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Eco-Theatre and New Media: Devising Toward Transnational Balance

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ECO-THEATRE AND NEW MEDIA: DEVISING TOWARD TRANSNATIONAL
BALANCE

by

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A Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
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ECO-THEATRE AND NEW MEDIA: DEVISING TOWARD TRANSNATIONAL
BALANCE

By

Marnie J. Glazier

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the field of Speech Communication: Theatre/Performance Studies

Approved by:

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

MARNIE J. GLAZIER, for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in SPEECH COMMUNICATION: THEATRE/PERFORMANCE STUDIES, presented on 27 April 2012, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: ECO-THEATRE AND NEW MEDIA: DEVISING TOWARD TRANSNATIONAL BALANCE

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Anne Fletcher

This dissertation seeks to address the pivotal ecological and technological realities of the twenty-first century, currently giving rise to new patterns of existence and new paradigms of human inquiry. This study will ask how technological innovation and environmental urgency have altered the ways in which human beings think, and thus perceive the world around them, changing human behavior, or non-behavior, and calling forth new imperatives for the arts, and namely for the Theatre. Most significantly, the dissertation attempts to traverse the shadow-lands, between our ecologies and our technologies, exploring those essential points of convergence in the borderlands where Eco-Theatre and New Media must find a precious balance.

As digital media and new technologies continue to transcend previously conceived barriers, so do new opportunities present themselves. New forms emerge, bridging cultures, facilitating connections of thought beyond national geographic boundaries. Rising to the challenge – seeking a global, even playing ground in a liminal age of shifting, invisible borders – this dissertation addresses the current need for re-envisioning of our positionality as artists, and as citizens of the world. In conclusion, the dissertation points toward a methodology of interdisciplinary creative collaboration, of global community-based social practice art, of theatre ecology, and of active new media strategies to address the needs of this decisive age.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my children, my two sons, my two bright all-ways shining boys. May these ideas and the conversations they share in, inspire you to go on dreaming, believing, being – actors in the rich pageant of our planet's future.



Fig. 1. Silas Glazier, *Photograph of John, Alden and Silas Glazier*, 3 Mar 2012.

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FOREWORD

From my humblest beginnings as a thinker, as a writer, as a theatre artist, my work has been in devised theatre. What began in impromptu childhood performances finds voice in this dissertation: an apex and an opening, borne of such crossroads, such converging patterns, such innumerable intersections on the point of which we find ourselves today, children of the twenty-first century.

I digress, to my youth in the 1970s. When the *Living Theatre* was performing their cycle plays in the prisons of Brazil, when Peter Schumann was bringing political puppet theatre and bread to thousands, when Augusto Boal in exile, was pioneering the Theatre of the Oppressed, my own devising began in the theatre of my bedroom. With two dogs and an occasional willing cat, came the formation of my first ensemble. Pieced together assemblages of song and dance, and spontaneous canine performances were interspersed with comic forays and other such staples.

Like my predecessors, it wasn't that I'd rejected the notion of performing character roles in previously defined scripts, with copyrights and production histories and video-archived performance footage – with clearly defined edges, and borders, and possibilities. I'd had my background there, in *Cinderella*, the *HMS Pinafore*, the Congregational Church Christmas pageant. They were beautiful, breathtaking, each attracting its crowd of spectators, each leaving audiences thoroughly impressed, but each for me its own kind of oppression. Invariably, whether in church or school, the most attractive, the most socially prominent children obtained the leading speaking

roles, year after year in repetition of the same dramatic formula. I learned early my place among the chorus.

And instinct led me each time back to the bedroom, dogs in tow, straight on, to the stage of my braided rug. In so many ways I am a product of my era, a daughter of the revolution, born and raised in its aftermath. In the quiet anti-climax of the student protest, of the ERA, of the Civil Rights movements. I learned to cope with the injustices of my small world, through art, unknowingly heeding the impulse of creative collaboration. Like a wave that crested so far beneath the surface of my world, its rocking swaying rhythm moved me unawares, tectonic plates shifting invisibly, the impulse guiding.

What was growing up in the world during the period in which I experienced the bulk of my own growing, was an increasingly pervasive commercialism, and in the theatre, an increasing tension between art as product and art as process. Stagecraft Productions' Andrew Ryder explains of the process-based collaborative *Bread and Puppet* Theatre's founder, "Peter Schumann views theatre and all forms of art as absolutely essential" (Ryder). Hence the name, *Bread and Puppet*, and the signature sharing of loaves as accompaniment to the collective's street theatre performances. But from 1970 to 1974 Schumann and his ensemble took up residency at Goddard College in Vermont, reacting against their recent tour of "regular established theatres with their habitual audiences: fancy or bourgeois," and aiming to appeal to the popular audience with what would become the *Bread and Puppet Circus* (Brecht 124).

For the *Bread and Puppet* of the mid to late 1970s, the notion of a travelling theatre, according to the company's biographer Stephan Brecht, was motivated at least in part by "the idea of a real America to be reached (in sufficient numbers) only outside of the big dehumanizing cities, by travelling..." (125). Brecht explains,

The variety show form of circus...connects up with the idea of an amusement park, and with the ideas, first of being able to accommodate a variety of shows with different orientations and appeals – more aesthetic, more crude, more personal, more traditional, more political, more religious – within a single show, without shocking any expectations, and, second, of being able to get Everything in, the scope of human existence, birth, life and death, and thus being able to achieve, the diversity notwithstanding, by means of it, a unity, the true unity of life. (125)

At the same time as Schumann and his troupe were completing the groundwork for their travelling circus, Minneapolis's *In the Heart of the Beast* Theatre company, another highly process-based collective, was coming into being, and would by 1983, travel down the Mississippi River from Brainerd, Minnesota to New Orleans, Louisiana, with their own *Circle of Water Circus*, part celebration, and part plea for the "vital resource" whose dead zones continue to this day, to expand since their initial discovery in the 70s (In the Heart of the Beast). Eco-Theatre pioneers, the *In the Heart of the Beast* and the *Bread and Puppet* Theatre companies influenced my life and work indirectly from my earliest beginnings. In large part then, this dissertation is an homage to them.

Alas, there are – have long been – other currents stirring beneath the surface of our contemporary world, calling our attention again and again to process. For those of us growing up in the America of the 1970s, the landscape we'd first behold was a bleak backdrop to the post-industrial society we'd come to inherit. And while the 1980s would yield bigger houses, bigger cars, and bigger paychecks, for those of us whose playgrounds had been the wastelands of polluted streams, forgotten railroad tracks, and former hubs of industry, the realities of what hid beneath the new sleek surface of America, haunted us like the image of the crying Indian indelibly planted in our brains by T.V.'s *Keep America Beautiful* campaign. Couple this with the growing realization of America's nuclear prowess– the only certainty, that we'd been born into a world bent on its own destruction. Author and social activist Wendell Berry wrote, in 1987, "The present situation...is that we...are so threatened by a foreign enemy that we must prepare...not simply to 'die in defense of our country,' but to accept and condone the deaths of virtually the whole population of our country...and of our land itself, as a reasonable cost of national defense" (98).

An undergraduate in the 1990s, majoring in American Studies, I'd become an avid activist, a dedicated member of the college's Praxis organization, the only difficulty, finding the one great cause. I campaigned for education reform, for human rights, for clean water, for land conservation. Cracks in the surface, the causes multiplied, spidering off each one a thousand issues deep, a wonder the center would hold.

In the preface to his *Home Economics*, Wendell Berry writes,

The essays in this book continue an attempt to construct an argument that I began twenty or so years ago. The subject of the

argument is the fact, and ultimately the faith, that things connect—that we are wholly dependent on a pattern, an all-inclusive form, that we partly understand. The argument, therefore, is an effort to describe responsibility. (ix)

Of all things, responsibility by the late 90s, had become perhaps the hardest to track. The long period of international industrial deregulation championed by fiscal conservatives like Margaret Thatcher, Boris Yeltsin, and Ronald Reagan, had led by the close of the twentieth century, to what economist Richard Bingham would deem "aggressive unilateralism," particularly on the part of the United States (68).

Renowned ecologist Eugene Odum in the prologue to his 1997 *Ecology: A Bridge Between Science and Society*, alluded to a term architect and environmentalist Buckminster Fuller had helped make popular almost thirty years earlier: "Spaceship Earth." In his seminal text, Odum reminded his readers of humanity's interdependence on the planet and its limited resources. "Our global life-support system that provides air, water, food, and power is being stressed by pollution, poor management, and population pressure." He urged his audience, "It is time to heed the early warning signs that are appearing" (1). But by 2011, the world's population had reached 7 billion, with "natural resources being depleted at record rates," according to the World Watch Institute (Shapely).

In a recent *People's Hearing: The Indivisible Living Entity of the Planet Earth v. Monsanto Corporation*, in Carbondale, Illinois in January 2012, International Green Party representative Paula Bradshaw testified that "6000 calories of corn" were

consumed, and "9 billion animals were killed each day in the United States" (Bradshaw). At that same hearing, plant biologist Dawn Morningstar reminded the audience, "Everything in the ecosystem works together– holistically. In nature," Morningstar contended, "every time one thing arises, an antidote arises" (Morningstar).

I come back around and around, to this notion of pattern. Today, the world has in so many drastic ways, changed from the one I and other thinkers and artists were born into, in the twentieth century. And yet, in so many ways, the shift my generation bore early witness to in the 1970s and 80s helped solidify the patterns of unaccountability, of production and consumption, of quiet grave passivity threatening our world today. We have entered a period of tremendous confluence, in which have not only the patterns of humanity and planet increasingly proven their interconnectedness, but in which pattern itself proves increasingly coalescent. In his bestselling, *You Are Not a Gadget: A Manifesto*, digital media pioneer Jaron Lanier recalls anthropologist Steve Barnett's reference to my generation – the ominous "Generation X" – as a perfect example of pattern extinction, "a phenomena in which a culture runs out of variations of traditional designs in their pottery and becomes less creative" (128). Says Lanier:

A common rationalization in the fledgling world of digital culture back then [in the early 1990s] was that we were entering a transitional lull before a creative storm—or were already in the eye of one. But the sad truth is that we were not passing through a momentary lull before a storm. We had instead entered a persistent somnolence.... (128)

I take particular issue with baby-boomer, Jaron Lanier's analysis of my generation in particular, as the penultimate example of the blandness and inertia so threatening human ingenuity and planetary continuance today. We are the generation of the mosh pit. We learned, in a world speeding faster by the day, to integrate, to dance with abandon, to long for the contact of bodies slamming against bodies, seeking common rhythm. In the darkness of basement rave-houses, and vacant warehouses, we danced in one great raging circle, and if I inadvertently threw myself into you, my neighbor, I rolled with you, and kept on going. We are the first of many generations to inherit a world gone bland and inert, a world whose tumultuous progress would leave less and less room for the dancing, a world ever more overlapping, messy, disjointed – for all its seeming sleekness.

This work, as I'll grant much of the work of our era, is, therefore, an act of convergence, an attempt to connect, to trace the tributaries, unblock the dams, and rejuvenate the river of compassion in our contemporary theatre arts. This dissertation borne of a coagulated, of a tumultuous– of a radically decisive– era, recognizes the need for human responsibility in actively, attentively determining the pattern of our future, of our very ecological continuance.

In that vein, Chapter One argues the need for mindful action in our contemporary world's longstanding age of automation, presently altering the human fabric and the fabric of our very planet. Chapter One details the specific confluence of factors presently bringing the global community into crisis: the environmental, the technological, and the existential. The chapter addresses the ways in which theatre's current crisis of form directly connects with these larger crises, suggesting how in

confronting its own crisis, theatre can at once help address the larger crises in our world – not by selling spectacle, but by exploring emerging methodologies that point toward a theatre and a world of sustainability. Namely, the chapter proposes a thorough exploration and recombination of Eco-theatre, of interactive media –addressing the opportunities and the limitations of new technologies– and most significantly of genuine human engagement, as a means of altering the ways in which humans engage with one another and with the planet. In conclusion, the chapter speaks to some of the ways in which contemporary Eco-Theatre and New Media practitioners are pointing the way forward with such methodologies.

Expanding upon Chapter One's proposition, Chapter Two addresses the conundrum of engaging action in an age of passivity. The chapter explores new paradigms for devised theatre, and human engagement, borne of our age of convergence– in theatre and society. Chapter Two explores the historical background and the contemporary resonance of devised theatre today. Drawing connections between the social movements of our own and of previous eras, the chapter argues the increasing relevance of devising today. It undertakes a brief survey of devising artists and companies, from Bertolt Brecht to *In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre*. It confronts the challenge of defining the complex and often variable components of devised theatre, suggesting in conclusion those commonalities that make devising especially important in our contemporary environment, and at last pointing to devised theatre's receptivity to ego-less inquiry and genuine eco-centrism.

Chapter Three reviews the confluence of factors compelling work in theatre and social action today, exploring further the notion of pattern and of humankind's

relationship to art and theatre as means of discovery, egoless inquiry, and most importantly, survival. The chapter discusses in particular the meaning of the term *ecology*, exploring the intersections of our real and our virtual landscapes. It traces the recent developments in digital media and in environmental prerogatives, suggesting new patterns in eco-theatre. Finally, the chapter discusses the need for further exploration and accountability in the theatre arts, as a means of bringing transformative possibilities at this decisive moment in our planet's continuance, suggesting theatre as a means for rediscovering human- nature reciprocity, and new patterns of eco-consciousness.

Chapter Four presents, as case studies, three recent devised performance pieces: The first performance script is *Soup*, a project exploring food in the twenty-first century as a metaphor for the state of the world today. A global/community-based weaving together of personal interviews conducted around the subjects of food, soup, and sustainability, along with research from popular culture and media, with folk songs, and finally with ongoing web-based social engagement, *Soup* is an attempt to harness the aliveness and interactivity of theatre to inspire dialogue on critical contemporary issues and to create transformative possibilities for a wide range of audiences. The second performance script is *Cruzando el Alambre de Puas: Crossing the Barbed Wire*, a collaborative project intended to explore the contradictions between free market globalization and human immobility in the twenty-first century. *Cruzando* weaves together personal testimonies from transnational participant performers, with news headlines on immigration, with poetry and with Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The third and final performance script is *Beauty: A Dialogue*, a collaborative project inspired by SIUC

undergraduate student Carrie Mulderink's wish to expand the conversation of Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*, to include voices traditionally left out of Ensler's text, such as people with disabilities, men, those who identify as transgender, and countless others. *Beauty* is a devised piece which speaks to common perceptions and misperceptions of beauty, and celebrates the trials, tribulations, commonalities, and differences from which its fabulous cast gained strength and exposed their own true beauty.

Chapter Five discusses each of the above performance projects in further detail, looking into the origins and instincts behind each of the projects, as well as the themes, the economics, and the inception of each of the works. The chapter expands upon the initiatives of this dissertation, offering concluding strategies for the continued exploration of new paradigms for the theatre. It provides a succinct understanding of the theory and application of an evolving performance methodology combining devised/hybrid structure, transnational social action, eco-centrism, and new/independent media, in an attempt to re-pattern our passivity into active engagement. Combining devised eco-theatre and new media strategies with yoga, dance, and creative writing intensives, the chapter offers exercises and rehearsal plans for today's practitioners. Finally it addresses this practitioner's aspirations in going forward. Rising to the challenge of inspiring action in an age of passivity, the chapter and the dissertation culminate in a call to action, not an end but a new beginning, an affirmation of our ability as artists and as people, to make new pattern.

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CHAPTER 1

PATTERNING THE CONFLUENCE; A POETICS OF PRAXIS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: INTRODUCTION

The Miracle that saves the world, the realm of human affairs, from its normal, 'natural' ruin is ultimately the fact of natality, in which the faculty of action is ontologically rooted. It is, in other words, the birth of new men and the new beginning, the action they are capable of by virtue of being born. Only the full experience of this capacity can bestow upon human affairs faith and hope...

–Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*

Hannah Arendt, in 1958, wrote what time has revealed to be a disturbingly prophetic account of the modern human condition. Arendt, now more than half a century ago, spoke to what has become the crux of the contemporary era. Detailing, in *The Human Condition*, the consequences of the alienating ego-centered age of automation, Arendt foresaw the perils of the future we now find increasingly present.

It becomes almost ironic to look back upon these observations in a world where by days we seem to have leapt so far beyond humanity's wildest expectations, with laser-pointed ease. And yet the human frailty of which Arendt, in 1958, so poignantly spoke has perhaps never before in history been as deeply felt as it is today. Presently, we cough into our sleeves, the forced admission to what devastating impact this numbing cycle of production and consumption has had upon our now so starkly threatened world. All the while, the cycle continues.

It is thus in her call to mindful action wherein Arendt's ideas today have the most appeal. For there is no doubt that in the imperiled position we now find ourselves, mindful action will become increasingly tantamount to our continuance. Finally, as theatre is centered on the interdependence of action and idea, it is uniquely poised to bring this sense of praxis back to the contemporary world. Arendt reminds us of art's transformative process wherein thought "...transforms its mute and inarticulate despondency..." and the "...human capacity which by its very nature is world-open and communicative transcends and releases into the world a passionate intensity from its imprisonment within the self" (168).

Art finally reminds us of our humanness, allowing us to see, reflected in the mirror of the transcendent creation, the expansive nature of our being. It reminds us that we are part of something greater, and simultaneously brings us to an intuitive understanding of our own, uniquely personal essence. But more than that, in its very tangibility – in its expressive, communicative nature – art brings us into conversation, with ourselves and with other selves, with other ways of being—past, present, and future. As Arlene Goldbard in *New Creative Community: The Art of Cultural Development*, puts it, "Society will always be improved by the expansion of dialogue and by the active participation of all communities and groups in exploring and resolving social issues" (143). Moreover, as Goldbard so succinctly elucidates, "Live, active social experience strengthens individuals' ability to participate in democratic discourse and community life, whereas an excess of passive, isolated experience disempowers" (143). And as artist Elizam Escobar posits in *The Heuristic Power of Art*, "Surrounded by obscurity, art becomes a salvation, the sacred activity of liberty" (Becker 51). This

brings us back to the notion of praxis, and more pointedly, to its meeting with performance, in the theatre.

On the specific art of the theatre, philosophers throughout history have argued, speculating on this particular form's significance, its role in society, its relationship to the needs and ideas of its time. Finally they've questioned its ultimate purpose, most often hinging back upon Aristotle's charge that theatre instruct and delight. And while each era might arguably have claim to the notion that theirs is "a time like no other," thus calling forth an art unprecedented, progress built upon progress, we are today experiencing a convergence of crises – technological, environmental, and existential – our response to which could quite possibly unseat human civilization and its very notion of change.

The February 21, 2011 issue of *Time Magazine* featured on its front cover an image at once so innocuous, and so horrific in its very simplicity, as to linger long in the mind of the viewer: a bare human head, hind view, and from the base of the supple skull, a connecting band of simple wire circuitry. "2045," the caption reads, "The Year Man Becomes Immortal" (Grossman). The feature article for the month in this popular magazine focuses on the singularity movement, summed up by Bill Gates as, envisioning "...a future in which information technologies have advanced so far and fast that they enable humanity to transcend its biological limitations – transforming our lives in ways we can't yet imagine" (Kurzweil).

There are two unyielding currents astir as we settle into the new century. They are, simply put: the environmental and the technological, each as exertive, as

efficacious as the next, each pushing rapidly toward continuance— or ruin. Each brings its own crisis and suggests a third, existential turning point.

What this has to do with the theatre arts is both immensely complex and startlingly simple: Theatre is again, at its essence, mindful action. Theatre is life. Scholar Paul Woodruff explains humanity's need for the theatre in this way: "They need it the way they need each other—the way they need to gather, to talk things over, to have stories in common, to share friends and enemies. They need to watch, together, something human. Without this...well, without this we would be a different sort of species" (11).

Woodruff's evocative closing statement excerpted above from his 2008 *The Necessity of Theatre*, brings us smack into the center of the contemporary paradox, between what eco-theatre pioneer Downing Cless refers to as "physis and noumos," nature and culture, or put another way, progress and utter destruction. "Aren't we," we ask ourselves, quiet as a mouse inside our mind-of-minds, "Aren't we becoming `a different sort of species?`"

Through genetic modification, biochemical advance, and technological breakthrough, humankind in the twenty-first century is steadily altering not only the fabric of our own human make-up, but that of the very planet. In the March 2011 issue of *National Geographic*, author Elizabeth Kolbert's "A New Geologic Epoch: The Age of Man," chronicles the dramatic impact human beings have had on the planet and the resultant shift the earth has taken into the Anthropocene Era. Agricultural expansion, deforestation, industrialization, mountaintop removal, and a whole slew of other human alterations of the natural environment, according to Kolbert and many of the world's leading scientists, have rendered our era so tenuous as to easily suggest that

humankind might by its own doing bring itself and the rest of the biosphere, the way of the dinosaur. The Kolbert article asks, “Why is our impact growing?” What are the root causes of this growing human devastation? Population growth? Affluence and its reciprocal relationship with consumption? Technology “which offers new tools for exploiting and consuming?” “The IPAT formula is a way of thinking about the issue,” the article explains. “It says the three factors compound... $I(\text{Human Impact}) = P(\text{Population}) \times A(\text{Affluence}) \times T(\text{Technology})$ ” (Kolbert 72). It seems that in the advent of the post WWII baby boom, in the very period from which Hanna Arendt speaks to us in *The Human Condition*, human impact had begun to skyrocket; and it has only continued in its exponential growth since.

Andrew Maynard, Scientist and Director of the University of Michigan’s Risk Science Center, sums up today’s challenges in this way,

As we move further into the 21st century, we are facing a confluence of three factors that will shake up the interface between society and science. Nanoscale science and technology are enabling unprecedented control over matter, allowing living and non-living systems to be manipulated and used in radical new ways. Innovative new approaches to communication and networking are facilitating the emergence of virtual partnerships that transcend geographical, organizational and social boundaries. And society is now so closely coupled to the biosphere that our actions are stressing the system to a greater extent than ever before in human history (Maynard).

In many ways, the burgeoning human progress of the twenty-first century, from the molecular to the virtual, is a double-edged sword; it creates as it destroys, its advancement in an ideal world, poised perfectly to fix that which it simultaneously threatens to forever unsettle – right down to the biosphere. And this brings us back to the theatre, which, as artist and scholar Jan Cohen-Cruz claims, “transports the audience to a reality apart from the everyday” (Cohen-Cruz 1).

For, theatre above all other art forms, exists in the present. If, as previously suggested, theatre is life, it achieves that essence of alive-ness through the act of being in the moment—through the act of negotiating the moment. In this sense, theatre is constructed of the moment-by-moment choices made in the live act of its creation. It is, at its best, eternally present. It is, to reiterate, on the most basic level, mindful action. Thus while the script may be written and re-written, the design envisioned and perfected, the performance rehearsed and polished to the very breath—the very fact of its collaborative, performative nature suggests continual process, continual inquiry, continual negotiation of the unexpected. And it is this capacity for live in-the-moment transformation wherein theatre affords such tremendous opportunity for societal contribution.

Theatre artist and scholar Theresa May in *Re-Membering the Mountain* urges, “If we are to win the sea changes in Western society that are needed to secure the survival of peoples, species, and ecosystems, then deep ecology must be an imaginative endeavor as well as a philosophical inquiry” (357). In “deep ecology,” May, to simplify, references the inherent interrelationship among ecology and all other areas of inquiry, so relevant at this moment in our collective history. May is not alone in

recognizing the dire significance of this profound interconnectivity today. The BRIDGES Consortium think tank, in a 2003 general article, “BRIDGES I: Interdisciplinary Collaboration as Practice,” explains, “The increasing complexity of technology requires both deeper levels of specialization and greater levels of collaboration between disciplines” (Pearce 123). In fact the think tank’s primary objective is to “...study and enhance the process of interdisciplinary collaboration in the arts, sciences and technology,” not the least of which includes theatre and performance. (Pearce 123)

It is in the collaborative, performative nature of theatre, in the continual process, the continual inquiry that is its making, wherein its extraordinary relevance today in this particular moment of crisis, is most widely felt. Of integral significance is not only theatre’s immediacy, but moreover its very tendency toward collaboration—toward interdisciplinarity. Theatre encompasses, or has the capacity to encompass, all other art forms, and all manner of disciplines, from the creative to the scientific. Its positionality, as an interdisciplinary form, in a time that so necessitates interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing the challenges confronting the modern world, makes theatre in some ways more essential than it has ever been before.

At the same time, this fundamental human art form has perhaps never before been challenged on so many levels as it is today. For, as the contemporary society itself alters so dramatically its fabric, the theatre is twisted and stretched in myriad directions. As the very notions of liveness and of performance are expanded and collapsed upon themselves, theatre’s own in-the-moment negotiations meet with new forms of expectation, and with new conceptions of the unexpected.

As artist/scholar Baz Kershaw in *Theatre Ecology; Environments and Performance Events* contends, "...the drama becomes prone to acute and continual crisis as the distinctions between image and belief, illusion and reality, stage and society, culture and nature begin to collapse and theatre ecology turns in upon itself" (67). Faced with the unprecedented challenges of that "confluence of" three factors Andrew Maynard suggests "will shake up (in many ways already has shaken up) the interface between society and science" the very conception of reality is presently undergoing dramatic alteration (Maynard). In a world where fewer and fewer people are needed to perform the labor that ensures their continuance— from food production, to the manufacturing of essential and inessential goods, right down to the servicing of the body, mind, and soul— the buffer between humankind and reality widens by the day. The very idea of action, mindful and otherwise, becomes a perversion of itself. And at once, the capacity to act becomes literally a mere matter of intention.

Social media on the most mundane level allow individuals to construct idealized performances of self in an online format, and on the most utopian level, allow correspondents across the globe to form virtual alliances. Nanoscale science, technology, and robotic surgery prolong human life spans. New media instruct and delight in ways less and less dependent on human effort and contact. And the avatar self becomes as mainstream a notion as the opposable thumb.

In an increasingly virtual world of seemingly limitless performances, potentialities and perfections, what, one wonders, is the relevance of the theatre arts? Strangely, the answer lies in the opportunity they afford us for *imperfection*—for unparalleled presence. In a certain sense, the current crises facing modern civilization have opened

doors previously thought impassable. As the very term *crisis* implies in its etymology, the problem suggests a solution; the crisis becomes a turning point in which to take stock, to assess and to determine a new course. What makes the theatre unique in this precarious moment of decision is its very ability to engage on the level of the human, spontaneously, actively, collaboratively. For even as our world is transformed, so must we be actors in that transformation. And theatre again engages audience and performers in the moment-by-moment action of aliveness, in the moment-by-moment capacity for transformation.

“The spontaneous give-and-take between performers and spectators,” says David Saltz in “Live Media: Interactive Technology and Theatre,” “is integral to theatre’s appeal as an art form” (108). Theatre’s uniqueness then is also its saving grace as it reaches its own turning point, faced with the challenges of competing with contemporary digital performance means, and simultaneously addressing the needs of its changing audiences. As sentient beings, humans are ever poised between the physical and the metaphysical, the material and the ethereal. Theatre, above all other forms, allows for a balancing of the two, a balancing which today proves ever more dire in its necessity. It is significant then, that we remember, that theatre is not only action, but *mindful* action.

As theatre artist/theorist Jerzy Grotowski’s 1968 *Towards A Poor Theatre* reminds us, the theatre above all is “a place of provocation” (21). In the theatre, according to the innovative, increasingly influential Grotowski, real substance is revealed, while the masks that we adopt in life are made to fall away. The potency of the form thus, resides not only in its immediacy, but moreover in its essence as

encounter, and in its subsequent tendency like all art toward profound meaning-making. “Art,” Grotowski says, “is the experience which we take upon ourselves when we open ourselves to others, when we confront ourselves with them in order to understand ourselves—not in the scientific sense of re-creating the context of an epoch in history, but in an elementary and human sense” (59).

This is no small task for the theatre, especially today, in the very midst of those “sea changes” so subtly attested to by *Time Magazine*’s February 21 cover, *National Geographic*’s “Age of Man,” and CNN’s “Natural Disasters” web page, with its chronicle of recent “record-breaking” and axis-shifting weather headlines (“Natural Disasters...”). And yet today, the kind of confrontation Grotowski was talking about in 1968—elementary and human—is of a certainty what is needed most. “Facing the leviathan of our global ecological crises,” says artist and scholar Downing Cless, “I am bolstered by all those who find signs of regenerative change” (174). For, within crisis resides the opportunity for renewal, the capacity for faith and hope. But not if we do not act upon such opportunity, not if we remain passive and inert. Thus, as contemporary civilization in the twenty-first century seeks its own regenerative change, so too must the age old form of theatre.

Competing today against ever more captivating media, the theatre’s struggles to maintain its viability in the age of the moving picture, and even in the advent of the television, seem to pale in comparison. Today as our home and personal media become ever more interactive and our virtual realities ever more real, the theatre is met with challenges previously unimagined. The question we must ask ourselves then, as theatre practitioners, is how this crisis of form connects to the larger crises confronting

the contemporary world, and how the theatre itself might in confronting its own crises, act as a bridge, bringing positive outcomes in today's technological, environmental, ecological turning points.

There are a number of ways in which all of the elements previously addressed can come together to provide profound opportunities for theatre and society. There are, however, three key areas of convergence that stand out in this moment above all others. And those areas precisely mirror our points of crisis. They are the following: the environmental, the technological, and the existential. Let us begin with the first.

Downing Cless said in 2010, "The theatrical mirror must be bent. Strictly reflective representation," insists Cless, "just plays into the hand of corporate, dualistic, denial-based modes of life and thought" (174). What Cless is calling for is a new ecologically conscious approach to theatre, responding to the call of theorists like Una Chaudhuri and Theresa May for "a vigorous unabashedly material-ecological discourse in theatre studies...that recognizes the ecological roots and implications of language, representation, systems of signification, and master narratives" (May "Beyond" 96).

Reflective representation comes not just in the form of the living room drama, but in the perpetuation of the status quo, in the selling of spectacle, in the reproduction of cinematic effects, and often times in the staging and re-staging of the same safe box office hit in perpetuity. The recent Julie Taymor production of *Spider Man* on Broadway is just one example of these trends. According to the *New York Times*'s Catherine Rampell, the production "made headlines as the most expensive musical in Broadway history. At \$65 million," says Rampell, "it had an initial budget that is more than twice as big as that of the previous record holder, *Shrek the Musical* (Rampell).

The show itself, like its predecessor based on the popular *Shrek* films, is in many ways a sure sell and has, perhaps not surprisingly, received rave reviews for its spectacle and its impressive score, boasting music from U2's Bono and the Edge. Its costs, though, also not surprisingly, have rivaled even those of the Hollywood blockbuster, with which it seems to compete. And in terms of its playing "into the hand of corporate, dualistic, denial-based modes of life and thought," the production becomes emblematic of the very impasse bringing so many today to question the viability of the theatre. While Taymor has no doubt brought her singular vision to this new production, the production itself is nonetheless a representation of the same dualistic story the corporate world has been capitalizing on for decades.

It was doubtless this familiarity with the safely polarizing *Spider Man* story that gave investors from the corporate and financial sectors the confidence to stake the show. It is in effect a comfortable retelling of the hegemonic master narrative. Whether the *Spider Man* team's ambitious effort will ever recoup its equally ambitious budget remains to be seen. But Broadway is not alone in raising the financial bar.

The traditional theatre from the academic to the regional continues in numerous ways to follow the Broadway model, in many cases staging their own scaled down versions of the same sure hits that have attracted audiences over the last half century. Competing against ever more pervasive forms of technological advance, even the most humbly endowed of theatres face costly challenges in attempting to reinvent themselves to keep up with this prohibitive status quo. With ever more expensive and complex efforts called upon to achieve the simple ends through which the theatre has

over time organically arisen, the end result inches ever closer to what pioneering theatre director Peter Brook deems “deadly theatre” (9).

Finally, such theatre today runs the risk of engaging in profound hypocrisy, “stuck in a cultural rut as we careen toward eco-catastrophe” (Cless 16). It neglects to serve its time, instead in many ways reinforcing “the corporate, dualistic, denial-based modes of life and thought” that have brought us to the precarious position we now find ourselves in— as a species and as a planet. (174)

For, such reinvention always comes at a cost –to both the community the theatre seeks to serve, and the physical environment. As Downing Cless posits, “Human excess or overreach in the cultural environment causes degradation of the natural environment” (3-4).

Today’s theatre artists have an opportunity to explore alternative models to this increasing tendency in modern theatre to “up the ante,” to compete against – rather than work with – technological advance. We have today more than ever the broadest opportunities to look across the spectrum of the disciplines at issues of sustainability, sustainism, interdisciplinarity, and the potential new digital media afford for international inclusivity. We have the opportunity to explore emerging methodologies that point toward a theatre –and a world—of sustainability. This brings us to the second area of convergence.

In this world of increasingly virtual performance, where the internet serves as “a palimpsest of the older ways of communicating, even as it is also a way of signifying through new technologies,” again the very frame of the theatre—the very notion of

liveness—is reconfigured. (Westlake 38) Theorist and performance artist Guillermo Gomez-Pena, even as far back as 2001, mused:

Since the new global culture is supposed to be 'interactive', we are granted the illusion of talking back....The illusion of interactivity and citizen participation has definitely changed the relationship between live art and its audience. Audiences are increasingly having a harder time just sitting and passively watching a performance....Given this dramatic epistemological shift, artists and art institutions are pressured to redefine their epistemological relationship with their public (15).

Doubtless we have long recognized the insurgency of media into the realm of the theatre, by means of video, audio, and projection technology—what David Saltz refers to as “linear” forms, wherein, “The medium forces the live actor to conform rigorously to it,” lending “...the live performance a canned quality” (110). Today’s interactive media, however, provide new possibilities for audience-performer engagement and exchange.

David Saltz explains, “Interactive media do not sap the spontaneity or variability from a live performance....By definition, the more interactive the media, the more responsive” (110). Saltz cites a small contingency of theatre companies engaged in the exploration of interactive media in performance, companies like the Gertrude Stein Repertory Theatre, and the Institute for the Exploration in Virtual realities, but more popular examples come to mind in companies like the Blueman group. According to Saltz, such performance work with live interactive technologies is “giving rise to new art forms that defy traditional interdisciplinary boundaries” (110).

A recent Chicago production by the Blue Man Group featured three enormous ipads, each one operated by one of the show's three Blue Men. The taller-than-the-average-human ipads offered a glimpse into the boundless opportunity and the alienating inhumanity modern technology proffers. The show itself, though boasting arguably enough of its own spectacle to rival even Spiderman, relied most heavily upon simple stage magic. Each of the three Blue Men were dressed in simple brown suits, with the added touch of blue painted hands and faces. The most constant element in the production was the repetitive thrumming on paint-covered drums, that offered with each beat, a fabulous splash of color. And far and away the most exciting point in the show for audiences of all ages was the moment in which the endless rolls of paper streamers stretched across the crowd, literally touching each participant, bonding all together, alike in their tactile web.

Chicago *Tribune* Theatre Critic, Chris Jones says about this latest Blue Man Group production, "This is no longer a show about our need to touch—we have screens for that now. It is about how we touch. And its limits" (2). The Blue Man Group is consciously addressing the changing face of technology in the modern world. More than that, they are bringing the interactivity of our pioneering new media literally onto the stage. And the Blue Man Group is not alone.

Even the circus has responded in its performative offerings, to new media technologies. A recent production by the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus had as its central motif, a contest among a multi-generational group of clowns, over musical technologies. The eldest clown tried again and again to assert himself, center stage, to play a trumpet solo. All the while, the youngest clown continued to overpower

the sound of the lone horn through the use of various musical media, from the ipad, to the tiniest ipod. Thus the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey are, like the Blue Man Group, bringing new media technologies onto the stage in provocative ways that inspire conversation and address the challenges inherent in an increasingly technologized world.

In a similar vein, innovative theatre companies have begun using new media technologies to make the theatre accessible to wider groups of viewers. A small number of theatre companies have begun offering live streaming of their productions for a minimal cost. One such example is the 2011 production of Joey Brenneman's *Better Left Unsaid*. The show's producers claim, "Live streaming gives theater artists the opportunity to present our work to an unlimited global audience." Moreover, "Live streaming is inherently community building. When you live stream a play you combine the excitement of live theater with the community of live streamed video events" (Betterleftunsaidtv).

These combined efforts may indicate just the kind of boundary-crossing needed to confront the challenges awaiting us in the twenty-first century – namely the challenge and the dire necessity of environmental performance and embodiment in a divisive contemporary world. Finally, such new art forms in the theatre might help bring to light emerging imperatives of not only Theatre and Ecology, but human existence itself. In facing today's most dire challenges, contemporary practitioners across the disciplines might find opportunities through this meeting of theatre and interactive media, to reflect and harmonize the human and natural environments. This brings us to the third and final point of convergence, the existential.

“Creating a cultural container for dialogue can give people the chance to encounter each other as human beings,” according to Arlene Goldbard, “this path almost always leads to the possibility of a world that can contain real differences without bursting apart at the seams” (53). It becomes increasingly necessary, given the challenges that lie ahead, to remain in touch with our own essential humanness and to recognize our connectedness with the larger global community. Theatre can, at its best, provide precisely the cultural container needed to bring about such cognizance, to inspire and to empower.

Augusto Boal said in his seminal *Theatre of the Oppressed*, “all theatre is necessarily political, because all the activities of man are political and theatre is one of them” (ix). Boal’s work was centered on overturning the repressive, divisive use of theatre as a tool of the hegemonic power structure. The objective in his poetics of the oppressed is “to change the people—‘spectators,’ into actors, transformers of the dramatic action” (122).

Art’s primary function, as indicated in its very existence as an external communicative dialogical process, is social. And the theatre, above all other forms, has as its primary function, a social imperative. Peter Brook asserted, in 1968, in his monumental *The Empty Space*, “The cinema flashes on to a screen an image from the past....The theatre, on the other hand, always asserts itself in the present. This is what can make it more real than the normal stream of consciousness. That also is what can make it so disturbing” (90).

We face an imperative as contemporary theatre artists, to engage real connection in a world that becomes by days increasingly virtual – to disturb, to

entertain, and finally to enlighten. Authentically. Sustainably. In our contemporary crises, there exist tremendous opportunities. It is up to us to recognize the ways in which the areas of environment, technology, and humanity might coalesce to present new theatrical forms, new means of engaging audiences, finally new ways of inspiring the mindful action so necessary to the survival of our world.

Interestingly, among the strongest of examples for theatre artists today of this kind of conscientious engagement are the long-standing *Bread and Puppet*, and *In the Heart of the Beast* theatre companies. What distinguishes these groups from the examples mentioned earlier is their insistence upon the absolute accessibility of art for the common good of all. *Bread and Puppet* wrote and began circulating their *Cheap Art Manifesto* [see Figure 1] in 1982 initially through the vehicle of print media, copied and widely distributed. Versions of the manifesto can, today, however, be found all over the internet, and have contributed to the development of a growing movement, predicated on the belief that art is not a commodity, but a necessity – of, by, and for the people. As the manifesto states, "Art soothes pain! Art wakes up sleepers! Art fights against war and stupidity! Art sings Halleluja!" (Bread and Puppet)

Acting on these principles, *Bread and Puppet* is currently engaged in a tour of their newest show, *3 or 4 Plays from the Republic of Cardboard*, with stops that include the March 26 and 27, 2012 *Wall Street to Main Street* shows in Catskill, New York, as well as shows in Ohio, Washington D.C, Wroclaw, Poland, and Chengdu, China. Beneath the listing for the Catskill, NY show, the company's website includes this note to audiences: " The Bread & Puppeteers are bringing Upriser Calisthenics, a new street

show created for our Occupy work. We'll teach the show to local volunteers..." (*Bread and Puppet*).

The above is just a brief example of the multi-faceted non-commercial approach the company takes to its work in theatre and in society. Moreover, the example points to the ways in which the *Bread and Puppet* paradigm builds bridges, conscientiously addressing our era's technological, environmental, ecological turning points. Combining Grotowski's notions of poor theatre with the time-honored ritualistic, communal traditions of street theatre, and with a steadfast commitment to environmental agency, while using digital media to connect with audiences and with the larger social movements occurring in the world, *Bread and Puppet* is ever stretching the envelope, experimenting toward new forms, and suggesting new means of human ecological engagement.

Similarly, the *In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre* company (HOBt) is currently preparing for their thirty-eighth annual *May Day Festival* in South Minneapolis, Minnesota. Each year the company brings together participants from the Minneapolis community and the wider world community, in a street theatre festival that unites thousands around a central ecologically conscious, life-affirming theme. Their website tells something of the festival's history: "We wanted to give a gift to the community that was supporting our theatre, and to create a celebration that would bring people together out of their homes at the end of winter" (*In the Heart of the Beast*).

The company has long been working to build and maintain connections among members of the Minneapolis community, from schools, to churches, to synagogues, to mosques, to local businesses, to the web of neighborhoods in the Powderhorn Park

area. HOB.T.org invites visitors to participate in the performance festival, "It takes a whole village - and then some - to put together a MayDay Parade and Festival. If you want to plan, brainstorm, organize, fundraise, give money and/or supplies, sculpt, sew, papier-mâché, staple, build, paint, cook food, usher, clean up, sing songs, play music, or dance please join us!" (In the Heart of the Beast) In fact, the festival and the *In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre* itself have become significant aspects of the St. Paul/Minneapolis, Twin Cities culture, with hundreds of volunteers helping each year to create and participate in this ongoing performance event.

At the same time, however, the company both provides a venue for the touring shows of visiting artists, and participates in their own touring schedule, bringing their work and workshops to communities all over the world. And while their impact is in their raw immediacy as visual and performance artists, *HOB.T's* internet presence is decidedly impressive, with numerous performance videos and a continuously updated user-friendly website.

HOB.T's March 30, 2012 email sent out to all those expressing an interest in being part of the company's listserv, proclaims in its subject line: "Announcing the 2012 MayDay Parade Theme & Start of Public Workshops!" Opening the email, recipients are notified:

We are excited to announce, that this year's umbrella theme is

"transition town"- visioning and energizing our transition away

from fossil fuel dependency toward a sustainable community. In

addition to seeing this theme in the Parade & Tree of Life

Ceremony, look for exciting new developments at the Festival this

year like an Off-the-Grid area, solar powered amplification, and an actual "transition town" where you will be able to learn more about the various "transition town" initiatives already happening in Minneapolis. (In the Heart of the Beast)

The company has long been engaged in eco-activism, since their earliest beginnings in the 1970s. Their recent work on the *Transition Town* theme links them with a larger social/environmental movement originating in the United Kingdom with eco-activist Rob Hopkins, whose *Transition Handbook; From Oil Dependency to Local Resilience* provides a succinct vision for our future. Hopkins's handbook, and the *Transition Town Movement* advocate for a smooth transition into sustainability – before we reach the end of peak oil production. The *Transition Movement*, as Hopkins explains, "... is an attempt to design abundant pathways down from the oil peak, to generate new stories about what might be waiting for us at the end of our descent, and to put resilience-building back at the heart of any plans we make for the future" (15).

In numerous way, *HOBt*, like *Bread and Puppet*, is stretching the envelope, both aesthetically and sociopolitically, suggesting new patterns of engagement, new ways of being. Assuredly, both companies prove compelling models for theatre artists today for their recognition of the environmental, technological, and human imperatives of our age – and for their consistent inspiration to mindful action.

Notably, for both *HOBt* and *Bread and Puppet*, the internet has increasingly proven an essential communicative dialogical tool, balancing the spectacular intimacy of their work with a kind of digital camaraderie. Both companies – including the key founding members thereof – quite readily engage in correspondence with potential

collaborators and audience-members via email, and listserv, both keep interested parties abreast of their work through web-based correspondence, and both likewise embrace film as a means of archiving past performance work, streaming present work, and inspiring future work. *HOBt's* efforts can even be followed on *Twitter* and *Facebook*.

Sandy Spieler, of *HOBt*, at a recent residency at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale shared with a few of the participants after the workshop, a powerpoint presentation of her thirty years' creative explorations on water. Spieler apologized for her lack of technological prowess, and conceded, "We're getting better," explaining that the company had recently hired one or two new, younger, more technologically savvy members who were helping to make *HOBt's* work more accessible (Spieler).

Accessibility is perhaps the most significant issue, and more and more artist/activists today are realizing the potential digital media provide for furthering the cause of "cheap art," the cause of creating transformative possibilities for the widest range of participants, the cause of accessibility – while as yet reaffirming theatre's place in society as one of provocation and genuine engagement. The above examples from the work of *Bread and Puppet* and *HOBt*, are by no means extensive case studies. They are meant to provide a glimpse into the kinds of authentic, sustainable, and genuinely engaging meetings of theatre, society, and interactive media, so necessary to our survival today.

Perhaps, in the end, David Saltz is correct in his bold assertion that theatre incorporating both live performance and interactive media “has the potential to combine the strengths of both” (110). And perhaps such interactivity combined with socially

conscious, mindful presence – like that consistently modeled by the artists of *HOB*T and *Bread and Puppet* – can aid in improving upon how we as human beings interact with one another and with our beautiful planet.

...when the theatre finds itself very near the end of its tether, when the protocols that create the theatrical frame begin to unravel under the pressure of mishaps, disasters or a terrorized world, then performance that in some crucial sense is not an intended part of the theatrical frame has to be called on to preserve it, restore it, or connect it to some other more urgently meaningful domain. In more melodramatic words, theatre in extremis has to draw on extra-theatrical performance to have any hope of making any kind of difference in the world (Kershaw 57-8).

If we do not act, then who will?

the WHY CHEAP ART? manifesto

PEOPLE have been THINKING too long that
ART is a PRIVILEGE of the MUSEUMS & the
RICH. ART IS NOT BUSINESS !

It does not belong to banks & fancy investors
ART IS FOOD . You cant EAT it BUT it FEEDS
you . ART has to be CHEAP & available to
EVERYBODY . It needs to be EVERYWHERE
because it is the INSIDE of the
WORLD .

ART SOOTHES PAIN !

Art wakes up sleepers !

ART FIGHTS AGAINST WAR & STUPIDITY !

ART SINGS HALLELUJA !

ART IS FOR KITCHENS !

ART IS LIKE GOOD BREAD !

Art is like green trees !

Art is like white clouds in blue sky !

ART IS CHEAP !

HURRAH

Bread & Puppet Glover, Vermont. 1984

Fig. 2. Bread and Puppet Theatre, *Cheap Art Manifesto*, 1984.

CHAPTER 2

ECO-PATTERNS/MEDIA PATTERNS: METHODOLOGY IN A MOMENT OF CONVERGENCE: METHOD

Perhaps the most significant question emerging – and established – theatre artists must ask themselves today, is how, in an ever more passive age, to tip the balance, and truly begin to act? The confluence of factors, outlined in the preceding chapter has indeed ushered in a unique moment in time, a unique convergence culture wherein as a matter of course, one visual artist recently marveled, "So many things are incorporated into one thing, like my cell phone that's also my computer, that's also my music source, that's also my internet connection" (Glazier).

The very manner in which we conceive of ourselves in the world has changed dramatically. The very relationships we engage have altered, with our changing notions of time and of space. At the same time, this moment of convergence, this pivotal moment in the future of humanity and planet has, along with its crises, brought new possibilities, new ways for disciplines and technologies to come together, to present new opportunities.

Ours is a moment of transition, for the seeking out of new paradigms, and for the unfolding of new transnational social movements. This period in time harkens back to earlier eras when aspirations outran progress. It reminds us, if we're looking closely, of the 1930s, with its starkly unequal distributions of wealth, its thousands of hungry and homeless, its contestations over workers' rights. It harkens back to the 1960s with its ubiquitous military maneuverings, its large, increasingly educated youth populations, its spirit of nonviolent protest. But too, it is unique, not -- ironically -- in its simultaneously

local and global calls to action. For, numerous movements throughout history, including those above, have exhibited such simultaneity, such patterns of human connectivity. What makes ours so unique – and too, so ironic – a moment, is the manner in which we connect.

The *Arab Spring* movement is one example. The *Occupy Wall Street* movement is another. Such movements have used digital media and live performance in ways that speak pointedly to our era's real and virtual connects -- and to this dissertation's primary focus. More than anything else, these contemporary movements -- but a small sampling of so many extant transnational stirrings -- illustrate exquisitely our era's need for change.

The following chapter will discuss devised theatre as a combination of methodological applications and intuitive perceptions of pattern offering hope in our world today. This chapter will attempt to address what devised theatre is, at its essence, placing it within its historical framework, and concluding in a discussion of why devised theatre is of particular resonance at this specific moment in time.

Artistic Director and founding member of the almost forty-years-strong, *In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre (HOBT)*, Sandy Spieler, in a recent talk at SIU, Carbondale (SIUC) reacted with some consternation when the term "devised" theatre was used to describe the group's long-established process. "We call it collaboration," she said, "It's just what we do, what we've always done" (Spieler). Devised theatre, some argue, has been in existence since the 1960s, when groups like *HOBT*, *Bread and Puppet*, *The Performance Group*, *The Open Theatre*, and *El Teatro Campesino* were stirring into being. Others hold, it goes back earlier, to the seminal

German theatre artists Bertolt Brecht and Erwin Piscator, or earlier still, to the Dadaists. Others yet, concede that it goes back to the beginning of time, to the first birthing of story and ritual performance, as poet and theatre artist Sekou Sundiata would say, "in dance and chants and magic" (Sundiata). The term itself, however, is a more recent construct, an attempt to define a growing movement in theatre and in society.

Certainly devised theatre has its antecedents in all of the above. It has roots in German playwright Bertolt Brecht's *Three Penny Opera*, and his subsequent ensemble works, with their strong emphasis on acting for the non-actor. Likewise it traces its ancestry to Polish director Jerzy Grotowski's *Laboratory Theatre*, with its insistence upon "poverty" and its troubling of audience-performer boundaries. It has roots in French actor/director/playwright Antonin Artaud's *Theatre of Cruelty* with its charge that theatre artists must "have done with this idea of masterpieces reserved for a self-styled elite..." (74). Even predating these influences, it traces its forerunners back to the early surrealist playwrights like Alfred Jarry, whose radical *Ubu Roi* challenged notions of acceptability in the theatre from its opening line, "Merdre! [Pshit!]" (Jarry)

In the 1960s era of widespread social protest, numerous groups were working in devised theatre, then more commonly referred to as *creative collaboration*, or *collaborative creation*. Some argue that devised theatre in this period really began in the visual rather than in the performing arts. Theatre artist and scholar Alison Oddey, in *Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical Handbook*, posits, "The company claiming to be in at the start is The People Show, a group of artists (not actors) who came together in 1966 to work collaboratively towards devising a visual theatre product in performance" (5). Artist/scholars Deirdre Heddon and Jane Milling expand upon this

discussion, in *Devising Performance: A Critical History*, wherein they explain, "Whilst not being 'anti-literary', the move away from a verbal art form towards a visual one challenged the authority or dominance of the written text, and arguably the means then of authoring a text" (64). Heddon and Milling reference the Happenings of that era, for which visual artist Allan Kaprow is most often credited as the primary originator. "...this attribution is somewhat problematic," however, according to the authors.

Kaprow's 'first' named Happening in 1959, *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, was preceded by John Cage's untitled theatre event of 1952 at Black Mountain College....Cage himself also admitted to earlier influences; the ideas of Huang Po, Artaud and Duchamp 'all fused together into the possibility of making a theatrical event in which the things that took place were not casually related to one another – but in which there is a penetration, anything that happened after that happened in the observer himself'. (67)

Yet in his poignant letter to the editor, printed in the summer, 1966, edition of *The Tulane Drama Review*, Allan Kaprow argues,

As quite a few of us see the Happenings, what is astonishing is that they are pan-artistic phenomena, in which energies originally developing within the separate fields of painting, dance, music, poetry, etc., began to cross each other's paths at various and unexpected places. This was what mutually affected all of them, and in turn produced new hybrid arts and new ideas as well. (281)

Offering a still different perspective, theatre scholar, Charles Gattnig, Junior, puts forth,

in his 1968 *Artaud and the Participatory Drama of the Now Generation*, "Sometime between 1963 and 1965 the so-called Theatre of the Absurd faded away and was replaced by Happenings and today's avant-garde theatre" (1). These arguments of attribution begin to point toward the difficulties inherent in attempting to trace the lineage of any organic movement in the world of theatre and art. The closer we seem to get to the headwaters, the more confluences reveal themselves. Yet, among the most viable of explanations for the development of collaborative creation and devised theatre is Kaprow's elucidation of "pan-artsistic phenomena" (Kaprow 281).

Contemporaneous to the work of visual artists of the era were the crop of theatre collectives growing up at the time. Judith Malina and Julian Beck predated even Cage's Happening with their 1947 formation of *The Living Theatre* – still in operation today sixty-five years later – though here again the lineage stretches back further, overlaps upon itself, and reveals its seemingly infinite tributaries. Beck was himself a visual artist, and Malina, a student of influential German theatre director Erwin Piscator, who with Brecht and others, had helped usher in the *Epic Theatre* movement. According to *The Living Theatre's* website, "During the 1950's and early 1960's in New York, [the company] pioneered the unconventional staging of poetic drama – the plays of American writers like Gertrude Stein... as well as European writers rarely produced in America... Cocteau, Lorca, Brecht and Pirandello" (Living Theatre). The company's mission, reproduced here in its original format, from their website, is striking in its urgency and in its call to action:

Our Mission

To call into question

who we are to each other in the social environment of the theater,
 to undo the knots
 that lead to misery,
 to spread ourselves
 across the public's table
 like platters at a banquet,
 to set ourselves in motion
 like a vortex that pulls the
 spectator into action,
 to fire the body's secret engines,
 to pass through the prism
 and come out a rainbow,
 to insist that what happens in the jails matters,
 to cry "Not in my name!"
 at the hour of execution,
 to move from the theater to the street and from the street to the
 theater.

This is what The Living Theatre does today.

It is what it has always done

The Living Theatre's mission reads much like a manifesto, and might remind readers, at least in part, of *Bread and Puppet's Cheap Art Manifesto*, in its rawness, its immediacy, and its emphasis on art as awakening, as activation, finally as liberation.

It was in 1961 that *Bread and Puppet Theatre's* founder Peter Schumann came

to the United States from Germany, after which point, he formed the company and spent the majority of the 60s living and devising in New York City before taking up residence in Vermont. Today the company is still actively engaged in creative collaboration and political puppet theatre. Schumann, in a recent interview posted on Youtube, remarked, "The project of attacking the world, the order of life that is organized for us, that has come down upon us from history... that now seems to be firmly established and at this moment is called capitalism, is an overwhelming demand on us. It's an overwhelmingly gigantic task and it needs overwhelmingly large means..." (Schumann). Figures 2-4 help illustrate Schumann's philosophy, depicting some of the "large means" the ensemble employs in their devised work. The images provide clear examples of *Bread and Puppet*'s experimentation with, and juxtaposition of scale, the scale with which since the 1960s, *Bread and Puppet* has come to define the bulk of their work – both politically and aesthetically.



Fig. 3. Bread and Puppet Theatre, *From the Pageant Photo Gallery*.



Fig. 4. Bread and Puppet Theatre, *From the Pageant Photo Gallery*.



Fig. 5. Bread and Puppet Theatre, *From the Circus Photo Gallery*.

While *The Bread and Puppet Theatre Company* was establishing itself on the streets of New York, *El Teatro Campesino* was coming into being in the fields of California, under the direction of founding member Luis Valdez, the son of Mexican migrant farmworkers. "Founded in 1965 on the Delano Grape Strike picket lines of Cesar Chavez's United Farmworkers Union, the company created and performed "actos" or short skits on flatbed trucks and in union halls" (*El Teatro Campesino*). Valdez and *El Teatro Campesino's* revolutionary flatbed truck performances were profoundly influential in giving voice to some of the most marginalized of the United States' residents – citizens both recognized and unrecognized.

Finally, during this same period, director, scholar, and Performance Studies pioneer Richard Schechner, working with his *Performance Group*, began laying the foundations for his seminal *Environmental Theatre*, and in 1967 wrote his revolutionary *Six Axioms*, excerpted below from the Spring, 1968 edition of *The Drama Review*:

1. The theatrical event is a set of related transactions.
 2. All the space is used for the performance; All the space is used for audience.
 3. The theatrical event can take place either in a totally transformed space or in "found space."
 4. Focus is flexible and variable.
 5. All production elements speak in their own language.
 6. The text need be neither the starting point, nor the goal of a production. There may be no text at all.
- (Schechner)

The above *Axioms* help illustrate the ways in which devised theatre – then and now – troubles boundaries, stretching the envelopes of presentability and of purpose. This succinct list of principles clearly articulates a radical move toward the unfixing of heretofore inhibiting social parameters and barriers.

All of the above artists have contributed immensely to the traversing of such barriers in the theatrical as well as in the social spheres. Expressly, they have furthered the art of devising. There are, admittedly, so many countless others as well, whose contributions in the influential period of creative and social transformation of the 60s, or of earlier or later eras, helped pave the way for the devised theatre of today, so many interrelations, so many tributaries. French actor and mime artist Jacques Lecoq would in the late 1950s establish the well regarded *L'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq*. Brazilian director and writer Augusto Boal, would in the early part of the 1970s begin his pioneering work in *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Later in that same decade American director Anne Bogart would, with director/playwright Tina Landau, expand upon the *Viewpoints* techniques of choreographer Mary Overlie, leaving a lasting impact on composition and performance theory. And the pioneering work of companies like *The Mabou Mines*, *Odin Teatre*, and *Double Edge Theatre* continues to inspire and enlighten audiences and artists today.

The above antecedents represent but a small sample of the numerous harbingers of today's devised theatre movement. They help illustrate the tremendous variety of approaches to the art of devising, and provide something of an historical framework from which to explore devised theatre's relevance today. Significantly, while not an extant survey of devised theatre history, the preceding is an attempt at a response to the recent, vital scholarship on this topic, primarily generated by artists and theorists of the United Kingdom. The above examples present, in some cases omissions in the evolving scholarship on devised theatre history and practice, and in all

cases, auguries of the eco-theatre movement that would unfold in the United States – particularly in the paradigms of *HOBt* and the *Bread and Puppet Theatre Company*.

Admittedly, not all devised theatre practitioners are eco-theatre artists. In the US and elsewhere, devised theatre, at present, manifests itself in any number of ways. It is a kind of aesthetic, a kind of therapy, a kind of political protest, and alas, a kind of steady, plodding social change from the ground up – what contemporary British eco-activist/artists the *Platform* group and others like them call "slow activism" (Kershaw). In short, there are as many ways to devise as there are topics to devise around.

Oddey's *Practical and Theoretical Handbook* explains that it is in fact the uniqueness of each group's process and in turn of each of their respective products that identifies devised theatre as such. Oddey puts it quite succinctly when she states that, "The significance of this form of theatre is in the emphasis it places on an eclectic process requiring innovation, invention, imagination, risk, and above all, an overall group commitment to the developing work" (2). This is precisely why devised theatre holds such immense opportunity for re-envisioning our ecologies.

Devised theatre, however, for that very reason, is tricky to pin down with any one succinct definition. As theatre educator/practitioners Emma Govan, Helen Nicholson, and Katie Normington express in *Making a Performance: Devising Histories and Contemporary Practices*, "If devising is most accurately described in the plural – as *processes* of experimentation and sets of creative *strategies* – rather than a single methodology, it defies neat definition or categorisation[sic]" (7). In *Devised and Collaborative Theatre: A Practical Guide*, Chris Baldwin and Tina Bicat explain that in conventional theatre practice, work traditionally begins with the director or producer

choosing a scripted play, and in turn disseminating to each of their selected cast and production team members, a printed copy of the script. While individual interpretations of the play may vary, the script provides "a baseline of common knowledge" that along with the director and/or producer's vision, will drive the project, in a largely top-down model.

This baseline, according to Baldwin and Bicat, does not exist in devised theatre, "except in the random imaginations of each company member."

The line moves about - it will not stay in one place. The ideas of the company conspire to shift it as soon as it appears to have settled. And yet it is the very existence of this shifting path that makes devised work so demanding, risky and exciting. As the devising process develops, this path must settle and aspire to some kind of aesthetic coherence. (7)

At its essence most would agree that devised theatre de-emphasizes the text as the central, defining – originary – feature. It opens the doors for invention, for reexamination.

Yet, while the term *devised* today is often used interchangeably with *collaborative creation* – itself a slippery term to pin to any single definition or origin – there is one interesting distinction: devised theatre can be carried out by a solitary artist working in a team of one. As Deirdre Heddon and Jane Milling suggest in *Devising Performance: A Critical History*, "While the word 'devising' does not insist on more than one participant, 'collaborative creation' clearly does" (2). What might appear to be a contradiction here – *How does a solo artist create a performance work that rejects the very notion of the*

creation of performance work, in the relegation to text? – is in fact a very rich area of discussion, as rich, in fact, as the terrain on which we stand today.

The discussion is one of process – again an essential engagement in moment when our own human processes so encroach upon those of our planet. Scholar and theatre director Paul Castagno, in his enthusiastically received 2012 *New Playwriting Strategies: Language and Media in the Twenty-First Century* – the second edition to his influential 2001 *New Playwriting Strategies; A Language-Based Approach* – tells readers, "If the first edition of *NPS* marked a renaissance in how plays are written, this edition acknowledges that this aesthetic has its corollary in the contemporary culture" (5). Without doubt, it has in nature as well.

Historically, devised theatre places equal emphasis on all elements of production, of experience, in an attempt to provide a framework for a truly organic – often collaborative – process. The very organic, intuitive nature of devised theatre implies a rejection of the status quo, a rejection of traditional Aristotelian structure, wherein action itself hinges on the tragic hero/heroine's "working out of the cycle," from stasis, to reversal, to redemption (Rush). Fundamentally, devised theatre, especially in recent years, instead often results in a hybrid form that merges elements and ideas within its structural fabric. According to Castagno, "There is [today] an emphasis on creating unique theatrical works, on surprising or shocking audiences, lifting from a variety of sources....Thus, old school unity has become restive, perhaps passé, as multiple voices and sources shape the playmaking" (5). In today's moment of convergence, devised theatre and its attendant hybridity speak quite directly to the overlaps and concurrences that increasingly define and potentially threaten our world.

Tangentially, devised theatre is broadly understood by artists and theorists alike, to be a democratic, uninhibited approach to the creation of a live theatrical event. As Castagno concedes, "The rigid paradigm of the playwright as sole creative source has become less the mantra..." (5). Most often, devising implies a resting of authority upon a given theme to be addressed in the work, rather than on a given all-knowing individual, or for that matter, on a finite materiality. The themes of course are derived from the needs of the moment.

Story-teller and *HOB*T founding member, Loren Niemi, in a recent dialogue with SIUC theatre students, suggested that, more than simply theme alone, story – broadly defined – is an essential feature of devised work. Though story too becomes unfixed, deconstructed, deeply personalized and at once profoundly universal in the devising process. As Niemi acknowledged in his talk, story can take a variety of forms: from the basic personal narrative, to the metaphorical, to the project-oriented, wherein the work itself becomes the enactment of its own story of creation (Niemi). More to the point, story, theme, and text itself, in light of the experimental, intuitive nature of the devising process become unmoored – fitting, in an age so rife with possibilities for solidarity or disaffection.

In an increasingly schizophrenic age of parallel advance and peril, where the center, and the centrality of power give way, nonhierarchical leadership and organization take stronger and stronger hold of our palpable and our virtual reality. Devised theatre, becomes a natural impetus across cultures; a response to current transnational existential – and environmental – crises.

Yet, whatever form it may take, devised theatre exacts an immense concentration of focus and dedication, and an ironically equal proportion of willingness to let go, the old adage, in the words of Anne Bogart, "Hold on tightly; let go lightly," a fitting mantra (161). The devised process, with its combination of rigor and flux is akin not so much to the high-dive as to the bungee-jump of the sporting world. Perhaps this is among the most significant reasons why devised theatre – and particularly devised eco-theatre – is so very important to our work today as theatre artists: the fact that it challenges us on so many levels and in the end, leaves us, not with answers to our questions, but with an appetite for further inquiry. Suffice to say that devised work has a growing import in our contemporary world, not, to be sure, for the sake of commercial reward, but for that of genuine transformation.

Moreover, devised theatre today becomes increasingly *glocal*, to use a term rapidly gaining ascendancy among colloquialisms. Digital media have significantly eased the challenges of thinking globally and acting locally. We have entered a new era of social action wherein, "activist networks have used new digital media to coordinate activities, plan protests, and publicize often high quality information about their causes," as W. Lance Bennett in *New Media Power: The Internet and Global Activism* suggests (Bennett). In fact, at the close of 2011, in a bold and much scrutinized move, the popular *Time* Magazine declared the protester the person of the year, offering an end-of-year feature article on 2011's uncelebrated heroes and heroines of transnational social action.

The term *transnational* itself, unlike the terms *international* or the ubiquitous *multinational*, indicates an inclination to cross borders, uniting not just nation-states and

geopolitically distinct entities -- but peoples. *Transnational*, in its use of the root *trans* which literally means to cross, is concerned not with expanding dominion over vast amounts of territory but rather with seeking interconnectivity to transcend such geopolitical barriers.

These inclinations fit well within the practice of devised theatre. As Govan, Nicholson, and Normington so poignantly state, "Devising performance is socially imaginative as well as culturally responsive, and articulates between the local and the global, the fictional and the real, the community and the individual, the social and the psychological....an agency of both personal self-expression and community or civic activism" (194-5). Essential to the devising process is the commitment to exploration, inquiry, discovery – not to a single unifying vision or dictate, be it the director's or the playwright's. In fact, as Heddon and Milling suggest, "Devising emerged as part of the desire of groups of actors to establish collaborative companies that reflected an anti-establishment and anti-hierarchy ethos" (61). It is, once more, in the de-centralization and the de-hierarchization of the theatrical form that devised theatre becomes so profoundly moving an experience, and so apt an expression of our age.

To recapitulate, instinct leads us, perhaps more today than ever before in history, to the eclectic process, to the de-centralizing quest, to the ever determined leap into indeterminacy, that is devised theatre. This is by no means an accident, a slippage of history, a retro-quest for the ideals of an easier time. The instinct is simpler and far more complicated than that. Just as the protester becomes emblematic of our age, so does devised theatre. In essence, we devise today because we must. We devise today because the forces that define our world, the combination of rigor and of flux that

characterizes the landscape today in 2012, on a number of levels, suggests this form as a natural response to circumstances. Form mirrors content.

Performance artist and pedagogue, Guillermo Gomez-Pena, in his introduction to *Exercises For Rebel Artists: Radical Performance Pedagogy*, discusses the sociopolitical shifts occurring in the backlash era of the 1990s, and leading to our present era of social upheaval. "The growing popularity of new technologies and the cult of globalization forced us to rethink our notions of identity and community" (2). Gomez-Pena explains the ways in which the as-yet newly emerging globalized media of the 1990s were controlled by "technocrats" inured to the voice of the critical artist.

These drastic changes contributed to a generalized skepticism, a pervasive spiritual emptiness, and a political despair within the art world and academia. We clearly needed to reformulate our artistic strategies.

But we were confused: race, gender, nationality, and ideology were no longer the main reasons for people gathering, collaborating, and creating. Everyone was looking for a new cultural paradigm and a new sense of belonging to a larger "we" in a time when all certainties were melting before our eyes. (2,3)

Gomez-Pena sums up the dilemma of our age, a dilemma which since his writing in 2011, has only increased in intensity. Devised theatre, in seeking new forms of communication, new modes of inquiry, new methodologies, and new means of inclusion, allows us today, when faced with the uncertainties of our present and of our future, to conceive of new possibilities, for transcendence.

Echoing Gomez-Pena's concern for "belonging to a larger we," author and spiritual teacher, Eckhart Tolle in his *New York Times* bestselling *A New Earth*, speaks to the contemporary world's state of dysfunction grounded in ego-driven identification with form. "If evil has any reality--" suggests Tolle,

and it has a relative, not an absolute, reality--this is also its definition: complete identification with form-- physical forms, thought forms, emotional forms. This results in a total unawareness of my connectedness with the whole, my intrinsic oneness with every "other" as well as with the Source. This forgetfulness is original sin, suffering, delusion. When this delusion of utter separateness underlies and governs whatever I think, say, and do, what kind of world do I create? To find the answer to this, observe how humans relate to each other, read a history book, or watch the news on television tonight. (22)

"If the structures of the human mind remain unchanged," Tolle concludes, "we will always end up re-creating fundamentally the same world, the same evils, the same dysfunction" (22). But how does one find freedom from this cycle?

Prophets and politicians through the ages have argued over the meaning of this essential concept: freedom. In Aristotelian and Augustinian terms, freedom is the will to do what one ought in the eyes of God, the license to deliberate between vice and virtue. From its inception, the United States branded itself, "the land of the free and the home of the brave." More recently, corporations, from South African Airways to Master Card, illustrate the associative value of freedom as a commercial conceit. Freedom means

being able to drive where you want, fly where you want, buy what you want. Freedom is material capital. Freedom is form.

But in its purest spiritual essence, freedom is a kind of surrender to what is, what Tolle would refer to as "inner spaciousness" (239). Theatre artist and yoga, dance instructor Gabrielle Roth of Body Spirit Dance discusses her movement and meditation practice, "5Rhythms," as "a spiritual and healing practice...helping us to cultivate awareness and to have a direct experience of union, wholeness, and freedom" (BodySpiritDance). Freedom is grounded in true awareness, in letting go of the forms that drive and define our existence; it is, as playwright Richard Foreman suggests, an opening up to new structures, new textures, new patterns. Freedom is unrestrained presence.

If there is any one common element connecting the various manifestations of devised theatre, it is its commitment to authentic, in-the-moment presence, to spontaneous discovery, to inner spaciousness, to the surrender of the self and the limiting ego to a "larger we," a greater awareness. Devising means letting go of form. It means, in an ideal world, letting go of ego. In that sense, it creates the possibility for change, for finding new ways of relating to one another -- and to our world. And today more than ever, new, eco-centric ways of relating are imperative.

CHAPTER 3

PATTERNS OF INQUIRY: RESULTS

In a 2006 workshop at the University of Iowa, Playwright Sheri Kramer spoke to an enthusiastic group of emerging playwrights about, of all things, pottery analysis. Kramer explained pointedly to the assembled group, the various ways in which the specific decorations on pottery helped to not only place such remains within given historical contexts, but more to the point, to illustrate time and again, the definitive connections between pattern-making and civilizational persistence. "Here's the thing," she breathed, allowing time to let the revelation sink in to the minds of her students: "A civilization falls when it loses its ability to make new pattern" (Kramer). This phenomenon, commonly referred to as "pattern exhaustion" is also referenced by long time computer programmer and author Jaron Lanier in *You Are Not a Gadget*. Lanier reminds readers of anthropologist Steve Barnett's lament on Generation X, whose media-induced inertness, according to Lanier, exemplify this era's perilous lack of originality.

On a more positive note, avant-garde playwright Richard Foreman in *Unbalancing Acts: Foundations of a Theatre*, suggests,

Among the countless impulses passing through us at any moment, some surface in a manner that allows us to continue with our lives along the patterns we've inherited from our society. But any moment of true freedom suggests other structures, other textures, around which life could circle. (4)

The above observations give rise to questions over whether art serves its time, innovating and guiding populations through respective patterns of existence – or whether art is after all a mere reflection of its age. Foreman contends that his plays attempt to prove by example "that you can break open the interpretations of life that simplify and suppress the infinite range of inner human energies; that life can be lived according to a different rhythm, seen through changed eyes" (4). Art after all is a process. It is a mode of inquiry. In its purest form, it is the act of observation and the intuitive process of illumination. Art is, in its very externality, in its essence as media – as communication between hearer and conceiver, viewer and visionary, seer and seer – a means of discovery. The theatre in particular, in its unique presence in the moment and at once outside of time, offers untold opportunities for discovery. And the theatre throughout history, from the ancients' ritual performances, to the Greeks' festival Dionysia, to the 1960's plays of peace and protest, has lived up to its name, as the "seeing place."

Contemporary director James Slowiak, in *Why Devise? Why Now?: In Search of Eco-theatre*, explains that along the lines of cultural historian Morris Berman's observations, art is born of two basic types of creativity: the modern ego-driven variety and the traditional, less ego-centered type. Slowiak posits, "Traditional creativity is not separated from life itself" (Slowiak). In applying these formulations to his own work as a theatre artist in an increasingly ego-driven age, Slowiak concludes, "The ideal...becomes an egoless theatre whose purpose is not to demonstrate one's virtuosity or identity, but to penetrate one's own humanity" (Slowiak).

If for a moment we concede that art is inquiry, allowing that art born of the traditional mode of creativity, as Slowiak suggests, makes possible "a smooth descent into the unconscious...where a forgotten unity organically expresses itself" (Slowiak), then as the cataclysmic human progress of the twenty-first century increasingly spans the poles between peril and promise, could we also concede that such egoless inquiry might be the answer to our survival?

In her 1982 *Nuclear Theatre*, during the height of the Cold War and the Nuclear Arms Race, early eco-theatre proponent, and founder of the *Performing Arts Journal*, Bonnie Marranca wrote, "More and more characteristics of Aristotelian tragedy manifest themselves: in the hubris of world leaders, their high-flown rhetoric, their separation from the life of the people, their belief in Necessity" (47). Marranca argued that even then, in the early 80s, humanity's changing relationship with new media had begun to alter the fabric of our existence: "The incursion of the media into every realm of experience sabotages the notion of private acts, turning performance into a way of life" (50).

While the imminence of nuclear war has yielded the stage to other more pressing concerns since Marranca's writing, the theatricalization of daily life, of which she speaks, has only continued to assert itself. In the thirty years since these prophetic statements were made, the change from analogue to digital technology has ushered in a revolution in the ways in which human beings perform in the world – on a number of levels. In his 2007 *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theatre, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation*, Steve Dixon explains,

In the last years of the twentieth century, digital computer technologies became increasingly ubiquitous, bringing the abstract relations of numeration – 'number crunching' – to more and more aspects of life in industrialized societies.... By the 1990s, new technologies became a constituent part of information and communication processes, business practices, manufacturing, commercial retailing, and everyday life in the industrialized world.

(157)

Theorist Douglas Kellner in *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity, and Politics between the Modern and the Postmodern*, argues, "A Media culture has emerged in which images, sounds, and spectacles help produce the fabric of everyday life, dominating leisure time, shaping political views and social behavior, and providing the materials out of which people forge their very identities" (Kellner). Online platforms like the ever-popular Facebook occupy more and more significant portions of the average individual's social life, and today, Marranca's references to performativity in daily life ring especially true. Hence her warning – "In its most dangerous manifestations, theatricality values appearance above essence, accommodation above ethics" – has a special resonance (50).

Significantly, when at the close of her *Nuclear Theatre*, Marranca made an inspired plea to her audience, it was a call to action that other artists and critics would soon enough take up. She drew a firm distinction between the mundane *theatricalization* of daily life and its tendency toward utter desensitization and superficiality, and the vital, necessary *theatre* so integral to meaningful human

existence. Referring to the work of artists like the *Bread and Puppet Theatre*, Marranca proclaimed, "A more healthy politics of theatrics is represented by anti-nuclear war protesters who use the performance mode to create guerilla theatre actions in marches...[regenerating] feelings for life in their acting out of the human dimension of war" (50),

At the time of her writing, such a call to action was rather an exception to the norm. In the fairly affluent period of the 1980s and into the 90s, theatre on the whole, particularly in the United States, had become far less radical than it had been in the previous two decades. Nonetheless, a growing contingency of eco-theatre proponents had begun to assert themselves. Director and scholar Downing Cless was among them, and boldly averred, in his 1996 *Eco-Theatre USA: The Grassroots is Greener*, "The American theatre remains stuck in a humanistic antiecological mode" (79). Cless, like Marranca, was calling for decisive action on the part of theatre artists, and began, along with contemporaries like Theresa May, Una Chaudhuri, and Baz Kershaw, to carve out a more definitive space for conversation and inquiry on the theatre's direct relationship to his era's pressing ecological concerns.

In the more recent *Greening the Theatre: Taking Ecocriticism from Page to Stage*, Theresa May urges readers, "As theatre participates in our human ecological situatedness, it reclaims its ancient roots as a site of ritual celebration of the reciprocity between people and the natural world" (110).

But what exactly is *ecology*? Given this era's grave challenges and environmental disasters, the term *ecology* seems to find its way into more and more conversations. As literary historian Lawrence Buell foresaw in his 1999 *The Ecocritical*

Insurgency, "...it is not at all unlikely that the twenty-first century's most pressing problem will be the sustainability of earth's environment--and that the responsibility for addressing this problem...will increasingly be seen as the responsibility of *all* the human sciences, not just of specialized disciplinary enclaves like ecology..." (699).

Today, the term *ecology* transcends its disciplinary categorization. It implies the intricate interrelationships among living things. Simply put, ecologies are life-relational systems. Ecologist Eugene Odum, in his preface to the 1997 *Ecology: A Bridge Between Science and Society*, describes the ways in which ecology has, in recent years, "...continued to emerge from its roots in biology to become more and more a separate discipline that integrates the study of organisms, the physical environment, and human society, in keeping with the Greek root of the word *ecology*: *oikos*, the "study of the household," the total environment in which we live" (xiii).

As our life-relational systems become more and more mediated today – past the age of automation Hannah Arendt foresaw the perils of in 1958 – into the age of digitization, we must, as theatre artists, pave the way for new patterns of reciprocity. For, so does our relationship with the planet continually prove ever more perilous.

Theatre has – has always had – a tremendous responsibility and a tremendous power. As theatre artist Eugenio Barba of *Odin Teatret* so eloquently expresses in his 2002 *The Essence of Theatre*,

You have to give your utmost to the spectators who come with an extraordinary gift: they offer up two or three hours of their life, placing themselves in our hands with candor and trust....The performance is a burning caress that touches their sensibilities and

intimate wounds, pushing them toward the hushed landscape that lives in exile within us.....the essential lies in the transfiguration of the ephemeral quality of the performance into a splinter of life that sinks roots into their flesh and accompanies them through the years....This memory constitutes the unimaginable and unprogrammable message that is handed down to those who are not yet born. (15-16)

It is not by accident that Barba draws from the language of the spiritual and of the metaphysical. For, in both of these regards theatre has, since its earliest inceptions in communal celebration and shamanistic ritual practice, had its roots.

Failing to see that, failing to recognize the profound power and responsibility handed down to us through the ages, as theatre artists today, we neglect theatre's own ecology, its crucial role in imbuing beliefs and empowering – or disempowering – systems. We run the risk not only of misopportunity, but of unintentional calamity. May reminds us, "Theatre has been a powerful force for disseminating the deeply-ingrained belief systems, or mythologies, of American ecological culture, and has participated in the making of myth and policy that brought us to the present crisis" (87).

As our planet is steadily stretched to the breaking point by our human systems of belief and of being, the changing thereof becomes ever more critical. Today, lulled into a comfortable state of passivity, peoples of the so-called "developed world," in spite of their countless virtual boundary-crossings, risk new levels of social malaise, and actual inactivity. In a culture that threatens intensifying isolation and desensitization, there is a

danger in unknowingly empowering systems as insidious as smog, passively perpetuating the grave cycle of violence now threatening our very biosphere.

Kellner reminds us that in the end, "Media culture is industrial culture, organized on the model of mass production" (Kellner). However liberating, enlightening, or spectacular we may find today's digital media and new technological advance, we must also recognize the potential it holds for the advance of commercial culture, whose products, as Kellner cautions, are commodities attempting "to attract private profit produced by giant corporations interested in the accumulation of capital" (Kellner). We can attempt to overlook the socioeconomic and political implications of our digital ecologies, but the choice to ignore the divisive capitalistic tendencies inherent in today's digital media immersion, only invites destruction. Theatre educator and scholar Ferdinand Lewis in *Why Devise? Why Now?* in the March, 2005 issue of *Theatre Topics* under the same heading, argues,

Inasmuch as theatre artists consider themselves members of a society in crisis, the devising of new work is required of them. Civil society has been replaced by a pervasive market-based rationality that expresses itself physically in landscapes of nowhere, in communities of no place. The aim of artists must now include the development not only of new work and new types of artmaking, but also the new sense of place. The mission's failure could mean a loss of society's ability to renew its sense of reasonableness, its humane cultures of care, and the institutions and communities that once defined the highest ideals of civilization. (23)

The issues of digital media immersion and of ecological crisis are inextricably linked today. It is the ultimate irony that just as our actual landscapes are steadily being destroyed, by strip-mining, deep-drilling, deforestation – our virtual landscapes are thriving. It becomes rather easy to forget, when straddling both worlds, just which reality is the *real*. We must wake up if we are to stop the cycle of production and consumption that has brought us to this precipice. We must act with accountability, as transnational citizens of the earth, and as artists.

In essence, every purchase we make, every gallon of fuel we consume, every advertisement we allow ourselves to be the targets of, is a link in the chain that binds us to the potentially detrimental pattern of existence that has come to so threaten our world's continuance.

Artist and social theorist, Susan Sontag, in *Regarding the Pain of Others*, urges, "Someone who is perennially surprised that depravity exists, who continues to feel disillusioned (even incredulous) when confronted with evidence of what humans are capable of inflicting in the way of gruesome, hands-on cruelties upon other humans, has not reached moral or psychological adulthood." "No one," Sontag boldly posits, "after a certain age has the right to this kind of innocence, of superficiality, to this degree of ignorance, or amnesia" (114). And yet ignorance is what sadly seems to define the popular culture of the contemporary developed world. The difficulty is, that in a period in which one can exercise such seeming control over one's choice of digital technologies, from Smart-Phones to Satellite Televisions, and from sources as divergent as "AnarchistNews.Org" and the ever reliable "Wikipedia," in a world of increasing insularity, actual awareness tends to become steadily more selective.

This has the potential to be both deeply unsettling – and profoundly inspiring. People who have never left their patches of world in the woods of Maine, or in the desserts of Yemen, or in the mountains of Svalbard can meet and speak with one another freely, can learn about cuisine, and outdoor recreation, and biodiversity hotspots across the globe, can develop worldly knowledge with more ease than ever before in history. But, too, they can lose touch with their neighbors, and the world just beyond their doorsteps. In *You Are Not a Gadget*, digital guru turned dissident, Jaron Lanier bluntly posits, "Information is alienated experience" (28). We must, on some level, be conscious of the dangers in today's apparent ease of information– in the potential such lack of difficulty holds for disengagement, for inactivity, for inertia.

We must searchingly ask ourselves, particularly as theatre artists, "How are we complicit in the tumult of our era, by *not acting*?" Eugenio Barba argues that among the most profound of theatre's objectives is "the search for something permanent that outlives the performance." As theatre artists, we are driven to quest for the eternal, "to stand on tiptoe stretching upward toward the beyond. It is not," Barba emphasizes, "a question of horizontal or vertical transcendence, but a way to protect ourselves from becoming victims or silent accomplices in this tireless tide, this pitiless race that is History" (18).

Theatre, in its ephemerality, is not– can never really be– a product, entire, but a process, transformative, alive, and ongoing. It is then, in its rawness, its immediacy, its potential for encounter and for change, where theatre offers such immense potential for meeting this era's particular challenges of social and environmental collective well-being. And in its very liveness, in its transformative, communal presence, theatre has

the capacity, not to compete with, but in fact to expand upon evolving virtual communication networks offered up by today's new media, transforming virtual communication and media culture, into live unmediated action.

Performance Studies theorist Philip Auslander in his 1999 *Liveness*, suggests that “the situation of live performance in a culture dominated by mass media” has given him little optimism for live performance's future “cultural prestige, as understood in traditional terms.” The situation has, however, also led Auslander among others to the recognition that such traditional terms “may no longer be the most useful ones” (4).

In what ways then, we might rightly inquire, can theatre's own patterns of inquiry respond to those other patterns, those other rhythms subtly guiding and defining human civilization today? Furthermore, in what ways *must* art today suggest “that life can be lived according to a different rhythm?” (Foreman).

David Callaghan, in a 2005 *Theatre Symposium* article, evocatively entitled, “Where Have All the Protestors Gone?” traced the changes from 1960s protest theatre to the theatre of George Bush's post 9/11 America. “The radical theatre of the 1960s was,” according to Callaghan, “the product of an authentic, urgent response to Vietnam and other troubling political events of that era.” In that vein, he surmises, “works were often improvisatory and rooted in a raw, immediate reaction to current events, a quality that created a sense of vitality in the moment of the audience-performer encounter” (106). The vitality Callaghan attributes to 1960s theatre can be seen in the works of such groups as the *Open Theatre*, whose goals, defined by founder Joseph Chaiken, were “to redefine the limits of the stage experience or unfix them. To find ways of reaching each other and the audience” (Terry).

But as Callaghan noted in 2005, the activism and artistic works of the sixties had in the early years of the twenty-first century, long since faced a backlash “fueled perhaps by a cultural need to achieve a distance from the turmoil and divisiveness of the period,” as well as by overall economic decline. (106) The Hippie generation seemed to yield to the “Me Generation,” a shift that would continue to affect the global culture more and more as production, technological advance, and notions of credit continued to expand.

“Simultaneously, the momentum of the avant-garde and radical theatre scene also changed drastically,” with considerably less funding for the arts, and overall increases in tension coupled with decreases in social activism (106). Art proved far from immune to the rampant commercial excess that gripped the hearts and minds of new generations. Of the few theatre artists who had, according to Callaghan in his 2005 writing, addressed the topic of the Iraq War directly, most adhered to safe allegorical forms or re-stagings of the classics. Noteworthy, however, among such classical adaptations, was the *Lysistrata Project*, spearheaded by Kathryn Blume and Sharon Bower.

Blume and Bower managed to orchestrate, in the space of two short months, an international movement that culminated in March of 2003 in over 1000 readings of *Lysistrata*, all across the United States and in over 50 participating countries. (Blume) While undeniably grounded in the classical Greek anti-war comedy *Lysistrata*, the project could hardly be accused of lacking vitality. For, the event was a global call to action, through theatre, uniting participants around the world in perhaps the widest

ranging street theatre event in history, in large part made possible by the – then still fairly new – worldwide web.

The *Lysistrata Project* was, as Callagan expressed, a restaging of the classic *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes. In that sense then it first stands out for its commentary on the relevance of such ancient classics. Helene Foley, in her article “Classics and Contemporary Theatre,” appearing in the November 2006 issue of *Theatre Survey*, agrees with classical theatre scholar David Wiles’s assertion that Greek culture occupies an especially formative position in its geographical meeting of East and West. “The possibilities provided by Greek myths and plots continue to resonate both psychologically and politically,” (240) Foley argues, “...but, as the playwright Charles Mee in particular has stressed in his many new versions of Greek tragedy, they are familiar enough to permit fragmentation, deconstruction, and remaking in a legible way” (240).

In an ever more de-centered world, straining to reinvent itself as whole populations reach across the globe to communicate in ways previously unimagined, the hegemonic metanarrative implodes; while the need for new narratives that speak across geo-political differences to reimagine our essential humanness is unprecedented. In such a period of flux, the Greek classics, between East and West, and thus in some ways beyond hegemonic power structures, occupy a unique position. Blume and Bower’s project stands out, however, for two additional reasons; the project uses the internet to link people worldwide in simultaneous performance of the classic play, and finally, the project at once extends the theatrical frame, by literally taking the performance to the streets.

This brings us back to the notion of pattern, discussed at the opening of this chapter. For what Blume and Bower's project illustrated so powerfully, even in 2003, was a new pattern, a new paradigm of engagement, in the digital age – what Jonathan Gray refers to as “the tension between local performance and connections of the global” (Gray). This type of engagement, one might argue, is critical to the theatre today in 2012.

As environmental performance artist and scholar Baz Kershaw warns, “...the potential for creativity in the digital age is enormous. But also that age threatens to up the ante in the society of the spectacle....In this scenario, live performance in theatres may seem like the last bastion of the truly human, which must be protected from reproduction at all costs” (72). To be sure, just as digital technologies have changed the ways in which human beings communicate and conceive of themselves in the world, so have such technologies deeply altered the ways in which we make and disseminate art. Dixon explains, “While historically the arts and sciences have remained polarized and deeply suspicious of one another, new computer technologies have become an interface for their mutual coexistence” (170). As human advance in the contemporary world continues to both open and close channels of opportunity and communication across the globe, it becomes crucial for today's artists to find the essential balance between digital and human connects.

In *Postdramatic Theatre*, Hans-Thies Lehmann proposes, “In media communication technology the hiatus of mathematization separates the subjects from each other.... The theatre, however, consisting of a shared time-space mortality, articulates as a performative act the necessity of engaging...with the (a)liveness of life”

(167). Juxtaposing these two elements, then, the solitary and the communal, in itself points toward new patterns of existence, new modes of hybridity.

In fact, “the hybrid,” according to artist/scholar Paul Castagno, “has become the accepted format for the performance artists, who present multiart productions in which textuality exists simultaneously with other elements” (51). Moreover, Castagno suggests in *New Playwriting Strategies: A Language-Based Approach to Playwriting*, that such theatrical hybridization, the patterning and juxtaposition of different voices, divergent sources and multiple media, has proven among the most popular of contemporary forms, evidenced in the tremendous success of companies like the Blueman Group and Cirque du Soleil.

In some circles, the debate around the centrality or rejection of the text still continues. But in an era of such striking paradox – between the real and the virtual, the solitary and the communal, the local and the global – perhaps more important than centrality, is the question of dispersal, of patterning new lines of connectivity that reflect and at once extend beyond emerging global communication networks, to the essence of our being.

For the shifting patterns of artistic preference outlined by Castagno mirror not only the paradoxical shifts in human communication and interaction ushered in by the digital age, but moreover illustrate deeper, darker schisms and disconnects, engendered by our era's schizophrenic inability to reconcile such seeming human ease and invincibility, with the alarmingly pressing reality of eco-disaster. Again, there is a tension between our virtual and our actual landscapes, our life-relational systems and our mediated means of relating. To repeat the claim put forth in the first chapter of this

dissertation: the particular point of convergence we find ourselves ironically straddling today, presents a crisis of being. And on the dawn of our entry into the portentous 2012, being is all.

The fall, 2010 edition of the *Canadian Theatre Review* proclaimed as its theme, "Theatre in an Age of Eco-crisis" (Gray). The journal's editors expressed a deep commitment to what they posited "the single most pressing issue of our time," in the hopes that the issue would "signal a sea change in this respect," opening up dialogue and presenting new ways of looking at "the role of the performing arts in an age of global eco-crisis" (3).

The Canadian journal is not alone in recognizing the dire circumstances with which humankind now find themselves confronted. Arlene Goldbard posits, "The conflict between land as life and land as commodity is one of the strongest dichotomies of our thematic universe" (31). Similarly, a recent edition of India's *Hindustan Times* criticized anarchist activist John Zerzan, not for his cause, "sustain[ing] life on the very limited resources of this planet," but for his anti-civilization stance. Yet despite his criticism of Zerzan's politics, reporter Amitava Sanyal conceded that "in a world increasingly frustrated by the excesses of modern life, Zerzan and his group of thinker-gatherers are being heard and heeded more" (Sanyal).

The "ecocritical insurgency" pointed to in the late 1990s has been gaining momentum. More and more people from more and more disciplines are recognizing the need to take action to sustain our "spaceship earth."

Even in his 1994 *The Coming Anarchy*, appearing in the *Atlantic Monthly* that year, journalist and foreign affairs consultant Robert Kaplan urged readers to consider

the many implications of global environmental devastation. Kaplan argued that West Africa was indicative of worldwide strains on the natural environment. "For a while," he speculated, "the media will continue to ascribe riots and other violent upheavals abroad mainly to ethnic and religious conflict. But as these conflicts multiply," he cautioned, "it will become apparent that something else is afoot, making more and more places like Nigeria, India and Brazil ungovernable.... It is time," he concluded, "to understand 'the environment' for what it is: the national security issue of the early twenty-first century " (Kaplan 190).

Eugene Odum, from the University of Georgia's Institute of Ecology spoke, not long after, in his 1997 *Ecology: A Bridge Between Science and Society*, of some of the "early warning signs" indicating, toward the close of the twentieth century, the great strain our planet was undergoing. As evidence, Odum cited: "excessive erosion of our best agricultural soils, dying trees in industrial regions, declining ocean fisheries, and the increase in environmentally related human health problems" (2). Plant biologist Dawn Morningstar, at Carbondale, Illinois's 2012 *People's Hearing: The Indivisible Living Entity of the Planet Earth v. Monsanto Corporation*, discussed the ecological implications of genetic modification today, explaining the ways in which microfunguses like pesticides and herbicides are currently getting into the earth's soil. "As bacteria spreads, it transmits information..." There is, she said, in short, "no way to contain intentional genetic modification in the ecosystem" (Morningstar).

It becomes important at this point to recall the longstanding progression in western civilization toward cultivation, toward alienation from nature, in order to gain further insight into our present eco-crisis. Downing Cless, in *Ecology and Environment*

in European Drama, speaks to this progression, positing that, “In the pantheism of Greek and Roman religion, nature had a sacred presence” (59). Later, destruction and pollution of the natural environment would increase over the course of the Roman empire, from its inception to its fall. This environmental degradation would only worsen with the passage of time, into the dark ages “...in which Europe is a multitude of disconnected feudal fiefdoms...” (59).

The culminating step civilization takes in its turn away from nature “...is a thousand year period of 'ecological pessimism,' spawned to a great extent by the early Christian fathers' belief that nature was senile and the end of the world near” (Cless 59).

Biblical passages reaffirmed such apprehensions toward the wilderness, and fear of the forest – deep and wild – embedded itself more and more profoundly into the human psyche. Cless concludes, “Referring to the old image for the era, I summarize: nature is dangerously dark...”(59).

The real dangers of the forest have no doubt, throughout history, asserted themselves time and again in the shape of bandits, thieves, animals of prey, and the like. But far more devastating over the course of western civilization's advancement, have been the symbolic manifestations of the deep and wild, slinking in the corners of the psyche, urging man, woman, and child alike to seek a more and more definitive shelter – from the elements. Environmentalist and author, Wendell Berry puts it quite eloquently in his *Home Economics*:

...the human condition remains for us what it was for Homer and
the authors of the Bible....We can only do what humans can do,

and our machines, however they may appear to enlarge our possibilities, are invariably infected with our limitations....The mechanical means by which we propose to escape the human condition only extend it; thinking to transcend our definition as fallen creatures, we have only colonized more and more territory eastward of Eden. (67)

New England's Metacomet Trail is an interesting case-in-point. The history, mythology, and politics of the trail and of its preservation help exemplify the complex interrelationships across time, between nature and human progress. Most importantly, the trail becomes a metaphor for our precarious eco-journey.

For those New Englanders growing up in the midst of the trail, the name, Metacomet, is spoken like a familiar branch of the family tree. And a handful of the residents of the southern New England states come to know an intimacy, a familiarity with both terrain and namesake that becomes almost intuitive. For those seeking it, the land itself – not to mention the names that have been bequeathed to it – proffer invaluable ties to the tribal and pre-tribal pasts. The very trails become topographical emblems of a receding but at once omnipresent way of being, equal parts unspoken history and deep, deep mythology. As one hiker expressed, “All the M-M is wonderful, it is an improbable resource that we are very lucky to have and enjoy. Some of it contains wonders that stay with you for as long as your memory does” (A Hike).

Now, as in previous eras, though, there is the undeniable tension between such wonders and their – partly intuited, partly conscious – mythologizing. Compounding such abstract tensions is the more literal contest between development and

preservation. In Connecticut in recent years, on Route 44 where the Metacomet rises up majestically to its highest peak, before blazing across Avon into Bloomfield and beyond, residential development has encroached upon the trail. What once had been the breathtaking King Phillip's stand, now looks down directly upon a string of multi-million dollar homes, newly constructed. This seeming shock is not really as surprising as it would appear on the surface, however, when one considers the assumptions implicit in the very mythologizing of the trail.

For the Metacomet is carefully planned and maintained, and for all of its appeal to the naturalists among us, even the very systematization of these lands into "parks" bespeaks a kind of possessiveness, a relationship with the land, grounded ultimately in a fundamental belief in our ability to frame it, to establish borders around it, to control and to cultivate it, at civilization's discretion. In this sense the trail, like the figure Metacom himself, becomes emblematic, one might argue, of civilization's triumph -- more landscape than land -- more backdrop than actual presence.

Of most particular note is the ironic fact that today's Metacomet Trail is among the last remaining testaments to "King Phillip's War of 1675-76, wherein Chief Metacom - deemed King Phillip by the English settlers- waged an unsuccessful uprising against increasing encroachment of Puritan civilization and related abuses to native tribes" (Sayre). It was, in other words, on this very Blue Blaze trail, that Chief Metacom and his warriors waged their first and last stand against western civilization's conquest; it was here too that they suffered their final horrific defeat. Even more ironically Metacom-- the son of Massasoit who'd proffered the first Thanksgiving feast just years before-- would be redeemed *only* in mythology. Upon his defeat Metacom was ceremoniously

beheaded, his bloody remains paraded through town on a pike pole, his children sold into slavery, never to see those lands again.

This part of the story, swept under the rug of American history, is conveniently left out of the telling. As did the great American actor Edwin Forrest, in his iconic portrayal of Metacom for John Stone's 1829 play, *Metamora*, America fictionalizes, mythologizes, and ultimately capitalizes on its own romantic retelling of a peoples' story, of a land's story.

It is revealing, in this context, to note the history of the national park system itself in the United States of America. "The Yellowstone Act preserves the watershed of the Yellowstone River 'for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.' " For the first time, according to the United States National Park system, public lands were set aside entirely for public enjoyment, under the jurisdiction of the federal government. "Put under the 'exclusive control of the Secretary of the Interior,' the land was 'reserved and withdrawn from settlement, occupancy, or sale under the laws of the United States, and dedicated and set apart as a public park or pleasuring-ground..." (National Park Service).

A close look at the language surrounding these preservation efforts, hints at something beneath the surface of this so-called "preservation," something as dark as the Christian fathers' perceptions of the wilderness, or as the aristocrats' romantic capitalization of it. Subtly implied in this language of protection and preservation is a hierarchical perspective on human-nature relations. The 1872 quotation affirms that nature does indeed have a purpose, but that purpose is centered on western civilization's fulfillment, on its sole right to "pleasuring ground." The real danger here is

in the fact that such noble attempts fall short, in their ultimate reification of human ego-centrism, not to be confused with eco-centrism!

Again, as a case in point, the Metacomet Trail can be encroached on by the line of mega-mansions emerging to stand sentinel over it, so long as we allow that the system that ordained the trail worthy of preservation in the first place, did so in the name – not so much of preservation– but of conquest. For if we as people believe the land to exist for our benefit and pleasuring alone, then any attempt to define the boundaries of such pleasuring becomes a more than slippery slope. Humankind reigns supreme, even if ruled by nothing more than whimsy.

2012 U.S. Republican presidential candidate, Rick Santorum, epitomizes the danger in this point of view, criticizing what he calls President Barack Obama's "theology...This idea that man is here to serve the earth, as opposed to husband its resources...I think that is a phony ideal" (Fiedler 1). Interestingly, the *National Catholic Review's* Maureen Fiedler in a response article took issue with Santorum's speech and its theological implications. Fiedler reminded her audience of readers that the Vatican had just released a statement confirming their own panel of scientists concede that "the earth is indeed getting warmer and urgent measures are needed to reverse the trend....Their statement," Fiedler asserts, "linked the health of the earth with the welfare of all humankind" (1).

In the end, the wild after all is not so easily subdued. As Cless posits in his 2010 text, "Even when nearly negated by corporate control and excessive consumption, nature kicks back – witness our era's worsening droughts, floods, wildfires, and hurricanes, presaged in early modern drama..." (2). Ultimately, hierarchization, in our

ego-centric scorch-and-burn approach to the landscape, and our fear- and whimsy-driven stance toward the natural environment, have contributed in shocking ways to the challenges confronting contemporary civilization.

Ultimately, in adopting the stance the developed world has toward the wild places like the Metacomet Trail, we have become what Downing Cless refers to as *eco-hubristic*. In approaching the natural world as subordinate to our fears and joys and whims, in sanctifying rampant eco-hubris, we become alienated from one another, the natural environment, and finally, ourselves.

If we are wise, the civilized world of the twenty-first century will see in our present crises opportunities for change, opportunities for redefining human-environmental relationships, beyond ideology, opportunities for exchanging ego-centrism for *eco-centrism*.

Finally, we have entered a new era for the theatre, an era that continues to demand new patterns of inquiry and new modes of connectivity that speak to our age's most pressing issues. We have entered the age of Eco-Theatre. And while Eco-Theatre can largely be understood as ecologically conscious theatre, it is imperative once more that we recognize the meaning of the term "ecology."

It is imperative that we recognize that "ecology" does not simply mean the wild, the bucolic, the utopian "nature." "Ecology" refers to the living organism in relationship with all that surrounds and sustains it. Ecologies, once again, are life-relational systems.

Likewise, it is imperative that we recognize the holistic meaning of "theatre." If after all, theatre is both a physical location in the theatron or "seeing place," and a

process, live and action-oriented – whereby one sees – then “theatre” at its best is a locus of transformation.

Eco-theatre then, bringing the two terms together, implies the process – or in fact the transformation – of life-relational systems. Highly relevant in this era's pivotal points of crisis, environmental, technological, and existential, an ecologically conscious theatre, especially one willing to trouble the boundaries between “reality” and “virtuality” in an increasingly post-human world, is essential. It can reposition passive mediation, affecting real human action. In this moment of corporate super-structures, of growing disparity between rich and poor, in this moment of down-sizing, of profit incentives, of global capitalism, in this moment of automation, of robo-surgeries, of un-manned drones, in this moment of seeming human obsolescence: real human action is the hinge on which our future turns.

CHAPTER 4

INQUIRING THE WAY TO NEW PATTERN: PERFORMANCE, PERFORMANCE TEXT, DISCUSSION

In addressing the confluence of factors that we face today, now in the full dawn of the twenty-first century – the environmental, the technological, and the existential – the creation of a performance script becomes a highly problematic endeavor. With so many issues coming to the fore, theatre artists are stretched like never before in their attempts to put words to our era's dilemmas, and to address the needs society puts forth. Just as nanoscale science and technology and digital modes of communication present a double edged sword, with their dual potential for promise and peril – with their simultaneous opportunities for true democratization and eco-sanity, and for corporate totalitarianism and eco-disaster – so too does performance script-writing in the twenty-first century.

The three scripts that follow represent three divergent approaches at inquiry into some of the particular issues and problems confronting us today. Each script attempts to explore issues in direct, authentic response to its own moment in time, recognizing within that exploration the literal, metaphorical, material, and psycho-spiritual implications and overlaps inherent in the subjects addressed as well as in our shifting modes of human perception. In recognizing the complexity of the issues addressed, as well as that of their communicability, each script incorporates and/or allows room for the following:

- Poly-vocality, to seek universal connections and at once challenge hegemonic metanarratives.

- Multi-textuality, to rediscover and to deconstruct popular cultural discourses.
- Interdisciplinarity, to seek interconnection among modes of inquiry and means of problem-solving.
- Creative Collaboration, to expand the possibilities for intermedia exploration and encourage the discovery of new forms to reach the widest audiences, for the purpose of engaging dialogue.

Thus, each of the scripts is only a draft, the structural framework suggested – beginning, middle, and end – the hybrid body beginning to take form. Each is a weaving together of personal narratives, along with research from popular culture and media, and with other textual sources, be they songs, stories, poems, or other materials. Each is an attempt to harness the aliveness and interactivity of theatre to engage dialogue on critical contemporary issues. Each in its own way builds from a multi-disciplinary, multi-cultural, multi-generational, multi-gendered, multi-abled perspective – in ways both real and virtual.

It would be unwise to suggest that there are any definitive parameters or guidelines for performance text writing, now or in any other time. In fact to even attempt to do so is to snuff out the single greatest flame the performance text has – that of the instinct, the intuition, the live, in-the-moment, honest-to-goodness presence. The scripts that follow, then, are more templates than finished performance scripts. For ultimately, performance text writing is different from any other form of writing, in its insistence upon the sharing, the being taken up, the collaborating, the enlivening. If we overlook that fact, if we forget for one moment that what we are working with as performance text writers is a thing of constant transformation, then we lose the most

significant aspect of the work. It is in the end what we do with the performance text that matters most.

The distinguishing feature for each of the samples that follow, is the manner in which each script was devised, ranging from solo-devising (*Soup*), to group devising (*Cruzando el Alambre de Puas: Crossing the Barbed Wire*), to director-generated group devising (*Beauty: A Dialogue*). Each will be discussed in further detail in the following chapter, wherein the dissertation will conclude by outlining specific strategies for generating – and making accessible – works of eco-theatre today.

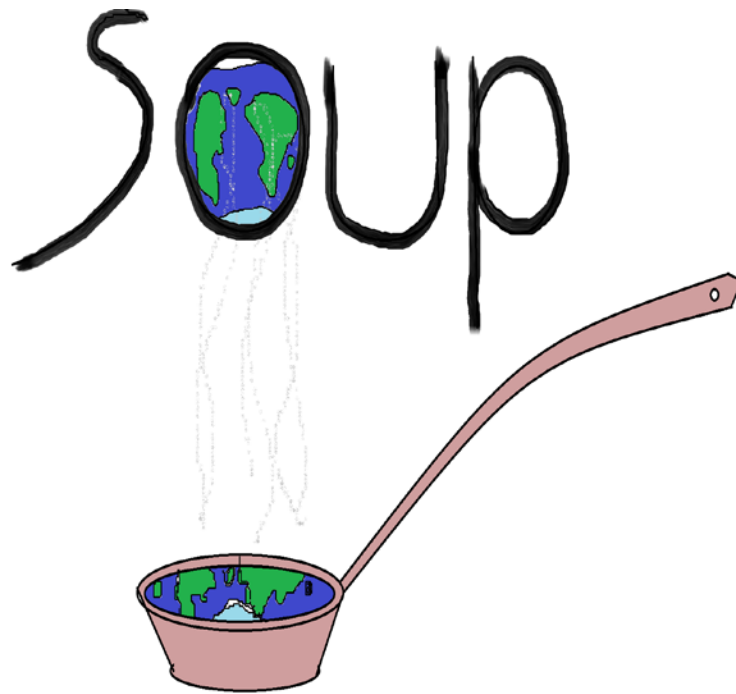


Fig. 6. Alden Glazier, *Computer-Generated Sketch for Soup Flyer*. 1 Nov 2011.

by Marnie J. Glazier

With Special Thanks to: Luis Borja, Mary Easton, Anne Fletcher, Ed Ford, Jonathan Gray, Susannah Bunny LeBaron, Clara Richards, and Karen Chenxiu Suo. Artwork by Alden Glazier.

CHARACTERS:

Singer/Guitarist - can be one or two people

Narrator - can be same actor as above, or different

Ensemble - 1-3 people who play multiple characters

Lights up on SINGER/GUITARIST, DR. ENSEMBLE enters,
silent performance, C, during or at the end of the following.
Guitar.

SINGER

(Speaking.) This song was written by Joe Hill. The infamous Joe Hill. Union organizer.
People's hero. For speaking his mind. For standing up for the right of every man,
woman, and child...to sustenance.

*Tunes guitar. Ad. Lib. "You can sing along if you know it,"
etc. Begins singing.*

Long haired preachers come out every night
Try to tell you what's wrong and what's right
But when asked "How `bout something to eat?"
They will answer in voices so sweet:
You will eat, bye and bye
In that glorious land above the sky
Work and pray, live on hay
You'll get pie in the sky when you die

SINGER (Cont.)

Speaks over music.

Now you can yell this out with me if you like. (*Yells.*) That's a lie! (*Beat. Speaking.*)

Joe Hill was framed for murder. Executed in the US in 1911, almost twenty years before the stock market crash, the Great Depression soup lines.

Sings.

O the starvation army they play

And they sing and they dance and they pray

Til they get all their coin on the drum

Then they'll tell you when you're on the bum:

You will eat, bye and bye

In that glorious land above the sky

Work and pray, live on hay

You'll get pie in the sky when you die

Calls out over music.

That's a lie! (*Beat. Speaking.*) Even today, one hundred years after the death of Joe Hill. Even today, in this age of untold human progress. Sustenance is not...a universal human right....

(*Sings.*) If you fight hard for children and wife

Try to get something good in this life

You're a sinner and a bad man, they tell

When you die you will sure go to hell

You will eat, bye and bye

Singer (Cont.)

In that glorious land above the sky

Work and pray, live on hay

You'll get pie in the sky when you die

(A shout.) That's a lie! *(Beat. Speaking.)* Across the globe, there are people going hungry. More than fifty percent of the world's population in poverty. The richest two percent, with half the world's wealth.

(Sings.) Holy rollers and jumpers come out

And they holler, they jump, and they shout

"Give your money to Jesus," they say

"He will cure all diseases today."

You will eat, bye and bye

In that glorious land above the sky

Work and pray, live on hay

You'll get pie in the sky when you die

(A shout.) That's a lie! *(Beat. Speaking.)* Systems fail. Financial. Political. Ideological. Forgetting our most basic connection....

(Sings.) Working folks of all countries, unite

Side by side we for freedom will fight

When the world and its wealth we have gained

To the grafter we will sing this refrain:

You will eat, bye and bye

When you've learned how to cook and to fry

Singer (Cont.)

Chop some wood, 'twill do you good

And you'll eat in the sweet bye and bye.

(Speaks.) That's no lie! *(Beat.)* We are what we eat. How we eat. The access we have, to the means of our own sustenance. The resources...and the recipes...to stretch them....

Music gently comes to a stop. ENSEMBLE setting up the soup pot. ENSEMBLE/NARRATOR comes forward, addresses the audience.

NARRATOR

The word "soup" dates back to at least the seventeenth century - - further in its Latin root, "suppare," soak.... But soup itself is "as old as the history of cooking," as old as humankind's discovery of fire. *(Foodtimeline.org)*

Beat. Over the following, SINGER gets ready for the next song and may gradually introduce the melody, etc.

ENSEMBLE might prepare performance, begin preparing soup, etc.

The PBS program, NOVA, asks the question, "What does soup have to do with the origins of life?" "It turns out," they say, "that the recipe for a rich soup resembles the recipe for life as we know it. Each generation of stars enriching the cosmic broth out of which the next generation forms, until after cooking for billions of years, the cosmic soup is rich enough and concentrated enough to form planets and people." *(From pbs.org)*

SINGER

(*Speaks.*) Monty Python's "Galaxy Song."

Sings, as ENSEMBLE begins first movement of "Galaxy Song" performance, and NARRATOR works on the soup. Might here incorporate large-scale tactful puppets and/or large earth ball thrown into the audience and passed/bounced among them.

...Just remember that you're standing
on a planet that's evolving,
and revolving at nine hundred miles an hour.
It's orbiting at nineteen miles a second, so it's reckoned,
The sun that is the source of all our power.
Now the sun, and you and me,
and all the stars that we can see,
are moving at a million miles a day,
in the outer spiral arm, at forty thousand miles an hour,
of a galaxy we call the Milky Way.

*Beat. Shift to second movement of
"Galaxy Song" Performance.*

Our galaxy itself contains a hundred billion stars.
It's a hundred thousand light years side to side.
It bulges in the middle sixteen thousand light years thick.
But out by us it's just three thousand light years wide.

SINGER(Cont.)

We're thirty thousand light years from galactic central point.

We go round every two hundred million years.

And our galaxy itself is one of millions and of billions,

In this amazing and expanding universe.

*Beat. Shift to third movement of "Galaxy Song"
performance.*

Our universe itself keeps on expanding and expanding,

In all of the directions it can whiz;

As fast as it can go, at the speed of light you know,

Twelve million miles a minute, and that's the fastest speed there is.

So remember when you're feeling very small and insecure,

How amazingly unlikely is your birth;

And pray that there's intelligent life somewhere out in space, 'cause there's bugger all
down here on earth!

Beat. Song and performance comes to a close.

NARRATOR addresses the audience.

NARRATOR

Soup is life. And life...is a deeply complex soup....

*Shift into scene. ENSEMBLE/first cook comes on, making
the soup as SHE speaks. "Part One: Singing With Your
Soup" spoken or presented on a placard, etc.*

ENSEMBLE

Always sauté your garlic and your onion first – right in the soup pot. Just a slab of butter to make it rich. Find the onion-side of your cutting-board and chop fine. Prepare to multi-task. You'll need at least four pair of arms in the early stages of your souping, sautéing up your onion and your garlic at just the right medium-high, keeping it moving with your spoon, and simultaneously preparing all those fading vegetables you've got to use while they're still usable. - - Don't let that garlic burn! The rule of thumb is to get the harder vegetables earliest into the pot. So start with your carrots, your parsnips, your turnips, your green beans. If you've got a stock, now's the time to use it. This is what we save our drippings for – the liquid that ran off when you cooked up your chicken. The water that you boiled your vegetables in. Nothing is extraneous. – The tomato sauce in the bottom of the jar, yesterday's white wine. Now's the time to pull out all the tidbits tucked into the far reaches of the refrigerator. Build your stock, one part passion, two parts practicality. Remember, like a woman, it gets sweeter, richer, more complex with time. Bring it to a rolling boil and cook it down a while. Search your shelves for odds and ends to give it character. Last night's lonely meatball, this morning's breakfast sausage. Bayleaf, thyme, a dash of maple syrup. Dance and sing with your soup. Inhale its spice and sweetness. Stir.... Salt. Pepper. Sage. This moment is sacred. Savor it.... Then turn it down and get back to the thousand other things to do this day. This baby can care for itself. By and by....

Beat. SINGER softly begins the lullaby. During, or at the end of this, shift to new ENSEMBLE member, or same actor shifts, through simple stage magic, into new character.

SINGER

(Sings.) Stars shining number, number one
 Number two, number three, good Lord!
 Bye n' bye, bye n' bye, good Lord/Bye n' bye....
 Stars shining number, number one
 Number two, number three, good Lord!
 Bye n' bye, bye n' bye, good Lord/Bye n' bye....
 Stars shining number, number one
 Number two, number three, good Lord!
 Bye n' bye, bye n' bye, good Lord/Bye n' bye....
 Good Lord/Bye and bye....

ENSEMBLE

My grandmother made soup - - a big pot on Sunday, her day off. Soup, baked beans, whatever they could afford to roast that week, and brown bread. The house filled with the smell. Soaking into every corner, every pine board. Molasses, yellow-eyes, onion. She worked two jobs all the time she raised her children, her husband worked three. Five kids they had, born and brought up in that house. And the center of it all was in her kitchen. All of her wisdom and passion and spirit went into her cooking, but nowhere more than in her soup. Even at seventy-five, she could balance a sewing project at the

ENSEMBLE (Cont.)

kitchen table, an oven-full of baking, and a steaming pot of soup, growing heartier at every twist in the conversation she engaged in, all the time – never missing a beat. “In everything,” she told me, “Patience.” She moved mountains...with a wooden spoon....

Beat. SINGER resumes the lullaby.

SINGER

(Sings.) Stars shining number, number one
 Number two, number three, good Lord!
 Bye n’ bye, bye n’ bye, good Lord/Bye n’ bye....
 Stars shining number, number one
 Number two, number three, good Lord!
 Bye n’ bye, bye n’ bye, good Lord/Bye n’ bye....
 Stars shining number, number one
 Number two, number three, good Lord!
 Bye n’ bye, bye n’ bye, good Lord/Bye n’ bye....
 Good Lord/Bye and bye....

*Shift into next scene. ENSEMBLE/second cook comes on, continues making the soup as NARRATOR speaks. “**Part Two: Stretching the Envelope,**” spoken or presented on a placard, etc.*

NARRATOR

In US history, “soup” conjures whole worlds of impressions, many of them centered on the Great Depression, the stock market crash, the dust bowl...the devastating impact of “progress.” When over-speculation and under-regulation on the financial front collided with aggressive, unsustainable practices on the agricultural front, and the soup kitchen spread through every city and town in the land....

SINGER

(Sings.) I'm spending my nights in the flop house

I'm spending my days on the street

I'm looking for work and I find none

I wish I had something to eat.

Soup, soup, they gave me a bowl of soup.

Soup, soup, they gave me a bowl of soup

Music gently trails off. ENSEMBLE member enters.

NARRATOR announces.)

NARRATOR

Clara's story.

ENSEMBLE

(As Clara, about 85 years old. Sits. With recipe book.) I was born in Naugatuck.

When the Depression came, I guess we were poor, but I didn't know it. My father was laid off, working on the road crew. For the WPA. - - We didn't want for anything. We were happy. My mother always sewed all our clothes and made our food - - made jams and jellies, canned vegetables. She had a little garden, she and my father, and they

ENSEMBLE(Cont.)

canned things. My mother made a soup with a soup bone....They'd go to the butcher shop and get a bone - - there wasn't much meat on it, but she'd put in vegetables and rice and whatever she had, and make it very tasty. My father used to go hunting, and we had squirrel stew. It was delicious. I didn't know the difference. She made a lot of stews....Every Saturday she'd make bread and rolls, and my sister and I would go around the neighborhood and sell them to help pay the rent. People tried it and liked it and wanted to buy it every week. And of course she was a great cook.... She made everything.... We grew up being economically inclined and that's the way we lived. - - I just figured it was the way everybody lived. - - We still do. I just don't want for anything extraordinary - - a big house, a big car. People would show me their big car and this and that, and it doesn't mean a thing to me. I'm happy with my car. It runs and it gets me where I need to go.... *(Beat.)* I never did take to the sewing.... I cooked.... I used a lot of my mother's recipes. *(Beat. Opens the book. Looks through it.)* Here's one of her soup recipes. *(Reading.)* Cover a soup bone with water. Add onions, a can of tomatoes, a little celery, and salt and carrots. Simmer it for two or three hours. *(Remembering.)* And then she made rice separately and added it to the soup. *(Reading again.)* It says here, "Save the leaves from the celery. Put them in a jar and dry them out." And then next time, you won't need to add celery. *(Reading.)* If you have a soup bone and don't use all the meat, grind it with some boiled potatoes, and then make a hash. If you have any left over gravy, add it to the mixture. Nothing goes to waste.... *(Closing the book.)* Nothing goes to waste....

Shift from Clara/ENSEMBLE, leaving, cradling her recipe book, etc. SINGER gently resumes music, on the guitar.

SINGER

(Sings.) Soup, soup, they gave me a bowl of soup.

Soup, soup, they gave me a bowl of soup.... *(Beat. For guitar only.)* I spent fifteen years in the factory.

I did everything I was told.

They said I was faithful and loyal.

Now why am I out in the cold?

Soup, soup, they gave me a bowl of soup.

Soup, soup, they gave me a bowl of soup....

Music gently trails off. ENSEMBLE member enters.

NARRATOR announces.)

NARRATOR

Mary's story.

ENSEMBLE

(As Mary, 87 years old. Rocks in a chair.) I grew up on a farm in Jackson City, in a place they call Buttermilk Hill. I was born in 1924.... We weren't affected by the Great Depression the way other people were because we always had plenty to eat. - - The only thing we didn't have were clothes. My dresses were made from flour sacks. We went barefoot all summer. But we always had plenty to eat, because we grew it, and there were wild raspberries, dewberries, blackberries we could go and pick. My mother canned hundreds of jars, and most were half-gallon jars.... She fed everybody. Even

ENSEMBLE(Cont.)

the old bums. Now we were a good long ways from the railroad tracks. I heard her tell plenty of times, "They must tell each other where they get the best food." (*Stops rocking.*) I'll never forget, when I made my first pie, my own little pie. When it got done, I raised it up in the window to cool, and here comes this old bum, and my mother told him, "I'm sorry. I've got no food." And he kept looking and looking, and my mother said, "Mary...would you give him your pie?"... And finally, I said "Okay...." To this day, I've never known how my first pie tasted.... (*Beat. Resumes rocking.*) We had cattle and we milked and sold cream, and that was, as far as I know, the only income we had year round. And then in the fall of the year, my dad would put up hogs and fatten them, and cure and smoke them in the old smoke house.... My dad died when I was thirteen. Me, my mother, and sister took care of the farm, and then my brother got married, moved in, and took over handling things. (*Beat.*) I got married at Sixteen, and the fellow I married had a service station and garage. He was nineteen.... That marriage lasted sixty-one years.... We married in 1940 and lived in a three room house where he had the service station.... When Tom and I first married, we made our own garden, up at my mother's place.... I remember planting in the light of the moon.... Later, we bought food in the store like everybody else. My husband worked for the Chevrolet garage for twenty-five dollars a week.... Those were lean years....We'd cook beans, cornbread and beans for lunch. In the evening we'd have beans and home made noodles I'd make kind of soupy. I learned how to be really savey. You had to be. Maybe I've gone in the other way now.... Maybe we all have....

*Shift from Mary/ENSEMBLE, continued rocking as lights
fade, etc. SINGER gently resumes music, on the guitar.*

SINGER

(Sings.) Soup, soup, they gave me a bowl of soup.

Soup, soup, they gave me a bowl of soup.... *(Beat. For guitar only.)* I saved fifteen
bucks with my banker,

To buy me a car and a yacht.

I went down to draw out my fortune,

And this is the answer I got:

Soup, soup, they gave me a bowl of soup.

Soup, soup, they gave me a bowl of soup....

Music gently trails off. ENSEMBLE member enters.

NARRATOR announces.)

NARRATOR

Cindy's story.

ENSEMBLE

(As Cindy, about 60 years old) Mum used to make pea soup and Johnnycake all the
time. Pea soup and johnnycake. Pea soup and Johnny cake. My parents never forgot
the Depression. It affected the way we ate a lot. Because my parents were used to
conserving and not having meat. So they learned ways to get meat in the diet without
having a portion of meat for everyone. Like my mother would make salt pork and gravy
and serve it over mashed potatoes. They supplemented with a lot of fresh vegetables -
- everybody would have a small garden and during the winter there were canned

ENSEMBLE (Cont.)

vegetables. During the Depression there were ration stamps, like food stamps, and there were stamps for sugar. You were only allowed so much because there was a real shortage of white refined sugar. So my mother got used to using a lot more molasses. We had things like biscuits and molasses for dessert. The biggest thing was we didn't eat a lot of meat. We'd have a pot roast, not even once a week, and then it would be made into a soup. Everything was made into a soup. Any kind of meat with a bone. Any kind of fish. Or we'd eat corn chowder, or tomato bisque and biscuits. And tomato bisque was nothing more than stewed tomatoes and milk, with salt. You'd stew the tomatoes with about a teaspoon of baking soda. When that was hot, you'd add your milk, your salt and pepper, and a little dab of butter, and you were all set. When I was raising my own family I was thankful that I had the ability to stretch a food budget. Later generations, people ten, or fifteen years younger than I am - - even some in my own generation, over time...people became spoiled.... - - The US is a very wealthy nation and people became used to living in the lap of luxury, and buying excesses, and wasting. They forgot.... They forgot how to conserve. Even though the middle class is becoming poorer, I don't see people cutting back.... I think it's very hard to admit, that you're not in the lap of luxury. I don't see people cutting back on anything.... *(Beat.)* If I were younger, I'd plant a garden....

*Shift from Cindy/ENSEMBLE, lights fade, etc. SINGER
gently resumes music, on the guitar.*

SINGER

(Sings.) Soup, soup, they gave me a bowl of soup.

SINGER (Cont.)

Soup, soup, they gave me a bowl of soup.... (*Beat. For guitar only.*) When I die and I get up to heaven,

St. Peter will let me right in.

He can tell by the soup that they fed me,

That I was unable to sin.

Soup, soup, they gave me a bowl of soup.

Soup, soup, they gave me a bowl of soup....

Soup, soup, they gave me a bowl of soup.

Soup, soup, they gave me a bowl of soup....

*Shift into next scene. ENSEMBLE/third cook comes on, continues making the soup as NARRATOR speaks. “**Part Three: Living off the land,**” spoken or presented on a placard, etc.*

NARRATOR

It’s funny...when I was a kid I remember we had, in the public schools - - I think in all the public schools in the country, we had Home Economics. It was a subject you took. Like Math and Science and History. We had Home Economics and we had Shop. Metal shop, wood shop, plastic shop. Everybody took all of it. A different one each semester. But Home Economics, it was divided in two halves. One semester it was sewing. We made pillows, I don’t remember what else. But everybody, boys, girls, everybody had to learn how to use the sewing machine. And then the other semester...the other semester was cooking. And we all had our, our pots and our pans.

NARRATOR (Cont.)

We all had our own burners on the stove. We learned how to make eggs, crepes, then at the end, at the end, seems to me we made a big soup, everyone, everyone chipping in.... What ever happened to Home Economics in this country? In America...we've forgotten about Home Economics.... Haven't we?....

SINGER

(Sings.) When the sun came shining, and I was strolling,
And the wheat fields waving, and the dust clouds rolling,
As the fog was lifting and a voice was chanting,
This land was made for you and me.
This land is your land, this land is my land.
From California to the New York Island.
From the redwood forest to the Gulf stream waters,
This land was made for you and me....

NARRATOR

Ed's story....

ENSEMBLE

(As Ed, in his sixties.) Theoretical physics would tell you that you can't make something out of nothing.... *(Beat.)* My family goes back three generations on the family farm. Before that my father's father's family came from Norway to the east coast. They ended up in Kentucky...the only southern state that didn't secede from the union. My great great grandfather fought with the north. Legend has it when he returned he was run out of town. He moved to Illinois, opened a harness shop, bought a house with land.... One

ENSEMBLE (Cont.)

of the things about the US, and the Europeans who came over to the US was that there was a lot of land available. That availability of land was a big reason for the success of the US. In Europe not a lot of people owned their own land. Farmers lived on an estate and worked for the land owners. A lot of the people who came to the US were debtors. They'd had to pay a certain amount to landowners and when they couldn't make that arrangement, they were thrown into debtor's prison. The US had all this land, all this available land. But the reason it was available was because the Europeans didn't think that the native peoples had any legitimate claim to the land. Part of our physiology is to make distinctions. Some people don't think that other people are really even human....

(Beat.) I'm not sure that you can really overcome your genetics. There's a genetic predisposition to the self and to the group, and those are always in conflict. The self drive wants to consume as much as they can, but there's a predisposition to the group too. And if the group realizes our own behavior is setting us up for failure - -for extinction, then theoretically they may be able to adjust their behavior, consume less, reproduce less.... - - I'm not sure what the current theory is but some researchers believe life began in water. So we certainly have a close relationship with water. It's essential to life. Can that redeem us? Just looking at it from a scientific point of view, you'd assume that there's an adequate amount of water to sustain human life, and so, pick some time, say 1500 AD. There was actually more water available than was needed to sustain the number of people - - so what happens? Population will grow, the growth continues.... Certain researchers...Malthus...tried to show that population growth is geometric. It's not just linear. So before you know it, your success has put

ENSEMBLE (Cont.)

you in a situation where you have more people than you can support with your water supply. If it hits the right proportions, the ultimate scenario would be the species dies out completely. But within that spectrum there could be adjustment...realization...the possibility to modify behavior...to make changes.... *(Beat.)* We need water to sustain life, but we need more than water. So soup is actually an efficient way to get water and other nutrients at the same time. Soup is sort of a symbol of human creativity. - - Liquid things are less contained by boundaries... but still, to make soup, you need a pot, so there is a container, and then it gets split up, into smaller containers.... And it brings us back to human physiology...to distinctions...to the group and the self. Can we support both?...

SINGER

(Begins with guitar, with chorus melody, then sings.) As I was walking that ribbon of highway,

I saw above me, that endless skyway.

I saw below me, that golden valley.

This land is made for you and me.

This land is your land, this land is my land,

From California to the New York Island.

From the redwood forest to the Gulf stream waters,

This land was made for you and me....

NARRATOR

When they think of America, a lot of people think of fast food. McDonald's has spread across the globe, selling pasta in Italy, perogies in Poland, and now, all over the world...soup.... *(Beat.)* A friend recently told me, "I don't cook. I don't have to. I eat out, or if I have to eat at home, I buy something already made. Just throw it in the microwave. Who has time to cook? It's not something I really learned growing up. We ate a lot of frozen dinners. A lot of Campbell's soup. Sometimes...sometimes I wish I could cook. But life. - - You know, life's just too demanding."

SINGER

(Begins with guitar, with chorus melody, then sings.) In the squares of the city, in the shadow of a steeple,

By the relief office, I seen my people.

As they stood there hungry, I stood there asking,

Is this land made for you and me?

This land is your land, this land is my land,

From California to the New York Island.

From the redwood forest to the Gulf stream waters,

This land was made for you and me....

Shift into next scene. ENSEMBLE/fourth cook comes on, continues making the soup as NARRATOR speaks. "Part Four: Finding Sustenance," spoken or presented on a placard, etc.

NARRATOR

Karen's story...

ENSEMBLE

(As Karen, Chinese woman in her mid-forties.) I think of my home...I think of China, because all of my family except my son and I are there....Food and home are intimately connected....We used to have soup every night, at home. For hydration and because it is a traditional way of eating in the region. Soup for dinner, noodles for lunch. That's a regular pattern for many people.... One particular soup is my mom's soup. My mom's been dead for almost seventeen years.... That's the soup I grew up with.... Flour and egg soup. Whenever my husband and I are feeling cold or have a fever, we want to have egg soup and for me, it's my mom's soup. That's one of the soups we always had when we were young every day for dinner. My son is not a soup person because he came here when he was young - - fifteen, so he'll have ice water, or coffee, or soda. But if you ask him, "Do you want some egg soup?" he'll say "Yes." We call it comfort soup. My husband and I, when we were young, in the 1970's, China was very poor, and a lot of families didn't have enough food and when we were sick, parents would say, "What do you want to have?" and both of us, my brothers too, would say, "Egg soup." So it's still a very sweet memory. Your parents prepared the soup. Mostly my mom would prepare the soup but my dad would serve the soup to us. It is a really simple recipe. To prepare it, you put one scoop of flour into a bowl, add a half a cup of cold water, stir them again and again for a couple of minutes. Wait maybe ten minutes, then boil some water. How much depends on how many people you're serving. When it starts to boil, you'll slowly pour the mixture of flour and water into the almost boiling

ENSEMBLE (cont.)

water, stirring very very quickly. Turn the fire down to medium, and then keep on stirring for another five to six minutes, add one or two eggs, crack them into a bowl, stir them one or two minutes, and pour them into the soup. Then turn off the fire. You don't want to cook the egg too long - - It's more nutritious. (*Beat.*) We have dishes that we serve with it. Chinese have a lot of different kinds of vegetables, and can have steamed buns, steamed bread, many different kinds of dishes go with the soup.... Every dinner or lunch, we normally have three or four dishes. You buy your vegetables every day. We have all kinds of shops, small shops, free markets, farmer's markets, supermarkets in the neighborhood. You don't have to drive to the store. There are always some stores, free markets, open markets, in the neighborhood. For supermarkets, we take the bus, or ride our bicycle, or drive. - - We never have left-overs. Maybe now, with the young generation, living in the big cities, who have to travel a lot for their jobs, it's different, but traditionally we don't have left-overs. We don't cook more than we need.... Two general things: Chinese people pay a lot of attention to the color of the dishes. If I have three dishes on the table for lunch, I might have a meat, a vegetable, fried eggs, maybe a fish. So this way I can have all kinds of varieties and all kinds of colors.... Food is really something big in the culture.... We spend a lot more time cooking and we spend a lot more time in shopping for the cooking. Especially for dinner, when all the family members get calm after the day of work or school...you just want to be with your family...and eat together. A lot of business activities are done over the lunch or the dinner table. So food has always been a way to communicate - -to stay in contact with one another. Business, holidays, friends...to stay connected.... In China

ENSEMBLE (cont.)

the restaurants are always crowded and the table is always very colorful, very flavorful....

*SINGER plays a gentle tune on the guitar, then shift into next scene. ENSEMBLE/fifth cook comes on, continues making the soup as NARRATOR speaks. “Part Five: **Living sustainably**,” spoken or presented on a placard, etc.*

NARRATOR

(The following information might be projected on stage or might be read from a handheld device, smartphone, etc.) Wikipedia tells a pretty concise story of the history of humankind. From the early stone age to the spread of agriculture when “Relative security and increased productivity provided by farming, allowed communities to spread,” and new means of transport to evolve. “Surplus food,” it says, “enabled the division of labor, the rise of a leisured upper class, and the development of cities, and with them, civilization.”... *(Beat.)* What now?... *(Beat.)* “In the last quarter millennium, the growth of knowledge, technology, commerce, and of the potential destructiveness of war has accelerated, creating the opportunities and the perils that currently confront many human communities.” - - Many human communities? Or the human community?...

SINGER

(Begins with guitar, with chorus melody, then sings.) As I was walking that ribbon of highway,
I saw above me, that endless skyway.

SINGER(Cont.)

I saw below me, that golden valley.

This land is made for you and me.

This land is your land, this land is my land,

From California to the New York Island.

From the redwood forest to the Gulf stream waters,

This land was made for you and me....

NARRATOR

Notes from Jonny...

ENSEMBLE

(As Jonathan Gray. Of indeterminate age, professorial, and at once possessed of a most youthful vigor. In an office desk chair, if possible, surrounded by books, etc.

Delivered with some rapidity and some enthusiasm.) ...This kind of paradigm for producing food that is local, organic, vegetarian, can often be in conflict with people who actually live in outlying areas like Alaska - - who know the land and what it has to offer....With the victory garden, from the Depression, World War II days, folks were encouraged to have their own small plots of land to grow their own gardens.... Even if you're just growing a small plot of carrots and tomatoes, it connects you with seasonal change, seasonal availability, and I think that that experience is important. There's a difference though between, "I have to produce all of my food that way," and "I have to produce some of my food that way." It's about availability of food and it's also about a kind of...sense of connection...to place. Part of understanding the seasonability of food is knowing that connection between season, and time, and place. - - Many

ENSEMBLE (Cont.)

environmentalists point to the fact that advocacy for the environment depends upon a connection to place. Many of us today experience geographic infidelity.... We lack a fidelity to a certain geographic place. - - Today most of us shift...many zipcodes in a lifetime. Our prosperity is in some ways defined by our mobility. But even if we are a mobile society, how do we mobilize our connection to place, and our ability to connect with place? What does it mean to spend a conscious amount of time trying to get to know a place...having the ethic of knowing and connecting to place?... It's about knowing what's in season. Where are the places to get local foods? What are the local orchards making? What is the history, written in the names of places? To know that, is to begin to have a sense of locality of place, to have an actual mindful practice of getting to know the place you live. - - Where does your water come from? What are some invasive species, endemic species, endangered species here?... Part of the revelation...is how little we tend to know that information.... Do you know the name of the creek that runs behind your house? Do you know where else it runs by, and what it's going to run in to? Because to know that, is to know the place where you live... to have a sense of interconnectedness with the systems that support us.... That's what the geographical infidelity really threatens....

SINGER

(Begins with guitar, with chorus melody, then sings.) I've roamed and rambled,
And I followed my footsteps,
To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts.
And all around me, a voice was sounding:

SINGER(Cont.)

This land is made for you and me.
 This land is your land, this land is my land,
 From California to the New York Island.
 From the redwood forest to the Gulf stream waters,
 This land was made for you and me....

NARRATOR

Negotiation. This is a term that comes to mind thus far. Negotiation, and tenderness. Consideration and most elemental need. The balance between the having to and the doing for love. For it is always there. Maybe even in our most grueling labors. I can hear it simmering, the delicate strands of interconnection among these separate ingredients: the way we eat, the way we live, regionalism & universality of foods, subsistence, the delicate relationship with the means of our own survival, food, soup, community and sharing, negotiating relationships, negotiating in the kitchen, “building a stew,” building a meal, building a life...stretching resources and using what you have, limiting waste... negotiating that balance....

SINGER plays melody from “This land is Your Land” on the guitar, then shift into next scene. ENSEMBLE/sixth cook comes on, continues making the soup as NARRATOR speaks. “Part Six: Negotiating the Balance” spoken or presented on a placard, etc.

NARRATOR

An interview with Anne...

ENSEMBLE

(As Anne, a youngish “boomer,” speaking to imaginary interviewer. May put on and remove reading glasses in the course of this. May sip from a cup of tea, dipping a small pastry in this from time to time.) What does “soup” mean to me?... I guess over time there'd be different meanings.... At one time – - everyone feels this – – soup is synonymous with childhood. Just a can of Campbell's Soup makes me think of New England and childhood.... But as an adult, I still find soup comforting and often seasonable.... *(Beat. As though processing interviewer's question.)* Particular kinds of soup...with special significance... I think of sometimes different people with different soups, and sometimes different places.... My old boyfriend Larry makes Gazpacho and always made a really big deal of it. He was always pawning it off on people.... I think of Bill Conde when I think of Vichyssoise. When I think of Pumpkin Soup, I think of Alan Benson.... *(Beat. Might sip from the tea.)* I love French Onion Soup and it makes me think of Massachusetts.... On the other hand, there's corn chowder.... I think of my mother when she was old and sick. She liked me to make her Corn Chowder.... I think of Lobster Stew, I think of Lincolnville, Maine.... *(Pause. Looking intently at interviewer/audience.)* Isn't it amazing...the array of soups and kinds of memories you think about?... My mother used to make Beef Stew, and I didn't care about it when I was a kid, but my husband liked it, and I got so I was really good at it. I found out the key was to use leftover Prime Rib. But it's always the leftover, because I wouldn't spend that kind of money on a soup.... That's the point of soup really, isn't it?... To use everything you've got.... *(Beat. Again, processing interviewer question.)*

ENSEMBLE(Cont.)

Anecdotes...about soup.... Well, yes... "Building a stew."... My parents' best friends were both chefs and after their retirement, she taught food in a Home Ec. Department in school. - - They'd worked at the old Child's Restaurant in New York before the Depression. - – They had kind of a bickery relationship. They were married more than sixty years before she died, and the bickering played out in their cooking, because they were both very talented. The food was always wonderful. My sister and I still remember this phrase, "Building a Stew." They'd call and invite us to dinner, and say they were "building a stew." But what they really meant was that one of them would add water, the other would add more stock, the other would dilute it, and on and on like that, one thickening, one diluting.... Their process in building the stew was a metaphor for their relationship.... I never thought about it as anything more than bickering, but now that I think about it I can see all of the different ingredients in their relationship...as a stew...the stew of life.... When I really think about it, they built a life for seventy years, adding and subtracting, and negotiating.... They really loved one another so deeply. When she died, he only lived about... She died in June, he died in August or September, a couple of months. They were a funny funny couple. He would do things just to get her going. Not mean-spirited, just funny....I suppose soup symbolizes that...a universal sign of sharing, of forgiveness.... Soup symbolizes the universality of sharing, giving, stretching the dollar... not wasting things....

SINGER

(Begins with guitar, with chorus melody, then sings.) O why don't you work like other men do?

How the hell can I work when there's no work to do?

Hallelujah, I'm a bum – Hallelujah, bum again!

Hallelujah, give us a handout to revive us again....

I went to a house, I knocked on the door

The lady said, "Scram bum, you've been here before!"

Hallelujah, I'm a bum – Hallelujah, bum again!

Hallelujah, give us a handout to revive us again....

NARRATOR

Here are some interesting tidbits on soup from the foodtimeline.org.... *(Reading from a sheet of paper or from a handheld screen, etc.)* "Etymology; "soupe," French, broth, "suppa," "sop."... Figures of Speech; Alphabet Soup, Primordial Soup - - Great depression - - Turtle Soup, Soup Kitchens.... 6000 BCE, first soups recorded in history. 1742, Colonial Cookbook published. 1772, "The Frugal Housewife," contains a chapter on soups. 1794, Jean Baptiste Gilbert Payplat - – refugee from the French revolution - – opens "Restorer," becomes "Prince of Soups." 1882, Emma Ewing writes "Soups and Soup-Making." 1897, the coming of canned Soup. Condensed soup introduced by chemist with Campbell's, Dr. John T. Dorrance."...(From foodtimeline.org.)

SINGER

(Begins with guitar, with chorus melody, then sings.) Whenever I get all the money I earn,

The boss will go broke and to work he must turn.

Hallelujah, I'm a bum – Hallelujah, bum again!

Hallelujah, give us a handout to revive us again....

O I love my boss, he's a good friend of mine.

That's why I'm starving out on the bread line.

Hallelujah, I'm a bum – Hallelujah, bum again!

Hallelujah, give us a handout to revive us again....

O why don't you save all the money you earn?

If I didn't eat, I'd have money to burn.

Hallelujah, I'm a bum – Hallelujah, bum again!

Hallelujah, give us a handout to revive us again....

*SINGER plays melody from "Hallelujah, I'm a bum!" on the guitar, then shift into next scene. ENSEMBLE/seventh cook comes on, continues making the soup as NARRATOR speaks. **"Part Seven: Returning to the Source"** spoken or presented on a placard, etc.*

NARRATOR

Mis manus.... Cooking with Luis....

SINGER

(Plays the guitar and sings.) Levantate y mira la Montana

De donde viene el viento, el sol y el agua

Tu que manejas el curso de los rios

Tu que sembrado el vuelo de tu alma....

ENSEMBLE

(As Luis, late twenties-early thirties, Ecuadorian. Speaks, in English, with a beautifully melodic accent. Cooks and prepares food as HE speaks.) One of the biggest things I remember about cooking with my grandmother was helping with the Christmas turkey. I was very little - – two or three years old maybe - - and I would stand on a chair, and there would be this big impressive turkey and I would inject wine in the turkey with my grandmother. Another thing: We would go to the market and get crabs. I would go with my grandfather and then we would bring them back to the house and we would kill the crabs. You had to let them go to kill them, and kill them one by one, with a knife. Then my grandmother would wash them with a toothbrush very carefully because they come very dirty. Because if you don't kill them you have to wash them alive. If you put them in the pot alive to kill them, they come out better - – they don't lose their juices - – but it's very cruel to kill them that way. *(Beat. Focusing for a moment on the vegetables he works on.)* The last time I made crabs I killed them myself in our house in Ecuador, and I felt that it was very cruel, I almost felt that they were crying when I stuck the knife in them.... But I felt good that I was doing it myself,... because when you eat flesh, someone has done the killing. So to me there was something very beautiful to learn the ritual of killing from my grandmother.... There is something very ancient in that....*(Beat.*

ENSEMBLE (Cont.)

Busy with his food preparation for a moment.) Artichokes.... My grandmother would make many different sauces and we would sit and taste the different sauces with the leaves of the artichoke. Probably I remember all of this because of the active participation I had - - injecting the wine, killing the crabs, peeling the artichoke.... What is important to understand is that my grandmother didn't know how to cook until she got married. Growing up, she wasn't allowed into the kitchen because that was not proper for a lady - - for her aristocratic position. Cooking is one of the most sacred tasks, but at the same time has been given away to the people of the lowest classes...so cooking has become degrading...lower work. Even here in the U.S. Who is cooking in the kitchens of the restaurants? Mexicans, Ecuadorians, Central Americans, other excluded peoples. (*Beat. Inspecting his work a moment.*) Interesting as a paradox. Because we say that food is so important but in the end the one who cooks usually belongs to the excluded, the vulnerable - -vulnerated.... - - When she married my grandfather, my grandmother was seventeen years old and she had never fried an egg...she had to discover by herself that cooking gave her power - - in front of my grandfather, her kids, her family, friends, the community around her. Because slowly she learned, she taught herself. So in the end, she ended up having a television cooking show - - thirty years later. She discovered that she had a talent for it and she also discovered the power of cooking.... She discovered how she could move people around her or pull people to her by cooking. She understood the mystery, the art of cooking, because she started to create.... Like any art, in the beginning you have to learn the rules, and then once you've mastered it, you can risk, you can discover....

ENSEMBLE (Cont.)

She started to make a lot of money and at some point, she was the strong person in the house. She quit high school and finished when she was in her thirties. She was eighteen years a teacher without finishing high school. Then she went to T.V.... with her cooking....

SINGER

(Strums and sings.) Levantate y mirate las manos

Para crecer estrechala a tu hermano

Juntos iremos, unidos en la sangre

Hoy es el tiempo que puede ser mañana....

ENSEMBLE

(As Luis, continuing as before.) Soup, in my personal history has a very special meaning. No meal was complete without soup. In my grandmother's house, you would have soup, second plate, and dessert for lunch, and a different one for the evening meal. *(Shows book, Grandmother's cooking journal)* Mis Manus,... my menus.... There is a menu for lunch and dinner for every day of the month. Lunes 1, Sanco Cho, soup - – a traditional rich soup, Carne con Bonitos en Montequilla, Arroz, Ensalada d Zanalaria: Noranja.... *(Beat.)* My family is from the coast, so even though I lived in Quito, the mountains, I ate food from the coast....She would spend all day cooking.... *(Beat. Working with the vegetables before HIM.)* When the soup is served there are a lot of plates passing around because there are many things that you add to it. And juices. Fruit juices. In the beginning I didn't like soups very much because there were two soups that I didn't like. The table was also a place of tension because if my uncles

ENSEMBLE(Cont.)

didn't want to eat something, my grandfather would be aggressive....I would have to go to the kitchen because I was crying and I would sit there with the maid. But then, when I started to change my mood with the soup was when I discovered my grandmother's soups. She started to cook some wonderful soups that would drive me crazy. My grandmother would ask what we wanted to eat for our birthday and we would go to her house for lunch and she would make that. I asked for calamari soup, goulash, cowcara - - which is hard meat, boiled, pulled, and fried - – served with lettuce, potatoes, and peanut sauce.... - - There was a famous soup my grandmother made called the soup of eternal youth....

SINGER

(Plays the guitar and sings.) Libranos de aquel que nos domina en la miseria
 Traenos tu reino de justicia e igualdad
 Sopla como el viento la flor de la quebrada
 Limpia como el fuego el canon de mi fusil....

ENSEMBLE

(Continuing, as Luis.) In Ecuador, we have a tradition of making a very special soup called Fanesca, made during Easter. The Catholics celebrate the holy week. The natives have their own celebration because the crops, the beans begin to grow. It is a very tedious process, Fanesca, because you have to take the skin off of each grain - – the beans, the peas - – because the beans have just been harvested. You separate each of the beans from the skins, and then you boil the beans, you add green beans, boiled egg, dried cod, and in every house there is a special hot pepper sauce - – ahi

ENSEMBLE (Cont.)

literally means hot pepper, but we refer to ahi as hot sauce, hot salsa. So every house has its own ahi. It is a tradition to have this on the table because it makes the food spicy. So in the Fanesca you also add hot sauce. So this soup is very traditional. The natives who live in what is now Ecuador have had this soup for thousands of years – - before the Spanish came. But it is everywhere. It is a soup that is eaten by the high class, the middle class, the lower class. It's a soup that's been absorbed by all the portions of society as a cultural element of identity....

SINGER

(Strums and sings.) Hagase por fin tu voluntad aqui en la tierra

Danos tu fuerza y valor al combater

Sopla como el viento...quebrada

Limpia como el fuego el canon de mi fusil....

ENSEMBLE

(Continues, as Luis.) Another special variation of a soup is Cebiche, cold seafood soup that you eat on the coast, but you can also get it in the rest of Ecuador. Made out of shrimp, or octopus, or calamari, or whatever, mixed with onion, tomato, lemon, orange juice, green pepper cut really small and thin. You eat that always as the first plate and you serve the Cebiche with a small plate of fried corn and maybe fried bananas also, and you add that, and then you put the salsa also.... It is very popular to eat cebiche for a hangover. - - Everybody in Ecuador knows that you go to eat cebiche with your friends after the party and you accompany it with a beer.... This shows two things: One, the cold variation of the soup - – the Spanish have something very similar - – Gazpacho,

ENSEMBLE (Cont.)

you can substitute the soup sometimes. Two, there are theories that the Chinese and Japanese people went to the Americas before the Spanish, and they stayed in the Andes. - - The Japanese use fish in some very similar ways - – The fish in the cebiche is raw. They talk about a parenthood somewhere in history between Chinese and Japanese culture and the Andes, the chain of mountains that runs through Ecuador. What you may call the Andean culture has a very mysterious parenthood with the east.... There are words in Quechua, the native language of the region, that share incredible similarities with the Chinese. - - In Chinese oral memory there is a story about a clan that fought and divided in two. The part that left got lost in history. “Shungo” in Chinese means chest, in Quchua means heart.... One of the explanations I give myself for how we make cebiche seafood and how we cook in general.... The part of China that eats seafood eats it in a very similar way to what we do. *(Beat.)* Now that I think about it, the Andes might be the peculiar place where east and west have met.... People from China, Japan, Egypt, then the Spanish.... There is something there. The Indians from the Andes are very similar to the Chinese in their bodies, in their faces, in their shape. There are all these things that suggest that there was very close contact between these worlds...

SINGER

(Plays guitar and sings.) Levantate y mirate las manos

Para crecer estrechala a tu hermano

Junta iremos, unidos en la sangre

Ahora y en la hora de nuestra muerte Amen!...

ENSEMBLE

(Continues, as Luis.) I have developed a palate because of my house – - my grandparents, my uncles, my mother. It was something I learned inside the family - – something that was given to me by my elders. Food and human beings. Knowledge that is possible to inherit. My mother, my grandmother would always call me, “Louis Alberto,” and they would make me taste what they were cooking, and I would say, “It needs a little more...” Everything that I know about food has been given to me by women.... My mother, my grandmother, the woman who cooked at my other grandmother’s house. It’s always the women that are around the kitchen and for me, being close to them meant learning.... *(Beat.)* I think you can read the isolation of the individual in the relationship with food. The alienation of the being is equal to the alienation of the food. In that sense literally you are what you eat. In every country, what’s happening to the food is happening to the people. Food is culture, as music is culture, as poetry is culture.... The pot is always a circle and that’s a very important symbol. *(Beat.)* All the time when you’re cooking.... The mystery of the circle. The perfect shape of the circle. Facilitates the gathering of people around it, like fire...the ancestral relationship between food, water, fire...the elements....

SINGER

(Sings, plays guitar.) Levantate y mirate las manos
 Para crecer estrechala a tu hermano
 Junta iremos, unidos en la sangre
 Ahora y en la hora de nuestra muerte Amen!...

SINGER plays melody from “Plegaria a una Labrador” on the guitar, then shift into next scene. ENSEMBLE/eighth cook comes on, finalizes the making of the soup as NARRATOR speaks. “Part Eight: Sharing, Giving, Forgiving” spoken or presented on a placard, etc.

NARRATOR

Bunny’s blessing....

ENSEMBLE

(As Bunny, young vibrant woman, late thirties-40, of great poise and compassion.)

These days, it seems like sustainability is equated with survival, survival of our species, of other species. And we’re scrambling to generate metrics so that we can track “sustainability” with numbers, and file reports, and get rankings, etcetera. But sustainability is more than that. It is first and foremost an attitude, a kind of waking up, an inquiry into ourselves and our lives - - especially our purchases. But it is not ONLY a nouveau frugality, it is not ONLY a choosing to have, to consume, less. It is these things, yes, but not only – -and not always. Sustainability is smiling at other people. It is smiling at YOURSELF! It is recognizing our interdependence and our interconnectedness, and not trying to resist that by being asleep, by choosing ignorance, by engaging in excess OR by becoming righteous, or guilty, or full of anger or despair. When we use our intellect and our emotions to beat ourselves up, to create tension in our bodies. . . When we engage in thoughts and deeds that result in rushes of adrenaline and cortisol, shallow breathing, tight jaws and tight shoulders – - in other words when we frighten or enrage ourselves into a survival response, a fight or flight

ENSEMBLE (Cont.)

response . . . at these times we are polluting the earth.... Why don't we see it that way? We do not see it that way because we do not, fundamentally, believe ourselves to be part of the earth. We are raised in a culture that teaches us that humanity is above nature, that we have dominion, mastery, control.... That is not an attitude that leads to a sustainable way of life. But the flip side of that is equally unsustainable: Humanity is a plague, we are destroying the planet and we shouldn't be here.... That sentiment is at the root of many people's despair over environmental issues. (*Beat.*) But in both cases, we are separate from our ecologies. We are above it, or below it, but we do not see ourselves as belonging to it. We need to see our bodies and our minds and our behaviors as PART OF. So our internal peacefulness, our state of mind, our chemical balance, I believe that tending to these things, becoming aware of these things is the beginning of real sustainability. And THAT is why sustainability is important – because it allows us to be PART OF our planet.... Cultivating this understanding, this state of mind and body, to me that's the real work.... (*Beat.*) If we are buying organic products or recycling or walking to work because we are frightened or angry, we are seemingly doing the “right” things, but we are not addressing our internal states, and by ignoring the piece of the planet for which we are most responsible – our own selves – we perpetuate the illusion that we are separate.... The earth needs balance, rest, and healing. So do most of the people I know.... I think that Thich Nhat Hanh has said it very well: Bring the Earth our love and happiness. The Earth will be safe when we feel safe in ourselves....

Singer plays guitar and sings, as ENSEMBLE begins first movement of “Galaxy Song” performance, and NARRATOR, etc. work on preparing for the sharing of the soup. Might again incorporate large-scale tactful puppets and/or large earth ball thrown into the audience and passed/bounced among them, and/or passing of bowls, etc. ENSEMBLE might now or over the course of the stanzas, join the SINGER, singing along, dancing, engaging the audience and potential audience plants in dancing, singing, etc.

SINGER

...Just remember that you're standing
 on a planet that's evolving,
 and revolving at nine hundred miles an hour.
 It's orbiting at nineteen miles a second, so it's reckoned,
 The sun that is the source of all our power.
 Now the sun, and you and me,
 and all the stars that we can see,
 are moving at a million miles a day,
 in the outer spiral arm, at forty thousand miles an hour,
 of a galaxy we call the Milky Way....

SINGER trails to close with repetition of melody on guitar, as ENSEMBLE resumes.

ENSEMBLE

(Resuming, as Bunny.) Sustainable food choices for me mean shopping a lot at the local Co-op. They take the research out of it. I grow some of my own food. This is my second year gardening vegetables. There is so much to learn, but I think this is a key part of sustainable living. I eat meat very rarely, and I won't eat if it is not local or organic. The best is when our friend gives us local deer meat. I think wild food is pretty amazing. And talk about feeling gratitude – -for the animal, for the labor of the hunter... to eat an animal that has been eating local wild food. It makes me feel connected to this place. It makes me feel primitive in the best sense.... The other consideration that I bring to the food-sustainability nexus is financial. When we lived in California, we were able to eat organically for much less. Once we'd moved east, it was breaking our budget and causing so much stress that we finally just said, 'Okay, we'll do this when we can, but not beat ourselves up when we can't.' - - The other thing about sustainable eating, and this fluctuates depending on how busy we are, is not eating out. And I used to stress out about this, but now, when we are eating out because we're busy or because it's an occasion, now I just work on being grateful. On being kind. On eating the food consciously, knowing what it has cost. I consciously choose to not add to that cost by adding guilt and despair in my own person.... But the key here is conscious.... There are lots of people who feel no guilt or despair when they eat at fast-food places. But this is - - usually - - because they have no idea of the violence that makes their meal possible. When you know, and if, for whatever reason, you are eating that kind of food, THEN I think you do the work of practicing gratitude, etc. You don't eat and feel rotten

ENSEMBLE (Cont.)

about yourself while you eat. What a goddamn waste.... But if you don't know about where your food comes from... then you also need to wake up....

Beat. Shift to second movement of

“Galaxy Song” Performance. Again, might incorporate large-scale tactful puppets and passing of bowls, etc. will evolve in this next phase to passing of spoons, etc. ENSEMBLE now more definitively involved in joining the SINGER, singing along, dancing, engaging the audience and potential audience plants in dancing, singing, etc.

SINGER

(Playing guitar and singing.) Our galaxy itself contains a hundred billion stars.

It's a hundred thousand light years side to side.

It bulges in the middle sixteen thousand light years thick.

But out by us it's just three thousand light years wide.

We're thirty thousand light years from galactic central point.

We go round every two hundred million years.

And our galaxy itself is one of millions and of billions,

In this amazing and expanding universe....

SINGER trails to close with repetition of melody on guitar, as

ENSEMBLE resumes.

ENSEMBLE

(Resuming, as Bunny.) How does soup tie in to this?... Soup!... I love soup.... It... is nourishing,... healing,... delicious, and you can make it up, it can be different every day, every time. *(Beat.)* That's sustainability... - – it doesn't always look the same. But. . . you also have to know something... about flavors, about cooking times, in order to make up good soups. You have to have information and you have to practice – - you have to become awake.... And again, that is sustainability.... It's the improvised soup I love best. The soup made from scraps when you thought nothing was left to eat in the house. *(Beat.)* I believe, though I can't measure... that the feelings of the cook are present in the soup. *(Beat.)* If she - - or he is happy or peaceful or angry or afraid - – all of this shows up in the soup... just as it shows up in our lives... Just as it shows up in our planet....

Singer plays guitar and sings, as ENSEMBLE begins final movement of "Galaxy Song" performance, and NARRATOR, etc. begin passing out the soup. Might again incorporate large-scale tactful puppets ENSEMBLE sing as they pass the soup.

SINGER

(Playing guitar and singing, standing, joining others at/near the soup bowl.) Our universe itself keeps on expanding and expanding,
In all of the directions it can whiz;
As fast as it can go, at the speed of light you know,
Twelve million miles a minute, and that's the fastest speed there is.

SINGER (Cont.)

So remember when you're feeling very small and insecure,
How amazingly unlikely is your birth;
And pray that there's intelligent life somewhere out in space,
'cause there's bugger all down here on earth!

CURTAIN



Fig. 7. John Glazier, *Barbed Wire Sculpture*, 26 Apr 2012.

Cruzando el Alambre de Puas/

Crossing the Barbed Wire

A Collaboration by

M Glazier, G Ponce, G Kotey, L. Chiteri, J Grote, J Glazier & C Meiners

Prologue

Welcome to Cruzando el Alambre de Puas/Crossing the Barbed Wire. We invite you to stand, or to sit if you'd prefer. We ask that you please turn off all cell phones for the duration of the event. The performance will run for approximately thirty minutes, after which we invite you to share your own testimony, either aloud, or in the books provided.

The following reflections, inspirations, references, and testimonies are part of the process, our process of sharing and interweaving our personal and political experiences and those of others... in landscape...in citizens of the earth... in border crossing....

The landscape ghosts our forerunners, our former selves. Nor can we be, in but one place. We ghost our selves, our former selves, our former vestiges of being, in and through the landscape. All ways, it speaks to us, the land – its energies and histories. Its secrets. In them, we find ourselves.

ALL

The circle is the infinite; within it, the finite.

The perfect form. Mirror-form of every living thing; particulate repetition.

Is to dwell, to live within a sphere of one's dominion? Or must our circles overlap?

The tree within the forest, within the vastness of the skies, within the great ocean's infinite ebb and flow, within the sunscape.

I dwell among them, within invisible spheres.

The walls of my home, the fence around my yard, the city limits, the nation's borders, the earth's atmosphere.

ALL(Cont.)

My circles, small among the cosmos.

But what of my circles...overlapping, conflicting, contending,

With someone else's, and someone else's, and someone else's circles?

When I dwell within invisible spheres - - overlapping, conflicting, contending - -

With someone else's, and someone else's, and someone else's spheres...do I dwell?

With the tree? Within the forest? Within the vastness of the skies?

Within the great ocean's infinite ebb and flow? Within the sunscape?

Or do I extinguish the flame of my great soul...within illusions of influence?...

"Every time we draw a circle...something is left outside."

Lights. Sound. Headlines read one after another by voices.

BUNNY

Of bodies chang'd to various forms, I sing:

Ye Gods, from whom these miracles did spring,

Inspire my numbers with coelestial heat;

'Till I my long laborious work compleat:

NEWSCASTER 1

"June 2010 The Boston Consulting Group posts, "Global wealth staged a remarkable comeback in 2009, becoming even

more concentrated than it had been before the economic crisis hit in 2008. "Less than 1 percent of all households

NEWSCASTER 1(Cont.)

are millionaires, and they own about 38 percent of the world's wealth, up from about 36 percent in 2008."

BUNNY/ALL(Echo)

In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas
 corpora; di, coeptis (nam vos mutastis et illas)
 adspirate meis primaque ab origine mundi
 ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen!

NEWSCASTER 2

Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz wrote, "We have created a society in which materialism overwhelms moral commitment, in which the rapid growth that we have achieved is not sustainable environmentally or socially, in which we do not act together to address our common needs."

BUNNY

One: The Primal Chaos...

Before the seas, and this terrestrial ball,
 And Heav'n's high canopy, that covers all,

One was the face of Nature; if a face:

ALL (Echo)

One was the face of nature; if a face...

BUNNY

One was the face of nature; if a face:

GABRIELA

My face

Mi cara

es su cara

is her face

is their face

my face

mirror of the past, mirror of the future

Dolores my face

Maria

Enriqueta my face

Laura

Clorinda my face

Rosa my face

Lucia

Manuela mi cara

Ramona

GABRIELA(Cont.)

Elvira

Mariana

Alma

Gabriela my face

NI

My face is my gate

My face is the point

An exit an entry

I see them, I hear them, I smell them, I taste them

My face is where they attack where they pass

My face my barrier

I can't let you see my face no!

To look is to bare me open

To see my mind, see my thoughts, see my feelings

Look at my legs. My bow legs

I dare you to look at my legs

NI(Cont.)

Aaha I am not vulnerable

Look as long as you want

Look at my legs, my stomach, my...well

Look as long as you want

Just don't look at my face

My face like a blackboard writes everything inside outside

Please don't look at my face.

MARNIE

My face is a roadmap of all the where-to's and why's I've been mired in, all the interstices I've ambled through, all the smiles I've smiled, the pains I've strained past, the aches for more.

My face is your way in to this shell that makes my "I"-dentity.

A stranger in the mirror.

A mask I wear but never see.

A soft subterfuge.

MARNIE (Cont.)

A landscape,

painting,

lifetimes.

CALLIE

My face is a roadmap to the Landscape of my soul. When you look at my face you can see everything. Everything I've felt. Everything I've thought.

Look at the lines on my face.

Look at my mouth.

Look at my eyes. See my soul.

See my happiness, my depression, my joys, my anger, my love, my hate.

Look at my face. Do you see these things?

See where things have hurt?

See where I was loved?

Where I am loved?

See who I was, where I am, see where I am going.

CALLIE (Cont.)

See who I want to be.

My face has scars. Scars on my face from the past. Where things have hurt. I have scars that have helped me. The scar tissue is deep. There are scars that are still open still able to bleed. Bruises where ones are beginning to form. I'm not afraid of my scars. I'm not ashamed of them. They have shaped me evolve. Changed the landscape of my life.

My face is ever changing, ever evolving, healing, smiling, crying.

My face is everything.

My face is me.

LAWRENCE

My face

This battered windshield to my heart, to my brain, they fondly call my face.

Where is it heading, what does it shield? The myriad storms both from inside and outside play on my face. They have learned to spite me, whenever they see my face, their heads turn, when they see my face, their biting tongues wag when they see my face, their body chemistry changes when they see my face. This face, my face the defining article of my life, my self, my all the windshield of yore, the separator between my body my self and others -my face. When I come to think of it, my face the concealer of sorts, the expressor of guile and the murderous accomplice -

LAWRENCE(Cont.)

my face. I harbour ill thoughts about you in my mind but my face offers a dancing smile and you are duped. I hold a grudge, a feeling a hatred and all, but my face smiles warily and you are sold out. That center player, the sandwich to myself the all seeing, the all knowing the master guile, my face. My face, this face, this face, my face.

JANE

My face is...

A battleground.

There are lines on my face that divide who I want to be and who I was expected to be.

There are scars where the great battles were fought.

There are lines where the fighting is still happening.

My face reads like a map of the Civil War.

Where family was fighting family

Boundaries were crossed

Hurts were felt deeper than before

Pain didn't heal

Soldiers were left to die

The map of war blood and the dead that lives on my face isn't there for people to look at. It's not there so they

can point to the spot where their grandfathers died or I lost pieces of myself.

It's there for me.

It's there for me to see every time I see my reflection.

It's there to be a constant reminder of who I am and what I'm fighting for.

BUNNY/ALL (Echo)

One was the face of nature; if a face...

BUNNY

What we call chaos....Though there was land and sea and air...nothing retained its shape...

ALL (Echo)

Nothing retained its shape...

BUNNY

Nothing retained its shape.

CALLIE

We are constantly moving. Constantly evolving. As humans we are always moving our shape. We start and end at different points. We don't retain our shape.

The Land. The land we love is ever changing. Ever moving. By growing crops, trees, plants to help us. With the hand of man the addition of buildings and road. The land doesn't retain its shape.

My home. My people are changing. Nothing is constant. I have moved my home from place to place and now I want a new home. I will always be in state of change.

CALLIE(Cont.)

Nothing is certain.

We are in constant motion.

Constant evolution.

Nothing retained its shape.

NI

NOTHING RETAINS ITS SHAPE

Where are we? What are we?

The body and the mind together as what?

Right, wrong.

What is right here and wrong there.

Right there and wrong here

Time and space control our actions

They can't do that here.

This is how it is done here.

Are we in Rome?

NI(Cont.)

The capital where everybody does what everyone else is doing?

The land it moulds us it shapes us

Nothing retains its shape.

MARNIE

Nothing Retains Its Shape:

“Eighteen years,” she told me, “Eighteen years, I worked at that factory. Got to the top of the totem pole. I was good at what I did. Got to where I was making \$13.00 an hour. And then, just like that.... They told us on a Monday. We had until the next Friday to say our Good-byes, leave off a lifetime climbing the ladder. Learning the trade... Two weeks to find there’s nothing else you’re fit for, after giving the best years of your life....” “Shoulda seen it comin’,” she said, “They’d started shippin things out at least a year before that – bits and pieces – quality control, assembly – started shipping pieces of the process overseas. Told us not to worry. But we shoulda worried. Shoulda worried good.... I was at the top of the totem pole... - I saw how the quality’d gone down. Separating out the process. Building one part here, one part over in Cambodia. Shoulda known. Things were fallin’ apart. But I didn’t. Didn’t wanta know.” “Nothing,” she told me... “Nothing retains its shape...”

LAWRENCE

There is suddenly a looming storm, it must be, else, why the fast moving whirlwind?

The heavy whistling wind blew indiscriminately.

The windows close with reckless abandon-boom! Baam!. The mighty doors shutter and clang.

East, West, North, South, every direction, in no direction. It is the cooking of a sudden mighty storm.

Naked children run helter skelter pelting one another with mud, oblivious to the looming storm.

The keen women, worried, apprehensive shout themselves hoarse issuing orders.

Men the carefree not moved by minor cares drop their heavy heads in submission into safe havens.

The mighty aged trees surge in abeyance, their branches succumbing to the mighty winds. Others yield to the fatal call.

Then comes the climax of it all-nothing maintained its shape.

From the once clear sky clouds compete for positions, and then settle amid blinding flashes and deafening rumbles.

It was ominous, it was destabilizing, and it was inevitable. Then after the higgledy higgledy,

The mighty skies open and a silent shower flow with unrestrained ease. Calming a rancorous high noon.

The silent rain rode on the back of a rapturous storm.

GABRIELA

Chicago Airport. 2:25 am. June 2010. Barbed Wire protecting the sacred doors of entrance and exit.

The sacred doors *to an out of* the empire. Who is in/who is out.

(monitors keep repeating monotonously don't *leave your bags unattended...*)

My flight will depart at 6: am. There is just one more person in the waiting area. I walk close to him. I notice that he is worried.

-Are you ok?

LAWRENCE

-I lost my flight. I was supposed to go to Kansas city at Missouri. But I lost my plane. And I don't have a way to call my brother to tell him I lost the plane. He will be in the airport at Nebraska waiting for me. And then I will not be able to catch him. I don't know where he lives. Actually I lost the paper with his phone and address.

GABRIELA

-Where are you coming from?

LAWRENCE

-Nigeria. I won the lottery.

GABRIELA

-You won the lottery? How much?

LAWRENCE

-I won the lottery to come here. To this country.

GABRIELA

-uh!

LAWRENCE

-I won the lottery of visas. But when I arrived the police here at the airport took me to the office and took all my documents and I had to take my cloth off. And I spend there for about ten hours. Until I was released but I already lost the plane and I also lost the telephone of my brother and they didn't allowed me to do a call to Nigeria to ask for his phone number.

GABRIELA

-You can call from my phone. But I do not know how to call to Nigeria.

LAWRENCE

-Oh oh oh thank you I will try. Thank you very much

HE kisses HER hand, as...

GABRIELA

He kisses my hand.... Alma, a Guatemalan woman who works cleaning the airport at night and who has been taking care of me all night long approaches.

CALLIE

-Te está molestando?

GABRIELA

Translates. Is he bothering you?

In scene. -No. He lost his plane Alma, and we need to call to Nigeria.

Alma helps us with the call to Nigeria. Josh is able to talk to his family and finally get in touch with his brother. He smiles. He holds my hand. And I ask him to watch my bag while I go to the bathroom. Alma is from Honduras and she has been here for fourteen years. She is still an illegal. She washes the bathroom of the airport. She also takes care of a kid in the afternoons. *At what time you sleep?* I ask She answers with a smile. She has a few teeth left but she has a beautiful smile. And you Josh, for how long are you going to be here?

LAWRENCE

I don't know

GABRIELA

he answers.

LAWRENCE

I want to stay here and bring my son who is with my mother in Nigeria. I want to be a dentist.

CALLIE

And you,

GABRIELA

asks Alma,

CALLIE

what do you do?

GABRIELA

I study theater.

The two of them respond with a big laugh.

LAWRENCE

Theater?

GABRIELA

says Josh, and he laughs with his mouth fully opened.

CALLIE

I am always watched by the monitor, I'll better go,

GABRIELA

says Alma.

CALLIE

I am not supposed to talk to any passenger for that long. That can make me suspicious.

GABRIELA

She holds my hand. Alma means soul. Soul. In her hand, her soul. My soul. The soul of my grandmother called Alma.... NOTHING RETAINS ITS SHAPE....

ALL

Nothing retained its shape...

BUNNY

One thing obstructed another, because in the one body, cold fought with heat, moist with dry, soft with hard...and weight with weightless things....

NEWSCASTER 1

The BBC's The Blue Planet; a natural history of the oceans states, "Many animals make journeys but an animal that migrates is one that moves beyond its usual home range. Some move from A to B just once in the course of a lifetime, others move between specific locations every year, and there are those that just wander about. Migration is driven by three very fundamental things: the search for food, the need for a safe place to live and the instinct to reproduce."

ALL

Nothing retains its shape...

BUNNY

Two: Separation of the elements...

This conflict was ended by a god and a greater order of nature, When s/he had disentangled the elements, and freed them from the obscure mass, s/he fixed them in separate spaces in harmonious peace....

ALL (Echo)

In harmonious peace...

BUNNY

In harmonious peace...

NI

they came. one at a time far in between
 they came more and more
 they came to look at the land
 they came to look at the people
 they came on a sunday bible in one hand
 wait a minute what is that in the other hand
 ei ataa me
 they have come
 bible in one hand, gun in the other
 the visitor with the bible and the gun
 christ's interest or corporate interest
 gold is good. diamond is good. people is better
 the journey of no return

JANE

When I was young I learned that religion was a weapon. When my mother taught me this I had no idea that I'd grow up to learn it again and again. i had no idea that I'd grow up to learn that more people will die have died suffered been dehumanized and broken in the name of God then for any other reason or cause.

I can't stomach most churches because of this. It makes me sick to sit in the pews and this about the crimes against humanity that have happened in the name of God. Once I asked my father about God and he told me to believe in

JANE(Cont.)

God, but not religion. He told me all churches are run by man, and so they are fundamentally corrupt.

Now I find myself deeply craving faith.

I want to be spiritual. I want to believe in something so much.

But I read about religions and philosophies, and I constantly find myself feeling that I'm on the edge of my great spiritual awakening, yet I never have it/

Maybe I haven't found it yet.

Or maybe I can't have faith alone. Maybe the community of a religion is what my faith is missing.

I read a quote yesterday that said something like "call it a family, call it a tribe, call it a community, whatever it is you need one."

LAWRENCE

The mighty sun had barely peed and raised his head,

When I got up and about it was barely six.

Yet the city and the land, still slumbered, sighing God's magical recreation of another day.

I haul myself from the heath stone, get my walking stick and hit the path again.

From the corner of my eyes I see the multitudes. Multitudes upon multitudes of people.

LAWRENCE(Cont.)

They stream and rush past me oblivious and unexpressionless like the stone wall.

They are like statues, monuments, inheritances, empty-hollow creatures.

I have seen their offspring's beget offspring's; I have seen their untainted eyes turn red
and bloodshot

Cast against their own grain; brother against brother, sister against sister.

I have woken from my wakeful slumber, reached their station, and engaged their
souls...

And in the mist of another day, I hope to

Break the yoke of separation.

Callosity, greed, avarice-the like.

And through them I hope to reach out to you all...all of you-for we are all one.

BUNNY/ALL (Echo)

In harmonious peace...

BUNNY

The weightless fire, darted up to make its home in the furthest heights. Next came air.

Earth drew down, compressed by its own weight. The surrounding water took up the
last space, and enclosed the solid world.

NEWSCASTER 2

“Migration,” according to The Blue Planet, “is a natural part of the life cycle....Some creatures travel the globe in a way that isn’t strictly migratory. For instance, the very word plankton means to drift and these microscopic plants and animals ride current systems...”

BUNNY

Three: The earth and sea. The five zones...

NEWSCASTER 1

David Quammen in the November 2010 National Geographic writes, “Animal migration is a phenomenon far grander and more patterned than animal movement. It represents collective travel with long-deferred rewards. It suggests premeditation and epic willfulness, codified as inherited instinct...it is driven ...by an instinctive sense of something we humans find admirable: larger purpose (Quammen 37).

JANE

I want to be fire.

I want to burn.

I don't want to just be, I want to knock on the doors and scream.

JANE(cont.)

I don't want to sit and wait to find what moves me I want to go out into the world and experience the movement.

I don't want to be static I want to move I want to breathe and I want to burn.

Water is powerful and vast but I'm not ready to sit and be peaceful and wait until I wear down the rock.

I want to go after the unknown which lies beyond the grasp and I want to burn.

I want to see and watch and feel. I want to pursue it-- all the things that,

remain hidden to me in the vast unknown of the landscapes I haven't seen.

I want I want I want.

I want to be selfish now.

I want to be unafraid of pursuing what I can burn about without worrying, that I'm only doing this for me.

I want to burn for something bigger than myself.

NI

KAA TA NNO

Kaa Ta Nnó! Kaa Ta Nnó! Kaa Ta Nnó!

I have to move. I need to move!

NI(Cont.)

I can't sit still. I have to move!

Move, move, move!

Stand aside I need to move!

Kaa Ta Nnó!

I have to breathe. I need to breathe!

Where am I going? I don't know. I have to move.

Is it important to know where?

Let me move, let me go. Let my people go!

Kaa Ta Nnó

Where are you going?

Boka, Kooyi,

Where?

Nshón Gbε.

Where?

Anai!

NI(Cont.)

Why all these questions?

Kaa Ta Nnó!

[boka-east, anai- west, wouyi- north, nshón gbe-south]

CALLIE

I have never felt a part of anything. No loyalty to anyone except the people that are around me. I am jealous of people who have this passion this love for their country. But I don't feel it. I can't feel it. I'm not ashamed to be from America. I am lucky that I was born in this land of opportunity. I am lucky to have these options. But day by day my options keep becoming limited. I am told what I am supposed to do and how I am supposed to feel. But I don't want to feel these things or feel what I am supposed to feel. I am grieving for my country. I am grieving for the state that we are in. Can we survive? Can we come back from the pain that we have suffered? Am I citizen of this country? I feel like a citizen of the world. Race and nationality don't mean a lot to me. I just want to live my life the way I want to, and I want to be happy. I want to find a place where I belong. I'm ready. Ready to leave this land that I have called home for so long. Ready to find my new home. Ready to make my journey. Ready to find a place I can go home and feel that I belong. Home. I want to go home. It isn't necessarily the land that makes it, but the people, the feelings that I have that make it home.

BUNNY

When whichever god it was had ordered the seas to spread, the plains to extend, the stony mountains to rise...

so the god carefully marked out the enclosed matter, and described the five regions on earth.

The equatorial zone, the poles covered by deep snow, and the two regions between

BUNNY/ALL (Echo)

mixing heat and cold....

NEWSCASTER 2

According to Wikipedia, "Trade is an exchange involving goods, services, or currency.

Trade is sometimes loosely called commerce or financial transaction or barter...The original form of trade was barter, the direct exchange of goods and

NEWSCASTER 2(Cont.)

services. Later one side of the barter were the metals, precious metals (poles, coins), bill, paper money. Modern traders instead generally negotiate through a medium of exchange, such as money. As a result, buying can be separated from selling, or earning...."

BUNNY

Four: The four winds

NEWSCASTER 1

April 29, 2008, Library of Economics and Liberty's EconTalk posts the comment, "Trade labeled "free" with people who are not free is mislabeled. "Free trade" properly labels trade in which both parties to a bargain are free. I suppose that my exchange with someone who is less free than I benefits me more than it benefits him. Whether this asymmetry is "moral" or not is a separate issue. I'm only saying that it isn't "free trade".

BUNNY

Then came the clouds and vapours, thunder to shake the minds of human beings, winds to create lightning-bolts... and flashes...

ALL (Echo)

And flashes...

BUNNY

And flashes....

NEWSCASTER 2

April 28, 2008, EconTalk posts, "Here's the point. Lots of people are skeptical of "free trade," even if they do understand principles of free trade like comparative advantage, because they don't believe that trade is really so free. Higher income people are less

NEWSCASTER 2(Cont.)

skeptical, because they know that trade is not so free, and they're O.K. with that, not because they're evil but because we all tend to think that forcible proprieties benefiting us are O.K. I think that forces benefiting me are O.K., and I'm not evil. I'm just human..."

BUNNY

Scarcely prevented from tearing the world apart,

each with its blasts steering a separate course:

like the discord between brothers....

GABRIELA

Son muchas mujeres

Son cientos de mujeres

Son ellas las que preguntan

Las que caminan, las que corren, las que sudan, las que gritan

I met Soledad years ago. She was crossing the border, from Guatemala to Mexico in her way to the United States, to the American Dream. I met her at the refugee for migrants. I was working there, as part of the research for my thesis program.

I ask her, What do you need

GABRIELA(Cont.)

Qué necesitas

Qué necesitan

Qué

Qué

HOW CAN I HELP YOU

CÓMO TE AYUDO

All I need is birth control pills.

I will be rape one or several times

By the coyotes, by the mafias, by the military, by the borders, by the corporations, by the empire.

I don't want to get pregnant.

Help!

Ayúdame.

BUNNY

Like the discord between brothers...

NI

Screams, screams, screams!!

Aaah! Voices so many voices screaming

Namó ji bo? Who are you?

Moi?

Eehh bo. Who are you?

Mini sane? Eh?

Why are you touching me? They are touching me.

They are all talking at the same time!

Don't touch me! Search me?

I am opened, exposed.

They touch me here and there.

My book this way and that way

You may go...

BUNNY/ALL

Like the discord between brothers....

BUNNY

Five: Humankind

NEWSCASTER 1

Vangaurd's Christof Putzel writes on November 14, 2010 in a blog entitled, Why I Smuggled Myself Across the Border, "Nearly all of us are descended from immigrants... But in recent years, as living standards have stagnated or declined for all but the wealthiest and most fortunate... the political pressure to choke off illegal migration has exploded. Billions of dollars are spent on higher, stronger fences, sophisticated sensing technology and more border patrol agents."

MARNIE

The first woman they say came of the deep deep, a fusion of the earth and sea.
 Daughter of the now, mother of the ever after.
 The first woman came of the deep deep,
 And took into herself, the ever high.

GABRIELA

In my country the second national income is the money sent by the illegal migrants living mainly in the US and Spain. The first national income is petroleum. Thousands of people leave each year in search of the American dream. Many die trying to cross the border (300 people die each year in the barbed wired Mexican-American border, a lot of them, Ecuadorians). The ones who finally make it to America will spend years working in terrible conditions as illegals to send money back to their families in Ecuador. These

GABRIELA(Cont.)

families will spend that money buying what American corporations sell to them, through a policy of free market.... Our second national expenditures are lives, human sacrifice and family/culture fractures. The first national expenditure is the deforestation of hundreds of hectares of natural forest, and the contamination of rivers and of land. Debilitation of bodies added to disruption of land = 70% of the population living in poverty.

MARNIE

The first man came of the ever high. Of fire and of air. Earth in the roots of his hair. Sea in his limbs. Son of the now. Father of the ever after. The first man came of the ever high, and took into himself the deep deep....

NEWSCASTER 2

“El Mundo Daily reports that, “The massacre of seventy two Central and South American undocumented immigrants killed at the hands of one of the most violent Mexican drug gangs, Los Zetas has outraged the Mexican society and the international community.”

BUNNY

The stars and gods occupied the heavens,

sea gave a home to the shining fish,

BUNNY(Cont.)

earth, the wild animals,

air, flying things....

No animal capable of higher thought, could be ruler of all...

Beat.

Then Humankind was born....

Beat.

So the earth, that had been, a moment ago, uncarved and imageless... changed...

BUNNY/ALL(Echo)

Changed...

BUNNY

Changed –

and assumed the unknown shapes...

Beat.

of human beings....

Beat.

JANE

We have this one sacred life here on earth, why must we define it by the boundaries that exist here?

Does the soul know what a boarder is?

Was the soul meant to be defined by the walls set up by the victors of war or was it meant to be defined by the human experience that belongs to every being, no matter the landscapes or boarders they were born under? Why must we limit ourselves this way?

Are we so afraid of the unknown that we stay within the boarders that we know?

I am a soul that is seen as the body that I exist in, and this body has a face, but my face does not belong to me alone.

My face belongs to the world that I live in and the experiences that I hold in my heart.

The stories in my heart are my stories, but they are bigger than that. They are the stories of a human experience. This experience of being, of living on this Earth resonates in every being.

With that idea in mind my face is not just the face of me or of you, it is the face of being.

It is the face of the Earth....

GABRIELA

The face of the earth... is filled with waste.

With plastic

With our garbage

GABRIELA(Cont.)

With cell phones

With computer and shoes

With cloth

With TVs.

With malls.

With cars

With paper and airplanes

With solids

with chairs and tables

with soaps /beds/bags

with boxes/bottles/jails

with doors

with videos

with microphones, walls and lamps

with more cars and bigger houses

GABRIELA(Cont.)

with mirrors and washing machines

with clocks and obsolete robots

The face of the world is a cosmological wasteland.

A boy of twelve years old, Henry Lacombe died today in the Ecuadorian/Colombian border. He was killed by the army in the war against narcotrafic. The Ecuadorian government does not recognize him as Ecuadorian.

The Colombian government does not recognize him as Colombian. He is a child of the war. A child without a place in the face of the earth....

CALLIE

There is so much blame in this world. Your people did this. Your people did that. But that isn't me. I did not do that. Just because I come from somewhere does not mean I share those ideals or beliefs.

My family history is one of hate. On one side my family lived in the south. They owned slaves. They fought on the confederate side of the war. But that isn't me. Just because I share that blood doesn't make me a part of that.

The other side of my family came from Germany. Part of them came to America post WWII. Yes part of my family history is tied in with the Nazi party. But that wasn't me.

CALLIE(Cont.)

I did not take part. Do not blame me for the mistakes of others.

I was 15 when I first experienced this hate, this blame. I was in England during the height of the Bush administration. The war for freedom was in full swing. A man yelled at me "Go home you filthy American. Your president is killing innocent soldiers, women and children." My president? I was 15. I couldn't vote. He wasn't my president. I didn't agree with him. Don't blame me for the mistakes of others.

I am just me. A citizen of this earth. Created and loved by a higher power. Do not blame me for things I have not committed. I am me. Look at me. See my face? My face is the face of the earth. No nationality. Human. Me. Child. Face of the earth...

NI

how did they do it? just how did they do it?

i wake one morning and it is done. i am a ghanaian!

my brother of the same womb and penis is a togolese

just how did they do it?

this invincible line that suddenly made me and my brother citizens of two different countries.

this invincible line, this invincible but hard line that separates us

me and you. they and us. we and them.

your line, my line.

NI(Cont.)

my line? i did not have a hand in that line?
 somebody decided to decide where i should belong
 the scramble for africa
 the partitioning of my identity
 white bearded people at berlin deciding my identity
 god created the earth?
 where is it? this expanse that he created
 where is it? i have to walk through a line
 open doors with a book in my nakedness
 god created the earth? which earth? where is it?
 i am a citizen of the earth or i am?

LAWRENCE

This is the place; thank God brothers, sister's mercy upon you all. You are the face of the earth and it begins here. This is where everything that has a beginning will end. You will agree with me that this place is quiet, dumb so homely. Forget the lights, the flashing lights peering through the dampness of this dawn. It is the face of the earth, a new face. And oh! What are those? The tall structures cutting a ghostly, ghastly cast against themselves. Like the jaws of a... a what? A hungry dog? That is the face of the earth. Have you forgotten what we already know about this place? Yes a huge maze if you ask-yes the face of the earth. Did someone say we should have stayed on and taken our chances? Worn the old, held onto the old? But there was no chance!-the

LAWRENCE(Cont.)

holocaust, the floods, disaster, upheaval-you would be a fool to hang on. This is the face of the earth, one place cannot be better than another when man wears a new face of the earth, a new phase holds the hope, the answer for all of us. Are you tired, drenched, hopeless but still boasting a perfect union, a perfect coordination with something? The face of the earth.

BUNNY

So the earth, that had been, a moment ago, uncarved and imageless... changed...

BUNNY/ALL(Echo)

Changed...

BUNNY

Changed – and assumed the unknown shapes...

Beat.

of human beings....

Beat.

Tearing paper, stepping over barbed wire.

ALL

The circle is the infinite; within it, the finite.

ALL(Cont.)

The perfect form. Mirror-form of every living thing; particulate repetition.

Is to dwell, to live within a sphere of one's dominion? Or must our circles overlap?

The tree within the forest, within the vastness of the skies, within the great ocean's infinite ebb and flow, within the sunscape.

I dwell among them, within invisible spheres.

The walls of my home, the fence around my yard, the city limits, the nation's borders, the earth's atmosphere.

My circles, small among the cosmos.

But what of my circles...overlapping, conflicting, contending,

With someone else's, and someone else's, and someone else's circles?

When I dwell within invisible spheres - - overlapping, conflicting, contending - -

With someone else's, and someone else's, and someone else's spheres...do I dwell?

With the tree? Within the forest? Within the vastness of the skies?

Within the great ocean's infinite ebb and flow? Within the sunscape?

Or do I extinguish the flame of my great soul...within illusions of influence?...

"Every time we draw a circle...something is left outside."

End.



Fig. 8. Alex Weinhold, *Beauty Cast Photograph*, 18 Jan 2012.

Beauty; A Dialogue

A Devised Work by Carrie Mulderink, Rachael Rodgers, Morgan Kopczynski, Modupe Ogniyemi, Alex Weinhold, Emily Thompson, Almedia Exum, Nina Jackson, Andrea

Henderson, Cheria Moore, & Marnie Glazier

Director: Marnie Glazier

Assistant Directors: Carrie Mulderink & Rachael Rodgers

Lights up on ENSEMBLE in the space, a wide circle, alternate corners dancing in conversation, all others in statue. Pre-show music, Moby. Music fades as CARRIE enters the center of the circle with the ball of red yarn.

CARRIE

I wanted to talk, about my body in this space...about my beautiful able body...

CARRIE holds an end of the yarn and passes

the ball to EMILY, who takes it and speaks.

EACH SPEAKER in turn takes the ball & holds

a section of the thread before passing the

ball to the next SPEAKER.

EMILY

about my body... **my own temple of love and discovery.**

MORGAN

about your body... internally, externally, forever yours to be as free as a flying albatross.

MODUPE

About our bodies...wanting to be connected, and no longer rejected...

MORGAN

about the morning, the night and the afternoon sun. A comet across a darkened sky....

ANDREA

about love, friendship and the things we all share....

NINA

in the space we're all holding, the air we're all breathing,

RACHAEL

the yarn we're all weaving,

RIA/ALMEDIA

I wanted to gather the thread of this conversation,

NINA

to unwind the strands,

RIA

I wanted to be listened to,

MODUPE

I wanted to listen...

MODUPE/EMILY

I wanted to be heard,

RIA

I wanted to hear....

ALMEDIA

I wanted to talk...but I was trapped inside myself. Searching for a key to my doorway of beauty.

RACHAEL

I wanted to talk and tell you that beauty is just a perception...that beauty's not a form of deception....I wanted to have a conversation...

CARRIE

about beauty...

EMILY

beauty...

MORGAN

beauty...

ANDREA

beauty...

NINA

beauty...

RIA

beauty...

MODUPE

beauty...

ALMEDIA

beauty...

RACHAEL

(Handing the spool of yarn to CARRIE.) about beauty...

ALL drop the yarn. Music. Transition to

history clip. Egypt. ENSEMBLE MEMBER

reads. ALL OTHERS tableaux vivants.

NINA

Supposedly Cleopatra was the first to write a book about beauty(*Reading from text source.*)" Mastering the art of beauty and splendour, the ancient Egyptian women took pride in their attractiveness and devoted much time in maintaining their appearance. In pursuit of external godliness, they celebrated the discovery of any novel beauty treatment and would eagerly add it to their intense regimen[...][utilizing]the materials around them to create effective recipes for beauty." (*Addressing Audience.*)This, according to "everything-beautiful.com."

*Transition to percussion circle, sitting one
after another, knees bent. Heartbeat. One-
Word-Poem.*

CARRIE

Beauty is not congruity...

RACHAEL

Beauty is not perfect symmetry...

RIA

Beauty is not cosmetic surgery...

CARRIE

Beauty is dynamic symmetry...

*ALL stop percussion heartbeat, lean back
into ONEANOHER in circle. CARRIE comes
forward, addresses audience.*

CARRIE

When I was younger I thought the notion of beauty could never apply to me. I knew that I would never fit into the mold of what I thought was beauty.

People had told me there was nothing beautiful about me. Nothing beautiful about a wheelchair. Nothing beautiful about a leg brace....

ALL sit up, resume percussion heartbeat.

CARRIE resuming HER place.

RACHAEL

Beauty is not engineered...

RIA

Beauty is not judgmental...

RACHAEL

Beauty is innocence...

ALL stop percussion heartbeat, lean back

into ONEANOHER in circle again. RACHAEL

comes into the space, addresses

audience.

RACHAEL

As a girl, beauty was strength, it meant being perfect. I wanted to keep up with my brothers and fit in and we were all striving to be the best. I grew into an all-star athlete, a straight A-student with a good sense of humor... and a tomboy.... Behind closed doors my brothers teasing and rough-housing caused me to retreat into my room, where I had my own fairytale land of a different life,

RACHAEL (Cont.)

with fabulous friends, a prince charming, and performances with my music stand -- transformed into a microphone -- me singing "I can't get no satisfaction!" But the older I got, the more I realized that people judged beauty externally. My mother taught me that. When she'd comment on my appearance or my etiquette, whether it was "Louise, take a shower!" "Say, Excuse me!" "You're not wearing that!" "Sit up!" Slouching meant walking around with a book on my head for posture and grace... I didn't understand what she was teaching me or why she cared so much about what people thought.... The reality of beauty and being lady meant that no matter how many first place trophies and academic awards I earned...that beauty is not perfect....so I rebelled....

ALL sit up, resume percussion heartbeat.

*RACHAEL comes into the outer circle again,
resuming HER seat.*

RIA

Beauty is not dishonest... (*Beat.*) Beauty is innovation...

*ALL stop percussion heartbeat, lean back
into ONEANOTHER in circle again. RIA
comes into the space, addresses
audience.*

RIA

Everyone has their story they're just waiting to tell to whoever will listen. It can either be written down or in the form of poetry, a song, or a dance. My favorite poem that can express my experience in high school is a poem by Alysia Harris, an aspiring poet from Philadelphia, titled "That Girl." This is an excerpt. (*Beat.*)

"We've got that waiting in the clinic silence,
that shush don't tell nobody what we did silence
and I'm so tired of being your hamper that
I'm about to dump out those week old ketchup stain secrets
and do laundry in that silence.
You like keeping it quiet,
but My vagina is not your walk-in-closet.
You wanna stuff your unmentionables through me,
want a place to hang up your insecurities.
Want me to keep track of your hand-me-downs and Prada!
Nobody knows you hold my hand.
Nobody knows I call you baby and you write anonymous poems about me,
the type that you can't post on Facebook,
because regardless of what you may think I'm worth or what you may think I deserve,

RIA (Cont.)

I will never be that girl.

The girl who's only allowed to make you smile when she's making
you orgasm,
that girl whose day job is day dreaming waiting for her
night job.

That girl who's so in love she's willing to turn her body
over for your superficial touch."

You hide me behind locked doors and bed sheets
because if you dare reach out everybody would know that it
was still about me!

Living in your hurt and in your mind your still
wrapped up in me.

My tears like you own them,
my heart strings you got them tied around your pencils and fingers.

Yea, you may say it's over and you never admit that you love me, but you don't have to
because the silence speaks volumes.

You want to hold me in your arms, rock me to sleep
then act like you don't know me.

As if the moments we spend together are some kind of down- payment.

As if my bedroom were layaway and that's all you ever do is lay away!

Crawl up beside me but in the morning pull up the hoody and run the other way.

RIA (Cont.)

I'm like that bastard child, the reason why daddy never stuck around in the first place,
but for me, rejection doesn't come every other weekend.

It comes when you lower your head and pass by without speaking, and I remember
there was a time you could barely take your eyes off me.

I just don't understand why it's not ok for you to love me.

I guess you just want me to be that girl:

the girl everyone wants to sleep with but no one wants to be
with.

That girl!

only good enough while finding a suggestible replacement,
not trying to make up for your past mistakes,

but you convince yourself that she means everything and you want nothing to do with
me,

but come on baby she looks just like me!

Read the signs or if not the facial features,

because I was your first your only the prototype,

and she's just a duplicate and you can't make copies without first consulting the
blueprint.

You know what they say the sequel is NEVER better than the original,

and she tries to write you stories but you know they're only half as good,

RIA (Cont.)

and still half squinting, you only hold her half as tight as you should.

Because your other half is tangled in my bed-sheets,
 your other half is complete within my mind soul and body,
 and your other half is French tonguing me Monday through
 Friday.

I'm not fighting for joint custody, I'm fighting for respect.

So I'll never be content with being your back door hoe.

Your something on the side,
 your something to do during those lonely nights.

Your closet freak!

You will never reduce me to being a skank and a whore,
 and though I love you,

I'd rather spend every night crying on my bedroom floor
 than to ever be
 that girl!

ALL sit up, resume percussion heartbeat.

RACHAEL

Beauty... is intuition...

Transition to ENSEMBLE widening the circle.

EACH in child pose. Images with yarn.

*RACHAEL and MORGAN rise into center, with
circles of yarn.*

RACHAEL

He said...it's inside of you...and it's inside of me...

MORGAN

She was beautiful...and wanted the world...

*THEY return to the circle. EMILY and
ALMEDIA rise with circles of yarn, come into
the center.*

ALMEDIA

She said that beauty had layers....

EMILY

Layers...

ALMEDIA

That beauty was not just physical. Beauty was culture, beauty was emotional and that beauty had.... depth. She said I didn't understand. Understand that beauty was everywhere. Like air, like energy. That knowledge was beauty, that pain was beauty that even death...was beauty. She said many things about beauty and these things I will never forget....

*THEY return to the circle. MORGAN and
CARRIE rise with spool of yarn, come
toward the center.*

CARRIE

We said... Beauty is one

Beauty is emotional.

Beauty is not physical.

Beauty comes from some place deeper.

Some place more profound.

Some place more meaningful.

Beauty is in everyone.

Beauty is in everything.

Beauty is one.

*MORGAN comes closer and closer to CARRIE,
re-winding the spool of yarn, handing it
back to CARRIE. Music, Asa.*

*Transition to ENSEMBLE one at a time, coming
slowly into dance, from floor to full
height. EACH from child pose. Beginning
with NINA. When ALL have risen, music
fades. Transition to history clip. Greece.
ENSEMBLE MEMBER reads. ALL OTHERS statue.*

RACHAEL

(Reading from text source.)" According to traditional Western thought from the antiquity through the Middle Ages, beauty is a constitutive element of the cosmos

RACHAEL (Cont.)

associated with order, harmony, and mathematics. Classical Philosophy treated and conceived beauty alongside truth, goodness, love, being, and the divine. In this concept, beauty is a supreme value, basic to the whole cosmos." (*Addressing Audience.*) From the New World Encyclopedia.org.

*Transition to percussion circle, sitting one
after another, knees bent. Heartbeat. One-
Word-Poem.*

RIA/RACHAEL

Beauty is...the universe...

MODUPE

Beauty is...nature...

NINA

Beauty is not...lost...

*ALL stop percussion heartbeat, lean back
into ONEANOTHER in circle again. MODUPE
comes into the space, addresses
audience.*

MODUPE

No one ever told me when you are nice, that you're asking to be treated wrong, used
and somewhat sexually abused, because I refuse to fuse with society.

MODUPE (Cont.)

The pain my society injected into me lead to the reflection on my flesh, getting cut in,
too deep,

as the bloody river of everyone's rushed down my skin, I felt it wasn't enough until my
life came to an end.

So I swallowed Asprin and Tylenol, hoping I would choke, wanting it to peel back the
layers between my throat until it seeped into the bubbly acid my stomach provides, so
that I felt like I was six feet under, dead, but buried alive.

As they layed me on that hospital bed, a thought came to me,
beauty doesn't lie in the arms of death

beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

So for those people that used me, abused me, and me called me ballhead, fat,
disgusting, dumb, and stupid, and took every inch of hope I ever had, "Fuck you,"
is what I wanted to say, but, "I forgive you," is what my beauty allowed....

ALL sit up, resume percussion heartbeat.

MODUPE resumes HER seat among the circle.

NINA

Beauty is hope...Beauty is not...an obstacle...

ALL stop percussion heartbeat, lean back

into ONEANOHER in circle again. NINA

*comes into the space, addresses
audience.*

NINA

Child put down that knife. That knife that you hold to your throat for not having a mommy or daddy. That knife for being the kid with huge brown dots on your face. For being four eyes and smart. For stopping and talking to that stranger, nearly snatched into that white car. That knife for your body responding differently than your mind when things should've stopped and went no further. Child put down that knife. **I can see her running and I can hear her screaming.** NO! You are lying to me! Stop it! Just leave me alone! She is saying to me. I'm trying to get her...to slow...down...and...listen. But she won't stop. She's running faster and faster. She's fading slowly and slowly. She's drifting and drifting, and drifting away that pain is taking her life from her. She's giving up. But Child you are beautiful. Child don't you see? You are unique with your huge brown freckles; her index finger unravels, glimmering eyes that could light up a room like a star lights up a sky; middle finger unravels, Your little shriveled up lips, soft just like a baby's; another unravels; Your voice, ooooooh your voice. You could get the most important person's ear with it. All fingers unravel; Child don't you see? Things have happened.... Don't let it take your life. Don't let it slash your throat with that knife.... And the knife falls!!!

ALL sit up, resume percussion heartbeat.

NINA comes back among the circle, resuming

HER seat.

MODUPE

Beauty is not...blind....

Transition to ENSEMBLE widening the circle.

EACH in cross-legged seated position,

facing audience. A gentle hum begins with

RACHAEL, and is picked up, one by one, a

kind of round, by the entire ENSEMBLE.

Images/Movement sequences with fabric/yarn.

HEATHER, ADNREA, & NINA move into the center

with fabric/yarn.

NINA

No one ever told me, beauty is who you are.... No make-up is required. Only love what you see....

ENSEMBLE resumes gentle hum. HEATHER &

NINA join the rest of the ENSEMBLE, sitting

cross-legged. EMILY joins ANDREA with

fabric/yarn.

ANDREA

No one ever told me that it was okay to be odd, yet still be considered beautiful...that being different from the norm could still be seen as wonderful....

ENSEMBLE resumes gentle hum. ANDREA joins the rest of the ENSEMBLE, sitting cross-legged. ALMEDIA, ALEX, RACHAEL, & RIA join/surround EMILY with fabric/yarn.

EMILY

No one ever told me that you could find your inner light. It's taken me a while to get here, comfortable in my own skin, proud of the young woman I am and still growing into everyday.... No one ever told me that it would be a struggle in the mornings, on your weakest days, to feel beautiful.... The key is inside yourself. Find your light...find your beauty...find you....

ALL but EMILY resume seated positions/gentle hum. Beat. Music. Sinead. Transition to EMILY vast, sweeping dance gesture encompassing the WHOLE ENSEMBLE, then one at a time, taking one ENSEMBLE member by the hand, etc., thus forming a chain of dance, from floor to full height. Something of a tribal, round-the-fire ritual dance, EMILY leading, CARRIE closing in the center of the circle. When ALL have danced the circle, music fades. Transition to history clip. Navajo. ENSEMBLE MEMBER reads. ALL OTHERS tableaux vivants.

MORGAN

The Navajo scholar Gary Witherspoon says, *(Reading from text source.)* "In the Navajo world... beauty is not separated from good, from health, from happiness, or from harmony. Beauty - *Hózhó* - is the combination of all these conditions. It is not an abstractable quality of things or a fragment of experience; it is the normal pattern of nature and the most desirable form of experience... The Navajo says *shi/l hózhó* 'with me there is beauty', *shii' hózhó* 'in me there is beauty', and *shaa hózhó* 'from me beauty radiates'." *(Addressing Audience.)* From "The South Corner of Time."

*Transition to percussion circle, sitting one
after another, knees bent. Heartbeat. One-
Word-Poem.*

ANDREA

Beauty is not...form...

EMILY

Beauty is not...on the out-side...

ANDREA

Beauty is power-love....

*ALL stop percussion heartbeat, lean back
into ONEANOTHER in circle again. ANDREA
comes into the space, addresses
audience.*

ANDREA

I always thought even skinny wasn't beautiful. Looking like a "twig" caused my classmates to giggle. Glasses and braces made me feel ugly....Let me just say "Thank God for puberty!" I'm still naturally skinny... but now at least I have some curves that make me feel more beautiful....

ALL sit up, resume percussion heartbeat.

ANDREA resumes HER seat among the circle.

EMILY

Beauty is not...simple....Beauty is...deliciously complex....

ALL stop percussion heartbeat, lean back

into ONEANOTHER in circle again. EMILY

comes into the space, addresses

audience.

EMILY

You live, you learn.... No one ever said it was really that easy. I used to let my insecurities fester within, building up into this gigantic ball of fear. But over time, with constant love and understanding from my mother and the world around me, I've learned to turn my insecurities into strength and love for myself. Self love and discovery are beautiful things, though the journey that I took to get to this positive place in my life has been a long one. But all those tears and struggles are worth everything in the end when you find yourself...when you find your beauty....

ALL sit up, resume percussion heartbeat.

EMILY comes back among the circle, resuming

HER seat.

ANDREA

Beauty is...inside....

Transition to ENSEMBLE widening the circle,

lying on stomachs. Flower.

Images/Movement sequences with yarn/fabric,

and then with large ball. RACHAEL & MODUPE

first.

RACHAEL/MODUPE

It's time to listen...

I mean, an eye for an eye leaves the world blind, so I don't want to be deaf too.

But I can't talk if you won't listen, or maybe I won't stop talking until you realize your deafness is based on your own ignorance....

THEY come back into circle. Percussion

Intro. Large ball.

NINA

It's time for me to stop blaming myself for all the fucked up shit that has happened to me.... It's time for me to HEAL and be HAPPY, and have HOPE....HOPE that one day I'll be able to move past this and see through the gray clouds, past the storm, and have a Dream....

EMILY

It's time to say "I LOVE MYSELF, MY BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL SELF." It's time to say "Amen" to curves and a second helping. It's time to say, "I EMBRACE myself and everything that I am." It's time to say, "thank you," to everyone who ever made you feel ugly. It's time to say "I AM BEAUTIFUL," because I am still here and I am still FABULOUS.

MORGAN

It's time to talk about how easy it is to let go. Jump in. Fall in love. Trust. Learn. Be happy. Be curious. Dance. Paint. Read. Question everything. It's time to talk about how to never grow up.... Not really, anyway....

ALMEDIA

It's time for you and I to realize who and what we really are. B.E.A.U.T.I.F.U.L. No matter what she says, he says, he wants or she flaunts. You are beautiful today, tomorrow, and always! Its time you knew!!

Music. Transition to ENSEMBLE

floor dance in circle. Coming one at a time

into seated, cross-legged dance. Slow,

subtle movement builds until transition into

mindfulness pose, remaining in circle.

Music fades. ENSEMBLE MEMBER reads.

Mindfulness Today. ALL OTHERS Statue.

RIA

Writer, and Life-Coach Jonathan Mead says, *(Reading from text source.)* "We are constantly surrounded by miracles, but we do not recognize them because they come to us so gracefully and seamlessly. For example, " he asks, "have you ever thought about how many different processes have to be organized simply to create the experience you're having right now?... Now multiply that by a trillion. Every breath, every movement, and every condition that's creating the possibility for you to be alive right now is a miracle."...

(Pause.)

Life...and our awareness of its thousand, thousand overlapping miracles...is the ultimate beauty.... *(From ThinkSimpleNow.com)*

Transition to percussion, circle. One-Word-Poem.

MORGAN

Beauty is warm scent...

ALMEDIA

Beauty is snow...

CARRIE

Beauty is a song...

MORGAN

Beauty is not defined...

*ALL stop percussion heartbeat, lean back
into ONEANOHER in circle again. MORGAN
comes into the space, addresses
audience.*

MORGAN

I always thought beauty was reachable to everyone but me. Like a book I crave to read but the shelf is too high for my tiny being, a role I aspire to hold but look too young for the part, or a color I cannot make with my paint.... Until I listen to my Mum and Grandma, realizing my beauty and meeting something called art.... So thank you to the J.K. Rowlings, Charles Dickens, and F. Scott Fitzgeralds. To the Audrey Hepburns, Leonardo DiCaprios, and Emma Thompsons. To the Vincent Van Goghs, Andy Warhols, and Claude Monets. Thank you, Amelia Earhart, for showing us how to fly....

ALL sit up, resume percussion heartbeat.

MORGAN resumes HER seat among the circle.

ALMEDIA

Beauty is sunshine...

CARRIE

Beauty is unity...

ALMEDIA

Beauty is not... having...

*ALL stop percussion heartbeat, lean back
into ONEANOHER in circle again. ALMEDIA*

*comes into the space, addresses
audience.*

ALMEDIA

Being me, a pre-teen. Being me, a preteen. Love. There was nothing more than love. Love = Beauty. Beauty was love. My first crush-es. "Sigh" All I could think about, was falling in love and living happily ever after. The idea of being in love was beautiful to me. I was consumed by it. Overwhelmed by it and obsessed with it. One too many Disney movies I suppose. Now I understand, that love is more than just a feeling you get. More than just a kiss you get. It's being....It's being....

ALL sit up, resume percussion heartbeat.

ALMEDIA resumes HER seat among the circle.

CARRIE

Beauty is...me....Beauty is not unreachable...

ALL stop percussion heartbeat, lean back

into ONEANOTHER in circle again. CARRIE

comes forward, addresses audience.

CARRIE

When I was younger I thought the notion of beauty could never apply to me. I knew that I would never fit into the mold of what I thought was beauty.

People had told me there was nothing beautiful about me. Nothing beautiful about a wheelchair. Nothing beautiful about a leg brace. By the time I was 16, I couldn't take

CARRIE (Cont.)

the taunts, labels, or even the stares anymore. Of course using a wheelchair made me a retard. Of course using a wheelchair made me a slut. I believed everything people said about me. I didn't mean anything to anyone else or even to myself. Quite frankly, I broke. Sitting in my room feeling alone for hours on end, my perceptions became blurred by the tears I cried out of frustration and loneliness. I kept crying, but my sobs went unheard. I wanted to get throw away these stupid leg braces. Get rid of that annoying wheelchair.

But do you know where that got me? Nowhere! I was throwing myself away, handicapped not by my disability but from so many judgments that were put onto me. The confident person that I used to be vanished. I didn't even recognize myself anymore. Even my own reflection. I had spiraled downward with such intensity that I almost did not survive.

I consider myself lucky. I am still here to tell my story and some way somehow I kept going and even stood up. *(Rising from HER wheelchair and standing.)* I realized disability can be beautiful if you make it that way. When I think of myself now, I know that my wheelchair makes me beautiful. My leg braces make me beautiful, my scars make me beautiful. Scars that are not from surgeries I've had. But from being treated for so long as if something was wrong with my heart, my soul, my body.... Scars that are from being so close to giving up on myself. These scars ooze with beauty....

Everything is beauty....

*Music. All, one by one, or by two, go up
and hug CARRIE, beginning with RACHAEL.*

Music picks up to full volume. Dance.

Yarn passed among the audience.

CURTAIN

CHAPTER 5

PATTERNING A NEW TOMORROW: CONCLUSION

The scripts in the preceding chapter are intended to provide a framework for the discussion to follow, on methodology – by no means a prescription, rather an aspirant to the conversation. Such methodology is predicated on the belief in reciprocity among our ecologies and our economies. It is also predicated on the firm belief that, as the now so strikingly pertinent Jerzy Grotowski said in 1968, "Art is a ripening, an evolution, an uplifting ... from darkness into a blaze of light" (212).

Many today might hold that they experience as profound an uplifting through their own private touch-screens as ever the theatre has afforded them. For today's digital media have on so many levels altered the fabric of our lives, increasingly mediating our ecologies, our relationships with one another and with the planet. Whole worlds open up to us at the flick of a finger. With our new virtual potential for transcending geographical boundaries, comes the very real potential for increased alienation, a conundrum which creates special challenges and conceivable opportunities. When we no longer need to leave our homes to view the latest film, to do our shopping, to chat with the members of our community, we are in some ways liberated– from the grind, from the travail of the physical marketplace– and, if we are not careful, we are equally liberated from the need for physical action, and all that that entails.

In the January/February, 2010 issue of *Mother Jones* magazine, Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz wrote, “The global economy has just escaped a near-death experience.” He was referring to the economic collapse resulting from more than two decades of rampant financial deregulation and world resource abuse. What he said though, in the following extensive quotation, reveals a keen insight into the modern human condition.

The crisis exposed the flaws in the prevailing economic model, but it also exposed flaws in our society....One of the lessons of this crisis is that there is a need for collective action, that there is a role for government. But there are others....We have created a society in which materialism overwhelms moral commitment, in which the rapid growth that we have achieved is not sustainable environmentally or socially, in which we do not act together to address our common needs. Market fundamentalism has eroded any sense of community and has led to rampant exploitation of unwary and unprotected individuals. (Stiglitz)

Stiglitz cuts to the heart of the modern paradox in his poignant article, pinpointing that tension between personal interest and collective well-being so central to our present condition.

Market Fundamentalism – or the absolute faith in the financial market as the rightful, unfettered determinant of economic, environmental, and social mandates – becomes difficult to trace in its lineage. Sociologist Donald La Magdeleine, however, in *A Mighty Fortress Is The Market: The Mythic Assumptions Underlying Economic*

Fundamentalism, notes significant developments in recent history contributing to this phenomenon. *Monetarism*, according to LaMagdeleine, a school of thought beginning around the 1960s and generally associated with the *Chicago School of Economics*, gained favor. One well-known theorist of this camp was the highly acclaimed economist Milton Friedman, who taught at the University of Chicago and later served in the administration of US President Ronald Reagan. La Magdeleine explains that, "the overarching tenet of this group of economists is that any tinkering with market processes is wrong-headed"(5). Theorists like Friedman challenged the thinking of influential British economist John Maynard Keynes, who had provided much of the foundation of economic theory up to that time with his in depth study of the mitigating factors necessary to regulating the market and its fluctuations.

The evolution of *Market Fundamentalism*, however, is intertwined with that of the larger ideological framework of *Neoliberalism*, dating back really to the advent of the industrial revolution and to the ascendancy of *Private Enterprise*, liberating business from the shackles of state control. Author, scholar, and business ethics expert David Schultz in the 2010 *The Neo-Liberal State In A Post-Global World* offers this explanation, "Neo-liberalism has been the dominant political–economic ideology defining the state and the world economy since the late 1970s. Neo-liberalism is a political–economic theory committed to laissez-faire market fundamentalism, a minimalist role for state intervention into the economy, and free trade and open borders" (7).

The results of this are found not only in the deregulation of the fiscal, but also of the natural environment, as economic policy is in essence social and environmental

policy. *Economics* is not in its actuality a mere matter of fiscal capital; it is a matter of resource management. And more and more economists are recognizing what this really means in terms of the prerogative for policy-makers today. As economist and scholar Harry Clarke suggests in *The End of Free Market Fundamentalism Not of the Mixed Economy*, "the urgent need to address serious global environmental issues, such as global heating, will increasingly need to be linked to trade policies" (376).

Economist and editor of *Dollars and Sense* Marc Breslow made similar connections. Breslow reported in 1999 on a then-recent talk at Harvard University, "George Soros, a billionaire currency speculator, has recently become a prominent critic of capitalism. During a recent speech at Harvard University, Soros attacked market ideology on several grounds, ranging from amorality to its role in fostering financial instability" (Breslow). Breslow cited several of business magnate- turned philanthropist George Soros's evocative statements, including the following:

Market fundamentalists... [claim] that the common interest is best served by everybody looking out for his own interests. This claim is false... There are many political and social objectives which are not properly served by the market mechanism... These include the preservation of competition and of stability in financial markets, not to mention issues like the environment and social justice....By promoting market values into a governing principle, market fundamentalism has undermined our society. (Breslow).

In short, over the course of the last half century, prevailing organizations of thought and decrees of policy have steadily supplanted social – and environmental – responsibility.

And today, socioeconomic conditions and political systems, coupled with successively more insular digital information technologies threaten to render more and more irreconcilable our competing drives to give and to take. As Community Cultural Development expert Arlene Goldbard so succinctly states, "In our information age, with its default tone of exaggerated self-importance – colossal, revolutionary, humongous! – human-scale phenomena are often dwarfed by energetically marketed trivialities" (Goldbard).

Further, sociologists and media theorists David Croteau and William Hoynes in their 2003 *Media Society: Industries, Images, and Audiences* discuss the sociological implications of internet advertising. "Advertising was long seen as a homogenizing force in the media world....But advertiser interest is encouraging a very specific kind of media diversity in which different audience 'segments'...are receiving different media..." (75). Croteau and Hoynes worry that such segmentation might bolster a kind of exclusivity engendering more and more class conflict, isolation, and social fragmentation.

It is its potential, however, to connect that also makes the internet and new digital media, like text messaging – and now group text messaging – promising partners in our era's attempts to address the inequities and crises articulated by so many social and economic theorists today. The internet in itself has the potential to re-negotiate the lines of policy and deepen the connectedness among our ecologies and our economies. As Croteau and Hoynes suggest, "The internet replaces the 'one-to-many' model of traditional mass communication with the possibility of a 'many-to-many' web of communication" (303).

Yet, for all the frontiers we traverse today through our ongoing technological advance, so too do we create new barriers, new means of exclusion, new modes of cultural divide. So too does our sense of community erode, with disturbing implications for the future of humanity and planet. We tread a precarious balance. To restate the premise of this dissertation: It becomes increasingly important today that we, as theatre practitioners, ask ourselves, What is the prerogative of the artist in such a climate – and in particular the role of the theatre artist? How can we tip the balance, harmonize our economies and ecologies, pattern a new tomorrow?

The stirrings of transnationalism, of collaborative creation, of exploration and inquiry, of social protest, and of social progress so powerfully asserting themselves today, are not new. Our revolutions, and our aspirations are not more poignantly felt than they were in the days of the Great Depression, of the Holocaust, of the Civil Rights movement, of the Vietnam War; the selfsame systems of power and of progress at work then, exact their hold on us today. The difference is only a matter of aggregation. We are living in an era in which we are increasingly forced to confront the realities of the aggregate impact such progress has had upon the very planet, which for all our competing systems of power, we must commonly depend upon for our continued existence.

This discourse is by no means a dismissal of the profound creative and humanitarian work of those who have, brick by brick built the foundation upon which we as theatre artists today stand. It is by no means a dismissal of the extant scripts we have the tremendous fortune to yet have access to – and yet have means to generate today, a growing treasure trove over the course of centuries – from well known and

lesser known artists and thinkers over the ages: from the anonymous Egyptian writers' *Abydos Passion Play*, to playwright Christopher Marlowe's haunting *Dr. Faustus*, to 2012 *Earth Matters On Stage Festival* winner, Chantal Bilodeau's, *Sila*. To dismiss such viable works would be to snuff the light of so many essential conversations.

The focus of this work is, rather, an assertion of the dire circumstances out of which we create today. It is a request for a seat at the table. It is a plea to all those in the position to decide – to educate, to produce, to perform – for the allowance of new ways of making theatre, to augment, to dialogue with, and to influence what has long been a market-driven approach to the art. It is, finally, a call to action.

This concluding chapter will address strategies in answering the particular set of challenges confronting theatre artists today, with special emphasis on the economic, the collaborative, and the flexible aspects of devised theatre, now so harmonious with present circumstances . It will explore devised eco-theatre process – underscoring avenues of egoless inquiry and integrated performance script-writing. Finally, it will invite engagement.

This writer reverts to the first person for the remainder of these pages, in hopes of offering an intimate, immediate perspective on current explorations in process.

Script-Writing Versus Script-Devising

I want to talk about process, about instinct, about the enigmatic differences between *writing* a script, and *devising* one. I want to begin with the admission that I come to devised theatre as a playwright – that moreover, I come to playwriting as a writer. My own background would seem, then, decidedly literary, though I confess that I

resisted as a beginning writer, the constraints of form, firmly identifying with neither of the two camps of *Creative Writing* available to me as a young student: *Poetry* nor *Fiction*. I wanted instead to straddle the two realms, to fuse them together into new forms, more liberating, more organic to my instincts as a writer. And this, I think is key: Instinct, an element I will come back to again and again in this conversation on process. Instinct was the matter I was compelled to honor most of all.

I was enthralled by writer and educator John Gardner's *The Art of Fiction: Notes on Craft for Young Writers*, with its insistence that "To learn to write well, one must begin with a clear understanding that for the artist, if not for the critic, aesthetic law is the enemy" (15). I took very seriously Gardner's affirmation that "To the great artist, anything whatever is possible" (15). "Invention," according to Gardner, "the spontaneous generation of new rules, is central to art" (15).

To embrace the mandate to lose awareness of the self, "perhaps feeling part of something larger," (9) as writer Susan Perry suggested in *Writing In Flow; Keys to Enhance Creativity*, was the ultimate aim. Gardner, Perry, and others like them made the art of writing no longer an academic, but an intuitive – a spiritual – endeavor.

When at last I had the opportunity to formally begin the study of playwriting, it was 1998, and playwright Buzz McLaughlin's *The Playwright's Process; Learning the Craft from Today's Leading Dramatists* had just recently come onto the scene. In it, McLaughlin did just what the book's title suggested – outlined very specific parameters for the craft of playwriting. From the introduction, McLaughlin's approach is made clear:

Several decades of anti-craft mentality have flooded the market with plays that simply do not work on the stage. Sadly, thousands of these failed works keep on being written every year.

The fact is that there are a few simple principles of the craft which in one way or another need to be respected in all dramatic writing, principles which have been in place and functioning beautifully for twenty-five hundred years. A playwright ignores them at his or her peril. (13)

Those who have read the preceding chapters have some inclination of the rogue writers McLaughlin is referencing in his anti-craft lament.

McLaughlin's own emphasis on craft, however, derives chiefly from Aristotelian notions of form, originating in the *Poetics* and later leading to the development of the *well-made play* formula championed by such influential writers as Oscar Wilde and Henrik Ibsen. The difficulty with promulgating such an approach comes in its failure to recognize the vast differences among human perspectives over the course of the past twenty-five hundred years.

A more helpful approach to craft was put forth by theatre artist David Savran, whose *In Their Own Words: Contemporary American Playwrights*, offered multiple, at times conflicting, approaches to playwriting. Savran interviewed a number of playwrights of differing styles and backgrounds, from the somewhat radical Richard Foreman, to the commercially successful David Mamet, to the iconic Stephen Sondheim, to the experimental Megan Terry, among numerous others. Each playwright put forward his or her own unique perspective, from Sondheim's "I'm interested in

storytelling and character " (235), to Foreman's, "I'm interested in generating language and then some gesture, music, staging" (50), to Terry's, "I think it's there for everyone—you just have to open yourself up to the possibilities of your own brain. The collective unconscious. The individual experience" (254), to Mamet's "...technique is trying to break down the barriers between the unconscious and the conscious mind" (138).

As a graduate student, studying *New Play Development* with visiting playwright Sherry Kramer, I recall the welcome advice, "Party with your play" (Kramer). Whatever the *party* meant to each of us, we were to embrace it – spending a weekend in the woods, relaxing over wine and cheese, eating pizza with abandon – all with the sole company of our budding script. This, in the end, is the similarity that connects almost all of these disparate approaches to playwriting: this emphasis on the playwright as sole generator of the script, with intense focus, finally doing the real work alone.

Devised theatre, on the other hand, even for the solo artist, implies by its very nature, that the artist is never really alone with the work. There are a few simple reasons for this phenomenon and paramount among them is economics. Recall devised theatre's longstanding rejection of the commercial, wherein "materialism overwhelms moral commitment" (Stiglitz). As the preceding chapters illustrate, devised theatre is generally written, not for the sake of commercial production, but for that of illumination.

In fact devised work is most often written with the intention not of submitting to market, but of subverting the very strictures by which the market operates. As *Open Theatre* cofounder Megan Terry recalls of her decision to join Joseph Chaiken in

forming the collective, "We had dreams about the spiritual qualities of acting that we didn't think were being revealed in the commercial theatre" (Savran 244). The overriding determination of the work's viability resides in its ethereal, intangible – holistic – impact on artists and audiences.

As artists Emma Govan, Helen Nicholson, and Katie Normington express in their more recent *Making a Performance: Devising Histories and Contemporary Practices*, "Straddling across boundaries, devised performance has the potential to disrupt material, political, aesthetic, and artistic conventions" – though it is revealing that they add – "as well as playing a central role in the landscape of experimental theatre that attracts increasingly wide audiences in mainstream theatre" (194). *Economics*, to reiterate from the chapter's introduction, is about resources and what we do with them. It is about how we *use* what we *have*. In devising, artists over the last half-century, and before that, are almost always subverting prevailing economic doctrine, and aspiring to an economics of social rather than financial capital.

This is among the most interesting of trajectories in terms of devised theatre's history – and I believe it points to the efficacy of devised theatre today. As Govan, Nicholson, and Normington assert, "These two ways of thinking about devising – the radical and the saleable – are not mutually exclusive nor binary opposites, but continually negotiated and re-negotiated by individual artists, performance-makers and by theatre companies" (194.) Even the highly successful commercial theatre artist Stephen Sondheim said in his 1988 interview with David Savran, "I don't think the noncommercial theatre is in such bad shape – it's in better shape than it's ever been....Much of the middle class that used to support the [commercial] theatre can't

afford it anymore....On the other hand, regional theatre is thriving, at least for now" (238).

There is, finally, a fundamental difference between *commercial* theatre and *saleable* theatre, and the latter is primarily interested in simply making theatre. Devised theatre in particular not only subverts the standard economic model – in a marked deviation from the traditional top-down approach, financially and organizationally – but also tends to, in situating itself within the social economy, serve specific social needs within particular communities, bringing us to the next related distinction between straight playwriting and devising, and the next reason why the devised artist is never alone.

The devised artist in addressing explicit or implicit social needs is ghosted in the writing process by all those with whom the work will enter into conversation, or community practice, or social action. There is often a very specific community to- and for- whom the devised piece is being generated. This brings up at least two different kinds of collaboration affecting the devising process. For, moreover, there is often a company by whom the solo-devising artist envisions the work to be actualized. Thus, in addition to writing for a particular audience or community, the solo-devising artist might be writing a script for a specific actor or ensemble. And while traditional playwrights certainly have written scripts for specific actors and or specific communities, there is a fine line of difference.

As Govan, Nicholson, and Normington point out, "It is interesting to note that economic need as well as artistic vision [today], is held accountable for changing working practices. This recognizes that bringing together diverse creativities and

different specialist skills presents rich artistic opportunities" (5). In our convergence culture, there is a newfound recognition of the tremendous wealth of opportunity afforded in collaboration. This is by no means limited to the theatre, but is, to be sure, a large indicator of the changing economies of our contemporary world. And this tendency in business, financial and creative sectors indicates the third and final distinction between traditional playwriting and devising: pliability.

Just as we've witnessed shifts in the collaborative tendencies in contemporary disciplines, fields, and sciences, we have concurrently seen an increased emphasis on flexibility. In a sense, we as a society are recognizing today the increased need for creative inquiry over fixed, finite solutions to solve our contemporary crises. There is on the whole a rejection of absolutism by many around the world today. Devised theatre, as exploration and inquiry, is a thing of constant process, constant discovery, constant re-negotiation.

Where the traditional script would be written for publication and production – finished in its implication as materiality, as document – the devised script is generally written to be explored through performance. Moreover, such script can then be re-negotiated, re-explored, for other performances, in other places, with other groups of actors. This is not the same thing as the *new play development hell* that many emerging playwrights lament getting caught up in, as their scripts are given reading after reading, critique after critique, sending them through the endless process of revision. The devised script is never, in most cases, intended to achieve the kind of studied perfection emerging playwrights seek under the *new play development* modus

operandi. The devised script is raw, rough, unrefined – and most significantly – never really finished.

Three Scripts

I want to at last look briefly at the three devised scripts that precede this chapter, to speak to some of the key ingredients in each respective process, distinguishing solo-devising from group-devising, from director-generated group-devising, before speaking more generally to methodology . For each of the three works, I'll talk about the themes and the instincts that compelled the process, and then discuss a little bit of the economic, collaborative, and pliable nature of each project.

Soup

Soup's origin was in the desire to address the contrast between plenty and privation that so define our contemporary world. Specifically, *Soup* wanted to explore the changing and contradictory relationships humankind has had with food over the last century. In an era in which food production and consumption become increasingly problematic on so many levels, with resources diminishing, genetic modifications expanding, and geographical, cultural, spiritual connections to the means of our own provision severing, *Soup* wanted to re-examine sustenance.

The instinct for the work came largely of my own soup-making, and the relationship between my own and my mother's and grandmothers' cooking and nourishing of the family. It was an instinct wound up in the tendrils of baked bean steam, sasparilla root, and popular folk song. It was compelled by my own complex relationships with the food and with the music and sentiments of the Great Depression era and the Post-War era I'd been so steadily – though indirectly – influenced by.

Economically, *Soup* needs to be looked at on two different levels: first, thematically, *Soup* is concerned with our food economies and wants to challenge contemporary practices of food production and consumption. Second, logistically, *Soup* is a decidedly low-budget or no-budget production. I conceived of the project as a communal sharing – both of an actual meal of soup, cooked up in a great big pot, by simple, though careful means – and of a dialogue on the wider implications of the work.

Collaboratively, I was joined in the devising of the *Soup* script first by the community of my immediate family and friends, who I began interviewing on food and cooking, and then by a widening circle of people from a number of diverse continental and cultural backgrounds. While I had no definitive ensemble in mind with whom to collaborate on eventual performances of the work, I had a budding vision of how and where such performances might unfold, with a special interest in bringing the work outside of the theatre, into the community. I conducted a number of interviews and as I gathered the testimonies of those individuals whose voices now speak so poignantly from the script, I had a definite intention to give back to them a performance that would dialogue with their narratives, and would continue to engage conversation in expanding circles.

To sum up, *Soup*, in its current form, is a template. As I continue to encounter new developments in my own and the larger world's relationships with food and food economies, as I engage new testimonies, and as I discover new collaborators, the work will grow and evolve. It is my hope that new voices will be added to the conversation, that new opportunities for local and global collaboration will continue to emerge, and that in its next sharing at the upcoming *EMOS Conference* new devising will be initiated.

Cruzando el Alambre de Puas: Crossing the Barbed Wire

Recent experiences have challenged us all, pushed us past the limits of our understanding – but isn't that what art is – a constant challenge, a constant process of inquiry? This experience has tested us. But I do not feel that after all we've failed. One thing that has been made clear to me in all of this is that we are all people of deep intellect and feeling. Already therein lay untold challenges. Of the very best kind. We will challenge one another. There is no doubt. And in the process I believe we will all grow and prosper.

I wrote the above reflection while in the process of collaborating on the group-devised script, *Cruzando el Alambre de Puas: Crossing the Barbed Wire (Cruzando)*. I include these reflections because I believe that they speak beautifully to the origins and to the breadth of the *Cruzando* project, to the themes and instincts that compelled the work and to the experiences that challenged it throughout.

Cruzando's origin was in a call for papers for the 2010 *American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR)* conference on the general theme of *Embodying Power; Work Over Time*. The specific call that appealed to me, was one for participation on a panel whose theme was *Embodying Landscape*. As I had recently had the honor of meeting Gabriela Ponce, a theatre artist from Quito, Ecuador whose work dialogued in

some very striking ways with my own, I whimsically suggested that the two of us submit a collaborative proposal for participation on the panel. I include an excerpt here of that proposal: "This devised piece will explore international trade regulations and resource management, immigration, and the physical environment. It will question borderlands as sites of modern contradiction, wherein states execute their violence towards the most vulnerable" (Glazier, Ponce).

The real instinct for me behind the *Cruzando* project was my own innate connectedness to *landscape*, to the land I'd grown up on, and in turn to my framing and my ancestors,' and my society's framing of it. My base instinct for exploring these framing devices and those mentioned above was an impulse to reconnect with something *pre-frame*, with the origins of humanity in its most primal connectedness to earth. I wanted to explore the ways in which systems of state control and international economic control have taken us away from our essential humanness, from our essential connectedness with the land.

In ruminating on the project's themes, I wrote, early in the process,

The 'Landscape' and the 'Border' speak to me personally, politically, and artistically. Because of my deep continuously imperiled connection to the earth, and my recognition of the fundamental need to tread it softly – to find harmony in its eternal being. Because of my complicity, as both American, and citizen of the contemporary global world. Because of my imperative as an artist, to cross over – to commune, to create. The 'Landscape' and the 'Border' speak to me because I believe that freedom can only

ultimately come in razing the walls, in accepting agency – in embracing a presence that redefines our borders. Individually and collectively.

Economically, like *Soup*, *Cruzando* would both challenge contemporary policies and practices, and assert as its primary directive, its own social – even anti-commercial mandate. Though admittedly, as the *Cruzando* project evolved, we were made aware of the tremendous resource, of a university-housed black box theatre, at our disposal. I can not say, in good conscience, that ours was a truly low-budget production, as we had the luxury of a dynamic theatre space in which to both devise and perform our work. We did, however, use minimal lighting, and employed a minimalist approach to our set – a spool of barbed wire stretched in two intersecting lines across the space – as well as to our costumes – repurposed stockings, sweat-pants, and T-shirts purchased from the *Good Will*.

Collaboratively, our team, fortuitously, grew – to include dynamic Ghanain theatre artist Godwin Nikoi Kotey (Ni). Ni had already been engaged in the related project of assembling a transnational collective to explore and work towards the energizing idea of transcending national borders and recognizing ourselves as *Citizens of the Earth*. Three writer/actor/directors, we fused our ideas, and with "exquisite pressure" confronted our own borders and our own preconceptions on where we stood in relation to them. (Bogart 138) We delegated responsibilities; I would be the primary script-writer, Gabriela would be the primary director, and Ni would be the primary artistic/digital media director. Eventually, our collaborative team expanded to include

Lawrence Chiteri, from Kenya, and Jane Grote and Callie Meiners, both from the United States.

It was ever our intention to continue the work on *Cruzando*. The experience was so powerful, so transcendent, I believe for all of us, but certainly for Gabriela, Ni, and myself. I wrote on reflection, just after our public performance of the piece in December of 2010,

Evaluating the collaborative process with Godwin and Gabriela in working towards *Cruzando el Alambre de Puas/ Crossing the Barbed Wire*, feels at this point a bit like writing about a dream before one has awakened. So much energy, so much effort, so many ideas have gone into the development of this project. And yet it still feels as though all that we have done thus far has been a working-towards. Maybe theatre always feels a little bit this way – or perhaps this is the mark of non-'deadly' theatre – theatre that moves and breathes almost of its own volition....

What amazes me most is the way in which our three visions intertwined, ricocheted off of one another, and came back again to meet in the center. Like the circle itself, like our barbed wire metaphor, like our stark set, we intersected and we absorbed, and when it came down to it, we yielded to our higher purpose. Always I think, this was guiding us, this truth to the inspiration for the project, this commitment to sharing. I learned above all that it is

equally important to hold on and to let go – all at the same time.

Like love, like birth, like making something out of nothing.

Finally, I do not feel as though we are done. I feel as though we are now, at last, beginning.

Shockingly, in January of 2011, Ni was diagnosed with Myeloma, cancer of the plasma cells. He had been complaining periodically throughout our devising process, of a pain to his back. We could see, by and by, how it had gripped him, but he had never let it interfere with his work, with his tremendous energy as an artist – as a performer. Our relationships, borne of the *Cruzando* project, of the profound sharing of our deepest intensity, as people and as artists, would deepen in the fourteen months that would follow. Our borders would be challenged in new and unimaginable ways, as Ni would fight for his life, and as Gabriela and I would fight with him. We would sit with him in the hospital, assist him in the long dehumanizing process of dialysis, radiation, chemotherapy, and finally help him cross the line of gatekeepers who would try to bar him – by then voiceless, immobile, and hemorrhaging – from the plane that would carry him home, to die, in Ghana.

We lost Ni just exactly one month ago today, as of this writing, on March 6, 2012, in the course of this dissertation's process. And yet I know that my closing words of the reflection on *Cruzando*, excerpted above, hold true. I know that *Cruzando el Alambre de Puas: Crossing the Barbed Wire*, like each of the other scripts – perhaps more than either of the two – is a work in progress. I know that we are not yet done, that we are only, at last, beginning.

Beauty: A Dialogue

The origin of *Beauty: A Dialogue (Beauty)* is somewhat less complicated than that of either of the previous projects. I was participating in a planning meeting for the V-Week performances of Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*, and a bold young woman in the group suggested that in conversation with the *Vagina Monologues* performance, we devise our own piece to include voices left out of the conversation. She wanted to include the perspectives of people with disabilities – the label she herself had been given, though in her red scooter, *Larry*, holding her own among the group of mostly older women, with aplomb and keen intelligence, Carrie Mulderink appeared anything but dis-abled – in short she wanted to make a seat at the table for anyone who had a right to talk about sexuality, sexual violence, and empowerment. I raised my hand and my voice almost immediately in support of her idea. From there, Carrie and I became a team.

In talking with Carrie and with the other young women who'd expressed an interest in the project, it became clear that my work with these young women needed to be more than just a response to Eve Ensler's script; it needed to be an affirmation of their own unique and tremendous worth. I determined our theme would be beauty. In a superficial world that treated cosmetic surgery as a matter of course for the otherwise *imperfect*, that prized external appearance over intrinsic value, that celebrated sameness like a revelation, actual beauty was shunted in favor of artifice.

Our theme would be beauty. And the driving instinct for me behind the work was superficiality versus connectedness. The driving instinct for me was the wish to affirm

within each of the young women who'd come to participate in the project, their own beauty – and ultimately their own connectedness to the earth, which influences and determines our connectedness to all things.

Economically, in keeping with our theme, we minimized artifice, relying on the bare minimum in terms of set, props, and costume. We would share an auditorium space with the *Vagina Monologues* production, and were thus able to offer free admission to our audience. We had decided early on balls of thread or yarn as the metaphor for our piece, in keeping with the idea of *passing on the thread* of our conversation, and with a budget of \$60.00, we were able to purchase the entirety of our set and props – in the form of yarn and balls of varying sizes. Each of the cast members fashioned their own costumes, in keeping with our visual universe of reds, blacks, and browns.

Collaboratively, I stepped from the beginning into the role of director, with Carrie Mulderink and Rachael Rodgers, both early proponents of the project, serving as assistant directors. I devised a loose rehearsal plan, leaving plenty of room for exploration while simultaneously allowing for the steady development, over the course of two weeks, of a performance script. Our group of collaborators changed slightly over the two week period, but rounded out to an ensemble of ten, with Carrie Mulderink, Rachael Rodgers, Morgan Kopczynski, Modupe Ogunyemi, Alex Weinhold, Emily Thompson, Almedia Exum, Nina Jackson, Andrea Henderson, and Cheria Moore. In the end, while I gave direction to the work, it was truly a collaborative creation, and in each of our writing/devising sessions, I was overwhelmed by the beauty, and the sincerity, and the depth of insight each of these remarkable women brought to the work.

Irrevocably, *Beauty* is, like the other two projects, ongoing. At the powerful close of our final performance before a deeply moved audience, we were invited to perform the show again as a part of the local *Sexual Assault Awareness Month* activities. We are at present re-discovering ourselves and our work together, devising new work on the project and re-imagining previous discoveries. I will speak more specifically about the general devising process as I go on to share ideas on methodology.

Methodology

Script-devising Methodology

I will begin by talking a little bit about script-devising methodology, before sharing ideas on performance methodology, though the two are certainly interrelated, and – particularly in terms of group-devising, and/or director-generated group-devising – work in concert with one another. It is essential that I clarify from the start that I firmly believe that there is ultimately no *how-to* – no formulaic list of strategies – that once-and-for-all demystifies and defines script-devising, any more than there is such a definitive list of strategies for traditional playwriting. I believe firmly in the words of Sherry Kramer, beautifully expressed in the following enduring quotation:

A play is a unique, self-organizing process which generates new states of order spontaneously out of nothing – like a cartoon character drawing herself. Since a play does not impose any context except the context of our own perceptions, there is no way to reference a play outside of the system. Like language itself – just as there is no place to stand outside language to evaluate it, because we must always use language to talk

about language – there is no outside system to use to assemble a template for a play (Kramer 1).

According to Kramer, only the play itself can determine its process. And thus, each play has its own unique set of specifications. For me, the devising of a script, like the writing of a play, is an intuitive process. The structure is determined by the instinct behind the work. Out of that instinct, a pattern emerges. I go back to Loren Niemi's suggestion on story as the structural through-line for devised work, on the three basic forms of personal narrative, metaphor, and project-narrative (Niemi). I add to Niemi's suggestion, the poetic.

There is generally, early in the course of the work, in the initial period of raw exploration, a leading poem, or narrative, or metaphor that bubbles to the surface and gives structural integrity to all the exploration to follow. For, while I believe there is no set list of strategies for devising a script, I also believe that, for my own purposes if not for those of my audience, the performance and thus the script itself must have a trajectory, a through-line, a kind of internal logic which brings conscious or subconscious cohesion to the experience – to the journey of both artist and audience.

The ensemble exercises, or narratives – in the case of group-devised, or director-generated group-devised scripts – or the interviews and/or research – in the case of solo-devised work – are determined by that internal logic that bubbles forth from the start, in a spark of story or poem or metaphor or song. And such exercises, narratives, and the like evolve in the process of devising, from new insights, from interviews, from rehearsal discoveries, from research. Finally all of this is woven

together into the performance methodology from which the work will in due time emerge.

Performance Methodology: Breath

In essence, the performance methodology is inseparable from the script-devising methodology. The process is holistic, integrating the body, the mind, the heart, and the soul. It begins, therefore, with the breath. As yoga practitioner and scholar Juliet Pegrum says in *Hatha Yoga: the Complete Mind and Body Workout*, "There is a direct correlation between the mind and the breath" (110). "In our modern stressed world," according to Pegrum, "most people breath incorrectly with shallow breaths that only exercise the tops of the lungs" (110), while slowing down our breathing, and inhaling and exhaling through the nose in steady natural breaths actually energizes us, regulating the body's digestive and circulatory systems, and acting "as a bridge between the conscious and unconscious areas of the mind" (110). This brings me to the next aspect of the devising methodology: yoga.

Performance Methodology: Yoga

I have practiced yoga as long as I have formally practiced theatre, and for me the two have always coexisted, long before I made the conscious connection to integrate them into a common practice. Theatre artists particularly working in the realm of physical or of experimental theatre have long incorporated yogic routines into their work, including Jerzy Grotowski whose *Polish Laboratory Theatre* had a long-established discipline in Hatha Yoga, and influential Cuban playwright Maria Irene Fornes, who explained in her interview with David Savran that her writing workshops conducted at *International Arts Relations (INTAR)* began with such a routine. "First

thing, we do half an hour of yoga. Then I give them a writing exercise" (58). The energizing of the body, the heart, and the soul – and the balancing of the mind – that come of the yoga practice have a tremendous impact on the artist's receptivity to the creative devising process, and on his or her receptivity to the natural environment – the next key aspect of this devising methodology.

Performance Methodology: Earthing

In fostering reciprocity among human performers and the natural environment that so profoundly determines the course of their work and existence, the cultivating of a deep ecological receptivity is integral to the performance methodology. The awakening of such receptivity has powerful and immediate outcomes. One effective way I have found to embrace this ecological connectedness as part of a performance methodology is in the practice of *earthing*. The *Earthing Institute* contends that *earthing*, or allowing "the skin of our bodies" to touch "the skin of the earth...transfers natural electrical energy to the body....[serving] as a foundation for vitality and health" (Earthing Institute). In simply walking barefoot on the earth, or lying on its surface, skin to skin, we become holistically energized and receptive to the intuitive. We can integrate this earthing experience with the following element of free-dance, by dancing barefoot out of doors, or if need be, we can return to the performance space, literally bringing the natural world inside, in the form of energy.

Performance Methodology: Free-Dance

Gabrielle Roth, dancer, and innovator of the *5Rhythms* movement practice explains "Energy moves in waves. Waves move in patterns. Patterns move in rhythms. A human being is just that, energy, waves, patterns, rhythms" (Roth). According to

Roth, "When we dance the rhythms we experience movement as a spiritual practice ~ a way of re-uniting spirit and flesh ~ We track the natural currents of energy that are moving through us and through all of life" (Roth). Roth's *5Rhythms* practice is an increasingly popular approach to ecstatic dance. But ecstatic, or trance, or sacred-dance has a long history across centuries and cultures. Dance has long been a vehicle for connecting – with our spirituality, with our community, with our deepest selves, and significantly, with the natural environment. Recent years have seen a resurgence of free-dance and dance-fusion practices. The May 2012 issue of *Yoga Journal* explains that "[Yoga] studios [around the country] are offering fusion styles that intersperse asana sequences with the spirited or sensuous moves of break dancing, belly dancing, hip-hop, and more" (Saffian 30).

In incorporating free-dance into the performance methodology, principally as it follows from breath-work, from yogic practice, and from the immersive earthing experience, we liberate the spirit. We open ourselves to penetrating inspiration and to fathomless reservoirs of perception. We free the body, the mind, the heart, and the soul, opening the way for genuine, transformative work.

Performance Methodology: Guided Free-Writing

All of the work that we have done up to this point has opened the doors for powerful, organic self-expression. In providing gentle prompts and subtle guidance throughout all of the above, the integration of the total process into the act of writing is a subtle transition, and a natural progression. As I explained earlier, the structure of the writing, and of the writing exercises, is determined by the instinct behind the work – and often by the nature of the work – by the energy and artistic vision of the collaborators.

In my work, either solo-devising, or group-devising, I generally start with a poem, or with a story, to be fleshed out by either my own free-writing explorations or by group free-writing explorations. In the latter case, I will often outline the poem or story, and provide the leading lines or phrases from each respective segment, as sequential launching-off points for group writing. Generally, ensemble members write for brief stretches, on their own, in the group space, and then work is read aloud, at times deconstructed or entered into conversation with other writings, and explored through the performative body. Always the writing is followed by the next element in the process: Circle Time.

Performance Methodology: Circle Time

The circle is the group embrace. It is the space where we begin and the space where we end. It is the elemental form that connects us to the sacred nature of our work. To be among the circle is to honor our interconnectedness. It is to enfold within ourselves, to envelope, and to hold.

The circle can be a productive space for group-generating of story, or of poetry, or of music, or of movement. It can also provide a powerful locus of receptivity. Following free-writing exercises, the sharing and the reading aloud of ensemble members' words, is generally accomplished in the circle, as is the originating of the next element of the process: movement exercises.

Performance Methodology: Movement Exercises

There is a rich tradition in devised theatre, of movement and physical theatre practices. Among the most well-known for their work in physical devised theatre are Jerzy Grotowski, Augusto Boal, and Anne Bogart, each of whom have written

extensively on process. Of these, I have found the ideas and exercises of Boal most accessible and most pertinent to my own work at present. Boal's *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* is an exceptionally useful tool for the devised theatre practitioner. The book provides "an arsenal," as Boal puts it, of exercises to help ensemble members experience the transformative nature of performance work. Boal explains that the goal of these exercises, "is a better awareness of the body and its mechanisms, its atrophies and hypertrophies, its capacities for recuperation, restructuring, reharmonisation. Each exercise is a 'physical reflection' on oneself. A monologue. An introversion" (60).

Through a combination of games and exercises, drawing from Boal, as well as from more recent practitioners like radical performance artist Guillermo Gomez-Peña, the ensemble-generated work from the guided free-writing exercises discussed previously, are explored in the body. The ensemble members, working independently or in small groups, begin to generate their own physical or imagistic dialogues with the writings.

Sample Rehearsal Plans

What follows is a brief sampling from recent rehearsal plans, included here to help illustrate the organization and implementation of these ideas.



Fig. 9. Cheria Moore, *Beauty Cast Photo: Marnie, Carrie, and Nina*. 18 Jan 2012.

Beauty: A Dialogue Rehearsal Scedule:

Fri. Feb. 3

6:45 - Yoga (A meditation on Beauty)

7:05 - Free-Dance in space, eyes closed (Mosquitos)

7:15 - Share

- intros, passing the thread "I am beautiful b/c...you are beautiful b/c"

- Theme Intro: We're passing the thread to talk about beauty, to celebrate the beauty in ourselves & in one another, to recognize that we are each separate strands of the same thread

- Sharing what people brought in (text, image, ads, etc.)

8:00 - Dancing across/in the space, w/ thread/coaching, eyes open (Moby)

8:15 - Writing/Personal Testimony: "He said...she said... you said... they said...we said..." Free-Write" (10 min.); Sharing "I hear you/I am hearing you."(20min.)

8:45 - Carnival at Rio Circle Game(20 min.)

9:05 - Partners & 3s Exercise: create a sequence of movements in conversation based on one of your testimonies or the testimonies you heard, w/ or w/o thread. (10-15 min.); Share (20 min.)

9:40 - Closing Circle: "I am beautiful because..., (group or individual) you are beautiful because..."

* Homework: Bring an image, bit of text, quote, jingle, ad from popular culture based on our theme of Beauty *

Sat. Feb. 4

6:45 - Yoga (A meditation on Beauty)

7:05 - Movement Circle (Individual Images)

7:20 - Free-Dance conversation in space, partners (E. Loizuea)

7:30 - Share

- Sharing what people brought in (text, image, ads, etc.)

8:00 - 3s Exercise: Statues & Tableau Vivants based on what you or someone else brought in; Share

8:35 - Writing:

- Group Circle: One-Word Poem "Beauty....."

- Writing: Expanding the Conversation Poem "I wanted to talk, about my body in this space...about my body...about your body...about our bodies...about...about...in the space we're all sharing, the air we're all breathing, the thread we're all twining, I wanted to gather the thread of this conversation, to unwind the strands, I wanted to be listened to, I wanted to listen, I wanted to be heard, I wanted to hear....I wanted to talk...about beauty" (10 min.); Sharing: Reading it through (20 min.)

9:05 - Solo Exercise: working with balls/thread, create a sequence of 3 movements to express 3 primary words, ideas, or themes of your part of the poem. Practice until you have the sequence smooth & memorized (10-15 min.); Share (20 min.)

9:40 - Closing Circle: "I am beautiful because..., (group or individual) you are beautiful because..."

Homework: Revise/polish your part of the poem. Practice your individual movement sequence. Work on memorizing your lines of the poem

Sun. Feb. 5

6:45 - Yoga (A meditation on Beauty)

7:05 - Rhythm Circle/Movement Circle(Remember the Image)

7:20 - Dance/Percussion conversation across the space, partners

7:30 - Share

- Complete read-through of poem

7:45 - Rehearse: Complete read-through with movement

8:15 - Rehearse/Rework:(from previous 3s Exercise/2s & 3s Exercise) Select Statues, Tableau Vivants, movement sequence conversations with complete read of accompanying text

8:45 - Writing:

- Group Circle: One-Word Poem "Beauty....."

- Writing/Personal Testimony "No one [ever] said/told me..." (10 min.); Share (20min.)

9:15 - 1s/2s/3s/4s Exercise: working with percussion, statue, &/or 3- movement-sequence , create an accompaniment or response to your testimony or one you've just heard. (10 min.); Share (15 min.)

9:40 - Closing Circle: "I am beautiful because..., (group or individual) you are beautiful because..."

* Homework: Continue to practice your individual movement sequence & memorize your part of the poem.*

Mon. Feb. 6

6:45 - Yoga (A meditation on Beauty)

7:05 - Rhythm Circle/Movement Circle(Remember the Image)

7:15 - Free-Dance in the space, partners

7:20 - Rehearse: Complete read-through of poem with movement

7:40 - Rehearse/Rework:(from previous 1s/2s/3s/4s Exercises) Select Statues, Tableau Vivants, movement sequence conversations with complete read of accompanying text

8:10 - Writing:

- Group Circle: One-Word Poem "Beauty....."

- Writing/Personal Testimony "It's time [to talk about/expand the conversation/say..." (10 min.); Share (20min.)

8:40 - 1s/2s/3s/4s Exercise: working with percussion, statue, &/or 3- movement-sequence, create an accompaniment or response to your testimony or one you've just heard. (10 min.); Share (15 min.)

9:05 - Rehearse assigned selections

9:40 - Closing Circle: "I am beautiful because..., (group or individual) you are beautiful because..."

* Homework: Practice individual movement sequence, memorize part/s of poem, Practice/revise/refine recent selections.*

Beauty: A Dialogue Sexual Assault Awareness month Performance

Rehearsal Schedule:

"Throughout history humans walked barefoot and slept on the ground. But modern lifestyle, including the widespread use of insulative rubber- or plastic-soled shoes, has disconnected us from the Earth's energy and, of course, we no longer sleep on the ground. Fascinating new research has raised the possibility that this disconnect may actually contribute to chronic pain, fatigue, and poor sleep that plague so many people."

- www.earthing.com

Schedule:

Thurs. March 22 (Comm. 2012 & Outside - weather permitting)

6:45 - Earthing/Yoga/Free-Dance/Journaling (on Beauty & Freedom)

7:35 - Run show

8:45 - Share/Discuss/Closing Circle: Beauty is..., "I am beautiful because..., you are beautiful because..."

* Homework: If you want to revise your monologue, please work on and finalize it ASAP *

Thurs. March 29 (Comm. 2012 & Outside - weather permitting)

6:45 - Earthing/Yoga/Free-Dance/Journaling

7:45 - Run show

8:45 - work opening poem/work with thread as conversation

9:00 - Closing Circle

Thurs. April 5(Moe Theatre & Outside - weather permitting)

6:45 - Earthing/Yoga/Free-Dance/Journaling

7:35 - Run show

8:45 - Group Circle: One-Word Poem "Beauty....."

9:00 - Closing Circle

Thurs. April 12(Moe Theatre & Outside - weather permitting)

6:45 - Earthing/Yoga/Free-Dance/Journaling

7:35 - Run show

8:45 - Work individual movement sequences

9:00 - Closing Circle

Mon. April 16 (Moe)

6:45 -Warm-up

7:00 - Rhythm Circle/Movement Circle

7:15 - Free-Dance

7:20 - Rehearse: Complete read-through of poem with movement

7:40 - Rehearse assigned selections

9:00 - Closing Circle



Fig. 10. Marnie Glazier, *Beauty Rehearsal* Photo: Almedia Exum, Morgan Kopczynski, and Rachael Rodgers, 5 Apr 2012.

Concluding Statement: "The Nature of the Invitation"

In the Heart of the Beast Theatre's Loren Niemi recently suggested in an interview I held with him, "If I think about devised [theatre], I think about the nature of the invitation....What is the nature of the invitation? How do you ask [audiences] to

imagine, suspend judgment, participate?" (Niemi). These are difficult questions to answer – but paramount. I believe that we are compelled as theatre artists to do the work that we do in order that, as so many others have suggested, we impact and enlighten other thinkers and actors of this and future generations. This is no small task.

But we do what we do, not simply for our own personal growth and well-being, but for that of the earth entire. Our work, in other words, must invite our audiences in. It must give back to them that gift, as Barba so eloquently suggests, that they give to us in offering up their time. A simple way of phrasing the question is "What is the audience's pay-off?" What do they get from giving us their time, their attention, their eyes and ears – if only for an hour or so? The answer depends largely on the instinct behind the work. But of a certainty, they must get something. Their time must not have been spent in vain. It is up to us to invite them, to let them in, to give.

I have talked in this dissertation about the present crises confronting us today, about the confluence of factors necessitating a re-envisioning of our human - nature relations, about the peril and the promise of our current situation. I have outlined in brief the methodological applications I have recently been exploring, toward a poetics of devised eco-theatre. In concluding, I want to address the ways in which we might invite our audiences in.

Croteau and Hoynes's *Media Society* attests, "Media technologies are a structural constraint. Like all structures, they have been developed by humans and, subsequently, both enable and limit human action" (302). We have seen, especially in recent months, the great potential the internet has for enabling human action. We have witnessed, through virtual communication networks, a powerful spread of revolutionary

social movements activated by digital media technologies and the solidarity they have the potential to inspire.

In a number of ways, both large and small, theatre practitioners have been opening themselves up to these larger movements, to these larger audiences – evidenced in Blume and Bower's *Lysistrata Project* linking with the larger anti-war movement, and in *Bread and Puppet's Upriser Calisthenics*, linking with the larger *Occupy Wall Street* movement.

It is essential today that we forge such connections, that we engage with the wider transnational dialogue, that we serve the world in which we live – and that we open the doors to our audiences by making ourselves accessible to them. *In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre* and *Bread and Puppet Theatre* are just two of the growing number of collaborative collectives working in the realm of eco-theatre and forging palpable connections through their effective combination of virtual – digital – and actual – live, theatrical – engagement. Both companies maintain dynamic user-friendly websites, post – or enable others to post – evocative video-clips of their work on public video file-sharing websites like *Youtube*, and most significantly, bring their work outside of the confines of the traditional theatrical space, to the streets, to the people. It is time for new generations of artists and thinkers to join them. As John Gardner reminds us in his work *On Moral Fiction*, "Art rediscovers, generation by generation, what is necessary to humanness" (Gardner 6).

Today, in the United States especially, where "less than 5 % of the global population, uses about a quarter of the world's fossil fuel resources—burning up nearly 25 % of the coal, 26 % of the oil, and 27 % of the world's natural gas" (World Watch

Institute), such rediscovery is imperative. In 1871, one hundred years before my birth, America's *Good Gray Poet* Walt Whitman wrote,

I say no land or people or circumstances ever existed so needing a race of singers and poems differing from all others, and rigidly their own, as the land and people and circumstances of our United States need such singers and poems to-day, and for the future....In the free evening of my day I give to you, reader, the foregoing garrulous talk, thoughts, reminiscences,

As idly drifting down the ebb,/Such ripples, half-caught voices, echo from the shore. Concluding with two items for the imaginative genius of the West, when it worthily rises – First, what Herder taught to the young Goethe, that really great poetry is always (like the Homeric or Biblical canticles) the result of a national spirit, and not the privilege of a polish'd and select few; Second, that the strongest and sweetest songs yet remain to be sung. (Whitman 574)

The nature of my invitation to you, dear reader, is a call to action. It is necessary that we explore new pattern, in addressing the specific challenges and the potential opportunities of our age. The earth's own indisputable evidence increasingly indicates that this is not a mere matter of choice. This is a matter of utmost necessity. If we, in the professional, the community, and – perhaps most significantly of all – the academic theatre, allow the scope of our work to be determined by the dictates of the financial market, rather than by the most significant needs of our time, we fail to do our job as

artists – as visionaries – as bearers of light. We further the inertia that threatens the very survival of future generations today. We snuff the light.

I close with a brief quotation from *Solo*, a play I wrote now a decade ago, quoting, in this line, a sage piece of advice given to me, as a young woman, by my father. "It's what you do now when you don't have to do anything that makes you who you are when it's too late to do a damn thing about it" (Glazier). *What will you do now?*

I implore you to help inquire the way to new pattern, to consider the meager words I've put before you in this work, to do your own probing search, and above all, to act – before it is too late.

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