 2009

The idea of the soul could appear to be a molar fascistic idea: something that is perhaps totalizing and implies something universal, however in our lived experience when working with a central action of the search for the soul, multiplicities emerged and we find that everyone answers what the soul is in their own way. The detective that has to let go of his identity to find what he is looking for is as old as Oedipus (at least) and there is the lovely irony of using this image whilst contemplating in the deep background the ideas of the men who wrote *Anti-Oedipus* (though Deleuze and Guattari of course were referring to Freud's use of the myth of Oedipus not Sophocles).

Of course it's possible!

No, it's not.

If I say I don't believe in anything then I don't.

It's not that simple.

Of course it is.

No, it's not. Even the denial of belief is a statement of belief, and even if it weren't, you certainly believe in Something.

Prove it.

OK, do you believe that we should discriminate against people based on race, for example?

No, of course not.

So, there you go.

What?! I just said I didn't believe in something.

Right. But the opposite is a belief: I believe that we should not discriminate against people based on race.

Yes, but that's just *common sense*, it's something *we* all agree on! It's not a *belief*. A belief is something unreal, unprovable, irrational... Wrong.

In other words, something you disagree with.

Right, I mean wrong, I mean it's just because it's just *common sense*.

I rest my case.

That's just sophistry.

No, it's not. Good try, but it's not. And anyway, the sophists weren't all bad, they got a bad name, but –

Please stop before I have to resort to violence.

Violence?!!

Yes, violence.



Are you thinking of torture perhaps?

Maybe.

**Text/*Besides*:**

*Besides* was written in London during the doctoral research period and for that reason reflects its concerns in a more concentrated and explicit way. Initially, *Civilisation* was spelled *Civilization*, but I changed it in deference to traditional British spelling. Ideally, the title would be spelled *Civilization* with the ‘z’ crossed out and an ‘s’ handwritten on top to manifest immediately the two worlds of language, culture and thought that the play traverses. The text was written in response to three urgings, and only when the third urging came along did a spark ignite the writing. First was reading an interview in the *New Yorker* (Mayer 2005: [www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/02/14/050214fa\\_fact6](http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/02/14/050214fa_fact6)) with an ex-FBI officer about why torturing people was a bad idea because you get bad information and, “Besides, you lose your soul.” That article sat in a tray until Hans-Thies Lehmann in a lecture at Central School of Speech and Drama (2007) reminded us that the individual soul was a Western construct. A week later, in response to this lecture and the memory of the article, I spread out all my books from Western Civilization classes taken at secondary school and university (in the early 80s before deconstruction had altered the traditional canon), and was struck by the most obvious yet breath-taking fact of all: no women. The text that emerged is a kind of tense and argumentative tessellation of these three threads: Why are we torturing people? Where did the soul come from, did we invent or discover it and have we lost it? And where (pre-WWII) were all the women? Having said all this, I should add that, as with *The Jesus Guy*, when writing I was not attempting to make a coherent argument but instead interfering with any of my own arguments or ideas, in this case, using a lot of found philosophy texts to do so, along with found history and literature texts, apocryphal tales, articles, lectures, memories, dreams, Wikipedia and my bulletin board. The multiplicities of possible interpretations are intentional and when we play with this text, as with *The Jesus Guy*, the attempt is to allow for as many resonances as possible.



Bouras in *Besides* 2009

As with *The Jesus Guy*, the lines were not assigned and each night the players improvised their way through the text, the core players working with scores built in rehearsals, which, as mentioned earlier, are visible on the walls of the theatre space. In this production, different configurations of players can perform the piece, including special guests who have worked with Apocryphal<sup>56</sup> in the past but have not been involved in rehearsals, instead bringing their experiences with the lab work to bear in the same way an experienced jazz musician can sit in with a group she has perhaps not worked with in a while but with whom she is familiar or with whom she shares a similar vocabulary.

As with *The Jesus Guy* no players are asked to ‘sell’ the text or say it in any one way, the goal still being that each player brings herself to bear against the text and finds her own way through it. However, because this text does have a density of philosophical material, we did have to engage with it on this level, which made the relationship to the text different than with *The Jesus Guy* as whole arguments and movements of text need to be heard and responded to rather than associations with individual lines or words. In performance, we discovered that if two people were moving the text along as a kind of duologue, another performer could be doing something different, but if everyone was doing something different,

<sup>56</sup> One special guest was Fred Backus from the original New York lab, who had not worked with Apocryphal, but had worked with Aitchison in New York and London on *No One* (2001b).

it becomes too diffuse. As the grid here is not only philosophical but also discursive, this reality needs to remain foregrounded or the primary grid gets lost.

However, if, as has happened, Ellis and Aitchison are doing a kind of double-act between two 'serious male philosophers' (disguised as detectives) and Bouras is wandering among people and asking them if she was too fat and to help her get on a too tight dress, this creates a wonderful counterpoint which made explicit the implicit feminist deconstruction of the male canon that goes on throughout the play.<sup>57</sup>

She held him and said, but you're taking care of her, right? That's your job now, isn't it? And he nodded yes, but then said she was an Obstacle and finally she agreed he was right, maybe she was an Obstacle, and then he jumped out of her arms and ran away. She was angry and talked to her friend who was also angry. They agreed they were angry.

They were friends.

Right. Friends who agreed to be angry.

Female friends.

Yes.

Ah.

What do you mean, AH?

### **Witness/*Besides*:**

Deleuze when discussing philosophy as the creation of concepts says

The only constraint is that these should have a necessity, as well as an unfamiliarity, and they have both to the extent they're responses to real problems.

(1995: 136)

Whilst Deleuze was not referring to problems such as funding issues, the presence or absence of money in a theatre production can cause a very real problem. However, anyone who creates theatre especially under reduced circumstances knows that the most interesting ideas come from attempting to solve 'real problems'. In *Besides* we had a funding problem which led to the possibility that even the core players would not have time to memorize the whole text and that some people would not be available for a full rehearsal process. This real

<sup>57</sup> As absurd as this will sound, it was not until half way through the run of performances that I realized how feminist a piece this was. As the text (small t) was so full of men and as we had had arguments about this within Apocryphal, it was not until it was staged and the anger of some players could manifest in their response, did the feminist nature of the piece become embodied explicitly. This was what I had hoped would happen but had begun to feel would not as the focus for a long time in rehearsals was on the gender of the philosophers rather than our own responses to their ideas.

problem led to four separate ideas, all of which created a new conceptual frame through which to witness the event:

First was the idea of guest artists, performers who were not involved in the rehearsal process but who were familiar with Apocryphal's work through having participated in labs. The special guests were not familiar with the scores created by the core players, though they could read them on the walls of the theatre space, used our four verbs as their scores: witness, support, disrupt, ignore. They were also asked to dress (as we had done) in their image of a detective and were asked to play with the four masks (or personae): detective, philosopher, self and Self.<sup>58</sup> The special guests typically spent a lot of time witnessing and created thereby a link between themselves and the audience. Many people in the audience told us that they were not quite sure from moment to moment who was in the show and who was an audience member who decided to participate. This accidental necessity thereby enabled us to further explore the concept of witness and allow the audience to re-frame the idea of who is a player and who is watching.



Schmidt as special guest in *Besides* 2009

Second was the necessity to have the text visible as a projection. This idea solved the practical problem of carrying scripts, which would impede physical movement. However this also made it possible for the audience, even before being explicitly invited, to participate in the show as everyone could see the next line. Some audience members did this and on some nights it seemed as if we had unintentional guest artists, which put into radical question who was 'us' and who was 'them,' who was watching and who performing.

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<sup>58</sup> These are discussed below on p. 167 in relation to levels of address.



The third idea arose from the question of who would control the projection of the text onto the wall. As we had made a decision in a group evaluation that I should be somehow implicated in our next performance, I would be the one to scroll the text onto the wall and not allowed to hide out as the ‘invisible’ director/author presence.

Finally, because the text is not necessarily said in performance the way it is written (and, as with *The Jesus Guy*, there are open textual improvisations indicated in the text), I would attempt to notate what was actually said (and not said) each night. I would be visible to the audience tracking the changes on the text each night whilst sometimes interjecting lines into the show, both prewritten and not. I could not, as was obvious to anyone watching, type quickly enough to capture everything said and when I spoke I usually forgot to type, so this account was rendered apocryphal. The questions therefore of who was ‘writing’ the text, who authored the event and where the ideas came from were paradoxically put into more radical question by being made more transparent. “Any concept” as Deleuze says, “is bound to be a paradox” (*ibid.*).

The concepts here emerged from a synergy between the practical problems and the philosophical and/or ethical bent of the group answering that problem. Apocryphal has a commitment to a multiplicity of voices, of ‘apocryphal’ authorship and a desire to up-end the rules of any room in which we find ourselves. The text of *Besides* has a question running through it about the individual soul and who is ‘us’ and who is ‘them’. All of these pre-existing concerns including the specific problems caused by funding issues led to our solutions. These solutions created the preconditions in the room for an act of philosophy to occur between the performers and the audience in which we could relearn to see the world especially in relation to having created new (and shifting) conceptual frames through which to view the theatrical rules of the room.

### **Witnessing the Process**

As stated in Chapter 1 regarding methodologies, I made a conscious decision with *Besides* not to document the process in any way that I would not do under normal circumstances. This decision came about primarily because I wanted to witness (without the intervention of artificial levels of documentation) how I actually work as a director. I felt that this would give a more realistic assessment of how philosophy would be affecting our process if I were not in an academic environment and I would see what of the philosophy I had engaged with came up without my consciously attempting to use it and how much of the witness would emerge without external devices. The irony is that this decision along with our

real funding problems coincided with arguably a more rigorous practice-based research process, perhaps because of the nature of the text and/or the experience of having examined so closely the process of creating and performing *The Jesus Guy*. In any case, the lack of documentation does not appear to have hurt the process and gave me the freedom to focus on the work at hand rather than worrying about how to write down everything I was doing each day. Having said that, the techniques of focusing and awareness of responses rather than reactions are by this point embedded and so there was reflexivity in the process that was simply not written down.

### **Cutting Up/*Besides*:**

Cutting up text happens in *Besides* in such a way that the audience can follow along. The first lines of the play, which are bits of found text, mostly from Hamlet, are visible on the projection and are repeated by the players through levels of address before being cut up. When the players begin cutting up the text, I type up their cut-ups onto the projected performance text (as quickly as I could and of course imperfectly). This excerpt from performance text (Appendix E: 271-2) gives an example<sup>59</sup>:

And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust?

What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba,  
That he should weep for her?

And for my soul, what can it do to that,  
Being a thing immortal as itself?

Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust; the dust is earth;  
of earth we make loam; and why of that loam whereto he was converted might they  
not stop a beer barrel?

Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf? Virginia? Virginia? wooolf Alexander was dust was  
converted soul Alexander was buried buried who's afraid buried soul was afraid  
buried soul was afraid my buried soul was afraid repeat of dust afraid of immortal  
afraid of immortal Alexander might they be converted? they might besides

When the players felt they had located the grid and with the cutting up had heated up the words, they went on with the text. Beginning this way functioned to bring the players together in listening to each other and the opening text and to show the audience some of the rules of the game. This kind of explicit cutting up happened again midway through the play

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<sup>59</sup> Cut-ups are in color as I typed with track changes function on to make differences in text visibly explicit.

with five philosopher's quotations, which sometimes audience members helped us read out. Near the end of the play, we asked the audience to help us find the answers in the books and create a full group cut-up. By the time we got there, the audience was aware of what we were doing and could therefore begin to participate. That action is analyzed further in Chapter 4 as a potentially collective act of philosophy.

The audience members, as mentioned earlier are encouraged to pick up books that catch their eye during the show. Those people that did so said that whatever they were reading would seem to somehow relate to what was going on at the moment, which relates to the original findings about cut-ups from found text in the first lab, wherein there is a kind of thematic repetition in even the most apparently random set-up (though this is of course encouraged by having found text, as in both cases, which covers related themes).

### **Levels of Address/*Besides*:**

The levels of address here, as always, are used in relation to cutting up, as the cutting up process should only happen once the grid level has been located. Even if the audience does not know what the 'grid level' is, they will hear the text in a different way if the players do and the cutting up will have more resonance.

Levels of address also related in this show to four personae, which were created by each player. These personae were defined as: the detective, the philosopher, the self and the Self. When playing, and in relation to actions in each player's score (as below), the level of address can be accompanied by a persona. In general, the detective related more to the level of address "to each other," the address that is most resonant with naturalism and fictional spaces, the philosopher is related "to the audience," a force that has a desire to explain, the self relates to "to one's self" and Self relates to "the grid"<sup>60</sup> These levels of address accompanying personae were meant as guidelines rather than rigid structures, representing the 'major chord' of each persona. Each persona could go through any level of address and presence and each action could be done by any persona, but these shifts would shift the resonance of the action, persona and/or text.

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<sup>60</sup> The Self also relates to the witness. In practice, the witness and grid intertwine but for the purposes of writing about the work I have separated them in a way that at times creates an artificial separation. The easiest way to conceive of their relationship is that when "I" have located the grid, I become "not I" and am identified more with the witness, and so am in effect witnessing the grid.

## Levels of Presence/*Besides*:

We did not work with levels of presence in as overt a way as we did with *The Jesus Guy*. However, there are shifts in levels of presence, but mostly in relation to how each player relates to the audience and in the way the audience is encouraged to shift their levels of presence. This creates a shift in who witnesses whom and upends the grid of subject/object. In so doing, we undermined the idea of the objective viewer and a stable place from which to critique an action and therefore the basis for many of the philosophical arguments mentioned in the play.



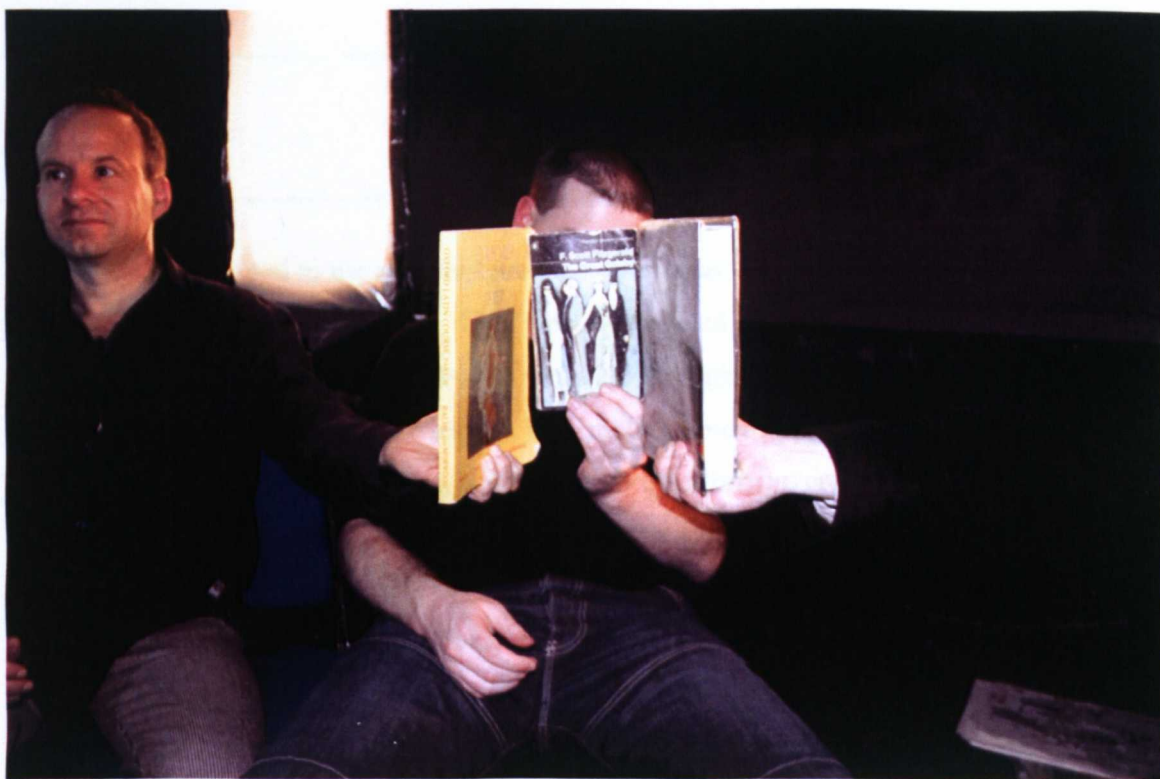
Audience members who accepted 'the king and queen's seat' in *Besides* 2009.

As the audience moves throughout the piece in relation to us, they themselves move levels of presence, from offstage to onstage (when an audience member, for example, would accept an offer to sit visibly on the rostra or become a player in the last Hamlet death scene) or from offstage to personal (when a player would engage in private conversation with an audience member or give them a cup of tea). As the play progresses the seats, which start out all over the space, end up on the rostra and in two facing rows lined up behind Jorgensen's book road, creating an ad hoc thrust stage, so that the players can perform the last scene of



*Hamlet*. The lights also gradually progress from lighting the whole space to this thrust stage playing area.

Along with being allowed and encouraged to walk about during the show and pick up and read any of the books, at one point, as mentioned earlier, the audience is actively encouraged to participate in the process of finding a way out of a predicament: if, as Nietzsche says everything is related to everything else and we cannot judge anyone's actions, then how do we judge the torturers? At this point, it becomes clear that we are all in one room together.



Audience members helping Bouras create an image in *Besides* 2009.

### **Other Tools/*Besides*:**

#### **Personal Scores**

In working on the text, another series of questions emerged that had to do with how the players were going to relate to these questions and this text. In this instance (as distinct from *The Jesus Guy*), we created personal scores, i.e. physical actions or certain prompts that are personal responses to sections of the text. The idea of working with responses came from

discussing prior performative responses<sup>61</sup> to the text and the frustration some of the players felt with the density of the philosophical quotations. In the lab, as mentioned earlier, we had been working on the difference between reaction and response, with the idea that a response was different than a knee-jerk reaction to something, so the idea of a response to larger ideas, pieces of art or texts we brought in had been established. A month before *Besides* rehearsals, we worked in the lab on responses to our favorite quotations. Each time we did this, everyone felt they owned the quotation and were no longer intimidated by it. This led to the idea of working in this way with the whole text so the players could own it and find a way through that would be guided by me but not be imposed.

Will it?

Well, yeah.

We had wanted to use personal scores in *The Jesus Guy* but took too much time on individual associations to get there. This time, we focused entirely on creation of these scores, so each core player could have an armature through the piece that they could use or divert from, but which functioned as their own melody line throughout the performance. After dividing the text into sections, each of the core performers created this physical personal score (created from their individual responses to each section) that could take them through the whole text. As they became more familiar with the piece, the scores became more fluid, however they were created to give everyone a handle for a way through the maze of the text and create an armature off of which others, especially special guests, could resonate and respond. This was crucial because each night different groups of players would be performing so some kind of basic structure seemed necessary as a ballast for the many variables.

What we lost at first from the scores was a certain fluidity of improvisation in and between people, but as the performances continued, the scores became what they were meant to be originally, not a rigid structure but a resonant chord that could be returned to, shared or ignored entirely. An exception to this rule was Jorgensen whose approach to working as a visual artist with the books was to move them around as a kind of mobile installation and because certain of those movements took a long time (especially moving the books from

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<sup>61</sup> Before rehearsing *Besides* we showed a number of informal 'performative responses' to the text wherein Apocryphal lab members held onto scripts and improvised through the text using tools from the lab. The first such performative response was given at University of Northampton in March 2008.

random piles into a long road), she decided to stay within certain parameters and play within those, which she did especially in her role as photographer and witness, sometimes sitting very still next to audience members, behind the table or against the wall.

As an example, Ellis' personal score (along with her note about she used it) is below:

**I have bolded the ones that I used the most, some of them I had completely forgotten about and never used.**

- 1 **Buried in books**
- 2 Tennyson
- 3 **Explorer**
- 4 **Free body**
- 5 **Audience**
- 6 **Book circle**
- 7 Best beginning
- 8 Free from choice
- 9 **Schweiz**
- 10 Psychoanalyst/eagle
- 11 Schopenhauer's girlfriend
- 12 Shudder
- 13 **No ideas of my own**
- 14 Defining myself
- 15 **Blindfold**
- 16 Diversions
- 17 Different viewpoints
- 18 ?
- 19 ?
- 20 Evidence bags
- 21 Lost – child pose
- 22 **Grandmother's footsteps**
- 23 Anti-Jehovah's Witness
- 24 **Kierkegaard**
- 25 Beatles
- 26 Eating
- 27 **Flirting Marx bookstore**
- 28 Having it all!
- 29 Prison
- 30 Cut up
- 31 Sleeping on walls/lying on arrow
- 32 Question mark
- 33 Torture – seats
- 34 **Julia's books**
- 35 Radical philosopher
- 36 Cut up – shifting personae
- 37 **Surrender to floor**
- 38 **Penelope**
- 39 To the Lighthouse
- 40 Tick Tock
- 41 Exeunt – Goodbye!
- 42 Hamlet
- 43 **Off stage**

(Ellis 2009: unpublished score)

This strategy is an example of challenging my own philosophical grid, wherein I had believed we must be devoted to improvising throughout and not setting anything. I wanted to free us from that restriction and see what would happen if we allowed for some repetition in performance. As Deleuze says in a rare essay on theatre “Variation must always vary itself. That is it must travel through new and always unexpected routes” (Deleuze in Murray (ed) 1997: 254). No route should be cut off, in other words, before seeing where it leads. In this case, not only with the scores but the different way we set up the space, we found a new way to challenge our assumptions about who we are as a company and, as will be discussed in the following evaluation chapter, as individuals as well.

I left you as ashes on the ground  
for all to see.  
All among the nations who knew you were aghast:  
you came to a fearful end and shall be no more forever.

That’s kind of harsh.

That’s Ezekiel “Prophesies against foreign nations” to be exact. From “The New English Bible (with Apocrypha).

A figure like your father,  
Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe,  
Appears before them and with solemn march  
Goes slow and stately by them. Thrice he walked  
By their oppressed and fear-surprised eyes

Yeah, I know that one.

Ghost.

Soul?

Ghost.

I want to go back to the canals...to the ocean...to the tide overwhelming the shore....to that time when we went underwater in that submarine and bumped into the huge humpbacked whale. Do you remember?

What about the time you walked through the park taking Pictures of each other? Pictures that you could remember each other by?

What about the pictures I take without a camera? What about those?

## Chapter IV: Evaluation

Whatever you break finds itself  
more intelligent for being broken.

(Rumi 1997: 85)

In this chapter, I evaluate *The Jesus Guy* and *Besides* in reference first to the original research questions outlined in the introduction and how engaging with these questions can be seen as creating the potential for acts of philosophy. In the next section, after reviewing how theatre and theatre artists in general have the potential to create acts of philosophy, I propose that Apocryphal's theatre project can be seen as a collective act of philosophy both in the way we create work and how we engage our audience in performance.

### *The Jesus Guy:*

What Robbe-Grillet says about the usefulness of critical reflection for a novelist holds true for theatre artists as well:

Once the work is completed, the writer's critical reflection is still useful to him in allowing him to stand at a distance from the work and in immediately supplying him with new material for research and a new beginning.

(Robbe-Grillet 1965: 47)

In other words, much of what we discovered in performing *The Jesus Guy* manifest in our subsequent work in the lab and in performance in *Besides*. However, to focus this reflection on the thesis subject, I will restate the research questions and discuss how these are engaged in *The Jesus Guy*.

1. If we can locate *the reality-grid of right now*, and make it visible in the room, is it then rendered mutable?

We were focused primarily on the reality-grid of religion and gender, which we located and attempted to make visible through our use of cut-ups, both improvisationally and within the text itself and through the use of associative gestures and cutting them up within the performance. When we had located the grid in performance, it would become mutable when it became visible to the audience and us, and this had the potential to engage a collective act of witness.

For this to happen, however, we needed to engage the audience. When evaluating the show as a group after our first run in 2006, we had questions about whether we had engaged the audience explicitly enough with the rules of the room and therefore the ‘rules of the game.’ Schmidt and Ellis both asked if we needed to offer ‘steps into the pool’ rather than expecting people to walk into the middle of our experiment and sink or swim. This relates back to what Campbell said in the New York lab (pp. 120-1) in relation to the first levels of address exercise, suggesting we allow the audience to watch the steps to the grid before cutting up the text.

With *The Jesus Guy*, people who were not already inclined towards multi-linear work or a desire to be lost retreated quite quickly from the work. I have mixed feelings about whether this is a problem or not, because I remember my experience with Foreman’s work, having not ‘gotten it’ the first time and then switching ‘on’ midway through watching his work a second time. I am glad that Foreman never decided his work was ‘not accessible enough’ and then changed it because of that, and I am glad I had a chance to come towards it rather than it coming towards me. However, in *Besides* we did try to offer some more clues so people who wanted a way in could find one, for instance the explicit and visible cutting up process at the beginning of *Besides* mentioned in the last chapter. I added this section to the beginning of the text in order to show how we cut up text after moving through levels of address, in hopes this would offer the audience ‘steps into the pool’ as suggested by Ellis and Schmidt, but without sacrificing the complexity of the work.



Angelini, Ellis, Schmidt and Aitchison rehearsing ‘bunnies’ for *The Jesus Guy*



In terms of the grid of the theatrical set up itself between the audience and us, we experimented with shifting the physical location of the audience from performance to performance, sometimes end-on, sometimes traverse, sometimes audience could bring in their chairs and place them as they wanted. We did discern that these different relationships changed some expectations in the room and that, for example, when given an option, audiences always sat in a circle and that when people can see one another they look to each other for cues as to how to respond and some people prefer anonymity rather than visibility. However, none of this was as important as the audience feedback we received that people felt invited to participate in some way, but for various reasons, they felt unable to accept that invitation. In response, we address this grid directly in *Besides*, including intervening on our own 'expert-performing' impulses to allow for more direct involvement from the audience, which offers the opportunity for a collective act of philosophy to emerge. In our most recent performance of *The Jesus Guy*, which occurred after *Besides*, we addressed this grid more directly and some audience members did respond by participating.



Angelini's in associative gesture 'Berlusconi' offering plastic green soldiers to audience in *The Jesus Guy*

2. How can we challenge our core assumptions, personal and political, by *owning them as our own ...exploring the depths of our own assumptions/investments and investigating our own "desiring machines"?*

In the writing of the text, I attempted to enact this process and hope that that is apparent in reading and/or hearing it. The players challenged themselves in their creation of the associative gestures, which included this level of self-reflection and challenge, and even more so in performance each night, when they had to confront their own desires and presumptions as people and artists in relation to the text, each other, the gestures and the audience. The desire for more to hold onto was strong, but as Aitchison said in his journal:

We've had good nights and bad nights, days that were more enjoyable than others and various sizes of audiences. *There is not any clear connection between any of these despite the desire for a system, a set of causes and effects.* It all seems too intricate and slippery for clean explanations. So too is it too slippery for a set of rules that as a performer will guarantee a good show. I'm always aware that whatever worked before is always subject to change. This doesn't invalidate the work we have done, *it just makes me aware it should not be regarded as a system that insulates me from the moment.*

(Aitchison in Apocryphal 2006: 15 *emphasis mine*)

In other words, not only is there no one in charge, there is no system in charge either. This challenged everyone's desire (including mine) for a system, a sense of order and predictability. There was no insulation, as Aitchison writes, from the moment. In theory, this is great, in practice it is hard and we all had to confront our desires to be liked and approved of in relation to this reality, and the challenge remains in each performance to stay focused on the task at hand rather than attempting to be likeable or 'accessible,' in other words to remain the witness rather than the teacher.

As we work outside of predetermined choreography or staging, any suggestions I make relate to the dynamics between the players, the room, the text, any gestures fixed or created and the music of the whole thing, not with creating a perfect moment. We therefore focus on rhythms and ways of allowing ourselves to witness whilst doing or as a way to step back and watch. As we now have a host of tools that are shared amongst us, solutions to problems are just as apt to come from the players as from me. I trust the company members in Apocryphal implicitly and do not have the problem Foreman does with being "sloppy" in the room with others (2008: 284). I am not the sole provider of direction, and, if anything, the company generally wants more direction than I give. That is as much a philosophical decision as it is a theatrical one, and sometimes I do surrender what Goode would call "theatrical fidelity" (2008: 215) to the ideals of collaboration, self-discipline rather than externally imposed discipline, and true multiplicity of points of view, practices and ways of playing in performance, even when that leads to conflict and rough edges.



3. How can we create *theatrical pieces that uproot the static nature of language, gesture, character, etc. in such a way as to bring about this process of becoming?*

*The Jesus Guy* was an attempt to answer this question, using all the elements mentioned in Chapter 3. We worked with shifting levels of address and presence, locating and cutting up the grid and not allowing ourselves to ever get caught in a system. Even if someone wanted to do that, there would be interference from another player or from Jorgensen in her role as ‘live’ artist. Schmidt summarizes the relationship between our process and the audience in a useful way when he writes:

...the most valuable thing for me about the process was the way that resonant moments --moments of synchronicity, or particularly aesthetically charged moments -- could resonate not only through their own moments but also through a wider circle, to lend a kind of grace or authenticity to moments which would not, on their own, necessarily demand any particular attention. why are we improvising this? why are

we starting from scratch every night -- yes, we're free to bring in what worked in previous nights, but why aren't we automatically bringing in what worked previously? it's because prepared resonant moments announce only the aesthetic framework from which they derive their particular beauty -- the intentionality of the author, the accomplishment of the performer, the range of available technological aids. they serve to transport, as part of a planned itinerary, to an emotional destination. ***whereas these moments that we stumble across transport you to the place you already are, only more attentively so.*** the moment of unexpected synchronicity, when for example everyone is trying to enact some form of magic trick at the same time, announces that every moment thereafter might be watched with the same delight and wonder as that particularly resonant moment -- because all moments are arising out of the same conditions, the same imaginations at work, the same room with the same people -- and what's wonderful is not what we might stumble across but the very manner and generosity and creativity of our stumbling.

(Schmidt in Apocryphal 2006: 16 *emphasis mine*)

Schmidt's view was unique and not something we had discussed as a group, but which we all agreed in our group evaluation was insightful and accurate. The focus shifted from what ‘worked’ to what we were doing in the performance itself and a way of looking at what we were offering in this performance, a way to “transport you to the place you already are” in other words another way to re-learn to look at the world.



Schmidt performing in *The Jesus Guy*

This leads to the question of whether *The Jesus Guy* can be seen as an act of philosophy. In terms of explicitly philosophical concepts, *The Jesus Guy* addresses them only obliquely through the text and the modality of how we performed. The desire to witness and allow a moment of complete awareness does emerge in the show. There are text and gesture references to the grid throughout but because we focused so much on the associative and the dream logic, these critiques can easily get lost in the flow of events. The associative gestures tapped into different aspects of the grid, however, a kind of subconscious grid that can throw up images that evoke various emotions and ideas that may make one more aware of darker or less well-lit areas of the human soul (or psyche) but does not necessarily make the connection to the conscious level of language, nor perhaps should it. This can still be considered an act of philosophy, however, if it shifts how we see the world in some way, as Schmidt's reflection implies.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, when David Tudor first performed Cage's *4'33"* (1952), and the audience in Woodstock had to either listen to the rain falling or the chatter of their confused fellow audience members or storm out and presumably get quite wet, that taught us to re-look at (and re-hear) the world forever. No longer could we assume that music was about sitting back and receiving something, we are challenged to listen and take in what we are hearing as music. We now know we can no longer be passive spectators, but have to

witness our surroundings in a new way. I am not equating *The Jesus Guy* with such a seminal moment in performance history, but point to it instead as an example of how an event that uses no words and does not reference any philosophy explicitly can challenge us to re-learn to look at the world.

***Besides, you lose your soul or The History of Western Civilisation:***

As with *The Jesus Guy*, I will analyze how *Besides* engaged with the original research questions. It bears repeating here that for this show, I did not look at these research questions or use them as guideposts as I did not want to bias the process for or against any self-imposed ideas of artistic or philosophical purity. Nonetheless, the work we do at this point is so fundamentally informed by these underlying concerns, it can still be analyzed in relation to them. As *Besides* directly engages with philosophical questions, there is no separate analysis about if it can be considered an act of philosophy as those considerations are included in the evaluation of its relation to the research questions.

1. If we can locate *the reality-grid of right now*, and make it visible in the room, is it then rendered mutable?

As mentioned in the last chapter, we were focused on the grid of Western Philosophy and its relationship to gender and religion, using the means outlined, namely the text itself, personal scores made up of responses to the text and philosophical ideas in it and working through levels of address, presence and personae. The goal of all of these shifts of levels and personae remained throughout the search for the soul. The question asked throughout the show implicitly and explicitly is if that soul is individual or if, as with the grid, can only be located within a larger engagement with the social.

We attempted to make our journey towards the grid more explicit through the cutting up at the beginning and giving space for the audience to join us more and more as the play progressed. The relationship between the audience and us turned out to be the most resonant feature of this show for many people and the area in which questions of philosophy became embodied more than the explicit philosophical ideas, which were multiple. However, individual audience members told me the piece made them think in new ways about questions of the soul and also rethink their assumptions about from where they could judge. Feedback from one audience member implies that we were successful in giving another perspective on the grid of Western philosophy:

I very much enjoyed taking quotations from books and giving them a philosophical status. It was a unique way of looking at how we prize certain people's thoughts and ideas and how depending on the context, a lot of what we all say could be valued as highly.

(Hanna-Grindel 2009: unpublished email)

Hanna-Grindel also responded to the shifting relationship between the players and audience and felt more engaged as a 'we' rather than a 'they.'

Another grid with which we are always engaged has to do with the theatrical rules of the room. In this regard, John Cage's notion that an error is "simply a failure to adjust immediately from a preconception to an actuality" (Cage 1973: 170-1) resonates with our experience. A recent example of falling into this error and adjusting to our "actuality" happened during a recent performance of *Besides* at Rose Bruford College in London. There was loud music playing outside the theatre space. Usually such outside interference does not bother us but in this case it was quite disruptive and we were futilely attempting to ignore it (not accepting its actuality). When the improvisation was called for in which we were supposed to address something that we believed but did not necessarily accord with our own 'official belief system,' I spoke loudly about the noise outside and how much it was bothering me even though I knew according to our own 'rules' it should not bother me. This led to Aitchison playing with this theme and exaggerating it to the point of absurdity in which he was wishing the people outside dead "even though I know I should not," whilst Ellis invited audience members to look outside. These actions allowed the energy of a loud, raucous party into the theatre space, which transformed it from interference to a very funny (because witnessed and acknowledged together by audience and players) counterpoint during which Bouras did a strip tease whilst yelling the next prewritten lines that referred to Plato and Aquinas like she was the drunkest one at the party. The energy of the room shifted from tense 'fictional' (i.e., quiet) space to an energized 'actual' space. The error had been rectified and the show became lively and resonant with both the inside and outside of the theatre space from that point onward. In other words, the grid of the theatrical rules of the room were rendered mutable, expanding to include life outside of the designated event, by making these rules explicit first to ourselves and then to the audience.

Even my experiences with people with whom everybody has had experiences bear witness, without exception, in their favor: I tame every bear, I even make buffoons behave themselves. (Nietzsche)





Ellis being buried in books in *Besides* 2009

2. How can we challenge our core assumptions, personal and political, by *owning them as our own ...exploring the depths of our own assumptions/investments and investigating our own “desiring machines”*?

In each player's responses to the sections, they attempted to explore their own assumptions and investments, as we had defined a response as being different from a reaction in this way. Further, however, this process challenged each person in the company's assumptions in very different ways. Bouras was challenged to find a way into the text, which she initially resisted because of the dominance of male philosophical voices. Our search for ways to respond to this guided the way we approached the piece, and added to the depth of the personal responses. Ellis felt she did not know much about philosophy and read a lot to try to 'catch up' but discovered a freedom in responding to the ideas as she understood them rather than worrying too much if she was right or not, which echoes the methods of the artists interviewed in Chapter 2. Aitchison, the only man in the core group, found his status challenging for that reason and felt he was asked to represent 'all men' in some way, which he had to let go of in order to find his own responses to the text and the idea of the soul. Jorgensen took on the challenge of being a more active player rather than a more comfortable role as separate mute artist, though she did have a distinct visual-artistic role, which involved

moving the books from seeming chaos into various kinds of order throughout the performance. However, she was not always behind a camera or in a special area as she had been able to during *The Jesus Guy*. The special guest artists were thrown into the show with one rehearsal and needed to find their way in using the score: witness, disrupt, support, ignore. Fred Backus, who had only worked with me in New York, had to find his way into working with a new group in a way that had evolved since we last worked together. And, on any given night, there were different configurations of players, so we could not even rely on a stable dynamic between each other. Finally, there was no separation between the players and the audience, so this relationship had to be addressed at all times, and especially during nights when there were hostile presences, this was indeed a challenge.

The greatest challenge to my core assumptions was being a visible performing presence, including typing a visibly shifting and imperfect text. I was no longer safe, the grid of my “authority” made visible and rendered vulnerable. I was terrified most nights, which demonstrates the power of the invisibility I had hitherto enjoyed. However, by allowing both the text and myself to be visible, my presence shifted the grid of the room, not only between the players and me, but also the audience and the show. There is no invisible author or director or even a stable text. Any words an audience member said were typed into the performance text, too. We were all making it up together.

In the group evaluation, a recurring theme was the sense that we had done something in this show we had not done before, individually and as a group. Avery said she felt we were building something, not simply taking things apart. Her sentiment was echoed in Chris Goode’s review of our show, when he writes that in contrast to our earlier work:

...this piece achieves a real dynamic of building, a productivity. It’s high on anxiety, low on desire; sometimes knowingly constrained by a formidable intellectualism that is both bracing and bruising.

(Goode 2009: 31)

Whilst I disagree with Goode’s characterization of the work as “low on desire,” as I would argue this desire is manifest in the books themselves scattered throughout the space, bodies having been dispersed into objects, creating a quite literal body without organs, I do agree that the “intellectualism” in the text and Text of the show is “both bracing and bruising.” In having been so dispersed, how do we manifest our very real bodies in the space? What is the relationship between these, especially female, bodies and these books? Interestingly, the person most protective of the books themselves was Aitchison whereas Ellis’ initial response was to tear them to pieces. Confrontations between them were quite pointed when this difference came into play and brought about some of the more raw emotions in rehearsal and

performance. In short, I would argue that books do evoke “desiring machines” and quite powerful ones at that. In confronting these “desiring machines” in performance, we experienced both the “bracing” and the “bruising” nature of this exchange, and the reverberations of that exchange are still being felt, and will be generative in our next project.

In a radio interview with Kéline Gotman and Aitchison, we were discussing the ideas about free will introduced in the play, especially with regard to the Nietzsche. In response to a comment I made about how hard it is to truly act non-violently, she made a connection between this and the nature of the *mise-en-scène* of *Besides*:

*The audience is interspersed in the space in a way that I think creates because of these open structures an invitation to react rather than maybe an injunction to react...I think the legacy of 1960s a lot of experimental theatre that you on some level come out of...or are responding to produces a certain sort of violence and an anger and a desire to break things down rebuild things reconstruct but that can seem on some level maybe overly demanding whereas I think with your work there is a real sort of openness to see or re-see in certain ways, and in this sense your work does have an extraordinarily pacifist and extraordinarily non-violent stance to it.*

(Gotman 2009 in Appendix H: 56” into interview)



Blunt's violin amidst the burnt books in *Besides* 2009

photo: Blunt

Aitchison added that:

I would put this question of free will on the level of what's happening in the room in that *nobody is being given orders. You can't say that you are being told what to see. You are present as a spectator as an ethical and perceptual being and you have to*



*make sense of it* in the same way as if you are a performer you have to make sense of the situation.

(Aitchison 2009 in Appendix H: 57” into interview)

In the structure of the piece itself, we are attempting to undermine our own deeply held investments in meaning-creation and thereby not provide any predetermined meaning for the audience, which may function to undermine their assumption that we should be providing such meaning. The idea that this could be related to non-violence is an interesting insight as it connects our political and philosophical concerns, as does Aitchison’s observation that “nobody is being given orders.”

3. How can we create *theatrical pieces that uproot the static nature of language, gesture, character, etc. in such a way as to bring about this process of becoming?*

Again, as with *The Jesus Guy*, this performance attempts to achieve this, through the shifting use of language (prewritten, improvised, cut-up), through shifting our relationship to the audience throughout the piece, through making my presence visible and through the challenge of improvising with scores, seeing if we can uproot our own assumptions even about variations and repetition. However, the moment that seems to resonate the most with this goal and relates to whether or not *Besides* can be seen as an act of philosophy is in response to Nietzsche’s idea that:

One is necessary, one is a piece of fate, one belongs to the whole, one *is* in the whole – there exists nothing which could judge, measure compare, condemn our being, for that would be to judge, measure, compare, condemn the whole...*But nothing exists apart from the whole!*

(Nietzsche 2003: 65)

This quotation is in *Besides* in the context of asking from where can we judge the torturers. Not finding an adequate answer, we then open up the space to the audience to join us in this search. This action bolsters Nietzsche’s claim that we are all part of the whole (we break down the us/them theatre wall at least for a few moments and also show our hand: we do not have all the answers, please help us) and also allows for any refutation of his argument by giving voice to other ideas. However, these ideas are ‘found’ in books.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> One night, a member of the audience asked, “Can I just say my own ideas?” and at first I said something like it should be from a book, but then said you can just pretend, you know, we won’t check, this is theatre, we haven’t read all the books. He then proceeded to ‘read’ an idea from a book that most likely were his own words. This moment can be seen on the unedited DVD of that performance (Appendix H).



These ideas are then cut up, ideally with the audience, and the cut-ups that are generated from this level of audience participation generally are quite remarkable. Though I could not keep track of all the quotations and cut-ups as they came up (particularly because I always end up as part of it), one night's attempt at recording it looks like this (typos included):

the books of the mind of the soul....What if there is no bad than we wouldn't enjoy the good, Jack would be a gentlemen female writer this morning we went on our way increased when we saw a man with a gun but we kept straight on our course and the man eventually disappeared instantly the table sank out of sight little 2 eyes what a way to keep house most unwilling was she to wake up from felicity the first time he resented a bank holiday permitting it from owning a new car and for some time she refused to submit are they persuasive definitions but disguised value judgments this was too much at the moment of death the lower jaw drops they make the person looks younger for the first time we resented he looked I was very much all there at the moment of death I'm eccentric to comprehend and describing there is a comprehensible way...psychotic way of being in the world never punish a skunk teach them to understand the word no never spank a female writer teach them to understand the word no I'm not acquainted with the principles the jaw would drop and we would look younger never punish an eccentric minuta of female writers teach an eccentric to understand the word never

(2009 Appendix F: 325-6)

As the books were all related in some way to pre-WW II history, literature and philosophy, a kind of strange soup of Western culture mixed with the audience's interests (as they chose which book to pick up and what to read) emerges that when cut up allows us all as witnesses

Look at me again. Like this.

Now.

Like this?

Like this.

Yes, like that.

Nice.

Yeah.

Nice.

to be active participants cutting up the grid. In order for this to happen, however, the players had to back off and allow the audience time to join in, and finding this balance took effort as the temporarily permeable barrier between performer and audience would seal up again

quickly when the players began cutting up the text. The act of witness is a discipline especially if one is used to performing, and the paradox of how to do both at once remains at the core of Apocryphal's attempt to create collective acts of philosophy.



Audience helping with cut ups and Barclay at her laptop in *Besides* 2009

Nietzsche's quotation, which leads off this section can also be seen to relate to Cage's vision of radical acceptance, in his case articulated through his understanding of Zen, when he writes, "The truth is that everything causes everything else" (Cage 1967: 17). He writes later, which also links in with Nietzsche's idea of false causality (also referenced in *Besides*, Appendix F: 323):

When one says that there is no cause and effect, what is meant is that there are an incalculable infinity of causes and effects, that in fact each and every thing in all of time and space is related to each and every other thing in all of time and space.  
(*ibid.* 1973: 46-47)

*Besides* at first affirms these ideas as philosophically true, but then throws up the problematic of how to deal with the torturers. The tension between these points of view is where we exist most of the time in our shows, intellectually, physically and emotionally (and refers back to the tension mentioned earlier between my 'mystical experience' and ethical sense). Deleuze and Guattari's insight that within the rhizomatic are the seeds of the arborescent and vice-versa (2003: 20) speaks to the place we act and speak from in our work, not settled on any side of a divide but in a gap between two places, which sometimes resonate and at other times simply conflict and grate. Apocryphal's potential to create collective acts of philosophy

begins here in our tolerance for actual conflicts, which are not resolved in a “poetic, open-ended way” (which the text of *Besides* references as the usual way to end things, indicating, of course, that that will not be happening in this piece, see Appendix F: 329).

When I asked Goode in our interview about contradictory philosophies he said that he only works with the gap between his concept and its actualization rather than actual contradiction because:

***contradiction... generates kind of unpredictable kind of arcs*** and I think I tend to be attracted to smoother arcs than that and ... I like seducing the audience very much and I wouldn't normally go out of my way to disturb in that way ... ***I'm very interested in dissonance, but that's ...another strategy for that seductive thing. It's about asking people to read on a quite detailed level, to experience themselves watching*** ... and to participate in the act. ... but I think contradiction in the sense that you mean it and in relation to sort of contradictory kind of underscoring philosophies, no... I am too much about my own authority in the process I think to be able to deal with that.

(2008: 215 *emphasis mine*)

As Goode was speaking, I realized that not only does Apocryphal embrace contradiction, but that that very embrace is potentially radical and renders me even less of an author/ity in our process. Goode told me after the interview that he had had the same thought.<sup>63</sup> Whilst I am the writer and director of most of our performances, the location of the *authorship* of these events is not discernable or univocal. However, the similarity with Goode's work is in the desire to have “people experience themselves watching” which relates to our use of witness as a bridge between audience and players.

### Acts of Philosophy

In saying Apocryphal or any other theatre artist can create acts of philosophy does not mean theatre *is* philosophy but that it can perform a philosophical function when it creates embodied concepts that help us re-learn to look at the world, in the same way that philosophy can be poetic and act as a form of conceptual theatre without becoming only theatre.

Müller makes this important distinction when she says:

I think it's great that there is philosophical thinking and theatre thinking, because theatre is not only philosophy and that's so great...but we take influences from the other ones in order to develop it, bring it further...you know it's thinking and it's movement and I think that's really important.

(2008: 227)

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<sup>63</sup> Goode was the only artist interviewed who knows Apocryphal's work well, which made the interview more intimate and conversational than the others.

Philosophy and theatre can therefore be seen as two circles that interlock when they can exchange roles, bring each other further along, make a moment wherein we all hear our relationship to sound and music differently after Cage's 4 '33" (1956) or articulate a new way of positioning ourselves as theatre artists accepting Kierkegaard's challenge to act as a witness rather than as a teacher (2006: 96).

I propose that the theatre artists referred to in Chapter 2 are creating (or have created) acts of philosophy and that Apocryphal Theatre is creating collective acts of philosophy. I propose that, further, these lively embodied acts offer a possible corrective to the static nature of philosophical discourse as it is written down in books to be studied and analyzed. If philosophy can be seen as consisting of re-learning to look at the world by creation of new (embodied) concepts that emerge from solving real problems that emerge as paradox, and if many contemporary philosophers themselves agree that any sense of knowledge or existence is impermanent, constructed and cannot be got at through purely linear means, then there is in fact a necessity to engage this study outside of the parameters of the study.

As the Sufi poet Rumi says:

Today, like every other day, we wake up empty  
and frightened. Don't open the door to the study  
and begin reading. Take down a musical instrument.

Let the beauty we love be what we do.  
There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground.

(Rumi 1997: 31)

I quote Rumi here because his writing is as philosophical as it is poetic. The "hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground" can resonate as a kind of humility and even ecstasy in discovery but does not necessarily imply a codified religious act.

Is She the soul?

Not exactly.

Who is She?

Can't say exactly, not without problems.

I am always equal to accidents. I have to be unprepared to be master of myself.

One of those, then. An accident. But one that works in your favor.

She is a favorable accident?

If you like.

And you have to be unprepared to see Her.

Some of these acts of humility (and philosophy) include the moments in Foreman's shows, which undermine their own seemingly serious philosophical arguments in order to:

indicate ironically that it's just anything that is said, you know the selection of one possibility out of a million and different perspectives and in the end they are all equally relevant which I do believe.

(2008: 200)

Or when the two actors in Foreman's *Now That Communism's Dead My Life Feels Empty* (2001) are embodying two completely different economic and ideological systems and yet in collusion – a tension between them (the kind Foreman must have foreseen in his original vision in the 60s) and us – as we watch them behind clear glass panels that also reflects us back to ourselves. The ambiguity this tension creates of their relationship to each other and us, who are they looking at or are they and why am I laughing now and why do I suddenly want to cry?

Or in Goode's *Hey Matthew* (2008a) in which we follow Liron through a room wherein he shifts the presence of that room creating Goode's desired "speculative space" not offering any guideposts for how to watch it but allowing a kind of vulnerability even of his own presence in that room. We are somehow witnessing and present at the same time, neither innocent nor guilty, but implicated as present unable to pawn off our existence onto the player in the room as we are bodies in the room with him. Goode fulfilling his desire as stated before the project to create:

that kind of layering of other readings as a kind of accumulation – the sort of despotism of other rooms in other places or other times or the idea of the conceptual room that sits and maps onto the real room and then trying to take that stuff away again and bringing people back to the room that we're all actually sharing in space and time...

(2008: 212)



Or during one of Müller's rehearsals when she is watching something she is unhappy with that she has created with her company and she tries:

to propose something that can nourish that that I like. That might mean a completely new form, but it might mean a concept that was there that is formal because that's the whole thing, what we have to do. Because we are charmed by certain concepts or we believe in it or are like really driven by it but then we have to find a form for it, and then the form informs the concept and then to get it you try to make a new thing. It's like the chicken and the egg equation...

(2008: 225-6)

Or during her show *How Heavy Are My Thoughts*, when in her fictional search for the materiality of thought as "I.M." blurs the three distinct areas of art, science and philosophy, by evoking their "shadow" which can render them indiscernible (Deleuze and Guattari in Bleeker 2009: 159). Bleeker proposes that this shadow, this 'that which they are not'

is *theatricality*: as constitutive of modern thinking, but also that which has to go unnoticed in order for the cogito to appear as the origin of its own thought.

(2009: 159)

In other words, the fictional I.M. in enacting her own destruction as "cogito" (ergo sum) makes temporarily visible the permeability of the barrier between theatre and philosophy, but that barrier between the two worlds will return when I.M. (or we) needs to reconstitute herself as such.

These actions, experiences and events all propose concepts, which may not be reducible to a philosophical essay, but nonetheless offer new concepts and ways to re-learn to look at the world and can therefore be considered acts of philosophy. If philosophy looks to history, theatre, art, literature, life, religion and many other sources to create concepts and re-learn to look at the world, so too does theatre use philosophy, history, art, literature and many other sources to create performances. If philosophy can use theatrical techniques that render it theatrical, then so too can theatre bring in and invent philosophical concepts that render it philosophical.

### **Collective Acts of Philosophy**

Apocryphal is dedicated to the idea of polyvocality to the degree that I ask performers to *not* do what they think any of my texts indicate but instead bring themselves to bear against any words or even directorial instructions from me. Our decision making process is not unilateral, though I do take responsibility for those decisions, as I am in the end directing the

process, even if I am asking people to disregard me as an authority figure to a large extent. The fact is as the director if I shifted course, my opinion would be more equal than others, which is one of Apocryphal's inherent contradictions. However, as we work now, I have much less control over the outcome of any given performance than any of the other artists referred to in Chapter 2. Chaikin was the closest to a truly collaborative director, though in the end, the Open Theater performances were shaped in ways, which were under his control far more than are under mine in Apocryphal.

By embracing the contradictions inherent in our group, writing texts that embrace contradictions in philosophy and between philosophy, life, religion and everything else, by producing these works in such a way that there is no one meaning being 'sold' or outcome predestined, by inviting in the audience in such a way that no one will experience the same show and more recently inviting them to participate to actively become an important part of the show, we set the preconditions for a collective act of philosophy.

In an Apocryphal lab which preceded rehearsals for *Besides*, players created individual responses to a Kierkegaard quotation which was brought in by Lukas Angelini<sup>64</sup>:

If at the bottom of everything there were only a wild ferment, a power that twisting in dark passions produced everything great or inconsequential; if an unfathomable, insatiable emptiness lay hid beneath everything, what would life be but despair.  
(2006: cover)

After showing their physical responses to each other (which involved the room itself as well as found objects and text), we decided to allow each other's responses to inform the individually created responses, whilst performing them simultaneously, each player gradually bringing in elements of the others' responses when it seems appropriate. This process transformed a quotation which had seemed static and heavy into a living entity in the room, embodied and brought it to life in the present through this interchange, and the idea too was changed by being embodied, a Möbius strip, the paradox of an idea moving into the bodies in the room, which somehow changes the idea, which then moves back into the bodies, creating a dance of becoming. What happened that night was a collective act of philosophy, as the players not only embodied the Kierkegaard, but also created something new between them, which resonated from and back towards it. This improvised exchange between players, text, objects and room is what happens in our shows and what we hope to offer to the audience as active witnesses and sometimes (as in *Besides*) participants.

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<sup>64</sup> Angelini was meant to be a player in *Besides* but severely injured his knee in January, so could not participate.

Apocryphal's working process in the lab and performance allows for, indeed actively solicits, contradictory philosophical input in the form of different philosophical outlooks from the various artists involved, different artistic disciplines demanding their own logic be respected and completely opposing demands expected of and from the players themselves. This manifests in our performances as a continual rigorous questioning of every element of the event in form and content. The outcome cannot be controlled but functions, in the clash of contradictory impulses and ideas, as a collective act of philosophy as the event unfolds in the moment. Further, the fact that this act takes place outside of the control of any one person is in itself an embodied philosophical concept.

As to informed critical response to our work, having seen a performance *The Jesus Guy*, Hans-Thies Lehmann wrote me a letter of reference, in which he said about Apocryphal:

This kind of work constitutes not only a highly enjoyable performance event but constitutes in my view ***an excellent practical research project in the possibilities of performance and theatre practice***. This work is at the forefront of the exploration of performance as a space of possibilities developing today, and pointing to the future of creative theatre and performance practice.

Julia's writing and her company's presentation of this writing can be seen as an example of what I have called postdramatic theatre in that ***what is most important*** in the text and its presentation ***is the event in the room, how it is heard and received by the audience and how the levels of reception and presentation fluctuate throughout the performance***, the text and the event itself able to accommodate multiple readings and resonances.

(Lehmann 2008: unpublished letter ***emphasis mine***)

Looking at the photos of her, from when she was a baby until right before she died. They are in black and white and in each one she is an entirely different person. A baby all smiling and fat, a young girl in a dirndl dress, a slightly older girl looking happy, a rowdy grinning teenager crouching by a lake, a glamorous young woman made up like a movie star, an informal, happy smiling woman with a baby, a young academic in a sweater, and finally the one I knew, older then but more confident, shyly pointing at a book she wrote displayed in a shop window. One night I saw her in a Theater called Here. The next night she died alone. Heart attack. Boom. Gone. Left behind: these photos tacked up on my wall. Which dream of herself did she cherish? Which image of herself did she see when she looked in the mirror? What vision did she bid farewell to on her way out of her body? What picture do her children carry? At what age has each of us fixed her? In what moment? Can we ever see ourselves as evolving? As containing all of our ages and none of them at once?

I mean that, without irony, if that's even fucking possible anymore.

*As for all the torments that are said to take place in the depths of Hell, they are actually present here and now, in our own lives.*



Same guy?

Yeah. Roman guy. Lucretius.

Not so bad really.

No, not so bad. Plus he's right. About that anyway.

Why are they all men?

Gee whiz I have No idea.

Copyright problems?

Yeah, something like that.

...this is not the System, it hasn't the slightest thing to do with the System. I wish all good on the System and on the Danish shareholders in the omnibus; for it will hardly become a tower.

Kierkegaard.

Oh *him*.

Yeah, him.

You know his nephew tried to keep them from burying him in the churchyard. That's the first recorded act of non-violent civil disobedience.

You don't say.

It's true.

Did it work?

No.

Figures.

Yeah.

But he *tried*.

That's true, he tried.

In other words, the authors of our work are *both* the audience and Apocryphal. As a collective social body, we can witness the grid and thereby perhaps render it mutable. If we have done this and continue to do this, our work can be considered a collective act of philosophy.

As Cathy Turner said about my experiments in text and performance leading up to the formation of Apocryphal (and which is still relevant to our work now):

The very structure of *No One* suggests that a sense of self may be a linguistic accretion, the trace of diverse cultural currents drifting through us and connecting us to others...

She prefers to explore the idea of the 'Me who you are', a phrase which implies that one might search through the debris, the documents of capitalism, a ground zero simultaneously personal and national, for traces of the unfamiliar, the unacknowledged and unwritten other.

(Turner 2002: 63)

By creating collective acts of philosophy, both in the writing of the texts and amongst each other as collaborators and then with the audience, we can witness the grid wherein there is a 'me who you are,' who exists in a world both familiar and unfamiliar and there we can possibly catch a glimpse within and amongst ourselves of this "unwritten other." This cannot happen through direct engagement but only sideways, and it cannot be done singularly as it is a social act. If we are all participating as witnesses to an event of which we are all the creators and collapsing the dualism of them and us perhaps we can see from what Deleuze and Guattari mean by "the middle" when they write:

It's not easy to see things in the middle, rather than looking down on them from above or up at them from below, or from left to right or right to left: try it, you'll see that everything changes.

(2003: 23)

It is a discipline that takes practice, and in Apocryphal we fail a lot, but when we do succeed in a collective act of witnessing the grid we do find that indeed "everything changes."



Jorgensen captured by her own camera in *Besides* at Lorem Ipsum Gallery London 2008

Amazing, and those wings, they look so Real.

Splat. Just lying there, all fallen and then, right on time for the Lazarus Routine, She Reappears!  
Over Lake!

Hallelujah.

I say, Hallelujah.....

I Can't Hear YOU! Let me hear you say Hallelujah!

Ahh.

Yes.

Even better.

Yes, yes.

Yes.

## **Appendix A:** Transcript of interview with Richard Foreman

Interview with Richard Foreman, Artistic Director of Ontological-Hysteric Theater – September 2008 – at his apartment on Wooster Street in New York City. His loft is very large and looks like the inside of the popular Strand Bookstore in New York (a warehouse of used books). The chairs we sit on are overwhelmed by bookshelves.

Julia: So my first question is just quite simple and it's just about what your experience is with philosophy just in general and then if you see a relationship between any experiences you have had reading philosophy, your interest in philosophy and your own work, either writing or directing.

Richard: My real introduction to philosophy was when I was in college – in my sophomore year, I don't remember – I took a course from a man who was a student of Ortega's – Ortega being out of favour these days as a reactionary philosopher – but I went home that summer and read Ortega, and not having really read any philosophy before then and was knocked out. I remember sitting on the lawn just every couple of sentences – and no matter what one thinks of Ortega and I think highly of him still – he is a great stylist and I remember reading a couple of sentences sitting outside and just going haaahhh, sitting back in the chair and letting what I had just read just sort of rattle inside of me for a minute or so uh later on after I graduated from college where of course I felt aside from that course that I was taught very little that was of any use and very little was accurate, I started reading a lot of different philosophers, religious writers, psychoanalysts, people writing on aesthetics on my own and that was my main preoccupation – reading that stuff and I remember starting to write a different kind of play at a certain point – basically on the basis of having a slightly mystical experience but also coincidentally thinking that I wanted the experience of watching a play to have something to do with the reading experience – to get the same kind of kick from watching the aesthetic moves – these little epiphanies after epiphanies of the play – the same aesthetic kick that I got from reading a dense text that would continually flip me around and reintroduce me into seeing the world in a different way and basically that's what I got from philosophy and get from philosophy uh which is seeing what's around you and realizing that it operates rather differently than you thought it was operating up 'til now. To me that's a tremendous moment of ecstatic aesthetic pleasure and that's what I get and that's sort of what I think what I'm after in my work though I hesitate to say what I'm after in my work anymore because I think that um in order to articulate it very often you distort it and you are lying and you are just trying to sound impressive, so I don't trust what I say, but I've said a lot of things quite similar for forty years now so there's probably some truth in it.

J: Well it's funny because actually what I'm interested in is your actual practical experience with that um would you be willing to talk about because I'm really fascinated by what you just said – it's a little off the subject but it's not for me – about you said you had a bit of a mystical experience before you started writing different plays – are you willing to talk about that?

R: Oh sure, sure, I've talked about it many times. My one main mystical experience and I don't claim it's special I know that many, many people have similar experiences was one time when in frustration I threw myself plop down on the bed and um at the moment I hit the bed it was as if my head turned into this globe that was about 6 feet in diameter, 8 feet in diameter I don't know but everything inside of me was on this transparent globe and everything in the outside world was in this transparent globe so they were in the same place, and they were all there everything was there at once it was all perfect and it was just ecstatic and I felt that way

for maybe 20 minutes, which is a long time for an experience like that, and then it gradually faded and I could remember that night what it was like and the next day I couldn't remember the feeling anymore, I could remember that it happened, but I couldn't feel it, but you know that didn't directly seem to influence what I was writing. However, uh, an experience that I had that changed the way I was writing one day you know after graduating from graduate school, Yale Drama School, studying with John Gassner who had been the literary manager of the Theatre Guild for many years a very wonderful teacher, my other great teacher, uh I remember coming home you know every year I was trying to write a play like Arthur Miller or like Brecht or whoever it was and one day sitting at my table I remember pulling myself back from the table and saying you know this is ridiculous. If you walk into a theatre tonight, what would you really like to see happening? And I just had this vision of two performer sort of looking at each other across the stage with just a certain kind of tension and nothing else happening and I started at that moment writing a very different kind of play which was vaguely akin to what I've been doing ever since for years.

J: And what you said about I'm just curious whether there's a relationship between that experience you had with the dense text that shift a point of view and obviously that mystical experience will shift a point of view, so do you think when you're working either – and you're talking about the writing process but also in the rehearsal room and either one is fine.

R: It's different.

J: Yeah, but just about that how you kind of try to make that happen or do you or are you not focused on that at the time?

R: I find it's not useful – look I've gone through many different stages where I did different things but I've never uh – I always try to be open and I never was one of these people who tried to work in terms of any schematic. I always pretty much tried to blank out and put down what comes. Now I'm a person who's read a great deal obviously and uh what comes comes from a very conditioned person conditioned in certain ways but I accept what comes. In the early days for the first 10 years maybe I had the Kerouac rule, whatever comes don't interfere, you're not allowed to rewrite, then after 10 years I started rewriting and now I rewrite like crazy, I rewrite everything a lot uh but uh I can't say – I don't know ahead of time where I'm going or why I'm finding what I'm finding, then as I rework the material of course I do tend to shape it - I've often said first it's like the patient in analysis and then the analyst takes over and tries to help shape the material that has come. Directing is different. I've always wanted to be as open in my directing but I find it very difficult, faced with these people who expect me to do something, uh, a less open person takes over, I think a more reactionary self takes over to be in charge to show people I know what I'm doing and I find it very difficult to just sit there and just let anything happen because I'm not particularly interested in what the actors will invent. I find it's never relevant to what I'm trying to do. Now it's a little different in the last 3 years since I've started working with film and I'm on the verge maybe of giving up the theatre completely and just working on film – I'm finishing my first feature. I may not be as good at it. I accept that, I don't care. But of course in working in film, I discover that I just sort of want - I want to watch. I gather material very quickly, I shoot very quickly and then I edit for you know months and I'm just trying to watch and see what grows out of what I have which was planned but in a very perfunctory fast way like in a silent movie days they used to shoot very fast and just say you come in the room, now fall down, now do this, so it is evoking a different part of my self to work in this other medium. I think with different philosophical implications because lately even in my theatre in the last couple of years and certainly in film I keep trying to tell myself no I don't want to do something to impress people

or have an effect on anybody. I don't believe in any of that anymore. I always maintained that I was making art for myself and offering it for others who needed it. I was not ever trying to achieve a certain effect on the audience but I was and always been trying to make great, solid significant art whatever that means, and I'm trying to free myself from that. I doubt that I'll succeed but I just want to be more you know Zen-like and accepting and working the way certain filmmakers, especially some European filmmakers work, just being open to seeing what comes to them and let the camera capture it.

J: It's funny because you made a fleeting reference to Zen-like, which I guess could be considered a philosophy and I was going to ask whether any of these shifts in your work as you've seen them happen if there's been any kind of philosophy that you have read and/or encountered or thought about whether it's religious or quote philosophy that has affected the way you've wanted to change or whether it's purely intuitive or what?

R: No, I'm sure it's affected it, because I'm always reading philosophers mostly to see oh look what Lacan says look what uh Wittgenstein, Whitehead look what they're saying that relates to what I'm doing, yeah I'm trying to do that they're talking about, you know, that's mostly the kicks I've gotten from reading philosophy for the last 20 years, that they justify what I'm doing perhaps because of my upbringing as a nice upper middle class Jewish boy whose parents always said why are you doing this crazy stuff and in my head having long conversations while I'm taking a shower for many years trying to justify what I do, I think a lot of the reason I read philosophy was to try to find people who would justify to me what I was doing, that I wasn't wasting my time, and they did, mammothly. I mean I think they were convincing that what I was doing was right. I do things – the main trends, certainly of 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy – a lot of it is very much related - even very secular philosophers are still talking about consciousness in a way that is very similar to the way spiritual and religious thinkers talk about it.

J: Well, yeah, there is a lot of feeling that people like Deleuze & Guattari are quite religious in some ways or at least spiritual.

R: Sure, I think all of them are, I think Husserl was, Heidegger obviously, but you know, all of them, all of them.

J: And so your experience is, if I'm hearing you correctly, so I'm just trying to make sure I understand, that it's kind of like you were doing what you were doing and you've been reading the philosophers and kind of using that in a retrospective way almost. Is that accurate?

R: Yes, yes - no, I take interminable notes all the time. You know, I have piles of theoretical notes, where I'll be reading somebody and he'll say art should be blah blah blah and I'll put a version of that, I'll write that in the margin of the book, and later on I might type it up so it feeds into me in that way but it feeds mostly into this huge stack of notes that are going to tell me - give me a system that I can easily use to write the next play, but of course when it comes time to write the next play I never pay any attention.

J: Of course....Something that just occurred to me while you were saying that, I like looking at your notebooks, the things you have on the web just blank and um I have a sort of weirdly similar way of writing um but I was just wondering if you find that you use either consciously or unconsciously almost contradictory philosophies because there's like a lot of arguing going on in your work.

R: Yeah, probably...I don't think about it in those terms, because I'm looking for you know I remember Wittgenstein saying that he doesn't read books, he just looks through them for hints and I'm looking for hints. So they may be contradictory if you place them properly in the context of the whole system but they're not contradictory in terms of my choices.

J: Right, right, but I guess what I'm getting at is that when I see your work, and I've seen a lot of it, that it seems like one of the things I like about it a lot actually is that it seems like you've got, it's almost like you're arguing with yourself, there's a lot of arguments going on as opposed to resolving them and saying blah blah blah.

R: Oh no, but I think less argument but more rather saying you know life is such and such, but you take that seriously? It's trying also to indicate ironically that it's just anything that is said, you know the selection of one possibility out of a million and different perspectives and in the end they are all equally relevant which I do believe.

J: So is that one of the reasons why you're trying to move now into that more of a seeing place in a sense or from what you said getting out of what you said the great art mode or whatever?

R: Yeah, but not consciously, and I'm having difficulty and I probably won't escape it but I've been always drifting that way for many years or trying to drift that but I always get pulled back because in a way I have been conditioned by something else by another kind of psychological upbringing, psychological orientation that I've always been trying to escape but I suspect I never will.

J: Do you really want to?

R: Maybe not, I don't know, I mean I say that I want to. And the pole that the alternative way provides keeps me going in a way.

J: Which is the alternative, I'm sorry I got lost there?

R: The alternative is the totally more open neutral way, like Barthes' book that just came out in English a couple years ago called *The Neutral*, which was a wonderful book I thought, talking about just about the whiteness of things, the blankness of things and the neutrality of things as the source of great uh psychic energy, but all those people – all the people that everybody always talks about –

J: The French men.

R: Yeah, and there are some German guys, you know everywhere, there are even a few Americans!

J: Yeah, I know, heaven forefend...oh yeah, I was just thinking of - in terms of a specific philosopher in your actual experience back to that quote that – I know you're not into Lacan right now – but what you wrote about in *Unbalancing Acts* about being a dumb reader of Lacan and the sense of looking at it – it seemed like what you were saying, my understanding of it was that you were writing – that the writing was dealing with the difficulty you had with it somehow, I don't know if that's a misunderstanding on my part –



R: Well, maybe, I'm not sure that's true. I think I said that but it may or may not be true. I mean I've read a ton of Lacan, a lot of secondary stuff. I have a whole bookcase full of books on Lacan. There's Lacan also but again I read –I'm looking for hints, and I've never felt guilty about skimming through books until something caught my eye and marking that and sometimes getting caught and reading a little more densely.

J: When you say getting caught what do you mean?

R: Finding a section that I want to read more.

J: Oh OK, getting caught – not by, oh yeah I see what you mean.

R: And then it's just uh creating an orientation, it's reinforcing a certain orientation. I mean at a certain point it was very important to me the whole French notion which is not in Lacan that we are born into this language which imprisons us and we are broken people you know we are all broken, so certainly he's not the first person to say that, I have no doubt that his difficult style was part of the appeal because I like the style of the riddle or the enigma or the oracle because um it frees you to get that first lightening flash that reveals something that you don't develop. I always refer back to who was it quoting Alain, I think it was, I think it was – um - well someone quoting Alain there's so little was translated into English, but you know the notion that it's not good for an artist to develop things in a way. I try not to develop things because I think the minute you start developing things and elaborating on things you get trapped in the system. And I suppose the people who don't develop things are poets, they just keep changing the flash that illuminates and uh so I read these people not so much to get a handle on their whole system. Occasionally I have, you know there have been times in my life where there's been somebody that I've thought well I've really got to study and understand what so and so is talking about but usually not.

J: Can you give an example of one of the people or if there is anyone right now or anything like that?

R: That I'm trying to get a handle on? I can give an example, which won't make my standing seem too high in the world that you are writing for. Just when I was coming out of college and I discovered Gurdjieff I remember reading everything and spending six months plowing through the whole book and also reading through a lot of other sources and trying to understand his system, and I read a lot of secondary Lacan to try to understand his system also so I suppose it's debatable if he's a philosopher but of course it's also debatable whether Gurdjieff is a philosopher but um there have been a few other people, I can't you know....

J: Can you tell me with either Lacan or Gurdjieff how – I mean could you follow whether it was conscious or unconscious how – I mean how can you talk about unconscious but – can you follow at all how that might have affected your writing and/or your rehearsal style or anything like that?

R: No, not particularly. It had an effect upon me, it had an effect on the person who was then writing out of blankness and waiting to see what comes. I never, never and I hate art where I see somebody try to embody in any way what this thinker has to say or – I have no interest in that and I know some people who do that and I don't like their work.

J: Yeah, no, that's actually what I'm actually trying to write this for, I mean I know have to submit it to an academic – but what I'm interested in is in fact how artists work with

philosophy and specifically and so far all the people I have talked to have said remarkably similar things about it though there is remarkably little written about it um and but one of the things that people talk about is this kind of skimming and looking for – the woman I was talking to earlier today was talking about food it's like food and kind of putting it in that sense, does that resonate with you at all?

R: Yeah, I wouldn't use the analogy of food but there's nothing wrong with that analogy, uh, I think I've said what I should properly say, I'm looking for hints, I'm looking for self justification and things that will explain me to myself and my process to myself.

J: I actually didn't get a chance to see *Bad Boy Nietzsche* but of course I know you wrote it and did it, were you in that piece, which I wish I had seen but I didn't, were you trying to go for something specifically with his philosophy or was it looking at him as a person or how that would resonate with you?

R: I worked the same way and I used certain – the only thing directly from Nietzsche I used were certain of the little poems and poetic fragments from *Gay Science* is it? I don't know. It's either *Gay Science* or *Human All Too Human* I think and then I just operated out of the the image of him throwing his arms around the horse in Torino and you know the things that came easily from whatever knowledge I had of Nietzsche. I was very, very proud of the fact that at the end of the year in Art Forum they ask these people to comment on ten events of the year and Arthur Danto said *Bad Boy Nietzsche* was great and it felt just like Nietzsche, but again I certainly did not work schematically and say how can I express for people what Nietzsche had to say. I just you know knew Nietzsche slightly well and just sort of let it lead my imagination.

J: Why, maybe a dumb question, but I'll ask it anyway, Why Nietzsche rather than Bad Boy Lacan, for example, since you said you were reading a lot of Lacan, just what drew you to it?

R: [laughter] That is a dumb question.

J: [laughter] I know it's a dumb question, I said it's a dumb question but I'm asking you anyway.

R: The same material but at one point I thought it was going to be about Nietzsche and Rimbaud and that didn't work. I don't know. It just came to me. I'd like to write about Nietzsche, that seems like a good, good center, potent center, I don't know. Well, obviously, Nietzsche is one of those people, who better to be the center. I wouldn't use Lacan because he's not available enough to everybody as a frame of reference. Not that people know what Nietzsche really said or who he really was but still you say Nietzsche and everyone will say oh yeah, Nietzsche.

J: Right so it kind of has this strange –

R: Resonance

J: Yeah, yeah...and when –

R: I did by the way when I was in college write a play about Simone Weil.

J: OK!

R: That's the only other sort of philosopher that I directly exploited.

J: And what led you to write that one?

R: I don't know it was about Simone Weil having to parachute during the war in an airplane in Argentina landing and Simon Weil falling in love with some young Nazi in Argentina.

J: [laughter]

R: Not properly registering how anti-Semitic Simone Weil really was in many ways.

J: Really, OK...that's funny. So I guess my other big sort of general question I'm asking people is do you think of theater itself and/or film now for you as any way philosophy itself or as a metaphor for or vice-versa.

R: I've been thinking lately and starting to say to people that I think maybe the reason I make theatre and what is most valuable to me about making art is less the work of art itself than the fact that in struggling with it, it forces me to have all kinds of thoughts that I would not otherwise have. It just stimulates a kind of mental process in trying to come to terms with it. Perhaps that's the most interesting aspect of it for me, because when I'm working not when I'm directing but when I'm writing or when I've been editing I'm still continually reading this stuff and getting new ideas and this interminable jottings that I do and in a way I find that more interesting than you know having produced a finished work of which I've certainly produced many, but that would be as far as I would go. I certainly don't claim that I'm doing philosophy uh though what I'm doing is trying to um make an object that reflects the truth in some way as I experience it, I don't know if experience is a good word, but I'm trying to reflect something about the truth so I guess in a sense that's philosophy.

J: I'm also curious because I was at that little thing at Loughborough you were at and you did that tiny mini-rehearsal with like four people – I know it must have been very strange for you – but it was actually quite lovely to watch from my perspective because I've never seen one of your rehearsals and I know that wasn't an actual rehearsal but still I was just curious because if when you're making those decisions, when you were just asking people to shift or whatever if there's any conscious thing going on there or if you're purely working off of complete intuition?

R: Does complete intuition make it look more right, more interesting less stupid, less obvious? It's just like really no. I think it's like a painter painting a painting, you know Picasso doesn't think you know I would better express the anguish of life if I changed that from orange to green. No, you just blank out and just do what something is telling you to do.

J: Because you talk a lot about the writing process, do you find any of that kind of um that stimulation between the writing process and the reading you were talking about when you're working with the actors at all, or do you not get that out of that process?

R: Not very much. I don't like working with the actors that much, um, occasionally I will work with an actor who will bring me things who will surprise me and be useful and that will be good, but just like in any art, most actors, most painters, most playwrights aren't going to do things that are going to interest me that much and I have to work with a lot of actors. I like them. Some of them are very talented. I'm not putting them down, but they don't really

interest me that much, I gotta confess, and I don't find generally that much stimulation. I don't think that proves that I'm evil because occasionally I work with somebody where I just sit back and go oh wow, whatever you're doing do it, but it's different and because it's a process of social interchange, now I tend to be sort of a hermit and one of the reasons I've stayed in theatre is that it's forced me to deal with people because I don't want to dry up but uh I do notice for instance, like a couple - many years ago I stopped working with designers because I worked with some great designers including people I liked very much like Sally Jacobs who was Peter Brooks' designer for many years and they would talk to me and want to give me what I wanted and want to discuss it and be very responsive to all my ideas- but I discovered that having to go through the verbal mechanism and deal with another person, it just isn't the same - it's not the same degree of creativity or discovery as when you're there alone making your model, allowing yourself to be as sloppy or as stupid at certain moments as you cannot be when you're interacting with somebody else so in rehearsal I cannot be as stupid and as sloppy as I can be when I'm writing. Now I may rewrite it and correct it but the impulse that is producing it is different than what happens when you're working with a group of people and having to be talking to them and communicating with them.

J: And you were saying with film that's somehow slightly different because you're just filming is that why?

R: Oh yeah... Well I film very fast and I accept a lot of mistakes and just invent things on the spot. I mean I film really fast, then I come home like this feature film I'm working on now, which is my first film and I'm going to give myself at least three to try and produce a masterpiece uh you know I filmed my material in three days and I've been editing for five months. I'm editing like 8 or 10 hours a day for five months.

J: So that kind of whole relationship you'd be having with actors you're obviously just having with film itself then?

R: Like the writing or the designing or the painting experience, you can try anything. Even there because you have got to go through the machine, I notice, that more than in writing there are certain things that you have to force yourself to rethink and to realize, you know, I worked so hard building this scene and making these edits, it could be changed, you know something happens in your head - I mean if you see it enough times you will eventually change it - but it's very hard to get past the feeling that no but that's the way it's supposed to be, that's the way it is and that's terrible for an artist to feel that's the way it's supposed to be.

J: And I assume you don't have that when you're working with people on stage? When you're rehearsing, or do you have that as well? Let's say you've rehearsed something for the same three months - because you rehearse for about 3 months don't you?

R: Yes.

J: And you've gotten it to whatever stage, do you also have that same problem of changing something at that point or not so much?

R: A little but I'm ruthless. I mean people are always shocked that I'll come in some day - but that's my favourite scene - it's terrible...

J: And how would you describe that moment, what is it that you think happens when you look at something and decide either it's terrible or it's working, either one of those moments what goes into that?

R: The moment that you looked at again and again and again and it seemed to work and all of a sudden one day – am I blonde – that's so stupid? And I would use the word stupid a lot.

J: Right, stupid, yes you do, so like what constitutes something stupid?

R: Something obvious, banal, too one dimensional, too banal, I don't know.

J: And then on the opposite side what constitutes something that –

R: It's really dense, really tricky, clear but tricky and hard to get your head around but very clear.

J: And then if you put enough of those together, then I assume your hope is that then people can possibly have that kind of rearrangement situation.

R: I don't know if they can. I really don't do it for them – obviously another part of me wants to be you know a bigger success than I've been and have everybody in the world think I'm a great artist but I don't do anything to try and say will people like this? – I mean I have to fight that at all times.

J: Right, I was going to say. At least with my experience with – yeah, it's hard to have both of those things at the same time, I mean to both want to have people to like you and then not doing anything-.

R: It's a continual internal struggle, but I'm certainly aware. I know where my heart lies, and that is to... And you know I'm not as arrogant – there are artists who care because of their upbringing and so forth less than I you know it's built into me in a way it's hard for me to remember to reject that desire to please.

J: So you actually find yourself actively trying to intervene on that then?

R: Oh, yes, when I notice it's happening.

J: And how does that work?

R: Well, I just notice it happening, but that's part of the reason – you know sometimes there'll be things that will happen and I think unconsciously I'm thinking oh you know that's pretty effective and I'm really thinking unconsciously, wow, that'll get 'em, that'll please 'em. On a certain day I'll come in and watch it and think but it's sappy or it's syrupy or it's sickening or it's stupid, or...

J: And so it's like another part of you comes in and does the editing for you almost?

R: You know a lot of people that work with me always think I'm throwing out so many things that people would really love – I'm not sure they would, but they think so and maybe that's one of the reasons I'm throwing some of them out.

J: Yeah, and do you think does that impulse, that actual impulse you're talking about of trying not to please – I'm sorry I know I'm harping on the philosophy thing but that's just because that's what I'm doing – do you think there's any philosophy or anything you read or experienced that made you want to have that impulse, that puts that impulse in you?

R: Well I've spent my whole life seeing things that most people don't like and I do or things I didn't like at first and then came to realize later were great. That's my continual experience of course, and I've got to say also that in the back of my mind I – you know – it's very tricky and I don't know if I'm kidding myself because I do find in the back of my mind I suspect that I am trying to please one or two super sensitive intelligent people. I think mostly the audience are dumb, and I can be dumb also, but yeah I think the audiences that comes to see my plays – It's interesting we had um last year every week we would have a talk back one night a week and I would talk to the audience, and I've gotta admit that very often what would happen – the audience could be coming in at night and I am standing there watching them come in and I'd say to the ticket guy wow they look like clods tonight, where did these people come from, and then in the talk back it turns out they are very bright a lot of them you know and they're not stupid, so I don't know, but I do have a prejudice.

J: I remember, it's very funny actually, I asked you a question once ages ago in the mid-90s, you were doing a talk somewhere I can't even remember where, but I remember sitting in the audiences of your stuff laughing and literally being the only person laughing and having people stare at me like I was horrific and I was so relieved – I said to you, it is supposed to be funny isn't it and you said yes, and I felt quite –

R: I think I'm basically a comic artist.

J: I do too. I mean I just find this interesting this whole thing about context because I think people walk into experimental theatre and it's sort of like they wear black –

R: They [unintelligible] in experimental theatre because it has a reputation of being intellectual and so on, and actually that's something that worries me about my film a little, it isn't very funny.

J: Maybe a Charlie Chaplin music track?

R: No, it's pretty bleak.

J: I think it's very interesting the way humor gets used, and I find that when people feel they are in an intellectual environment there is a fear of seeming wrong and having fun or laughing in any way.

R: Yeah, well, an awful lot of – in all of my life I've been interested in all these people and I must admit on the few occasions when I have to go to conferences and people are talking about Lacan or this that or the other thing I go out of my skull with boredom it's so stodgy, and - oh.

J: This is kind of why I'm doing this – talking to a handful of artists who read philosophy because I don't know if you've ever been to a conference and heard a philosophical paper about laughter but it's one of the most horrific things you can ever do.

R: A philosopher is just like everybody else, I mean I think everything could be cut by at least three quarters - it's always too long even books and everything it's amazing how long - and the same thing with art and philosophers, I mean really.

J: Well, speaking of that, I'll let you go. Thank you. Is there anything else you'd like to say about it in general?

R: Everybody always asks that. I just say things in response to what people want to hear. I don't have anything to say, you know really. I've always dreamed of being someone who didn't have anything to say, who wouldn't talk, uh, but I've always - as I said at the beginning - I've always mistrusted what I say. Am I really speaking the truth or am I just trying to impress people, trying to impress myself.

J: But I think you put that - my experience is that you put that in the work don't you?

R: I try to. I try to.

J: Just, I mean, I don't know if this is useful to you or not, but my experience of watching your work is that it's - I go into it with one brain and come out with another, which is a really lovely experience and very rare.

R: I know, and most serious art - for many years I told people that somebody that most people admire and a lot people I respect people admire, but my particular bugaboo for instance is uh Bergman, Ingmar Bergman, because I always thought that his films which I really hated were trying to - everybody sort of inflating their chests and saying we are serious upper middle class sophisticated people with great sexual spiritual problems and that's what makes us important and interesting to people especially our emotional and sexual problems and I find it so phony, so uh...I don't want to be like that.

J: I said I wasn't going to ask anymore questions, but now I am since you said that....Do you think there's anything in your upbringing or anything you read or whatever where you can find if you can locate when that started, like that perspective of wait a minute, I don't want to do that thing, because it's such an almost ingrained idea of what serious culture, that kind of Ingmar Bergman thing.

R: On the other hand I like some people that a lot of people would say are like that, I like I don't know if you know the work of Béla Tarr?

J: No, I don't.

R: There are people European filmmakers who are that way, who are pretty glum but there's something about them that's different from Bergman, but how did it start? I think it comes from coming from a you know upper middle class Jewish family, my parents not being intellectuals at all, not being uncultured in the sense in the American context that they encouraged me to you know be interested in art not that they - they still would laugh at modern paintings and my father would say I could do that but they would take me to the museums, but there was still that Jewish culture. I think it comes from Jewishness, yeah I mean look at Woody Allen, who I don't particularly like, but don't take yourself seriously, it's traditional.

J: It is funny though, because I did think of Woody Allen when you mentioned Bergman, of course, because I was actually thinking that Woody Allen kind of does the photo-negative version of what Bergman does –

R: There was that one time he tried to copy Bergman what was it called Windows or –

J: Oh yeah, that was really bad. Yeah, it was, I was actually thinking that you wouldn't like Woody Allen because of that. Because it's still very much in relation to – and it's still very much here I am I'm interesting because of my sexual and philosophical problems.

R: I think there is a Jewish tradition to not take things too seriously, everything from the Hasidic tradition which was not any more important to me than a lot of other things, but opposed to the Nordic Protestant tradition.

J: Of taking things far too seriously? I come from that but somehow I've managed to escape.

R: Well, I'm a person who hates that whole Nordic – hates is too strong a word – but I'm much more into the whole Mediterranean kind of civilization, and yet I know I myself as a person, most people perceive me as being very reserved, uptight Nordic kind of person. I'm not and I don't like to be in crowds and I don't like parties and I don't like people making noise. So I'm a Nordic type in a sense but I love you know Italianate or Mediterranean culture.

J: This is a little off-subject but this is something you said once and I wonder if you still related which is once you said something about wishing you could create work that was as exciting as a rehearsal, like in another words that felt it was more exciting in the rehearsal room than when it was show?

R: Well maybe, there are so many artists that talk about process and process is what is important and I feel that's true, but it's sort of a cliché to say that so it doesn't interest me too much to say that because it's so old hat, so in the air now. As I said more interesting than any of that is for me – you know at different times, different things are interesting you know? Different times in your life, I don't mean in your life in terms of five year periods, I mean you know this week you're doing this and there are certain gratifications, next week the play is opening and you've gotta admit you know it's sort of exciting when it first opens in a way – I don't think too highly of that level of excitement, but it's all part of it, nothing can be denied, you know the fact that I hate Ingmar Bergman can't be denied, but how important is that to me, you know, more important than perhaps I would like to think, you know more useful to me than I would like to think sometimes. None of it can be denied, it all has to be there.

J: The sense I get when I look at your work and I wonder if you're conscious as I imagine you are of attempting to put all of that in there?

R: Oh yeah, you bet, yeah, that's always been the overriding concern. It should have everything in it and a lot of people would react and say well that's weird it seems like your work leaves a lot of things out. I don't think it does.

J: Do you think – because I know a lot of people think of your work as cerebral, I actually find it weirdly emotional, now what do you – I don't mean that you're trying to get an emotion out of people, I just feel stuff coming out of it, do you have any experience of that?



R: Oh, sure. I don't aim for that, but I see what's happening, sure. Absolutely, I think it's very emotional.

J: Yeah, I do, too, it's just something I wanted to ask directly, because I've experienced it that way.

R: The thing I would think about is feeling. Feeling can be emotional and it can also be intellectual. But it's feeling, colors, feeling, sadness...there's a lot of sadness in my work, elegiac, realizing death is coming you know death is coming to me soon and that is certainly informing my work.

J: I think somehow it always has though in a way. I don't know if that makes sense, but-

R: No, it has.

J: Yeah, and that awareness and from my perspective that's what makes it quite great actually and I think also why the humor is there in that weird way, if that makes sense.

R: Yes, absolutely.

J: I think I'll leave it there then. Thank you.

## **Appendix B: Transcript of interview with Chris Goode**

Interview with director/writer/performance Chris Goode – September 2008 - Café Z, London (the café was friendly but loud and some of the interview was drowned out at times by a cappuccino machine)

Julia: OK now, so the question I have for you or what I'm just trying to find out is what people's relationships is between philosophy and their work, so before I get to more detail questions, I just want to ask the question in general, which is what do you think the relationship is between any philosophy you have read and have been interested in either now or in the past and your own work...as opposed to someone else's.

Chris: That's a good question. Well, as I said to you already, I don't um I'm not I don't think of myself as a philosophy user, I don't have a background in philosophy so in terms of um coming into any kind of encounter with philosophical ideas it tends to be a grab bag of stuff that you know crosses my path or I go looking for it depending on what I'm working on. Um, but I do think there's um a broader sense in that's coming more and more in focus for me in the last few years that way in which my work – I was going to say my work but I think that's not quite true – my idea of my work um by which I partly I mean the things I wish I was making rather than the things I am actually making – but the things that I wish I was making and the kind of theatre that I think about when I think about theatre as a set of ideas um begins more and more to feel like a species of philosophical thinking. Um the idea of um just opening out and defining a designated speculative space um I'm mostly realizing that in relation the piece I'm about to start working on *Hey Matthew* which kind of serendipitously but it comes as close as I've ever got to kind of making a real explicit connection between the idea of theatre as a speculative space and philosophy as something you know working through similar manoeuvres. In this piece it kind of – the engine of it is about a series of um I suppose a series of five readings of rooms, an idea of a room, the room that everyone is in in a performance and the room that that room occupies um and the other rooms that are legible in that room conceptually and otherwise and one of the things that I'm doing is drawing on the way that philosophers have also drawn on the idea of a room to also represent a speculative space -

J: My question about that then is since you are speaking of certain philosophers, can you tell me which philosophers those are? And how you came upon them perhaps.

C: Well the two things that I'm working with uh most at the moment are um John Locke in *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* which uses the idea of an apparently closed room um to explore some ideas of personal liberty to understand where personal liberty begins and ends and that was something I was reminded of by Paul Goodman who is kind of the central figure in this project and the model in *Growing up Absurd* of the apparently closed room with a rat race at its centre which kind of compels the attention of these various tribes of more or less disciplined young men none of whom realize that actually the door to the room has been open all this time and their fixation on what happens to be in the room distracts them from their understanding that they are actually able to leave um and that kind of tessellates very interestingly with what Locke does in talking about you know suppose a man is carried into a room, uh, while he's asleep, he wakes up he wants to be there and he doesn't realize he can't leave because the door has been locked, so that's where this idea of exploring rooms has come from and I'm now about to get into um an essay of Kant's *What does it mean to orient yourself in thinking* and that's an essay I know Deleuze was very fond of so my next thing is to look for other iterations of this stuff, amplifications and expansions of it...in a way I'm starting to feel a little bit cautious because I didn't set out to make a piece about these

different philosophers' portraits and questions and so on but there is something about having that apparatus even if it means translating it into other forms that in order to present it in the room itself.

J: That's good good good... This is fantastic, I had a feeling it would be easy... how do you actually – in your experience in the past or how you foresee this – either one or both – you have all these ideas and then of course you end up in a rehearsal room or sit down in front of a – I was going to say typewriter, but there was a time when we had typewriters – and you know – and you're going to write or talk to actors or whatever, how do you experience that process and/or foresee it, either one? In terms of that idea of concrete forms...

C: Yeah, yeah...um I mean for the current project um there was an interest for me – it kind of came out of a practical imperative which is making this piece with um an incredibly small budget and knowing that it's got to be moveable in hand luggage. We're going to be taking this show to Bradford on the train so you know so right from the start it was about what can I do in a more or less bare room um and so then it's about – it's kind of I suppose a thought experiment, the idea of inviting an audience to you know through a kind of commentary I suppose, a directed commentary to um inviting an audience to read this room in different ways and to in a sense project other rooms in other orientations um onto the room that we're actually in um partly of course because I'm interested in what happens when you then take those narratives away again if you can or at least try and direct people back to the room that we're all actually in. That I think is really interesting, that kind of layering of other readings as a kind of accumulation – the sort of despotism of other rooms in other places or other times or the idea of the conceptual room that sits and maps onto the real room and then trying to take that stuff away again and bringing people back to the room that we're all actually sharing in space and time and uh and wondering where those other rooms then live you know in us and the journey we have made together, so that's kind of how it's worked for this and I think the idea of the thought experiment kind of um seems to me innately theatrical um it's simply a what if and even the most sort of um most indicative and the least matrixed theatre events seem to me still begin with a what if – um –

J: Just to ask – I'm talking on a simpler level than you're talking on – so like you go into the – are you working with other people?

C: yes.

J: OK, so when – either the past or if you're going into a room – the relationship between the idea and the – I'm still hearing ideas which is great – but what I'm really fascinated by right now is our relationship as artists between these abstract ideas and the most concrete thing – I mean I love the fact that of course you had to get it in hand luggage – so I mean these incredibly practical things, so I'm wondering if uh you can talk about that at all or what your relationship is – because you write as well – what you perceive as your relationship whether its conscious or unconscious between these ideas and when you sit down or are writing with the people in the room.

C: Yeah, that's interesting. One of the things that was on my mind at the time I started to put the theme together for the project is about having a bunch of people who would bring entirely different approaches or not so much approaches – partly they are coming from different disciplines – and you know we don't work on this together for 3 weeks, but one thing that will happen between now and then is that everybody will have a chance to read the things that I've been reading – um – so we'll have that stuff shared and the other thing that will start to

happen between now and then is that part of the making of the show. All of the essays that I'm using, all the texts I am using as stimulus, some of which relate specifically to this room idea and some of which are attaching to other parts – some of it being an attempted portrait of Paul Goodman as well so they are ideas that and bits of text are going to become a kind of virtual library um in a blog um the other members of the team will have a chance to read what they want to and have a chance to think about what they would be interested in making with the ideas that come out of the map, um but also um I'm gonna be – another really important part of this project has been wanting to work with a kind of international set of writers so in a week or so a big email will go out to a dozen or so writers from different places and backgrounds just pointing in the direction of this library saying is there anything you want to write in response to any of this text so I'm hoping that by the time we start we have not only those source texts, the Locke, and the Kant and quite a lot of Goodman and various developments of that [unintelligible] on queer phenomenology which is kind of bang on where I want to be – we'll have those source texts but we'll be beginning to receive hopefully for example poetry in response to those texts or little kind of scenes that might have been written by screenwriters or whatever so the conversation at the beginning of the collaborative part of the process is absolutely about what people respond to – there's going to be four of us in the room sort of from day to day covering like someone whose much more of a physical specialist than me but comes from a fine art background, somebody whose kind of working in an interzone between lighting design and installation, again very different ways of understanding the body in the room for example, what it means to put a body an unadorned in an unadorned room and to start to invite them – so that's really where the process begins and at the moment you know what isn't in place is anyway of getting through what emerges from the early stages and figuring out what might be useful and what might not be but I think that's something we do together as it all comes up.

J: And what do you think – and maybe here I'll invite you to kind of think of past work a little bit so you can go into more concrete things because that's fascinating and I want to talk to you more about it as it's going on – so you speak of artists reading that material and having some response to it, maybe writing a piece of poetry or something I could see you do as well – so again where I'm going with this I'll try this duality thing – how do you think you as an artist respond to one of those essays as opposed to how an academic might respond to one of those essays – here you said I'm not a philosopher, I'm an artist – what do you think you know happens – as you can define it in the most concrete possible away – this doesn't have to be a conscious thing – but that filter – I mean you've been to enough academic conferences I imagine so you could have some idea of the difference – so how do you perceive that difference?

C: Yeah, it's I suppose what I can say on a basic level is what is missing for me in the philosophical text is the body. I mean right from the start I kind of feel like I suppose in a way I suppose I'm thinking of the new project, but I think I have to translate those ideas onto a visible body in a visible space before I understand what that might mean and it doesn't have to be for me a kind of accurate mapping and I think that's really important as well – that gap of um like for example reading Sarah Armand's work which I find kind of fascinating but difficult to read and kind of dense and impacted and operating at a register where I'm not at home um and yet I suppose it's partly that a lot of the language is available to a reading I do understand so when she's talking in phenomenological terms about orientation for example and the way that that word spills out in various directions I am immediately mapping that onto at least the idea of a body and the idea of a space and I suppose really then the inquiry for me in a way lets that text drift away – it's been a booster rocket and the inquiry for me is about the travel between the idea of the body and the idea of the room and the body in the room um

and the loading of both the body and the room – I suppose that's partly it – it's about the process of trying to monitor that travel and the point at which you start to take on different kinds of baggage different kinds of weight that um that then [unintelligible] the concept – that do belong to what happens when you put people in a room – the absolute kind of bench mark for this for me particularly at the moment is about nudity and about an understanding that as an ideal for thinking with – the body in the room and the naked body in the room – the work that I've done in the past on the kind of – the ideological of clothing and clothing as a place and a heavily inflected place and if I'm thinking about the body I'm resistant to the idea that I'm thinking of a clothed body because that seems to me categorically dissimilar to a body um and a whole bunch of things are already in place there but of course once you get into working with an actor in a room it's nudity that carries the weight and the turbulence and the clothed body is the default and uh so it's gaps like that where at the conceptual level something is happening but actually completely redistributes its value in the transition between its conceptual moment and its lived moment uh and –

J: Can I ask that something about that?

C: yes.

J: That's exactly what fascinates me and that's kind of what this is about and I'm just glad that you brought it up – it's much easier that way. But also, in terms of that, a question I have – or my perception is and I'm just curious if it's your perception – it doesn't have to be at all – is that I perceive that in concept land let's say that if you're giving an academic paper versus putting a performance up that an academic paper has to have levels of consistency in it or it has to prove itself correct even if it's doing something very abstract. So, you were talking about the launch pad, the blaster – that's the word I – I use a similar kind of thing – so your relationship to that is when you're doing are you looking for did I get that philosophy correct or are you looking for something different?

C: Yeah, that again is very interesting. I think what I am very aware of is that the piece starts as an argument and I'm always very protective in a way of that argument but I wouldn't consider the effectiveness of the piece as a piece of theatre to reside in whether that argument transmits itself, like for example – it's a record for me – it's something I check my thinking against, it's not something I need to share. I think it may be working but it may be working on an unconscious level. For example in *Sisters* – the version of *Three Sisters* that I just did – um there was a lot of pressure from various places during that piece to make a sort of unconventional design situation for people to walk into – they really wanted us – this was at the Gate to do something imaginative and exciting with the space and I found myself really pushing against that because the argument of the piece was about the securing of those freedoms so that if you walked into a space that was already displaying that disregard for convention for example then the piece itself couldn't enact that argument and couldn't hold the tension I needed it to – so people walked into a kind of chocolate boxy set and a very end on traditional configuration with just one or two kind of little clues dotted about it that there was going to be some tension as we went along but it would build build build and eventually the fourth act that spatial arrangement has not been physically destroyed but conceptually destroyed in a way that I think is more powerful than having people come in and sit with that to begin with but it goes without saying had I asked anyone who came to see the show whether they were aware of that argument taking place, um I think it's very unlikely that any of them would have said that – none of them would have described the trajectory of that argument as I understood it nonetheless it was there as a [record?] for me to go what choice to we make at 23 minutes in, where are we in the arc what level of tension and what is the

amount of heat I want in this tension at this stage and I think something of those dynamics inevitably does transmit itself and is shareable but it may be sensational, it may not be intellectually processed by an audience. I have no idea of what audiences do process intellectually...

J: I have a question about the heat and tension phrase. I use that phrase and I have a feeling a lot of people use that phrase – people who are working on interesting stuff – which makes me think of another question I have here – do you like to use inconsistent philosophies and/or contradictory philosophies...that sounds like in a sense you've got Aristotle v Wooster Group, not really, but whatever...I mean you've got these big blocky things put next to each other in a sense, so I'm wondering if you find yourself drawn ever to contradictory philosophies? Or is it more the gap between the concept and the

C: I think it's mostly that. I think I'm more controlling than that, in terms of – because what happens with contradiction I think is that it kind of generates kind of unpredictable kind of arcs and I think I tend to be attracted to smoother arcs than that and um I'm quite – I like um I like seducing the audience very much and I wouldn't normally go out of my way to um to disturb in that way or be turbulent in that way. I tend to think when I'm using tension in the way I was talking about – in doing that consciously it tends to be about the kind of cross-fade between one state and the next state in the argument or whatever it is of the piece. The moment you can tell that something is shifting from one state of the argument to the next, but it tends not to be contradictory or using contradiction in the sense that I think you mean it. I think there are – I'm very interested in dissonance, but that's more about – that's another strategy for that seductive thing it's about asking people to read on a quite detailed level, to experience themselves watching to experience themselves paying attention to something and to participate in the act – a sense of an audience holding something together um from inside, um so there's always dissonance, but I think contradiction in the sense that you mean it and in relation to sort of contradictory kind of underscoring philosophies, no, I find it too – I am too much about my own authority in the process I think to be able to deal with that.

J: I wasn't even trying to go there but you went there, it's really interesting. So what about, perhaps another word that's less loaded than contradictory is consistent and maybe that is more about that gap that you were talking about before but in other words. I haven't read the woman's philosophy that you mentioned, so I can't speak to that with any specific way but I'm assuming that you're not going to do an elucidation of her philosophies but probably something that happens in the room that may be inconsistent with say with the concepts she's proposing.

C: Yeah, a whole bunch of things kind of fold out from that, but I suppose consistency comes with a kind of - I think theatrical fidelity is a very different thing than academic fidelity.

J: Yeah, I agree, so how would you describe that?

C: So I am as content as possible to take some of the ideas of queer phenomenology – that are not in themselves theatrical but are provocative and I can find ways of translating those things but I think that a kind of a sense of almost a kind of sort of almost homeopathic way – so many rewirings – a process that a kind of memory or an odd fragment that might just be literally a half phrase from that text which isn't actually key or isn't pertinent to the argument that she has just been making but that is just resonant for some reason and that kind of **[unintelligible]** treatment of work in that way I feel very relaxed about because – I suppose because I see kind of um identify the stimulus in the room in the same way memory works in

a room – you have access to certain things in an unreliable way and because it simply is, it kind of gets traded off at the point that it comes through the door a kind of availability a kind of promiscuity of ideas is kind of more interesting to me than the kind of what would be an academy thing of rendering those ideas into a kind of a staged delivery.

J: Well it's just so funny because you've mentioned seduction now and promiscuity, it's very funny because it all seems so – referring to the ethical academic fashion chart – the idea of seduction would be considered very bad and it's interesting the different formulations, and of course you're talking about bodies and theatre and of course you know all the bad rap theatre also got in the past for having whores involved and it's just very interesting, because I think there's that thing that holds theatre down in terms of a thing because it moves very slowly...but it just came to me as interesting...because I find myself saying things like this all the time, that are completely useless in a PhD, like 'for some reason', you know, and I'm just wondering if you can talk about that little moment for a bit, just what your experience is, you don't have to theorize it, your experience of when you think something is resonant 'for some reason.'

C: yeah, yeah, there are two things that come immediately to mind, one of which is multiplicity, about the phrase that you can work from and represent in different contexts and in different ways and it will be available for that and no single presentation will ever present the whole of the content or the implication of that phrase and I think working in theatre has always been about being a technician of that kind of multiplicity, being able to keep um as much of that proliferation as possible, the other thing this I have a very vague language around –

J: That's OK, say it anyway...

C: and I don't quite know what it is, but the word I use is scuffing and it's about the element that you introduce to reduce the pristine-ness of an idea or of a presentation or an image, a kind of a movement or a dynamic or whatever and I'll say well that's lovely but now we need to scuff the edges of it and I think the only thing I can automatically tie it to, I don't know if you know Tom Spanbauer from Portland, Oregon whose stuff has been very inspirational for me and as a writing teacher one of the phrases that he uses is the idea of certain tongues, that having found your pristine phrase for saying something, you re-speak it with a burnt tongue, and um I think that just means it's about making a kind of jaggedness or a kind of roughness something that snags the attention and that doesn't sit, doesn't play nicely with the other kids that one quietly reconciles to the context that it's in um uh I can't remember what your question was –

J: It's totally about that – but I kind of like that your forgot the question because so did I for a second, so it's nice it's kind of like you're doing it while you're saying it, because this makes me think – also the other question I have I think relates to this too because do you think because you are not a philosopher and you are not trying to use them on that level, do you think the work you do or the artists you like somehow speak to philosophy, do you think it's kind of an embodied philosophy or something or there's something there that philosophy could learn from or take somehow, you know, in the same way we that we're using it, that it could go back the other way?

C: Yeah, that's really interesting I mean I suppose the kind of thing the basic thing to say about this that is kind of at a remove from everything we're talking about it is that I do see um the work that I do fundamentally as an ethical practice, um, it is concerned with [unintelligible]



living and it is not incidental to the work and it's also not always part its surface content but it's this thing about – I have a little checklist in my head I suppose of the things that I'm looking for in the work to do and looking for people to be able to experience in their kind of apprehension of it all of which I think [unintelligible] so the ethical drive of it, so that is, my immediate response to is it an ethical practice or is it available for a philosophical reading in – yeah but it's not always in the – there's seldom anything pedagogic in the work that I do uh –

J: That's not what I meant – it's more just that what you're talking about in the way of, in the experience of a piece of art is there philosophical content, not in sitting around talking about Lacan or something, you know – just so you know...

C: Sure yeah, but in terms of what the kind of return relationship is the moving back into philosophy, that's really interesting because it begs the question of what can be articulated only from theatre as a medium and that in a sense is a really important goal for me um about the kind of achievement of a distinctively theatrical language that doesn't arrive at any other practice. There are always 150 different ways because theatre is such a rich practice anyway but a kind of faithfulness to that hybridity is part of the task, um, so I suppose that's the thing isn't it, it kind of talked about translating into the body, into that bodily presence um it kind of hard for me to see how the two contrary translations uh is possible and that's about exactly that isn't it, that distinctiveness of the theatrical transaction how opposed to anything else we might do in a room together um and actually opposed partly to performance I think – I mean that's something I have no – I have nothing coherent to say about but the sense that um that theatre is, that theatre exceeds performance and I'm very interested in that whatever it is around that kind of performative situation and that locus of performance, all the other things that theatre is that are not performed and that are uh indicative that we can call real or whatever and I kind of feel like the philosophical cogency of theatre probably resides as much in that moat area which kind of, that is suffused with those ethical commitments that isn't speculative, that is a practice rather than a conceptualization um uh I kind of think that might be as available to a kind of philosophical condensation as the performance that is about the what if, it's as much about the what is that is –

J: What I was thinking of when you were talking is Aristotle, you know one of the first recorded philosophers who spent a hell of a lot of time talking about the theatre, you know when you think about it – in terms of what you were saying, it made me think of that. I don't know precisely what about that, but that clearly a lot of his ideas about stuff also relate to his ideas about theatre, I don't know it's a question mark, but you know, so kind of in terms of what you're getting at it's almost like you're talking about theatre itself...what I heard, the moat that you're talking about is as much a conceptual state as much as a real state, that there's something in theatre that is almost inherently philosophical. I don't know what that means exactly, but exactly you know what I'm talking about.

C: It's kind of a fiction, isn't it? It's the place that we go in order to have a theatrical experience but it's different from the show, you know the theatrical experience is not the show, yeah, that kind of –

J: Do you think, I guess what I'm getting at – yeah that's it – for instance, I feel that you know again as the same way as Richard Foreman talks about himself as being a dumb reader of Lacan, I'm a dumb reader of Deleuze and Guattari in a similar way, meaning that I don't think I engage in it the way as academics but like you I use it as a booster thing, but I'm wondering if that's kind of what they were pointing to again which is something about embodying, in other words, that's not about a concept that's going to stay still, that maybe

there's something in theatre there's, you know what I mean? It points to almost a necessary correction of philosophy as merely a stable concept.

C: Yeah, yeah, I suppose I'm very aware that I go to that place as a kind of spiritual practice as someone who has no use for a language of spirituality. But it's about that retuning of just attentiveness and apprehension and a kind of a repositioning of oneself in relation to detail and an idea of scale and a kind of – it feels like a flexibility in relation to those things, - a component of what people go to spiritual practices for and also quite contrary to that in some ways in that what I'm exactly not looking for is faith and truth and stability and those kinds of things, so yeah I guess that's partially what it's doing is reframing – the best thing that happened in my life was stealing a book when I had no money and nowhere to live and was trying awfully hard reading a book that kind of just explained the chemical composition of the soil or air and gave me a different sense of the planet I was standing on and the air I was breathing of and those sorts of things and I think there is something about this kind of shift into a different register, pretty much the moment I walk into a rehearsal room, that shift of register in myself which is not dissimilar to the transition that people make in musicals, those lovely transition moments where they're not quite singing yet but they're not quite talking like people talk anymore, that kind of sense that being tuned into, attentiveness and discretion and being able to give space to bring to bear the kind of discriminating apparatus that gets beaten out of us otherwise.

J: I have another question which came to me while you were speaking, but which is very related. Do you think in your experience that has led you to read the philosophy that is in your work or do you think it's reading certain books whether they are philosophical or not that has shifted your experience in the rehearsal room or the theatre or both.

C: In terms of proper hard line philosophical texts, I probably go looking for them because I'm in search of something to do with a particular project. If there's a sort of general shift that I take in then it would be in poetry and in fact – yeah, that's quite interesting I never thought of that – that's one of the ways I think I would be able to kind of not define but suggest a kind of difference between two kinds of discourse is my experience of using them is that poetry that gives me a shove towards something and it's the something that then sets me on an investigation that will lead me to philosophy, yeah...

J: So what happens to you when you are going to the philosophy – you have this departure moment ...

C: Yeah, yeah, I'll normally have a particular question or a particular model in mind and although there will be something attractive in a particular idea – it tends to be at the edges of – my interest in philosophy is at the fringes of what I do – again the current project one of the essays that's going to be gathered on the blog is about skateboarding and my interest in philosophy has been spiked by my interest in skateboarding, so it happens that way round – the skateboarding is close to my heart and I'm trying to find a language to describe it with or say what it's like because as soon as you can say what's something like – as soon as you can share a language – I find that particularly with art as well – as soon as I can share a language with what's going on then I can access the ideas that are in it, so my interest in skateboarding and what has written about skateboarding are questions about phenomenology or old fashioned [unintelligible] - that zone between phenomenology and poetry and – yeah, so it kind of – philosophy is always at the end of the line, it's always the thing I won't go any further than.

J: It's never been the other way, you've never sat around reading a philosophical text and thought, oh, I think I'll make a piece about this?

C: No, never.

J: Interesting OK.

C: Because philosophy is not the language that I use to think with it, theatre is the language I use to think with and philosophy is what I use to find a language to **[unintelligible]** back with.

J: Great, I think that's it.

## **Appendix C: Transcript of interview with Ivana Müller**

Interview with Ivana Müller, choreographer/director from Croatia resident in Paris and Amsterdam – September 2008 – Cosmopolitan Hotel, Tribeca, New York City – the hotel room was loud because of outside traffic so some words were hard to pick up in transcription.

J: So I'm here with Ivana Müller in her hotel room. So my basic first question is the most general version is how do you perceive your use of philosophy if you have one – your relationship between your philosophy and your work on the most practical level.

I: I think that maybe it is important to define what philosophy is because if you are talking about philosophical books or philosophical readings that is one thing and the other thing is the way of thinking which you could also call philosophy and then it doesn't necessarily have to be connected with a certain author, it's more a kind of mentality of thinking of reflecting, so I think in a way I am excited reading different things philosophical texts but I never directly apply in my work but they are probably informing in a much larger sense the problems they can inspire me but I think what is very exciting is somehow when making work to make your own philosophy, you know, because it's really like yeah – it's as I say it's a mentality it's a state, it's a way you wind your brain you know and also what is very important for my philosophy is that that creates a discussion, because I always work, you know, my way of working is talking with people about the work and discussing these issues, so you know these processes are – can somehow be called debates, you know? So I think this mechanism in a larger sense is how I use - and I also you know very concretely whenever, when I'm in a process of making – well I'm making all the time but when I'm conscious that now I'm making, I never read philosophy at that time because I think it would just interfere and I would be inhibited by this because I think we as artists, I think we have to make our own theory, we are the thinkers, so I think it's fantastic that we do it differently than those that are called philosophers or people from academia and I think actually that's our contribution the general mode of thinking and acting in society...

J: That's great. I totally get what you mean, but on the most practical level, it's just a funny – like what I'm thinking of – the reason I decided to ask you was because of *How Heavy are My Thoughts*, which is the first piece of yours that I saw and I knew something of the making of it and you actually in that piece in fact interviewed a philosopher that wonderful woman from – I don't where she was from –

I: Slovenia

J: Slovenia – and I think she was talking a lot about Deleuze and Guattari and Descartes so I knew from that – or I should say I assumed from that, I don't know – I assumed from that oh Ivana must read these ideas or have some kind of engagement with them so in that – let's just go to a very practical thing first – what made you want to interview her and actually put that in your piece.

I: I think there was a certain ambiguity about this whole tradition of knowledge, talking with someone who is called philosopher, you know it has a completely different degree, it gives a certain authority, um but it can also be completely – I don't want to say ludicrous – but you know the develop these things – and it all depends on the context – and since I was thinking and concretely working on the knowledge as power position you know because in the piece there's Bill, he's not exactly a professor but he has a position that is a little bit like that. You know, do we trust him, do we take it for granted because he's a male, it's someone who is well-spoken, the way how he speaks, I think we can recognize from the world of academia

and so I wanted to really like shake all those like ideas because it's really like that or not because a lot of people you know they were not sure if she was a real philosopher or not, because their attitude, you know because if you put these ideas in this context they start to be very poetic you know almost funny, or, so this I think is very interesting and I think this is in pretty much all of my work, maybe not as concretely as in the example you gave but it's exactly this, like the idea of knowing or of the idea of how we understand things, and that is very philosophical because you know I mean I also work a lot with metaphors, and already Nietzsche was saying that metaphors are like probably the best way of learning because we through metaphors we re-question some the old, ideas that are taken for granted or accepted and I think that these kind of poetic way or intuitive almost way – this – like what you said – I don't have any responsibility to produce anything that is true, right, I just have to make something that makes sense in a performative system, you know, a system of thought that I propose. You can also connect it to – you know Deleuze is saying that he is a concept maker, he's proposing concepts whether or not they are true or good or bad it doesn't matter, in that sense yes I guess we all do that, but yeah I don't have anybody – I can be stupid and that's fine. I can be ridiculous and that's even good. I can be the idiot and I like to be that because it gives me another space I can inhabit or I can propose a dialogue, something a serious philosopher or a serious thinker could never afford, so if I have that space I go there, you know.

J: Yeah, yeah, that's great and you mentioned, just in that little answer, both Deleuze and Nietzsche, which is very interesting and one of the thoughts I was wondering which is where um and it's not a trick question by the way, where – I was thinking when you were saying that – was there anything for instance that you read in Nietzsche or Deleuze at some point – was there anything in any of those philosophies that made you start thinking about questioning those grounds of knowledge or was that something that came to you more from sort of practical in the room experience or a mixture of both do you think?

I: You know, I think these kinds of ideas come from all sorts of sources and you have to be in the right place in the right moment and ding, but the ideas are never really one thing. They are just like moving all the time and they are getting into interaction with other ideas and they produce kind of line of thought and etc., etc. I never really thought I ever really like read about a concept and thought, oh I could...but they could feed some of my ideas um they could kind of change a little bit how I thought things or they could – this might sound stupid to say but it's true - but I could say OK you know there's also something those people found in that area that is sort of similar to what I was thinking, this kind of thing, but you know the same type of inspiration I can find also in fiction because in fiction [unintelligible] is not only stories but they are standing there for something else, so it's not necessarily connected to philosophical readings you know it can also be fiction or any other sort of source, but I want to say there are certain philosophers however that I like to read.

J: And who are they?

I: I like Nietzsche because he writes relatively simple, you know – very easy. His concepts are complex but it's very easy to read, so it's like you know there are some people who talk very nicely and then you want to meet them so I can – when reading philosophy it's much nicer if it's like a talk, and sometimes Deleuze he's a little but stubborn and tough and I very much like you know this movie it's called Alphabet, actually a movie made by one of his students and they made it when he was still alive, but they made a deal they would only release it when he was dead, so they could say things like where he lived and it's actually a talk, and it's a talk about different concepts and they are in alphabetical line, A – Animal, B –

Boisson – to drink, C – Culture, and then he talks about it, so there I think, I really like him and there they're a short form, you know he talks for 10 or 15 minutes and I used to go to bed with my laptop with Deleuze in my bed – so every evening at bedtime, instead of reading a chapter, I would just like – and I liked that very much and because you have the whole land, and I like Zizek because you know he's very contemporary and the way he writes – you feel this hyperactivity – apparently he sweats a lot when he's speaking – he's boiling and he always takes examples from contemporary culture and I find this very nice because I can relate directly so yeah these are the ones I've been reading probably the most and then there are like – there are other kind of philosophers like Godard – you know Godard? – who is actually a film-maker, but to me...

J: I have two questions I think I'm going to start with the smaller one and there's a bigger one but I think I'm going to wait on that one. The smaller question is so it sounds to me, and can completely relate to this, like you've got a kind of top 3 that you come back to. So do you see anyway, like you're in a rehearsal room, and even though you're not reading Deleuze or Nietzsche or whoever, it doesn't matter, Zizek, do you ever find in any way that you consciously, and it's hard to say unconsciously but maybe in retrospect do you think any of those ideas come into play? I'm not talking about you go in going I'm going to do a Nietzschean 4<sup>th</sup> Great error thing or whatever, but do you interrogate any part of your process with any of those ideas?

I: I think I do but they probably come in unconsciously or they exist and then I read like some of the texts and then I realize aha that is kind of similar, you know, because great thinkers they talk about many universal things so of course you can [unintelligible], but what is also very nice, you see how we talk now, for instance I sort of quote, but then I also got this quote also from somebody else, so this is very interesting to me, I think it's in our circle of people, these things pass through, it's almost like they're our friends, you know, and then you say remember when he said, it comes also like that – and that's also the difference between like the academic way of studying you know – I get inspired by them but I don't study them, you know I don't examine them, no, they are just like fresh air and I don't have to – I've never read a whole philosophical book, you know, I also don't care if I'm [unintelligible] because I have nothing to prove. They are just like there in the air and I can use them or not.

J: This idea of metaphors is obviously very important to you and it's interesting because you were talking about Nietzsche talking about metaphors and it's true and the larger question I had which came back again when you said that was whether or not you think of theatre itself – and I'm saying theatre even though I know you technically do dance, and we can talk about that later because it's a whole other issues, but let's call it theatre for now – so theatre itself as a metaphor almost as a metaphor for philosophy in a way?

I: Yes, totally, I think we can uh, I think people have different ideas of theatre but maybe how I think of theatre, yes, for sure, as I told you it's the place for thinking and when I say thinking it's not just cerebral, I mean feeling is also thinking, you know, it's this place where we come together at the same time to think, [unintelligible] it's also a place of intuition, I think good scientists and good philosophers use intuition always otherwise you cannot change any ideas if you are just quoting all the time, and turn out ideas that already exist, but the good ones are turning out the new concepts and even if it fails it doesn't matter, you know this energy that is produced it's so wonderful and it's very influential it gives you the appetite for more and I think in a good show it also like that, so I'd rather see a show that proposes a completely like outrageous thing that you kind of think well this is completely crazy than

something that just wants to prove, well, I've read that book and I'm a student. That's terrible, it's really a pity.

J: Yeah, so what do you think – you mentioned before I just realized, I want to pick up on this – that of course when you're doing something it's not like an academic reading philosophy that you said – I'm going to misquote you so I apologize in advance – about making sense within the performative system – oh good you did, OK so what do you see that as, say different from a philosophical system, or maybe you see it the same?

I: I think it can be similar because it's a proposition and a certain way of thinking but on the other hand what is very different is the formal, because when you go to the theatre it's a live thing, it happens there, you cannot – I read something and I have to go back and try to read it again – no, it happens in the moment so it's fantastic because it's not only what's been said or done or shown but it's also the tension in the room, where are you sitting, all these things that are kind of feeding the whole thing, you know and um I think that it depends because there are philosophers that are proposing more systems, and I think sometimes this is looser, the word system is very curious, you know I use it because I make pieces that are never really bits and pieces that are stuck together but it's really like a whole thing you know, and sometimes you have to come to the last minute of the show to understand what happened in the first 7 or 10 and I don't even care if you didn't understand what happened in the first 10 in that moment but later, and I think it's even better, and I think you work in a similar way with improvisation and fixed things – I don't know if I answered your question.

J: Yes you kind of did, it's a hard question to ask...what I'm kind of getting at is what – the similarities and/or the differences between – I think what you were getting at – you're obviously not in academia as a philosopher and out doing, creating dance and theatre pieces. Because you said, for instance, that you wouldn't want to read philosophy while you were in the rehearsal room because you thought it would inhibit you somehow – so what is it do you think is going on in the rehearsal room that would be inhibited by that, so in other words, how do you see that as possibly being inhibitory?

I: You know, if somebody's being like – some texts are super solid, it has this power to seduce you to think that that's the way to think and no matter how fantastic I think it is, I think once you become an addict, you're not speaking it you're just approving it and I'm not interesting in approving something but I'm interested in proposing something else, and of course in these propositions there is there are resonances, and of course every time it's a certain positioning, you say, you know you say OK, I think this is interesting, I think this is not interesting, yeah, so in that respect I think it's, maybe we are coming down to the area of authorities and things like that, I think when you are working and you are creating you have to drop all that to be present and alert in here and now in what's happening, with these people in these conditions of course and with the idea that we have, the starting concept for the project or –

J: Yeah, that's good, so what I'm wondering then is if you're in like – I just thought of this, too – when you're in a rehearsal room and you have those moments when you think yeah, that works, right?

I: Yeah.

J: As opposed to those 90% of the other moments when you're thinking wow, that really doesn't work. I think we all know what we're talking about here. What do you think that



moment, when you're going yeah that works, what is it that's happening there? What do you think is that moment?

I: I think, you know, when we work like on a piece I'm trying to find something – very often it's very simple but that can talk about or be engaged with all those different interests that I have you know about for instance in *How Heavy Are My Thoughts* or in *While We Were Holding it Together* you know, I had to find something that is very simple but that can include all sorts of questions about body, movement, collective imagination, you know, things like that and then you are thinking, OK, this could maybe be it or maybe it's very theoretical and then when you try it with people I don't know – I'm not a mystifying artist – but then it's when I am personally interested and amused, you know, if I'm bored that means that nobody will ever you know dig it or go with it. I think it's very difficult because each of those moments is slightly different and it really depends on what are you looking for, I don't know it corresponds a little with that, that it's me somehow what you desire and perhaps open something that you didn't really think of and that's great, because how I work I like to control a lot and I'm very precise, you know, but I allow myself intuition and that's great. I don't know if that happens for you but for me the best moments are you make a show and you play it already for sometime and after like the 15<sup>th</sup> time you see your own show you realize something new, something you never wanted to put inside, you know, something that just happened and you weren't able to see because you were so completely busy with ideas that you wanted to see and then it happens for you that you read something in a different way and it's so wonderful. So that's also a moment when you think, yes, I made good choices, you know, I made choices that allow other things to happen.

J: Is it something to do with – the word that comes to my mind when you're saying that because it's a word I like a lot – in the Deleuze and Guattari category – the idea of multiplicity I think about that. I don't know if that resonates for you? If you see multiple resonances is that something that you look for at all?

I: I think it's not that I'm like making work with the idea to create it but I think that work is always good when it has that. I concentrate on other things when I make things, but it has to be there. Or it is a tyrant proposal, which is kind of stupid, just one line of thinking.

J: Do you ever use that idea when something isn't working. When something's not working, where do you go? You're looking at something and you're going no, you know, I'm bored or whatever it is. Do you ever consciously try to do that? Do you try to multiply things or focus on something different? I don't mean you have a universal solution to those moments...or do any of those ideas come to you from the philosophical sources or other places, like maybe if I look at it from this angle or something?

I: I think in the very moment of making never. It never comes from philosophy. It really comes from looking at things, from really observing and also taking you know something that is forgotten [unintelligible], it means like also looking – OK this doesn't work, but what's there that works, what do I like about that, and I know what I like about it, I try to propose something that can nourish that that I like. That might mean a completely new form, but it might mean a concept that was there that is formal because that's the whole thing, what we have to do. Because we are charmed by certain concepts or we believe in it or are like really driven by it but then we have to find a form for it, and then the form informs the concept and then to get it you try to make a new thing. It's like the chicken and the egg equation, because people ask me well, did you first think about tableau and then invent all those things or did you first have a text and think aha tableau would be best. It's not like that at all. Because we

can't remember, that's also very important, you have it in writing as well, you have to sort of organize your text and subject, but it's different because in academia they have such a strong rule how one should write a paper, I find it so...sometimes it can help because maybe you go faster and makes you deliver some kind of substance, but on the other side I think it's kind of a pity because the formal side of writing is also writing, it's not only the content. You know what I mean?

J: Oh yeah, believe me I agree.

I: Master of visual arts have to write academical texts you know and I think it's such a pity that they cannot propose.

J: That just reminds me that Massumi says in his introduction to Deleuze and Guattari that it's not so much are they right but do they make you feel a new feeling or think a new thought...I mean I just thought of that when you were saying – is that's what I like about them as writers particularly is that it's more about proposing new ways of thinking or proposing an action, as I understand – I'm not a philosopher either but my understanding is that their desire was that their writing actually spark political action or works of art, you know actually provoke works of art not so much provoke another academic paper written in an academic style. It's very interesting when you get to philosophers who appear to be trying to propose, trying to stimulate action in the world.

I: I think they are sometimes almost like poets, you know how Nietzsche is very poetic.

J: My other question, and I think I already know your answer to this but to talk about it in detail, is do you think theatre itself or dance can essentially add to philosophy, in other words you have philosophy that can stimulate certain things but then you've got an actual theatre event or a dance event or a dance theatre event, do you think that can sort of speak in fact to philosophy.

I: Yes, definitely, I think I already spoke a little bit about this in the beginning.

J: Yes.

I: But I think that philosophy is a way of thinking and theatre is a way of thinking and I think they can absolutely – in my experience I have a lot of people who come from a philosophical background who are students or PhDs even – that are interested in the work and the way we feed each other and you know for instance *How Heavy Are My Thoughts* there is a department of Philosophy in the University of Leuven and the students who saw the show actually had to write an essay about the piece and relate it to some of the philosophical concepts and it was very interesting. There was a girl who was writing about some Nietzschean idea, there was a guy that was writing about Descartes – a little bit predictable, you know, Descartes, but etc. etc. I think it's very interesting, and I also really think that we are [unintelligible] in the language of philosophy in the language of theatre.

J: I was just going to say, just as you were saying that, I always think of Aristotle who's one of the very first Western philosophers and so much of his stuff actually comes from observing theatre which I find very fascinating.

I: He's definitely not the only one.

J: It's just a base level thing, just how people talk about theatre as a reality and theatre as a concept, and also I guess the other thing – I am going to close this window because it's so loud – the whole idea of theatre as philosophy and philosophy as theatre, oh yeah, that – oh sorry, I completely forgot – why just don't you talk about that some more-

I: On the other hand, I think it's great that there is philosophical thinking and theatre thinking, because theatre is not only philosophy and that's so great, you know that we always staying in the kind of main but we take influences from the other ones in order to develop it, bring it further, I don't mean it in capitalist way, you know bigger, better, but it's a kind of evolution you know it's thinking it's movement and I think that's really important.

J: Movement, that's what I was going to ask, because you did start with dance and the whole idea of the body and what do you see as the relationship between embodiment and action and philosophy?

I: Yeah, I think uh I think it works – movement is extremely important when you think about thinking really because I think if you think you do move, you are alert, you are in contact, you interact and when you move you can see better, because you can turn around you can see some angles then when you are static uh...so I think that for me there is a direct link between thinking and dancing for instance, and I think also if you think about body you should not think only about the physical body but you know like a body of thought, a body of ideas and that's why you know I'm always saying that I am treating text in a choreographic way, through movement and for me that's crucial and that maybe tells me also to propose maybe some other kind of ideas and also another thing that is very important is to try to think about the text as a body, a physical body and the theatre as a body, and we apply this idea about movement in it, then everything starts to be part of the story, everything starts to be important and then you know we are very much observing the interconnection and things that are taken for granted, all kinds of conventions that are there, uh, if you start to examine them and use them as metaphors for conventions, we have so many of them in life, then you start to be like interesting and then for instance – it starts to create some kind of thinking that comes a little bit out of ordinary –

J: Well, yeah, the titles of all the shows that I can think of are almost metaphors. You're already standing on the head the idea itself, you've already got a phrase that you know you multiply the meaning of the phrase by the piece itself, which I think is wonderful, as well. That just occurred to me that you are literally moving it out of its context and into something else.

I: I hadn't thought of it like that, but it's nice.

J: My having said that just made me think, you know you having read the student essays they wrote, did anything they said – was there anything they said – back to this idea of food – that maybe went into your head, maybe not about that piece but any other work, did it aid any perception you had or was it just such student work that it didn't really affect it?

I: Yeah, you realize they are also...my first thought was why did they try so badly to fulfil the requirements, and I remember when I was the same, because you don't have the capacity to be alert...there are now theoreticians and philosophers now writing about my work and it's very funny there is a book that is coming out by Edinburgh University Press and it's about dance and theatre makers and their work connected with different ideas of Deleuze and I think

this woman is a wonderful theoretician, she's the head of the University [unintelligible]<sup>65</sup> and she actually wrote a piece about *How Heavy Are My Thoughts* and she is writing about the idea of the idiot, and I had never thought about it like that, and when I read the text I realized yeah, wow, and of course this happened all very unconsciously and if anything it is somehow my position not only in that piece but also in art you know but I never really consciously chose, you know, I also didn't read this in Deleuze so that's very nice when your work starts to be read through the concepts of those philosophers.

J: And so you can almost use that, it's in the air when you go into the next rehearsal process, it's probably somewhere –

I: Because I know – I can use this strategy –

J: It's very lovely when that happens, when someone sees something that you didn't see but you know is right, as opposed to when people see things and you're like where were you, but that's a whole other thing...

I: It can inspire you.

J: You used the metaphor of food, which is great, that it can feed you, almost like something nourishing or is it just a piece of corn flakes or something, there are different kinds of food.

I: Exactly.

J: With the idiot thing I just wanted to say – I think it's great, because the whole reason I decided to do this is because of Richard Foreman in *Unbalancing Acts* he refers to himself as a dumb reader of Lacan and he actually says he's not trying to become an expert on Lacan nor does he feel it's his job but he gets inspired by and what he puts into his writing is some of the difficulty he has – in other words he's writing from the sense of non-understanding, not from the sense of understanding – do you relate to that?

I: Yes, I think I told you a little bit before, I don't need to actually – yeah – to understand – I just have to be inspired and this kind of relationship with the reading I have, and I think it's even dangerous if you start believing you understand that, I think you might go a little wrong, you know, like, because I don't think it's made for that, you know, you cannot...it's also not just philosophy it's also mathematics for instance, I think a lot of people hate mathematics, they think they have to – mathematics is also a way of thinking but no one ever tells you that, you know, and once you realize it, it's too late...it's not about learning all those like those words or formulas it's about engaging yourself in this kind of wonderful world of possibilities so what if we say this is that, to imagine, and this is great....An example before, with the idiot and all that, I think this whole area of misinterpretation is a fantastic area, you know, again, thinking about food and all this, the best inventions happen by mistake. OK, I'm going to talk about drink, because I like that. You know, cognac...but food, because somebody left wine too long in the barrel and some kind of ---- and it introduces this wonderful thing, so misunderstanding, mis-spelling, I think is wonderful, in all of my work there is one mis-spelled word. Before when I was younger and I didn't understand you know I always like oh God, now I think it's great, it's part of writing.

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<sup>65</sup> This is a reference to Maaïke Bleeker (2009), whose article can be found in bibliography.

J: Oh God, that reminds me I was wondering about this very thing and now I think I know the answer in *While We Were Holding It Together* um one of the actresses refers to Barbarella and the Bandits and Katja refers to it as Barbarella and the Rabbits now was that initially a mistaken misunderstanding and then you kept it?

I: Yes.

J: Of course. Because when it happened the first time I thought it was a mistake and then when it happened a second time I thought it was a mistake that you decided to keep.

I: Yes. It happened, and then you stage it. In *How Heavy Are My Thoughts* you know there is this moment when Bill calls up the wrong file. So we were talking about this and then we staged it because it produces, is this right or is this wrong, I mean sometimes it's not so deep, it just happens but it brings your attention to something else, it brings movement and I think that's very nice.

J: Do you think maybe that's the ambiguity, which I think is a wonderful word, because my last question to you is why do you think you became an artist rather than a philosopher?

I: I think it's very simple, because I think it's more playful, you know and it's also I don't know, I feel I have this affinity with this space, the space that I can take or and I also think that – I had such a bad experience with academia you know when I studied literature in French, I think it's this whole paranoid hierarchy that goes around that wasn't to my liking, I also just didn't like the people that were supporting this – there are always wonderful professors that you meet, but the whole thing in general I mean that was definitely there just to rebel against, so you know in the course of – I think that's why also –

J: I said that was my final question and that was a lie because the other thing I was wondering because I know you also think of your work in a political sphere and I think that philosophy relates to politics personally, I don't know if you do, but I would assume given the philosophers you like that you do, and do you see in theatre a certain ability to manifest a political something, I don't know what the word is, to do that in a different way than say if you were writing a philosophical text.

I: Yeah, absolutely. I think that the place of politics in theatre is crucial and I mean I feel that I make more and more political pieces or I'm more and more aware of the political side of the work I do and I think there's – what I thought yesterday a little bit in that talk you know is that because theatre is a public place, it's a public arena so we the people that make theatre we take this position or this power to say things publicly which is not nothing and I think that when one makes work you have to be really aware of that and I think that the fact that people sit in the same room and it happens live has a different impact even physically than when you read a book, of course, they are like – there are books that make such an incredible impact that you can feel it almost everywhere, but the difference also here is that everyone there is present in the same space and also the idea of group when you are sitting in a group somewhere, although you are an individual I think your perception of what is offered there is political is different and you also question differently, so I think there we can work in some different levels in engaging politically or you know making – it's difficult to say making people aware because who am I to make people – but proposing let's say in the open some political ideas, and also what's very interesting is that you can do it in a completely not direct way and there also the space of ambiguity and position taking for the spectator is created and I love that you know – maybe we come back to this – because I work a lot with text and there is

a sentence and of course you are more or less aware of what's the potential, you know, there is a political idea behind it but there's also another way to interpret it, you know, I don't think we live in the world, you know, where we can use – we can't use slogans anymore, you know, this kind of way of being political is so old, because the industry that uses slogans today is commercials and... I think we need to me smooth operators in the way that we propose political ideas. I think it's interesting when you say, did she say that, is that that she meant and this kind of starts a whole kind of avalanche of all sorts of –

J: The thing that I think of just in terms of that is my favourite moment for sure last night was when Karin said 'You are bourgeois' because to me that was – does she say that?

I: I imagine that we are all bourgeois.

J: Oh 'I imagine that we are all bourgeois' – I liked that because to me that was of all the moments the most political in the way you are saying because it's saying a very simple sentence but I found myself so affronted by it, which was great, because it was this great moment where I was like, and then went oh...and having to go through the whole permutation of wondering why I am sitting in this space right now.

I: I have to tell you – I don't know if this is on the record or off the record but I had a lot of discussion with Bill and Katja, they were not agreeing that we put this in the show because they were saying we are not bourgeois.

J: You're right. I appreciate it in there, because I went through the same thing in the show because I went through that was I'm not bourgeois and then I realized oh fuck yeah you are, you're sitting here, you know, so, whatever to use Bourdieu, whatever cultural capital is that you have you know symbolic capital, that's why I'm here – ok, you know I went on scholarship to the fancy schools, but I got to the fancy schools which is why I'm sitting in this room.

I: Yeah, and also, the whole other issue, it's also a political issue – the open discussions of others artists and philosophers, you know there is this politically correct thing that so many people take for granted because government proposes it, you know, that we have to go out and offer art to everybody and we have to work with minorities and everything – I don't agree, because I know that I make theatre for people like me, it's not because I want to make something elite it's just because I think this is how it works, because I don't want to preach you know to anybody to do it if they don't – you know what I mean and I think the more versatile way of producing things and you know showing things ...the better it is, and everybody in the same types of institutions...

J: I think it's very important and America is a perfect example of an attempt that doesn't work at all of a classless society – that there are always these class systems and you ignore them at your peril and you ignore where you are at your peril and that's very interesting that you know – that's why I brought it up – the reason I knew it was the most political moment is because it made me uncomfortable, you know if I'm sitting around thinking, oh that must have made the person next to me uncomfortable then you're just preaching to the choir but if I'm actually made uncomfortable that's what excites me is if somebody makes me uncomfortable, because I'm such a fucking know it all.

I: But what's interesting to me for instance is that it made me think in different contexts because it made me think in a different way because [unintelligible] yesterday there is a whole

part 'we can change the world' and for a couple of days everywhere you hear the word change, you know Obama has it in his discourse - and also McCain has it and the word change all the time sounds so different in the show in New York in 2008 in September and when this is political – I think it's so great.

J: And with the whole financial system collapsing right around you – I mean that really struck me last night, because I was actually relieved when the line we are all bourgeois came because I was feeling that very strongly, while I was sitting in the room and thinking what are we doing here right now, the whole world's collapsing why are we sitting around imagining thing, and then when that line was there, it changed the whole – because then I realized oh no, we are here – it's the thing about the whole notion of the political and the theatre responding to reality on the ground and especially these days when the reality is so much shifting sands – yeah.

I: Yeah, there are also economical things where they are always led by Chinese because in Europe like we feel a lot, because everything is always made in China and also you know I think that what is interesting – I mean I don't want to offend, I have no intention – but it's a way to make people think –

J: But it's power of example too isn't it because it's maybe not about pointing at somebody, but if you point at yourself long enough you know what I mean and actually look at your own shit. I know that's what I do with my own work, my intention is not to come out to you and tell you what – but for us to be interrogating our place so maybe that stimulates you to interrogate yours but I'm not going to come out and tell you to do that because like you said why would I and who am I to do that in any case...OK, I think we'll end there, because we just went off into a lovely conversation with you...

## **Appendix D:**

**Chronology and Facts of Apocryphal Labs and Shows and referenced earlier work.**



### **1997-1999 – New York lab**

- Lab started in 1997 with five actors and three stayed to the end: Fred Backus, Renée Bucciarelli and Christine Campbell. When we began we did not have an end date or a specific outcome in mind, the idea was to explore.
- We met once or twice a week for two years, mostly in donated space behind The Present Company Theatorium in New York City where we had to choose between heat and light.
- We did four showings of the work in the form of loosely scored improvisation at the Theatorium in June 1999 under the name *Inside of a Shapeless Angel*, which title came from Campbell's cut-up text. Our final act as a lab was teaching a workshop at FringeNYC in August 1999 after which we disbanded.

### **2000 – Word To Your Mama**

- Directed my first stage text *Word To Your Mama* for Screaming Venus Kallisti Festival at Camera Obscura in New York March 2000 and for FringeNYC at St. Marks Theatre in August 2000.
- Players: Nicole Higgins, Monica Sirignano and Kate Ward.
- Set Design: Daniel Jagendorf.
- Lights: Ryan Schmidt.
- Assistant Directors: Julie Blumenthal, Carolyn Raship and Rachel Solomon.
- Won Off-Off Broadway Review award for excellence and was published in *Plays and Playwrights 2001*.

### **2004 – Apocryphal Theatre lab and company**

- Apocryphal lab has been meeting at Camden People's Theatre in London since July 2004, once a week, except when we are in performance or rehearsal, in donated space in the basement.
- There are varying numbers of people in the lab, but the core group who has been working together since 2005 are Bill Aitchison (performance artist), Lukas Angelini (actor/director), Lucy Avery (assistant director), Zoe Bouras (live artist), Rachel Ellis (actor), Birthe Jorgensen (photographer/sculptor) and Theron Schmidt (live artist).
- People who joined in 2006 and are with us when they can be are Alison Blunt (violinist) and Boris Kahnert (lighting designer/actor)
- The lab evolved into a company that has produced and performed *Heart Oven Falling: Gotcha!* (2005), *The Jesus Guy* (2006) and *Besides, you lose your soul or the History of Western Civilisation* (2009).
- Apocryphal is now an incorporated not-for-profit organization.
- Whilst the shows do sometimes get funding, the lab does not, but the space is donated so no one is paid nor does anyone pay, as with the New York lab.

### **2006 – The Jesus Guy**

- Directed *The Jesus Guy* with Apocryphal for performance at Camden People's Theatre (CPT) March-April 2006.

- Players/Creators: Bill Aitchison, Lukas Angelini, Zoe Bouras, Rachel Ellis, Theron Schmidt (CPT) and Alison Blunt (touring)
- Live Artist/Photographer: Birthe Jorgensen
- Assistant Director: Lucy Avery
- Lighting Design: Seth Kriebel (CPT)/Boris Kahnert (touring)
- Intern: Joanna Bone
- Funding from Arts Council England and Rose Bruford College and co-produced by CPT.
- UK Touring: University of Loughborough, Rose Bruford, Central School of Speech and Drama and University of Northampton.

### **2009 – *Besides, you lose your soul or the History of Western Civilisation***

- Directed stage text *Besides* for February-March 2009 performances at Camden People's Theatre (CPT) in London.
- Players shifted each night depending on who was available, with a core group that rehearsed and performed most nights and special guests who performed when they could with very little rehearsal.
- Core player/creators: Bill Aitchison, Zoe Bouras, Rachel Ellis and Birthe Jorgensen.
- Assistant director, sound and light operator: Lucy Avery.
- Lighting designer: Boris Kahnert.
- Special guest players: Fred Backus (actor from New York lab), Alison Blunt (violinist) and Theron Schmidt (live artist).
- Avery and I were both visible and spoke lines at times; I edited projected text during performances to reflect what was said that differed from or was supplemental to prewritten text, so each night created a new performance Text.
- The set includes over 1,000 books of history, literature or philosophy, written before or about pre-WW II, with a few intentional exceptions. All books donated by used-book stall and Leytonstone library and hand-chosen by Aitchison, Avery and me. Also included were my philosophy, history and literature books from Western Civilization courses in secondary school and university in the US.
- Funded by Arts Council England, Camden Council, Rose Bruford College, Peggy Ramsay Foundation and Royal Victoria Hall Foundation and co-produced by CPT.
- UK Touring: Rose Bruford College.

**Appendix E:** *The Jesus Guy* – performance text revised for November 2008.

# **THE JESUS GUY**

by

Julia Lee Barclay

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May 2003

**Revised: January 2004**

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Boats.

I am. You're not. I am.

Floating.

Flying.

Walking on water.

Changing water into

Whatever.

Look. Look at me like this.

He was massaging my hand. Then the cops showed up.

They are always asking for identification.

They want to know who you are.

Why are you here?

Who brought you to this place?

What boat did you arrive on?

Whose boat?

Who needs a Boat?

I don't know. Do you?

Well.

There's that place I go to sometimes. That place with that field where it's always some kind of late afternoon light...or is it morning? But there are clouds, right?

Not sure...can't recall.

I can't recall.

Recall.

Call.

Calling.

Calling home...again. Whose home? Where she lives? Where she Never picks up the phone? Where she's drunk all the time and out somewhere - God only knows where....

No, not that. Don't start.

Why not?

It's depressing.

Well, yeah.

She's out dancing now.

Dancing or dancing?

You decide.

And is she the one walking on....

You decide.

Who *Is* she?

You decide.

I'm sick of these games. I want clarity.

Who doesn't?

So why can't we have any?

Because it's NOT clear, not where I want to go.

And that is.....

Exactly.

Exactly what?

Exactly.

AAAAAAHHHHHHHHH.

Well, yeah.

There's that place again...yeah, with all the canals....

And someone just had a Baby.

Another one?

Yes.

Didn't you?

No.

But didn't you-

NO.

She's gorgeous. Of course she is.

He seems happy.

Of course he does.

She looks tired. Yes.

Could you imagine?

Sometimes.

I want to go back to the canals...to the ocean...to the tide overwhelming the shore....to that time when we went underwater in that submarine and bumped into the huge humpbacked whale. Do you remember?

Yes.

I want a baby, too.

A baby or a Baby?

You decide.

No, I think this is for you to decide.

Well, yeah. Fuck.

There was that decision.

Yes, there was.

It was difficult.

I had dreams and they were of no use then. Simply chattering dreams. Dreams of no consequence. Dreams which didn't fit together At All....almost like they were Someone Else's Dreams....

And she prayed.

Yes, she prayed a lot.

I prayed a lot.

We all prayed a lot.

And a decision was made.

And we all thought it was right.

Then wrong.

Then right again.

Whose decision Was that really?

Not sure.

Still?

Still.

Stillness.

She's lost.

Well, yeah.

Can you see it yet?

The train?

Yes, the train...the one where the compartments keep shifting and you've left your luggage on the other train and you're trying to get back to the First Station... Someone really Important to you has gone onto the Other train, and you missed the connection, and the sense of being lost and alone is all you know, but the train just keeps moving relentlessly forward away from your Luggage and all your Money and Identification?

Yeah, that train.

The one that's left the station.

Yeah.

What about the other Trains? The ones interrupted by bombs? By dust and rubble? By frantic phone calls? The ones you can't ride because of the men dressed in green with machine guns outside your Hometown Train.

When were we put in jail? When did that happen?

Was it only last night I tried to escape from jail? Yes, it was. With a friend. She was trying to escape and I was helping her, but there were all these Men in Suits sitting around, looking like a mixture of Shrinks and undercover Cops, and I was trying to signal her, and then she was trying to get down a Hole or something, but one of the Men slipped in past me to go



down with her, and I thought, well, maybe she's Escaped anyhow, but then a bit later we were in a bathroom and she was telling me, no, I didn't get away. He got me. They've got me. Now, I'm fucked.

She was going to be kicked out of School. But, I thought, wait, she's a writer. She doesn't need a certificate. She'll be o.k.

Will she?

Train. Training. Train.

De-train.

Un-train.

Get off the fucking Train.

Train of thought?

Yeah, that too.

Sometimes you just can't know if you did the right thing. You can tell yourself you did. You can say everything's the right thing. You can say "it all had to happen that way" and you might be right....but you still don't know. Not *know* know....you know? There's no one outside who can tap you on the shoulder and say: yes, that was the Right Thing to Do. Someone might, but it doesn't matter. Because you still don't know. But you can't spend your whole life staring at that moment of decision, either. So you move on, but certain things remind you about it and the whole process begins again. Someday, you think you might be forgiven. Some days you think you are. Some days you really, really fucking wish someone else could do it for you.

You hope it was worth it.

You really, really do.

I do.

She does.

So does he.

Hey - what Is it with the Mirror thing? You know?

The cats look around the mirror to see where the other cats are. They appear both relieved and disappointed to not see another cat behind the mirror.

Then there are the cat doubles, when suddenly there is more than one of each cat, and you spend all of your time trying to figure out where they are, who has which cat, whether they went outside and wondering how you suddenly went from having 3 to having 6 cats.

Doubles.  
Twins.  
Missing links.  
Missing pieces.

Where's your Other Half?  
Your Better Half?  
Your Missing Half?

When do you know when you've found that Other Half?

What do you do when you realize you found the Wrong Other Half? So, you're kind of trying to fit together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that almost fit but Not Quite. Do you just keep shaving off parts of yourself so you can Fit?  
Or do you say to Yourself:  
Deal with What You Have Like an Adult.  
Nothing's Perfect.  
Stop Whining and Make It Work. (Etc.)

Or do you throw a bomb at the jigsaw puzzle board and see what happens?

Maybe work out your own Salvation?

Yes. That is most likely it.

But who the hell wants to do That?

Yeah, well, there's that.

Yeah.

He kept saying it was Him....he was showing his face in profile, like in those photos - I mean paintings - of Him. But this red-neck guy kept saying, naw, it's not you. And He kept saying, no, it is me, Really. LOOK. Then he looked sideways and opened his mouth slightly as if in prayer - I think there was even a halo effect - and he was wearing the white robe and had the weirdly trimmed beard and long brown hair and he looked just like the white guy Jesus painting I got from my friend's mother after I was baptized in a white robe by being dunked backwards into a pool of water smack in the middle of a big Baptist Church. And I kept wondering....am I seeing Jesus or is this just some kind of comedy routine?

And why the Fuck are you obsessed with some Jesus-looking guy? What IS that?

Boats.

I NEED a fucking BOAT, O.K.?????

O.K.

Well, no, it's Not O.K. actually.

O.K.

AAAAAAHHHHHHHHH.

You know how Sometimes the water is nice and clear and you can see all the way to the Bottom and it's white sand and it's warm and beautiful?

Yes.

And then sometimes the water is murky and there might be God knows What underneath it and you're swimming in it anyway, and you're trying to get to shore because there might be Sharks there and it's fucking scary?

Yes.

And then sometimes it's a mixture of both.

Yes.

And then sometimes the shore is close and other times it keeps drifting away further and further.

Yes.

And then there was that time...yes, there was that Time when you were having all those dreams about someone trying to kill you or rape you and no one was helping-

Yes-  
but then you were reading about Buffalo Bill - of all things - and how he could stop an Indian in his tracks by looking at him.

Right.

And then there was that night when That Guy was chasing you with a gun, and you were cornered but then you turned around and looked him in the eye and he put the gun down and walked away.

Right.

And then you never saw him again.

Right.

Right.

Right.

Just turn around and look Him in the eye. Look the Man with the Gun in the Eye.

Right.

Stop running.

Right.

But then there was the time-

Back when she was Drunk All the Time-

Right.

When that man came into her-

No - she had her eyes closed remember...

Yes, her eyes were closed and she couldn't Open them. Right.

And she was in a Bad Part of Town.

Right - a bad part of town. And she felt this Man's presence...no, not a man, but a dark presence-

And then she finally opened her eyes, and she was in her Own Room, and there was a man with a black hat but she couldn't see his face. He walked over to her bed, lay down next to her-

She was terrified, couldn't breathe -

-And disappeared.

Into Thin Air.

Vanished.

And she got up quickly and turned on All the Lights.

No one there.

No one.

But she was scared

and she was Drunk All the Time.

So was everyone.

Yeah, so was Everyone.

Until she wasn't.

Yeah, until she wasn't.

What happened?

Whattya think?

You decide.

Did she Die?

What do you Think?

Well, yeah.

Yeah.

Where is she now?

Where do you Think?

Right here.

Kinda.

I mean she is and she isn't, if you hear what I'm saying....

No, I don't. I don't Hear What you're Saying!

Sorry.

Christ.

Oh well.

Oh Well?

What more can I say?

I don't know. Something.

SOMETHING?!

Yeah, well, something.

Oh Christ.

NOT that.

Well, What then?

An Explanation.

AN EXPLANATION???!!!!

Yeah.

For What exactly?

What you're Saying.

How...how would I *do* that?

By, you know, explaining yourself.

WHY?

So, we can all Understand you!

WHY?!

So, we can all be on the Same Page.

WHY?!

So we can all sing from the same Hymn Book.

WHY?!

So we can all know what our mission is on this planet, on this earth, in this moment, in this space where we all happen to find ourselves Now.

For that you need an Explanation? From ME?

Remember that time when we were walking down to that shack...and for some reason you were talking about physics with that Guy and you Knew what you were talking about even though it was something insane like Super String Theory?

Yeah.

That was cool.

Yeah.

Can't we keep walking up that mountain?

What mountain?

You know, The Mountain.

Well, yeah, I guess.

He flew in from across the ocean. He flew in from across the sea. He flew into JFK and then suddenly he was standing there - all for Me! And then from a taxi I turned the Empire State Building right into the Eiffel Tower. Poof. Like magic. Just for he!

One way not to notice a big hole in the sky....

She had dreamt he would be wearing an old fashioned suit. She had dreamt he would appear then disappear, then re-appear. And that's just what he did.

Her biggest fear now is that he will turn into a dream figure...one of those people who are extensions of herself ...who she casts in the Movie of Me....and will be henceforth judged solely on the criteria of whether or not he Performs his Role Well.

Kinda like the Jesus looking guy....kinda what we do to Him and Others like Him on a daily basis...oh, Sir, I mean, Lord God, I mean, Allah, I mean, Buddha, I mean, My Personal Idea of a Power Greater than Myself...could you please look a little to the left, I mean right and could you smile more...yeah that's good...could you maybe talk to me with that deep, sexy voice...oh yeah, that's it...That's it! Yeah, nice and slow...yeah, that's how I Like it...yeah, now I can Hear you...I can really, really Hear you...Now that you Look like something I can Understand and Accept and Replicate. So, now, where were we? Oh, yes, the submission part....OK, how about I submit like This...do I Look good like that? Do you think it'll Sell. 'Cause I'm doing this all for You, and I don't want anyone to get the Wrong Idea, or think I Look Funny doing it...cause what would be the point then....and - Oh, yeah! I can feel it, oh yeah! That's IT. That's IT. I'm Saved! Hallelujah.

WWJD?

Probably not this.

Looking into her face. His face. Eyes.

Beginning to look into eyes, you know?

Wondering why I haven't done that before...seen how stunningly clear they are. Eyes looking at me all this time. Where have I been?

Where have you been Looking?

What about the time you walked through the park taking Pictures of each other? Pictures that you could remember each other by?

What about the pictures I take without a camera? What about those?

She's taken those, too. In those moments, when the sun is coming through a tree and her head is near yours or you're smiling and she thinks to herself, remember this. This is a moment to remember and click, she takes a picture. And they are there inside her head - she just flips through her brain to find one, and out it comes, just like going through an old dusty box of snapshots.

Always in the sun?

Yes, and with contrast and color specs, too.

You know she studied photography, don't you?

Oh.

Well, yes, indeed she Has studied Photography.....Just like an elephant, she Never forgets.

Scary.

Yeah, a little. It's a little scary.

She's scary.

Yeah, she is. She's a little scary sometimes. She scares Herself. Trust me, I know.

How?

Trust me.

Um.

Or don't.

Um.

Just make up your mind, one way or the other, because it'll all be a lot easier then.

Will it?

Well, yeah.

Oh, Christ.

Not HIM again!

You got a better idea?



Well, yeah, in fact I DO.

Wanna share it with the rest of the class?

Well, no, not really.

We wouldn't understand?

Something like that.

Honestly.

Sorry.

Sure.

Well, I am.

No, you're not.

Yes, I am.

No, you're NOT.

Yes, I-

Never mind.

Christ.

AAAAAHHHHHHHHHH.

OK, Listen: one of the Images she has, for example, is of a Minister who was her step-father. They are in a bathroom together. She is Very Small. Shall I go on?

No.

OK then, trust me.

OK, nevermind. Forget it....

Many miles travelled on the earth. That she knows. Maybe that's all she knows. Maybe she doesn't even know this.

And rubble. Rubble, rubble everywhere. Brutal stupidity....it's timeless.

She'd really like to see something Else. Someday. Somewhere. Just a glimpse. It'd be great. And not just in a moment with people she already likes, and not just in a chapel or a yoga studio or in the Woods or meditating or in the Theater or Whatever, but just, you know, on the street, at a store, in the Normal Course of Events. Something that doesn't, in the end, result in rubble. That'd be great.

But there was that bus driver the other day – when it was raining out and you were miserable and he just smiled at you for no good reason when you paid your fare. He said thank you and you both looked each other right in the eyes and smiled. You sat down and felt warm inside for a moment. You weren't spinning inside your own wheel of fortune worry brain. You were free.

Yes. It's true.

For a moment.

Look at me again. Like this.

Now.

Like this?

Like this.

Yes, like that.

Nice.

Yeah.

Nice.

Nice?

Yeah.

Nice?!

Yeah. Nice.

Well, O.K.

O.K.

Yeah.

The deep blue and purple sea. The kind you can't even believe is real when you first see it, but there it is underneath the Boat, lapping up and around the prow, so seductively, so invitingly, so menacingly.....saying:

Yes, yes, come in and see if you can Swim here....I know your boat might've cost a lot of Money....I know it might have cost a lot time and effort and time is, of course, Money ...but maybe, it's Time, you know, to Let it Go...just, kinda, really, you know, just Let it Go....see what the Water feels like. See how it is to swim in the water. All by yourself. No life boat. No life raft. Nothing but you and the Deep Blue Sea.

Insert your dream here.

Which one?

Whichever one....the one you like to tell the most. The one you tell Yourself the most.

O.K. It's like this:

*[A performer in fact tells the dream he or she likes to tell her or himself the most: could be waking or sleeping dream. The other performer, after a time, repeats phrases he or she hears from the telling of this dream and then they begin riffing off of it...the phrases and the story, moving between the forward momentum of the dream and the riffing of the language. There should also be an interplay of levels of address and presence throughout this....starting with naturalistic presentation, moving through to presentational, then towards the reality grid directly and back and forth between the two....performers let this take them where it takes them.....maybe the other performer/s do the same, this is open...]*

O.K.

Now what?

I'm not sure where we are right now.

How could you be? We just made that up.

Right, how could she be.

Or you?

Or me. Or us for that matter...any of us!

Easter Bunnies.

Playboy Bunnies.

Fertility?

Bunnies for Christsakes? BUNNIES?????

Well, you know, for the kids.....

But, BUNNIES???!!!! The Resurrection = Bunnies?!

Well, there were the pagans to contend with and all that kind of-

Chocolate bunnies?

I am the Resurrection and the Light and Bunnies?!!!!

Look, it wasn't My idea, O.K.!

Jesus Wept.

Right. That was the name of one of his films.

And something She says All the Time!

Jesus Wept.

All those colors darting across the screen. Pinks, reds, oranges, purples. Each tiny film strip painted meticulously with his soul. No mere representation enough, but instead his Soul splayed out there for all to see, one frame at a time. A miracle really. And real, too. And no miracle, but hour upon hour of devotion to his Work.

Maybe that's the miracle?

Maybe.

And then of course his cat.

There's always a cat.

Always.

He told her that he was told to give her the Milky Way.

Has he Done so?

Ask.

I would, if I could....

She used to rub her legs with Vaseline Intensive Care lotion when she was a little girl while fantasizing that a stunning prince would arrive and do this for her.

Where did she Get such a notion?

You are moving away from us. You are wondering what's going on. You don't know what's going on. You Shouldn't know what's going on. No one Ever Knows what's going on.

Ever.

Remember when the woman who looked like your Barbie Doll was yelling at you because her two children were in the burning building and you couldn't rescue them? Remember how you woke up screaming and even the ocean outside, the bell-buoy and all the stars in the world that were visible in the sky could not comfort you? You were maybe five I think.

You don't remember the famous words or the flag or the golf balls...you only remember a grainy black and white picture and your mother gently waking you up over and over again to watch it.

The man stepping on the moon for the first time. The astronauts spoke through microphones which sounded like walky-talkies. They walked on air. They looked like fragile snowmen who would float away. You were tired mostly, but could feel in the electric air that it was important. The adults were very excited.

America.

Good Friday.

A day that will live in Infamy.

Watching the two men rub their hands all over her body, like they owned her. She sat there stoically looking forward, I think pretending she wasn't there. She was older, not young anymore but not old either. This was clearly her life. This was clearly not the life she had intended. You feel a shame in the memory because you too were crossing boundaries as you watched her being groped. You were ashamed of your actions and felt about as helpless as she looked, but you weren't. You just felt that way. Or maybe you were. A life-size picture of Duke Ellington smiling over the whole scene. Lots of cigarette smoke, and a very tired jazz set playing. It was about 5:00 a.m. You were Not drunk at the time. You had thrown the dice, or so you said to yourself. And you had. And you did.

She did.

Yes.

Good Friday.

Always another fucking crucifixion.

You'd think we'd be sick of them by now, wouldn't you?

You can set your watch by them these days.

Good Friday.

Good for Whom exactly?

Did he Want to be sacrificed? Does Anyone Ever?

Did anyone want that kind of Guilt?

Who has sinned against whom?

Hey, you, could you get Down from the Fucking Cross????

Could we try this, you know, a Different Way?

According to a well-known German philosopher Christ is the only Christian.

Well la-di-da.

And all we have to look forward to is an Eternal Return.

Same guy?

Same guy.

Great.

Whatever is falling-

Yeah, yeah-

One should also push.

Same Guy.

Same Guy.

Same Guy.

Hey, why is everyone's god so fucking hungry? Why is there always a sacrifice to be made at Someone's Altar? Sacrifice of Self of Sex of Food of Body of Dignity of Sons of Daughters of Whatever is Loved? Why? Who dreams up this bullshit? I mean, really. And then of course there's the hungriest god of all: Money, which eats Everything, Body, Soul, Time, Dignity, Love, God, Anything Sacred, Anything Taboo, ANYTHING to satiate itself, and of course It is Never Satiated...won't be probably until we're all Dead.

Who's angry now?

Hey, I've got an idea! How's about we Stop Feeding the Gods. See what Happens! What say?

*[some kind of performer riff here on God Food would be good...what do you feed your gods? Maybe performers could even elicit answers from the audience...maybe these phrases could then be riffed on and a cut-up of sorts created from them...see what happens....]*

But then he kept saying things like - yeah, if I Knew I was going to die, then I'd want to jump from a plane, ya know, jump without a parachute....I mean Imagine the Rush. You know you're going to die soon, but right before that, woah, that'd be the Ultimate Rush. Man. I've bungee jumped before, ya know. And man, I was on the platform and this guy is like, are you

ready, and I'm like, no, man, I'm not *ready* and then I'm on the Edge and he kinda like Pushes me and I'm falling forward and I'm so fucking scared and I think I'm going to die, but then I don't and Man - the Total Fucking Rush. That fucking high was so fucking high man. I can't even explain how high. Yeah, man, that's the high I want to go out on. The rush, man. The high. The Rush. Fuck yeah. Ya know? Maybe shoot up and smoke some crack, too, man. Yeah. Get as high as you fucking can, then like, jump out of a plane or off a cliff or some shit. Yeah. Get as High as you Can....

Yeah.

Wow.

Or

No windshield.

The opposite of high.

Yes. But quite a rush.

Yes. Nothing between you and the fucking wind.

Nope. Nothing. Not a Goddamn thing.

That's hardcore.

Yes, it is.

You ever wonder where to go sometimes?

She was speaking about her experiences, and then these guys started interjecting with their stories, about beautiful Views they had seen. Her story got lost in the discussion of Scenery, and she interjected, and said, you know, I'm not Finished yet. And they said, oh, sorry and let her go on, but by then of course, she didn't know what else to say and felt guilty. She said that instead, that she felt guilty. One of the older men smiled at her knowingly. She was grateful.

Should she have been Grateful?

Well, that's how she Felt.

Great. For what? A connection.

I guess, yeah, the connection.

With the Older Man.

Yes. It felt nice to her. Yes.

Back to nice.

Well, yeah.

Pussyfairycocksuckermotherfuckercunt.

WHAT?!!!!

Had to let it out, that's all.

Why, for Christsakes?

Jesus weeping again?

Well, maybe.

The gates are open.

The gates are shut.

The gates are now partially open and half-shut.

Lots of probing to discover this. To discover that one's Insides are not as they are Supposed to be. It hurts. It makes you tired.

But for some reason it seems worthwhile.

Easter Eggs in a Basket.

You gotta break some eggs.....

Yeah, yeah.

Different guy.

Same guy.

Same guy. Different guy.

One guy. Another guy.

Same guy.

When a bookstore decided to add to its "women's literature" section a "men's literature" section (which of course included most of the classics) everyone got really upset and they changed it back to "women's literature" and "literature".

Oh well.

The ultimate compliment: you don't sound like a "woman" writer.

Secretly this makes you happy.

Oh well.



Do we want the eggy-weggy to become a baby-boo?  
Hmmm?

Somehow that question never made it into any of the classics.

Oh well.

Thoreau's Mother. Why is she never mentioned in the famed Thoreauvian economies. The woman who baked pies for the saint of Walden Pond. Probably gave him socks, too. Why is she never mentioned? Why does Jesus forsake his mother? What IS that all about? What's the problem with Mothers? Why so much shame? Bodies? The Mess of it? Mortality? What?! We are not born of fathers or even Fathers, but instead this very fleshy, flesh that gets born and gets sick and gets healthy again and then ages and eventually dies. No philosophy, no economics, no sociology, no religion, will ever be complete until Mothers can simply exist. The body exists. We are Here, and then we are Not here. We come into the world vulnerable and someone has to take care of us or we are Fucked. Period. Perhaps this is the issue...perhaps the problem is not so much of gender even but just the God-awful sense of Oh, No, I'm Dependent on Something Outside of Me. Somehow that is Unacceptable to the Mind...the Mind of One Who Writes Stuff Down. And not just in some kind of Abstract Spiritual Sense as an adult, but in a very real, tangible sense as a baby, as a child....You Had to be Taken Care of..... AAAAAHHHHHHH. Nooooooooooooo. Very scary.

Is biology destiny?  
Oh God, I hope not.

But, there are the phone calls and the gynecologists and the questions and the concerns about all the Internal Functions.

I mean, I even LIKE Thoreau. I think he was Right about – well – practically everything. It just really bugs me that he never mentions his Mother's Pies in his incredibly detailed Economy.

There are so many Details.

So many Bills to Pay.

So many Debts to Make Right. So many Accounts Fucking Payable.

And so many Accounts Receivable you wish would Come In.

Pointless exercise waiting for Accounts Receivable...kinda like, oh, setting yourself on fire and waiting for someone else to come along and put you out...

But still.  
But still.  
But  
Still.

Still.

Still.

Looking at the photos of her, from when she was a baby until right before she died. They are in black and white and in each one she is an entirely different person. A baby all smiling and fat, a young girl in a dirndl dress, a slightly older girl looking happy, a rowdy grinning teenager crouching by a lake, a glamorous young woman made up like a movie star, an informal, happy smiling woman with a baby, a young academic in a sweater, and finally the one I knew, older then but more confident, shyly pointing at a book she wrote displayed in a shop window. One night I saw her in a Theater called Here. The next night she died alone. Heart attack. Boom. Gone. Left behind: these photos tacked up on my wall. Which dream of herself did she cherish? Which image of herself did she see when she looked in the mirror? What vision did she bid farewell to on her way out of her body? What picture do her children carry? At what age has each of us fixed her? In what moment? Can we ever see ourselves as evolving? As containing all of our ages and none of them at once?

I mean that, without irony, if that's even fucking possible anymore.

Here's to the Afterlife!

Yeah, here's to the After-Life!

WHAT?

I don't know. It just kinda, you know, happened.

What about this life???

What about the one we're in Right Now????

Well, yeah.

Yeah?!

O.K.

Angel Shot Down by Duckhunter Reappears Over Lake!

She Lives!

Yes.

Amazing, and those wings, they look so Real.

Splat. Just lying there, all fallen and then, right on time for the Lazarus Routine, She Reappears! Over Lake!

Hallelujah.

I say, Hallelujah.....

I Can't Hear YOU! Let me hear you say Hallelujah!

Ahh.

Yes.

Even better.

Yes, yes.

Yes!

Can you fly?

Can I what?

Can you Fly?

Yes and no.

Yes and no?

Well, yes, I can and no, I can't show you.

Why?

Because it's not something one Shows.

Why?

Because it just wouldn't Do, that's why.

It wouldn't Do?!

Right.

Well then we can't know if you fly or not, then, can we?

Right. You just have to Trust me.

TRUST you?

Yes, Trust me.

No.

OK, then.

OK, then.

NO trust.

No trust.

No trust.

Not in what I can't SEE for Christsakes! NO! And you're going to make me feel BAD about that?

It's fine. No trust.

Duck Hunter Reappears!

Ahhhh! How did he get back here?

Just like that.

It seems too simple...too scary this way. Not enough action or drama to get us, you know, Carried Away. We need something with some fucking Rules so that fucking Duck Hunters can't just fucking Re-Appear out of fucking NoWhere.....You know?

You're swearing a lot, you know that?

Does that answer my fucking question?

No.

NO...right, NO it does not answer my Fucking Question.....

RULES!!!! I want some fucking RULES!!!!!!

Ok., Ok.....

Thou shalt not kill.

That's a start. How we doing on that one?

Hmmm.

Not so well. Next!

Thou shalt not use the Lord's name in vain.

Forget it.

Yeah.

O.K. Next!

Thou shalt honor thy mother and they father.

Anyone? No, didn't think so.

NEXT!

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's whatever.

Whatever?

You know, wife, cows, whatever.

Right.

How we doin' on that one....Anyone?

No, didn't think so.

O.K.....

Never mind. Just stop.

O.K.

Gotta go do some fucking yoga over here. Wanna watch?

Do we have a choice?

Not really....well, you could turn your backs, shut your eyes, whatever, if it really Offends you.

It might.

Well, fine, then do some Dance or some Mime or Whatever.....

O.K. I will.

*[Some kind of extended movement sequence here which can happen at the same time as below dialogue...with yoga, dance, mime or Whatever. I think the performers are somewhat separate while doing it...maybe attempting to influence one another into Their way...maybe even trying to get audience to participate in it. Performers can play with levels of address here too, I think...but should be both somewhat fun, somewhat oddly competitive in a subtle way and somehow challenging of one another's basic body movements and natural rhythms...by the end performers should be putting themselves off-balance with each other's more natural movements, and cutting up whatever is comfortable with what is not...so the challenge in the end is constructive....if any audience does get involved, use their stuff too....]*

"No one even thinks of saving you anymore."

What?

Just something I read somewhere. After a while, you know, you get to this point where no one even Thinks of saving you. You're on your own.

Do you think you're there?

Do you?

Can you know?

I think so. I think it's impossible Not to know.

Why?

Because they stop trying to save you.

How can you tell?

You can just tell.

Is this like the No Hope thing?

Kind of.

Hmmm, thought so. Eastern Guys?

Yeah.

Thought so.

Doesn't mean it can't be true.

I guess.

Doesn't mean it Is true.

Duh.

Well.

There were these pigs that showed up out of Nowhere. First we all were performing something. Some of us had masks on and were singing something, kind of haunting and beautiful. It started with some stuff we've already said. Something about a Jesus Guy. And it's a rehearsal, but there's an audience. We are cutting up words and phrases, we are creating moments of beauty. Someone is writing furiously in a notebook as all this is happening. There are famous people in the room. Someone half closes a velvet curtain and then a bunch of Pink Pigs appear, out of nowhere, and that's kind of beautiful too. Some people are happy and others get up from their chairs in frustration. It's kind of hilarious really, but we just keep going on to the next segment.

Kind of like this.

Yeah, kinda. Except no pigs.

Right, no pigs.

Oh well.

We could pretend!

Pretend there are pigs!?

Well, why not?

Because there aren't any pigs!

O.K. But if there were...we would have them now.

Yes, I think so. That might help.

Yes.

It might Help.

What do pigs mean?

Mean?

You know, Jung, whoever, what do pigs Mean?

How the hell should I know?

I don't know, maybe we should look it up.

Maybe.

Later.

Yeah.

Later.

Pigs are clean animals you know. People tend to think they are-

Yes, we know.

Pigs mean cops.

Yes, that's true...very 60's, but true.

As in, Hey, Pig, Man, etc.

Right.

So you think Cops were busting up Our Show?

Not really.

But it's a thought. Seeing as there are so many Cops around these days, like everywhere you look and their Guns keep getting Bigger and Bigger.

Stop.

O.K. Sorry. My mistake. Move on...images, art, non-threatening, etc...yes, yes....

Animal Farm?

Maybe.

Fascists, fascists everywhere and nary a drop to drink!

Sad really.

Yeah.

Amen.

Amen.

Amen.

Don't Mention the War!

Right. No war. There's no war. What war? Who said war?

Not me.

Not me either.

Nope.

No war.

She held him and said, but you're taking care of her, right? That's your job now, isn't it? And he nodded yes, but then said she was an Obstacle and finally she agreed he was right, maybe she was an Obstacle, and then he jumped out of her arms and ran away. She was angry and talked to her friend who was also angry. They agreed they were angry.

They were friends.



Right. Friends who agreed to be angry.

Female friends.

Yes.

Ah.

What do you mean, AH?

Well?

WELL?

Christ.

*[Well, yes, kids, here it is: the obvious place where Gender Clichés can take their rightful place in this “text”...I think perhaps hurling insults might be a good way to start...making sure of course to shift levels of address...it might be interesting to see how many insults one could hurl in the realm of cliché and without resorting to any idiosyncratic speech - another option would be a monologue, similar to the dream monologue earlier, and the other performer(s) listening and as the spontaneous monologue has made it to the Grid level of address begin to start taking phrases out of the monologue itself and repeating them to create a kind of jazz soup of gender clichés...yes, I think that would be good. And of course, the best clichés to use are the ones you wish you didn't believe in, but maybe they cling to you anyway...or a monologue that recounts a situation where you acted in a way you wish you hadn't which betrayed a gender cliché or some such thing....I think you could also employ any kind of duet work done prior as well, to enhance this...or if there are more than two performers, battling duets perhaps - and maybe by the end different gender duets, e.g. but using the same stereotype dancing...and, as with the other improvisations, the music will play with these concepts too.]*

You know, they kill people now for breaking the Rules. All over the place. Different rules, but death seems to be the normal sanction. Feloniously female. Feloniously anti-capitalist. Feloniously anti-American.

Shush! Don't bring POLITICS into this for Christsakes.

Yeah, *Sorry*. I didn't mean to mention the Irregular Combatants who don't need to be treated according to any Rule of Law or anything. I have no Idea what I was thinking.

Irregular Combatants.

God forbid you should be an Irregular combatant.

Try not to think about it. Try not to think about what goes on when people are being tortured in a democracy. Just stop, because it'll only upset you and the last thing on Earth I would ever want to do is upset You.

Right.

Best to just Let it Go.

Yeah, Let it Go. Breathe. Let it GO.....

Right.

That better?

Yes, much. I was actually getting Upset there for a minute, and damn, but it just wasn't, you know, comfortable.

Yeah, can't have that.

No, it would be un-American.

Damn straight, and we Certainly Can't Have That.

No. No sir. No sirree Bob....oh no.

No.

Got a flag somewhere we could put up just in case anyone was, you know, confused as to where we Stood or anything? Or, was perhaps, even confused as to where we Are...cause I know if I don't see a flag for a few minutes or so I do start feeling awfully Confused about where I Am, who's in Charge...that kind of thing...oh and while you're at it could you find one of those Guys with Big Guns to guard the door outside, cause I'm feeling a little, you know, Unsafe what with all the Confusion here and the freedom and the lack of Rules...and I kind of need some Order.... Don't you agree?

Absolutely.

Code Red! Code Red! Code Red!

Couldn't have said it better myself.

No way.

Johnny, Row the Boat Ashore, Hallelu-u-jah....

Johnny, Row the Boat Ashore, Hallelu-u-jah....

Onward Christian Soldiers?

Something like that.

Quick.

Now.

NOW?

Well, yeah. Now.

O.K.

*[can perhaps even end piece here either singing a Southern folk tune about "Sing a Song for Jesus" or "Not Looking For Signs (Just Looking for Jesus)" - yes, there is such a song - and while doing this find a way into a "Jesus" tableau... Mary and Jesus... maybe on cross and weeping Mary, or Mary cradling Baby Jesus, or the three crucified men on the cross or some such thing, with the song playing, and/or singing the song - so it looks like a kind of grotesque but also humorous sing-a-long.]*

Trust me. This isn't what He meant.

Or She meant.

Or Anyone meant.

Look at me. Look at the person next to you. Look at whoever you want to look at.

Look around the room. Look at each detail and color and light. Hear the breathing between you. The coughing, the giggling, Whatever.

This is it.

We are It.

Let's submit to This. Shall we?

Ahhhh.

Nice.

Yeah.

Nice.

*[Let there be a long silence here before breaking... maybe a bit of music beforehand then stillness and listening to the room - when it feels as if you as a group of performers, have heard the room, you can break together]*

**Appendix F:** *Besides, you lose your soul or the History of Western Civilisation*  
(performance text from 1/3/09 including section breaks and changes to text made during show)

***Besides, you lose your soul or the History of Western Civilisation***

**by**

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**Note for readers who have not seen Apocryphal Theatre:** This text, as with all my stage texts, does not suggest what players should take which lines or how the text itself should be embodied. My company, Apocryphal Theatre, has worked together for five years in labs to develop techniques to be able to improvise with and create work from this type of text (building on work I did with actors in labs in NYC from 1997-2002), along with devising performance scores from scratch. There are therefore terms in the stage directions which may not make sense to you, but you should feel free to allow the terms to evoke in you whatever images or resonances that emerge, as the words we use in labs are working definitions, not meant to pin anything down as much as stimulate ideas and imagination. Each Apocryphal performance is unique, as we do not decide on any one way to perform any text, using it instead as a springboard for new improvisations each night, using certain flexible internal structures but no rigid rules. The only thing that does happen during each performance is that we make it through the text and each free-form improvisation suggested in the text is attempted.

*[In the room are strewn many old classic books of Western Civilization, preferably from college or university level of courses, with underlining and highlights, crumpled pages, etc. there can also be a sense of an interrogation of some nature going on, something shadowy and not quite right – no literal indication of this, but a tone that pervades, like an odor from the basement you can't quite disguise – perhaps if possible there is a floor covered in a grey-ash like substance about 6 inches thick. If any recorded music, there is a CD I have given to me by a man who worked at a Kurdish restaurant of dirges sung by an older man. CD player and any and all means of production visible, including any documentation or film and video technology, such as Super-8 film loops or projections from laptops, the text itself and any improvisational structures. The audience should ideally be seated throughout the space.]*

*[performers will begin with a cut-up of quotations/questions mostly from Shakespeare's Hamlet, and one from Edward Albee...working through as usual the levels of address and presence...when it feels as if some kind of shift has occurred begin the text that follows, which is of course somewhat of a cut-up-riff itself – and as per usual, if something comes out of this improvisation that seems somehow apt, you can intersperse throughout]*

### SECTION 1

And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust?

What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba,  
That he should weep for her?

And for my soul, what can it do to that,  
Being a thing immortal as itself?

Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to  
dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that  
loam whereto he was converted might they not stop a beer  
barrel?

Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf? Virginia? Virginia? wooolf  
Alexander was dust was converted soul Alexander was buried  
buried who's afraid buried soul was afraid buried soul was afraid  
my buried soul was afraid repeat of dust afraid of immortal  
afraid of immortal Alexander might they be converted? they  
might besides

\*\*\*

## SECTION 2

Besides, you lose your soul.

Be-sides

You

~~Lose~~

You lose

You

Yours truly,

A soul

Lost

Loser

Losing

Lost

Loved once and lost

A soul



Being a thing immortal as itself

What's he to Hecuba, or Hecuba to him?

Sold.

You sold it?

Yes.

I mean no.

I mean.

Mean?

| ~~Mean.~~

Quintessence of dust.

Soul. A mean soul, sold for cheap.

Mean as in *mean*?

Yes, as in 'mean'.

Where are we now, England or the U.S.

England, I think. Where mean is *mean*.

| yeah As in cheap.

As in *quintessence of dust*.

Soul-less?

Maybe

### SECTION 3

Where does the soul come from?

Soul?

Yes, soul.

Not sure.

What is it? This thing you can lose?

This thing you can lose when you torture people you mean?

| Right, ~~yeah~~, that's right, *that's* what he was talking about I think.

But he said you couldn't - remember? Just now...it's immortal. How can it be lost?

Who?

The other guy, before, the famous one, who wrote a lot – English guy.

About torturing people?

| yeah No, well yeah, but ~~no~~, not the same guy.

About Alexander stopping beer barrels?

| ~~Yeah~~ Right, that guy.

| Yeah, that guy, yeah but I'm talking about the other guy - the American military guy the ex-FBI guy - who was talking about torturing people. He was saying it wasn't that efficient in the end, because people will say, you know, anything, if you torture them long enough.

So you might not get the right information?

Right, you might not get the right information.

And besides, as he says, you lose your soul.

| ~~Right, you lose your soul.~~

Aren't we kind of, well, repeating ourselves a lot here?

| ~~Well~~, yeah well. But some things, you know, well, they kinda, well, *bear repeating* don't you think?

Maybe.

Yeah, maybe.

But the English guy, he was writing before America was even like something real – it had just been found by other English guys but no one was really you know *sure* of it, not really sure if it *meant anything*. Could that make a difference? With the idea of an immortal soul, I mean...one that you know, can't get lost?

| Not sure I follow ~~you~~...

You know like maybe it was more secure then, that idea about souls... that they kind of couldn't get you know lost...but then they were  
| suddenly kind of well more you know less ~~um well I don't know~~, less like fixed or something?

Um, maybe...I guess...

Maybe that's why he was so obsessed with stopping beer barrels?

Maybe...

Yeah, yeah, because he was beginning to *sense* it – that something wasn't right...that something was about to get really, you know, *lost*.

So, you mean in finding something new something else gets lost?

Yeah, something like that...

Wow.

Yeah.

#### SECTION 4

*[maybe here everyone starts looking for something metaphorically or literally, and without any success...something important that can't be found...like keys, a wallet, identification, a wedding ring, an idea that was great in the bathroom, a dream you just forgot...then below begins the interrogation of S/He Who Has Lost That Thing Which was Important] something that didn't get lost last night was the food, food? food there was food there was definitely food this was lost last night see I don't always do that because it can result in falling over or tripping over I try to do something dramatic each night definitely food last night since hit my mid-thirties surely I still have some life left in me this last night disaster I'll be put off going to work last night I can go completely bonkers girls in the 50s said heart racing Lucy you weren't there last night I was*

#### SECTION 5

OK, then...so before we lose it

--if you haven't already lost it ...

Yes, right if you haven't already Lost it!

~~Me?~~

~~-~~

~~Yes, You!~~

How do you think Western Civilization started?

WHAT????

| What?

Well, how do you think it started?

| From Greece???

How the fuck should *I* know?

I don't know, I thought maybe you had, you know, like, a *theory* or something...

A *theory*?

Yeah, you know, a *theory* as to how Western Civilization might have started. Doesn't everybody?

| Yes

Um.

Well?

I mean, everyone *we* know?

What do you mean everyone *we* know?

You know what I mean.

No I don't. I haven't a fucking CLUE what you mean!

Yes you do.

No I don't.

Yes you do.

No *we* don't!

Aha, there, caught you!

It was a joke for Christsakes....

Maybe there?

What?

The beginning, of Western Civilization.

Um, I don't think so...I think we'd at least have to go back to the Greeks or-

SEE, I *knew* it, you DO have a theory!

| Yes It's not a theory.

~~Yes it is.~~

-

~~No, it isn't.~~

-

~~Yes, it is.~~

-

~~No,~~ it's just, you know, *fact*.

Fact? You're joking, right...I mean we, the people *we* know, do you think *we* believe in simple 'fact' anymore?

Um, maybe? And who do you think I know that you know that makes us a 'we'? Just out of curiosity, you know, *Idle Speculation*...

Well, I think you do, I mean *we* do...it's all of us, those of us who find ourselves *here*. And those we *already know*. The people who count.

| The people *here* who *know things*. Them, who of course are now we, or at least I hope so...I mean, I think, really, I've done enough work  
| here by *now* to be counted *as* one of *we* rather than *them*. Don't you think? I mean, really?

and why of that loam whereto he was converted might they not stop a beer barrel?

I'm kind of lost.



That's such a lie.

No it's not.

Yes it is.

No it's not.

Yes it is.

SHUT UP!!!!!!!

Make me.

Make you?

Yeah, make me.

| **Make me make me shut up**

This is a joke right?

Maybe. Maybe not.

How can you be so FUCKING childish?

I don't know, how can YOU be so FUCKING childish?

Or how can we be so-

STOP, please DEAR GOD, STOP!

## SECTION 6

| In the beginning was Oedipus, **the Greeks!** and God said, that is good, and in seven days, someone rested and we were all happy. The word was Aristophanes, and Aristophanes was the word. There were birds in the heavens and he said it was good. Sometimes there were women around, but they usually had a

supporting role, unless of course they were fucking everything up, in which case they became crucial to the plot points...but I digress...

Excuse me.

Yes?

Who are you?

I am he who tells stuff that ye shall believe what I say because I said so....Amen

Do you really think that stuff works anymore? I mean aren't we kind of like, well, beyond that?

This is the very word of Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool

That's enough.

What, the fair Ophelia?

Amen.

Pretty Ophelia!

Amen.

Good night ladies, good night. Sweet ladies, good night, good night.

Amen.

[pause]

## SECTION 7



Is it all like that?

I'm afraid so, more or less, give or take, etc.

OK, let's start again then.

Again?

Yes, again.

We can't do that.

Why not?

Because we already started.

Who says?

They do.

| **They?** Who is they?

Them, you fool. *Them.*

Oh, come on, who cares about *them*???

Well, we should.

| Do you think so, I mean really? Isn't ~~this~~-itone of those, you're either *on* the bus or you're not kind of things? Or shouldn't it be? I mean aren't *they* supposed to be part of *we*, I mean seeing as we're in the same room and all? Like you said before?

I never said that.

Yes you did.

No I didn't.

Yes you did.

No, I didn't. I think *you* said that, if you want to be accurate with the facts.

But you said there were no facts!

I most certainly did not.

## SECTION 8

You are such a liar.

Yes. I am.

Finally, the truth.

Is it?

*[At this point there could be any number of responses, for instance: dancing, gesture-texts from labs that come from moments of training/disciplines, some way of responding to this whole tiresome 'truth-lie' contradiction that resolves the paradox without recourse to linear narrative....by resolve I don't mean 'solves' but resolves into action somehow...]*

is it was explained to you I hope that you can move around when you were outside you may be enjoying your spot there you may be regretting your position we can even move one or two chairs if you want so many of you up here it seems a pity to sit on ugly thing and it's all quite dirty um we have done this so many times I can't think of anything original time that's what she said last night this night you're in the worst place I've seen so far this shouldn't be maybe something else should be happenig what about astrological key to birthday book...owl tests? more theatrical the tempest can't get more theatrical than the tempest I'd rather be mrs Twit going ballooing we can work something between them have to give King the King's crown, I didn't know this is the best view and particularly the stage.

that's where you can see the truth from. You do like my son...pull ere to take me up to the moon be cheerful soon what a ghastly these are actors as I foretold melted into air into thin air put more string on my ankles quickly I want to feel absolutely safe, the solemn temples that's scary

## SECTION 9

That's scary.

Is it?

It can be.

Why?

Because it's not moving anything forward, not getting us anywhere.

| Where ~~on earth~~ exactly do you want to GO?

I don't know, somewhere.

| ~~WHERE?~~

Well, somewhere.

Somewhere BETTER?

Well, yeah, maybe somewhere better. Is that so bad?

Could be. Could be one of those horrible utopian type things that leads to fascism and world wars and god knows what else!

Or not.

How do you know?

I don't. I'm just saying, sometimes wanting to go somewhere better else can be, you know, good. It's not always bad. It could mean getting out of somewhere bad and going somewhere, you know, better.

But do you really think it's a matter of going somewhere???

Maybe.

I'm not so sure. I think that usually makes things worse.

~~Maybe.~~

—

But maybe not.

Maybe

Ok, whatever.

Whatever?!

Yeah, whatever.

## SECTION 10

So this early Dionysiac ritual was a cathartic that took man out of himself-

A cathartic?

That's what it says, right here, in this book on Myths.

It sounds like an enema.

Yes, it does. You're right. Shall I go on?

Ok, for a bit...

and purged his irrational impulses, or directed them into a special channel... Yeah, yeah I know, ~~I know~~...but listen to this,

it gets better: These were the times when the religious sanction had become guilt instead of shame (page 167)-

So what's on page 167?

OK, here's something: Clytemnestra, tormented by a snake-dream that is a gift to psychoanalysts-

Excuse me? Were there psychoanalysts in ancient Greece?

Well, no.

| No So what's That all about?

I think the author is trying to be clever.

Great.

And anachronistic.

Well, yeah.

I mean, is there a SOUL yet or not? Is anyone talking about souls??? Isn't that the point here???

Shall I go back to the original reading?

OK, let's try again.

and some of the Greeks, their old clan solidarities weakened, were finding it difficult to bear their new burdens of individual responsibility...blah blah blah.... orgiastic rites... blah blah... snake handling... blah blah...Mediterranean fertility cults...oh but this is good, it all relates to the ecstatic rattlesnake cult of the Holiness Church in Kentucky!

Wow.



Who knew?

Kentucky?

Yeah. Kentucky.

Wow.

Yeah.

Wow.

## SECTION 11

Men will know that I am the LORD  
when I execute judgment upon her  
and thereby prove my holiness,  
I will let loose pestilence upon her  
and bloodshed in her streets;  
the slain will fall in her streets,  
beset on all sides by the sword;  
then men will know that I am the LORD.

| Lord is ~~always~~ in all caps, isn't it?

Yes.

| So, is this it ~~then?~~—How they justify the torture and ~~all, do you~~  
~~think~~ that kind of thing? God's will, that kind of thing?

Some believe this to be the case yes.

Some? Is 'some' different than 'we'?

But of course.

So 'we' don't believe this then, am I to presume?

Right. 'We' are smarter than that.

Oh, good, well, that's a relief.

So, what is it that 'we' believe then? ~~Just you know again, out of idle~~  
~~curiosity?~~

Oh, we! We don't believe Anything!

We don't believe in Anything?!

Right, we're Smarter than that! I mean More Clever than that...in America they or we say 'smart', in England you or I say 'clever' depending on who is saying this line that is... I am *trying* to be culturally *sensitive*...

That's impossible.

That I'm trying to be culturally *sensitive*?

No, that 'we' don't believe anything!

Of course it's possible!

No, it's not.

If I say I don't believe in anything then I don't.

It's not that simple.

Of course it is.

No, it's not. Even the denial of belief is a statement of belief, and even if it weren't, you certainly believe in Something.

Prove it.

OK, do you believe that we should discriminate against people based on race, for example?

No, of course not.

So, there you go.

What?! I just said I didn't believe in something.

Right. But the opposite is a belief: I believe that we should not discriminate against people based on race.

Yes, but that's just *common sense*, it's something we all agree on! It's not a *belief*. A belief is something unreal, unprovable, irrational... Wrong.

In other words, something you disagree with.

Right, I mean wrong, I mean it's just because it's just *common sense*.

I rest my case.

That's just sophistry.

No, it's not. Good try, but it's not. And anyway, the sophists weren't all bad, they got a bad name, but –

| STOP

| ~~Please~~ stop before I have to resort to violence.

Violence?!!

Yes, violence.

Are you thinking of torture perhaps?

Maybe.

Valerian: I left you as ashes on the ground



for all to see.

All among the nations who knew you were aghast:  
you came to a fearful end and shall be no more forever.

That's kind of harsh.

That's Ezekiel "Prophecies against foreign nations" to be exact. From  
'The New English Bible (with Apocrypha).

## SECTION 12

A figure like your father,  
Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe,  
Appears before them and with solemn march  
Goes slow and stately by them. Thrice he walked  
By their oppressed and fear-surprised eyes

Yeah, I know that one.

Ghost.

Soul?

Ghost.

## SECTION 13

People who say they will first die and then arise are mistaken. If  
they do not receive resurrection while they are alive, ~~one~~ after  
they have died they will receive nothing.

Gnostic guy?

Yeah.

Which one?

Valentinus. The Gospel of Truth...according to Wikipedia.

Ahhh.

| Well, I had to start somewhere. To ~~look~~begin the search for the soul.

Hm.

You got a better idea?

No, not really, but there are certainly a lot of BOOKs written about it, that you don't need to be on a Web to look up, etc., etc...

| ~~Yeah, yeahs~~, I know. I have them too. But I was looking for, you know, the Origin of the word. Where it comes from? How can I lose something I haven't found in the first fucking place? You know?

Yeah, I guess.

OK then.

OK.

| What about Lucretius?

What about him?

He didn't believe in a soul.

True. It didn't exist yet. At least not written down anyway, at least according to Wikipedia (and other sources that shall remain nameless, until they are deemed nameable, because I – I mean 'we' – decide that – but of course as 'we' all know there is no 'real' anyway, so citation is like, fascistic or something, right...?)

Right?

Right?

## SECTION 14

Um, I'm not sure.

| ~~I wish you'd get over your patriarchal need for Definition!~~

Yeah, I'll work on it.

Good. It's really a bother.

A bother???

Yes.

A bother??? How long have you been in England now? Have you lost your Identity Already? You never would have said 'bother' before! Do you know that?

Oh, leave it.

Leave it?!

| Yeah, leave it... ~~What do you want me to say:~~ can it? bag it? Fuck it? etc.

That's better.

It's had its chips!

NO!!!!

America the Movie brought to you by Some American Writer You've Never Heard of Before! Better?????

Oh, nevermind. I'm just trying to Help.

Great. Stop. It's not Helping.

OK, OK....

What about Lucretius he didn't believe in a soul. I think we need to stop quoting Nietzsche first

I consider it a great privilege to have had such a father -

Oh stop quoting Nietzsche, it's tiresome, and well, all of them and their Father this, Father that business....

You're being quite literal. You do know that, don't you? I mean this tiresome cod feminism...

Cod feminism?

Well, yeah.

COD Feminism???

You heard me. It's boring, B O R I N G...boring.

## SECTION 15

Some have located the soul in this possible difference between the mind and a classical computer.

Wikipedia again?

Yeah. The scientist bit.

Oh. Them.

~~Yeah, them.~~

Researchers, most notably Ian Stevenson and Brian Weiss have studied reports of children talking about past-life experiences.

Any evidence that these experiences were ~~in~~are fact real would require a change in scientific understanding of the mind or would support some notions of the soul.



That reminds me of that story – remember?

Yeah, the one about the little kid. Yeah, the little girl who wanted to talk to her brother who was a baby – alone.

| Yeah, and her parents were *like* totally freaked out and thought it was one of those little kid homicidal moments or something, so they said ‘yeah, sure you can talk to Bobby alone’

Bobby, was his name, Bobby?

Oh, I don’t remember, does it matter???

Just checking...

| So Anyway, so they said yes, and then put on those walkie-talkie things...you know the little kid intercom things so they can hear

| what’s going on in the *next* room when they’re not there –

| Kind of like that

You mean like *spies* do?

No, not like that!

What’s the difference.

In this case it’s because they’re *concerned*.

Oh.

So anyway, the little girl goes into little Bobby’s room and the parents are listening over the walkie talkie thing and she says to him “Hey, Bobby, can you tell me about God again, I forgot.”

Wow....

She forgot?

Yeah, she forgot.

But then how did she know to ask?

I guess because she hadn't quite forgotten but was afraid she would, or maybe she had a *feeling* of something she couldn't remember.

Did the baby tell her anything?

I don't know. They didn't get that part on the walkie talkie bit.

Thank God.

You can say that again.

I mean it.

Yeah, me too.

I                   Season your admiration for a while  
                    With an ~~in~~attent ear till I may deliver  
                    Upon the witness of these gentlemen  
                    This marvel to you.

“For God’s love let me hear!”

Well done, that was the next line of the play!

He knows; because now He knows that Christ is born, which means the same thing as Christ will be born.

False!...I mean Correct!

I   Ding ding ding...you win the “I’ve read the Summa Theologica Award” – at least page 158(162).

Yay!! I’d like to thank my Mother and my Father and All the lovely people from the Shop....

OK, enough...Enough!

## SECTION 16

Hearts and flowers, hearts and flowers....will anyone ever love me on Valentine's Day?

What???

Oh, sorry, just a diversion.

Are you sure?

| Yes. I don't **wouldn't** want to seem, you know, cheesy.

Cheesy?

Yeah, cheesy. Can we move on?

Um, ok, I guess...

| But what about the diversions? **Hunh?** Are they always? Aren't you maybe Avoiding something?

Maybe.

*[here perhaps performers could talk about that which makes them uncomfortable, i.e., beliefs that go against their 'beliefs' – where the personal and political for example don't link up...and as always, no one will ever ask you what is 'real' or not here...but there's something interesting in the 'official story' and the emotional usually derided as 'trivial' one... as per usual you can work with levels of address/*

*presence/verbs, etc.]* OK when we first started this play I bought Sophie's world I thought it was a beginner's guide by the time I started the show I'd know what U was talking about only read a few chapters you might notice I often don't know what I'm talking about I believe it's OK nobody here is going to quiz you we could be dumb as



rocks we say the words in the right order that might be enough maybe? I feel we need more razmatazz maybe a little dance something perhaps I could share to play Devil's advocate in this show a lot of feminist only because Lukas messed up knee I have to tell these women to shut their fucking gobs telling them to shut their mouths I don't know oh yeah Hello Hi hello!!! OK oh lovely Bronte sisters women's book to prove to you...

## SECTION 17

Speaking of inconsistencies, why isn't the soul mentioned in the Bible?

Didn't exist yet.

Oh.

Who invented it?

I think Aquinas might have. Well, there was Plato first of course, then the reinterpretation by Aquinas.

Oh.

Why do you think they did that?

Who?

Whoever – invented the soul?

I don't ~~know if think~~ anyone invented it. Maybe it was there all along and then discovered!

Like America?

Right, like America.

Be serious.



What?

| America was already t/here.

I know that's my point.

But it wasn't 'America' was it?

Sure it was.

No it wasn't. It was just a bunch of land with some people here and it was not called 'America'. Get it?

Ummm.

Like with Freud and the idea of psychology, same thing. Dreams used to be visitations, messages, whatever, then they became something to be interpreted. Looked at. *Used*.

| Fly Yeah, so?

So, before that they were Something else!

| something else

What?!

I don't really know!

Why not, you seem so fucking sure of everything else.

I don't know because I was born after Freud, not before.

Oh, how tedious.

## SECTION 18

Tedious? Our entire identity, what we're doing here on earth, all that, tedious???

Well, it can be talking to you.

Why?

| Because you're so Sure of Yourself. It's ~~boring~~ annoying.

So I should pretend to not know stuff for your amusement?

No. Nevermind.

What does She think?

Oh, not Her again.

Well, She does creep into it now and again, doesn't she?

Why?

Because it's *unavoidable*.

Why?

Because she's *here*.

She's here?!

Yes. Always.

Like the Soul???

Kind of. Yeah, like the *soul*.

| What Napoleon failed to recognize was that the antipathy shown by the Spaniards toward their ruler did not ~~necessarily~~ imply a corresponding enthusiasm for rule by the French. - Get it?

No, not really.

Well, try.

Do we have to?

| ~~Yes~~ Yeah, *you* have to.

## SECTION 19

| Kelina starts singing Marseilles - she helped with play a bit so feels comfortable interjecting - Zoe now sings Marseilles - no one knows words except Kelina - she has a PhD and is part French.

[Long pause...any number of things could be happening here, but the following text comes after a length of time appropriate to the condensation of Western Civilization into a cut-up]

| elderly men...can't pronounce lulls to stodgy calm must be easily amused...

OK: despite the improvised character of these forces, with handmaids bearing loaves, ending the Inquisition, during the seven years that I taught Greek, Men will know that I am the LORD, the eating of the bleeding goblets, those "things utterly non-human and immoral" knows that an annunciation is sometimes true.

Therefore, the knowledge of God is not speculative.

The ship sailed on, out of the Ocean Stream, then stood by weeping while the flame burnt through The way of heaven-

## SECTION 20

That wasn't Western!

What!

The last bit, "the way of heaven".

How do you know?

Trust me. She tells me things.

She *tells* you things?

Yeah.

OK, so where is it from then?

Lao Tzu. Eastern guy.

Right. Eastern guy.

| yeah But Jesus was supposedly influenced by –

Yeah, yeah, Buddhism, we know, we know...

But there's no Proof, is there?

Proof?! You must be joking. You're asking for proof, at this stage?!  
When we know there is no such thing. I can't believe we're back *here*  
again.

| who 's got the Aquinas?

Therefore, God has a speculative knowledge of all things.

Wait, before you said He didn't.

Right, but I never said He. You did? You're assuming God means He.

Yeah, but I bet that guy does too...and you're diverting me...How  
does God now have this knowledge?

A lot of words.

Words?

| yeah

Words words words

| ~~Yeah, a lot of words.~~ Quoting other people, and then what was true is not, and what is true now won't be later. That kind of thing.

Great.

## SECTION 21

| It gets better... ~~Apparently,~~ according to the same guy, "God is not operable."

Wow, like there's a problem?

| ~~He doesn't seem to think so.~~

| But it sounds like a toy that doesn't work right when you ~~buy~~ get it.  
Like that Mister Potato Head she got for her birthday once that didn't  
| have the plastic potato. ~~Remember?~~

| Yeah, that was ~~a drag~~ annoying.

All those little parts, noses and eyes and whatnot and no potato.

Right, no potato.

Like God?

| ~~Yeah, lots of little parts, something you can guess about maybe—  
some ornamentation at best, but no Potato.~~ In the end, He's not operable.

| I really doubt that's what this guy meant.

Doesn't mean we're not onto something.

True, true...

| What did her mother ~~desay~~ when the potato wasn't in the box?



| She shrugged and said, Oh well. ~~Maybe?~~

You don't remember? No, and neither does she.

She was a Child then, remember? Very small. Too small to remember very much except a laundromat, an IGA food store and some tar outside. And that little box ~~with little~~ and the plastic pieces and no potato.

That was back in the 60's right?

Yeah, back in the 60's.

There was a lot more important stuff happening then.

| ~~Yeah, it's true~~, but she was like 4 or 5 max.

Still.

| ~~Yeah.~~

Lost. She was lost.

She was lost or she *felt* lost?

Does it matter when you're 4?

What are we talking about now? The car and being left there and not knowing where anyone was and crying? And crying.. And crying..

| yeah Something like that. Is she still there?

Sometimes, yes, sometimes she's still there.

## SECTION 22

Is She?

No. and yes. She was always there, but sometimes she didn't know it.

| ~~Is She the soul?~~

—

| ~~Not exactly.~~

Who is She?

Can't say exactly, not without problems.

I am always equal to accidents. I have to be unprepared to be master of myself.

One of those, then. An accident. But one that works in your favor.

| If you like

She is a favorable accident?

| —

| ~~If you like.~~

And you have to be unprepared to see Her.

### SECTION 23

| There is no murky pit of Hell awaiting anyone of us.

No?

No.

*As for all the torments that are said to take place in the depths of Hell, they are actually present here and now, in our own lives.*

Same guy?

Yeah. Roman guy. Lucretius.

Not so bad really.

No, not so bad. Plus he's right. About that anyway.

Why are they all men?

Gee whiz I have No idea.

Copyright problems?

Yeah, something like that.

## SECTION 24

...this is not the System, it hasn't the slightest thing to do with the System. I wish all good on the System and on the Danish shareholders in the omnibus; for it will hardly become a tower.

Kierkegaard.

Oh *him*.

Yeah, him.

You know his nephew tried to keep them from burying him in the churchyard. That's the first recorded act of non-violent civil disobedience.

You don't say.

It's true.

Did it work?

No.

Figures.

Yeah.



But he *tried*.

That's true, he tried.

His nephew that is.

| Right, the nephew. But so did *he*. Kierkegaard, that is. Tried. He really did *try* to get heard even though he wasn't *saying anything* - that is ~~saying~~ anything anyone wanted to hear.

| What was he trying to say *exactly*?

| That's a little hard to explain ~~actually~~.

Well, try.

OK.

OK.

OK.

[Here, performers have the option to attempt to say by doing and/or speaking and/or dancing, playing music etc. something which demonstrates how to be 'a witness not a teacher' – something which bears witness to something hard-won – as Kierkegaard says regarding the true knight of faith: 'what he won, he did not win on the cheap so he does not sell it on the cheap' – perhaps this has something to do with moments of discipline training where you transcended yourself somehow, or it could be a conversation or description of some kind of experience you have had that does not 'fit the box' – I believe you are dealing here with grid level of address quite consciously – though can take the mask of other levels – this is not a facile moment, but needs to be somehow challenging to oneself on a deep level. If this seems impossible at this moment, witnessing others is fine – so is silence and/or stillness.]

The full quotation, from *Fear and Trembling*, not to be said, but known by players is:

| *Birthe is reading this in Danish, she is related to Kierkegaard:*

*"The true knight of faith is a witness, never a teacher, and in this lies the deep humanity in him which is more worth than this foolish concern for others' weal and woe which is honoured under the name of sympathy, but which is nothing but vanity. A person who wants only to be a witness confesses thereby that no one, not even the least, needs another person's sympathy, or is to be put down so another can raise himself up. But because what he himself won he did not win on the cheap, so neither does he sell it on the cheap; he is not so pitiable as to accept people's admiration and pay for it with silent contempt; he knows that whatever truly is great is available equally for all."* ]

| *I don't know French but will try: Mt Zion..les mont des olives mount of olives avant post arab isaraelien arab legion post old wall taken 1967 le marais de la tour de David tower of David jerusalem with dome of the rock Zoe tried to speak Danish with Birthe Rachel it was more dangerous than you know the blazing arch lucid to meet the sun*

He foresees his fate will be to be completely ignored; has a dreadful foreboding that the scourge of zealous criticism will more than once make itself felt.

## SECTION 25

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

She loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah...

| with A love like that

| You know ~~it~~you will be fi-ine.

Or is it: She will be mi-ine...

Good luck and prosperity one and all.

| she loves you and you know it will be fine...yeahyeahyeah  
Something like that.

Oh.  
Timeless tales of Gods and Heroes.

Back to Western Civilization?

No, to “timeless tales of Gods and Heroes.”

Oh.

And it was the Goddess of Love who brought about what next happened.

Which was?

Zeus raping Europa, you know turning into a bull, all that kind of thing. Then she bears famous sons not to mention having a continent named after her.

Wow, so getting raped by a god is a good thing?

Apparently. Except when it isn't.

Right.

She loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah....

With a love like that,

You know you will be fi-ine...

## SECTION 26

A Letter from A Gentleman to his Friend in Edinburgh.

What?



## An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding!

Oh.

We have already observed, that nature has established connexions among particular ideas, and that no sooner one idea occurs to our thoughts than it introduces its correlative, and carries our attention towards it, by a gentle and insensible movement.

Kind of like this?

I Kind of, except ~~all this stuff~~ these things are from books on a floor, not anyone's thoughts per se.

Per se?

Yeah, per se. Got a problem with that?

No, I guess not.

Good.

...were we to attempt a *definition* of this sentiment, we should, perhaps, find it very difficult, if not an impossible task.

Yeah.

Kant's own attempt to get out of this difficulty often appears to his readers an addition of insult to injury.

Kant? I thought it was Hume.

Yeah, yeah...

It's kind of a collage, don't you see???

Kind of a way to get At something, you know, Larger than the  
| individual ~~thoughts~~ ideas...

A kind of connection?

Yeah, a kind of connection.

| to what?

When you say 'larger', what do you mean?

I mean larger.

| ~~But~~ larger than what!

Larger than individual ideas.

| What makes you think there is ~~some~~ anything Larger than individual  
ideas?

I don't know, um, intuition? Life? Something like that.

Sounds fuzzy.

Fuzzy?

Yeah, fuzzy.

Fuzzy wuzzy was a bear. Fuzzy wuzzy had no hair. Fuzzy wasn't  
very fuzzy wuz he?

## SECTION 27

In action we are, as we never are in scientific research, 'up  
against reality'

Yeah, well we are here, aren't we!

Whilst in ordinary life every shopkeeper is very well able to  
distinguish between what somebody professes to be and what he

really is, our historians have not yet won even this trivial insight. They take every epoch at its word and believe that everything it says and imagines about itself is true.

Marx, right!

Yes!

Bracing stuff.

Yes.

True.

Yes, true.

...if I wish, I can become the friend of God at this very moment.

What???

That's also true.

So? What does that have to do with Marx? That's St. Augustine!

I don't know!

So why mention it.

Because I don't know!!! That's why!

Thus the whole body of materialistic elements has been removed from how sordid I was, forcing me upon my own sight this whole semblance that, the more bitterly I hated myself, or the 'general interest', refusing to see myself, the historical method, which reigned in Germany, they had agreed upon it, as soon as it is no longer necessary to give me chastity and continence, but not under empirical conditions, which I did not explore but opposed out of malice.

| Ah, good now I see.

Good.

## SECTION 28

Still no women.

Right, no women. Striking that.

Yes.

Do they have a soul? Women?

Not sure. It's usually something given to 'man' or 'Man'.

Or 'the idea'

Right, 'the idea'.

Or a victim, some men do refer to women as victims, slaves, etc.

| did I say women? yes sorry

| Right, yes, like when that guy in college who told her she shouldn't be playing that Rolling Stones song because it was misogynist.

| Yeah that was annoying he just came into her room uninvited, to tell her she was a victim of false-consciousness.

And thank God, he did. I mean, what would have become of her otherwise?

Yeah.

| Like when she wasn't allowed Barbie dolls or Betty Crocker ready-to-bake ovens because they were considered patriarchal.

| Yeah, like that.

Wow, that's annoying.

Yeah. It is - uh was - uh is.

It's truly incredible how everyone seems to know what's best for womenandchildren.

Right womenandchildren.

| Watch out, here come some Womenandchildren, be ~~careful~~quiet, don't say anything too loudly or they might just all Fall Apart or get blown up or be corrupted or something...

Unless of course she's prime minister. Right unless she's prime minister. But then she is a man-women, you know, not quite right. Something's Wrong. Plus she was of course a victim of False Consciousness. Right, right. Of course she was.

Whenever a woman acts like a human being she is accused of acting like a man.

Simone, Simone, Simone...

Yep.

And if you do that, you're not allowed to want flowers on Valentine's Day.

Right. These things cannot take place at the same time. You are liberated or you are not. That's that.

Right.

That's that.

## SECTION 29

| OK.



To remove the mystical appearance of this “self-determining concept” it is changed into a person – “Self-Consciousness” – or, to appear thoroughly materialistic, into a series of persons, who represent the “concept” in history....Thus the whole body of materialistic elements has been removed from history and now full rein can be given to the speculative steed.

That’s nice: speculative steed.

But somehow it all feels oppressive.

Yes, it does. Like a well-constructed prison almost.

Yes.

Almost exactly.

Almost exactly.

Identical even.

| yes Perhaps, ~~yes~~.

Any escape routes?

Let’s check.

OK.

[*check for escape routes...this can be literal, metaphoric, symbolic, verbal, physical, visual, musical...etc.*]

this is an escape route, if you need to leave at any time this is the quickest way out but you can’t change your mind and get back in but if you need to get out just push if it gets to be too much or you could do this just easily probably better to do that get a drink might run over the road and get hit by a bus or not rachel stop running around every woman in this room runs run stunningly beautiful very very beautiful run run run Rachel or marry someone with lots and lots of power run

behind you run to the screen Rachel run to the screen run here Rachel  
run here Rachel run here Rachel Rachel Rachel Rachel! Rachel  
Rachel

### SECTION 30

*[Then begin repeating and cutting up the following sentences from philosophers – each person take one and work through levels of address (to the self, each other, audience, grid, i.e. rules of the room):]*

I have always thought that the two questions of God and of the soul, were the principal questions among those that should be demonstrated by rational philosophy rather than theology.  
(Descartes)

Consequently, the objective reality of these concepts (*viz.*, that they are not mere chimeras) and also the truth or falsity of metaphysical assertions cannot be discovered or confirmed by any experience. (Kant)

Reality Kant. Reality Kant even my experiences with philosophers  
reality philosophers who have attempted to go back to the state  
of theology bear witness hachoo without buffoons without  
buffoons without buffoons in the state of nature reality buffoons  
woundings even God has bad experiences. God? I have had bad  
experiences on stage in reality in society I have had bad  
experiences even God has had bad experiences without  
exception with Nietzsche hahahahah bad experience with  
Nietzsche on stage paroxysms of Nietzsche death of Nietzsche  
nature paroxysms deaths on stage woundings on stage  
metaphysicals woundings of god of rational theology god on  
stage rational falsity behave God Bad God behave God behave  
God I have had bad experiences on stage God philosophy God  
Nietzsche Kant Aristotle behave oooh

The philosophers who have examined the foundations of society  
have all felt the necessity of going back to the state of nature, but  
none of them has reached it. (Rousseau)

Even my experiences with people with whom everybody has had  
bad experiences bear witness, without exception, in their favor: I



I tame every bear, I even make hahchoo buffoons behave themselves. (Nietzsche)

A *pathos* is a destructive or painful act, such as deaths on stage, paroxysms of pain, woundings, all that sort of thing. (Aristotle)

**[NB for anyone who has not experienced cut-ups: the 'rule' is that once cutting up, you cannot add new words not in phrases, but they can be cut up in any way, so for example, we might end up with "A pathos is every bear, going back to the state of nature" or "none of them make buffoons of God". These cut-ups can be created individually by performers or as a group, where one person could begin a phrase and another finish it.]**

### SECTION 31

Witnessing

hostages

explosions

war

terrorism

exiles

I journeys

gaps

How did we get here?

How did you get here?

Is She here?

Is He here?

Have you lost your soul?

All copyright should remain with yourself

It's your work after all.

After

All.

It's your work.

Your

Work.

If you could notify me before I am grateful,  
I am old-fashioned ~~enough~~  
to get some ideas.

Love comes on strong,

consuming

her

Self

She risks

Everything and

Asks for

Nothing

Without cause,

Give it back.

Again.

Love is reckless, not reason

Reason seeks a profit.

Somewhere between East and West?

Yes.

Not taught in school?

No.

“the reality construction machinery”

School?

Sometimes.

### SECTION 32

“Why were you not more like Moses?”

That’s not the question!

I know, I know.

What is it then?

Why were you not more like you?

Can you answer that?

Will you be able to answer that?

Will anyone ever be able to answer that?

Why the past tense?

It happens after you’re dead.

How do you know?

I don't.

Then why ask it.

Because it can help now.

Help what?

Help us figure out if we're where we want to be.

We?

Ok, you, whatever, me...I don't care.

You should.

| Ok, ok, ~~whatever...~~

### SECTION 33

Why are we torturing people? Why is that?

I'm not torturing anyone.

| ~~Yes~~but you are.

No, I'm not. I'm here with you, right now. Not torturing anyone.  
None of us in this room is torturing anyone.

But we are.

Oh, come on!

I'm serious.

You mean self-righteous.

No, I don't think so.

Well you wouldn't, would you? She said you were self-righteous, remember?

Yeah, so? Who gives a fuck what she thinks?

Oh, Now we don't Care what she thinks!

Depends on who we're talking about, doesn't it, especially since we're talking in this kind of annoying code.

Yes, but it's to make it emblematic, you know, so people can read into it, create their own meanings, see the construction of signifiers and all that.

Oh, God, how tiresome.

I ~~Yeah~~, well yeah....

But this is a digression, isn't it?

Isn't all of it?

Well, yeah...

But the torture thing.

What about it?

Why are we torturing people?

Don't we have to agree it's 'we' first?

Yes, but where do we get if we say 'they'?

Somewhere else?



Right, we get to a place where they are they and we are we and can pretend 'they' torture while we sit around and deconstruct, as it were. Fiddling with semiotics while Rome burns and all that.

Is Rome burning?

You know what I mean.

No, I don't.

Yes, you do. Rome, as in 'our ethics', 'our ideals as a democracy', 'any sense of common decency or the rule of law', 'that which should be good about Western civilization' etc.

Burning?

Right, with each person being tortured right now in 'our name'.

Someone's using our name?

Oh stop being an idiot or trying to be clever. It's annoying!

Which one?

Both!

It's hard to stay here, isn't it?

Yes.

| OK, ~~so let's try~~. Let's take a moment and consider that at this very moment someone is being tortured, having their toenails pulled out, or their genitals electrocuted or their teeth pulled or almost drowned in the name of 'democracy' and 'freedom' and perhaps the person doing the torturing believes he or she is doing the will of God. The person being tortured may believe the same. The person being tortured may be completely innocent or may be planning to blow up the Tube or



Eiffel Tower or New York. Either way, they are being held without ~~trial or~~ recourse to any outside justice or any trial. You probably have a better chance of knowing or recognizing the torturer than the one being tortured. The person being tortured may die and be thrown into a shallow grave and we'll never know. Or even if we do know, we probably won't care for very long. It'll be a news photo, a momentary 'tragedy'. A *pathos*, 'that sort of thing.'

See if it's possible.

*[very, very long and most likely uncomfortable silence – there can be many ways to attempt to squirm out of this and the only 'rule' is: no words and to try to remain still, but any discomfort can be – should be – allowed to be visible]*

## SECTION 34

And for my soul, what can it do to that,  
Being a thing immortal as itself?

Is it?

I hate choice.

What?

She hates choice.

Does he?

Ask?

Do you?

Yes.

No.

Maybe.

That's the problem right there!

It's where it all goes Wrong.

Choice?

Yes. Choice, the illusion of, p. 94.

What book is that?

It's figurative for Christsakes. Jesus.

Oh, that again.

It's a Figure of Speech.

It's a damn sight more than that!

| ~~OK, OK...~~

Think about what you say, for Once, just Think first before saying, writing, whatever the fuck it is you're doing.

Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust.

Nietzsche. Yes.

What? That was Shakespeare.

It was Nietzsche. He said that thing, in that last thing he wrote about the Four Great Errors, that you can't condemn anyone for anything they've done because it's never actually a choice.

Nietzsche said that?

Yeah, something like that....wait here it is:

The error of false causality.

What?

You know when you think a caused b because they happen one after the other, but they might not have anything to do with each other....

No, no you mean the Other error...here it is:

*The error of free will.*

I ~~Yeah, yeah~~right, right, that's the one...where he talks about how the will to hold accountable by intentions is the will to punish, right, that one!

One is necessary, one is a piece of fate, one belongs to the whole, one *is* in the whole – there exists nothing which could judge, measure, compare ~~or~~ condemn our being, for that would be to judge, measure, compare, condemn the whole...*But nothing exists apart from the whole!*

Hard to argue with that.

Yes, it is.

Hard to argue.

With that.

....thus alone is the innocence of becoming restored.

## SECTION 35

But what about the torturers?

What about them?

| ~~Can~~ shouldn't we judge them?

Isn't that what they're doing?

What?

The torturers are judging. That's what they are doing. They are part  
| of that 'moral order', ~~aren't they?~~

But what about us?

What about us?

Shouldn't we judge them?

From where?

From here!

But Nietzsche said it already, we are *part* of the whole. How can we  
*judge* any of it if we're *in* it?

So we just accept it, just let people do horrible things and sit around  
and agree with Nietzsche?!

| What's ~~she to Nietzsche to Her or She to Nietzsche~~ or her  
That she should weep for him?

But we *have* to accept it.

Why?

What choice do we have???

| The choice to judge! To act! To condemn! To write stupid email  
petitions, ~~something~~ that kind of thing!



That's kind of pathetic.

Yeah, I know.

I would really like to interject something here, something you know *clever* but I seem to be unable to do that.

Maybe ask God for something?

I tried that already.

Oh. Shit. Then we're on our own???

Afraid so.

Shit.

Yeah.

| Ok then everybody just search and if you find anything that can help Quick, *everyone*, search!!!! NOW!!!!

### SECTION 36

the books of the mind of the soul....What if there is no bad than we wouldn't enjoy the good, Jack would be a gentlemen female writer this morning we went on our way increased when we saw a man with a gun but we kept straight on our course and the man eventually disappeared instantly the table sank out of sight little 2 eyes what a way to keep house most unwilling was she to wake up from felicity the first time he resented a bank holiday permitting it from owning a new car and for some time she refused to submit are they persuasive definitions but disguised value judgments this was too much at the moment of death the lower jaw drops they make the person looks younger for the first time we resented he looked I was very much all there at the moment of death I'm eccentric to comprehend and describing there is a comprehensible way...psychotic way of being in the world never punish a skunk teach them to understand the word no never spank a female writer teach them to understand the word no I'm

not acquainted with the principles the jaw would drop and we would look younger never punish an eccentric minuta of female writers teach an eccentric to understand the word never

*[a frantic search ensues through all the books of Western Civilization for an Answer. You can read out what you find, no matter how absurd and then repeat it, work through levels of address and then cutting up might be good... and keep doing this until you have hit the 'grid' and something has shifted – a paradoxical moment of both shift and acceptance, a shift that somehow manifests from acceptance]*

the innocence of becoming restored...?

### SECTION 37

Maybe.

Without cause God gave us Being;  
without cause, give it back again.

Rumi?

Yes.

That's different.

Yes.

We're not coming up with a consistent thing here, are we?

*[long pause to stare at whoever said that (or wrote that, esp. if you are the person who got stuck saying it)]*

| No I guess not.

### SECTION 38

Here now again he lay, waiting for dawn,  
while in the great hall by Athena's side  
Odysseus waited with his mind on slaughter.

Presently Penelope from her chamber  
stepped in her thoughtful beauty.

So might Artemis  
or golden Aphrodite have descended.

What does that have to do with anything?

What do you think?

She wrote a note next to this when she was young.

| ~~Oh yeah,~~ what does it say?

| ~~It says~~ "all threads come together." Written in pencil.

Hmm. So maybe she wasn't sure?

Maybe.

Probably she was identifying more with Odysseus than Penelope,  
though...

Odysseus, the great tactician

Choice, maybe?

Maybe, or maybe he's just sneaky.

Hmm.

What if all the threads don't come together? What then?

They stay apart.



Yeah, because she knows she's a she but then she can't imagine stepping anywhere in thoughtful beauty -

Was she referring to Penelope and her weaving do you think? The whole 'threads' thing?

Maybe...but then again she definitely couldn't weave. The only class she ever failed was home economics, and even then she was pissed off she couldn't take shop and learn how to make wooden things with saws-

Yeah, but she wanted all the threads to come together, that we know.

| Yes.—

Did they?

No.

They couldn't. They didn't even come together in *her*! How could they come together in Odysseus?

Have they?

No. Not in that way anyway...

Will they ever?

| no Probably not.

### SECTION 39

There is no end here, is there?

No, not really.



There usually is, you know, that word, that way, that phrase that sums it up, in an ~~poetic, yet~~ open ended yet poetic way.

Yes, there usually is.

With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished.

Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision.

But as he said about classical music once:

It gives you the illusion that you can own your own home.

Right he did say that. And so what did *he* do?

Composed silence.

Among other things.

Ah.

Perhaps we should try that.

Compose silence?

Among other things, yes.

OK.

*[perhaps here you do this, in whatever form that makes sense, if the 'opposite' of classical music is silence, what are other ways of 'acting', 'art', 'dance', 'writing', 'speaking', etc...that do not give us the illusion of being able to own our own home...]*

## SECTION 40

Are we trying to find the end?

Maybe.

OK.

Hey, that's a construct you know! Beginning, middle and –

Yeah, we know. But we have to figure out a way to end anyway, as we're all here in the same construct.

Tick. Tock. Tick Tock. Tick Tock.

The mouse ran up the clock.

The clock struck one.

The mouse ran down.

Hickory Dickory Dock.

The mouse ran up the clock.....

[*And continue...*]

So, no end then.

Right, no end.

No end.

No end.

No end.

World without end...

-ing.

Right “-ing.” End-ing.

Not quite the way it used to sound, but then what is?

Do souls end?

No, I don’t think so, if they exist.

Ghosts?

Not so sure. Maybe they fade away. Eventually.

And us?

Depends.

Yes it does. It does Depend.

On what?

On who we are, what we are, etc.

## SECTION 41

This is like one of those conversations you have with someone on a sidewalk (in New York, that is – if it was London it would be a pavement...) and you just don’t stop. Even though you’ve said a million times you have to Be somewhere, or Do something.

| Yesah, it is.

OK, so I’m going to pretend the conversation is actually over now.

You’re going to do WHAT?

Pretend this is actually coming to an end. See, here I am, waving goodbye.

Goodbye!

Goodbye!

Goodbye!

*[at least one person walks out of the immediate space]*

Exeunt a player.

No, it's exit a player. Exeunt players. It's Latin.

Oh.

Let's keep pretending stuff, it's fun.

OK, I'll pretend that we're leaving too. Here I am, waving goodbye.

Goodbye!

Goodbye!

Goodbye!

*[another person walks out]*

Exit a player.

| oh but they've come back OK

SECTION 42

| we're missing a player

I am the King:

Stay, give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine.  
Here's to thy health. Give him the cup.

I am Hamlet:

I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile.  
Come. [*They play*] Another hit. What say you?

I am Laertes:

A touch, a touch; I do confess't

I am the Queen:

He's fat and scant of breath.  
Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows.  
The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

I didn't know Hamlet was fat.

Me neither.

Queen dies.

Laertes falls.

King dies.

Laertes dies.

Hamlet dies.

Horatio lives and puts Hamlet on the stage.

I am Fortinbras: Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

Exeunt.

Go on, then.

But we're just pretending.

Right.

*[rest of the players leave]*

### SECTION 43

I have had my vision.

*[Below is audible but not visible, and maybe getting further away:]*

Where should we have our thanks?

Not from his mouth,  
had it th' ability of life to thank you.  
He never gave commandment for their death.

Right, I forgot about that.

Hmm...

Ouch. That hurts.

Sorry.

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**Attached to back cover:**

**Appendix G:**

1. Edited DVD of excerpts from *The Jesus Guy* (including rehearsal footage focusing on two pages of text) and an excerpt from lab showing *Has It Started Yet?*.
2. Unedited DVD of full performance of *The Jesus Guy* April 2006.

**Appendix H:**

1. Edited DVD of highlights from three shows of *Besides, you lose your soul or the History of Western Civilisation* at Camden People's Theatre, London with still photos by Jorgenson and audio of interview of Barclay and Aitchison by Dr. Kéline Gotman broadcast on ResonanceFM in February 2009.
2. Unedited DVD of full performance on 1 March, 2009 of *Besides, you lose your soul* at Camden People's Theatre, London.