A New Body of Order

Designing Social Meaning through Performance

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ABSTRACT

This study identifies an absence of order in contemporary social life and offers a design-based response to that absence, theorising order as a living phenomenon of regulation, meaning and authority that may be generated through the participatory, symbolic, embodied, creative and relational practice of performance. This participatory interpretation of order motivates the study's methodology which proposes performance as a mode and method of design and suggests that order may be designed through performance. An initial case study (reflecting on the process of a theatre production) presents a design methodology based on the identifying elements of performance, namely: embodiment, mimesis, ephemerality and agon.

The practice of designing order is tested through two participatory design projects that identify an absence of order and address that absence using an exploratory process of performance-as-design. The first project investigates an order of authority in a classroom context, and the second an order of consent in response to participant concerns around physical intimacy. Both projects build embodied, relational structures that enact regulation, meaning and authority and demonstrate that designing order through performance is possible, productive, and effective.

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Chapter One

A New Body of Order

The Chorus of the stars, the conjunction of the planets, their harmonious order and connection are but various copies of the first great dance of things.

Lucian of Samosata

INTRODUCTION

This work begins from a sense of absence. An absence of something ill-defined yet unmistakably significant at the heart of urban, globalised society in the 21st century. A vacuum of meaning deep in the presence of lived life that produces an ever-emergent incoherence which obscures the very nature of this vacuity, this absence.

Represented through the idioms of alienation, atomisation and isolation, and identified in various fields from the 20th century and into the 21st, this sense of absence has been diagnosed as the product of the interdependent phenomena of capitalism (See: Berman, 1983; Dalton-Brown, 2006; Ollman & Bertel, 1976; Marx & Engels, 2009; Simmel, 1978; Weber, 1976), globalisation (See: Barber, 2007; Bonnett, 2015; Kolot, 2014), the erosion of community and the rise of individualism (See: Guisinger & Blatt, 1994; Lasch, 1991; Nisbet, 1969; Santos, Varnum & Grossmann, 2017), the decline of religion and the heterogenisation and secularisation of society (See: Arendt, 2006; Geertz, 1966; Douglas, 2003; Habermas, 2010), colonialism (See: Fanon, 1967; Mabovula, 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015; Wahab,

Odunsi & Ajiboye, 2012), consumerism, commodification and the marketisation of culture (See: Comor, 2011; Debord, 1983; Fischer, 2009; Jameson, 1983; Zenovska, 2020), the subversion of gender roles (See: Leacock, 1981; Slagter, 1982; McGregor, 2011), the breakdown of the family (See: Fox, 2015; Zaretsky, 1976), urbanisation (See: Buchecker, 2009; Schlemmer &Thaw, 1980), alienation from the natural world (See: Hailwood, 2015; Turner, Nakamura & Dinetti, 2004), the atomisation of social relations, the rise of parasocial relationships through internet culture and social media (See: Bakardjieva, 2005; Hartmann, 2016; Rey, 2012), and most recently, the material alienation of society through global lockdown policies, masking and social distancing of the Covid-19 pandemic (See: Berkowitz, 2020; Shah at al, 2020; Sood, 2020; Zhu *et al.*, 2021).

To outline a few examples, in *Ruling the Void* (2013) political scientist Peter Mair describes a growing absence of civil participation in party politics, political processes, and power structures in contemporary Western democracies. In *Between Past and Future* (1961) political theorist Hannah Arendt proclaims the absence of authority in the 20th century, describing its loss as "tantamount to the loss of the groundwork of the world" (Arendt, 1961:95). In *Natural Symbols* (2003) anthropologist Mary Douglas diagnoses an absence resulting from the loss of collective ritual and its commonality of embodied symbols, arguing that the collective process of authority enacted through ritualised social practices is also lost through this absence of ritual (2003:35). In an example from fictional literature, children's author Michael Ende portrays the terrible spirit of "The Nothing" in *The Neverending Story* (1997) as an all-consuming absence generated by the decline of collective belief in the power of stories and the world of the imagination. In *The Nature of Order* (2003) architect Christopher Alexander laments the absence of order in the

contemporary built environment, describing order as “living” and produced through a collective feeling of personal engagement with material structure (Alexander, 2003:7-22).

The notion of absence, alienation, atomisation, the void, ‘the nothing’ presented in these examples (and the cited references preceding them) exists in implicit antithesis to connection, relationship, construction and ‘fitting together’. As Mair (2013), Arendt (1961), Douglas (2003), Ende (1983), Alexander (2003) pose (whether implicitly or explicitly) this absence, in its guises of the political, socio-cultural, imaginative, and environmental, is an absence of participation.

In describing my opening “sense of an absence” as an “absence of participation”, I further characterise the nature of this participation as that of order. Political philosopher Eric Voegelin distinguishes order as an action of symbolic participation that results from the inherent participative nature of human existence: “Participation in being, however, is not a partial involvement of man; he is engaged with the whole of his existence, for participation is existence itself” (2001:39). Moreover, Alexander positions order as an action of participation, generated and recognised between the “living” material forms of built structure and the shared, intuitive affect of how order is experienced and accordingly “generated” through this experience (Alexander, 2003:1-22). Performance, as an embodied, collective practice, is an inherent method of participation (See: Fischer-Lichte, 2008; Fleishman, 2009; Schechner, 2020). Following Alexander’s view that his notion of order has broader philosophical applications than architecture (2003:1-4), I propose his theory from the position that order may be collectively designed through the living, relational, embodied practice of performance.

This study then, is an investigation into designing order through performance. It is a response to design theorists' Thomas Binder, Giorgio De Michelis, Pelle Ehn, Giulio Jacucci, Per Linde and Ina Wagner's [1](2011:106-123) proposal that performance is a potential mode of designing, and their assertion that "No relationship between performance theories and studies and design has yet been attempted, although anthropological works have already been applied to create new perspectives on design" (2011:108). Moreover, the work is led by Ezio Manzini's (2015), Arturo Escobar's (2018), and (anthropologist) Tim Ingold's (2018) proposals that we are emerging into a new subjectivity in terms of social and cultural production, where the formation of social structures and ways of living are shifting from matters of tradition and culture to matters of design. As Manzini argues, the contemporary, globalised world is in a phase of transition and "is a world in which everybody constantly has to design and redesign their existence," (2015:16) and:

> [F]or a growing number of people ideas on well-being must be invented (and reinvented) each day. [W]e can see them as subjects who must constantly define and redefine their life projects. They must ponder what well-being they are looking for, what possibilities they have of reaching it, and what steps they must take to get there. We should add that even though their choices are individual, the sense system in which they are made is in any case a collective artifact: a cultural construction resulting from a vast and complex social conversation; a sense system that anyone may confirm or reject, but that no one can ignore. (Manzini, 2015: 83)

The study's philosophical hypothesis assumes the absence of order in social living and suggests that this absence may be addressed through the study's methodological thesis, where performance is proposed as a method and mode of design (specifically participatory design within the scope of design for social innovation).

[1] Under their collective 'A.Telier' pseudonym.

Thesis Outline

The introductory chapter begins with a brief outline of the study's framing disciplines of design and performance and goes on to extrapolate the concept of order as it is imagined in the dissertation. This is followed by a more detailed framing of design and performance as they relate to the thesis, and the positioning of performance as the practice through which order is designed. The chapter closes with a contextualisation of the study. Chapter Two begins with a review of the primary literature and goes on to describe the thesis methodology through the frame of practice-led-research and the complementary methods and methodologies of design and performance. Chapter Three presents an expositional case study of my play *Woolworths* (2018) that traces my developmental logic in connecting performance practice to design practice. This chapter makes the argument for theorising performance as a design practice through identifying the characteristic elements of theatre and performance practice and establishing their correlation as the discipline's distinguishing 'design identity'. Chapter Four and Five present the major design projects of the study and put the philosophical and methodological premises of the thesis to work by identifying and addressing a perceived absence of order and designing a new order to fill the absence using performance as a mode and method of design. These projects were both carried out at UCT's Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies (CTDPS). Chapter Four describes a 2019 project carried out with a group of 2nd year acting students that addresses the absence of an order of authority in the event of their 2nd year acting class. Chapter Five describes a workshop project carried out with a group of 2nd year acting students in 2020 and addresses the absence of an order of consent in their practical classes

in light of ongoing concerns around physical intimacy and recent events of gender-based violence in the country.

Introducing Design

The study is conceived as task of design that corresponds with and is a consequence of a world described by design theorist Ezio Manzini (2015:16) as one "in transition to sustainability: a world in which everybody constantly has to design and redesign their existence whether they want to or not." It reflects on Arturo Escobar's (2018:139) assertion that the emergent idiom of design is being "repositioned as a central domain of thought and action concerned with the meaning and production of socionatural life" and moreover that:

> [C]ritical design studies are being actively reconstituted...as a key space for thinking about life and its defence from increasingly devastating anthropogenic forces. There is a hopeful recognition of the multidimensional character of design as material, cultural, epistemic, political, and ontological, all at once. Design, in short, is being acknowledged as a decisive world-making practice, even if often found wanting in this regard. The mood seems to be settling in, at least among a small but possibly growing number of design theorists and practitioners, for playing a more self-aware, and constructive, role in the making and unmaking of worlds. (Escobar, 2018:139)

Design's elastic definition is presented here in accordance with Manzini and *inter alia* transition design theorists Arturo Escobar (2018), Terry Irwin, Gideon Kossof and Cameron Tonkinwise (2015), design historian Victor Margolin (1995), and design-thinking theorists Rim Razzouk and Valerie Shute (2012) as an investigative process of sustained, creative, problem-solving or (via Manzini, 2015:35) "sense-making" whose theoretical and practical efforts are offered through the lens and practice of 'designing', where design

encompasses the interactional intentions of participatory design[2] (Erling Björgvinsson, Pelle Ehn, Per-Anders Hillgen, 2009, 2012; Enzio Manzini, 2011) and design for social innovation (Escobar, 2018; Irwin, 2015; Manzini, 2011).

Participatory design's central tenet sees stakeholders as active participants or active designers in the design process, and the role of the individual 'professional' designer as taking a more collaborative or facilitatory role in the process (Ehn, 2008; Björgvinsson *et al.*, 2009, 2012; Manzini & Rizzo, 2011). Moreover, participatory design seeks to shift the focus from, as Björgvinsson *et al.* (2012:101) put it, "an obsession with products, objects, and things", to a focus on dynamic systems, processes, ways of being, behaviours, and context-driven user-led solutions. Design for social innovation intersects with the socially co-operative intentions of participatory design, and addresses itself directly to issues of social change, not as (following Manzini, 2015:64-65) a "'complementary activity' to existing social, economic, political and cultural activities [that] deal with problems that are not dealt with by the market or by the state" but as a design mode that "produces meaningful social innovations…solutions based on new social forms and economic models" and "deals with all kinds of social change toward sustainability" that allow for the possibility for social groups to reduce their "environmental impact, regenerate common goods, and reinforce the social fabric".

In defining the terms of design for social innovation, Manzini (2015:64) describes the meaning of 'social' as "the ways in which people generate social forms", and it is to this

[2] There is some slippage, theoretical intersection, and diversion between the terms participatory design and co-design, the details of which I feel are extraneous to this project (See: Manzini 2015; Ehn, 2012). Unless otherwise indicated, I will use participatory design as a noun and co-design in verb form, because of the clunkiness of the potential term: participatorily designing.

definition, with its proposition of the participative production of relational structure, that the design intentions of this thesis belong.

Introducing Performance

Performance is presented here in its interdependent guise as a *practice* of art and culture and a *lens* through which social life is positioned as fundamentally dramaturgical. J.L Austin's (1962) contention that speech acts and non-verbal communication are 'performative' in that they have the capacity to make or consummate an action, and Erving Goffman's (1959) hypothesis that social behaviour is constructed through performance, are foundational to the lens of performance. Goffman's seminal idea that social behaviour is "dramaturgical" in that it is a "show" of culturally determined dramatisations of behaviour and relationship for a social audience (1959) is developed by Judith Butler (1988) and Richard Schechner (2003, 2020) who reason that identity, whether social or individual, is constructed through the repeated, collective action of performing the self.

Schechner (2003: 7-9, 116-164) argues that the cultural (or ritual) and theatrical (or artistic) aspects of performance practice are not separate modes but twinned or counterpart social actions in that they 'do' things and are codified, repeatable actions that differ from each other in their 'context and emphasis.' It is the 'doing' action of both artistic and cultural performance (or ritual and theatre) that is central to their shared definition and production of knowledge; a knowledge that is produced *as* and *through* action.

According to anthropologist Theodore Jennings (1982:116) 'To say there is such a thing as ritual knowledge is to say that it is knowledge which is identical with doing or acting, with a bodily doing or acting." This 'doing as knowing' or an embodied knowing and doing, conceived as integral to ritual, is similarly integral to the contemporary framing of theatre

and performance and performance research; Mark Fleishman (2009:117) asserts that performance "is a set of practices that are embodied" and it is the action or the 'doing' of performance that defines it. As a practice that is generated *by* and generative *of* the socio-cultural, performance's mimetic action of representation is productive. As Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf assert, "[m]imesis... has a part in our symbolization of the world and in processes of simulation" (1995:5). As a practice defined by the emergent present, Peggy Phelan (1993:146) suggests that "[p]erformance's being becomes itself through disappearance," and is fundamentally ephemeral. As a practice of dramatic literature, performance is an agent of 'agon'; the conflict, counterpoint or struggle that defines drama and dramatic narrative. Walter Benjamin (via Lehmann, 2006:47) refers to agon as an action of "transformation" meaning that it is through the shifts and transformations caused by agon that drama is produced and developed. It is at the intersection of embodiment, ephemerality, mimesis and agon that I locate my intentions to exemplify performance as a practice, process, and producer of the embodied, ephemeral, mimetic and agonistic present.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Order

In his introduction to *The Nature of Order: An Essay on the Art of Building and the Nature of the Universe* (2003) Alexander says, "The activity we call building creates the physical order of the world, constantly, unendingly, day after day... Our world is dominated by the order we create." (2003:1). It was this statement that inspired my thinking on the potential of the concept of order, not only in the architectural context in which it is offered, but in its potential meaning for embodiment: that to 'build' structure through the body and in the

community of the body has the potential to create “the physical order of the world” in which we dwell. If, like the built environment, people 'build' embodied order without knowing of its potential, or indeed the type of order they create, how then could this unconscious order we build be made conscious, effective, and helpful to its participants?

Alexander’s argument introduces the notion of order as something we do not fully comprehend (“if we are honest we must admit we hardly even know what kind of phenomenon it is” (2003:1)) but are able to recognise and ‘feel’ as a participative phenomenon that is collectively generated through the building and affective experiencing of built material form and as a structural phenomenon that exists as “a deep regularity” (2003:1) and exerts control on how (and where) we live out our lives and moreover directs (and exerts control) over the affective experience of that living (Alexander, 2003:22).

Alexander’s position on order is spatial, material and a result of architectural practice and his argument is accordingly constructed through the practice, consideration and experience of architecture, but the complex subject of order has of course multiple philosophical applications. In order to establish and contextualise my own position on the concept I move here to provide an outline on the material and ideological framing of order as it relates to the position of this dissertation.

The term’s commonly understood meaning in noun form is as an organising structure, arrangement, pattern or method that enacts regulation, and in verb form as an action that makes, exerts, embodies or participates in structuring, arranging, patterning or method-making. As philosopher Ruth Lorand describes it, “order”, is a complex or a “manifold entity” that:

> …concerns all aspects of life and has many manifestations. We discern order in Nature, in our thinking, in our goals and in our values. We distinguish between natural orders and artificial orders, shared and private orders. In some cases we believe that order is inherent in things, in other cases we strive to impose order where we do not find it. (Lorand, 2000:7)

Order is identified, generated, interpreted, and applied in philosophy, art, politics, law, economics, science, mathematics, architecture, design, and as, Lorand argues, all aspects of life and thinking. The notion of order as a socio-political structure is integral to contextualising the phenomenon as a legislative, administrative and political structure that coheres societies. As a circumstance of social organisation, order is both a process and product enacted through social and institutional structure that is generative of (and by) the complex matrices of power inherent in these structures and the participative actions of their actors. In terms of participation, Thomas Hobbes notion of the "social contract" (Martinich, 1992) proposes that the order of the ruling state is able to be carried out through the participative consent of the populace, and it is through this implicit agreement to abide by the order of the state that order is maintained and is able to 'rule over' its consenting subjects. Jean Jac Rousseau's thesis on the social contract (Williams, 2014)contends that it is directly through the participative agreement to submit to a collective system of political order that ensures the liberty of the individual citizen. Emile Durkheim's (1961, 2001) position is that social order is generated through a collective set of shared norms and values that are enacted through the collective, and necessarily regulate the choices and responsibilities of the individual. In these readings, existing social orders are conceived as external to the individual while interdependently generated through the acceptance and participation of individual actors. The creation and conservation of a social order that exerts hierarchical domination over its citizens as an

action of coercive power manipulated by (and generative of) the ruling class is emphasized in Karl Marx's (2000) critique of (industrial) capitalism where order is presented as an economic (and consequently socio-political) phenomenon that is produced by competition for resources and maintaining control over those resources by the ruling class. In *Discipline and Punish* (1995) Michel Foucault poses that the hierarchical social order of capitalism and its disciplinary controls are enacted upon and forcibly embodied by its subjects through institutions like prisons. In this argument, the body is coerced into performing a social order in which it forcibly participates but has no participative power to alter. To be sure, perceiving order as belonging primarily to a socio-political context and being generative of (and by) authoritarian, hierarchical power structures is the common-sense (whether positively or negatively perceived) affective meaning of the term, not least of all because a person doesn't need to have read Marx or Foucault to have an intimate understanding of hierarchical order as it may be enacted in their family, school, social or work life. The notion of order as hierarchical (and the ideological stances in response to this notion) is, as Lorand avers, a qualitative framing of the phenomenon and I offer an extremely brief overview here of the extensive philosophical, economic, political and sociological arguments on the contested ideological significance of social order. These (cursorily presented) histories of thought notwithstanding, it is important to establish that my framing of order is driven by the motive of creative practice and the study's key rationale of order is not presented as a critique of existing sociological structure but as a proposal for designing participative processes of structure through performance practice.

Lorand's framing of order in *Aesthetic Order: A Philosophy of Order, Beauty and Art* (2000) concerns the context of the order of aesthetics, art and beauty, but Lorand asks, "is

there one basic understanding of what order is? Is such basic understanding necessary for the comprehension of particular orders?" (Lorand, 2000:7). To go some way to answering that, Lorand argues that:

> One cannot analyse concepts, relate them to each other or present coherent arguments about their meaning unless one assumes, at least for the sake of argument, what concepts have distinct and definable contents. Definitions and analyses of concepts do not necessarily describe the common use of the word (which may be hard to describe) nor the common understanding of the concept (which may be confused). Rather, they give an account of the use of the term in a particular theory, and it may be useful for comparing different theories. (Lorand, 2000:8)

Following this position, and for the purposes of my argument, I move to outline a theory of order that will necessarily restrict its potential meanings and interpretive applications but will provide a clear conceptual framework for the concept as it is used in this dissertation.

I start with Henri Bergson's (1944) dualist model of two fundamental types of order: the "vital" and the "physical" (or "geometric') (1944:244) where the latter is "automatic" and "[b]eing solid and motionless (or being treated as such), the elements lack any 'will' or any specific direction of their own, which qualifies them to tolerate any external pattern imposed upon them' (Lorand, 2000:47). In contrast, "'vital' (or 'willed') order" is intuitive, alive, creative, and one that exists between and within living bodies (1944:245, 252-253).

Lorand's own dualist concept of order is, as she attests (2000:83) based on Bergson's thinking (1944) and through it she proposes the two-part model of "aesthetic" and "discursive" order, where the latter is entirely quantitative and the former, "aesthetic order" embodies elements of the qualitative and quantitative and may be perceived and generated through an affective, intuitive response. Lorand's framing of aesthetic order responds to the notion of order as necessarily "predictable" and "redundant" and disorder

as “unpredictable” and “original” (Lorand citing Moles 2000:71). As Lorand argues, if disorder is creative and intuitive, and order is banal and predictable, how are art and beauty to be understood, where art clearly embodies elements of quantitative order and yet may be produced and interpreted at an intuitive, spontaneous level (2000:71-81). Bergson and Lorand then both forward notions of an intuitive and creative order (that, following Lorand) is not ‘disorder’ that contains within its intuitive, responsiveness the formal, quantitative, set patterns of a quantitative, “discursive order”.

I will return to the concept of disorder, but at this stage, the first position of my argument follows Bergson’s concept of “vital order” and Lorand’s framing of “aesthetic order” where via Bergson, order may be creative, intuitive, spontaneous, alive and exist between people and their bodies (1946:237-252) and following Lorand order is a dualist phenomenon that encompasses two interdependent modes, that of quantitative form and that of qualitative affect (2000:117-177). For my framing, I propose the terms material order and symbolic (or affective) order to stand for the elements of ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ order respectively. These interdependent actions of order comprise my framing of the concept. Material order is centred on the conditions of form, structure and taxonomy that may be physically material (as evidenced by Alexander’s notion of the order of the built environment) or may embody (as evidenced by Bergson, 1944; Foucault, 2002; Lorand, 2000) the taxonomies and structures of non-physically material customs, practices, systems and epistemologies. In either case, material order designates quantitative elements, the relationship between these elements and the manner in which this relationship generates an order that may be interpreted through the quantitative materiality of these elements. For example, if the material elements of bricks and mortar,

architectural plans, engineering equations and the practice of building generate 'an order of a built environment' this order may be interpreted through the quantitative elements of building. If a legal order is generated through quantitative elements of language, cultural practices and philosophical epistemologies, then the order of that law may be understood through those quantitative, material elements that constitute it.

Symbolic (or affective) order is qualitative and designates a symbolic action (and affect) that is in and of itself a praxis of order and is produced through and in relation to material order. For example, the manner in which an order of the built environment is felt and the impact it has on the behaviour and affective landscape of people inhabiting it, may be said to be its symbolic order.

The relationship between symbolic (qualitative) and material (quantitative) order is described by Foucault in *The Order of Things* (2002) where "the fundamental codes of a culture – those governing its language, its schemas of perception, its exchanges, its techniques, its values, the hierarchy of its practices establish for every man, from the very first, the empirical orders with which he will be dealing and within which he will be at home" (2002:xxii). Foucault argues that the epistemic order of a historical period (represented through language, economics and the natural world) is not only implicit in the epistemological, linguistic, cultural and scientific production of that period but is itself an agent of interpretation of that epistemic order, thereby limiting the understanding of order and of the nature of language, nature and economics to the order of the period. According to Foucault, order is a method and limit of meaning-making and production.

A comparable (but more theologically oriented) historical philosophy of order is made by Voegelin in his 5-part work *Order and History* (2001) where order is posed as the

purpose, product, and experience of living with community, nature, and God through (the time and space of) history (Voegelin, 2001:19-41). As I have mentioned, Voegelin (2001:19-41) explicitly defines order as an action of participation, viewing it not as an imposition of the mind upon the cosmic, natural, and spiritual worlds, but as a phenomenon produced emergently through a sense-making participation with all life (earthly and divine) that endows the experience of order with the affect of participation, belonging, and coherence. Voegelin's argument corresponds with Foucault's (2002:xix -60) on the position that the limits of a society's order define the limits of its ability to interpret itself, arguing that the infinitely complex, incomprehensible participative experience of life is only able to be comprehended through order as an act of symbolisation "the attempt at making the essentially unknowable order of being intelligible as far as possible through the creation of symbols that interpret the unknown by analogy with the really, or supposedly, known." (Voegelin, 2002:43)

Understanding order as a "process" and "producer of symbolisation" that coheres a society in terms of meaning, values and relationship to nature and the cosmos (Voegelin, 2002:41) corresponds in theory (if not in exact terminology) to Douglas' argument for the importance of "symbolic action" in *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (2003) where she poses that social systems and patterns are "replicated" through symbolisation, contending that "[o]ne of the greatest problems of our day is the lack of commitment to common symbols" (Douglas, 2003:1). In Douglas' argument, the making and embodiment of common symbols is achieved through ritual, and it is the loss of ritual or anti-ritualisation of society that society's participatory order of meaning-making is eroded in individual and communal contexts:

> As soon as symbolic action is denied value in its own right, the flood-gates of confusion are opened. Symbols are the only means of communication. They are the only means of expressing value; the main instruments of thought, the only regulators of experience. For any communication to take place, the symbols must be structured. (Douglas, 2003:40)

And:

> There is no person whose life does not need to unfold in a coherent symbolic system…social responsibility is no substitute for symbolic forms and indeed depends on them…For it is an illusion to suppose that there can be organisation without symbolic expression. (Douglas, 2003:52-53)

Moreover:

> The drawing of symbolic lines and boundaries is a way of bringing order into experience. Such non-verbal symbols are capable of creating a structure of meanings in which individuals can relate to one another and realize their own ultimate purposes. Learning and perception itself depend on classifying and distinguishing. Symbolic boundaries are necessary even for the private organizing of experience. But public rituals which perform this function are also necessary to the organizing of society. (Douglas, 2003:53)

For Douglas, ritual is a practice of symbolisation that produces and mirrors social order through the body: "the body is a symbolic medium which is used to express particular patterns of social relations" (2003: xiii). The collective body in formal relationship is then foundational to Douglas' argument, where ritual is the practice of this collective, formal relationality. If ritual is a practice of performance (*inter alia* Schechner, 2003) then performance as an embodied order of symbolic form may be posed as "creating a structure of meaning" and "organising society" (Douglas, 2003:53).

Douglas poses that ritual performance or (what could be termed) embodied symbolic order generates authority through collective action, contending that ritual exerts authority, "hierarchy", "solidarity", "commands obedience" (2003:35), is "classifying", "regulatory",

and "organisational" (2003:40-53), and to lose or reject ritual in social life is to lose and reject these aspects of social organisation and boundary.

If order is then a structural action of participation (Alexander, 2001; Voegelin, 2001) creativity and intuition (Bergson, 1946; Lorand, 2003) it is also, following Douglas, (2003:53) an organising and hierarchical structure that is embodied. Central to Douglas' argument (2003:53-56) is the view that the rejection of ritual order (with its hierarchy and claims on obedience that may be objectionable to some or many of its members) leaves no collective, participatory practice in its place, but only an entirely individualistic scope of social relations coupled with the delusion that there is a form of communication that exists without socially symbolic intermediaries. The rationale of Douglas's argument belongs to a broader web of sociological, political, cultural and artistic arguments[2] that are critical of a postmodernist approach to meaning and broadly ask: if we only have the tools to undermine structure, how are we to build structure? It is to this conclusion of Douglas's argument, and to the premise of Alexander's argument that my rationale is addressed. The hierarchies and contaminated meanings of existing and historical social orders cannot be excised from our understanding of the phenomenon, and the only way to reimagine or renegotiate a new understanding of hierarchical order is to consider Douglas' question, not through the cerebrally cognitive undertaking of ever more exhaustive intellectual critique, but through the embodied cognition of participatory, creative practice.

A correlative of this view can be drawn to Lorand's (2000:27-44) position on disorder: if the only alternative to order is disorder, how is a coherent understanding of art to be made possible, and if that point is extrapolated, how are outdated, increasingly meaningless or

[2] *Inter alia*, see: Callinicos, 1989; Habermas, 1981; Hassan, 2003

inappropriate orders to be collectively replaced? Indeed, how is society to function if there is only the rejection of (old or expired) order with no new understanding and motivation towards what order is, or more appropriately what order could be?

Douglas' claim[3] that authority is produced by embodied order (as ritual performance) presents the position (See also: Foucault, 2002; Voegelin, 2001) that authority is the result of order. In framing authority, I refer to Arendt's (1961:93-985) definition of the concept as a collective action that is enacted through neither violence nor coercion and is moreover "a non-individuated, external structure common to all, a force of belonging, without which, means to be confronted anew…by the elementary problems of human living-together" (Arendt, 1961:141). Arendt's primary contention in her essay *What is Authority?* (1961) is that authority no longer exists in the world, and its loss (similar to Douglas's notion of the loss of ritual) is the result of a loss of collective belief and commitment to common symbols in the form of tradition:

> Authority, resting on a foundation in the past as its unshaken cornerstone, gave the world the permanence and durability which human beings need precisely because they are mortals the most unstable and futile beings we know of. Its loss is tantamount to the loss of the groundwork of the world, which indeed since then has begun to shift, to change and transform itself with ever-increasing rapidity from one shape into another, as though we were living and struggling with a Protean universe where everything at any moment can become almost anything else. (Arendt, 1961:95)

In lamenting the loss of tradition (and consequently its authority) Arendt raises the necessary contradiction of this loss, saying that the "thread" of tradition "that guided

[3]*Natural Symbols* was first published in 1970, and Douglas' argument refers primarily to the loss of collective ritual in secular Western European and North American societies. I extrapolate it here as applicable to the emergent globalised experience of society in the digitised 21st century.

us…was also the chain fettering each successive generation to a predetermined aspect of the past" (1961:94). A similar paradoxical position is thrown up (if not explicitly confronted) by Douglas' argument and directly addressed by anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff (1977:200-203) where she counteracts the criticism of the de-ritualisation of contemporary society with the assessment that not only is it impossible to return to the communal rituals of the past (and by extension homogenous, religious, pre-globalised societies) but these fading ritualisms would likely be inappropriate or divisive in a contemporary setting, and more crucially would be devoid of significant symbolic meaning and contribute nothing to the experience of social life in the 21st century, alone embody the power to govern or hold authority over society. Voegelin says that when an order is no longer relevant, its symbolic structures lose meaning and efficacy:

> Not only will the symbols lose the magic of their transparency for the unseen order and become opaque, but a pallor will fall over the partial orders of mundane existence that hitherto furnished the analogies for the comprehensive order of being. Not only will the unseemly symbols be rejected, but man will turn away from world and society as the sources of misleading analogy. (Voegelin,2001:48)

Voegelin's description of an expiring order that appears absent or irrelevant and is unable to marshal any social meaning or authority is mirrored in the positions of Douglas (in terms of ritual performance as order) and Arendt (in terms of the order of tradition). Alexander's position is that order is continuously generated but may not be supportive of of social life and living unless it begins to be understood as a participatory action that is not solely a practice of form but one of affect and relational experience: "This order is not remote from our humanity. It is that stuff which goes to the very heart of human experience" (Alexander, 2003:22).

Framing Embodied Order

In view of the foregoing positions, I move to define a guiding definition of order where the following components and their interdependent relationship form the synergetic framework of order as it is proposed in this study, suggesting that:

- Order is a twofold phenomenon that (following Lorand, 2000) comprises both quantitative and qualitative aspects. I name this quantitative/qualitative binary as material (or formal) order and symbolic (or affective) drawing the notion of symbolic order and action from Voegelin(2001) and Douglas (2003).
- Order is a symbolic action (Voegelin, 2001; Douglas, 2003).
- Order is an action of material and form (Alexander, 2001; Douglas, 2003; Lorand, 2000).
- Order is embodied (Bergson, 1944; Douglas, 2003) and its symbolic action is enacted through the collective body (Douglas, 2003).
- Order is collective (Voegelin, 2001; Douglas, 2003).
- Order is participatory (Alexander, 2001; Douglas, 2003; Voegelin, 2001).
- Order is creative (Bergson, 1944), 'living', and 'alive' and creates life (Alexander, 2001; Bergson, 1944).
- Order is regulatory (Douglas, 2003; Foucault, 2002; Lorand, 2000; Voegelin, 2001)
- Order enacts authority (Arendt, 1961; Douglas, 2003).
- Order is an emergent process (Voegelin, 2001).

On Disorder

As Lorand demonstrates, the concept of order is necessarily framed as relative to its complementary concept of disorder (2000:27-44) pointing out that order is intended to

address and mitigate disorder. Whatever the creative potential of order, the manner in which it is wielded, understood, and ultimately embodied within the world proper is a contentious matter. As Lorand (2000:37) concedesand as the hierarchies implicit in interpretations (See: Marx, Foucault) and enactments of social order (that its elements exist in a specific sequence or relationship that is regulatory and restrictive) have been made explicit in discriminatory social ordering and its resultant inequalities of power and agency. This (following Lorand, 2000:42-44) presents the problem, or more accurately, the potential solution of disorder: if order is a system that is necessarily hierarchised and stratified, then one interpretation of disorder must necessarily mean an equality of elements and an end to this inequality.

Lorand provides several philosophical and scientific examples of counterarguments to this notion and demonstrates that the binary framing of 'order/disorder' is only one of the interpretations of the 'order/disorder' continuum. Bergson's argument is that disorder does not exist, but the experience of comprehending disorder reveals the absence of "a certain order" (1944:243) or as physicists David Bohm and F. David Peat[4] describe it, the absence of a recognised order (Bohm and Peat, 1989:126 cited in Lorand 2000:37). Bergson says:

[4] A notable scientific model forwarding the nonexistence of disorder is Chaos Theory which holds that chaos and disorder do not exist but are only perceived as such when (one is) presented with conflicting and or unrecognised order(s). Bohm and Peat's example of the perception of chaos is: "The word chaotic provides a good description for the order of such movement (ocean waves as they break on rocks). Within the context of order that is visible to the eye of a close observer, this motion contains a number of sub-orders and is far from random. Nevertheless, to a more distant viewer these sub-orders become so fine that they are no longer visible to the eye and their order would be called random." (Bohm and Peate, 1989:126 quoted in Lorand 2000: 37)

> Now suppose there are two species of order, and that these two orders are two contraries within one and the same genus. Suppose also that the idea of disorder arises in our mind whenever, seeking one of the two kinds of order, we find the other.' (1944:243)

This position is echoed by philosopher Wolfgang Köhler (quoted in Arnheim, 1971:13) saying that "'[d]isorder 'is not the absence of all order but rather the clash of uncoordinated orders". These positions are only a part of the complexity of the concept of disorder as Lorand addresses it in her book, and this complexity notwithstanding, I state my position on disorder as congruent with Bergson's, holding that disorder does not exist, and the 'absence of order' that predicates this thesis is not disorder, but rather, as Voegelin (2001) suggests, the ruins of expiring orders that are increasingly irrelevant, and whose symbols are largely impotent (Douglas, 2003; Voegelin, 2001).[5]

Furthermore, imagining disorder as a redemptive counter to an order that is hierarchical and oppressive is, I suggest, a utopian ideal that is merely rhetorical in that it offers an imaginary 'other side' of the orders that exist and have existed in the world, thereby presenting a passive absolution of those existing orders. According to this logic, disorder is then resistant to human creativity and a force to which we are entirely passive, a phenomenon that lifts us out of all the "horrible order"[6] that people have created and continue to create but leaves us with nothing to do about it. It is my position that order is a potential site of design, a practice of collective agency and to abdicate responsibility for it,

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[5] Lorand (2000:15) refers to a "strong'"and "weak" order, where "[a] weak order is an order that is hard to grasp, hard to remember or recognize because it is either too complicated, rare, or too remote from the interests of the perceiver."

[6] "It is not our disorder, but our order that is horrible." George Bernard Shaw in his 1911 Introduction to Charles Dickens' *Hard Times*.

is to, as Alexander (2003:1) describes, “go on, willy-nilly creating order in the world, without knowing what it is, why we are doing it or what its significance might be.”

Crucially, the absence of the order that I evoke here is not the absence of a pre-existing order, but of one that does not yet exist. It is the absence of a new order that is embodied, participatory and generated through performance and whose hierarchies of material order are negotiated through the participatory, embodied action of symbolic order .

Design

Having framed the inciting concept of order, I proceed to further detail the study’s theoretical intersection between the fields of design and theatre and performance studies, where order is theorised as a product of a design process that uses performance as its mode, method and material. I have briefly addressed some aspects of conceptual framing in the introductory sections, and here I expand on these.

As a practical and theoretical mode, the field of design historically includes, but is not limited to, the disciplines of architectural, graphic, interior, product, industrial, service, technological, digital, management, policy and ecology design (See: Grillo, 1975; Irwin, 2015; Tonkinwise, 2015). Design is commonly understood as a process of problem-solving that uses materials (which may or may not be physically material) to create design products or ‘design solutions’ that according to design theorist Terry Irwin “...manifest in several broad categories: messages, products and artefacts, processes and built environments” (2015:5). Manzini (2015) suggests that rather than a process of “problem-solving” design is a process of “sense-making”:

> [F]ormulated in this way design becomes a producer of sense. To be more precise to the question “What does design do?” the new answer is: “It collaborates actively and proactively

> in the social construction of meaning." And therefore, also, of quality, values, and beauty. (Manzini, 2015:35)

Referring to both the process of designing and the products of that process as conceptual actions, Armand Hatchuel and Benoît Weil (2003:2) describe design as "a specific form of reasoning or rationality". Viewing design as a way of thinking is seminal to the field of design thinking (See also: Owen, 2007; Razzouk & Shute, 2012) and is one of the contemporary lenses of design that has broadened the scope of the field from multiple hermetic disciplines engaged almost exclusively in the innovation and development of enclosed systems of material form, to an emergent field of socially and philosophically reflexive research. This expanded notion of design combines theoretical and practice-based research, and is engaged in the conception, evaluation, speculation and development of not only materials, objects or products, but complex interactional social, economic, environmental, and technological systems (See: Grillo, 1975; Margolin 1989; Diani, 1992; Manzini & Rizzo, 2011; Irwin, 2015; Richter, Göbel & Grubbauer, 2017; Escobar, 2018).

Following Margolin (1995, 2005), Escobar (2018), and Manzini (2015) the increasing self-reflexivity of design has led not only to an expansion of the potential of the form, but an expansion of the field's recognition of its active relationship to the social, economic, environmental, and material systems in the world proper, and an increasing sense of responsibility for the conditions of that relationship. Moreover, as proposed by Terry Winograd and Fernando Flores, design is viewed as "ontological": "We encounter the deep questions of design when we recognise that in designing tools we are designing ways of being" (Winograd and Flores, 1986: xi cited in Escobar, 2018:110). This ontological argument is developed through an explicitly anthropological lens by Escobar, Manzini (2005), and anthropologists Caroline Gatt and Tim Ingold, who on the discourse of

generating culture say that "design does not transform the world. It is rather a part of the world transforming itself'" (Gatt & Ingold, 2013:146). Escobar's phrasing of this idea is:

> Most people would intuitively reject the idea that we humans, too, are designed in some fashion. Yet this is one of the most direct and consequential lessons of the ontological approach to design. To paraphrase, in modern societies we design ourselves. Although not under conditions of our own choosing. (Escobar, 2018:117)

Connecting the logic of "design as ontological" to "design as generative of social systems", Anne Balsamo (2011) argues that where design's identity is centred on technology, as it overwhelmingly is in the 21st century, technology cannot be viewed as a disparate series of objects, systems or gadgets but a coherent force (combining imagination and material practice) that generates a "technocultural" society (2011:4-25). Papanek says: "There are professions more harmful than industrial design, but only very few of them...Today, industrial design has put murder on a mass-production basis..." (Papanek, 1984:ix in Escobar, 2018:1). Escobar (2018:6) contends that colonialism and its development of and into modernity formed part of the 'grand design' of Western expansionism and cultural production and *inter alia* Manzini (2015), Irwin (2015) proceed from the understanding that design in the 20th and 21st centuries is inextricably connected to industrial and technological modernity under capitalism. Escobar's (2018:2) argument (referring *inter alia* to Balsamo's[7] 2011 and Manzini's 2015 positions) is that design is implicit *to* and

[7] Balsamo (2011) argues that where design's identity is centred on technology, as it overwhelmingly is in the 21st century, technology cannot be viewed as a disparate series of objects, systems or gadgets, but as a generator of culture to such an extent that culture itself becomes "technocultural" (2011:6). "It is through the exercise of their technological imaginations that people engage the materiality of the world, creating the conditions for future world-making. In the active engagement between human beings and technological elements, culture too is reworked through the development of new narratives, new myths, new rituals, new modes of expression, and new knowledges that make the innovations meaningful" (Balsamo, 2011:6-7).

complicit *with* culture, and that the West's (or the Global North's) expansionist capitalism is necessarily implicit in its design modes and methods. An applicational problem of this position, presented by Manzini, is that if design, like any profession under capitalism, is driven by capitalist incentives (and those incentives as they in turn generate culture) then it is extremely difficult to design on a large or 'social scale' outside of market-driven imperatives, and yet it is precisely this ideal of large scale, socially-oriented designing to which design for social innovation, transition design, and (positions on) participatory design aspire.

Björgvinsson *et al.* (2012), Ehn (2012), Escobar (2018), Gatt and Ingold (2013), Irwin *et al.* (2020), Kossoff (2008, 2011), and Manzini (2003, 2015) all forward the conception of design as not merely "the exclusive preserve of a class of professional experts tasked with the production of futures for the rest of us to consume" (Gatt &Ingold, 2013:144) but an emergent process of ontological participation that belongs to everyone and embodies the collective practice of everyday life and may mitigate the atomising experience of life under technocentric capitalism. In their proposal for transition design, Irwin, Tonkinwise and Kossoff (2011,2015, 2018) and Escobar (2018) highlight Ivan Illich's concept of "conviviality" (1973) which poses a socially interactive counterpoint to industrial and economic growth that foregrounds human relationality and that should "[foster] people's creative autonomy, social equity and well-being, including collective control over energy and work" (Illich, cited in Escobar, 2018:9). Manzini suggests that non-professional or what he calls "diffuse" designers (2015:37) have their own intrinsic, "ontological" design knowledge to offer the field, especially in terms of transforming the design modes of their own everyday lives and community contexts. Moreover, he reviews the intentional

framework of the participatory or co-design process and refers to it not as a "formalized process" but as "[a] vast, multifaceted conversation among individuals and groups who set design initiatives rolling at the nodes of the networks they are part of: a *social conversation* in which different actors interact in different ways" (Manzini, 2015:48-49).

Participatory design theorists Ehn (2008) and Björgvinsson *et al.* (2012) apply Bruno Latour's (1999, 2005) relationality-driven concept of "Things" as collectives of human and non-human actants to describe the shift in design's imaginative identity as a move from designing things-as-objects to Things-as-"socio-material processes" (2012:102). Following Latour's[8] (1999) reasoning that objects cannot exist outside of relationship to the human imagination, Björgvinsson *et al.* (2012) argue that whether material or non-material, the outcomes of design practice or designing can never exist as objects in and of themselves, but must necessarily be viewed as a process, the result of a relationship between, and indeed as a manifestation of human beings' symbolic imagination. Through this lens, the material space, intentional action and process of designing is viewed as a 'Thing' itself. This analysis is prefaced with the observation that the meaning of 'thing' in pre-Christian Nordic and Germanic societies referred to gatherings of people "governing assemblies, rituals, and places where disputes were resolved and political decisions made" (Björgvinsson *et al.*, 2012:102)[9]. By this definition, a 'Thing' and a design project in process is a performance.

Through this reasoning, participatory design's 'participatory identity' refers not only to the relational action between its process and participants, but to this same relational action between design object(s) and subject(s) where the design object ('Thing') itself (whether

[8] See also: Edward T Hall's corollary theory of "extension transference" from *Beyond Culture* (1979).
[9] Ehn also writes about this in his individual capacity in *Participation in Design Things* (2008).

material or non-material) once produced, exists in a state of participation (Björgvinsson *et al.*, 2012). This notion is congruent with Alexander's (2003:22) concept of 'life' in objects and buildings: "I believe such a formulation can only come from a new view of the world which intentionally sees things in their wholeness, not as parts or fragments – and which recognises "life", even in an apparently inanimate thing like a building, as something real."

This 'life' is generated by a design process, whether conscious or unconscious, human or ecological, and is a result of, and results in order.[10] Moreover, he posits that objects are alive because of the 'life' of their design. A building, a shoe, a candle, a pond, or a highway, in Alexander's terms, are alive not because of the biological life in them, but because of the 'life' of design, which is itself a form of life. My own framing here is that the existence of Alexander's 'life' is due to this very notion of participatory 'subject' and 'object' in design: the object is alive precisely because its existence is connected to human life and that life's participatory connection to all life. The basket, the dam, the sewing machine, the play, exist not as 'things' but as 'Things' that inextricably reveal the connection between human life and imagination and the material world, or the material world as a part of the human imagination.

Both Alexander's and the participatory design approach view a shift in relationship to design as a vehicle of potential social and environmental change. The transition design (*inter* alia Irwin *et al.*, 2015) perspective proposes that the contemporary understanding of design does not need to change or be replaced, but rather 'transition' into a different or

[10] Whether that order is strong or weak (in Lorand's terms) or has "more" or "less" life, in Alexander's (2003) terms, is the crux of the technical argument presented in the work. This argument, rooted in the very specific elements of form, will be touched on later within the project, but its finer points are extraneous to my own conceptual framing of order and understanding of design within the confines of this project.

new way of seeing and using design. Through Escobar (and Manzini, Ehn and Irwin *et al.*) this means shifting the lens of design from the single vision to the participatory, from the universal to the 'pluriversal', and from the singular cognitive to the collective ontological practice. This transition, from Escobar, Manzini's and Irwin *et al.*'s perspectives, suggests a movement away from capitalist imperatives, albeit without any defined political project to scaffold this ideal. However, considering Balsamo (2011), Escobar (2018), and Margolin's(1989) understanding of design practice as socio-culturally generative, their scaffolding 'political project' as it were, is framed as a speculative proposition rooted in the potential of design practice as an agent of social change. At the centre of this position is the concept of transition[11] (See: Irwin, 2015; Kossoff, 2008; Tonkinwise, 2015; Escobar, 2018; Manzini, 2015) which assumes not only that the global, contemporary moment is one of change, but that it requires active change *in order to change*. As Irwin *et al.* (2015) argue, we are living in a time of transition and 'transitioning' (as an action of design) is required for this transition to happen (Irwin *et al.*, 2015; Tonkinwise, 2015). Manzini's (2015:85-86) philosophical framing of this transition presents the idea of "designability" where under the control of "traditional society's" binding social ties, coherent traditions and collective identity, people could not make the decision to "design" their social systems (in the sense of design being a consciously motivated practice) but were subject to the collective, unconscious design of society itself. Through the process of modernity, Manzini argues, socialisation does not "subordinate the subject to the community" or "confine the individual search for happiness within the strict rules on which that community is based" (2015:84), meaning that human beings are no longer subject to collective systemic will but

[11] And is the founding concept of transition design.

"recognize themselves as *subjects*" thereby making it possible "and subsequently even mandatory, to build their own idea of well-being" and to engage with the potential "designability" of their social landscape. (Manzini, 2015:85)

Designability then, is the potential and capacity of contemporary globalised living to be (socio-culturally, politically and economically) within the conscious designing power of contemporary globalised people. But as Manzini attests, the paradox of this modernity-driven designability and its potential for collective design is hindered by the very dissolution of the collective bonds and rise of individualism that have made its existence possible. This raises the idea that for designability to be possible, collective participation itself needs to be designed or the conditions that make participation possible need to be generated or encouraged (Manzini, 2015:152). Manzini's views on the rise of individualism and modernity's absence of collectivity and coherent social traditions is congruent with the argument of my thesis, specifically where the animating principle of order is participation, and participation is a requirement of designability. Moreover, if I return to Voegelin's assertion that participation and order are interdependent, then the notion of developing 'designability' through participation is essential to generating collective, participatory embodied order in heterogenous, secularized globalised societies.

It is towards designability and its underpinnings of collective participation that design practice is directed (by Manzini, Escobar, Ehn, Irwin *et al.*. and notable standpoints of design for social innovation, participatory design, social design and transition design and design thinking) not only as an historical agent of aesthetic, industrial and socio-technical development, but as an essential contemporary custom that must be considered, applied

and wielded as a crucial social practice, and in my thinking a crucial social *performance* of the 21st century.

Performance

While the design field is at pains to extrapolate the participatory potential of design, the participatory nature of performance is most often taken for granted as a given characteristic of the practice, where, following Schechner (2020:11-13) performance exists as a result of the essential participatory relationship between the actions of "showing" and "witnessing", and this relationship, as Gay McAuley (2010:45) defines it, is necessarily "intentional" on the parts of both the performer(s) and the witness(es). Moreover, in its meaning-making and mimetic action as a practice and a mode of interpreting social life, participation is fundamental to that which is perceived as performance.

Perceiving performance as an operational force in the world proper is a seminal aspect of a progressive argument leading from Austin (1962), Goffman (1959), Butler (1988) to Fischer-Lichte (2008) where individual and socio-cultural behaviour is deemed 'performative' in that the iterations of its enactment within the continuous present brings identity into being. In constantly generating representations of personal and socio-cultural ways of being, performance can be viewed as a harbinger of culture, a 'designer' of social order. As Erica Fischer-Lichte says:

> We rather have come to understand that culture is also, if not in the first place, performance. It can hardly be overlooked to what an extent culture is brought forth as and in performances – not only in performances of the different arts but also, and foremost in performances of rituals, festivals, political rallies, sport competitions, games, fashion shows and the like – performances which, in a mediatized form, reach out to millions of people. (Fisher-Lichte, 2008:1)

Mark Fleishman (2009:117) makes the point that performance is “a process, a verb, the doing that makes performance as a noun. It is a set of practices that are embodied and belong to the domain of the non-representational”, and “as a noun constitutes a set of not so much objects, as events that includes theatre, dance, ritual, but also occasions such as political rallies, funerals and the like.”

It is important to mention here the practice of applied theatre, which broadly infers the application of theatre techniques and practices to non-theatre contexts, and specifically refers to theatre that is motivated by direct ideological, social and educational interventions in schools, prisons, awareness campaigns and marginalised community contexts (See: Prentki & Preston, 2009). Although it is not explicitly identified as such, applied theatre could potentially be theorised as theatre’s analogous version of social design. Moreover, Augusto Boal’s forum theatre also presents a significant application of theatre as a direct and practical social tool. The forum theatre approach generally dramatises a social issue that concerns the audience and thereafter engages with the audience in direct dialogue with the actors and the dramatisation as a whole. While these applications are relevant to a contextualisation of my research within the canon of theatre studies, the theoretical and practical frameworks of these forms are based in traditional dramatic narrative, where the action of drama is taken as given function that is presented through discursive rather than embodied practice.

The performance practice and approach I use in this project (as a noun and a verb) is centred on the communal body in space, with its theatrical genesis in the chorus: an ensemble mode of performance that is explicitly participatory in execution, producing a

collective identity that generates what Albert Weiner (1980:205) refers to as a “collective character” and what Jacques Lecoq (2006:111) calls “a body”.

The historical function of the chorus is a matter of debate. Several Classical drama scholars like Weiner (1980) and HDF Kitto (1956) relate the choral function specifically to Classical Greek works and interpret the chorus in essential relation to the protagonist. Hans Thies Lehmann's (1997) view is that the chorus predates the concept of the protagonist, saying:

> [I]n a certain way the space of theatre is and always has been a choral space; theatre, even as monodrama, cannot be separated from the chorus... implies a status of language defined by a multiplicity of voices, a “polylogue'”, a deconstruction of fixed meaning, a disobedience of the laws of unity and centred meaning. (Lehmann, 1997:53)

Lehmann's description here forms part of his theoretical positioning of “postdramatic” theatre, and its development out of, and away from the traditional, Western 'dramatic' form with its textual primacy, linearity of narrative and temporal logic (Lehmann, 2006). The concept of postdramatic theatre and its relationship to drama and 'the dramatic' (See also: Fuchs, 1996; Szondi, 1987) is contributory to the foundational definitions of performance theory, namely: performance, performativity and theatre[12] (See: Fischer-Lichte, 1995; Reinelt, 2002; Schechner, 2003).

Fischer-Lichte (1995:88) makes the point that “...the signs engendered by theatre denote the signs produced by the corresponding cultural systems”. Through this lens (See also: Schechner, 2003) 'theatre' clearly encompasses and enacts meanings of cultural action

[12] And the phenomenon of theatricality, on the subject of which Josette Feral says: “Theatricality produces spectacular events for the spectator; it establishes a relationship that differs from the quotidian. It is an act of representation, the construction of a fiction. As such, theatricality is the imbrication of fiction and representation in an ‘other’ space in which the observer and the observed are brought face to face.” (Feral, 2009:105)

outside of its identity as an artistic practice, although the commonly understood meaning of the term is undoubtedly centred on this interpretation, with the implication that an artistic practice is heterogenous and secular, participates in the economic landscape of market forces and urban, social entertainment, and is explicitly not a homogenous, cultural practice that dwells solely within the mandate of traditional cultural beliefs and religion (See: Schechner, 2020:5-24). Within this notion of artistic interpretation, there is significant and often complex overlap and slippage around the terms 'theatre' and 'performance', but in brief, the primary theoretical distinctions between these are focused on:

- Theatre as a textual form: an embodied appendage of dramatic literature and its associated history/Performance as driven by embodiment, or not explicitly dependent on literature or literary history (Szondi, 1987; Fuchs, 1996; Fischer-Lichte, 2008).
- Theatre's existence in direct relation to a material performance space: 'a theatre'/ Performance's existence freed from notions of a building or any specific space, or indeed material space (Fischer-Lichte, 2008; Lehmann, 1999).
- Theatre as an act or facade invoking characters and accompanying character-driven acting and narratives that together present an imaginary world which is categorically not the same world as the one inhabited by the audience/ Performance as a non-character (or narrative) driven presentation, potentially without fictional acting that presents the honest, 'real' person(as) of the performer(s) and may inhabit the same established world and space as the audience (Fischer-Lichte, 2008; Reinelt, 2002).

- Theatre embodying a specific, established relationship with an audience/ Performance embodying no specific established relationship with an audience, or indeed disturbing notions of this relationship (Fischer-Lichte, 2008).

Fleishman (2012:12) citing Willam Soutar (2000) offers a counter to these theoretical divisions, saying:

> I think the shift from theatre to performance, particularly from the perspective of the US academy, is somewhat overstated. As theatre scholar Willmar Soutar has indicated, the European academy has always accommodated a wide variety of forms within the idea of theatre both inside and outside of buildings called theatres. At least for Northern European scholars the term 'theatre' does not designate any given genre of artistic activities: "There are at least five major types of theatrical expressions, which are conventionally looked upon as theatre: spoken drama, music theatre, dance theatre, mime/pantomime,and puppet theatre. These types of theatre are not mutually exclusive." (Fleishman, 2012:12)

I present these definitions and contestations of theatre and performance to provide an outline of the discipline as an artistic practice, and to gesture towards further definitions and contestations that exist within the field. It is important to add here that ritual studies as a branch of anthropology is a vital progenitor of what is now called performance studies (Schechner: 2020:31-34) and the interdisciplinary research of Victor Turner (1977, 1982) and Richard Schechner[13] (2003, 2020) was foundational to this shift in naming and analysis.

That said, there is significant anthropological and sociological research that predates the establishment of the field of performance studies and does not use the terminology or framing of performance but nonetheless engages with the sociological and aesthetic

[13] He coined the term performance studies.

implications of the field. Fundamental here is the sociological interpretation of the body by Douglas (2003), Goffman (1959, 1963, 1971), Hall (1959), and Mauss (1935) all of whom position the body and physical relationality as central to the structure and organisation of society. Mauss begins this idea in *Techniques of the Body* (1935:70-75) with the argument that physical practices, postures and gestural communication are culturally and contextually specific, serve cultural motives, and are learned "techniques" rather than natural "ways" of using the body. He differentiates "techniques of the body" from Bourdieu's notion of "habitus" as physical actions and practices rather than an embodied enculturation (1935:74). Hall makes a similar argument in *The Silent Language* (1959) with an emphasis on cultural specificity and the significance of non-verbal communication as a pattern of culture, where "communication is culture" (1959:119-126). Particular to Hall's argument is the consideration of time and space as crucial elements of non-verbal communication (1959:165-210). [14] Further to Goffman's dramaturgical analysis of social life (1959) is his notion of how relational behaviour expressed through the body is pivotal in generating the ongoing structure of public life (1963). Douglas specifically positions the body as the symbolic custodian of collective meaning, contending that it is through the body that society represents and organises itself.[15]

In this work I refer to theatre studies, performance studies, anthropological and sociological research and am content to acknowledge the slippages within the

[14] Useful as Hall's ideas are, his research, presented in a 'popular anthropology' vein is often dated, especially as much of *The Silent Language* (1959) argument is illustrated through the context of diplomatic relations between the United States, Britain and Japan in the 1950's. I do not reference him again in the work, but outline his ideas here as significant to thinking around the sociology of the body. The outdated critique could also be levelled at Mauss's examples, but his philosophical argument is stronger and foundational to Douglas's argument in *Natural Symbols* (2003).

[15] I return to Goffman and Douglas in greater detail in Chapter Two's literature review.

'performance' conceptual sphere without making these semantic arguments the focus of my position. Accordingly, I position my understanding of theatre as an embodied artistic practice whose definition may be framed by the term performance where performance, via Fleishman, is a wide-ranging practice that:

> …involves acts of storying, sounding, moving, feeling and relating that are all embodied and constitute alternative ways of knowing that are non-representational, experimental, and potentially political, both in the sense of transforming knowledge in the academy but also as a means of creating voice in marginalised communities. (Fleishman, 2009:126)

In proposing performance practice as a mode of design, my primary application of performance is methodological, and my argument for 'using' performance as a design mode is illustrated through the structural elements of performance that are responsible for its coherence as an artistic form.

In common with material design forms and arts practices, the composition of performance practice exhibits fundamental relationships between the elements of line, space, force, tone, texture, proportion, rhythm, weight, pattern, and contrast which are foundational to the pedagogy and practice of the performance arts (See: Bogart[16], 2005; Grotowski, 2012; Laban[17], 1966, 1971; Lecoq[18], 2000). These constructional elements have

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[16] Bogart's "Viewpoints system" is described as "a spatiotemporal approach to creating and organising movement onstage" (Dennis, 2013:336) is a system of theatre and performance composition that Bogart adapted from Mary Overlie's 1970 choreographic methods and pedagogies. Bogart's nine compositional Viewpoints comprise four relating to time – "tempo, duration, kinaesthetic response and repetition; and five relating to space – shape, gesture, architecture, spatial relationships and floor pattern (also referred to as topography)" (Dennis, 2013:337).

[17] Laban's theories on movement composition, analysis and notation included several systemic methods on making and interpreting physical movement and dance. These include the eight "effort actions" of movement: float, punch, glide, slash, dab, wring, flick, and press and their interactions with the "four qualities of movements: time, weight space and flow" (Laban, 1971).

[18] Lecoq's teachings on physical theatre were strongly influenced by architecture and notions of embodying architectural forms. According to Ismael Scheffler, "Topics such as the importance of tension and contrast in different forms of visual composition, relations of attraction and grouping, the use of elements which provoke dynamics and the sensation of movement" (Scheffler, 2016:183).

similar or equivalent analogues within material design fields like architecture or graphic design, and while (for example) the application of 'tone' or 'texture' may manifest differently in performance and architecture, these compositional elements are equivalent to their practice in that they fulfil similar relational functions across different forms.

The compositional elements that are not shared across different design forms are those that define a form as itself and are specific to, and indivisible from their practice. Textile design for example is defined by fabric, architecture is defined by built environment. It seems evident that in order to design *with* a form, the operative elements specific to that form need to be defined. In Chapter Three I detail an investigation into these four elements of performance, and briefly introduce them here as mimesis, embodiment, ephemerality and agon:

- Schechner defines performance as iterative or "twice-behaved" (2020:10) and the relationship between repetition and mimesis in performance is a dialectical one that repeats and re-presents in order to present the unrepeatable. In this way, as Gunter and Gebauer (1995) argue, the mimetic action of performance (and the repetition that founds it) is generative.
- Embodiment, the quality of having, dwelling within and enacting the body as a mode of knowing (See: Merleau Ponty, 1964;Durt, 2017) is exemplified through Fischer-Lichte's view that "[a] performance comes into being by the bodily co-presence of actors and spectators, by their encounter and interaction" (2008:38) and Fleishman's assertion that forms of performance act as "ways of knowing that

proceed from the body [and] give us access to a vast range of ideas that distant and dispassionate contemplation cannot" (2009: 126).

- Ephemerality, the quality of performance that affirms its identity as specific to the present is exemplified by Phelan's avowal that "[p]erformance's only life is in the present" (1993: 146), and Fischer-Lichte's supporting argument that "performance brings forth its materiality exclusively in the present and immediately destroys it the moment it is created" (2008:76).
- The 'agon' that motivates character-driven narrative and is at the heart of the mechanics of dramatic literature exists in non-narrative performance as a quality of opposition, or what acting pedagogue Jacques Lecoq refers to as "equilibrium and disequilibrium" (2006:82) and director Robert Wilson names "counterpoint" (Wilson in Holmberg, 1996:84).The specificity of this counterpoint in terms of embodied performance is its genesis within and between people in space as a relational, ephemeral affective "frisson" or simultaneous attraction and repulsion that identifies performance as a compelling or watchable event and is causative in that it enables the event to develop.

The proposal of order as it is proposed in this dissertation is predicated on performance, where order is performed through ephemeral, mimetic and agonistic embodiment. The conceptual framing of performance provides a sociological and philosophical lens through which to interpret order and a practice through which to generate order.

A NOTE ON THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

While my conceptual framing of order is theoretically universalist, my practical investigations are concerned with a series of small projects in a specific context. In South Africa, and in Cape Town, where I conducted my research, an absence of order is concurrent with technocentric, globalised, neo-liberal (potentially post neo-liberal, see: Dennis, 2018; Hochuli *et al.*, 2021; Stiglitz, 2019) capitalist culture and the country's colonial history and ensuing system of Apartheid that was predicated on racial, cultural, linguistic and economic segregation, and whose divisive social order remains dominant in the country today (See: Christopher & Netshitenzhe, 2019; Elder, 2003; Mokgalong, 2016; Ramphele, 2008). The intentions of this project result from and exist within the ruins of that order and its political design.

The premise that the order of Apartheid can be viewed as a practice of design follows Escobar's (2018:6) contention that colonialism and its development of and into modernity formed part of the "grand design" of Western expansionism and cultural production. Escobar (2018:2) argues (referring *inter alia* to Balsamo's:[19] 2011 and Manzini's: 2015 positions) that design is implicit to and complicit with culture, and that the West's (or the Global North's) expansionist, competitive, linear, hierarchical identity is necessarily implicit in its design modes and methods.[20]

The motivating order of Apartheid's design model was centred on the separation[21] of peoples and the severance of collective embodiment. This deep order of embodied

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[19] Balsamo (2011) argues that where design's identity is centred on technology, as it overwhelmingly is in the 21st century, technology cannot be viewed as a disparate series of objects, systems, or gadgets, but as a propulsive webbed generator and shaper of culture that causes culture itself to become "technocultural" (2011:6).

[20] In his introduction to *Designs for the Pluriverse* Escobar cites Victor Papanek: "There are professions more harmful than industrial design, but only very few of them...Today, industrial design has put murder on a mass-production basis..." (Papanek, 1984:ix cited in Escobar, 2018:1)

[21] 'Apartheid' translates as 'apartness' from the Afrikaans.

dissociation or disembodiment arguably still haunts the country, or potentially *is* the country, not only in the tangible contexts of geography and economy, but at the affective level of collective relationship and the imaginative potential for new relationships.

If the histories of colonialism and Apartheid in contemporary South Africa are not only a matter of spatial, cultural, political and economic design legacies, but of embodied design legacies that are carried within us, that dwell in our 'ontological design', then performance-as-design mode is potentially a befitting mode through which to approach a new embodied, participatory and creative order that could strive towards, in Illich's terms "foster[ing] a diversity of modes of living, that would acknowledge both memory and the inheritance of the past as creation" (Illich, 2015:26-28 quoted in Escobar, 2018:9).

According to Escobar (Also: Manzini, 2015; Irwin, Kossoff, Tonkinwise, 2015, and the field of transition design more broadly) design that is participatory, non-linear, that results from and in everyday practice (Manzini & Jegou, 2003; Manzini, 2019) that is intended for the "long now",[22] for complexity, for change and being subject to change, for process, for the subject over the object, for "conviviality"[23] over "commercial imperatives, for worlds within worlds, for the 'Pluriverse'" (Escobar, 2018) is a design practice that through its principles potentially opposes, transforms, or transitions the Western, capitalist, expansionist, competitive principles that 'design' in its current iteration is heir to. To my

[22] "The long now" is a series of concepts presented through the designing and building ofthe actual Clock of the Long Now, a mechanical clock built in 1999 to keep time for 10,000 years. According to Stewart Brand in *The Clock of the Long Now: Time and Responsibility* (1999) and Irwin *et al.* in their 2015 Transition Design Monograph, the "long now" presents the notion of designing for the long term, for generations to come, and to consider the effects design in the present may have in the future and on future generations.

[23] Cited by Escobar (2018) and Irwin *et al.* (2015) and contributing to the frames of Transition Design, "conviviality is a concept presented by Ivan Illich in *Tools for Conviviality* (1973) that is presented as a counterpoint to industrial and economic growth that foregrounds human relationality and that should "[foster] people's creative autonomy, social equity and well-being, including collective control over energy and work" (Illich, cited in Escobar, 2018:9).

mind, the most important aspect of this (often utopian) thinking is the analysis of political and economic systems through the lens of design and the causative reasoning that design is not only concerned with thinking about and generating new systems, but in framing old and existing systems *as design* in order to view their structures and mechanisms *as design* and consequently offer the possibility of altering or shifting these structures and mechanisms *through design*.

In view of Voegelin, Lorand, Alexander, Douglas, and Foucault's positions, it is clear that political, economic, cultural, aesthetic, and ideological systems of order are complex and reciprocal, and any analysis of them must necessarily consider this complexity. As Douglas (2003) argues, and the Apartheid system plainly demonstrates, the order of the body and its relational, affective and symbolic capacity is a significant feature of social power, and as such, embodied order should be considered equal to the systems of political, economic, cultural, aesthetic and ideological order. The absence that motivates this thesis is then not only an absence of practice, but an absence of theory that considers the body and its relational, affective, and symbolic capacity through performance as a significant generator of social, cultural, and political systems.

In raising these ideas, I do not address this study either naively or grandiosely to the wounds of Apartheid but rather look to position the significance of the body (and consequently performance) as central to material political order and the analysis thereof. Moreover (following Escobar, Manzini, Irwin, and others) I pose that the action of identifying social systems as design processes is itself a design process that in turn 'designs' how systems are interpreted and may be shifted or altered through the framing and practice of design.

CONCLUSION

The inciting idea of this chapter perceives an absence of order in social living, where order is a participatory, embodied, symbolic, structural, creative, regulatory process with the potential to animate social meaning and enact authority. The study's philosophical contention that there is an existent absence of order is addressed by the study's methodological contention (and illustrative projects) that performance may be employed as a mode of design to generate order. Order is proposed as a matter of participation, a matter of design, (specifically participatory design) and matter of performance. Performance is proposed as a method of participatory design with its design identity located in its discipline-specific elements of mimesis (including repetition), embodiment, ephemerality, and agon. A Venn diagram of the project's motivating concepts concludes this chapter.

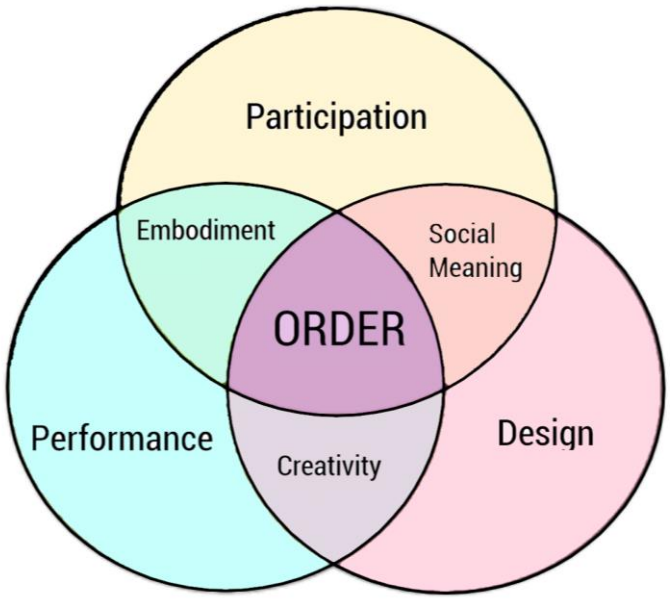

Figure 1: Motivating Concepts Venn Diagram

Chapter Two

Literature and Methodology

The body is a great reason, a multiplicity with one sense…Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, there is a mighty lord, an unknown sage – it is called Self; it dwells in your body, it is your body.

Friedrich Nietzche in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (2006:22)

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this brief review, I begin with the literature with which my research is directly conversant and move on to that which it is more broadly allied. The latter five works, Christopher Alexander's *The Nature of Order* (2002-4), Mary Douglas' *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (2003), Ezio Manzini's *Design where Everybody Designs* (2015), Schechner'*s Performance Theory* (2003), and Erving Goffman's *Behaviour in Public Places* (1963) are the literary touchstones of my research that unite the work's configuration of order, design and performance.

In terms of the literature on order, I feel that the relevant arguments from Voegelin's *Order and History* (2001), Lorand's *Aesthetic Order: A Philosophy of Order, Beauty and Art* (2000), and Bergson's *Creative Evolution* (1944) have been sufficiently outlined in the conceptual framework. These works contribute to the study's inciting argument on order, but they are little used in the methodological argument on performance and design that makes up the body of the work. Douglas' thinking on order in *Natural Symbols* (2003) has been detailed in the conceptual framework, but this chapter further details her position on

embodiment. Manzini's major positions from *Design Where Everybody Designs* (2015) have been comprehensively outlined in the conceptual framework, but here I provide a single outline of the book's through-line for the sake of continuity.

In the three case-study (or design project) chapters I engage with literature specific to the argument of each chapter. While this literature also contributes to my overarching argument, I feel that to outline these works here would encumber the clarity of the literature framing and its connection to the conceptual frame. As such, I review this literature in the introductory sections (and sometimes in the body of) of chapters 3, 4 and 5.

At the time of writing, there is no available literature (I am aware of) that explicitly cites the need for an embodied order or theorises performance as a design practice through which to generate this order. However, within the intersecting fields of participatory design, design for social innovation, transition design and design anthropology there is significant research that proposes aspects and conditions of performance (like embodied improvisation and relationality) as a mode of designing and design exploration. *Rehearsing the Future* (2010) by Joachim Halse, Eva Brandt, Brendon Clark and Thomas Binder, and *Improvisational Design Dialogue: exploring relational design encounters as means to dismantle oppression in design* (2022) by Brendon Clark and Nicholas B. Torretta provide reflections on the use of performance practices in design research, but performance (if it is explicitly referred to as such) is taken as a given tool that can be used *by* design research. The formal aspects of performance practice are not theorised or explained in any depth, so while these works relate to my research, they do not engage with a methodological

proposal where performance is not a mere tool (whose meaning and practice is taken as a given) of a design process but is itself the mode and method of the design process.

Halse and Clark's *Design Rituals and Performative Ethnography* (2008) provides an extensive theorisation of using performance in a design context. Here performance theory is positioned as an anthropological design approach and performance practice as an interpretive social and ethnographic tool referring *inter alia* to Van Gennep and Turner's arguments on ritual performance and liminality (Halse & Clark, 2008:131-132). Using the term 'design rituals' the authors compare a design workshop to a theatrical rehearsal process where a liminal space is created in which the generative world of the play/design product is experienced as a 'rite of passage' that generates the enactment of the design process. The authors further expand on the action of social performance and behavioural rituals through Goffman (2008:134) and connect his notion of 'facework' and social interaction to their case studies where performance (specifically acting in character) is used as an ethnographic tool that provides a framing of immediacy and emergence to the authors' research. Moreover, they propose the (Stanislavskian) concept of the 'suspension of disbelief' as a powerful framing through which to (potentially) generate a space of liminality in the design/ethnographic design process where belief in the reality of the everyday deferred in order to fully commit to, experience and in turn generate the "out of the ordinary" world of the design project process (2008:142).

The chapter *Designing is Performing* in *Design Things* (2011) by Binder *et al.*. proposes a significant performance as design model. Citing Geertz and Bruner, Binder *et al.*.'s argument is motivated by the idea that design "artifacts" are not simply passive objects, but results of a "processual activity" that, similarly to performance, are "activated" or

"performed" by social interaction and experience with the design artifact (2011:105). Citing Bruner: "a ritual must be enacted, a myth recited, a narrative told, a novel read, a drama performed" (Bruner in Binder *et al.*. 2011:105) the authors align the experiential 'doing' of performance with the practice and product(ion) of design. Moreover, they offer Turner's framing of ritual performance as formative, generative and preservative of culture and social relations (2011:108-109) and correlate this view with their position on design as fulfilling a similar social role:

> The fundamental mechanisms of expressing and experiencing are the same in their practical accomplishments, on the one hand, of devising a cultural performance or creating an artifact that produces and maintains a culture, and, on the other, of manipulating, acting toward, and interpreting artifacts to evoke the emergence of an object. (Binder *et al.*., 2011:109)

In theorising the defining elements of performance practice, or "characterizing design from a performance perspective" (2011:110) the authors focus on three central ideas: the first is Turner's(1982) (after van Gennep's, 2004) concept of liminality in ritual performance (and "the passing over a threshold to a new status or structure through separation, transition and incorporation") and the correlated notion of the "liminoid" experiential space as one of "set-apartness" and anti-structure that the authors pose reflects the creative space of design practice, that is, "set apart from the status quo" (Binder *et al.*.,2011:110). The second is the aforementioned notion of emotion and experience and the idea of framing design through temporal and ephemeral "experience" and the creation of this experience as "drama". The third is what they term "the performative aspects" which include "the expressive, experiential, processual, and structural aspects along with the consciousness of the acts of design" (2011:110).

Although my performance-as-design model of 'mimesis/embodiment/ephemerality/agon' differs in classification from Binder *et al.*.'s 'design-as-performance' model ('liminality/ drama/performative aspects') my thinking has much in common with theirs. They compare the notion of temporality in performance and the design process (2011:108) highlighting a similar processual development of the designed product and the performance, where temporality, ephemerality and the "traces" generated by these processes are integral to producing the products of design and performance practice (2011:108). They equate the collective, co-operative nature of the design and performance processes, suggest that the temporal, spatial and material encounter of the design process and the interaction with the designed object is experienced as a kind of ephemeral experience that is analogous to that of performance (2011:108).

Narrative and its relationship to metaphor is posed as central to performance and potentially to complex or "inspirational" design (2011:107) as is the fictional space of design and performance, a world that does not yet exist but is aimed towards through performance and design practice (2011:111). Touched on too is the emotional experience of meaning that is expressed or made available through performance (2011:110) and in the design context, this experience is encountered not only through the relationship with the design product, but with and through the process of designing.

The defining characteristic of performance not referred to directly by the authors is the one central to my thesis: that of embodiment and specifically the relational human body as the instigator and site of design. While they refer to the collective, participatory experience of "design as performance", and elsewhere in the book, they refer to embodiment[24] as an

[24] The authors also use the term 'embodiment' to mean the quality of being tangible.

element of "embodied design"[25], but this understanding of embodiment in relation to design refers to a mode of design thinking that advocates for human embodied experience to be closely considered when designing products for human use or consumption. This stance towards designing has emerged from commercial technological design[26] and design thinking, and according to Kristina Hook in *Designing with the Body* (2011) poses that (technological) design influences how we use our bodies, and in turn should itself be influenced by the body.[27]

Binder *et al.'s* (2011) Halse *et al.'s* (2010) Clarke & Torretta's (2022) and Halse & Clark's (2008) works provides an important framing for this study and the potential of performance as a mode of design. But beyond citing these works here and advancing their significance in the design-as-performance canon, I do not engage with them any further in the study, primarily because their perspectives are all from from a design background and their authors' familiarity with (specifically the practice of) performance is limited – or certainly it appears limited from my perspective, which is founded in theatre and performance practice. While my theorising shares these works' performance theory touchstones of ritual, liminality and emergence, the focus of my research is led from and by performance practice, where the form of performance, and theorising *out* of the form, rather than *about* the form, leads my thinking and the motives of the research.

Proposing order as a relational structure produced by design, Alexander's four-part work, *The Nature of Order: An Essay on the Art of Building and the Nature of the Universe*

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[25] Or, according to Hook (2011) "somasthetic interaction design".
[26] A commercial example of this field is User Experience or UX design, and an example of this is in practice is the interaction between the body (fingers) with mobile device screens (See: Hook, 2011:1-3)
[27] The available literature on embodied design does not focus on embodiment or the body itself as a site of design and is, following Hook's examples, centred on design as a solely commercial pursuit.

(2002-2004) comprising the sub-titles: *Book 1: The Phenomenon of Life, Book 2: The Process of Creating Life, Book 3: A Vision of a Living World* and *Book 4: The Luminous Ground* inspired my initial thinking and use of the terminology. Alexander's framing of order is in three parts, the first holds that order is built as an aesthetic, material system in the world proper, the second, that this material order is apprehended and generated through an affective relationship to the specifics of its formal structure and arrangement, the third, that although order is understood and recognised through a qualitative affective embodied response, the process of recognising and building order can be quantitatively methodised through an engagement with the design elements of the material form (Alexander, 2002:5-27 and 299-325).

Alexander's theory (and methodology) of recognising and building order through the built environment is the major project of *The Nature of Order* and is illustrated through numerous case studies featuring the compositional details of buildings, elements of the built and natural environments, industrial and technical objects, works of art, textiles, ceramics and prints. Although I am compelled by his theory[28], the particulars of its logic are extensive, complex and mostly particular to the composition of the built environment. His methodology then is not pertinent to my argument in and of its methods, but in its ideological proposal for a coherent concept of order based in material form that is creatively generated, "alive"[29], participatory, relational and has a powerful influence over the experience of social life and living.

[28] The mathematical proofs that substantiate it are beyond my comprehension.
[29] I have described Alexander's concept of "life" in design in the previous chapter.

Interpreting order as a cross-cultural and universally recognised phenomenon that may be generated through a unified methodology, Alexander's position is a universalist one and runs counter to the postmodern view[30] that poses the relativism of aesthetic values, forms and ideals, and explicitly rejects unifying truths and ideologies (See: *inter alia* Foucault, 2002; Grenz, 1996; Lyotard, 1984). Moreover, in terms of Alexander's own positioning of his argument in relation to the scientific method, his view on the interdependence of form, function and relational affect opposes a purely quantitative approach, or what he calls a "mechanical world picture":

> That is, a picture of a world made of atoms which whirl around in a mechanical fashion: a world in which it is assumed that all the universe is a blind mechanism…Coupled with this picture there is a larger picture of weather, climate, agriculture, animal life, society, economics, ecology, medicine, politics, administration and even family life – *all* understood in a more or less mechanical fashion. (Alexander, 2002:8)

In Alexander's view, the building of order embodies a singular, unifying purpose combined with a singular, unifying experiential understanding of the form and function of order as these are perceived and felt in terms of beauty, "life", wholeness[31] and meaning. (Alexander, 2002:36-96) He argues that the action of experiencing beauty as order is an affective consequence of the order of nature and the cosmos that we, as participants of that natural and cosmic order, form a part (2002:7-22). This philosophical argument (echoing Voegelin's and Douglas' in that it poses a participatory, universal order through and to

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[30] And Foucault's position of order in *The Order of Things* (2002).

[31] "Wholeness" according to Alexander, is a view of the world that sees everything as interconnected and indivisible, where "…the wholeness in any part of space is the structure defined by all the various coherent entities that exist in that part of space, and the way these entities are nested in and overlap each other." (Alexander, 2002:22)

which we are all generatively participative) is substantiated through the methodological theory of architecture (and mathematics) of material actions of form and function. Alexander's universalist theory is not prescriptive in terms of content and aesthetics, it does not dictate the material composition of what order in architectural design should look like, nor is it reactionary or claiming, for example, that all buildings should be Gothic. Rather, it proposes an underlying compositional and affective structure of order in terms that may be universally applied to various conditions of building.

At this point, providing a more substantial discussion of Alexander's universalist stance and contrasting it to the postmodern relativism would be a thesis in itself and dispensable to my argument. I do not have a simple, unambiguous view on Alexander's universalist position nor indeed on the position of postmodern relativism.[32] I would however like to highlight these two points from *The Nature of Order* that I think are germane to the framing of this work at this juncture.

The first is an argument Alexander makes to support the notion of a universal understanding of order using the example of a group of architects collectively designing a building. If order is simply a matter of personal opinion, each architect may want to emphasise different aspect of the building's design for aesthetic, material, structural or ideological reasons. These reasons in and of themselves may be inoffensive, even potentially co-operative (like water-saving design, for example) but without a unifying understanding of order, individual design choices will be "essentially arbitrary" and led by a process of disconnected, individual decisions that may appear superficially democratic

[32] This dialectic has been considered by many significant thinkers (See: *inter alia* Anderson, 1998; Habermas, 1981; Jameson, 1991).

and "personal" but will only result in affirming the impersonal, mechanical view of the world (Alexander, 2002:20-21). Alexander asks how this approach to building can "be responsible for anything?" (2002:7) inferring that the design process holds a position of responsibility to the experience of the group: if a mass of individuated choices driven by personal taste, politics, or any number of motivations are pursued to their logical end, their results, being only singular, cannot administer to the needs of collective.

The second point, as it pertains to my interpretation of embodied order, is that a grand, unifying methodology of order is potentially more critical to the built environment whose design products are largely permanent, fixed, durable, and (mostly) not open to change by different collectives of people. An order of the body created through performance is necessarily flexible to change, impermanent, and need only be universal for the collective of people who embody and simultaneously extinguish its transient structure.

Similar to *The Nature of Order* (2002) Douglas' anthropological work *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (2003) presents an applied theoretical model[33] framed by a universalist philosophical argument. The determining position of the book is centred on the relationship between embodiment, meaning and structure, where the body generates a symbolism of order and meaning that coheres, configures and organises society. This position and the "grid-group" model are applied as tools for sociological analysis and this analysis makes up the major discursive content of the book.

[33] The "grid and group" model that is the major theoretical product of the book describes the main types of social organisation in societies that exist in a dialectical dynamic. "Grid" refers to a social order or regulation of individual actions by an "external" force that is imposed through laws and social systems of discipline. "Group" refers to the regulation of social behaviours through relationships within the group (Douglas, 2003).

The “natural symbols” of the title refers to Douglas’ foundational idea that nature (and the cosmos) can only be “known” through symbols produced by the collective “mind” of society, proposing that all meaning is understood through an implicitly social symbolic system (Douglas, 2003:73-79). According to Douglas (2003:xxxvii) “the most readily available image of a system” is the human body, whose internal and external systems embody and mirror social systems. The body is then the signifier and signified of society, and through it, the systems of society are both mirrored and generated. This signification-generation process is dependent on collective participation and (Douglas argues that) without the collective action of the body as ritual, social systems lose their meaning and regulatory authority, in essence they become de-socialised (2003:40-79). The affect of alienation and atomisation, the ‘absence’ that begins this study is a corollary of this logic, where a society that is de-socialised, that, as Douglas argues, does not have a common commitment to a shared symbolism (2003:1-2) is an increasingly alienated one featuring an absence of participation, and an absence of the embodied systems that enable participation and indeed are themselves self-generative of those very systems.

Like Alexander, Douglas’ universalism is particular: she contends that every society uses the body as a symbolic regulator and generator of that particular society, she does not suggest that there is a single symbolic system that applies to all societies. This argument is founded on her universalist claim that humans have a “drive to achieve consonance in all levels of experience” (2003:74) where the social body produces a symbolic action that in turn regulates society and exhibits the regulations of that society (Douglas, 2003:76-80).

The absence that motivates Manzini’s premise in *Design Where Everybody Designs* (2015) is also that of collective social structure, where the need for an ontological design

culture has arisen in response to the weakening of social ties and the loss of social organisation under "modernity" (2015: 84-85). Manzini refers to social participation as central to people's "well-being" and suggests that people in 21st century globalised societies must necessarily engage in designing "well-being" through their own personal "life-projects" and "collaborative organisations" (2015:84-85). Like Douglas (2003:1-16) and Arendt (2006:94-96), Manzini raises the issue of resolving the collective determinism of (expiring) tradition with unregulated freedoms of secular individualism. Coming from the field of design, Manzini is necessarily focused on making and imagining the future, and these conceptual problems are not the philosophical conundrum they are for Douglas and Arendt, but rather a point of consideration for the designing process. For Manzini, the missing "meaning" in work and social living (2015:165-173) is a matter of design that can only be addressed if design itself is viewed and democratised as a seminal way of thinking, analysis and making. For that to happen "everyone" must view the systems of society and culture as matters of design requiring a collective design process whose implementation is of utmost significance to life and living in the 21st century.

Schechner's *Performance Theory* (2003) is a seminal work of 20th century thinking that positions performance as central to understanding and participating in the actions of society and culture. As a theatre practitioner, Schechner frames performance as a current social and aesthetic practice that involves the participation of people at all levels of social life, from play and games to theatre, ritual, sports and entertainment (2003:x-7). In this way, Schechner's view of performance is analogous to Manzini's (2015:16) view of design in that the practice is viewed as a fundamental social action that people must and do participate in, whether they know it or not, or whether they want to or not.

Further to Schechner's motivating aspects of performance outlined in the previous chapter, I highlight his notions of "boundaries", "transformation", and "efficacy" as pertinent to my framing. There is an extended discussion on the application and interpretation of boundaries throughout the book, and Schechner demonstrates that the boundaries between different categories of performance are blurred, for example theatre can be ritualistic and ritual can incorporate elements of theatre (2003:194). Moreover, contemporary performance that is not confined to a conventional theatre space or is ritualised or "invisible"[34] may exhibit blurred boundaries between what is perceived as art and what is perceived as "real life" (2003:194). These points on boundaries (and the semantic and philosophical debates around them) notwithstanding, I am compelled by Schechner's definition of theatre, ritual or game performance as *defined* by boundaries, by the special behaviours, repetitions, preparation, stated intention and separation between the world of the performance and the "real world" (2003:12-16). Although, as Schechner says, these boundaries may not be clear at all times and may need to be negotiated (2003:105-194), it is precisely these boundaries that separate performance from what we understand as everyday life (2003:13). For my thinking, the most important aspect of performance's boundedness is that it is a *conscious practice* of generating the present, relational experience of the moment. This experience is mimetic in that it manifests human behaviour in momentary, ephemeral time and simultaneously consciously designs that behaved experience. Performance grabs hold of the incomprehensible and eternally

[34] The notion of theatre that is performed outside of a conventional theatre space (for example on a street corner) and where witnesses to the event may be unaware that they are audience members or indeed that they are witnessing a performance, was conceptualised as "invisible theatre" by theatre practitioner Augusto Boal (1990).

present experience of human life and orders it into a coherent experience (or as Schechner says: “Making art is the process of transforming raw experience into palatable forms”(2003:30)). Through this logic, performance is a *practice of order* operating at the fundamental level of human society: through the human body in relation to other human bodies and their shared environment.

It is this ordering power of performance that is able to effect what Schechner calls “transformation”. In one meaning of the term, ritual performance effects a transformation, for example “a boy becomes a man”, two single people become married. In other meanings, the inner workings of performance action itself are transformative: a stage is transformed into a house, a shopping centre, a battlefield; a spoon is transformed into a sword, a young, contemporary man is transformed into an ancient 17th century king. According to Schechner, these transformations occur where real behaviour is transformed into symbolic behaviour (2003:43,108,116-117). Moreover, he says:

> Theatrical transformation appears to be of only two kinds: 1) the displacement of antisocial, injurious, disruptive behavior by ritualized gestures and displays, and 2) the invention of characters who act out fictional events or real events fictionalized by virtue of their being acted out (as in documentary theater or film or Roman-type gladiatorial games). (2003:116)

Whatever form of transformation performance may embody, significant to my research is the idea that performance generates an ordering action of transformation that is produced by and is productive of embodied symbolism. This framing of symbolic action *as transformation* recalls Douglas’ (2003) line of reasoning in *Natural Symbols* (2003) and again places the body in performance as a determining social force.

Scechner differentiates between the socially determinist force of ritual and that of artistic/entertainment theatre, contending that performance exists as a continuum

between “efficacy and entertainment” (2003:129-131) where ritual is on the most “efficacious” end of the continuum in that it embodies a cultural motive that is achieved through ritual action and is generative of the culture, whereas theatre (or aesthetic/artistic/entertainment performance) “comes into existence when a separation occurs between spectators and performance” (2003:137). In discussing this continuum, Schechner says that performance activities are “traditional in the most basic sense” (2003:13) meaning that their repeated enactment forms the social traditions of that society. If, for example, watching Premier League football is a major collective activity of a society, then playing, watching, and participating in the personal and economic drama surrounding football (the buying of players, the hiring and firings of managers and coaches) is *de facto* a tradition of that society. Schechner contends that when a member of a bounded society rejects a social ritual they necessarily reject or defy the collective, implying that participation is mandatory (2003:137). By contrast, rejecting a show or a football match (in an unbounded, globalised, secular, capitalist society) enacts no serious repercussive actions on collective or personal identity. Schechner does not take this observation to its logical conclusion and deduce that if a globalised, secular society has no binding social contracts, its performances will accordingly ask nothing of their participants, and certainly these performances will hold no sway over the personal accountability of its audience members. This line of thinking arguably demonstrates the strong “efficacy” of “performance as entertainment” i.e., through abandoning any action of collective identity, it reflects these same social imperatives and reproduces a ‘tradition’ of unbounded individualism, a tradition of absence.

Erving Goffman's *Behaviour in Public Places* (1963) builds on his idea of the dramaturgical nature of social interaction in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) and focuses specifically on social gatherings (like meetings or funerals) and the expectations, behaviours, moral and cultural codes, embodied relationalities, and psychological incentives that constitute them. Goffman's research affirms that the minutiae of embodied social behaviours[35] are significant as individual actions and more so as constituents of collective social action and order. Using the terms "organisation" and "regulation" to describe the structural composition of social gatherings, Goffman also refers directly to the notion of order and establishes the term as having various applications (as legal, political or economic order) and usages. He describes his characterisation of order as a necessary lens through which to frame his social analyses, and defines social order as:

> …the consequences of any set of moral norms that regulate the way in which a person pursues objectives. The set of norms does not specify the objectives the participants are to seek, nor the pattern formed by and through the coordination or integration of these ends, but merely the modes of seeking them. (1963:8)

Significant then is that a system that regulates modes of seeking objectives is uniform only in its systemism, in other words there is no single mode of order, there is only the regulation of 'what people want' that manifests order. Goffman goes on to say that "Any social system or any game may be viewed quite properly as an instance of social order, although the perspective of social order does not allow us to get at what is characteristically systemic about systems or what is gamelike about games" (1963:8), inferring that if (to take Goffman's example) we observe the order of a traffic system, we

[35] As well as considering embodied behaviour like posture, facial expression, gesture and use of space Goffman's (1963) analyses refer to language use, vocal gestures, dress and use of personal accessories.

observe a set of rules and regulations, we do not observe the design plan of regulating motives, for example: regulating the intention to get from one place to another, in concert with (*inter alia*) regulating the motive to speed. It is through order's "regulation of motives" that according to Goffman, "mere behaviour is transformed into a corresponding type of conduct" (1963:8).

Conduct is then the personal behaviours of individuals working in concert to generate a collective structure of embodied social relationality that in turn regulates personal behaviour. This idea, combined with Goffman's focus on the specific regulation of embodied, present relationality ("…a person's handling of himself and others during, and by virtue of, his immediate physical presence among them; what is called face-to-face or immediate interaction" 1963:8) makes a significant intersection with the thinking of my dissertation.[36] Moreover, in common with Douglas and Schechner, Goffman invokes the symbolism of the body as integral to the organisation of society, reasoning that a "common body idiom" or "vocabulary of body symbols" is collectivising and "one reason for calling an aggregate of individuals a society" (1963:35).

METHODOLOGY

The case studies (or design projects) of my dissertation are directed by a practice-led methodology executed by and through the methods of participatory design, and the tools and techniques of performance. Theoretically, the methodology is conversant with the

[36] Often particular to the geography, social and class milieu of his time, Goffman's case study analyses are extremely specific, and his motivation is expressly sociological and focused on the observable contemporary social practices of his time and not (as I have interpreted him) on the potential of social behaviour as a potential designerly or creative practice.

'practice turn' of contemporary theory, the ontological turn of design, and the Practice as Research (PaR) approach of artistic research. More specifically, design and performance practice methodologies are invoked through an intersection of participatory design and Ingold's (2013) "thinking through making".

As practice-led disciplines, design and performance both function as 'ways of knowing' that are accessed specifically through their practices. The field of 'design-thinking' makes this relationship explicit in its assertion that the creative, iterative logic of the design process and the systemic understanding of the design lens can be used as a problem-solving approach by non-designers in various contexts (See: Brown, 2009; Cross, 2001; Ehn *et al.*, 2012; Razzouk & Shute, 2012). The motivating concept of 'design thinking' is that design *is* thinking, or the practice of design is a 'way of thinking'. Escobar (2018:34) citing Paoloa Antonelli, calls this practical cognition "thinkering" or "thinking with your hands", while Hatchuel and Weil (2003) assert that: "Design is a reasoning activity" (Hatchuel & Weil cited in Razzouk & Shute, 2012:334). But what is the "reasoning" of the design process? According to Nigel Cross (2001:50) the rise of the scientific idiom[37] in the 1960's that emphasised the analytical, mechanistic empiricism[38] within the methodology of design

[37] Or as Cross calls it: "design science" (2001:52). According to Cross's definition, "design science…refers to an explicitly organised, rational and wholly systematic approach to design; not just the utilisation of scientific knowledge of artifacts, but design in some sense as a scientific activity itself" (Cross, 2001:52). He distinguishes it from "scientific design" which refers materially to "modern, industrialized design" that is "a reflection of the reality of modern design practice" (Cross, 2001:52). Cross also contrasts these definitions with "the science of design" that he defines as "that body of work which attempts to improve our understanding of design through 'scientific' (i.e. systematic, reliable) methods of investigation" (Cross, 2001:53).

[38] Following Ilpo Koskinen *et al.* (2012) this "rationalistic" design approach is characterised by the ideas of Herbert Simon who argued for design based on systems and operations analysis. "For [Simon] design became an exercise in mathematics, and the task of design research was to describe the natural and human rationalities that govern it" (Koskinen *et al.*, 2012:15).

was widely disclaimed in the 1970's by *inter alia* Alexander, whose seminal work *A Pattern Language* (1977) had been instrumental in the popularising of a "rational method of architecture and planning" (Cross 2001:50). Cross cites design theorist John Christopher Jones explanation for his repudiation of the 'design-as-science' lens: "…I reacted against design methods. I dislike the machine language, the behaviorism, the continual attempt to fix the whole of life into a logical framework" (Jones, 1977:11 cited in Cross, 2001:50). This conceptual shift away from viewing design as a "rational and wholly systematic" process (Cross, 2001:52) towards what Donald Schön (1983, also cited in Cross, 2001:54) proposes as an interdisciplinary and "reflective practice" that he describes as "an epistemology of practice implicit in the artistic, intuitive processes" applied to "situations of uncertainty, uniqueness, and value conflict". This line of reasoning blooms into the ontologicial, intuitive, participatory and non-linear design methodologies proposed by *inter alia* Björgvisson *et al.* (2012), Ehn (2008), Escobar (2018), Irwin (2015), Manzini (2015), Tonkinwise (2015), and the fields of social innovation, participatory and transition design more broadly, where Cross's 'designerly ways of knowing' are focused not only on the artificial or material world but on interdependent social practices, behaviours and communal systems.

Design as Embodiment

Despite the emergent ontological, transition(al) and participatory idiom of design, where the discipline is viewed through its possible and implicit relationship to social practice, the 'thingness' of design and its historical *raison d'être* is largely if not exclusively focused on the relationship between people and material systems. While this relationship may be embodied or employ relational embodiment (in that the people whom the design serves

exist as embodied beings) and the designed system may be designed and function in relation to the body, design (and what is termed 'embodied design') generally considers the body (and embodied self) as relational to, by, with, in, or on a site or object of design (See: Sirkin & Ju, 2014; Poulsen & Thøgersen, 2011; Wilde, Vallgårda & Tomico, 2017; Abrahamson & Lindgren, 2014). By this token, the body (and embodied self) does not itself embody or enact the site or object of design or designing. One of the primary methodological concerns of this project is the positioning of the embodied self in relation to notions of designing: by connecting the embodied locus of performance to design practice, I look to position the relational embodied self as a site and object of design and designing.

The locus of performance, as Fleishman (2009:118) contends, implicitly rejects the dualist or Cartesian model of cognition and positions the body as a site of cognition as proposed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (after Husserl's, 1965 and Nietzche's, 2006) phenomenological defence of the "primacy of perception" and his philosophy of embodiment where the conceptual basis is founded on the argument that: [The sensate body possesses] "an art of interrogating the sensible according to its own wishes, an inspired exegesis" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:135). This 'primacy of the body' idea (that Henk Borgdorff refers to as the "a priori of the body", 2012:48) is presaged by Mauss' (1979:4) "techniques of the body" argument and is exemplified in his assertion that "[M]an's most natural technical object, and at the same time technical means, is the body". The notion that the body is a tool or a method of knowing forms the animating methodological frame of this project, which positions the relational body-self as (a) designer and a site of designing. The broad methodological framing is one of practice, of 'thinking-through-making', the method employed is that of participatory design, and the modes, tools and techniques are of those

of performance. Through this thinking, the communal body or body-self-in-relation exists as the site of a systemic, participatory, performance-led design model that enacts an embodied system of relational meaning, and a methodology of embodied designing.

In performance (and ritual) theory, embodied, systemic cognition is presented by the notion of "performance as a way of knowing", a process which Jennings (1982:112) in describing ritual, calls "one of many ways in which human beings construe and construct their world", "a way of gaining knowledge", and "a mode of enquiry and discovery" (Jennings, 1982:112). Shannon Riley and Lynette Hunter more explicitly state that: "performance can be more than creative production…it can constitute intellectual inquiry and contribute new understanding and insight" (Riley & Hunter, 2009:xv) and dance theorist Maxine Sheets-Johnstone asserts that "To think is to be caught up in a dynamic flow; thinking is, by its very nature, kinetic" (Sheets-Johnstone 1999:486). Fleishman echoes the argument that performance embodies its own epistemology, and argues that it has the potential to articulate:

> a correlation between the world of places and material objects and the world of ideas and sentiments, a correlation that is achieved from the vantage point of the body-subject and through the body-mind in active engagement with the world. (Fleishman, 2012:117-118)

Practice as Research

Riley's, Hunter's, Sheets-Johnstone's, and Fleishman's positions align with the arts research methodology proposed by *inter alia* Annette Arlander (2008), Estelle Barrett & Barbara Bolt (2007), Henk Borgdorff (2012), and Baz Kershaw (2009) that is variously termed 'Practice as Research', 'Performance as Research' or 'Performance led Research'. Despite notional differences in its adjacent definitions and applications, the 'Practice/Performance as/led Research' (hereafter PaR) hypothesis holds that the processes and products of

artistic practices may act as embodiments of research, contribute vital innovation and discovery to research production, and collaborate with traditional research methods that are co-developmental to both theoretical and practice-based knowledge production (See: Barrett & Bolt, 2007; Borgdorff, 2012; Haseman, 2006; Kershaw, 2009). In his critical overview of the field *The Conflict of the Faculties: Perspectives on Artistic Research in Academia* (2012) Borgdorff presents the Aristotelian notions of the "episteme": intellectual knowledge, the "techne": practical knowledge that incorporates the making-knowledge of *poesis* and the doing-knowledge of praxis, and the techne-adjacent knowledge of "phronesis": a practical knowledge of being-in-the -world that Borgdorff (2012:47; after Polanyi, 1969) refers to as "tactit" or "implicit" knowledge.

In participatory design, it is this tacit or implicit knowledge of the participant designers that is viewed as an intrinsic tool of the design process. Binder *et al.* make this point in *Design Things* (2011:163) and posit that participants' tacit knowledge is:

> [N]ot only their formal and explicit competencies – skills as fundamental to the making of things as objects. We could also think about this as the value of being able to express and share "aesthetic experiences" in the pragmatic sense of embodied experience enforced by emotion and reflection. (Binder *et al.*., 2011:163)

While design and specifically participatory design's practice and research aligns with the notion of PaR, the cognitive research potential of design is arguably more explicit than that of artistic research, whose contemporary methodological intentions (following Borgdorff, 2012) are to extrapolate and legitimate their cognitive research potential. Whether design praxis is applied to engineering, computer programming, business management or housing, its cognitive research potential and purposes are presented as definitive: crudely put, the purpose for design is to solve problems, thus design is (successfully or unsuccessfully)

applied to problems and they are solved, partly solved, or unsolved. It is credible then to conclude that the methodological legitimacy of design and participatory design is not critical to extrapolate, because the practice of design *is* the extrapolation: design praxis is necessarily the methodology and subsequent value of design as a research and practice model.

For Borgdorff, PaR and artistic research more broadly, to extrapolate and legitimate the phenomenon of "(t)he non-conceptual knowledge embodied in art" (Borgdorff, 2012:48) is a guiding motivation of the field. In working towards asserting the "epistemic character" (Adorno, 1966 cited in Borgdorff 2012:153) of artistic research within the academy, PaR challenges the traditional notion of cognition as a solely intellectual practice. That said, Borgdorff does argue for the delineation of artmaking and art-research within the academic project, contending "that 'what artists do' cannot automatically be called research" (2012:159) and while "artistic research - as embedded in artistic and academic contexts - is the articulation of the unreflective, non-conceptual content enclosed in aesthetic experiences, enacted in creative practices, and embodied in artistic products" (Borgdorff, 2012:168) it needs to be "qualified" or complemented via traditional research methods that:

> …begi[n] with questions or issues that are relevant in the research context, and it employs methods that are appropriate to the research and which ensure the validity and reliability of those research findings. (Borgdorff, 2012:160)

The End of the Cognitive Empire

The perception that practice is validated 'through' traditional research methods is credible if the corollary is true: that traditional, cognitive research methods are validated through practice. In *The End of the Cognitive Empire* (2018) Boaventura de Sousa Santos argues that

the mind/body or theory/practice divisions are not necessarily the binary tropes forwarded by "Northern" epistemologies[39] (de Sousa Santos, 2018:5) and that through a "Southern" epistemology (comprising the cognitive abilities of embodied, ontological practice) these binaries could be interpreted as interdependent or paradoxically complementary relations. De Sousa Santos' notion of a Southern epistemology is centred on ways of knowing (as opposed to "knowledges") that are embodied by oppressed peoples in struggle against Western-centric modernity, whose ways of knowing have, under Western centric modernity (or under a Northern epistemological outlook) been rendered invisible: knowledge "which often does not even appear as knowledge in the light of the dominant epistemologies" (de Sousa Santos, 2018:2).

De Sousa Santos says that Southern "ways of knowing" "are experiential epistemologies" (2018:2) that "exist embodied in social practices…emerge and circulate in a depersonalized way" (2018:3) and are "not thought knowledges but rather lived knowledges" (2018:1). De Sousa Santos' "Southern epistemological" alternative to the Northern "'cognitive empire' of capitalism, colonialism and patriarchy" is congruent with Escobar's (2018:6) critique of expansionist Western design culture wherein he proposes that the ideological and symbolic realities of practice are equal to those of its material realities, and the cognitive logic of practice exists as a performative materiality. If, via Escobar, Western colonialism and its resultant modernity exemplifies a design praxis, then practice does not in and of

[39] According to de Sousa Santos, the basic assumptions of Western epistemologies are: "the absolute priority of science as rigorous knowledge; rigor, conceived of as determination; universalism, conceived of as a specificity of Western modernity, referring to any entity or condition the validity of which does not depend on any specific social, cultural, or political context; truth conceived of as the representation of reality; a distinction between subject and object, the knower and the known; nature as *res extensa*; linear time; the progress of science via the disciplines and specialization; and social and political neutrality as a condition of objectivity" (de Sousa Santos, 2018:6).

itself present a challenge to the Western (or Northern) epistemologies, or indeed the design expansionism of capitalism and colonialism. It is crucially then Escobar's (2018) and de Sousa Santos' (2018) companion position that the locus of Southern epistemological thinking is methodological, and the way out of capitalist, colonialist systems is not a new practice, but a new way of using or seeing practice; as de Sousa Santos puts it: "by the idea that we do not need alternatives; we need rather an alternative thinking of alternatives" (de Sousa Santos, 2018:6). This idea is congruent with Manzini's (2015) and the transition design perspective (Irwin *et al.*, 2015) where design does not need to change or be replaced, but rather 'transition' into a different or new way of seeing and using design. According to Escobar (and *inter alia* Manzini, 2015' Ehn, 2012; Irwin *et al.*, 2015) this means shifting the lens of design from the single vision to the participatory, from the universal to the 'pluriversal', and from a cognitive to an ontological practice.

Thinking through Making

Ontological practice is at the centre of anthropologist Tim Ingold's "thinking through making" methodology. In his 2013 book *Making: Anthropology, Art, Archaeology and Architecture*, Ingold (2013:25 citing Deleuze and Gauttari, 2004:450-451) proposes a materiality-led notion of practice (makers follow or intuit the flow of matter rather than bending it to their will or imagination) and a practice-led notion of thinking he names the "art of inquiry" that: "continually answers to the fluxes and flows of the materials with which we work" concluding that "materials think in us, as we think through them" (Ingold, 2013:6). In describing architecture as a "way of knowing", Ingold says:

> [A]rchitecture is not so much about as by means of buildings. It is, in short, an architecture of inquiry. Included in it are questions concerning the generation of form, the energetics of force and flow, the properties of materials, the weave and texture of surfaces, the atmospheres of

> volumes, and the dynamics of activity and of rest, of making lines and making place. (Ingold, 2013:10)

Through this logic of "that which is made is that which makes" Ingold proposes that the practice of making is itself a way of knowing that uses specific materials and forms in order to express its knowledge, and through this production of knowledge, it generates the very materials and forms that allow its knowledge to be produced. In terms of an embodied practice this would read as: if the materiality and material of performance is the body, then performance is created *from* and *through* the body and knowledge is generated *about* the relational body. As Ingold says, "The living body…is only sustained thanks to continually taking in materials from its surroundings, and in turn discharging into them, in the processes of respiration and metabolism" (Ingold, 2013:94).

In asserting that material leads practice and research, Ingold offers a methodological frame to challenge the Cartesian or purely cognitive position, arguing that it is not the mind of the designer that designs, but the mind of the designer(s) in embodied relation to the life of the material, that is led (and designed) by the material, and therefore complicit (and arguably embodied) with the material. This is a companion argument to that of the participatory relationality of designer and designed in the "thingness" hypothesis argued (via Latour) by Ehn (1993) and Björgvisson *et al.* (2012) and Alexanders "life" of design position (2002-2004). In locating design practice as both a producer and a product of the world, and an action of social and material participation, Ehn says:

> Through practice we produce the world, both the world of objects and our knowledge about this world. Practice is both action and reflection. But practice is also a social activity; it is produced in cooperation with others. However, this production of the world and our understanding of it takes place in an already existing world. The world is also a product of former practice. Hence, as part of practice, knowledge has to be understood socially – as

> producing or reproducing social processes and structures as well as being the product of them. (Ehn, 1993: 63)

The Practice Turn

Whether primarily ideological (de Sousa Santos) or methodological (Borgdorff, Ingold) the turn towards validating the logic of practice points towards (through its various fields of design, arts research and anthropology) the notion characterised by the title of de Sousa Santos' counter-imperialist epistemological work: *Another Knowledge is Possible (2007)*. Whether or not this turn implies the decline of the 'Northern' or Western epistemological model, the validation of embodied and ontological cognition aligns with the 'practice turn' in contemporary critical theory whose methodological outlook, following Michiel Leezenberg and Gerard De Vries (2018:273) is "a reaction to on the one hand structuralism and positivism, both of which were modelled on the natural sciences, and on the other hand hermeneutics and its foundations in the philosophy of consciousness". In his editorial introduction to *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* Theodore Schatzki (2001:11) points out that there is no "unified practice approach" or indeed a unified understanding of what "practices" entail, stating that:

> Most thinkers who theorize practices conceive of them, minimally, as arrays of activity. Not only, however, do their conceptions of activity and what connects activities vary, but some theorists define practices as the skills, or tacit knowledges and presuppositions, that underpin activities. (Schatzki, 2001:11)

But further asserts that:

> [P]ractice accounts are joined in the belief that such phenomena as knowledge, meaning, human activity, science, power, language, social institutions, and historical transformation occur within and are aspects or components of the field of practices. (Schatzki, 2001:12)

Schatzki's (2001)(See also: Bourdieu, 1986; Goffman,1967; Ortner, 2006) and social practice theory's notion of practice largely excludes the notion of creative or artistic practice in its view of social practice as an everyday (social) activity that has a formative relationship with the living of everyday life and cultural identity. That said, when performance itself is viewed as (an) everyday activity (through Goffman, Turner, Schechner), Sherry Ortner's (2006) seminal argument on social practice reveals the methodological identity of performance: that it is through the iterative, embodied activity of social practice that identity is daily made and re-made, and upon this act of making that society is conceived.

Viewing practice as one of conscious social design or of consciously creative (or artistic) praxis does not avoid the contentious or as yet unanswerable question of the enclosed reasoning of practice, and how it is to be extrapolated and interpreted through the language and written practice of the academe. If, as Ingold proposes, architecture is itself an architectural reasoning, is its reasoning then to be understood most closely through (as Ingold also suggests) the practice of architecture (Ingold, 2013:10)? This idea recalls the statement attributed to dancer Isadora Duncan on the meaning of a dance performance "If I could tell you what it meant, there would be no point in dancing it" (s.n.)(n.d.). If through this and Ingold's reasoning, it follows that the meaning of practice is located within the practice itself it remains debatable whether this meaning is *locked* within it. Applying de Sousa Santos' (2018:5) argument that a Southern epistemology is not the opposite or mirror of a Northern one, and assuming that through a Southern epistemological lens, practice is not the inverse of theory, but its heretofore unacknowledged self, it can be drawn that theoretical cognition is linked inextricably to an action of practice: an example

here is Ingold's (2013) notion that "writing is a practice" and exists materially as an action of "thinking as making". To follow Ingold's and de Sousa Santos' logic, assuming that the action of practice is indivisible from cognition (that without practice there is no cognition and vice versa) practice may then be said to exist simultaneously as generated by, and generative of theoretical cognition, or to use Ingold's (2013) notion of the relationality of materiality and 'making': practice and cognition make and are made 'with' one another.

Methodological Slippage

In terms of participatory design methodologies (and the emergent transition design framework) there is in my view some slippage between the notions of methodology and methods, where methods, via Tone Bratteteig *et al.* (2013) are viewed as methodological and the "tools and techniques'"of design (following Bratteteig *et al.*, 2016; Eva Brandt *et al.*, 2013) are more in keeping with the "methods" notion of sociological research. In my understanding, because design research and the action of design itself (despite its emergent participatory and transition design definitions) has largely been and continues to be a linear, commercial, primarily solutions-based or solutions-led practice, design's general methodological approach is more closely aligned to a scientific methodological model and as such, is more concrete, systematised, prescriptive and outcomes-directed than the methodological approach favoured in arts or artistic (and specifically performance) research.

I raise this point because in using performance methods to enact a design methodology, I eschew what would be considered a 'design' approach, and the broad methodological framework of my research involves simply applying a design lens to performance methods or positioning performance as a design mode and model. That said, and as I've previously

noted, participatory design theorists themselves position the notion of 'designing' against traditional prescriptive design methods, that is: not prescriptive (Brandt *et al.*, 2013), non-commercial, non-linear, that highlights process over outcome, and uses modes or practices not traditionally associated with design (Irwin *et al.*, 2015; Manzini, 2015). In outlining various models of participatory design in *The Routledge International Handbook to Participatory Design*, Brandt *et al.* (2013:146) assert that: '[p]articipatory design is today not one approach but a proliferating family of design practices that hosts many design agendas and comes with a varied set of toolboxes', and yet, as they claim, for a practice to be considered an action of participatory design, and to "act" as participatory design, it needs a coherent but not prescriptive approach to the design process (Brandt *et al.*, 2013: 149).

In light of these methodological positions, I define the participatory design approach as the research 'method' of my practice research. Through the lens of the participatory design method, I employ a dramaturgical design 'model' that comprises the 'tools' and 'techniques' of embodied performance.

METHODS

Participatory design principles are used as the foundational method of my research, and these are applied to the practice and interpretation of the project. As Brandt *et al.* (2013) affirm, design practices are specific to the context of their discipline, and as such, participatory methods are adapted to the requirements of the discipline. With this is in mind, and cognisant of the breadth and scope of the various participatory and (other

design approach) models[40] and methods, I apply the following guiding participatory design conditions to the practice and interpretation of this project:

- In the broadest sense, the design process is addressed to a use or process that is perceived as needful, cf: ‘‘Design is directly linked to the satisfaction of human needs [and] is an ‘emergent’ property of humans striving to meet their needs” (Irwin, 2015:2).
- The design process is led by and addressed to the needs and suitability of the participants (or users) of the design model (See: Ehn, 2012; Manzini, 2015; Escobar 2018). Manzini (2015:38) calls this relational context of the participatory model the “design culture”.
- The design process is participatory in that participants take an active role in shaping the design process and the applications of the design process outcomes (*inter alia*: Binder *et al.*, 2011). Brandt *et al.* (2013:147) view this collaborative process as congruent with Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger’s (1991) learning theory of “communities of practice” where the collective, relational action of the participants is the driving creative force of the design process.
- The design process may be non-linear in that the outcomes of the process may not be explicitly pre-determined, and the process itself may follow unplanned motives and experiments, and these motives and experiments may not follow an explicit rationale (Escobar, 2018; Irwin *et al.*, 2015; Manzini, 2015). Another aspect of a

[40] In design pedagogy, there is considerable research in terms of design methods or models, and how these are taught, employed, or indeed designed for educational purposes. For examples from architecture, see: Ashraf M. Salama’s body of research including *New Trends in Architectural Education: Designing the Design Studio* (1995) and *Transformative pedagogy in Architecture and Urbanism* (2009).

non-linear approach is that the design process may not produce a final designed outcome, but rather reveal what needs to be designed (Ingold, 2013; Irwin *et al.*, 2015).

- The design process is iterative and experimental in that it uses the traditional design notion of prototyping or what Björgvinsson *et al.* (2012:102) refer to as "use before actual use" and Ehn (1988) refers to as "design by doing". In the context of the project, prototyping is defined by the embodied performance tools and techniques employed in the dramaturgical design model (to be elaborated on in the following section.)
- The design process relates to and is resultant of the everyday practices of the group that it serves (Ehn, 1988; Manzini, 2015).
- The traditional sociological research methods of participant observation, group discussions and interviews are also used in the research, and in terms of participatory design, these methods form part of the ethnographic analysis, or "user-centred" methods, tools and "prototyping strategies" of a participatory design approach (See: Ehn, 1988, 2012; Björgvinsson *et al.*, 2012; Brandt *et al.*, 2013; Bødker and Pederson, 1991; Kensing and Blomberg, 1998; Koskinen *et al.*, 2012:19).

Further to these conditions, I organise the design projects of Chapters Four and Five into a preparatory 'conceptual phase' (comprising observation, interpretation and visualisation) and a 'design project in practice' phase that comprises the collective, participatory performance-as-design process. This project model is based on Kensing *et al.*'s (1998) MUST participatory design method which begins with a thorough investigation of the project's context, incorporating observational, analytical, and ethnographic research

(Kensing *et al.*, 1998:8- 13). They call this opening action "project establishment" which requires "a systematic technique supporting the clarification and negotiation of the aim, level of ambition, scope, and conditions of the project" (Kensing *et al.*, 1998:21). At the outset, I observe the motivating context of the project and determine what I perceived as the 'problem' to which the project is addressed.

In the 'interpretation' part of the 'conceptual phase', I engage in the MUST method phase of "strategic analysis" (which following Kensing *et al.*, 1998:23 may form part of the project establishment phase) whose aim is to "clarify and delimit which work domains should be in focus in the design project" and engage in "project planning" and "negotiating the conditions of the project" (Kensing *et al.*,1998:22). In this phase, I interpret the experience of the first ('observation') phase and translate the analysis of the problem from an experiential form to a more systemic design-led interpretation. Critically, in this phase I make a "problem list" (Kensing *et al.*, 1998:15) and outline my own interpretation of the absences and weaknesses of order that I perceive as constituting the problem.

In the third part of the 'conceptual phase', I translate the analysis from the 'interpretation phase' into an archetyping, imagining and 'visioning' process during which I project and envision the project's possible solutions and outcomes. According to Manzini (2015:65-67) imagining of ways of designing change is key to the identity of the design process, arguing that in a participatory or co-design process, it is important that designers do not take a merely facilitatory role, but should use their creativity to "transform their design culture into visions and proposals" (Manzini, 2015:66). This 'visualisation' part of the conceptual phase was critical to clarifying the boundaries and founding concepts of the

project for myself before I began to explore and facilitate them within the embodied, participatory practice of the project.

Dramaturgical Design Model

The dramaturgical design model I employ comprises embodied theatre and performance frameworks, tools and techniques that are used by theatre-makers and teachers in workshop, rehearsal, and classroom contexts. Arguably a 'designerly' practice, 'dramaturgy' (its multiple and complex iterations notwithstanding) is, as Synne Behrndt and Cathy Turner (2007:4) assert, an action of "composition", a practice fittingly described by the term "formgiving"[41]that Kolkinen *et al.* (2012:7 -8) use as a way of interpreting the word 'design'. Mary Luckhurst (2006:10-11) suggests that dramaturgy has two primary meanings: the first "relates to the internal structure of a play text and is concerned with the arrangement of formal elements by the playwright", and the second to the "external elements relating to staging, the overall artistic concept behind the staging, the politics of performance, and the calculated manipulation of audience responses".

In her editorial introduction to *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*, Magda Romanska (2016:1) says: "originally, dramatourgos simply meant someone who was able to arrange various dramatic actions in a meaningful and comprehensive order". Romanska goes on to outline the historical etymologies and implications of dramaturgy from its Greek origins of a practice resembling playwriting to the 18th century German notion of "someone who assisted the playwright" in working on the dramatic form, to Brecht's notion of

[41] Following Kolkinen *et al.* (2012:7-8) the word 'formgiving' is a synonym or equivalent of the English word 'design' in several European languages. The actual word 'formgiving' is a direct translation into English from these languages. As Kolkinen at al (2012:7-8) assert, "Germanic languages usually have separate words for planning and formgiving, including German *Gestaltung* and *Formgebung*, and also the more general *Entwurf* (verb *entwerfen*), Dutch *ontwerpen*, and Swedish *formgivning*" (Kolkinen *et al.*, 2012:12).

dramaturgy as a vehicle to connect the play to the social and historical mores of its social and temporal context, to Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical lens of social life to dramaturgy's postdramatic application as a tool for social interpretation and performance practice (Romanska, 2016:2 - 5).

In practical application, dramaturgy's meaning in a contemporary (primarily European and American) context exists in relation to the profession of a 'dramaturg' whose traditional work, following Bert Cardullo is:

> (1) to select and prepare playtexts for performance; (2) to advise directors and actors; and (3) to educate the audience. To fulfill these duties, dramaturgs serve as script readers, translators, theatre historians, play adaptors or even playwrights, directorial assistants or sometimes apprentice directors, critics of works-in-progress, and talent scouts (Cardullo, 1995:3-4).

While Cardullo's definition of dramaturgy highlights the written play-text, my thinking follows a broader view of the practice espoused by *inter alia* Turner & Behrndt (2007:6) where the 'text' of dramaturgy is not solely a written form, but one that may be centred on embodied performance. As Fleishman has observed (comment at UCT seminar, n.d.) there is no nominated 'professional dramaturgy' in South Africa, and yet many South African theatre professionals often take on the multiple 'theatre-making' roles at once, taking charge of their production's directing, writing, acting, lighting, sound production, marketing, logistics, theatre administration and social research. This generalist (as opposed to a highly and discretely specialised) approach is arguably a result of the economic precarity of the South African theatre industry, and in my experience, generates a 'culture of dramaturgy', that is relative to both the action and perception of theatre and performance as an artistic practice.

In light of my belonging to what I consider the South African dramaturgical culture of theatre production and considering the lack of consensus[42] around the multiple and "contested" meanings of the term (Luckhurst, 2006:11), I position my own view of dramaturgy as an expanded metaphor and interpretive application of the formal-material and social-relational elements of theatre and performance practice. That this metaphor is applied to so many diverse aspects of performance-making and analysis (and indeed diverse fields not connected to artistic performance[43]) speaks to me of the interpretive possibility that the concept offers.

In drawing connections between visual art and performance, Shannon Jackson (2011:2) gestures to the relationship between curation and dramaturgy, and following her argument, it seems a reasonable conclusion that dramaturgy is indeed the performance mirror of curation, and while it is arguably not as popular a lens as curation in the contemporary moment[44], both terms are applied concepts from previously hermetic artistic fields, and both act as compositional, organisational and systemic modes of thinking and practice, and are accordingly exemplary of what could be considered a 'design lens' or indeed a 'design-led' approach to arts practice and research.

The foundation of my own dramaturgical practice is a result of my training in theatre-making (at what was UCT's conservatoire-style theatre school in the early 2000's) my own

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42 Turner & Behrndt, 2007; Luckhurst, 2006.

43 Some examples of the dramaturgical frame applied to: film (Potter, 2016), globalism (Sellar, 2016), digital marketing (Grove and Fisk,1983), psychology (Zillmann, 2013), management consultancy (Clark and Salaman: 1998).

44 See Alex Williams (2009) article: "On the Tip of Creative Tongues" in the *New York Times* on the mainstream usage of the curation concept and associated terms curate and curatorial. Also, by using the *Google Books* "Ngram Viewer" graph comparing the usage of the terms 'curation' and 'dramaturgy,' the increase in usage of both terms is clear between 2010 and 2019. After 2014, the popularity of curation continues rising and 'dramaturgy' begins to level off.

arts practice and career as a playwright, actor and director, and my dramaturgical work as the resident 'literary consultant' for the Artscape Theatre Centre's *New Writing Programme* from 2010 to 2013, during which time I read and edited play submissions, advised writers on their plays, and considered the social and market relevance of these plays for staging. In practice, the dramaturgical model I employ reflects on Fleishman's (2012:42) description of his dramaturgical approach as "part pedagogical, part facilitatory, and part authorial. It involves the employment of particular tools and methods in acts of gathering, generating, guiding, advising and shaping". The project's dramaturgical model entails the conception and interpretation of relational embodied performance and its corresponding tools and techniques comprising the 'performance-specific' design elements of embodiment, ephemerality, mimesis and agonism or 'drama', and the 'performance non-specific' elements of line, space, force tone, texture, proportion, rhythm, weight, pattern and contrast.

Improvisation through the method of performance shapes the primary design approach of the project. I took two improvisational approaches: experience and experiment. The experience approach, as the name suggests, is explorative rather than generative: in these sessions I had an idea of what I wanted the group to explore, but I didn't want to explicitly state my intentions or instruct the group to follow my idea. Instead, I offered improvisations that I hoped would lead them (at least in part) to discover what it was I wanted to explore. This technique is one I learned as a student from Mark Fleishman's theatre-making pedagogy and think of as a 'leading question' improvisation. In some cases, the intention of a 'leading question' improvisation may be clear to the participants, but it is through embodied improvisation that they come to experience rather than simply perceive

the idea they are exploring. The second improvisational approach is a generative one with an explicitly stated motive to create a performance action directly related to the concept of the improvisation.

For each experience and experiment, I describe the improvisation's details, results, and group discussions. This is followed by an analysis.

Project 1

The introductory project (Chapter Three) investigates the development of my dramaturgical approach from a theatre-making practice to a design-focused practice. In this project, the participatory design method is used as a reflective lens rather than a driver of practice, and consequently the chapter outlines the study of a performance process through the lens of design rather than as an intentional design-led process. The study itself reflects on a series of rehearsal processes (between August 2018 and February 2020) of my play *Woolworths* (Jenkin, 2018) a choral satire on South African middle-class identity and aesthetics.

Project 2

Project 2 (Chapter Four) is an explicitly design-led process that takes place in a classroom context over a 6-week term at UCT's Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies (CTDPS). The project investigates an absence of order and associated authority in the structure of the event of the class. The dramaturgical model is employed, and critically the experiments are framed from the outset as participatory design experiments. In these experiments, my role in the work is prefaced (to myself and the participants) as that of a designer.

Project 3

The final project (Chapter Five) is a design-led 'workshop' process involving UCT students in a non-syllabus context and is aimed at negotiating an order of consent around physical touch and proximity in theatre and performance practice. As outlined in the introduction, the participant incentive that drove this workshop series arose from a Gender Based Violence (GBV) discussion series held by the CTDPS in the wake of the rape and murder of UCT student, Uyinene Mrwetyana (Lyster, 2019; Meyer, 2019), and student calls for policy change, open discussion on GBV and increased safety for women[45] on campus. The workshop looks to explore workable solutions to address these issues within practice-based classes, with the overarching intention of applying the discoveries from the workshop to broader systemic approach within the centre's classroom practice. The workshop is framed as a participatory design process.

CONCLUSION

It should be clear that the philosophical intentions of the project are distinctly methodological. The methodological framing of the research is founded in the thinking of Practice as Research (PaR), Ingold's "thinking through making", and the ontological turn of design. Participatory design provides the method and practice-lens, and the "dramaturgical design model" comprising the tools and techniques of embodied, collective performance enacts the mode and action of the design process.

Michael Muller and Alison Druin (2012:2 citing Homi K. Bhaba, 1994) pose that the action of participatory design and designing can create Bhaba's (1994) notion of a "third

[45] These were held in September of 2019. Following the students' wishes, the discussions were divided into two groups: male (and male identifying) students and female (and female identifying) students.

space" where the emphasis of the concept is centred on hybridity and "hybrid experiences" (Muller and Druin, 2012:2). Following this analogy, the participatory design space has the potential to create "a fertile environment in which participants can combine diverse knowledges into new insights and plans for action" (Muller and Druin, 2012:2). It is towards hybridity, towards a merging of the congenial but seldom aligned practices of performance and design, that the methodological aims of this project are directed, and it is within the space of this hybrid action, that the project (following Brand *et al.*., 2013:149) seeks to simultaneously draw on and transform the everyday practices of the participants, whose own practices of performance and design are at the centre of a practice-led, participatory methodology.

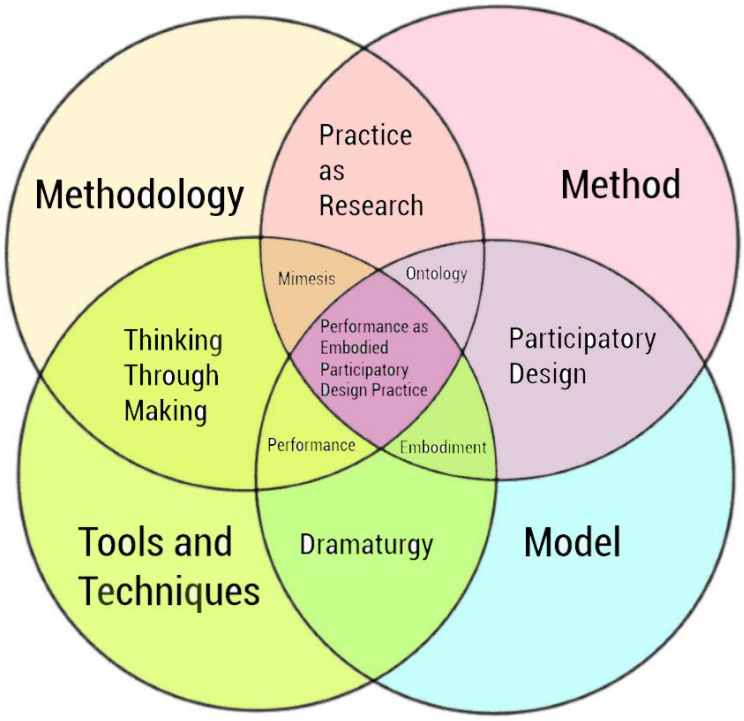

Figure 2: Methodology Venn Diagram

Chapter Three

Order and Chorus

The drawing of symbolic lines and boundaries is a way of bringing order into experience. Such nonverbal symbols are capable of creating a structure of meanings in which individuals can relate to one another and realise their own ultimate purposes.

Mary Douglas in *Natural Symbols* (2003:53)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as an exegesis and exemplar for the design projects of chapters 4 and 5. Through it, I trace my re-framing of performance from a theatre to a design application and detail the logic of my proposals for the performance-as-design elements of mimesis, embodiment ephemerality and agon. I developed my thinking around the design possibilities of performance through my performance practice and research, specifically the rehearsal processes of *Woolworths* (2018) a theatrical work I wrote and directed as part of my master's research in Theatre and Performance at UCT[46] and have since rehearsed and produced in various commercial theatre contexts since the completion of that degree. Performed by a cast of seven, *Woolworths* is a choral satire on middle-classness in South Africa. The play has no unified narrative or character arcs, employs no set or props. The world of the play is presented entirely through the voice and body and the performers remain onstage for the duration of the play. I developed the foundational

[46] *Woolworths* was first performed as part of my coursework MA in Theatre and Performance at the Arena Theatre, UCT on December 3rd, 2017.

writerly, directorial and choreographic choices for the play over the course of my MA, and when the play went into commercial production in 2018, I scripted four additional scenes, and together the cast, revised and re-imagined significant elements of the choreography. I wrote the script prior to the start of rehearsals, but the staging of the play was collectively developed through the rehearsal process which I directed and facilitated with varying emphases on authoritarian directing and collective facilitating. It is also worth mentioning that I was the production manager, stage manager and (sometime) lighting operator for the show, so I was involved with and bore witness to every aspect of the rehearsal and performance process.

This chapter is concerned with four *Woolworths* production runs and rehearsal processes that took place between mid-2018 and early 2020: at the South African *National Arts Festival* in Makhanda (June/July, 2018), the *Theatre Arts Collective* in Cape Town (August/September of 2018), *Woordfees* in Stellenbosch (February/March 2019), and *The Courtyard Playhouse* in Cape Town (February/March, 2020). The chapter outlines the function and significance of the chorus and its relationship to order and the order of performance. The design lens of performance is then presented through an introduction of the potential 'productivity' of performance. From there, in four discrete sections, *Woolworths* is used as an illustrative investigation of the performance-as-design actions of (repetition and) mimesis, embodiment, ephemerality, and agon.

Order and Chorus

In terms of the theatrical idiom of *Woolworths,* a chorus is defined as a group whose collective intention is expressed through its collective, relational embodied structure. The chorus expresses no designated or unified character arcs, does not forward a unity of

causational plot and embodies what Albert Weiner (1980:205) calls a "collective character" and Jacques Lecoq (2006:111) refers to as "a collective body". Debate on the dramatic identity of the chorus notwithstanding, the chorus as I use it here is a group made up of individuals whose identity is simultaneously plural and singular. In this chapter, the chorus refers not only to a collective theatrical identity as it exists in the fictive world of the play, but also to the choral identity that extends into the group of actors who make up and perform the part/s of the fictive chorus.

Expanding the action of the chorus from a theatrical to a social context is central to the argument of this chapter and the arguments I make for thinking about and ultimately employing performance as a mode of design. The four performance-as-design elements detailed in the chapter are generated by and through the chorus and should be viewed as interdependent. For the sake of clarity, I present them here as discrete elements, while proposing from the outset that it is not only the specific defining features of mimesis (incorporating repetition), embodiment, ephemerality, and agon themselves, but their defining reciprocal relationship that identifies them collectively as the locus of performance-specific designing.

As Lehmann (2006:129-131) and Lecoq (2000:133 -141) maintain, the chorus exists in an implicit state of participation in its foundational action as a mode of performance and consequent actions as a mirror of the audience and a mimetic mirror of the relationship between the individual and society. The participative nature of the chorus is not only generated by mimesis, embodiment, ephemerality, and agon, but generates these elements. These elements are themselves actions of the chorus, and actions of the world of the choral

performance, i.e., it is through the chorus that they enact the structure and world of the play.

As I have previously argued, performance *is* participation. In this chapter, I particularise this position as choral performance, where the participative potential is especially high. Since a chorus is not separated into a hierarchy of characters or divided by a hierarchy of narratives, the participation of the performing group is at its most mutually dependent and mutually generative. There is clearly a greater degree of participation between the performers in a production where the chorus is a cohesive organism that generates the world of the play than in a production of *Hamlet* where different actors are playing entirely discrete characters and following discrete narrative arcs, both of which have defined hierarchies. [47]

Choral performance is a fundamental practice of participation in that through it, participants not only initiate, experience and apprehend participation, but 'become' participation. As I suggested in the previous chapter, the order of performance is generated through what Schechner calls its "boundaries" which define performance and distinguish it from everyday life. It is fair to say that all theatrical performance exhibits and enacts structure, whether it is a specifically choral work or a narrative and character-driven, realist drama. Schechner's (2020:13) position is that theatre, no matter its type, has "rules" like the rules of games and sports: "Special rules exist, are formulated, and persist because these activities are something apart from everyday life. A special world is created where people can make the rules, rearrange time, assign value to things, and work for pleasure".

[47] The performer playing Hamlet arguably experiences a greater level of participation in the production of *Hamlet* than the performer playing Second Gravedigger.

The idea that the rules governing the world of the play exist outside of the rules of everyday life is in dialectical relationship to the idea that the rules of the world of the play exist in vital relationship to everyday life: "This 'special world' is not gratuitous but a vital part of human life. No society, no individual, can do without it" (Schechner, 2020: 13).

Performance then generates and maintains an order that regulates and defines its boundaries (which are specific to the structure of different performances/productions of performance). If participation is fundamental to performance, and as Voegelin (2001) argues, fundamental to order, then I propose that performance (comprising its defining elements) is productive of order. This order, as produced by and of performance, is necessarily embodied, mimetic, agonistic, and ephemeral. As Schechner says, the structure of performance is specific to the world of the performance, but its rules, boundaries, agreements and significantly its symbols have the potential, as Schechner (2020) argues, to transform, carry over and influence the social world that produces, participates in and bears witness to that performance.

The significance of the reciprocal relationship between the order of performance (as ritual, theatre, games, and play) and the order of social life is a widely held anthropological position that also positions "ritual action" as causative: "That to which the ritual action corresponds is not some discrete and immutable state of affairs but 'world in act'. The ritual does not simply mirror but intends to transform this world in act (Jennings, 1982: 120)". This position is analogous to Douglas's notion which proposes "the body is a symbolic medium which is used to express particular patterns of social relations" (1970:xiii imprint of *Natural Symbols*) and her argument that "ritual forms, like speech forms are transmitters of culture, which are generated in social relations and which, by their

selections and emphases, exercise a constraining effect on social behaviour" (Douglas, 2003:23). Wulf echoes this 'carrying over' of the order the performance to the order of the social, saying that "mimetic, ritual and imaginative movements of repetitions play an indispensable role in the production and transformation of individuals and communities. They are essential for the creation of social life" (Wulf, 2020:87).

If the order of performance is a causative embodied order, it simultaneously expresses an order that is specific to its particular content and context *and* one that is applicable to the general practice of performance itself. Moreover, the embodied order of performance (that comprises the particular and the general order of the form) is internal to the practice and enacts an order that is external to the practice. This chapter aims to articulate the interdependent performance-as-design constituents that build the order of performance, and to offer them through as potential actions of design, not only in their particularity to the internal order of performance, but to their forging of the causative relationship between the internal order of performance and the external order of performance – or the order that performance causes.

The causative action of performance or 'what performance causes' leads to the next foundational concept of the chapter, that of 'productivity'. Historically, the practice of design has been materially productive, and its ambitions centred on the production of material objects, structures, and processes. Following Margolin (2002:4) and Dilnot (2015:116) this productivity is inextricably linked with industrial capitalism. The material productivity of performance is, according to Schechner (2004) nil, and he characterises the non-productivity of performance as one of its defining features (2004:8) and compares this non-productivity with "the 'ordinary' activities of productive work" (2004:13). I concur

with Schechner's position that performance is not productive in terms of material 'things' (and I discuss this in more detail in the later section on ephemerality) but I am interested in the fundamental relationship of productivity to design as a way of thinking of the design potential of performance, where the defining elements of performance (as performance) are productive of order.

(Repetition) and Mimesis[48]

Introducing the Concepts

The idea that repetition is a dialectical condition of living that is at once impossible to achieve and upon its achievement creates or has the potential to create a difference from that which is repeated is introduced by Søren Kierkegaard in *Repetition* (2009) where he presents repetition as a philosophical frame unto itself and a crucial lens for interpreting the world. He establishes repetition's productivity in comparison with recollection, which he posits as un-generative or unable to produce newness or "the future", saying that "Repetition and recollection are the same movement, just in opposite directions, because what is recollected has already been and is thus repeated backwards, whereas genuine

[48]It is important to position my usage of mimesis and its rationale of imitation over that of poesis and its rationale of creation. In Oded Balaban's (1990) analysis of Aristotle's notion of poesis, he compares poesis to the concept of praxis (where the end is the activity) and argues that poesis "refers to an activity whose end is different from the activity itself" (1990:186). Balaban further contends that poesis is a compulsory creative action, that "the activity of poesis is not desired for its own sake; for if the end could be achieved without it, the teleologically minded subject would have no objection to dispensing with it. This means that poesis is a compulsory activity; and a compulsory activity (as is labor in the strict sense of being poesis) should be avoided whenever possible, although without also forfeiting the end for which it had been undertaken. This activity therefore has no intrinsic value; only the end gives it significance" (1990:186). Following Ricoeur and others, because mimetic action is itself the 'making' of the end, mimesis cannot, via Balaban, ever avoid its own activity, and because mimesis (following Ricoeur (1984), Deleuze (1994), Gebauer and Wulf (1995)) manifests difference and newness through its action of imitation and representation. Mimesis is an action of creation, and I am content to take the position that whatever poesis may be, the re-productivity of mimesis places it, for my purposes as an action of creation.

repetition is recollected forwards" (Kierkegaard, 2009:xiii). "Forward recollection" is the futurising action of repetition, an action that manifests sameness and forgetting of sameness, an amnesiac creativity that is arguably creativity itself: doing the same and making different. Deleuze explores the paradoxical creative power of repetition in *Difference and Repetition* (1994) saying that: "to repeat is to behave in a certain manner, but in relation to something unique or singular which has no equal or equivalent. And perhaps this repetition at the level of external conduct echoes, for its own part, a more secret vibration which animates it, a more profound, internal repetition within the singular" (1994:1).

The reconciliation of art and reality through repetition is the cog of mimesis – the fundamental theory of Aristotelean aesthetics notably theorised by Derrida in *Economimesis* (1981), René Girard in *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (1987), Paul Ricoeur in *Time and Narrative* (1984), Erich Auerbach in *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (2003), and Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf in *Mimesis: Culture, Art, Society* (1995). Classicist Stephen Halliwell (2002:152) asserts that mimesis is "not a wholly unified concept" and does not have a "single, literal meaning" but is rather "a rich locus of aesthetic issues relating to the status, significance, and effects of several types of artistic representation". Rich, complex and un-unified as this locus is, the meaning of mimesis is inextricable from the meanings and actions of repetition, representation and imitation. Mimesis is unarguably produced through the action of imitation and generates 'another' imitation that diverges from that which is imitated. From this germinal concept of Aristotle's Poetics, mimesis is interpreted as the foundation and maker of drama: "Tragedy is an imitation of action" or "the imitation of

action is the plot" (Aristotle via Ricoeur, 1984:34) and viewed as fundamental to the motivation of artmaking. In *Time and Narrative* (1984) Ricoeur's discourse on the *Poetics* applies the meaning and applications of mimesis from a concept expressed primarily in relation to drama (or tragedy)[49] to one that relates to the cultural notion of narrative and the narrative of cultures, where mimesis, in generating the narrative that represents the cultural genesis of its representation, succeeds in generating the narrative of that genesis culture. Useful to the trajectory of mimesis as it is understood here is Ricoeur's assertion that mimesis needs to be understood as an "operation" not as a "structure" (1984:33) through which the "making" of mimesis constitutes its action:

> Whether we say "imitation" or "representation"...what has to be understood is the mimetic activity, the active process of imitating or representing something. Imitation or representation, therefore, must be understood in the dynamic sense of making a representation, of a transposition into representative works. (Ricoeur, 1984:33)

The generative 'verb-tense' aspect of mimesis is described in its cultural and social guise by Gebauer and Wulf in what they call the "performative" or "action character" of mimesis where the mimetic moment, calling forth its "indicative action" conveys a specific indication that is performed through the relational act of communication (Gebauer and Wulf, 1995:5). Moreover, they emphasise the formative power of mimesis in the making of self, culture and society, saying: "Mimesis has a part in our symbolization of the world and in processes of simulation" (1995:2). Invoking Theodore Adorno's assertion in *Minima Moralia* that "[t]he human is indissolubly linked with imitation: a human being becomes a

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[49] On Aristotle's contextual use of mimesis, Ricoeur says "Still it is the imitation or representation of the action proper to tragedy, comedy, and epic that alone is taken into account. This is not yet defined in a form proper to its level of generality. Only the imitation or representation of action proper to tragedy is expressly defined" (1984:33).

human at all by imitating other human beings"(Adorno, 1978:154 cited in Gebabuer and Wulf, 1995:286). Gebauer and Wulf expand on the integral mimetic identity of human beings, arguing that mimesis is a practice-of-being through which "[t]he individual 'assimilates' himself or herself into the world" (1995:2). It is through this mimetic lens of the relational-generative self-family-culture-society, and the artistic production of society that Gebauer and Wulf present mimesis as:

> [A] highly complex structure in which an entire range of conditions coincide...a theoretical and practical bearing toward the world; [mimesis] encompasses cognition and action, symbolic systems and communications media, relationships between I and Other…

Affirming that:

> the relevance of mimesis is not restricted to the aesthetic, that its effects press outward into the social world, taking root, ...in individual behaviour like a contagion. (1995:309)

This reciprocal determinism[50] of mimetic processes is, as Wulf argues in *The Movement of Repetition: Incorporation through Mimetic, Ritual and Imaginative Movements* (2020) achieved through and as a result of the action of repetition. From the biological perspective of the repetition of breathing, eating, drinking as fundamental to humans' biological existence, Wulf poses that the repetition of rhythms and symbols are fundamental to human social existence: "Human beings develop their existence and knowledge through cultural learning. This learning, education and human development take place essentially through mimetic processes, for which repetitions are constitutive" (Wulf, 2020:87).

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[50] "Reciprocal causation", a term from evolutionary biology, holds that developing organisms simultaneously influence and are influenced by evolutionary processes. An analogous term from the Humanities is "reciprocal determinism", forwarded by psychologist Albert Bandura in *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory* (1986) that presents an individual's psychology as influenced by and an influence on their psycho-social environment.

In thinking about performance as a mode of design, it is important to note that repetition is implicit not only to design practice but to the identity of design itself. Ingold's (2013) notion of materiality-led design[51] notwithstanding, design implies replication. Whether rendered as pattern, strategy or plan, and through whatever form it is articulated, the motivation of the design-action is to achieve the repetition of the idea or concept from an conceptual space to a tangible product, process or object, repeating the conceptual into the material, or as Dilnot (2015:116) suggests[52] "to over[come] at least in appearance, the subject–object split at the level of objects". This "overcoming", the synthesis of subject with object, or design user with designed object is itself a form of repetition where Dilnot suggests that:

> The object is the substitute for ourselves "and an extension of ourselves," not only in almost physiological projection from our bodily conditions (as we can read a chair as a mimetic projection and externalization of the spine) but also as a projection, even more fundamentally, of our awareness of the conditions of our sentient existence as a whole. (Dilnot, 1993:56).

This notion, concurrent with the participatory design principle referenced earlier via Ehn (2012) maintains that that the designed "Thing" exists not separately but as a part of embodied human imagination or indeed the imagined human body, and is a repetition or a mimetic action of this embodied imaginarium.

The clearest example of performance's productivity resides in its action of repetition and mimesis. In theatre and performance practice, the constitutive action of repetition that

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[51] "[E]ven if the maker has a form in mind, it is not this form that creates the work. It is the engagement with materials. And it is therefore to this engagement that we must attend if we are to understand how things are made" (Ingold, 2013:22).

[52] As part of his argument on the genesis of design from industrial capitalism (Dilnot, 2015:116).

drives and is driven by mimesis results in the material and cultural production of the form. If repetition, as Wulf (2020) says, is constitutive of mimesis, then it is useful here to present the frames I use to distinguish between mimesis and repetition in *Woolworths*. Repetition is viewed as primarily a material action 'interior' to the performance practice and is generated by and through rehearsal. It covers the formal, functional aspects of performance-making through the collective action(s) of body, voice, text and space. Mimesis is primarily viewed as a symbolic 'exterior' action that performance generates as 'a production', and results in how that production is received and interpreted. These distinctions assume mimesis as the overarching symbolic (or ideological) action that incorporates the material action of repetition.

Repetition

As Schechner observes with his concepts of "restored" or "twice behaved behaviour" (1985:3-150) theatrical performance is produced by and exists as an act of repetition. A rehearsal process[53], at its most foundational is a process of using repetition as a mode of production, i.e., it is through the process of rehearsals that a play is produced. Through attempting to reproduce a production over and over with a great(er) degree of consistent replicability, performance succeeds in creating a product that (following Phelan, 2003) is unreproducible.

[53] Not all performance requires or makes use of a rehearsal process, and there are many examples of performance art (or latterly, 'live art') that specifically avoid a rehearsal process or are predicated on being unrehearsed and whose performances are not repeated. (For works of 'live art,' see *inter alia* Marina Abromović's *Lips of Thomas,* 1975; for theory on live art, see: *inter alia* Adrian Heathfield and Hugo Glendinning's *Live: Art and Performance*, 2004). The context of the *Woolworths* process and the theatre idiom which comprises it, assumes a series, rather than a single performance, and the necessity of a rehearsal process to create and prepare for these performances.

The intensity of repetition in the *Woolworths* rehearsal process in terms of the number of rehearsals, rehearsal periods and the internal repetition of the blocking[54] within each rehearsal was immense. For the cast and me, rehearsing *Woolworths* was by far the most repetitious rehearsal process of any of our experience.[55] The choreography involved a series of repeating choreographic patterns[56] and the text was framed by 'call-and-response' declamations and reprising series' of repeated phrases and speech rhythms.[57] It often felt like the rehearsal process existed as world of constant and unrelenting repetition that imprinted itself upon the air around us, until it seemed to me that the rehearsal space and the architectural dimensions of the room had themselves become part of the chorus.

In his analysis of the chorus, Lehmann suggests that the identity of the chorus itself is led by productive repetition in the repetition of individuals creating a new single entity:

> The chorus raises a voice in whose sound waves the individual voice does not disappear entirely but it also no longer participates in its unadulterated peculiarity, instead becoming a sonic element in a new choral voice that has uncannily taken on a life of its own, neither individual nor only abstractly collective. (Lehmann, 2006:130)

Moreover, the repetition of the choral 'voice' is clearly expressed through the repetition by the individual chorus members collectively repeating the same phrases and gestures. Kierkegaard's (cited in Deleuze, 1994:25) “reconciliation of the general with the singular” exemplifies the paradox of repetition, where the same makes different and the many make one. In moving and speaking together, the chorus of separate performers embody one

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[54] The choreography or 'moves' of the play.

[55] By making *Woolworths* the subject of this statement, I clearly leave out my own agency over the process: I was the director of the work, and it was I who was behind the repetitious structure of the text, choreography and rehearsals.

[56] The triangle, lines: horizontal, vertical, diagonal and parallel, the circle, the oval and combinations of these. For a diagrammatic representation of the choreographic formations see Addendum.

[57] See: *Woolworths* in Addendum.

entity, and as Lecoq says, “speak through another's mouth in a common choral voice” (2000:135) to become as “a collective body” (2000:139).

Repetition of the singular into the plural, and the plural to the singular formed the basis of the *Woolworths* production process. The text itself is based on a structure of repetition (there are repetitions of sounds, words, phrases, rhythms and imagery) and the choreography and physical language of the play worked on a repetition of group formations and patterns moving from the single into the many, that repeated movements of gestural rhythms. For example, I used a repeated mirrored 'v'-formation with the apex of the 'v' alternating between downstage and upstage centre.[58] Alongside the spoken script of the play, sounds, tunes and onomatopoeic vocalisations were repeated, for example, the growling of dogs, whistling, umm-ing and barking.

I suggest that the constant repetition of the choral landscape of *Woolworths* by the fictive chorus repeated its function through the group of actors playing the chorus and became mimetic. The most obvious result of repetition (and indeed the *raison d'etre* of rehearsals, as discussed by Schechner, 2020:37-38; 237 - 242) was that of constant improvement: the more the chorus repeated the blocking, the better they became at repeating it, and the easier it became to build the play. The repercussion of this was that collective repetition made the chorus better at being a chorus. The more they performed repetitions together, the more they were able to work together, and the more they performed the 'set' repetitions of the fictive chorus, the more they spontaneously created other ‘social repetitions’ of their actor's chorus that served to connect them to one another,

[58] Downstage is the area of the stage closest to the audience. Upstage is the area of the stage farthest from the audience.

individually and as a group. This 'rippling out' of the action of choral repetition reflects on Schechner (1985, 2020), Jennings (1982), and Wulf's (2020) arguments for the centrality of repetition to ritual, and its role in the process of social building and cohesion. Schechner (2020:37) cites Mircea Eliade and his term "reactaulization" describing how through the repetition of ritual, a "community is regenerated" (Eliade, 1965:40 cited in Schechner 2020:37). Jennings asserts that (1982:13) "Repetitions are necessary to produce and sustain the coherence of human communities and their members' sense of belonging" and Wulf says (2020:94), "If there were no repetition, there would be no social order or society".

An example of repetition's productive action from the fictive performance world to the social world comes from the call-and-response vocal script of the play, or the repetition of a single voice by a choral voice. Sometime during the rehearsal process for the 2018 National Arts Festival, the chorus of actors began a spontaneous 'call and response' of their own that they used as a kind of 'pick-me-up' when things were difficult, or energy was lagging. It went like this: in response to whatever the situation was, someone in the cast would suddenly call out '*Lekker*'[59] followed by the name of a member of the cast or the production team, and the entire cast would repeat the intonation:

(Single) 'Lekker Alice!

(Chorus) Lekker Alice!'

This call and response 'naming of members' might simply end there, with the calling of one person's name, or it might continue in a series to include the names of some or every

[59] Afrikaans for "good, nice, very, or slightly drunk'" Colloquial expression commonly used across South African language groups meaning one or all of these things, in this context meaning specifically good, nice, affirmative.

member of the cast and production team, and even on a few occasions, people outside of the production team. This call and response effected personal and collective affirmation and cohesion whereby the affirmation of one group member affirmed the entire group. As a result, the 'lekker call-and-response' became a lubricant of social problem-solving. Its repetition engendered feelings of collective sympathy and co-operation and had an energising and focusing effect on the group. After the call and response, we worked better together and applied ourselves to whatever problem we were facing with a feeling of mutual aid between us. One of the times it worked especially well was when we were doing a very rushed technical rehearsal at the Courtyard Playhouse in 2020. The lighting operator, Damon, was inexperienced and intimidated by the volubility of the cast, an unreliable lighting desk, and my confusing lighting cues. He kept muddling up the cues, and I became increasingly annoyed with him and exasperated with the process. In the midst of this frustration, a call came up from the blindingly lit stage, invoking the name of the lighting operator: "Lekker Damon!" called the voice, "Lekker Damon!" intoned the rest of us. Damon relaxed. I relaxed. The lighting board relaxed. From that point on our technical rehearsal ran smoother than it had before.

Gebauer and Wulf (1995:287) say that mimesis is "a precondition of fellow feeling, compassion, sympathy, and love toward other people. It is imitation, assimilation, surrender; it leads one to copy and experience the feelings of others, without objectifying or becoming hardened towards them". As an integral mechanism of mimesis, I suggest repetition is also encompassed by this position, and indeed evidenced by the example of the 'lekker-call' example.

A second example of repetition's productivity in performance, or its causative acting-outwards from the aesthetic chorus into the social chorus, lay in the repeated instances of tunes and melodies that were hummed chorally as part of the play's *mise-en-scene*. In one scene of the play (Jenkin, 2018: 26) the chorus embodies a 'fairy-tale kingdom', using formations, physical gestures and the repeated humming of a piece of music. This scene is almost half-way through the play, and the action up to this point was quite frenetic and extremely physically demanding. The building of the kingdom scene and its hummed melody was a calming, grounding and preparative moment that allowed the chorus to centre themselves, connect to one another, relax after the frenetic first half of the play and prepare for the even more frenetic final half of the play. During the rehearsal process, the humming of this song became a way of collectively repeating these emotions as they happened in the play: to calm, to connect and to prepare for that which was coming. The cast would sing and hum this song[60] together, not only as a conscious focusing exercise before they went onstage, but throughout the pre-performance waiting, talking, and warming-up time. Often the song would rise up and some or all of the cast would spontaneously, or half consciously (as I saw it) hum it together over and over until it died out or was picked up again later. It bears mentioning that of the cast, three of the performers had strong singing abilities and considered themselves actors-who-sing, the other 4 performers, with varying degrees of competence, were actors who could sing in tune. To my ears, the sound that the group made when they were humming together sounded like a vibration of togetherness that I felt rather than heard: a deep, sweet, calm that I can compare to the humming of bees, or perhaps what bees sound like to themselves.

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[60] An altered version of Alan Mencken's prologue music for Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* (1991).

The humming sounded to me not just like a song to appreciate but an action of collective design, a solution to a problem.

Mimesis

I have referred to the world presented by *Woolworths* as a 'psychic landscape' in that it presents the ideologies, aesthetics, compulsions and aspirations of its subject using symbolic structures of the performed world to represent symbolic structures of the social world. Schechner (2020:29) says that an artist's impulse to make an artwork sets off a process of transformation originating from that impulse "until, at a decisive moment, the artwork breaks off and becomes itself. From then on, the artwork makes its own demands in accord with its indwelling form or action. These, as artists know, may be stubbornly unlike those of the original impulse or conscious plan". This critical observation holds that the mimetic process of art cannot be consciously generated by an individual impulse or plan and is one that is wholly participatory, where that participation is both conscious and unconscious, material and symbolic. Indeed, while I envisioned *Woolworth*s as an 'epic satire', during the creative process, my intentions for the subject of play were not, as I present them now, coherently rationalised.

From my own experience of contemporary South African theatre and performance, I feel acutely aware of the problem of the artist's stated ideological intentions standing in for the meaning of the work, effectively rendering the practice of theatre and performance secondary or even incidental to the ideological pretensions of the artist. Gebauer and Wulf term these ideological intentions 'the utility of theatre' whose roots are founded in the Enlightenment and find their strongest purchase in the Western theatre of the 19th century as an instrument of bourgeois morality: "there developed the idea that theatre is mimesis

of the empirical world and that the tangible existence of that world consists in social practice" (1995: 169) and: "..spectators are meant to take something away from the theatre, they are supposed to leave the performance changed" (Gebauer & Wulf, 1995:167).

The notion that theatre has a noble mission to shape the moral taste of society (as Gebauer and Wulf argue) is defined by the bourgeois theatre-makers of a bourgeois symbolic universe proclaiming its own set of middle-class moralities that are arguably presented as universals, or in my view, conceal the will to power of that bourgeois symbolic universe. I do not have a settled position on this argument, but I present it here as a preface to my own bourgeois (or in the contemporary idiom, professional middle-class) identity and my presumption to satirise South Africa bourgeois ideology as an actor of that ideology. While I find the "ideology of the theatre as an institution of moral betterment" (Gebauer and Wulf, 1995:167) mawkish, I cannot avoid the South African bourgeois symbolic universe to which I am heir, and can only concede that my distaste for middle-class, do-goodery, morally aspirational theatre may very well be the mimetic action of seeing the moralising intentions of my own work reflected back at me.

That said, I present my observations on *Woolworths* as a cultural product that did, however imperfectly and possibly unintentionally, enact its intended actions of social mimesis in that the satire of its subject was carried out. The play's audiences were primarily middle-class South Africans, largely, but not exclusively white, representing a diverse age-range from high school students to pensioners. The play was almost always interpreted as solely about white South African people (rather than representing a broader class issue centred on capital and globalism) which is not surprising given the close historical connection between white people and middle-classness in South Africa and the

traction of the white privilege concept in mainstream South African discourse at the time. I found the responses to the play fell into three broad categories, the first was a defensive one, characterised by an audience member, who after the performance at the National Arts Festival in 2018, shouted at me: “Same old crap! Flogging a dead horse! Over and over again you want us to feel shit about ourselves! What must we do? Jump in the sea?!”(Anonymous, Personal conversation, National Arts Festival, 2018). The second group were sympathetic to the satire of the play, were gleeful that finally these 'white’ issues were being revealed, and that they (the 2nd group) definitively did not belong to the social world that was represented onstage: “I wish all these private school fuckers could see this!” (Anonymous, Personal conversation, Courtyard Playhouse, 2020) The third group were also sympathetic to the satire of the play but felt directly and personally implicated by what they saw on stage” 'It was so good. I feel so bad” (Anonymous, Courtyard Playhouse, 2020). A black, working-class audience member (and theatre-maker) told me: “I didn't like it. I didn't want to know this stuff about white people” (Anonymous, Personal conversation, National Arts Festival, 2018). From these responses, the number of people who attended the shows[61], the reviews, and what I observed as the significant emotional response of audiences after seeing the show, I can only assume that the social satire of the play had some representative mimetic action or at least provided an image that was one that audiences recognised and in instances recognised themselves.

Having no central narrative, characters, set or props, the action of the play did not present, as Gebauer and Wulf term it, “a mimesis of the empirical world” (1995:167) but a

[61] The production had sold-out runs at the National Arts Festival (2018), Theatre Arts Collective (2018), The Courtyard Playhouse (2020), and the audio version of the play was one of the Top 5 most downloaded shows of the Virtual National Arts Festival (2020).

mimesis of a symbolic world enacted through, what Douglas (2003) poses as the symbolic action of the body. As one of the cast members observed in an interview: “The lines became absolutely secondary to the performance of the physical language and then became intrinsic to the physical language. The formations gave meaning to the words” (Tazmé Pillay, Cast Interview, 2020). These choreographic formations were built as a symbolic landscape of middle-class South African identity that were embodied and made material through the action of the chorus. In embodying the group, Lehmann argues, a chorus implicitly represents the notion of the social:

> The chorus (owing to its character as a crowd) is able to function scenically as a mirror and partner of the audience. A chorus is looking at a chorus, the theatron axis is put into play. Furthermore, a chorus offers the possibility of manifesting a collective body that assumes a relationship to social phantasms and desires of fusion. It is obvious that it hardly takes any directorial effort to make the audiences associate choruses on stage with masses of people in reality (of classes, the people, the collective). The chorus formally negates the conception of an individual entirely separated from the collective. (2006:130)

The notion of a kind of perpetual production, where the audience is the chorus, and the chorus itself becomes the audience, not only locates the chorus as existing in a state of embodied mimesis but locates the relationality between the chorus and the audience as that which produces mimetic action. In their analysis of the mimetic action of artworks (specifically, the novel in the 19th century) Gebauer and Wulf say that the form “dominates the social reality of its time” and “the social world and the novel, on account of the principle of mimetic interpretation and world-making, are bound together; they exist in constitutive reference to each other” (1996:237). Theatre is definitely not the art-form dominating the social reality of the contemporary moment, but I think the Gebauer and Wulf's position is relevant when applied to the direct relationship between the audience and the chorus (and

the outward impact of that relationship into the social world proper, however small it may be). In terms of thinking about the productivity of this relationship through a potential lens of design, I consider the relational action of the chorus as productive of the audience and the audience as productive of the chorus. In embodied, present, relational time, the chorus then holds the collective capacity to produce collectivity.

In building a fictive, symbolic performed world that was mimetic of the actual, symbolic social world (or trying to make a play-world about a real-world) the chorus and I worked with mimesis as a play-making device. This was not a conscious, articulated decision or a direct process and may not even have been necessarily successful (if such success can be quantified) but the intention and the process of trying to collectively embody and perform an affective, symbolic version of an affective, symbolic social landscape was generative.

Victor Shklovsky's (2007:2) position that "[t]he purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known" is relevant to the blocking or staging process of *Woolworths*. This process was developed through an improvisation process that can broadly be described as imagining an affective aspect of the social world, trying to embody and stage it, and then interpreting what that staging conveyed. The process was clearly in participation with the social world it was satirising, the relationship between the different parts of the play (what came before, what was to come), and the actual participation in the affective understanding of the social world embodied by the chorus themselves. During the process of trying to figure out pieces of blocking, we used a combination of collective improvisation (with the chorus leading the blocking) and direction (with me guiding the blocking). If we weren't sure of the effectiveness of the blocking, I would join the chorus and individual cast members would take the position of

director and look at the blocking, as we asked: Does this give you the feeling of a shopping mall? Does this look hard, like granite? Does this make you think of a high school assembly? This technique did not always work and at times I felt we were reaching for the representation of a thing that was out of reach. But when the performance 'thing' and the 'real thing' appeared to fuse, a mimetic action was produced that we were able to work and knead as if it were as substantial a material as clay. As a cast-member commented when asked about the experience of connecting the blocking to meaning: "Each movement referenced a thing, a feeling, but the trick seemed to be to allow the movement to become its own entity" (Alicia McCormick, Cast Interview, 2020).

'Allowing the movement to become its own entity' reflects Lehmann's notion (2006:130) of the choral voice hovering above the chorus, which is surely mimetic action producing newness through representation. In *Woolworths*, this choral production of the new (as cautioned by Ricoeur, 1984; Gebauer and Wulf, 1995; Halliwell, 2002) was not mere imitation, but an emergent process of attempting to synthesise the complex and often disparate psychic, economic, political, historical, aesthetic, and comedic affects of a scripted play and the social world it represented in order to produce a new version of that world through collective, embodied performance.

As the rehearsals, performances and audience responses of *Woolworths* grew over the course of the runs, the idea that the mimetic action of the play was succeeding in 'making another version' of middle-class South Africa, or indeed making 'more' middle-class South Africa, gave me pause. Certainly, it is in the transformation of the mimetic act, in making the same different that the subject is 'seen' or recognised, and that is arguably to a greater or lesser degree, the major intention of all artworks regardless of their form: as Schlovsky's

(2007:2) argument of the defamiliarisation of art goes: "[t]he technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar,' to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception".[62] Shklovsky's productive estrangement of artistic production is consonant with the notion of the (re)production of difference through repetition, and the mimetic action of transformation through imitation, which in the context of embodied, collective performance is the making of a relational action that mediates between the perception of a subject and the translation of those perceptions. Shklovsky emphasises that is the process of making art that is its purpose: "[a]rt is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object: the object is not important" (1991:6).

The mimetic importance of the designed object is raised by Dilnot (1993:56) through his example of the mimetic design of the chair and his suggestion that it exists in direct and symbolic relation to the spine. This notion is further complicated by Cranz's (2000) argument that the chair, an action of Western design culture, prevents the natural alignment of the spine and inflicts damaging pressure upon the (neck, head and) spinal posture of the sitter, or in this case, generations and cultures of sitters. The synthesis of these arguments is: the mimetic intention embodied in the chair (and that which is based on the spine) may end up hurting the spine, or certainly in the case of the ubiquity of the chair, tyrannising it. The creative force of mimetic action then, whatever its intentions, like all design action (as argued by Margolin, Dilnot, Cranz, Escobar, and others) is not without its contradictions and potential for harm.

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[62] Alternatively worded by Shklovsky as "By 'enstranging' objects and complicating form, the device of art makes perception long and 'laborious' and the perceptual process in art has a purpose all its own and ought to be extended to the fullest" (1991:6).

In terms of performance as a design mode of co-present, relational ephemerality, it is my suggestion that the contradictions of the mimetic action of design and indeed the tyranny of the designed object may be negotiated in the very space of designing. Once a chair is made, it cannot respond to its makers, but the mimetic action performance is embodied by its makers, and their calls to response are conscious and present to change.

Embodiment

Dilnot's mimetic argument is framed by the position that "the object is the substitute for ourselves" as well as an extension of ourselves (1993:56) and the designed object may "over[come]...the subject–object split" (1993:116). The overcoming of the subject-object split in terms of performance-as-design is the overcoming of the subject-subject split or the relational action of embodied presence.

If mimesis, as I've established through Ricoeur (1984), and Gebauer and Wulf (1995) is participatory, and the designed object, via Ehn (2012) is participatory, and the mimesis of design, via Dilnot (1993) exists as an interdependent participation between the body and the designed object, then design arguably does not simply relate to the body but is a relational practice *of* the body and forms part of the mimetic action of embodiment. To establish embodiment as a design action and the collective participatory body as not only relative to design (or to 'being' a designer) but as a site of design itself, is to return design, via Mauss, to its site of origin, where "man's most natural technical object, and at the same time technical means, is his body" (Mauss, 1976:104).

A phrase I kept repeating to the *Woolworths* cast during rehearsals was "I can't do it for you, I'm only one body". The problem solving of the staging dynamics needed to be physically executed by and through the collective. As I observed in the previous section on

repetition, this collective process, although often slow and frustrating, had a cohesive effect on the cast, not only because of the action of repetition, but specifically the repetition of collective embodiment. Dilnot says that "[t]he [designed] object is the substitute for ourselves in the special sense that things work to provide us artificially with what nature 'neglected' to bestow on us" (1993: 56). If design gives us what we do not have or cannot manifest with our bodies, then design centred in performance may, using this same line of logic, give us other people, and a connection to the 'many oneness' which we are unable to manufacture as individuals. In my interviews with the cast, Tazmé observed that: "Performing this moment, each time I felt my body become more integrated with those of my fellow performers until it was as if we a part of a single mass; Kaylee's arms were an extension of my own, Frankie's legs and Wynand's too and an extension of each other. In retrospect, it was a feeling of complete cohesion and conglomeration when we managed to get it right" (Tazmé Pillay, Interview, 2020). Francesco, another cast member, made the observation that: "…you have all committed to one another to perform a highly complex act. This makes you very close to the company. To be able to trust so deeply is also something that doesn't just happen. It is engineered. It's the time spent together – the time working on it again and again, that lets it accrue some kind of psychic capital, and this nourishes us in some way because essentially in our society we live without community" (Francesco Nassimbeni, Interview, 2020).

Nearly every time we began preparing for another run of *Woolworths*, a cast member dropped out[63] and we rehearsed someone new into the old cast, or (as was the case for the

[63] The actors left for higher paying/previously contracted work in commercials, film and television. For the National Arts Festival 2018 we rehearsed in two new actors (Roxanne and Francesco). For the Theatre Arts (2018) we rehearsed in a new actor (Alicia) for the Woordfees (2019) run we rehearsed in a new actor

2020 run) we re-rehearsed an old cast member back into the play. After the major changes to the text and choreography for our National Arts Festival run in 2018, the play was mostly established, and after what I would consider an extremely intense series of rigorous rehearsals, the chorus were well-prepared, very familiar with the play, and the performance was a slick and cohesive production. As a result of this, the first time we took on a new cast member, we all naively assumed it would be a fairly simple task of teaching them the blocking and slotting them into the play. That time, and each time afterwards, we were profoundly wrong, and the substitution of a new cast member turned into a whole-scale re-rehearsal of the entire play. The changing of one cast member altered the material action of the play to such a degree that the chorus seemed to break down like a car or a machine with a wrong part: even though the machine was the same, it had become completely different, and because it was different, it had to be reconstructed in its new image. As cast member Alicia observed “It was interesting to see how, regardless of how slick a movement was, the minute you change something/or in this case someone, everything is nudged off kilter. Regardless of whether the new cast member had been taught the body position perfectly in a separate rehearsal, it does not matter until it is absorbed into the whole” (Alica McCormick, Cast Interview, 2020).

This 'knowing' the chorus gained through collective performance, and the indeed the performance they produced was specific not only to its individual constituents, but to the specific collective body those individual constituents produced. Each new collective body had to remake its production, reflecting Lecoq's position that ”[a] chorus is not geometric

(Clyde) and for the Courtyard Playhouse (2020) run we rehearsed in an old cast member (Wynand) who had left the show in 2018.

but organic. In just the same way as a collective body, it has its centre of gravity, its extensions, its respiration. It is a kind of living cell, capable of taking on different forms according to the situation in which it finds itself" (2000:139).

The imperative of embodiment to the repetition-action of choral performance connects to the action of mimesis, where repetition creates difference through the embodied collective and the repetition inherent in the chorus generates what Lehmann (2006) describes as the "purloined voice" of the chorus, reasoning that:

> [T]he individual voice can no longer be detached from the resonant space of the whole choir (even if, it can often still be distinguished in it), inversely the chorus speaks in every individual speaker. The sound estranged from the individual body hovers above the whole chorus like an independent entity: a ghostly voice belonging to a kind of liminal body. (Lehmann, 2006:130)

Lecoq's analogue to this, is:

> To speak through another's mouth, in a common choral voice, is to be, at one and the same time, grounded in the truth of a living character, and in touch with a dimension which transcends human reality. (2000:135)

Lehmann and Lecoq, if not directly, are describing the productiveness of the chorus, of the plural singular creating the singular plural that itself produces something else, an entity outside of both the single and the plural, Lehmann's "liminal body" and Lecoq's :dimension which transcends human reality". Moreover, Lehmann refers to chorality as a "force" that is more than itself, where the choral voice means the manifestation of a not-just-individual sound of a vocal plurality and, at the same time, the unification of individual bodies in a crowd as a "force" (2006:130).

Following these logics, and Lehmann's naming of the action of choral performance as a "force" (2006:130) I suggest that the collective embodiment of the *Woolworths* chorus, the

shared, repeated gestural and vocal force held only between and within its 7 members, generates another 'force' outside of itself, that is of, and not-of the chorus, a force generated by the relationality of the chorus members, that is not only produced as an inter-relationality but as an outward relationality between the chorus and the audience, and an 'other' relationality, a force I perceive as located not in what the play means, but in what the play does. The force of this liminal body is produced by embodiment but exists outside of human bodies and is, I suggest, a potential material, mode, and site of design.

In their proposal for using design as a method of anthropology, or anthropology "as, of and by means of design" Gatt and Ingold (2013:139) critique the notion of design as a finite practice and one whose end-product is predestined and static. Quoting artist Paul Klee's statement that "Form is the end, death...form-giving is movement action. Form-giving is life"(Klee, 1973:269 cited in Gatt and Ingold, 2013:144) they argue that "design seems bent on...specifying moments of completion when the forms of things fall into line with what was initially intended for them" (2013:144) and ask:

> By setting ends to things, do we not, as Klee intimates, kill them off? If design brings predictability and foreclosure to a life process that is open-ended and improvisatory, then is not design the very antithesis of life? How, following Klee's example, might we shift the emphasis in design from form to form giving?...What, then, can it mean to design things in a world that is perpetually under construction by way of the activities of its inhabitants, who are tasked above all with keeping life going rather than with bringing to completion projects already specified at the outset? (Gatt & Ingold, 2013:145)

Their answer is:

> [T]hat design is not so much about innovation as about improvisation. This is to recognize that the creativity of design is found not in the novelty of prefigured solutions to perceived environmental problems but in the capacity of inhabitants to respond with precision to the ever-changing circumstances of their lives. (Gatt & Ingold, 2013:145)

In response to this proposal, I suggest that a design practice centred on embodiment and collective performance is one that responds directly to Klee's notion of 'form-giving' and as indicated by my examples from the *Woolworths* rehearsal process, “dwells”, as Ingold (2013:144) suggests design should, in an implicit space of adaptability and flux.

Ephemerality

The idea that embodied, choral performance produces something that is not embodied or exists outside of the body aligns with Phelan and Blau's (1982) positions of the constantly disappearing nature of performance, which is, according to Blau (1982: 28) “always at the vanishing point”. Phelan says, “Performance ... becomes itself through disappearance” (1993: 146), inferring that the material of performance is simultaneously produced in the moment of materialisation and its disappearance. Through Phelan and Blau, the material body in performance and as performance, exists as and produces ephemerality. Ephemerality in this sense, embodies the impossibility of repetition, where repetition makes difference every time it is made, and (via Deleuze, Ricoeur, Wulf and others) is unable to exactly reproduce or repeat itself. This argument embodies the contradiction, central to notions of art, where material form generates that which is outside of material. Diana Taylor’s contention in *The Archive and the Repertoire* (2003) is that the relationship between the epistemologies of “the archive” (permanence: that which can be materially kept and recorded outside of the body) and “the repertoire” (impermanence: that which is embodied) is a dialectical one. Taylor's notion that the embodied knowledge of performance is itself a site of, and way of conveying knowledge coincides with Rebecca Schneider's position in *Performance Remains* (2001) where performance and embodiment are positioned not as acts of “disappearance” (2001:101) but carriers of memory that

"leave residue" (2001:102). My position on the disappearance/remain, permanence/impermanence, ephemerality/endurance dialectic is to consider ephemerality and indeed disappearance as a process and product of performance and moreover consider that ephemerality itself is productive as an action of relational embodiment, and a potential mode, material, and site of design.

Produced solely through the choral voice and body, *Woolworths* generated what I interpreted as an architectural embodiment of performance. From the huge 64 m^2 stage at the Stellenbosch *Woordfees* to the tiny 12m^2 stage at the Courtyard Playhouse, the playing space felt like it was filled with a massive structure, a sounded, moving, multi-bodied creation that boomed and glowed in the dark long after the lights had gone down. At the close of each performance, I often had the sensation that the show was still happening and that after the audience had left the auditorium and I had gone backstage to give the cast notes, the chorus were still somehow onstage. It seemed that the performance was still out there, like a vibration or the end of a vibration. This impression was echoed by a remark my father made after seeing the show[64]: "It was like they were going into me, like they never stopped walking" (Garth Jenkin, Personal remark, 2018). Evidencing Phelan's (2012:146) "productive disappearance", this remark reasons that the chorus stopped moving and the performance ended, but the stopped movement (or disappearance of the performance) generated another chorus, a 'ghost' chorus that kept walking out from the actual chorus. The chorus that keeps walking out into the audience or perhaps *through* the audience, is a dynamic idea that reveals the dynamism of performance's ephemerality: in making itself, it generates an 'other'.

[64] The performance ends with the cast advancing on the audience into a sudden stop and 'snap' blackout.

Blau calls the “nothing” that is made by performance an “ado”, and says that “Nothing may come of nothing, but it would also be precise to think of that replicated nothing as a substantive ado” (1987:161). I conceive of this 'becoming', this making of dynamic impermanence, this “substantive ado” as part of the four-part productive engine of performance where impermanence is a site of design. This impermanence is not of the object, like a compostable coffee cup, but the subjective impermanence forged in the moment of the collective performance and the embodied, collective witnessing of that performance.

Gatt and Ingold (2013:144) say that “the very history of design could be understood as the cumulative record of concerted human attempts to put an end to it: an interminable series of final answers, none of which turns out, in retrospect, to be final after all”. As an action of embodiment, designing with the ephemerality of performance addresses (as argued by Gatt and Ingold, 2013; Escobar, 2018; Irwin *et al.*, 2015) the finality of product driven design, and its inextricable connection to the intentions of the production of industrial and latterly technocentric capitalism (see: Dilnot, 2015; Escobar, 2018; Margolin, 2005). Dilnot's argument that the identity of what is commonly understood as design (what he calls “professional” or “modern design”) is “called into being by Industrialization” (Dilnot, 2015:116). In the post-industrialising context of the digital or technocentric age, Dilnot argues that the identity of design is still connected to the motivations and presumably the psyche of the industrial age:

> Today it is not quite correct to say that we are in a “post-industrial” world – certainly one would not say so if one lived in China for example. But, and it is a very important 'but,' even in China, let alone in the de-industrialized West, industry is no longer socially or economically formative. We can put a precise date on the transition: 1973–1974, the oil price shock, the

> collapse of manufacturing profitability and the beginnings of a move to accumulation through the management of financial flows and consumption fuelled by debt. After this point, in a certain way, industry no longer matters. It becomes like craft in the nineteenth century, present, but no longer formative. What is formative in the world and the economy belongs to consumption and to finance and to the realm of digital communication and above all to their interlinking. An obvious question now intrudes. If Design was born from industry and industry is no longer formative how then is Design? What happens to Design as it loses that which formed it? (Dilnot, 2015:116)

I cannot answer to the future of design but suggest that designing with the ephemerality of performance answers to the provocation of Irwin (2015), Kossoff (2008), and Tonkinwise (2015) where proposed design interventions should produce results that are viewed as emergent, non-linear, non-static and spontaneous (Irwin, 2015). Designing with the ephemerality of performance could potentially generate a design action that dwells in a constant place of making and unmaking, between becoming one thing and leaving another behind: a practice of transition (design). Moreover, designing with impermanence and irreproducibility challenges at least the capitalist actions of reproducible commodity and ownership implicit in design's identity, not only through the disappearance of performance, but perhaps more significantly through its action of change, a phenomenon that never becomes or settles into any fixed object, that does not produce (via Gatt & Ingold, 2013:144) a finite end product but rather an endless process that embodies not the passiveness of the object, but the volition inherent in the collective subject.

Another performance oddity or paradoxically productive element of performance's ephemerality that I suggest as a potential site of design investigation relates to what Schechner calls "symbolic time":

> When the span of the activity represents another (longer or shorter) span of clock time. Or where time is considered differently, as in Christian notions of "the end of time," the

> Aborigine "Dreamtime," or Zen's goal of the "ever present." Examples: theater, rituals that reactualize events or abolish time, make-believe play and games. (Schechner, 2004:8)

A result of the interdependent contradictory actions of performance (whereby repetition produces difference, presence produces disappearance and embodiment produces disembodiment) is that of predetermination producing spontaneity. Performance requires deliberate planning and repetition to produce a consistent and predictable event of learned behaviours, texts, and gestures that entail knowing what to do next over and over again within a set space and time, and effectively attempting to gain control over that set space and time for a set space and time. It is through this process where that which is familiar generates the unknown, where that which is planned generates the spontaneous, and where that which is specifically plotted in time generates an experience where time is experienced as elastic. Performance's ephemerality is then generated by 'knowing what comes next' and using that knowing as a way of dwelling deeply within the unknowable present.

Woolworths ran at between 53 and 56 minutes depending on the speed of the run and accounting for the laughter of the audience. The cast were onstage for the entire time, so it was a relatively short play, but one that required extreme focus and continuous energy output from the cast. The cast would often remark how far the beginning of the play seemed from the end, and paradoxically how quickly it all finished. One of the actors, Kaylee, said when she got to the kingdom section of the play (Jenkin, 2018:26) she couldn't believe how long ago the beginning of the play felt, and how far away the end seemed to be. In real time, the beginning of the play was only 30 minutes before that point, and the end was within another 25 minutes. This 'out of time-ness' resulted in part from the nature of

the play's content, the lack of a linear narrative arc, the shifting subject/s of the content, and the intense concentration and focus it took to perform the play in chorus. That said, the experience of time becoming strange or elastic belongs to all kinds of performance and has long been something that fascinated me. As an actor I have twice experienced this affect to such an extent as to be remarkable. On both those occasions between speaking my lines, or as I spoke them, I experienced what felt like the slowing down of time during which I was able to fully and deliberately observe the dust motes drifting in the light before me and feel the expansive sense of 'being' in time and the (perceived) ability to move freely around within it. I interpret this experience as the attainment of true presence within the performance moment, that is, a release from the self, coupled with the profound consciousness of being alive and an innate, corporeal recognition of the integrated relationship between the body, space, and time.

The body-space-time relationship is central to the impermanence of performance and is arguably a product of performance. Blau's "ado" of presence is the excitation of discovering time around you like a sudden, tangible stuff, a material made manifest at 'the vanishing point' where the stuff-ness of time and space are, if not materially designable, then investigable through performance. The affect of control that is enacted by performance through the body over (an established) time and space, generates a sense of freedom from time, and the spontaneity of this momentary experience is the result of the repetition and planning implicit in the order of performance. I consider this affective experience of sensory control over, and freedom within the body-space-time relationship another relevant point of investigation into the design potential of the ephemerality of performance.

Agon

Agon is the conflict, the counterpoint, the struggle that defines drama and dramatic narrative. Walter Benjamin (cited in Lehmann, 2006:47) refers to agon as an action of "transformation" meaning that it is through the shifts and transformations caused by agon that drama is able to develop. As Lehmann contends, the Aristotelean agon created between protagonist and antagonist was rooted in an expanded and monologic dialectical speech-making[65] that developed into the more dialogue-based drama of increasingly interpersonal psychological events in the 18th and 19th century. This grew into the agon of realist drama of the 20th century which has been exploited to its fullest through the cinematic imagination. Following Lehmann, agon is a primarily text-led condition of the interrelationship of character and narrative, where drama is "an exemplary form of discussion [that] stakes everything on tempo, dialectic, debate and solution (denouement)" (2006:75) The dramatic narrative's "form of discussion" is then a way of thinking whose reasoning is manifested through the character struggle of agon. In a postdramatic or de-theatricalised notion of performance where theatre is "estranged" from drama, the notion of the 'drama' or 'dramatic' no longer exists because its existence arises from the interdependent relationship between the logical development of time, incident and character (Lehmann, 2006:30).

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[65] Modern drama was a world of discussion, while the dialogue in ancient tragedy – despite the appearance of an antagonistic battle of words – is basically not a discussion: the protagonists each remain unreachable in their own world, the opponents talk at cross-purposes. The dialogue here is less conflict and altercation in the space of verbal exchange but appears rather as a "'competition of speech' (Wettreden), a race in words, reminiscent of the wordless wrestling in the agon. The speeches of the antagonists
do not touch one another" (Lehmann, 2006:75).

Agon is arguably older and stronger than dramatic narrative and is generated as conflict and counterpoint in non-narrative theatre and dance performance (Laban, 1971) and as 'competition' in games and sports (Schechner, 2013:171-172 citing Caillois). The notion of an embodied agon is, following classical anthropologist Louis Ruprecht (2001:53) apposite to the classical Greek conception of the idea where agon is inherent in physical struggle and games like wrestling. On this note, Schechner proposes that "The Athenians were an intensely competitive people. The *agon* was for them the motor, source, and energy of creation, a model of becoming" (2020:349).

In performance, the agon of embodiment exists in concert with the narrative agon of drama but can exist outside of that relationship through the logic of the body and be generated by the relationality of bodies in space. In terms of proposing agon as a performance-specific mode of design, I submit two significant productive aspects of the phenomenon that are generated through performance: the production of attention and the production of the conditions for negotiation (Mouffe, 2005; Björgvinsson, Ehn and Hillgren, 2010).

Through either dramatic narrative, embodied 'struggle' or a combination of these, the presence of agon produces in both observers and participants an affect of interest, focus and excitement. In everyday speech, when a situation is called dramatic or 'full of drama' that situation is understood as compelling and productive of attention, or simply put, it makes people want to watch it. The constituent elements that produce agon through performance are theorised by several performance practitioners, including Schechner (interpreting Stanislavski and Csikszentmihalyi, 2013:168-172) who talks about a committed engagement with the world and rules of a game or performance, and Lecoq who

argues for the relationship between “push and pull” or “equilibrium and disequilibrium” (2000). Most notably, Stanislavski's (1989) systemic approach to acting[66] positions the triadic relationship of a character’s “objective”, the “obstacle” preventing them from achieving this objective and the “tactics” they use to overcome the “obstacle” and attain their objective as the engine of agon in narrative drama. From the perspective of postdramatic or non-dramatic performance, this triad need not be rooted in narrative or character. Objective, obstacle and tactic can be used through the gestural and postural objectives, obstacles, and tactics of the relational body in performance. This is a similar line of thinking to Laban’s (1971) and to an extent Bogart’s (2005) positions where the agon of performance is generated through the manipulation of opposing dynamisms as they are embodied by line, weight, texture, rhythm, tone and force. I have used this framing of agon to teach acting to ballet dancers, where instead of focusing on the narrative of the ballet, I focus on the objectives, obstacles and tactics embodied within the ballet steps and postures themselves. Through this thinking, an arabesque, by virtue of its opposing forces (the reaching of the arm forward, the extending of the leg back) becomes a drama or an agonistic struggle in and of itself.

In an early scene of *Woolworths* (Jenkin, 2018:15) the chorus of 7 crouch down together, form a rugby scrum and move around the stage.[67] In rugby, the scrum formation is made up of two sets (of opposing teams) both comprising 8 people crouched in 3 interlocking rows in the general formation of 3, 4, 1. The scrum is then generated through the opposing forces of the two member teams pushing against each other (or more correctly, trying to push the

[66] And Robert Cohen's (1992) reformative interpretation of the system
[67] The scripted scene is not about rugby or scrums.

other team backwards) to gain possession of the ball. The scrum is framed by the rules, content and layout of this formation, but it only comes into being at the moment of the collective, counteractive action of push-push. In *Woolworths*, we created an approximation of one of the teams of the scrum formation. The chorus were crouched together in a 3-3-1 formation locked into the agon of the scrum with an invisible opposing team. In performance, this invisible opposition was a protean force that was at once onstage and pushing against the chorus and watching the chorus from the auditorium. No-one was on the opposing team, but everyone was on the opposing team, compelled by the push-push that the chorus built up between themselves and performance space. This staging worked on a number of levels, not least of all because of the potent position of the rugby scrum in the South African imagination; one that is produced by the formation's material, symbolic and cultural force. I thought a lot about how compelling this scene was, and how it caught the audience's attention and seemed to force them, even if they had no clue what was happening at that point, to lock heads with the chorus and push on into the play.

Lehmann poses that the agon that connects the logic of the postdramatic may be achieved through what he calls the "social chorus"[68], a chorus that never severs the relationship between the group and its constituents, a chorus that remains onstage throughout a performance, and doesn't use the entrances and exits prevalent in dramatic theatre (2006:131-132). This cohesion of the chorus as a single group, the omni-self, where individual volition is never seen as separate from the group is interpreted through Lehmann's citing of German theatre director, Einar Schleef who says "the modern drama

[68] In reference to the choral of work of Swiss director Christoph Marthaler (Lehmann, 2006:131).

broke with the ancient chorus because it wanted to forget the interdependence of the collective and the individual" (2006:131). If in the context of 'the dramatic' agon is bound up with narrative, time and character, then agon without these elements is forged into an overarching logic through the uniting narrative identity of the social chorus, where the interdependence of the individual and society creates the logic through which agon is made coherent and its logic developed.

In *Woolworths*, the logic of the play's shifting agon was given coherence through the collective narrative that belonged to the chorus onstage and the greater idiom of the social chorus that extended to the audience. In the 2020 Courtyard Playhouse run, we often played to a substantial number of distracted and distractible audience members, many of whom who consumed a lot of alcohol, left and re-entered the (very small) auditorium to smoke or go to the toilet, heckled the chorus (often in what seemed like an unconscious way, like they were talking in their sleep) put their feet up on the stage and spilled wine on themselves and others. But whatever the levels of wine spillage, there were two points in the play that consistently aroused a silent and profound audience engagement: the scene about domestic workers, and the scene when the scrum crouched and engaged (Jenkin, 2018:15 -16) These points, as I saw them, elicited the deepest agon of the "social chorus", the interpretation of which is not my present task, but which leads me to affirm my proposal of agon as a site of design that is productive of attention.

The idea that agon is productive of the conditions for negotiation refers to political scientist Chantal Mouffe's (2005) concept of the 'agonistic struggle' of democracy, and participatory designers Björgvinsson *et al.*'s (2010) and Emilson and Hillgren's (2014) interpretation of this idea as constructive to the design process. For Mouffe, healthy and

democratic political engagement should not be motivated consensus or resolution, but should rather allow the adversarial friction of agonism to generate clarity and growth around issues of conflict: "…the task for democratic theorists and politicians should be to envisage the creation of vibrant 'agonistic' public sphere of contestation where different hegemonic political projects can be confronted" (Mouffe, 2005:3). Björgvinsson *et al.* (2010) Emilsen & Hillgren (2014) synthesise this idea with their participatory design notion of "Things" that proposes design as centred not on objects but on relational "sociomaterial assemblies" (Ehn 2008; Björgvinsson, Ehn, and Hillgren, 2010; Emilsen and Hillgren, 2014). Through this synthesis, the design space is envisioned as a relational encounter that may "assemble heterogeneous stakeholders who might aim for a shared vision and agree on a preferred solution, but also to bring out alternative opportunities and allow for a polyphony of voices and for mutually vigorous but tolerant disputes among these stakeholders" (Emilsen and Hillgren, 2014:69).

My own contribution to this synthesis is that, as an embodied, relational generator of agon, performance is the ideal practice through which to produce, investigate, and negotiate agonistic design *things*. Mouffe's position suggests that democracy does not simply require agonistic struggle, but is produced through agonistic struggle, and the negotiation of a heterogeny of views and motives is only possible through the knowing, expressing and struggling with these views and motives. Through performance, agon is given structure and 'logic' that is mutable and open to repetition and change. Moreover, in keeping with the notion of the "social chorus", agon may be deciphered outside of a narrative of individualism and viewed as a potential structuring action for and of the collective. This idea refers back to Mouffe's proposal for an agonistic political idiom, and

indeed even further back than that. Classical scholar Louis Ruprecht (2001) argues that while the Greek state was "riddled with conflict...the Greeks attempted to build this agonism into the political process itself. They did not shy away from conflict so much as they attempted to ritualize and regulate it" (2001:53). Citing the Olympic Games and presumably competitive sports more broadly as a means of ritualising agonism, Ruprecht says: "in the hopes that, by competing against one another athletically, we would wage war less often" (Ruprecht, 2001:53). It is this simultaneous ritualisation and regulation of the agonistic production that performance offers the conditions for an embodied, mimetic, ephemeral state of negotiation.

CONCLUSION

Through the illustrative example of my play *Woolworths*, I have traced my framing of performance from a theatrical form to a design form. Through a practice-led investigation of the four performance-specific principles of mimesis (comprising repetition) embodiment, ephemerality and agon, I detailed how each principle is an (interdependent) identifying characteristic of performance that can be viewed through a design lens, and as a potential site for design practice and investigation.

The cohesive and generative potential of repetition was presented firstly through the singular-plurality of the chorus and subsequently through the actions of the performance (or fictive) chorus rippling out into the social chorus. I presented the symbolic, relational action of mimesis where the audience and chorus correspondingly produce each other as a collective capacity to produce collectivity. Through Schechner (2020), Jennings (1982), Douglas (2003), and Wulf (2020) I explored the productivity of mimetic action in ritual and

performance as active in producing the social, and I proposed this action as a site for design.

In the embodiment section, the collective body in performance was posed as a method, mode, site, and process of design that manifests the volition and subjectivity of the design product. Gatt and Ingold's (2013, citing Klee) notion of "form-giving" offers a way of negotiating the finite and static action of object-driven design. Moreover, through Mauss (1976) the body itself was positioned as a productive tool and technique of design.

Through Phelan (2003) and Blau (1982) I argued that the ephemerality of performance is itself productive, and via Lehman (2006) that choral, embodied presence is productive of a force that extends beyond its embodied moment. Moreover, I argued that designing with the ephemerality of performance challenges the capitalist actions of reproducible commodity and the Western identity of design, that via Dilnot (2015) and others is based in industrial capitalism.

In considering agon, I offered an exploration of the concept outside of dramatic narrative, where agon is presented as symbiotic with Lehmann's (2006) "social chorus" and its usability as a mode of social action is one centred on the interdependence of the individual and the group. Moreover, through Schechner (2020), Lecoq (2000) ,and Stanislavski (1989) I positioned agon as productive of attention and through Mouffe (2005), Björgvinsson *et al.*. (2010), and Emilsen and Hillgren (2014) as productive of the conditions for negotiation.

For better or worse, theatre and performance has been the guiding work of my career, and I have long felt that I knew the limits of its application. Through my postgraduate

research and the making of *Woolworths*, theatre changed before my eyes, not in its form, but in its potential function and potential for function. Alexander says that:

> During the early and middle 20th century, the idea of function was for the most part understood in a mechanistic spirit. In trying to work out what a building ought to do, how to analyse its way of working, one had the approach that the building's functions were to be described by a kind of shopping list of "goals". These goals were defined by the architect or engineer, then achieved. (2001:404)

Alexander's position is opposed to this mechanistic spirit, but he reveres, and indeed details the specific rationalising of function and structure, where "form is structure and function is the behaviour of structure" (2001:405). In working with the detailed functions of performance and presenting them as a design model, I do not intend to amputate them from the theatre form, nor indeed do I present design as a "shopping list" of applicable units to be employed. The discrete descriptions of mimesis, embodiment, ephemerality, and agon are presented here as a collective action that belongs to the artistic work and history of theatre and performance, and indeed to the participatory notions of design as an action of collective imagination and embodiment. My analysis of the functions of performance is made in the spirit that Alexander (2001:45) offers his analysis, where function is held "precious" and its actions are not viewed as expedient, atomised or simple mechanics, but as integral, interdependent workings of the whole.

Chapter Four

An Order of Authority

Show me the stone that the builders rejected: that is the keystone.

Jesus in *The Gospel of Thomas*, 66.

INTRODUCTION

The project described in this chapter uses performance-as-design to explore designing order for the event of a 1 ½ hour practical drama class at UCT's CTDPS.[69] I carried out the project with a group of (10) 2nd year acting students during an 8-week chorus acting course in March and April of 2019. The object of the chorus course is to produce a 20-minute chorus work whose rehearsal process incorporates the pedagogy of ensemble performance. The focus of the course notwithstanding, the explorations of the design project were directed towards the framing order of a general performance practice class at the CTDPS.

The Problem

The project of designing order was addressed to the problem of an absence of order that I perceived in the classroom event. Before I began this project, my perception of this absence was a general affect that I observed in various social situations and events in

[69] Of the courses I was teaching at the time, the chorus course offered the greatest contact time with the group (2-3 times/week) and I reasoned that the explorations of the design project may have applicable lessons for the chorus task itself.

contemporary, urban life in South Africa both inside and outside of the academic institution. When I began teaching at the CTDPS (and the greater university) this general affect began to take a more specific shape in the context of the classes I taught and participated in. The affect was an absence of something profound that I could not immediately establish but recognised as fundamental to the structure of the classroom event. I emphasise the 'classroom event' because it was not the structure of the course content that was absent[70] but the structure of the classroom event that supported it. This meant that even though the outline of the course was clear to both me and the students, the thing that held us and the course together was missing and seemed to exist in an imaginative space outside of the embodied event. The course was a tomato soup without a bowl, but the bowl itself had long ceased to be a material structure capable of holding soup and had become an abstraction that no-one could remember or even recognise. The order that held the event together was absent.

That said, the event took place at a university and there were the usual institutional regulations in place, and these, combined with the blueprint of the South African school system's disciplinary regulations, conspired to generate something that felt like the memory of an academic or scholastic order. On the CTDPS campus, the buildings themselves brought their own ghosts of order, recalling the colonial-style South African private schools established in the late 19th and early 20th century[71] with their antiquated

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[70] The course structure and its development over the term was clearly planned.

[71] The main buildings of UCT's Hiddingh Campus were built in the mid 1800's as South African College School or SACS (https://www.uct.ac.za/main/about/history). Examples of South African private schools include St Mary's DSG, Johannesburg, established in 1888, St Johns DSG, Pietermaritzburg established in 1897, Grey College, Bloemfontein founded in 1859.

behavioural knick-knacks of English empire, Anglicanism, sirs, ma'ams, and ribboned hats. These old bricks jostled up to the contemporary buildings of glass, chrome, and exposed brick with their newer order of global, Euromerican aspiration and the great authority of the market. Running in the background of the old bricks and books was the ever present, ever wakeful technological order of digital and social media whirring in everyone's heads, an order without body or time, an order we all belonged to but could not share, that seemed to hold sway without doing anything, but could not be challenged or "augmented" to use Arendt's (1961) term, in the embodied, collective present.

Whatever authority these orders held or had held, they could not be called upon for support during the present, embodied event of the class, not least of all because they were phantasms. To my mind, it seemed that many students (and I often felt myself included in their number) spent their entire university careers in active rebellion against the phantasms of an authority of order that provided them with a target for their frustrations, but the real target, obscured by these ghosts, was no target at all, but an absence. An absence of, as Arendt has it: "a non-individuated, external structure common to all, a force of belonging…" without which, Arendt argues "means to be confronted anew, without the religious trust in a sacred beginning and without the protection of traditional and therefore self-evident standards of behavior, by the elementary problems of human living-together" (1961:141).

As I established in the opening chapter (via Arendt, 1963; Douglas, 2003) order enacts authority, and it was specifically this identifying condition of order that framed the absence of order in the classroom event. I only came to this conclusion when my investigation was well underway (and I describe that later) but I introduce it now to give the chapter a coherent line of reasoning and to justify my use of Arendt's thinking on authority to shape my argument from here on.

As I have previously described, Arendt's primary contention is that authority is collective (not a matter of individual influence) and is enacted neither through violence nor persuasion (1961:93-95).When I taught classes at UCT (and in this case, specifically the chorus acting class) I often felt that there was nothing holding the event together but the force of my personality and the profound attention I was able to give or (or less generously) 'show' each member of the group.[72] I recognise that "active listening" (See: Egan, 1974; Jalongo, 1995; Rogers & Farson, 1976) and numerous personal tactics are necessary tools of teaching practice, but (teaching methods aside) I contend that it was only these personal tactics that I was able to call upon to hold the group together and give unity and coherence to the classroom event. There was no order and no concomitant authority but mine, and that authority so often felt like a mere trick of the light, a wink and a smile with nothing greater behind it than my own dramatic flair and inconsistent resolve.

[72] Following acting pedagogue Sanford Meisner (after Stanislavski) the performance mode of "giving attention" holds attention. Meisner contends that acting is "re-acting" and the practice of listening and responding to an acting partner (both as the actor and the character) has its own tactical agenda in generating "attentiveness" and thus generating a compelling performance (Meisner, 1987).

Following Arendt, this classroom situation exhibits failed authority, expressing as it does my use of personal persuasion to convince the group to obey me and commit to the task of the classroom. As Arendt says:

> Authority…is incompatible with persuasion, which presupposes equality and works through a process of argumentation. Where arguments are used, authority is left in abeyance. If authority is to be defined at all, then, it must be in contradistinction to both coercion by force and persuasion through arguments. (Arendt, 1961:94)

The order of the class, such as it was, appeared to embody the dialectical relationship between Arendt's (1961) notion of the ruins of an old authority where authority no longer exists in the present, and Alexander's (2001) position, where an old order may be crumbling, but it continues to be built 'willy nilly' whether or not it is supportive or effective. In designing an order that enacted a collective authority, I wanted to release myself (and the participants) from my sole personal authority over the class and generate a collective authority that managed and was managed by the group. Moreover, I wanted to avoid threats and persuasion that invoked personal, institutional, state or socio-familial violence, or more commonly, envisioned failure and exclusion (you have to do this or you won't receive your DP, you'll fail, you'll be excluded from the university, the job-market, your family, and social group). I also aimed to reject the easier, seemingly benign threats of inter-personal responsibility: “Do this to please me” and its inverse “Do this or you will disappoint me”.

Before attempting anything, I had to confront the fact that there had not been any appeal expressed by any community in the CTDPS for what I was proposing. Students were

protesting for the reduction or abolition of university fees,[73] for an end to outsourcing,[74] for the decolonisation of many syllabus[6] models and an end to gender[7] based violence. The combination of these demands could certainly be interpreted as the demand for a new order and a re-negotiation of the authority of the university's pedagogical and economic policies, but not in the way I was framing them. Whatever confluence of 'wicked problems' were raised, I could not honestly offer my design experiments as a direct response to the broader UCT and South African universities' demands for change in specific areas of fees and curriculum. However, as Escobar (2018:75-76), Irwin (2015), and the transition and participatory design approaches more broadly contend, direct responses to 'wicked problems'[75] may not be possible or effective, and, as an emergent action of dynamic, complex systems, the design process may produce design responses that are indirect, nonlinear, and even (following Irwin *et al.*, 2015) potentially contradictory. Moreover, Manzini maintains that creating the conditions for "participative behaviour" within a social ecosystem is an intervention that may enable infrastructural change through the change that occurs within participants as active agents within that system (2015:152).

That said, I did not think it was credible for me to tell the project participants that in designing an embodied order for the class, we might nonlinearly address the myriad issues that concerned them as students. I wanted to begin the project from a place of, as Ehn *et al.*

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[73] See: https://www.groundup.org.za/article/fees-must-fall-2016-where-here/ and https://www.thedailyvox.co.za/fmf-3-0-how-free-education-promises-fuelled-the-2019-protests-2/

[74] [5] See: http://www.thejournalist.org.za/academic-papers/solidarity-during-the-outsourcing-must-fall-campaign-the-role-of-different-players-in-ending-outsourcing-at-south-african-universities/

[6] See: Lesley Le Grange's *The curriculum case for decolonisation* (2019).

[7] https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2019-09-05-addressing-gender-based-violence-on-campus

[75] "Wicked problems" are long-term, complex, interdependent problems whose complexity, interdependence and ambiguity of boundary make them chronic or insoluble. The term was conceived by Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber in *Man-made Future*s (1974) and is widely used in design and other disciplines. Examples of wicked problems include climate change, poverty, and gender-based violence.

(2014:19) term it, designing “with” rather than “designing for”. To do this, I felt I should avoid an elaborate explanation of my motivations and start a process that would hopefully facilitate the group towards *experiencing* the motivations for the project thereby avoiding a 'power of suggestion' situation where the opinions I introduced would influence the group's experience and exploration of the idea.

Framing the Project

Before getting into the participatory work with the group, I began framing my own understanding of the project’s motivations, anticipated plans, and outcomes. I undertook this conceptual process as a means of clarifying the practical application of my thesis, by asking myself: What absence of order did I observe? What specific aspect of order was absent? What did I mean by the possibility of generating order in this specific context? How could I describe it and how could I narrow the area of design focus? As I described in the methodology section of Chapter Two, I divided this conceptual phase into three parts: observation, interpretation, and visualisation. In the interpretation phase I interpreted the experience of the first phase and translated the analysis of the event from an experiential narrative form to a more systemic design-led interpretation. In the visualisation phase I translated the analysis from the previous phase into an archetyping, imagining, and 'visioning' process during which I projected and envisioned the project’s possible solutions and outcomes.

Following *inter alia* Binder *et al.*'s (2011) and Manzini's (2015) position that a design process is built from and in relation to the social processes that are present in the existing system, I began the first “project establishment” phase (Kensing *et al.*, 1998) by observing the relational structures and behaviours that constituted the event of the class. I observed

the event from beginning to end and described my experience and my perception of the group's experience in a phenomenological or affective narrative form. Moreover, I used the framing of what Goffman (using Barker and Wright's (1954) term) calls the "standing behaviour pattern" of the participants, which he defines as "a pattern of conduct that tends to be recognized as the appropriate and (often) official or intended one" for the social occasion (Goffman, 1963:18). Goffman uses the term "social occasion" to refer to the collective gatherings of his investigation, defining these as "bounded in regard to place and time and typically facilitated by fixed equipment [providing] the structuring social context in which many situations and their gatherings are likely to form, dissolve, and re-form" (1963:18). I make use of this definition but refer to Goffman's "social occasion" as an/the 'event' and to the students who take part as participants or alternatively group members. I chose this terminology over that of the 'class/classroom' and 'students' to position the research in a design-based (rather than education-based) frame, and to present the project's findings as relevant to collective contexts beyond the pedagogical.

CONCEPTUAL PHASE

1: Observation

The event takes place in a rectangular converted studio space on the ground floor in the Little Theatre Workshop building of Hiddingh Campus, UCT. The studio has hard floors, is right at the main entrance of the building and has two old, sash windows that open onto the parking lot. Beneath the window is a university-issue table. At the diagonally opposite end of the room are another two windows that have been partly covered and permanently shut.

Aside from the tables, the only other pieces of furniture in the room are two regulation chairs, one of them is missing a back.

As the start time of the event approaches, I arrive at the studio and open the door and windows. The participants mill around the main entrance of the building or on the floor outside the door to the studio. The start time of the class arrives. One or two participants enter the studio. They look at their phones. I wait another few minutes.

I walk into the hall and make pointed eye contact with the participants sitting outside. Swinging out of the door of the main entrance, I call out in the mock-authoritative tone of a sports coach, veering between cheeriness and resignation (often with a rousing series of claps) something like: “Okay, guys, let's go, let's go, it's *drama* time!” The participants respond slowly and reluctantly before they begin to slope, drag or jog themselves towards the inevitable event of the class. We greet each other at the door, some ask how I am, how was my weekend, have I seen this or that series, and others merely enter the room.

The participants do not appear to see the space as they enter it, or to enact any agency in entering it. They are dragged into the studio by forces that are beyond their control but hardly worth fighting against.

The participants drop their shoes and possessions at various points around the room, on top of the chairs or below the table. (Students are generally expected to remove their shoes in practical classes.)

The participants are all familiar with one another. They hold animated conversations in their friendship groups of two to three people. They play out their banter and personal dramas to the unacknowledged audience of their peers and me. Some of them stand alone checking their phones.

I resume my chivvying exhortations, weaving through the group trying to sew them together with my opening instructions of “Alright, phones away, shoes off, let's go, let's go!” The participants begin to mill around the room in an undirected manner. Some of them look like they are trying to find their way out of a forest and have lost the path. There is a general sense of discomfort, of not knowing where to stand or indeed how to stand. The room is closing in on all sides, but the room is invisible. The participants bob around the space around like unmoored boats.

Now comes the warm-up. In theatre education and practice, a warm-up takes the form of a series of games and exercises that are intended to engender collective focus and tune a participant’s voice and the body into an instrument among instruments. I begin the warm-up. The room comes into focus. The participants become a group and pull apart. Become a group and pull apart.

After the warm-up is done, we begin the work of the course. Beginning exercises. Rehearsing with text. It takes around 45 minutes from the end of the warm-up for effects of collective performance to begin working. Through choral performance, the participants stop resisting the group and become the group.

The end of the class approaches. Some participants are deeply inside the work of the course, others gaze out of the windows, someone raises their hand and says, “Excuse me Juliet, but it *is* nearly a quarter to, so maybe we should come back to this next time?” The rest of the participants murmur their assent at this suggestion, and I agree “Alright, yes, yes, off you go. Thank you for your time”. The participants make for their phones and shoes, milling and chatting as they go. Some of them thank me for the class or shout goodbye as they leave the studio.

2: Interpretation

In interpreting the mechanisms that generated the order of the event, my observations were led by Ehn's (1993:63) argument that:

> [T]he production of the world and our understanding of it takes place in an already existing world. The world is also a product of former practice. Hence, as part of practice, knowledge has to be understood socially – as producing or reproducing social processes and structures as well as being the product of them. (Ehn 1993:63)

Moreover, I was prompted by Manzini's contention that the design process is not something that happens in a vacuum but must necessarily develop from (or "transition") from existing conditions: "When a collaborative organization is put into practice for the first time, the people involved work like bricoleurs: the required artifacts are found among those that already exist". (2015:165).

In interpreting the absence of order of the event, I concluded that order was not entirely absent, but rather that it was weak or lacking. According to my framing of order, the event's order exhibited little to no symbolic action, embodied form, creativity, regulation or authority. There were clearly points of structure that kept the event going and enabled it to progress from beginning to end. Goffman's (1963:8) notion of "norms that regulate the way in which persons pursue objectives" and Ehn's (1993) conception of "existing social practice" correspond with these points of structure, that I decided to term the event's potential nodes of order. From what I observed, the nodes of order that produced the event 1) were repeated every time the event happened, 2) caused or produced something else to happen after they happened, i.e., they moved the event forward, and 3) provided the foundational mood for the class, or what Goffman (1971) refers to as the "tone" or emotional structure of the occasion. The nodes of order were not large or sustained

interactions in any sense and as I was to discover, were often disregarded or went unnoticed by the participants of the event. Many of the nodes were interactions that can be defined as greetings and farewells and fall under Goffman's term “supportive interchanges” (1971:73) and “access rituals” that “provide ritual brackets around a spate of joint activity-punctuation marks” (Goffman, 1971:79).

Goffman argues that the social occasion is a relational structure that has “a distinctive ethos, a spirit, an emotional structure, that must be properly created, sustained, and laid to rest” and through this relational structure it enacts authority through “a specification of negative sanctions for improper conduct, and a preestablished unfolding of phases and a highpoint” and causes participants “to become caught up in the occasion, whatever [their] personal feelings” (1963:19). In light of this portrayal and my own framing of order, my impression was that while the event held a clear potential for the collective production of embodied, creative, and symbolic actions of order, the major absence seemed to be the actions of authority and regulation, and the difficulty of generating these actions of order. The event did not generate any action of authority external to the individual. The authority of the event’s order and its unfolding was generated almost entirely by me and the application of my tactics as the teacher and de facto authority.

My other major impression of the event’s structure was a collective (and individual) lack of what is referred in acting practice as “believing” in the dramatic situation (Stanislavski, 1989). This “belief” in the emotional veracity of the dramatic action combined with a committed focus to the development of the actor's character and emotional journey through the narrative action of the play is referred to (often by acting teachers or directors)

as “committing to the moment” or “committing to the action” (Stanislavski, 1989).[76] In social performance, Goffman calls this commitment to the moment “interaction tonus”, describing it thus:

> Whatever his other concerns, then, whatever his merely-situated interests, the individual is obliged to "come into play" upon entering the situation and to stay "in play" while in the situation, sustaining this diffuse orientation at least until he can officially take himself beyond range of the situation. In short, a kind of "interaction tonus" must be maintained. I would like to add that in considering the conduct through which this aliveness to the situation is demonstrated it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that an attachment to, and respectful regard for, the situation's participants and the encompassing social occasion is being avowed. (Goffman, 1963:25)

Goffman qualifies this statement with the observation that interaction tonus builds up over the course of the event and indeed it is the event itself that produces this tonus, saying that “...between beginning and end there is often an ‘involvement contour a line tracing the rise and fall of general engrossment in the occasion's main activity” (1963:18). While I observed the rise of an involvement contour and general engrossment during the course of the event, specifically when the participants were committed to the collective, embodied performance part of the class (i.e., acting together in an ensemble performance) the framing order of the event did not serve, regulate, support or indeed forward this involvement contour. If, via Goffman's thinking, a social event generates an interdependent relationship between “committing to the action” (“interaction tonus”) and the collective order (and authority) of the event, then the interdependent relationship bonds between the “commitment to the action” (interaction tonus) and the causative progression of the

[76] Committing to the action is closely related to Stanislavski’s (1989) “suspension of disbelief” where actors and audience members suspend their understanding that the world of the play is imaginary and commit to its reality for the period of the performance. As I argue in the following chapter, this phenomenon is fundamental to the production of agon.

“involvement contour” of this event were weak. Just as an insecure actor may struggle to commit to the action of the play, so the participants seemed unable to commit to the action of the event. They appeared to have a fundamental lack of belief in the collective reality of the event or its authority. In a play (or fictional, theatrical performance), order (and attendant authority) is produced by the 'world of the play': Hamlet believes in himself and indeed is Hamlet because he speaks the words of *Hamlet*, he lives in Elsinore castle, his mother is Gertrude and his father's ghost has told him to avenge his death etc. The ‘world of the play’ of *Hamlet* enacts the order of *Hamlet*. It appeared to me that the 'world of the play' of the classroom event was neither strong nor coherent enough to generate and sustain belief in the very world that made the event possible. The event did not produce the order that could sustain the structure, attention, or emotional commitment of its participants.

With these overarching interpretations in mind, I move to outline the specific weaknesses (of order) at the potential nodes of order as I experienced them during the unfolding of the event:

- The event has no clear starting point that indicates the crossing over from the outside world into the inside world of the event. There is a general feeling of confusion as to how and when the event begins.
- There is no shared sense of when and how the event should start. I make the individual decision to begin the event. The group does not feel they have the agency or indeed the authority to begin the event.
- There is no acknowledgement that the space of the event and the space outside the event are different spaces.

- There is no acknowledgement that the space of the event (that takes place within the place of the studio) is generated by the group.
- The participants do not feel a sense of agency over their participation in the event nor do they appear to perceive that it is their participation that constitutes the event. There is no sense of collective ownership, authority, or desire to commit to a collective responsibility for the event. The participants are not in the state of negotiating their own active agency as drivers of the situation. They appear to believe that they are subject to an authority they must passively obey and equally passively resent. This belief inhabits the group and the event with a subtle feeling of passive-aggression that is directed at all times to no-one and no 'thing'.
- There is no sense of a collective identity of the group that is separate from the participants' individual, inter-personal selves.
- The event does not have an identity that is generated by the group and separate from than its official departmental identity and the identity I personally assign to it (I.e., the event is identified as T&P 2: Chorus Acting and Juliet's Chorus Task).
- I have no sense of identity specific to the group and event that is separate from my personal identity. This does not mean that I have a poor relationship with the group. Despite their (mostly subtle) resentment of the authority of the event, the participants do not resent me personally. Most of their interactions with me are attempts at personal intimacy that aim to draw me out of my tenuous position of authority and break down whatever remnants of formal

boundaries are keeping us apart and transform our relationship into an entirely personal one.

- I do not believe wholeheartedly in my authority or the authority of the event. I can only believe in it ironically by distancing myself from the authority I do not believe in, vaguely resent, and internally resist. I find myself (as do, in my experience, many of my teaching colleagues in the CTDPS) in a constant struggle of attempting to personally democratise the teaching situation in a way that is purely performative. Through my behaviour, I regularly 'show' the group that I have no wish to oppress them with an old order, authority, or hierarchy, signalling to them that I am a good, contemporary, and egalitarian person who is not actually in charge, because being in charge is an unsolvable personal and political problem that I want no part of and seek therefore to absolve myself of authority. In doing this, my behaviour presents an argument for the individual self and specifically 'my' self, where I place myself outside of the collective concept of authority, not to provide any new negotiation or investigation of it, but merely to serve my own self-image.
- There is no group acknowledgement of the closing of the class.
- There is no group act of thanks.
- There is no group acknowledgement of the 'transformation' from the space of the event into the space of world outside the event.
- There is no farewell.

3: Visualisation

Using Phase 2's interpretation of the weakness of the event's order, I defined nine potential nodes of order and envisioned a sequence of these nodes that consolidated the order of the event and provided a foundation for framing the participatory investigation of the project. The nine nodes of order formed my own conceptual frame for facilitating the participatory process. Through this process I intended to provide myself with a clear and considered framework for my own intentions, reasoning that it would equip me in facilitating the design process and providing me with a starting schema against which to measure the developments of the project.

The primary feature of the order I envisaged is an organisational pattern (in this case, one part following another) of events, which I take to be causative (something happens and causes something else to happen.) From this point, I pose that the sequential, causative, and what Goffman calls "emotional structure" (1963:19) of the event generates it order. Emotional structure (in my application of Goffman's term) is the collective, affective generation of an emotional architecture that exists as an interdependent result and generator of sequential, causative structure. The 9 nodes of order are as follows:

- **To Enter**

  Following Turner's notion of liminality (1966:95 -98) I pose that the act of entering the space of the event is an act of liminality, crossing as it does the threshold between one space (the 'outside' the event) and inside (the event). The 'entering' of the room causes the event to begin for the 'enterer' and it is the collective entering of the space that begins the process of event.

- **To Acknowledge the Space**

The following three 'acknowledgement nodes' are all modes of greetings.

Acknowledging the space recognises the specificity of the space and how it is used specifically for the event. Goffman calls the relationship between event and place its "situatedness" and argues that an activity is situated and becomes situational when it is "intrinsically dependent on the conditions that prevail" within that situation (1963:22). I propose that the conscious action of acknowledging the space and its situatedness is necessary for acknowledging the identity of the event, and the collective generation of its order.

- **To Acknowledge the Individual**

  Following Goffman (1963) the personal greeting conveys (if only the performance of) trust and co-operation. In this context, I suggest that for participants to greet one another individually is to acknowledge the presence of its constituent members.

- **To Acknowledge the Group**

  The action of greeting and acknowledging the group invokes the "self-in-chorus" (and as I detail in the previous chapter) that via Lehmann (2006:129-131) presents the liminal collective body constituted by its individual members and via Jean-Luc Nancy (2000) acknowledges the plurality inherent in the singular, the "being with" that animates the fundamentally social identity of the individual.

- **To Prepare to Work**

  Here I pose another kind of 'entrance', this time into the work that the event frames. I reason that the conscious, collective acknowledgement of the boundaries of the event's objective will give clarity of purpose to the work and more clearly frame the event as a whole.

- **To Work**

  The focal undertaking of the event. In this case, a 2nd year chorus acting class.

- **To Close the Work**

  A collective acknowledgement that the objective of the event is completed or nearing completion. My reasoning here mirrors that of the preparing to work node, where the boundaries of where one practice begins and another ends (and vice versa) must be clarified.

- **To Thank**

  To show thanks and acknowledge the collective effort of the group in generating the event. To collectively acknowledge the event is over.

- **To Leave**

  To cross again from the space of event and into the world outside the event.

THE DESIGN PROJECT IN PRACTICE

In the following sections, I describe and analyse the participatory design project, following the basic blueprint of the potential order nodes I visualised in the third conceptual phase. My analysis offers observations and detail that I found useful or productive and follows the chronological progress of the project without enumerating the exact development of every single session.

Opening Order

To introduce the group to the idea of embodying the event in space and time, I asked them to perform a physical map of how they experienced the event from the very beginning to the very end. I clarified that their performance could be an abstract or realist

interpretation, i.e., they could enact the class as if they were experiencing it, or they could use a more symbolic physical language to express the experience of the class. I made it clear that the improvisation could be entirely experiential, and they did not have to 'project' their performance out to anyone. The only requirements were that the participants used their physical bodies (and voices if they chose to) in and through space.

The results of the improvisation were mostly small-scale, static, muted, performed in the centre of the studio and focused on the participants' individual bodies. None of the participants left or re-entered the studio during the improvisation.

I then asked the group more direct questions on the order of the event as they experienced it and prompted them to visualise the moment-to-moment happening of the event from beginning to end and not simply as a vague, personal experience. My questions went along the lines of "At what point does the event begin?", "What is the first thing you do to begin the event?", and "What moment signals to you that the event is beginning?". These admittedly clunky prompts were met with answers like "We warm up", and "We take off our shoes". I continued to press them with "And before that...and before that?". Many of the answers remained concerned with material possessions and the storing of bags, scripts, and phones. After a lot of back and forth and what started to sound from my side like an interrogation (or a stream of transparent rhetorical questions like "Do you start the event in your bedroom? Do you start the event in the parking lot?") we got to "You walk through the door!" Effectively badgering the answer out of the group was not an auspicious start to the project, but I felt that at least by arriving at the notion of "entering the space" I could move on to the main investigations of the process with a (hopefully) more participatory tone.

Experience: Entering the Studio

I asked the group to imagine an ensemble performance that consisted of only one action: leaving the passage and entering the studio. How would we perform this action? How would we experience it?

In the first response to this provocation, we simply walked (one after the other) from the passage outside the studio through the door and into the space. In the subsequent versions of the exercise, I encouraged the group to explore any different ways we could enter the space. These improvisations included, but were not limited to:

Entering the space as individuals by

- Jumping.
- Rolling.
- Leaping.
- Crawling.
- Walking.
- Running.
- Numerous combinations of steps, leaps, jumps, dances and walks.

Entering the space as a group by

- Walking and shuffling as close as possible next to each other at different speeds.
- Crawling together.
- Rolling along each other's bodies like rolling pins (We had to give up on this one before everyone had made it through the door).

Analysis: Experience (Entering the Studio)

The first version of simply experiencing walking into the studio was notably focused and solemn, with everyone walking through the door very slowly and meditatively. A notable response from one of the participants after he had walked through the door into the studio was: “Now I know where the door is!” This observation seemed to me to be true of my own experience whereby consciously experiencing entering the room, the spatial dimensions of the room seemed to come into focus.

The second version of the exercise was a much louder, more enthusiastic affair and the participants tried to outmanoeuvre one another with increasingly innovative, acrobatic, or absurd ways of getting through the door. Entering as a single group was a loud jostle with everyone trying to stick together and fit through the door. In one of our collective shuffles into the room, someone suggested dropping our heads, and this had a solemnifying effect on the group. The major discovery from this exercise was that moving through the door as a single group inevitably led to a bottleneck situation that forced a single file entrance or moving through the door in two lines of shifting pairs. It was clear that the door (designed in response to the dimensions of the single, upright human body) enacted its own authority on those upright human bodies who passed through it. We concluded, not unreasonably, that the authority of the door was to be heeded if we were to enter the room in comfort.

At the outset of this exploration, I was struck by how the group appeared largely oblivious to the space of the studio and did not consider entering the space as 'part of the class': it was an invisible or a non-event to them. Seen through the prism of the Covid-19 pandemic, this pre-pandemic observation seems especially apposite, and recalls a conversation I had with a friend about our experiences of teaching online during South Africa's lockdown. In response to my impression of the experience as empty and

incomplete, she lamented the lack of liminal spaces in the online teaching experience, saying that she missed the entrances, gates, doors, and changes of visual perspective that created the boundaries of a class. When a Zoom meeting begins it is like someone pops into your living room without coming in through the door and similarly when the class finishes, they pop out of the room as if they had never been there. “You don't,” as Frances said, “get to walk them to the door” (F. Slabolepszy 2020, personal communication, 12 December).

This technological phenomenon of arriving directly at the centre of the action through the instantaneous logic of apps and programs appeared to be mimetically conjured by the group, that is to say, they were enacting their digital psyches in the material world. The participants’ bodies were in the doorway, but their minds, connected to the interminable mind of the internet, were not in the same space. The group didn't seem to know how they got anywhere; they were just there. All the little-times in between, all the liminal crossings, gateway and paths to the centre were invisible to them or were so unimportant as to be rendered invisible.

The crossing through an entrance from one material space into another is the simplest, embodied action of Turner’s (1966, after Van Gennep's, 1960) notion of the state of liminality or “being on or in the threshold”. In comparison to Turner's application of the theory, these liminal crossings of the everyday have no greater social narrative than their brief material action. The threshold (and liminal space) of the doorway allows the connection between rooms and interior spaces and is fundamental to the identity of a room as a place people may access. But Heidegger presents the argument that “things” or objects or actions of architecture are never merely material:

> To be sure, people think of the bridge as primarily and really *merely* a bridge; after that, and occasionally, it might possibly express much else besides; and as such an expression it would then become a symbol, for instance a symbol of those things we mentioned before. But the bridge, if it is a true bridge, is never first of all a mere bridge and then afterward a symbol. And just as little is the bridge in the first place exclusively a symbol, in the sense that it expresses something that strictly speaking does not belong to it. (Heidegger, 1997:99)

This (and later Ingold's, 2000:153-187) argument concludes that building is an action of dwelling and "dwelling is the manner in which mortals are on the earth" (1997:97). This argument is implicit to Heidegger's position the identity of the built environment is not simply material or symbolic but manifestly connected to the identity of human beings as "dwellers". Bjogvinsson *et al.* (2012) use this position to argue that the participatory design space of the "socio-technical" is an embodied "being wit"' material and symbol. Following these, and Alexander's (2001) position that buildings "have life", I pose that the affect of walking through a doorway is not merely moving the body through the material connection between two rooms, but a participatory action of "dwelling" in or "being with" the world. The simple, everyday action of entering and exiting that generates a moment of dwelling inside this liminal space of the 'entrance' is the very archetypal template of our greater liminal experiences. In crossing the limen and walking from one room into another, do we not invoke in the smallest ways the greater symbolic crossings of life, as we embody so briefly the constant emergence of ourselves from thing into another? I pose then, that entering the space of an event is a potentially powerful action, making it an integral part of order, because whatever the purpose of an event, its participants are unable, as online logic would have it, to simply appear at the centre of it. We cannot avoid entering a space to access it and we cannot avoid exiting an event to leave it behind. The simple, fundamental

and overlooked actions of access and egress carrying their symbolism of the everyday and the eternal, are integral to our lives of “dwelling” and to an order of material embodiment.

Experiment: Entering the Studio

Now that the group had experienced and 'discovered' the act of entering the studio, I suggested that we collectively explore designing a collective mode of entering the studio we could perform every time we entered the studio, until we wanted to re-design it.[77] The group reasoned that from our previous 'entering the studio as a group' experience it was impossible or at least very uncomfortable for the entire group to pass through the doorway at the same time. We settled on the group entering the studio one after another in single file. We then improvised various ways of entering the studio with participants performing suggestions and the rest of us repeating their actions. These 'ways of entering' we experimented with included but were not limited to:

- Jumping into the room, through the doorway.
- Walking into the room at a very even, stately pace.
- Crawling into the room.
- Slide-stepping into the room.
- Jumping on one spot just outside the threshold of the door and the studio. Jumping inside the threshold of the doorway. Jumping just inside the threshold of the door, inside the studio.
- Stepping through the door and smacking both hands in a double high five against the doorjamb.

[77] I used the term design to the group without too much explanation or qualification. I had explained in introducing my research to them that I was looking at using performance as a way of designing.

Through these various try-outs and repetitions, the participants collectively settled on an entrance mode. This began with facing the doorway, bending into a high squat and springing forward into the room while making a high rising “pyeeew!” sound that rose up off the hard palate and resonated primarily through the nasal cavity and head. The effect together was something like an excited grasshopper launching itself into the air.

Analysis: Experiment (Entering the Studio)

The participants' drive to contribute to the experiment in ways that focused on themselves as individuals rather than the collective task was a major negotiation of the project. Most of the participants either attempted to come up with the most interesting, acrobatic, or humorous contributions, or to make very half-hearted, non-committal contributions by avoiding committing to the task. The attempt to make an improvisational performance 'interesting' or 'clever' and perform the actor-self rather than respond to the situation is a core struggle presented by Keith Johnstone in *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre* (1981:32-35). This struggle is one that is familiar to theatre teachers and directors, especially in the case of young participants who are often deeply motivated to prove themselves worthy to the task. In my experience, the phenomenon is not limited to theatre and performance but mirrors a more general social struggle where one is faced with a social event or situation and feels (a self-inflicted) pressure to be or say something interesting or entertaining. In my observation of the theatre and performance context (and following Johnstone, 1981) a participant (or actor) either responds to this pressure by the former (interesting, humorous, attention-seeking) or the latter ('opting-out') response. It is important to note that both these responses have a shared root: a feeling of pressure to perform that is centred on the individual self rather than the collective motivation of the

task. It is difficult if not impossible, especially in the company of acting students, to completely mitigate this issue, and I don't think it needs to be completely mitigated, as the practice of collective work is (following Mouffe's 2005 argument for the agon of participatory democracy) an emergent struggle between the will of the self and the will of the collective. That said, I was committed to re-iterating the collective motivation of the task, so when we decided on the action of 'grasshoppering' into the room, I wanted to interrogate the group's choice, feeling that may have chosen the action because of its individual humorous value rather than its collective value. My concerns were allayed by the group's cogent and near uniform response: they argued that the action gave a clear feeling of moving from one space to another and performing it made them feel excited and energised for the start of the event.

Greetings From Space

Experiment: Greeting the Individual in Space

After we had established our (subject to change) mode of entering the studio, I asked the participants "What happens next?". This interrogative dramaturgical technique is presented by Johnstone in *Impro for Storytellers* (1999) as an exercise called "What Comes Next?". The question focuses the participants on the logical development of narrative action and, as Johnstone argues, "allows one action to lead into another" (Johnstone, 1999:134-142). In response to "What happens next?" the participants' responses were variations on a theme of "We put our stuff down". They had suggested this action before as the next logical step in the event, and as before, I ignored their suggestion and pursued my own agenda, asking "Okay, before you put down you stuff, what do you do?'". This was a confusing line of logic because the participants did put their belongings down after they entered the studio,

but I was set on uncovering my next node of order so I wanted to elicit a response that went something like: “We greet the room”. Given that greeting a room upon entering it is not something that had ever happened before (or indeed ever happens as a South African social action) this was a somewhat unreasonable expectation.

Despairing of my interrogations I began another 'leading question' improvisation in the hopes of getting the group to explore the potential significance of greetings. The improvisation I designed was a direct translation of my intentions in that I simply asked the group to walk through the room and experience the act of greeting and being greeted by the people, spaces, and objects. I did not specify whether the greetings should be between individuals/smaller groups/the entire group. I explained that the manner of greeting could be carried out in any physical or vocal interpretation and that it was important to take note of the moment when the participant 'felt' the acknowledgement of greeting and being greeted. “What makes a greeting feel like a greeting?” I asked. “Is it possible to feel that you have been greeted by a wall?” These questions were greeted with solemn consideration by some members of the group and variations on an eye-rolling theme by others, but the group went ahead and improvised greetings with me joining their number.

The greeting improvisation was largely silent, and the participants notably explored the full dimensions of the space. All the greetings were one-one-one, either participant to participant and or participant to object. The greeting actions included but were not limited to:

- High-fiving participants and high-fiving or slapping doorways and walls.
- Making prolonged eye contact.

- Performing complex gestural routines or dances either with or without physical contact.
- Performing simple gestures like touching hands, backs and shoulders and variations on a theme of bowing and nodding. Either with or without physical contact.
- Placing the ear to the wall and floor.
- Kneeling in front of a person.
- Kneeling in front of a wall.

Analysis: Experiment (Greeting the Individual in Space)

Douglas says that people who "prefer unstructured intimacy in their social relations, defeat their wish for communication without words. For only a ritual structure makes possible a wordless channel of communication that is not entirely incoherent" (2003:51). The most notable aspect of the greeting experience was not its silence, but rather its unspoken-ness. The participants used their bodies to make sounds, but no-one said, "Hello, how are you?" or used any of the usual forms of spoken greeting. Compared to their usual voluble style of entering the studio, this appeared to me to be a solemn and solemnifying experience. In the discussion period after these improvisations, I asked the group what their experience of greeting one another was. The main comment was that it felt 'good' and 'nice' to have a moment of acknowledgement with every person in the class and being able to see exactly who was in the group. One participant said, "It wasn't like you versus the class, it was you *and* every other person there". I think this "versus"/"and" distinction is a productive one and invokes again Heidegger (and Ingold's notion) of building constituting dwelling, where building the material world intensifies dwelling and where dwelling is a "preserving", a "staying with things" (Heidegger, 1997:98). If I apply this logic to the construction of an

order of performance, then these nodes of order potentially act as ephemeral buildings (or structures) that support the relational environment and intensify the experience of 'dwelling' by generating participative interconnectivity and collective cohesion.

The participant's comment that described how the act of greeting made them aware of the collectivity of the event echoed an earlier comment about consciously entering the space and discovering "where the door was". This new sense of spatial awareness was the most notable response from this improvisation, and there were several comments on "seeing", "knowing" and "feeling more inside" the studio. The question on what it felt like to greet (and be greeted by) the studio space generated further questions and generative discussion from the philosophical and affective (What did it mean to greet the room?) to the practical (What part of the room do you have to greet in order to greet the entire room?). An especially productive response offered by several participants, was that greeting the studio made the space feel "important". Goffman says that the personal greeting is an action of mutual trust and support that reveals the greeting parties are not concealing any "evil intent" from one another (Goffman, 1971:74-75). If I extend this notion of a greeting that generates trust to exist not only between participants but between participants and the space they occupy, then the act of acknowledging the studio's presence as a 'presence' that is part and co-producer 'of' the event potentially creates a greater trust in the event itself. This idea re-iterates the co-reliance of people and space in Heidegger and Ingold's "dwelling", Björgvinsson, Ehn and Hillgren's (2012) "socio-material assemblies" and in what Henri Lefebvre describes as the social generation of space where:

> (Social) space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products, but rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity - their (relative) order and/(relative) disorder. It is the outcome

> of a sequence and set of operations, and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object. (Lefebvre 1991:73)

Order of the Shoe

Having explored greeting one another and the space, I intended to return to my "What happens next after we enter the studio?" refrain. Before I could follow through with this, a participant who had missed the first few weeks of the course returned to the class, and on hearing what we were doing, responded that he understood the process and had done something similar in rehab, saying "You always put your shoes in the same place". At this, I could no longer ignore the group's earlier assertions that "what happened next" after entering the room was "putting their stuff down". I realised that in my preoccupation with embodiment and space, I had ignored all the material objects that come along with these, and (following Björgvinsson *et al.*, Heidegger, Lefebvre, and Ingold) actively participate in the co-creation of embodied collective relationality in space.

Experiment: Order of the Shoe

Following this revelation and deciding that there was little need for an experiential exploration of storing belongings, I led the group straight to the experiment phase and proposed we explore different ways of removing our shoes and storing our belongings. Several participants then offered suggestions and the group tried these out in practice. We then discussed the pros and cons of each suggestion. This led to a list of conditions that the group deemed necessary for the belongings node of order to work. These conditions were as follows:

- The belongings must be safe.
- The taking off and putting on of shoes should be an easy and smooth process.

- The belongings must be placed in such a way as to not interfere with our working space.

These conditions were problematised by:

- The room having no storage space and only one surface: a +- 1.5 x 1 m table.
- Shoes, especially big sneakers, taking up a lot of space.
- Shoes being smelly/ having the potential to be smelly.

We eventually decided on a configuration where shoes were lined up along the wall under the window and bags placed on the table. The group decided to store their bags and belongings first, reasoning that their hands would then be free to remove their shoes.

Analysis: Experiment (Order of the Shoe)

In not paying much attention to the potential role the participants' belongings might play in the event's potential order, I had ignored the importance of personal possessions, not only as markers of identity, but as material resources and security.[78] The possibility of losing, breaking or dirtying their phones, wallets and bags was a pressing concern for the group, and one that had not occurred to me. In their transition design monograph, Irwin *et al.* (2015:6) observes that "[d]esigners' mindsets and postures often go unnoticed and unacknowledged but they profoundly influence what is identified as a problem and how it is framed and solved within a given context" and indeed my disregard of the group's concern with their things came directly from projecting my own relationship with my possessions onto the design process: one that is fond but (especially in the case of tech devices) not particularly attentive. I love my things, but I do not concern myself with their

[78] Suzuki Tadashi's acting methodology stresses the importance and inescapability of everyday domestic tasks (like cleaning the studio) and he emphasises that performing these tasks are as much a part of the actor's method as specific acting and performance exercises. (Allain, 2003:25)

well-being. I know that many people do not share this feeling and may feel quite the opposite. I assumed that where we put our shoes was not a significant node of order (or part of the design process) because it did not feel significant to me. Goffman's (1963, 1971) meticulous mode of social analysis reveals not only the extreme detail of the moment-to-moment motivations and tactics of social interactions, but the significance of being alert and sensitive to these tactics and motivations. In designing through performance, being sensitive to relational conditions of an event that may appear inconsequential, momentary or even banal is then crucial to adequately shaping these conditions as potent elements of the design process.

The Sacred Something

Experiment: Walk-about

Having established the order of the shoe' after 'entering the space', I asked the group to run through these nodes of order in sequence and “see what happens next”. After we completed these actions, the group began wandering around the room in way that appeared to be aimless but was charged with what I interpreted as a heightened expectation and awareness. The group’s walking was smooth, fluid and focused without being 'driven,' and the space itself seemed to gain a liquid quality, it felt easy to walk through. I noticed the posture of the participants was more rooted and upright than usual.

In the discussion afterwards, the participants reflected on how there seemed to have been no decisive start to the walking, it had just happened. The majority of the group described the walking as feeling nice, meditative and calm. I personally felt like I could have kept walking around the room forever. Nothing happened and yet the experience was gently and deeply compelling.

Analysis: Experiment (Walk-about)

I asked the group what they thought had been happening. What had we been doing? One participant answered that we were experiencing the room. Another said that by walking around the room together, we were greeting the space as a group. We decided that this spontaneous walk around the room would be our next node of order. To clarify what we had done and specify the conditions of the walk, we decided that:

- The walk has no set beginning. When a participant has put down their belongings, they begin the walk.
- Participants aim to be conscious of one another, to 'see' one another without feeling obliged to nod, greet or make obligatory eye contact. Awareness of one another's presence and aiming to be alert to the moving bodies in the room (and not bumping into them) is all that is required.
- Participants aim to be conscious of the dimensions of the room. To notice the floors, windows and the walls without feeling they have to stare at these elements. They aim to feel open to sensing what the room feels like and how they feel in it.

Experiment: Full Circle

In response to my next “What happens next?” challenge, one participant said “Well, we haven't really looked at each other yet”. I suggested that now would be a good time to have a group greeting and we experimented with a number of suggestions that flowed out from the ‘walk-about’. These included but were not limited to:

- From the walk-about, the focus shifts to actively seeing one another, making direct eye-contact and exchanging a hand-touching gesture (including variations on the bow and the high-five).

- From the walk-about, the action moves into jumping into a circle and then jumping into a specific position in the circle.
- From the walk-about, the action moves into standing in a circle and exchanging eye-contact with each participant in the group from one's position in the circle.
- From the walk-about, the action moves into a high kneel and then sitting back onto the feet in a low kneel.
- There were some elaborate choreographies that worked in a relay from participant to participant. For example, a participant crawls through another's legs, then the standing participant in turn crawls through another participant's legs and so on.

After experimenting with these configurations, the group decided on moving from walking into kneeling in a circle. We practiced this action and several participants naturally sat back onto their heels and brought their torsos forward towards the ground into what is referred to as *Balasana* or 'child's pose' in yoga practice. The rest of the group followed this action with many of us putting our palms down on the floor and resting our heads on the backs of our hands. From this position, the group began a low-effort, soothing, mid-register hum common in the first stages of vocal warm-ups. After a time, the hum petered out.

Analysis: Experiment (Full Circle)

The participants were very pleased with this development and especially the hum that seemed to rise spontaneously from the group. It is important to note that humming is a familiar aspect of vocal warm-ups in theatre and performance practice, and the participants practiced these warm-ups at least twice a week in their voice classes. Moreover, humming in 'child's pose' is a common part of vocal warm-ups and voice pedagogy at UCT's CTDPS (Using the practice-based theories of *inter alia* Arthur Lessac and

Catherine Fitzmaurice). Using existing, shared practices in generating a new practice recalls Manzini's position that a design process uses the elements of an already existing system and re-imagines or re-uses them (2015:165). He quotes Ehn, saying: “An infrastructure, like railroad tracks or the Internet is not reinvented every time, but is 'sunk into' other socio-material structures"(Ehn, 2008 cited in Manzini, 2015:165). In this instance, vocal humming was an embodied 'infrastructure' that was shared by the group and could be used in the structuring of collective, embodied order.

We discussed what the ‘circle-kneeling-hum’ felt like. I had experienced it as solemn and embodying a sacral affect. The participants mirrored my interpretation, saying it felt “religious”, “holy”, “serious”, “like praying”, and “like a ritual, a sacred...something”. Kneeling towards one another with our heads bowed embodied a gesture of humility that combined the genuflection of the bow (lowering the body before another person and showing a humility or willingness to supplication) and a supplication to the collective that produced an affect of committing to the group. The non-linguistic communication of the hum generated a single voice through which everyone was heard but no-one was exposed. Moreover, I had the sense that the group was 'making' something in the centre of the circle. Our combined humming seemed to drive forward into the centre of the circle as a vocal outgrowth of our combined creative forces.

I asked the participants if they were happy with this 'circle hum' as the final step of the opening frame of the event and they were very enthusiastic in response. The group’s enthusiasm for the high seriousness, reverence, austere grandeur of this node was notable, and it is an enthusiasm I have observed several times in performing, teaching, and directing theatre. The habitual behaviour of a group may be garrulous and flip, but there is often a

deep enjoyment and unwavering commitment to collective acts of shared and rhythmic solemnity that embody this 'sacred something'. I interpret this enthusiasm as a direct response to the absence of embodied order in people's everyday lives. Douglas says that:

> Durkheim's famous saying 'Society is God', spelt out, means that in every culture where there is an image of society it is endowed with sacredness, or conversely that the idea of God can only be constituted from the idea of society. It follows from the first that alienation from society will be expressed by desacralizing its image. And from the second that the idea of God, dethroned from the centres of power, will be set up again in the small, interpersonal group which is alienated. Thus the image of God loses its majesty and becomes intimate, a personal friend who speaks directly, heart to heart without any truck with instituted forms. This is obvious in the change in the use of the body as a medium for expressing the sacred, from honouring the outside, shifts to honouring the interior exclusively. (Douglas, 2003:173-74)

Following Douglas' argument, if the sacred is not only invoked but *generated* by the embodied collective, then the affect of what the participants called "holy" and "religious" was generated by and existed as a result of the shared form-making of the group and the action of the' circle-kneeling-hum' as an embodied supplication of what Douglas refers to as the symbolic "typology" of the body (2003:18). Accordingly, I interpret the sacred affect of the 'kneeling circle hum' thus: the collective body kneels, affecting the commitment, service and loyalty embodied in the symbol of the high kneel. The collective body sits back on its knees, affecting the gentleness, trust and humility embodied in the symbol of the low kneel. The collective body leans forward into a bowed kneel with the head dropped, affecting the vulnerability, devotion and deference to the Great Collective Self embodied in this position. Finally, the collective voice offers a hum affecting a soothing, pre-linguistic vibration that reaches out to each member of the group that is of them, but outside of them, Lehmann's "sound estranged from the individual body" that "hovers above the whole chorus like an independent entity: a ghostly voice belonging to a kind of liminal body" (2006:30). This

“independent entity” is the voice of the collective spirit generated by the collective sacred body and through it, the group finds its commitment to itself, and to the order generated through its own creative power.

Thank You and Goodbye

After the 'circle kneeling hum' naturally reaches its conclusion, we decided that the participants would stand up in their own time, and the work of the class would begin. We then tried out the sequence of order we had created so far, from entering, placing our things down, walking around into the ‘kneeling-circle-hum’ and into the work of the course. After we completed our work, I asked, “Now what happens next?” there was a rush of similar responses along the lines of, “We get our stuff” and more enthusiastically “We leave!” When I suggested we thank one another, some participants shouted “Thanks!” and made a rush for the door. I thought about how greetings are often physically expressed without words or language: handshakes, waves, shoulder/back pats of various combinations, hugs, kisses, winks, high fives, fist bumps (and under Covid-19, the elbow bump). The same cannot be said for thanks, which are often worded and individually expressed. My own experience of the wordless thank you is the performance of *révérence*[79]at the end of a ballet class. Since I was a child, this practice of bowing or curtseying to the teacher to conclude the lesson has had a great effect on me, and to my mind, has generated not only the 'feeling' of gratitude but the 'being' of gratitude. Although in a traditional ballet class[80] *révérence* is performed between the class (as a group) and the

[79] The custom of révérence that takes place at the end of every ballet class and performance has its roots in the courtly conventions of ballet's beginnings in the Italian and latterly French courts of the 15th and 16th century (See: Kirstein, 1971).

[80] Other disciplines like yoga, kung-fu, and tai-chi have similar formalised greetings to the instructor at the beginning and ends of classes.

teacher (as an individual) it has been my own experience that performing *révérence* is an entirely collective experience. Even at times when I have not felt particularly charitable towards my ballet teacher or indeed myself, there has come a moment when, despite my distraction or annoyance, I have curtseyed myself into a sudden and unsought gratitude as I collectively inhabited the *révérence* for the studio, my teacher, myself, my fellow dancers, the change-rooms, the walk to the gate, the music rising over the sounds of the traffic, and woven through it all, the dance.

The collective embodiment of the *révérence* is a node of order that holds within its structure the power to act upon its enactors independently of their individual motives. I pose then that to enact the collective form of gratitude, is in some way, to become (in the moment of performance) gratitude, or alternatively to have gratitude enacted upon oneself.

Experiment: Thank You and Goodbye

In the next session, I suggested we try a group 'thank-you'. At this point, the group's attention was increasingly consumed with the work of the course and their enthusiasm for designing the class event was beginning to flag. In light of this, I suggested we do a two-part experiment coming up with a 'way of thanking' and a 'way of leaving'. The group then improvised around thanking, coming up with choreographies that included but were not limited to:

- A round of applause.
- A single clap of the hands.
- A bob.
- Waving both hands in the air above the head enthusiastically.

- Forming a circle and running as a group towards the centre of the circle and back out again.

After a brief experiment with these combinations the group decided on the single clap combined with the bob to end the class. Some participants wanted to repeat the circle formation, but the majority were in favour of remaining where they were and 'aiming' the ‘bob-clap’ towards the rest of the group.

After this was decided, I suggested we think about leaving or 'saying goodbye' to the event. Several participants said that they thought the 'bob-clap' expressed sufficient acknowledgement of the group and acted as a closing and 'goodbye' action in one, and the rest of the group agreed with this assessment. I repeated my “What happens next?” and one participant said, “The same as coming in, but backwards”. This meant putting on shoes, picking up belongings and exiting the studio.

Analysis: Experiment (Thank You and Goodbye)

The bob-clap farewell was easily performed and allowed the group to finish the event quickly. According to Goffman, the expansiveness of a farewell gesture or ritual is relative to the length of time until the next event (Goffmann, 1971:88) and the brief and snappy 'bob-clap' farewell reflected this position. I thought that ease and speed were reasonable motives for this node of order, but I also felt that the group's enthusiasm for the project was diminishing, and with it their sense of agency over the process. At this point, although they were participating in the project, it started to feel like something they were doing for me rather than something they were interested in doing together. I was hesitant to pursue a further investigation on exiting the room, and felt that if I did, the group would just be making things up because I asked them to, rather than with any meaningful intention. With

this in mind, I asked the participants how the experience of entering the studio might differ from the experience of leaving it, reminding them of the energy and drive of the 'grasshopper pyew' entrance. Some responded that to leave a space is a less energising experience because it comes after the effort of the event. Several participants agreed with this, while others said they still felt more energised to leave the room. There was the observation that leaving was a quieter experience, “Because you're thinking about what just happened”, “Or what you want for lunch!” rejoined someone else. I suggested that one of the differences between entering and leaving the event, is that on entering, you commit to the collective identity of the group, and on leaving, you are released back to your personal self. I illustrated this idea by pointing out that there was no collective destiny waiting for our group in the parking lot outside, we all went our separate ways. The group supported this idea and one participant suggested that if leaving the event was coming back to yourself as an individual, then it was up to each participant to decide how they wanted to leave the event and there was no need to come up with a collective action. The group supported this point, and I deemed the active designing process of the project complete.

Running Order

Having completed our design 'prototype' and affirmed it as an open-ended, flexible process that could be challenged, negotiated, and altered at any time, we launched the order of the event. It ran as follows:

- Grashopper Pyew Entrance.
- Shoes Off.
- Belongings Store.

- Walk-about.
- Kneeling-Circle-Hum.
- *The Work*
- Bob-Clap.
- Shoes on.
- Belongings Collect.
- Back to the Self Exit.

In a design process, it is the testing of the prototype that determines its workability, and if the participatory design process is one of continual process, the product of the process should continue in a perpetual state of participatory development. As Björgvinsson *et al.* say: "[T]here is design during a project, but there is also design in use. There is design (in use) after design" (2012:107). The prototyping part of this project included aspects of trying out the design within the event and elements of the design going beyond the design process, or what Björgvinsson *et al.* (2012) refer to as "infrastructuring" where the design process-in-use may (in concert with the existing socio-techncial relationships of its contextual system) change and develop over time, not only as itself but as an influence on other unexpected systems or relationships (Björgvinsson *et al.*, 2012:107-108).

In the following analysis, I present the experience of running the entire order of the event and describe its development over the remainder (3 and a bit weeks) of the term, highlighting some of the positive and negative outcomes.

Interpreting how the project's embodied order worked in the context of the live, repeated event meant conducting an analysis of its relative form and function. Manzini says that:

> Form and function have a complex relationship that must be uncovered or generated case by case. It is precisely in this complex interaction that design finds its deepest motivation. Design therefore does not operate only on the function of artifacts, nor only on their form. It operates on both, knowing full well that they are independent yet interacting. Thus, it is a question of finding a language that enables us to talk about the function and form, the utility and beauty, not only of material objects but also of relationship systems. (Manzini, 2015:36)

Accordingly, my analysis looks to "find a language" to understand how the event's order (as function) is served through the seminal elements of performance (as form) and how this form interacts with, and as an avatar of, function. Moreover, through this analysis I look to determine failures of function that are manifested through performance (and its constituent elements) and how these work/do not work in generating function. These potential problems include those presented as 'weaknesses of order' in the conceptual phases and those manifested by the running of the event.

Grasshopper Pyew

From the outset, the very first act of entering the event became a sticking point, because for the order of the event to begin, every participant had to be present and waiting at the door and this was seldom the case. The group's lack of punctuality for the event itself was one of the crucial problems I had recognised but not addressed in the project. I hadn't thought of experimenting with designing *the time preceding* the start of the event, and as such, the event was stuck in a similar position to the one it was in before the design process, with no order of beginning. In practice, the event continued to be delayed, and in some cases even more delayed than it would usually be, as the group members who were punctual waited for everyone to be present in order to enter the space. As the weeks went on, the delay of the 'entering the space' meant that, tired of waiting, several participants began entering the space at random, so that by the time some participants had reached the 'circle-kneeling-

hum', others had only just entered or were taking off their shoes. This upset the collaborative action of the order, delayed the event's beginning, and disturbed the calming, collective affect of the order nodes, specifically the ‘walk-about’ and 'kneeling-circle-hum'.

On reflection, it was *the beginning before the beginning* that was the source of collectivity that enabled the event’s order. If there was no collective action from the start, the 'order' of the event did not exist as an entirety, even though it was played out in parts by nearly every member of the group. Each node of order became a separate action that did not make a whole, and no matter how enjoyable each section may have been to the participants, because the collective, embodied, relational experience of order ceased to exist, the order of the event ceased to exist. If we had continued the design process, this would have been a key problem to address and replay into a new design process. As it was, I let the order play out over the rest of the term without suggesting any changes and waited on the group to raise any issues they experienced.

The group did not raise any issues. Despite my participatory aspirations for them, their sense of agency over the order of the event was inactive once the designing process was complete, and for most of the participants, the order of the event became (like so many old, hierarchical formalities) something they simply repeated without feeling a sense of participatory agency over.

The action of the 'grasshopper pyew' entrance was enthusiastically embraced by the group over the course of the project. The dynamism and humour of the movement, and the possibility for each grasshopper to compete with the preceding grasshopper in jumping higher or 'pyew'-ing louder made this an energising and uniting start to the event that remained effective, even though as the order of the event wore on, it often became a

standalone node of focus that failed to connect to the totalising order of the event. Because so many of the participants enjoyed performing the 'grasshopper pyew' together, they often waited for the latecomers to arrive, and through this engagement with the action, arguably took on a sense of collective authority for starting the event.

Shoes and Belongings

The action of the 'shoes and belongings' node was as functional as it had been in the designing process. On reflection, I considered how we could have explored this node in more imaginative ways and made use of a subtler and more considered exploration. Despite my initial disinterest in the action, the 'shoes and belongings' node was faithfully performed by the group over the course of the project. When I filled in for a different class in which some of the participants were members, they showed me how they had used the 'shoes and belongings' idea here and allocated a place for their things. Shortly after this, a colleague in the CTDPS encouraged me to attend one of their classes "…and get the students to put their things away". I was a bit indignant at being viewed as some sort of Mary Poppins figure and having my grand design intentions interpreted as tidying up, but I did have to concede (echoing Binder *et al.*'s observation, 2011:159) that the participants interpreted the project through the lens of what was most important to them, and this happened to be their belongings. Moreover, it was important for me to accept that whatever I viewed as the project's motives and production of order, I could not design or control how the group interpreted these motives or how they implemented their insights from the design process to their own applications outside the event.

Walk-about

The 'walk-about' never again achieved that first improvisational sense of effortless, floating awareness. The participants became much more consciously performative of their awareness, so that the sense of the movement achieved a rigidity and a self-conscious theatricality than had been absent in its initial execution. The quietude and focus of the action remained however, and (in and of itself) this node was successful at connecting the participants to one another and the space.

Kneeling-Circle-Hum

A striking and effective compositional aspect of the 'kneeling-circle-hum' was the stillness of its specific geometric placement and the contrast between it and the organic, wandering movement of the 'walk-about' that preceded it. The moment of coming to standstill between walking and kneeling was particularly effective at marshalling the sense of collective focus and energy. I have already discussed the sacred affect of this order node, and this sensibility endured (to a greater or lesser extent) throughout the rest of the process. Earlier I mentioned the group's longing for a feeling of reverence and grandeur, but I want to add to this a longing for seriousness. A seriousness that the body brings, that cannot hide in the ironic distance of language, but must be itself. I have the sense that the participants (and I include myself here) experience of seriousness is limited to the mind. They want to perform their seriousness through language and their digitised selves ("I am very serious I think about social injustice and climate change") but they are unable to 'be' serious. It is this 'being serious' or 'the seriousness of being' that is offered by the wordless, ensemble performance whose embodied, symbolic affect is an action of solemnity.

Bob-Clap

As the event came to an end, the thanking action of the 'bob-clap' contained within it a powerful agonism of symbolic affect. The single, collective clap exists in implicit, absurd contrast to the 'round of applause' of many, collective claps, and because of this, the affect of the single clap was unexpected and humorous. Ending the class with this sudden, loud clap seemed to hold within it a feeling of intimidation or violence, for example, someone might clap their hands together to kill a mosquito, or in front of someone's face to intimidate them or give them a fright. The single 'round of applause' was brief and sharp, like a living exclamation mark, and in combination with the brief curtsey-like bob, it created an agonism that allowed the participants to express an expression of antagonism or violence at the same time as a gesture of appreciation and humility. This paradoxical, agonistic node of order was appreciated by the group, and they were enthusiastic in giving thanks and giving one another a fright, all while celebrating their victory over finishing the event. I found the action useful in that it seemed to embody the possibility of releasing negative emotions towards the event, the group or me, and then immediately salving them in the conclusion of thanks. This embodied dialectic of 'thank you' and 'fuck you' may embody a momentary struggle between conflicting motives, but it also enables an emergent expression of the collective self, where the many-ness of fleeting, paradoxical thoughts and feelings may pass through a group and be released. In his teachings on accessing spontaneity, honesty, and most critically, creativity in performance, Johnstone (1989:83 -88) talks about expressing (within the limits of the improvisation exercise) repressed impulses, or what he terms, “psychotic thoughts”. In the case of the ‘bob-clap’, the psychotic thought was not expressed in language or in the fixed psychological universe of narrative, but in the ephemeral, symbolic moment of the collective body in performance.

CONCLUSION

As we completed the term, Fällman's notion that a design process may produce “knowledge over devices” (Fällman cited in Binder *et al.*, 2011:159) was especially apt, and it seemed to me that this project was a research phase for the following iteration of the project. Moreover, this discovery affirmed Manzini (2015), Irwin *et al.*'s (2915), and Escobar's (2018) position that design exists in the continuous participation between process and emergent design result.

The project did not explicitly achieve my aim to design an order that would produce a collective authority that was simultaneously dependent on and independent from the will of each individual participant. As I have described, the order of the event broke down, did not work as we had designed it, and in some cases did not work at all. In positioning authority as an aspect of order, I must presume that the authority produced through a faulty and vacillating order will itself be faulty and vacillating.

The issue of the event's order being dependent on the potential (and unrealised) order of the time before the event was a fundamental problem of the design, and consequently the ‘order without’ toppled the 'order within'. The 'order without' was partly held by the nested institutions of the CTDPS and UCT, systems that circumscribed the event. The interconnection and interaction of systems within systems is a function of complexity theory and as Irwin *et al.* (2015) and Manzini (2015) attest, the consideration of complex systems is key to designing meaningful systemic transitions. Binder *et al.* (2011) and Bratteteig *et al.* (2013) all contend that for design to be genuinely transformative it cannot be considered within isolated parts of an organisation but needs to address the holistic

interaction of the entire organisation. Designing the greater institutional orders of this event was clearly outside of the scope of this project and arguably outside of the scope of any single design project. That said, the 'outer order' of the university, although not directly 'addressed' by the project, played a fundamental part in its development. That said, I did not feel the project's limitations were caused by the failure to address the order of the greater CTDPS or UCT systems, but that the project did not develop deeply or significantly enough to be able to meaningfully perform and develop order within these systems.

The second fundamental issue of the project concerned the commitment of the participants to the collective aims of the project. Manzini (invoking Buber and Cipolla) shows that designing relational and collaborative systems relies on the personal involvement and commitment of the participants, saying that: "[i]n their nature, however, lies also their limit. Everybody has resources, in terms of their willingness and practical ability to get involved, which, extensive as they may be, are not infinite" (Manzini, 2015:23).

The participants involvement in the active, 'designing' phase of the project was strong, but as I have mentioned, when the project shifted into its everyday functioning, the commitment of the group weakened. This outcome revealed that without the continued, active agency of the participants, the functioning of collective, relational order is impossible. While this was frustrating, it was not altogether unexpected, and revealed the pertinence of Manzini's (2015:152) argument that to design a participatory system, one must first design the conditions for participation or those that encourage 'users' of the system to become active participants within the system.

These issues notwithstanding, the nodes of order we designed did enact moments of external authority that were partially or at least at times effective. If the existing order (and concomitant authority) of the original event was extremely weak or non-existent, the project succeeding in generating an order (and authority) that was stronger than the original and at least intermittently convincing. The methodological aim of the project to use performance as a mode of design, was in my view, extremely successful. Through the tools and techniques of performance, the group explored and discovered the problem of an absence of order, and through these same techniques were able to investigate and respond to the problem. Although order's principal actions of regulation, authority, and meaning-making were not consistently replicated over a significant period, the collective, embodied, creative, and symbolic practice of order was experienced by the group as a generative and regulatory phenomenon that the participants both made and were managed by. The action of performing order generated significant responses from the group and revealed performance as a potential and powerful structuring force in their social lives. Moreover, the specific weaknesses of order that I outlined in Conceptual Phase Three were directly addressed in that:

- We made a clear starting point and mode of entering.
- We acknowledged one another as individuals and as a group.
- We acknowledged the space and the different modes of being outside and inside it.
- We attempted to generate an identity of the 'group' that was separate from our inter-personal relationships and was specific to this group and the event.
- We clearly framed the beginning and the end of the 'work' of the course.
- We acknowledged the end of the event.

- We collectively thanked and greeted the group.
- We considered our manner of leaving the event.

I naively anticipated that the process of performing order would generate collective authority, participant agency, and commitment. As I have just described, this did not occur, and was a paradoxical expectation given that the collective performance of the event's order required participant commitment for it to take place. Despite these knotty problems, the proceedings of the project revealed that designing embodied order itself is a practicable and actionable undertaking with notable and investigable results. The order we designed fundamentally changed the event, and when we began performing the order as an everyday function of the event, its potential power was compelling. On the few occasions when the order ran as a single, cohesive process it generated a deep sense of interconnection and focus. On one or two occasions, the order supported the event, and I felt my potential release from individual authority and the frail threads of outworn orders. In these moments, the promise of a new, embodied order and its collective authority seemed to be on the horizon.

Chapter Five

An Order of Consent

The man's body is sacred and the woman's body is sacred,
No matter who it is, it is sacred –
…
Each belongs here or anywhere just as much as the well-off, just as much as you,
Each has his or her place in the procession.
(All is a procession,
The universe is a procession with measured and perfect motion.)

Walt Whitman in "I sing the Body Electric" from *Leaves of Grass* (2018:120)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes a design project aimed at producing an order that negotiates consent around intimate boundaries and physical proximity in the practical classes of UCT's Centre for Theatre Dance and Performance Studies (CTDPS). The project was carried out with a group[81] of 2nd year acting students over a series of workshops between the 10th and 14th of February 2020.

Inciting Incident

The rape and murder of UCT student Uyinene Mrwetyana at the Clareinch Post Office, Cape Town in August 2019 led to nationwide demonstrations protesting the violence perpetrated against women in South Africa (Meyer, 2020). At UCT, demands for greater

[81] Between 15 and 21 participants took part in the 2-hour workshops over 5 days.

protection and safer spaces for women were especially impassioned. At the CTDPS, where the practical form of study involves (often intimate) physical interaction, the students' call for regulations on physical boundaries presented a challenge to live performance's fundamental principle of embodied relationality and its place in the department's pedagogical practices.

In the September of 2019, following protests and vigils, the CTDPS proposed a series of meetings and workshops to discuss these issues. Sara Matchett (head of the CTDPS Theatre Section at the time) proposed a student-led plan to form a CTDPS Gender Based Violence (GBV) Task Force and "collectively create a vision statement and code of conduct (or a CTDPS Campus Citizenship Policy) around how we want the CTDPS to acknowledge and protect the dignity, rights, equality, and safety of womxn on our campuses" (Matchett, 2019. CTDPS general email. 12 September). These meetings were divided into two working groups: one comprising women (and those who identified as women) of the CTDPS students and staff, and the other comprising men (and those who identified as men) of the CTDPS students and staff. Acknowledging the issues inherent in the polarity of this solution, Matchett said that given that the issue was centred on violence against women, these divisions were initially offered to create a space for women "to express themselves freely without being self-conscious or perhaps censoring themselves because they are in the presence of men" (Matchett, 2019. CTDPS general email. 12 September.)

The women's meetings[82] (which I attended) were initially productive in terms of enabling the participants to express their feelings of pain, fear, and outrage about Uyinene's

[82] The women's and men's meetings continued for 2 consecutive weeks and were called off in the third week due to dwindling attendance.

death and the broader issue of violence against women, as well as giving the group an opportunity to raise specific problems they experienced or perceived in the embodied, relational work of the CTDPS. A pressing concern about the late arrival of university transport was able to be directly addressed, but apart from members of staff re-iterating the university's sexual discrimination policies, codes of conduct, and channels of complaint, there were very few material suggestions for addressing how we could address the issue of negotiating intimate space and performance practice. Many participants were in support of a possible 'code of conduct' but there was very little clarity on how this was to be instituted. Some participants suggested signing an agreement form before each class, others said that women should be allowed to decide who they touch/are touched by in a performance class, scene, or rehearsal. This proposal was taken further by the suggestion that every student should be able to choose whether they wanted to interact with others in a scene, class, rehearsal, or staged performance. Other potential solutions related directly to physical safety, with some participants suggesting self-defence classes for the women of the CTDPS and the university as a whole.

On the third weekly date of these meetings, the participants had dwindled to two or three, the group had not drafted a collective vision or code of conduct and the suggestion box for the submission of ideas was empty. I then suggested to Sara that I hold a series of workshops to explore the negotiation of intimate boundaries in performance work. She supported the idea, and in October 2019, I offered a series of voluntary workshops to the CTDPS student body that I titled “Designing Body-Space Rituals for CTDPS Practical Classes”. Only one person arrived at the first workshop, and as it was impossible to begin a collective design process with just the two of us, I abandoned the workshop idea. Sara and I

remained invested in the potential of the project, reasoning that the issues remained pertinent to the students, and attributing their lack of long-term investment in the matter to their exam commitments. Sara agreed to schedule the workshops as part of the 2nd year acting students' introductory course of the following year. We planned for the findings of the workshops to be presented as part of the CTDPS' termly 'performance week', with the hopes that the findings could be developed and incorporated into the structure of the department's practical classes.

The Problem

In planning the design workshops, I started by identifying and clarifying the problem for myself to begin the participatory phase of the project with a clear conceptual foundation for my intentions. I interpreted the problem as an absence of order whose precise definition was unclear to me at the outset of the project. Unlike the previous project that was addressed to the order of a single, repeated event and designed by the participants of that event, this project envisioned a potential application to future, repeated events within the institution of the CTDPS, many of which did not include the project's participants. That said, the project's designing group belonged to the greater group of the CTDPS student body, and the order we looked to design belonged to the event of a practical performance class or rehearsal – defining, repeated events of the department's practice-led pedagogy.

In the context of this project, there was an unmistakable declaration of a collective problem combined with a demand for change. It was to this demand that the project was addressed. My opening interpretation of the logic of the problem ran as follows:

- On a macro-level, the occurrence and threat of sexual harassment and gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa generates trauma, fear, and mistrust based on the

physical and psychological harm a body is able to enact upon another body. The enactment of this harm is dependent on physical proximity.[83]

- On the micro-level of performance practice and pedagogy at UCT's CTDPS, this trauma, fear, and mistrust is implicit in the context as the institution is embedded in the national circumstances of GBV.
- Theatre and performance practice is dependent on physical proximity. This creates the potential circumstances for both the occurrence and threat of GBV and may incite the affect of trauma, fear, and mistrust. The removal of physical proximity cannot be removed without removing the practice of theatre and performance.
- The contradictory problem then lies in negotiating the definitive characteristic of theatre and performance (i.e. its physical proximity) through embodied relational, physical means, i.e. through means of performance.

Designing Language

In my initial thinking, I recognised the absence of an order that revolved around embodied relationality, but I was unsure exactly what this order was or how to define it. Student demands for behavioural regulations that would provide agency over the problem and protection (or at least the feeling of protection) indicated that something was missing, but no-one could describe what this was, or propose the form through which behavioural regulations could be manifested.

[83] In the context of this study, this logic assumes that gender-based violence, specifically rape and physical sexual harassment are physical embodied acts. It does not discount the existence of physically remote violence and harassment.

I variously named this absence as one of collective negotiation, physical proximity, and relationality. Manzini's comment (2015:36) about language having an important role to play in considering the relationship between form and function is especially apposite here, and I felt strongly that finding a way to name and describe the problem was itself a design process; one focused on the role language plays in the framing, interpretation and functioning of the design project. The framing terms I had come up with were combinations of “negotiating”, “physical proximity”, “relationality”, “intimacy”, “intimate space”, and “body-space”. Apart from being clunky, these terms seemed vague and didn't help me to clearly define the focus of the project. I spent some time shuffling words around and came eventually, via “agreement” and “mutual physical respect” to “physical consent” that I finally simplified to “consent”. From my present perspective this seems like a self-evident choice, but the process of identifying (an order of) consent was itself an integral part of the design process. Through this process, the conceptual logic of the project was not only illuminated but made manifest. Having identified consent, I reasoned that what we were looking to design was an order of consent that was addressed to the absence of an order of consent. But what constitutes the absence of an order of consent? In the previous project, the absence of order was one based in event. The absence of order I address here is based entirely in interpersonal relations. It is an absence of order that proclaims any and all relational space, time, and event as produced by and through the body and subject to its active, emergent state of being “singular-plural” (Nancy, 2000). It is an absence of order that proclaims and administers the dialectical power and fragility of the body, recognising its capacity for enacting harm, recognising its capacity for having harm enacted upon it, and

most significantly, recognising its capacity for negotiating, ameliorating, and mitigating harm.

Framing the Project

The project looked then to investigate ways of designing an order of consent that could be applied or explored in classroom, rehearsal, and performance contexts within the CTDPS. The nature of this context could mean a practical[84] class, rehearsal or presentation where participants relate to one another in close proximity and may potentially touch, hold, and/ lift one another. In scenic acting contexts where performance is explicitly narrativised, participants play out physical and emotional intimacy 'in character' that may be of an emotionally vulnerable, sexual, and/ or violent nature.

At the outset of the project, I imagined that an order of consent could potentially fit into any CTDPS event as a free-standing model that participants could perform together and agree upon, with the motivation of 'shaking on it'. This idea, combined with the framing of the project's aims through language constituted my initial conceptual phase. Following the participatory design approach (Ehn, 2008; Björgvinsson *et al.*, 2012; Manzini, 2015) of founding a project on the participants' responses to the problem, I began the participatory process with a group discussion, anticipating that the results from this would reveal the detailed concerns and needs of the group.

CONCEPTUAL PHASE

1 & 2: Observation and Interpretation

[84] Dance, voice, or acting.

Opening Discussion

To begin the discussion with the group, I broadly framed the issue of GBV and the issues that had been raised by the student body about the contentious issue of physical relationality when performance is a practice of physical relationality. Like the previous project, I did not use the term order or describe the hypothesis of my research in any depth but looked rather for the motivations of the project to be developed by the participants over the course of the project. In starting the discussion, I wanted to make sure that the issues raised at the GBV meetings the previous year were a matter of concern for this particular group and I invited them to speak about whatever issues, feelings, observations, or ideas they had around using their bodies to work with one another. I made it clear that there was no agenda for the discussion apart from sharing whatever they felt like sharing.

In introducing my intentions for the project, I briefly presented the idea of thinking about performance as a design tool that could be used to negotiate consent in the practical classes in the department. I framed this through the analogy of thinking about staging a play as a mode of design, where a world is brought to life and 'protected' through playing out the relationships of the play. Rehashing my favourite *Hamlet* example, I said that by performing *Hamlet* we not only bring the play to life but protect it. That a play may be protective of the world it creates (whether or not it is a linear narrative like *Hamlet*) is an idea partly inspired by the familiar entreaty made by directors when they call on actors to "Defend the work!" Most often uttered in the final stages of a rehearsal process, there is always a desperate urgency to this statement, meaning as it does that the play is alive and those who give it life are tasked with defending that life. 'Defending' the play takes the form of complete commitment and presence – the play cannot be left to fend for itself; it requires

total presence on behalf of its makers, or it will die. Actors and audience members alike know the desperation a floundering performance can cause: the fervent longing to be swallowed by the earth, or better still, to be unborn and never have to endure a moment of the unbearable self-consciousness of the unprotected performance. A performance's potential for being unprotected lies in its imaginary foundations, it is only kept alive by belief in its pretence. *Hamlet* is not real. Everyone knows that, but in the moment of performance, through what Stanislavski (1989) calls "the suspension of disbelief", there is the potential for everyone to cease knowing that. In a weak performance where the imaginary world is not protected, it is revealed for what it is, a deadly sham. In a strong (or 'defended') performance, no-one, neither the actors nor the audience would dare cross that boundary between the real and the imaginary and cry out: "But this is just stupid make-believe!" More than that, no-one, neither the actors nor the audience, would even come close to imagining such a thing, because a strong play is so fully alive, so completely protected, that it obliterates the real of reality and replaces it with the real of the imaginary.[85] Performance's power to simultaneously make and protect a world and in doing so engender belief and absorption in that world generates an agonism through the struggle between that which is real and that which is unreal or imaginary. In this sense, the imaginary does not obliterate the real, but through a powerful agonistic struggle with the real, generates attention towards the struggle, and consequently generates belief in this

[85] This argument echoes director Peter Brook's (1980:11-17) notions of "deadly" and "living" theatre. Deadly theatre is moribund, boring, and irrelevant not because of its content, but because its conception and execution are imitations of what has come before: established tropes and the reflection of cultural expectations of what theatre is and ought to be. "Living" or "immediate" theatre (Brook, 1980:110-156) is theatre that takes hold of the ephemeral, spontaneity implicit in the practice, responds to the present, is improvisational and not tied to the burden of the cultural and historical expectations of the form.

emergent conflict between the real and imaginary, where a new world is always on the brink of being born, a world at once real and unreal and entirely convincing.

This idea (or rather a considerably less coherent version of this idea) occurred to me as I was introducing the project to the group, and I posed the question of whether it was possible to make a performance that not only binds its participants and witnesses together but generates protection for those participants and witnesses.

In what follows, I present the major concerns raised during the group discussion through my own interpretive classifications of those concerns. The group was initially hesitant to speak. I re-iterated that I was not seeking any 'right answers' or 'specific responses' and the participants should feel free to share whatever they wanted to. The first few responses were stilted, but discussion soon became animated and engaged.

Boundaries

A participant said she would ideally like the group to “eliminate uncomfortable feelings in space and get a safe energy so when people are interacting, no-one crosses any boundaries”. There was support for this idea, and it led on to a discussion on how difficult it was to negotiate personal boundaries with others. “Where do they begin and end?” was a pertinent question. Someone brought up the issue of the existing relationships in the group, saying: “You might be very 'touchy-feely' with someone outside of the studio, but to act like that in the studio sometimes feels inappropriate and like you might be taking advantage of that relationship”.

The debate on interpersonal boundaries extended into the boundary of the self and the self in space. A participant brought up the difficulty of trying to align what he called the “outside self” and the “inside self”, and the struggle between “bringing yourself to the group

space of the studio" and "leaving your other self at the door". This led to a discussion on distinguishing between the domestic self and the performance self. A participant said he didn't struggle at all with distinguishing between these selves, because he felt that acting a character gave him "a world of trust" that was separate from his personal world and he felt safe inside it. A counter to this opinion was the observation that not every performance class (workshop or rehearsal) is framed by a character-narrative context, and in many of the classes there is no character 'world' in which participants could place their trust.

Trust

A participant asked, "If you are an actor you have to trust to be able to act, but what if you don't want to trust, or you feel that you can't trust?" This elicited a response asserting that you can only trust others without fully knowing whether you can trust them. Other participants responded that it was impossible to trust anyone. I suggested that instead of thinking about trusting an individual, we could think about the potential of trusting the group and the collective trust that group generates. I added that in collective performance maybe it was possible to "fake trust 'til you make trust" and say "I trust our togetherness" rather than "I trust 'you' specifically". "Well, that's what culture is," rejoined a participant.

Power Relations

One participant brought up "the feeling of being forced to do things and of having to do what you are expected to do, or what a teacher or director tells you". Several participants muttered their assent to this. In response, I asked if this was a specific example and whether a director or teacher had told the participant to do something they found compromising or abusive. They gave a resolutely negative answer but continued to pursue a vague and innocuous objection that ran along the lines of "Why do I have to do things I

don't want to do?" I took this grievance (and the vague mutterings of assent that followed it) as revealing the general, anti-authoritarian feelings of 20-year-old university students and indeed the 'anti anti-authoritarian' sentiment I described in the previous chapter. The exchange did not really contribute to the conception of power (and power relations) as a significant aspect of consent, and I decided not to pursue the subject directly and assumed it would come up in indirectly during the project.

Acknowledgement

A number of participants brought up the issue of wanting the opportunity to acknowledge feeling strange or uncomfortable with a fellow actor or group member without it being a 'big thing'. One participant said, "You can be willing to feel uncomfortable and to do what you're required to do, and still acknowledge that it might be uncomfortable or that someone is actually distressing you. It needs to be normal, and we must make people feel safe when they say that there is discomfort".

In addition to the concerns voiced by the group, were concerns I had about the group's general attitude towards the issue. These I framed as "Lens of the Individual", "Mind Over Body", and "Perfect Solutions Now or No Solutions Ever".

Lens of the Individual

One participant asked why it was necessary to investigate the issue of consent "when it is so easy to plan with someone before a scene where and how you will touch each other and agree on it". This response, and several other responses on different points in the discussion revealed an interpretation of collective work as produced entirely through individual and linguistic relationships. Even in a collective setting where most of the work undertaken by the participants takes place in groups, the participants appeared to think of

themselves as partaking in a series of one-on-one relationships rather than the collective, "being-with" (Nancy, 2000) relationship.

Mind Over Body

In my view, the problem under discussion was clearly produced through embodied relations and addressed through the embodied, relational practice of performance. The group's presentation of the problem and their suggestions about addressing it was almost entirely cognitive, linguistic, or ideological. The language the participants used to describe potential solutions referred to "seeing", "knowing", and "acknowledging", there was no talk of "doing". One participant did directly refer to her own body, saying "touching" and "being touched" but thereafter her potential solution to the issue she raised was a cerebral, ideological process that would take place in the mind of the imagined other, and did not refer to any relational physical action on her or anyone else's part. The ideological framing of the statements this participant made[86] supposed the potential transgressor (who may have transgressed physical boundaries, committed abuse, or sexual harassment) coming to a violent, moral realisation of their wrongdoing, 'understanding' it and stopping it. This outlook, offered in instructive terms of "must know", "should know", and "will know" had an affect of avenging righteousness to it: the wicked would be shown the error of their ways and shamed by them. But how and by whom? It seemed to me that this attitude was a kind of magical or religious thinking in that it imagined a painful revelation taking place in the mind of the evildoer through authoritative judgement from an unspecified source.

The question of the purpose of the project came up a few times, with the insinuation that in focusing on an embodied approach to the problem I was avoiding the power of talking.

[86] This framing was mirrored by several other participants.

One participant directly asked: “Why is it just the body? What about talking?” I countered this with the argument that performance is an embodied practice, and the voice is a part of the body (See: inter alia Linklater, 1976). I went on to emphasise that designing with the body does not mean that the body is mute, or that there is no speaking, but that the communication of the relational body is given equal authority to that of discursive, spoken communication. I re-iterated that it was my proposed idea (not an irrefutable fact) that the problems and difficulties of interpersonal work arise from embodied relationality and in attempting to address these problems and difficulties we should consider employing embodied relationality. I asked the group to consider how much we use thinking, writing and talking in our social lives, in media, social media, and academia to address social issues of this kind, but we never use the body to engage with these issues. The response to this idea was largely one of disbelief, with a participant countering “That's because you don't address issues with the body”. To this, I offered (via Schechner, 2004:8-10; Lecoq, 2000) an example of a soccer game, suggesting that soccer players solve the ‘problems’ of the game (how to score a goal, how to defend the goal, how to get past other players and prevent other players from getting past them) with their bodies. This example was received as humorous, or even as an actual joke. Participants answered that soccer was just a game and that the problems of soccer were not problems but “the point of the game” and soccer was “not life”. I countered (via Douglas, 2003; Gebauer & Wulf, 1995; Schechner, 2020) that soccer was at least some kind of representation of life and held a symbolic power that was compelling to those who played it and those who watched it. I referenced Schechner's (2020:8-13) characterisation of games and sports as performances that achieve the intention of overcoming obstacles and affirming collective identity through symbolic

action. I suggested that if we used soccer (and my earlier example of the play) as models of 'worlds' that make meaning, negotiate and protect the world (See: *inter alia* Gebauer & Wulf, 1995; Schechner, 2020) we could conceivably design a world through which to negotiate our concerns.

Perfect Solutions Now or No Solutions Ever

The group's ideological framing of addressing the problem seemed to contribute to their commitment to it being unsolvable, and I found they were compelled by *having* rather than *addressing* the problem. With a 'wicked problem' like GBV and sexual violence, it is understandable that the prospect of addressing it may induce despair or resignation. But the issue presented to the group (and to the larger group in the meetings of 2019) was focused on a limited context which to my mind reduced the issue to a difficult but certainly (at least partially) addressable one. The 'insolubility attitude' expressed by the group was not exhibited solely through the direct responses of the participants, but through an affective stance (not limited to this group) where the importance of a problem is legitimised only through its insolubility. The corollary logic of this stance is: if a problem is addressable, it is not so much of a problem, and the resulting logic is: if a problem really is serious, it cannot be solved. A variation on this attitude manifested in the group's request to be provided with the solution (to the problem) before we had begun any investigations. A number of participants expressed disbelief that we could design an order of physical consent that could protect everyone all the time, or even anyone at any time, with the implied logic that it could not be done and should therefore not be attempted. This was a reasonable concern, and my response was that I did not know if it was possible and stressed that we were exploring the problem and were not likely to find any quick or easy

solutions to it. I used the example of signing a contract, saying that a contract is not magical, it cannot prevent people from breaking it, nor can it protect its contracting parties in every case or prevent conflict between these parties, but entering into a contract legitimates the agreements therein as existent, significant, and breakable. By designing an embodied order of physical consent or trying to 'make a contract' with our bodies, we could not, I suggested, prevent all issues of abuse of this consent, but every time we performed the order (and 'entered into the contract') we would be affirming that our interpersonal contracts are real, breakable and demand to be witnessed.

3: Visualisation

In this phase, I considered my interpretation of the group discussion and planned a frame through which to lead the practical explorations of the project. In light of the act of witnessing/being witnessed as a fundamental identifier of performance (See: McAuley, 2010:254; Schechner, 2020) and my analogy of 'witnessing a contract', I reasoned that the project should investigate developing an order of consent that would function as a bearing of witness that allowed participants to:

- Affirm that the work to be undertaken is embodied and relational.
- Negotiate individual physical boundaries and proximity.
- Negotiate collective physical boundaries and proximity.
- Acknowledge the interplay of power relations implicit in working with relational, physical proximity.
- Acknowledge the vulnerability inherent in working with relational, physical proximity.
- Acknowledge potential feelings of dissent and an outlet for this dissent.

- Contract a collective and/ interpersonal agreement that recognises the physical autonomy and right to respect of each person who is taking part in the work.
- Build collective trust.
- Build interpersonal trust.
- Build conviction in the performance of the order.

I envisioned the overall order of consent to comprise three modes:

- Group-to-Group: where the group witnesses and acknowledges itself as collective witness and custodian of the order of physical consent. I envisioned this mode and the following mode to take place in group events and classes.
- Individual-to-Group: where the group witnesses and acknowledges its individual members and their negotiation of physical consent. I envisioned this mode to connect directly to the preceding one.
- Individual-to-Individual: where specific individuals of the group acknowledge one another's negotiation of physical consent. I envisioned this mode to potentially connect to the previous modes but also to be used as a discrete action that could be used by participants specifically when rehearsing scenes/scene-driven performance where they are performing with a small number of acting partners.

Considering that the project was not connected to an established event and in light of the complexity of the group's reaction towards my proposal, I wanted to begin with an improvisational motif with which to frame the project, hoping that it would act as a way of focusing and connecting the different sections of the process. The idea of improvising around a particular theme or idea is a common one in performance practice and follows theatre theorist and practitioner Jerzy Grotowski's "plastiques" improvisation approach

that focuses on isolating and articulating the body in specific and rigorous detail (Grotowski, 2012).

I thought the notion of the 'inside' and 'outside' self that a participant described in our group discussion was a particularly generative one that had great interpretive possibility as a guiding symbol for our exploration that referred to the negotiation of the body and could potentially evoke:

- The inside of the self and outside of others (and the inverse of this idea).
- The inside of the individual and the outside of the collective (or potentially the inverse of this).
- The material inside (the internal organs) and material outside (the skin) of the body.
- The affective inside (what a person may feel, hide, or retain) and affective outside (what they may express, give, or offer) of the body.
- The inside and outside of the space and happening of the event.

I also felt that the 'inside/outside' symbol invoked protection and potential care, suggesting that the outside protects the inside (or potentially vice versa). Another generative idea was that the outside and the inside are not two separate ‘things’ but an interdependent co-productive relationship, was a generative one. With these considerations in mind, I began the participatory designing process of the project.

THE DESIGN PROJECT IN PRACTICE

Group to Group

The practical process of the project took place over four days. The sequence of events is presented here as it progressed over that time.

On the first day I asked the participants: “When you enter the studio as a group what is your first experience of space and each other?” This was a similar instigating prompt to the previous project, with the emphasis placed on the relationship between the participants in space rather than on the individual's experience of the space. Some participants answered the question verbally and I suggested they answer it through performance and explore the experience. This led to a 'naturalistic' re-enactment of the beginning of the event, with the participants acting themselves out, in a largely comedic and/ironic manner, the result of which ended with most of the group chatting to one another in their friendship cliques of 2 to 5 people. I then asked the group to look around and observe the results of our exploration. The group was divided completely along gender lines and to some extent along racial ones, and there were a few lone individuals who were clearly left out of the smaller cliques of the group.

I asked the participants if they felt this was an honest reflection of what happened to their group at the beginning of a CTDPS event and they concurred. I asked them if they perceived any potential problems with what they had performed. They responded that the group was “divided”, “some people were left out”, some groups were bigger than others and there were several “couple” amalgamations. One participant commented that the situation didn't create the feeling of “one group” or “all of us together” and the group agreed with this. These responses developed into the motivation for our initial exploration: how do we come together as one group? Here, I introduced the 'inside/outside' symbol and suggested it as a way of considering the problem: “How do we get everyone from the outside, inside?” To this, a number of participants said: “We come together”, “We make a circle”, and “We greet each other”. I then proposed we improvise on these suggestions,

starting from our current groupings and trying to find a way to bring the outside, inside and the inside, outside. A participant asked how this could be achieved and I suggested we try and find out by considering our intention and simply moving around the room.

Experiment: Into the Spiral

The group walked around the room in silence, initially with some discomfort at not knowing what to do, and eventually relaxing until the walking achieved a similar affect to that of the 'walk-about ' of the first project: an effortless sense of occupying space together. As this went on, the group began forming a spiral towards the centre of the room that eventually brought the walking to an end because the people in the centre could no longer move any further inwards. The structure the group made was not a particularly geometrical or strictly 'spiral' but moved through various larger and smaller spirals that even when they bulged or became ungainly kept the general shape of a whirling, circling movement that was larger on the outside and smaller on the inside. I thought of the shape as a 'constellation', a picture of the milky way turning in my mind. I invited the participants to look around and see what they had made and suggested we continue to consider the symbol of 'inside/outside' as we went on with our explorations.

From that point, we tried out several variations on the spiral. First, I suggested repeating the movement, with an emphasis of acknowledging one another through 'soft' eye contact[87] with an emphasis on an unforced awareness of others rather than 'staring' at one another or feeling the need to exchange a mute hello of eye-contact 'greeting'. On the next attempt

[87] The “gentle eye contact” technique is commonly referenced in theatre practice and pedagogy and comes through a combination of somatic practices notably the Alexander Technique (See: McEvenue, 2002) and the practice of “soft eyes” used in Aikido (See: Dang & Seiser, 2012).

we continued the spiral motion until the centre could no longer move and the outer layers of the spiral became tighter and tighter until everyone in the group was squashed up together at the centre. On the third attempt we spiralled into the centre while trying to remain as far apart as possible. To do this, we started from the furthest points in the room and retained a set distance from one another. On our final attempt, we spiralled into the centre with focused eye contact while attempting to avoid any physical contact. This proved difficult and a number of participants protested that it was impossible to achieve because they couldn't see where they were going.

Analysis: Into the Spiral

In the discussion following our exploration, I asked the group what they had thought, felt, or observed about the spiral movement. The group observed that some people were closer inside the circle, and some were further outside the circle. One participant said it felt like "acting out statistics", and another that it felt like "making a map". I expanded on the "map" observation, suggesting that if making the spiral together was making an embodied map of the group and our feelings about proximity to one another, how could we use this map to express our feelings about our proximity to one another? The consensus response was that if a participant did not want to be close to others, they could stay on the outside of the spiral, but if they felt like they could be close and intimate with the group, they could place themselves towards the front or the inside of the spiral.

This opening spiral exploration gave rise to the 'proximity logic' of the project, where a participant's 'inside' sense of how comfortable they felt with the other members and their personal sense of physical boundaries could be articulated and measured 'outside' as a material, symbolic spatial arrangement of the collective. I interpreted this spatial

organisation as a mode of representing physical consent at the initial level of group engagement, where simply through greeting and acknowledging one another's presence, each participant was able to represent an internal sense of their proximity preference and witness that representation in every other participant. Over and above representing and witnessing, as a sensate collective the group was able to perform and embody its own pattern of boundaries.

Experiment: Shaping the Spiral

Following on from the idea that members of the group could define their placement in the spiral, I suggested that during the walk into the spiral, each participant consciously decide whether they wanted to be closer to the 'inside' or the 'outside' of the spiral. I emphasised that this was clearly not going to be an exact measurement but a 'felt' spatial positioning that should come out of and be relative to the movement of the group. Following this experiment, we tried two extreme, 'fixed' versions of this idea. In the first, the entire group decided they wanted to be 'inside' the spiral, resulting in the group squashed together in a tight clump. In the second version, everyone wanted to be 'outside' the spiral, resulting in the group forming a circle.

Experiment: Voicing the Spiral

The participants at the centre of the spiral were in close proximity to another and they unintentionally brushed up against or touched one another during the spiralling process. There were also several involuntary 'brushings past' between participants that occurred as a result of moving together towards a central point. I reflected on touch as the seminal marker of proximity and wondered how touch between participants might be expressed as an action of the group's negotiation of physical consent. Lessac says:

> We use the voice...to defend ourselves, challenge the positions and beliefs of others, justify our motives and actions, motivate the actions of others, and reveal or share our thoughts and feelings. Our voice and speech are our first lines of defense and our chief weapons of offense. (Lessac, 1997:10)

I considered sound and the human voice's production of sound as a mode of signalling alarm, alertness, or warning and suggested that as the participants moved into (their chosen spacing of) the spiral and touched or brushed against each other, they should utter a sound or word to 'indicate' the touch to the group. At first, the participants interpreted this in a mock-ironic manner, giving melodramatic screeches and yells upon touching one other. To mitigate this, I suggested that they approach expressing a sound as a simple signal that did not highlight an individual performance, but rather let everyone in the group know of the incident of touch. I used the example of a siren or the 'ping' sound of a microwave contending that there is nothing else to the sound but the intention to alert. I also suggested they consider the proximity of one another and the effect this proximity had on the modulation of their vocal volume, tone and projection, asking "How do you use your voice when you are 2 metres from another person? How does that differ from when you are 30 centimetres from them?"

On the next spiral attempt, the participants made simpler, often very brief vocalisations, some of them with the mouth closed. As the spiral went on, the sounds became softer, gentler, more intimate, and were only communicated at the level of the people in the group. Standing a few metres away, I could barely hear the vocalisations of the participants in the centre of the spiral.

Experiment: Completing the Spiral

The people (or often the person) at the centre of the spiral completed the collective movement by slowing down and coming to a halt, basing their decision on how close they wanted to be to the other people at the centre, or the impossibility of moving any further. After we had reached this end point several times, I asked the group “What happens next?” One participant suggested that each member of the circle rotate around every other member in turn, which the group decided was ungainly and didn't smoothly connect to the movement of the spiral. Taking another suggestion, we tried focusing on and synchronising our breath. This was more successful in terms of flow from the spiral, but there was some disagreement around whether we should be breathing together or expressing our own individual breathing patterns. From there, we settled on every participant standing in their final spiral position and turning around on the spot in order to witness the spatial organisation of the group and make eye contact with everyone in it.

Analysis: Shaping, Voicing and Completing the Spiral

In its entirety, the spiral process:

- Began from the participants walking around the room.
- The group gradually moved into a spiral shape that was created through the participants defining their spacing and choosing their 'inside' or 'outside' positioning in the spiral.
- The participants vocalised any incidents of physical contact to the group.
- The participants stopped moving when the spiral reached its end point, stood in place and slowly turned on the spot, observing the spiral around them and making intentional eye contact with everyone in the group.

I interpreted the spiral action as simultaneously collectivising and individuating. In performance, it brought the disparate elements of the group together, and provided an opportunity for an initial acknowledgement of the collectivity of the event and the conscious experience of the group in the space. This experience of collectivity was qualified by each individual participant's capacity to set the spatial terms of their own feelings of personal space in relation to the group (and acknowledge the spacings of others).

In moving and vocalising the spiral and their proximity within it, the participants presented a kinetic, spatially embodied map of consent to one another. The spiral's dependence on the changing intentions of its members meant that every time it was performed, it enacted the group's own agency as a body and the agency of those members within it.

I interpreted the kinetic symbol of the spiral as a continuum of the 'inside/outside' negotiation between the group members. The 'turning on the spot' at the end of the spiral contributed to this sense of continuum, where the group's turning movement continued within each part(icipant) as they took on the spiral shape as an individual movement and used it to greet and bear witness to the collective.

In our group discussion, I asked the participants what they felt about performing the spiral and what it had achieved. There were several responses on the theme of 'seeing everyone' and feeling a part of the group. Some participants said it felt meditative and calming. Others responded that they liked that they could choose how close or far they were to the other members of the group. I asked whether they thought this was an effective way of seeing 'where everyone stood' in relation to physical proximity. The response was generally favourable and their response to the 'sounding' of the spiral was especially

positive. A number of participants commented on the gentle, meditativeness of this action and someone mentioned that it felt like the group was communicating their feelings without talking. Expanding on an earlier response that the spiral felt like 'a map' I considered how the movement could act as a plotting out or forecasting of the event to come in that it mapped out the intentions of the group. In the group's slow and gentle performance of the spiral there seemed to be an assertion of respectful intent and an embodied blueprint of how the group should enact its collective relationality.

As an opening action that introduced a consensual mutual relationship between the group members bodies and personal space, I found the spiral action to be compelling and effective. Some participants expressed their suspicions of the process, questioning how making a spiral could negotiate the terms of working intimately with one another. I encouraged them to continue asking these questions but cautioned that our investigation was still underway, and it was too early to be able to make any definitive judgements of the process. In response to this critique, I asked them what they thought was missing from the spiral process and how we could add to it or develop it. One participant answered that this spiral wouldn't work for a dramatic scene rehearsal, a couple or a smaller group and it didn't give individuals the chance to make physical consent agreements with one another. Using this response as a conceptual springboard, I moved our exploration from the group-to-group context to that of the group-to-individual.

Group to Individual

My plan for the next phase of the project was to lead an improvisational exploration around group-individual (and vice versa) physical consent, with the general idea that the individual could directly assert to the group their bodily autonomy and personal space. As I

detailed earlier, I had already projected that I would explore three physical consent modes (group-group, group-individual and individual-individual) that would ideally connect to one another and form a single cohesive order of physical consent. That said, I had not projected any potential outcomes for this process and was relying on group participation and improvisation to lead the designing process.

The final position of the spiral (with some participants far apart and others squashed together) was not a conducive shape to begin the next exploration. I envisioned the group moving into a circle (as it is the most efficient relational shape for equality of spacing, sightlines, and central focus) and saw the need for a coherent and meaningful link that connected the group-group action of the spiral and the next (as yet unknown) group-individual action.

Spiral Transition

I put the ‘link’ idea to the group, qualifying that it was important that the link itself played a meaningful part of the order and did not simply act as a way of getting from one place to another. I exemplified this through a comparison with an acting performance, saying that when an actor plays a character and they are not actively speaking dialogue, they do not simply stop acting and just wait or move around the stage until it’s their turn to 'act' again: they remain in character and the character is a structure that links the meaning of the play together. This seemed to be a helpful example, and there were several suggestions in response. Those that we tried out included:

- Walking and spiralling back outwards into a circle.
- Running out to the edges of the room and then forming a circle.
- Walking out of the spiral and filing along each wall of the studio.

One participant suggested a variation on the children's singing game called “Sayivula”[88] (*Vula* means “open” in *isiXhosa*, *Vala* means (to) “close”, the combination of *Sayivula/vala-azwi* is the action of ('we are') opening and closing). In the game, the participants start in a closed circle and sing “*Sayivula*” and then jump outwards chanting “*-azwi, -zwi, -zwi*” on each jump. This process is then reversed when jumping back into the circle with “*Sayivala-azwi/-zwi/-zwi*”. The participants were very responsive to this suggestion, it was fun, energising, and had a lighter, diffuse, and more rambunctious energy than the solemn focus of the spiral. Because our starting point in the spiral was 'closed' we decided on a combination of “*Sayivula-azwi/Sayivala-azwi/Sayivula-azwi*” so that the participants could use the three sets of jumps inwards and outwards to place themselves outwards in an ‘open’ or wide circle.

Experiment: Performing Physical Consent Tasks

From this point we discussed designing a way for every member of the group to have an individuated moment of negotiating their bodily autonomy with the group. As before, several participants immediately questioned how this was possible. In order to go some way towards negotiating these questions and concerns, I devised a series of instructive improvisational tasks for small groups of participants (between 3 and 4 people) that I hoped would enable the group to materially experience modes of performing embodied agreement, assertion, negation and negotiations of these. The improvisation tasks were as follows:

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[88] I have seen this alternatively spelled “*Siyavula*”, “*siya*” meaning “we are” in the Nguni languages. The participant who suggested the movement pronounced the word *Sayi* rather than *Siya*, and I base this spelling off his pronunciation and Zandile Bangani's Master's Thesis *Taking hold' of mobile phone stories in a Cape Flats reading club* (2017:74) where she describes the game and uses the “*Sayivula/vala*” spelling.

1) Individual participant expresses willingness to the group.

2) Individual participant expresses unwillingness to the group.

3a) Individual participant asserts their own personal space.

3b) The Group agrees to this assertion.

3c) The group asserts its personal space.

3d) The participant agrees/disagrees with this assertion.

4) Negotiate personal space with a small group of people.

Using an aspect of Grotowski's "Plastiques" actor training technique of isolating and exploring the smallest actions of physical movement (Grotowski, 2012) I asked the group to consider the parts and places of their bodies where they feel more and or less vulnerable, re-iterating our guiding symbol of 'inside/outside'. Here, I used the example of the 'inside' or relative softness of the stomach versus the 'outside' or hardness of the spine, the 'inside' of the inner upper arm versus the 'outside' of the outer shoulder. The responses and improvisations were diverse, and I will not describe them in detail here. In the analysis section, I focus on the useful elements that were developed through these tasks and detail how we expanded on them.

Analysis: Performing Physical Consent Tasks

After each small group had worked on their tasks, they performed them for the entire group. Some of the improvisations were presented in a figurative mode, but the majority were presented in a mock-realist, dumb-show style. This style of physical performance (and gestural communication) that uses gestures to stand in for words is defined by Lecoq as "pantomime" and "relies mainly on hand gestures, supported by the attitude of the body" (Lecoq, 2000:107). While Lecoq affirms the technique as valuable, he critiques the limits of

its applicability and refers to its direct but necessarily fragmentary relationship to sentence structure, saying that "it requires a special syntax which is different from that of spoken language" (Lecoq, 2000:107). To this critique, I add the contention that in using embodied performance as a simple and direct translator of syntactical, spoken language, the body is reduced to a mute signaller of mental logic rather than the motivating co-generator of an embodied, relational logic. Considering the time constraints of the project and not wanting to turn the process into an acting class, I merely mentioned this critique to the participants and did not pursue any alternative or further interpretations[89] of the task.

Despite this direct translation issue limiting aspects of the expressive potential of the tasks, many of the improvisations that the groups offered were interesting and allowed the participants to experience or at least see the beginnings of a negotiative embodied mode. In our feedback session, I asked the group to discuss which tasks (or elements of tasks) they found effective or ineffective and why this was so. Through analysing and using aspects of several 'small group task' presentations, the participants focused on 'how' the individual could demarcate and assert their bodily autonomy and a sense of their proximity requirements to the group.

A Three-Part System

[89] Other physical performance modes codified by Lecoq include "figurative mime" where a performer uses their body to represent spaces and objects (Lecoq, 2000:108) and "cartoon mime", which is a collective mode that is the embodied analogue of silent cinema and "uses gesture to release the dynamic force contained within images...Rather than the actor representing words or objects on his own,
this language is made up of images expressed collectively" (Lecoq, 2000:108). Another important physical technique of Lecoq's is the *"mimage"* where the performer expresses an internal state through an external embodied language, or as Lecoq says, "to express whatever has no image in our interior space" (Lecoq, 2000:110). Elements of these modes, whether they were formally known to the participants or not, formed some part of the performance language of the tasks.

The task the group deemed the most effective took the 'inside/outside' guiding symbol and expanded on it to make a three-part system that demonstrated the individual's feeling of personal space, willingness to physically engage, and sense of proximal vulnerability. These three parts were expressed as 'inside/close/willing', 'outside/far/unwilling' and 'between/medium/indifferent'. The system was primarily played out through the performance of spatial relations between the participants. In discussing this approach, a participant commented that it was like a traffic light: "Green, red, yellow or go, stop, wait". Another participant countered with: "It's not like that at all, because it's clear to everyone what traffic lights mean and it's not clear what this 'inside/outside/between' system means". I thought this debate on the potential machinic semiotics of the system was useful and recalled my earlier enjoinder to the group to consider the 'ping' of a microwave when trying to express a simple and clear instructive sound that was without (excess) interpretive baggage. This was another example of the symbolic logic of non-human 'machine performance' (traffic light) being applied or analogued to the symbolic logic of embodied, human performance. And in this case, the human performance was not only found wanting, but found unable to perform systemic coherence. My own counter to this was that the three-part system need only be coherent to its participants because it was necessarily a relative, relational system, and did not have to be universally coded[90] like a traffic light. And yet this question of interpretation bothered me because the ability to

[90] Among several others, Chandler (2002:27-36) and Bignell (2002:15-16) say that the semiotics of the traffic light are culturally embedded, and their meaning is apparent without (or with limited) interpretation value. For example, when I approach a traffic light and see the green light, I do not ponder whether it is telling me to address unresolved issues with my mother, because its only available meaning is "go". Marusek (2014) and Caivano (1998) argue that the amber light does not present an immediately unambiguous instruction, i.e., whether to "slow down or speed up".

express clear and unambiguous boundaries around mutual relations seemed to me fundamental to the success of the project.

An embodied semiotics (following *inter alia* Goffman, 1971 and Fleishman, 2012) poses that the iterative performance creates difference and expands the potential interpretation of this difference. The 'wave' gesture of the hand is arguably limited in its meaning to that of greeting (“hello” and “goodbye”) but as Goffman shows (1971:81-82) within this limit there is an array of interpretive and stylistic action: a wave can express joy, irony, and dismissal, it cannot be reduced to a single, simple gesture without interpretive associations. It was this interpretive baggage, this ever-expanding potential of meaning – this *performance* that seemed to be confusing and tripping up our progress. To try and overcome this confusion, I returned to the traffic light comparison, reasoning that the success of its design rests on limits: there are only three options (two opposite positions and one intermediate position) and nothing beyond them; there is no violet, peach or cerise to confound the clarity of the red/green/yellow system. Our potential three-part 'inside/outside/between' system could similarly enact limits on the ever-expanding interpretive capacity of performance and create clarity around the mutual relational and boundary needs of the participants.

Experiment: Three-Part Consent System

I suggested that we improvise around the three-part structure and come up with a system that was coherent to the entire group. Depending on their preference, participants worked either as individuals or in groups and came up with three modes of performances (or parts thereof) that expressed the three-part structure. The results of these improvisations were then performed to the entire group, and as before, we selected aspects of the performances

that we found compelling, effective, or useful. Having made these selections, the whole group then worked together to generate an overarching three-part system together.

The participants dubbed these three parts 'intimacy vibes' and they played out as follows:

- From the final position in the circle after the "*Sayivula/vala*" sequence, each participant stepped forward into the centre of the circle and asserted one of the three 'intimacy vibes' to the group.
- The group responded by repeating the chosen 'intimacy vibe' to the participants. This continued until the entire group had asserted their 'vibe' and had it affirmed by the group. The 'intimacy vibes' are detailed as follows:

1. 'Inside/Close/Willing': Stamp the Clap

The individual participant stepped forward into the circle and performed two stamps followed by a clap with the arms overhead. The movement was energetic and produced the affect of a cheerleading routine. As individuals, the participants were enthused by performing this part, and the group response towards the individual assertion was especially strong in generating a mutual feeling of supportive enthusiasm.

2. 'Outside/Far/Unwilling': Crossover

With the palms facing the body, the participant crossed their hands over their chest and double tapped their chest/inner shoulders. This was followed by a simultaneous dip of the head and a 'see-no-evil' position. The combination of the crossed arm position and the double chest-tap seemed to paradoxically embody the affect of a 19th century Romantic ballet (like Giselle) and the warlike antagonism of the Maori ceremonial dance[91] the *Haka*.

[91] The Haka is performed by the New Zealand national rugby team before international matches.

This combination seemed to express: “I'm vulnerable, don't touch me – or I'll fuck you up”. The crossing of the chest and heart was a protective self-hugging action that also expressed the feeling of feeling cold and/or vulnerable. The ‘see-no-evil’ action was more of a pantomime narrative gesture and directly expressed wanting to hide, to not be seen, and the feeling of feeling sad and/or vulnerable. Compared to the exuberant camaraderie generated by 'stamp the clap', this action was a gentler more serious affair that generated not only a solicitous affect but one of attentiveness where the focus of the group was concentrated on the individual participant rather than the group.

3. 'Between/Medium/Indifferent': Patting Hum Turn

With the elbows bent at right angles to the torso, the arms extended out and the palms facing downwards, the participant turned on the spot, humming an 'mm' while moving the hands up and down in a small patting motion. The patting motion expressed an affect of “it's okay, it's alright” like the comforting action of patting someone on the back but also the sense of asking someone to “slow down” or “take it easy”. The patting of the palms in mid-air also recalled a gesture that expresses middling-ness or of feeling “not too bad”. Combined with the turning and the hum, the patting motion embodied a peaceable diffidence that articulated reserve in emotion and judgement.

Analysis: Three-Part Consent System

Having formalised the three-part system and connected it to the circle, we tried out several cycles with participants changing their 'intimacy vibe' choices as we went around. After this experience, the group became far more enthusiastic about the process and for the first time since we started the project there was the sense of the potential of what was possible. There was a sudden rush of suggestions about altering what we had designed and

proposing what we could design. The pressure of time meant that it was not possible to explore these suggestions, and we agreed that our three-part system of individual-to-group physical consent (while flexible and open to change) was workable for now. We resolved to move on to designing the order of physical consent between individuals.

Individual to Individual

Before we began the individual-to-individual exploration, I asked the group what they wanted to achieve through this investigation. Responses included “Agreeing to respect each other's personal space and boundaries”, “Make intimate rehearsals more comfortable”, and “Make it easier to trust one another”. I asked them to consider these motivations during their explorations and reminded them of our guiding 'inside/outside' symbol. From here, the group divided into pairs (and a single group of three) and conducted their own improvisations. As before, the smaller groups performed their findings for the larger group.

These individual-individual physical consent modes manifested as two distinct types. The first type, each participant presented a separate action/performance directed towards their partner(s). In the second type, the participants made a single integrated performance system between them. In both these types, there were examples of pantomime or literal linear narrative logic, where for example a participant might indicate a part of their body and follow this with a gesture of “No” or “I don't like that” by waving their hands in front of their body. In two instances this was followed by a “...or I'll fuck you up” gesture where the participant showed a fist or swaggered towards their partner in a confrontational or intimidating manner. Other examples were less literal and led by a more symbolic gestural language of the body. Some were highly choreographic and performed or 'danced' with an emphasis on making a 'good' or artistically commendable performance. Others were more

focused on the connection between the participants and less on the aesthetic merits or formal considerations of the performance.

After each performance, the group responded to what they had seen, offered suggestions, and discussed the aspects of the performances they found effective or notable. Unlike in the previous feedback sessions, our task was not to select elements of performance for use by the group, but to try and interpret the different elements and approaches of an individual-to-individual consent mode. We agreed that each individual-to-individual mode was unique to the concerns of its participants and only they were able to judge its effectiveness through their own relational experience. This potentially meant that greater group's opinions were not applicable to this part of the project, but I viewed the interactive interpretive process as integral to the project as it allowed the participants to further consider and apply performance as a tool outside of dramatic practice.

Observing how other participants used performance to design and negotiate physical consent enabled the participants to apply their critical understanding of the elements of performance and observe how the mechanics of these worked towards making each physical consent mode. Moreover, in describing their observations, the participants followed Manzini's line of “finding a language” (2015:36) by trying to accurately explain the interactions between the form of performance and the function of the physical consent modes. Identifying an action of form like: “she moves her hand slowly across her eyes and keeps her gaze fixed on the floor” and interpreting how this action of form appeared to function (or could potentially function) were seminal processes of the project's development.

A notable aspect of the "reciprocal" form and function relationship (Manzini, 2015:36) was the collective interpretation of an order's apparent functionality (in that it clearly appeared to negotiate physical consent) through its perceived dramatic and aesthetic ability to compel the viewer. In nearly every case, the group read the dramatically and aesthetically compelling performances of order as successful or effective. In this context, dramatic compellingness appeared to rest primarily on:

- Open, clear mutual engagement between the performing participants.
- Strong objectives that were enacted by the performing participants either together (i.e. a mutual intention) or separately. Stanislavski's (1989) pursuit of objectives holds that character motive is not only the driver of dramatic action but of the compellingness of action. For example, to walk across a room with the intention of putting out a fire will produce a more compelling affect than walking across a room with no explicit intention.[92]

The aesthetic compellingness of the order rested on:

- Intentionality in concert with a specific interaction of compositional (line, tone, rhythm etc.) elements.

I return here to Manzini's (2015:36) assertion that it is in the "complex interaction of form and function that design finds its deepest motivation" and suggest that in trying to parse the affect of form and function generated through these consent modes, the group began to see the potential application of performance to the project or 'as' the project itself. In this

[92] Via Stanislavski, a character's objective and attempts to overcome obstacles that stand in the way of this objective (through the use of emotional and or material tactics) are the smallest foundational units of dramatic action (Stanislavski, 1989).

session, more members of the group began to engage with performance as a practice that embodied transferable, applicable, relational parts rather than a monolithic practice with the single application of dramatic acting.

To try and understand the relationship between the perception of embodied watchability, aesthetic value (or beauty) and effectiveness is clearly a subjective, emergent, and changeable process and certainly not one that is interpreted over a single design session. That said, the possibility of asking these questions around form and function and seeing the exploitable elements of performance as design began to emerge in the group's analysis of the task.

This analysis was called into question by a participant who argued that if every partnership/small group came up with their own physical consent order specific to them (and that only those partners could judge its effectiveness) what was the point of the whole group watching and judging them? I thought this was a productive argument in that it raised the question of 'witnessing/being witnessed' as fundamental to performance and (as I posed at the outset) fundamental to the performance of consent motivated by the project. The question also raised the point of how the act of witnessing consent altered from the witnessing action of the group to the witnessing action of the individual. In response to this observation, another participant suggested that in performing their individual-to-individual consent mode, the (partner) participants were 'seeing each other', they didn't need anyone else to see them.

What I did not say and only considered after the session was the issue of viewing the three parts of the project (group-to-group, individual-to-group, and individual-to-individual) as discrete, atomised entities rather than contributing parts of a whole, and

thereby thinking of making micro-orders of consent rather than a macro-order that governed and always included its contributing modes and parts.

I re-iterated to the group how the process of mutually embodying an order of physical consent was a changing process and would continue to change. I suggested that if we had more time available to us, the project we had just undertaken could itself be seen as research for, or a way into the design process itself. The group was naturally less enthusiastic about this notion than I was, and were focused on the logistics of what, when, and where we were going to perform our findings for the department. We decided on presenting a selected showcase of three individual-to-individual modes, and agreed that these, along with the group-to-group spiral and individual-to-group three-part system, would be performed during the department's performance week with the hopes that this would be the beginning of a new and larger design investigation within the CTDPS.

Final Analysis

On the 15th of March 2020, the day before the group were due to perform our findings, the university suspended all classes due to the Covid-19 pandemic, putting an end to the project. As a result, the group could not present their findings to the CTDPS student body, there was no response to the performance and no (potential) further development of the project. In what follows, I analyse the noteworthy design flaws and successes of the project's development up to this point.

Agency

The major problem of the project (as a work of participatory design) appeared to be a lack of collective engagement and active participation on behalf of the group. In spite of the fact that the project was a direct response to going student concerns, and at the outset of the

project the participants (at least on a discursive level) wanted to address these concerns, the process was almost entirely motivated and directed by me and my own design intentions. As I have documented, the participants responded to my directions and came up with a number of ideas and responses, but the general feeling from the group for large parts of the process was non-committal, lacking effort and expressing a sense of forced participation. Apart from a few participants, there was a notable lack of agency in the group. In my view, the possible reasons for this phenomenon are three-fold: the first is the outcomes -based or 'not for marks' malaise where student relationships to all activities within an educational context are driven solely by grades and direct outcomes, rendering anything outside of the official graded syllabus irrelevant. The second reason, closely connected to the first, was the participants' focus on the individual craft of dramatic acting and their general bewilderment and impatience with the notion of applying this skill to anything other than traditional acting. The third potential reason was the project's outsider status, taking place as it did outside of the set content and scheduling of the course and the running of the CTDPS. This meant that the work we did was not embedded in the participants' everyday context and as a result, the design process could not meaningfully form part of an intervention that (as participatory and design for social innovation theory suggests) considers the social embeddedness (Bratteteig *et al.*, 2013:119-125) and "lived landscape" (Binder *et al.*, 201:131) of the organisation.

Over and above the group's lack of active participation in the project was an attitude I interpreted as a peremptory and results-driven approach to our investigation. Often the group simply wanted to get the thing done, find the answer and finish the process without experiencing the process. In Frederick Matthias Alexander's "Alexander Technique" of somatic

practice, this approach is termed “end gaining” (Alexander, 1946:135) and in discussing his “Awareness Through Movement” (ATM) method, Moshe Feldenkrais (1949) cites the phenomenon where students exert their willpower (and by extension, their ego) over a somatic practice in order to “do” the body, rather than to experience it or investigate a way towards a better awareness of it. In my experience as an actor, director and latterly a performance teacher, to induce actors to think through the body (or as the body) rather than ‘present’ the body as an extension of the mind is a difficult task that exemplifies the distinction between the process space of the rehearsal and the 'product' space of the performance. While this issue was a major stumbling block in the process (and could be attributed to the age and life stage of the participants) I think it is important to seriously consider their response (especially in terms of potential performance-as-design projects) because, to my mind, this attitude is not uncommon, and feeling a lack of agency over the structures (and potential structures) of everyday life is itself a potential response to an absence of order. By this logic, the group’s attitude revealed the necessity of the project and the veracity of its claims to address an absence of order.

An important design question to consider in relation to this problem is that of engendering a sense of agency over the project that demonstrates to the participants their own capacity for activating change. Crucially, in a participatory design process, the participants’ intentions need to be participatory. Intentions, according to Stanislavski (1989), not only drive the action of a play but are fundamental to its structure, to its design. The Hamlet who does not intend to avenge his father’s death makes neither a Hamlet nor a *Hamlet*. Correspondingly, participants whose intentions do not participate in either the methodology or ideology of a project cannot create a participatory design project. If a participatory design project is an emergent process

to be used and applied in its participants' contexts, this use depends explicitly on their participatory intentions, and if they do not feel or enact these, if they do not 'defend the work', the project cannot survive past its inception phase. In discussing this dilemma of inter-relational design projects' dependence on participant commitment and the "relationship intensity" required by participants, Manzini (interpreting Buber, 1996 and Cipolla, 2009) says that:

> [I]f we want to extend the influence of the collaborative mode in people's lives, we must increase the possibility of joining in "lightly." Thus we must cultivate all the ways of collaborating, from relational to experiential, and all the others which may emerge from the combination of relational and formalized interactions. (Manzini, 2015:23)

He goes on to conclude that "it is possible to create conditions that make some ways of being and doing things more probable than others. This is also true for active, participative behaviour" (Manzini, 2015:152). These conditions, as I have noted earlier, form a part of Ehn's (2008 cited in Manzini, 2015:152) notion of 'infrastructuring' and long-term and interconnected processes between projects and organisation. Even without the interruption of Covid-19, the project was far too limited in its size, time frame and application to consider any grander or deeper ideas of infrastructuring. That said, the notion of designing conditions that facilitate participative behaviour, and more importantly participative agency, is compelling. It is my sense that the embodied experience of practising performance as a design mode allows for the development of this capacity, and the (albeit variable) progress of the group's involvement, motivation, and agency over the course of the project was testament to this. Through 'doing' performance-as-design the group were slowly persuaded, not only of the potential efficacy of the project but of their own facility for performing shaping that efficacy.

Traumatic Subject

Another important issue facing the project was the traumatic frame of the investigation. There is significant pain and anger around the issue of gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the country, and the group was prickly with it. Not only that, but awash in the ideology of identity politics and its primacy on the right to speak and anxiety around who has the right to speak, many of the male participants were notably reserved in their responses and participation. The group were leery, not only of the process, but often of each other, and their responses were full of wary silences and waiting; waiting for someone else to say something or waiting for something to go wrong and (so it seemed to me) avoid being implicated in it. Lacking the trust and spontaneity necessary for improvisation and indeed the practice of theatre and performance itself, the atmosphere was often stultifying accurately reflected the difficult and often uncomfortable social environment that necessarily arises when negotiating these issues.

Not Knowing Through Performance

As I have established, positioning performance as a mode of design and research presumes that the concept under exploration may be comprehended and explored through the cognitive action of performance practice. As per the PAR reasoning of *inter alia* Borgdorff (2012), Fleishman (2012), and Kershaw (2009) this does not preclude or replace traditional cognitive reasoning, but centres performance and its mode of embodied presence as a specific 'way of knowing'. To be intellectually convinced by this perspective is to recognise that there are ways of knowing that may be accessed through performance (and arts practices more broadly) but to be practically convinced or indeed 'to practice' this perspective is to be able to experience performance as a way of knowing. It is the

latter, a familiarity with experiencing performance as a way of knowing that was difficult for the group to access. This was especially clear in terms of negotiating and interpreting physical consent: especially at the outset of the project, the participants wanted to establish and clarify ideas, meanings, knowledge, and boundaries around the issue entirely through intellectual reasoning and dialogue, thereby rendering the knowledge production and investigation of performance-as-design incidental to the project.

In his essay *Techniques of the Body* (1935:70-71) Mauss describes the development of swimming practices over his lifetime and how these fundamentally altered how people were able to swim and apply their potential (or latent) embodied swimming abilities to the action of moving through water. Central to his argument is the position that there is no "natural" way of swimming, and the practice is reliant on learning and generating bodily techniques and "awareness" around swimming in order to swim with ease. A method-based exemplar of this argument is presented through Feldenkrais' "Awareness through Movement" (ATM) method (Feldenkrais, 1990) where efficient, easy use of the body is achieved through an acute and detailed feedback system between mental awareness and physical posture and movement. Both Mauss' and Feldenkrais' positions assert that 'learning the tool of the body' is integral to 'using the tool of the body' and I reasoned that this position may and must be applied to the practice of design-as-performance, where the ability to use (and develop the awareness) of the (relational) body as a design tool can be developed and practiced through embodied investigation.

In the context of this project, it would be reasonable to assume that acting students would have significant capacity for learning and using the tool of the relational body, but I found the group's aptitude to be severely limited by what they believed to be the function

of performance, specifically acting. The notion that performance could be a tool separate from character-driven theatre (or film) practice was difficult for them to grasp. As a result, it seemed that for the most part, the group was unable to fully apply their embodied 'performance knowledge' to our explorations. This was a frustrating but useful finding that (like the issue of agency) is relevant to the practice of designing through performance with participants who (like most people) are not actors or students of acting. In terms of considering this issue through design, I think that (again) like the notion of designing or creating the conditions for participation (Manzini, 2015:152) a performance-as-design process would need to consider an exploratory, pedagogical component where the potential modes of using performance outside of artistic practice and ideology are thoroughly explored.

The Struggles of Agon

The struggle between the (often conflicting) motives of the participants and myself was a significant feature of the project. During the design process I often felt frustrated and unable to negotiate a way through these struggles, but on reflection, it seems to me that it was precisely at these impasses of intention and belief where the agonism of the project was generated, and where I could have (following Bjorgvinsson, Ehn & Hillgren's (2010) and Emilson & Hilgren's (2014) interpretation of Mouffe's (1999) concept of the agonism of democracy) considered the potential role of agonistic participation, not only, as Emilson and Hillgren (after Mouffe, 1999) suggest, “to allow for a polyphony of voices and for mutually vigorous but tolerant disputes' among [the] stakeholders”, (Emilson & Hillgren, 2014) but to 'use' agonism (as I posed in Chapter Three) as a generator of the action and logic of the project, where (via Bjorgvinsson, Ehn and Hillgren, 2010) the notion of the

socio-technical 'thing' of design is one that embodies a state of agonism and is generative of and as a result of this state.

For all that, agon, as produced through the practice of performance, was not necessarily something I needed to direct. As I have detailed, the agonism of the project was productive, not only in what it generated in practice, but what it contributed to the reflective and discursive elements of the project. My observations around agency and the difficulty of using performance as a mode of design were the conceptual result of an agonistic process, and contributed to my understanding of how performance-as-design could be potentially problematised and practised.

The positive agonistic findings of the project notwithstanding, I felt that there was a missed opportunity concerning agon and the consent order's (and its constitutive modes) model of acceptance and agreement. The 'group-to-group' spiral was an introductory action and one of mutual acknowledgement, but the 'individual-to-group' and 'individual-to-individual' actions had the potential for an agonistic principle to be incorporated into them, or at least a more rigorous form of embodied negotiation. In the 'individual-to-individual' actions, the level of agon, or negotiative physicality depended on the individuals concerned, and there was often an agonism enacted between the participants as part of their design performances. I did not bring this aspect to light, nor did I suggest it as an avenue to explore. In the three-part 'individual-to-group' system, there was a single, unchallenged process of response: the individual presented their 'intimacy vibe' and group accepted and repeated it. We did not explore the possibility of a) challenging or b) rejecting the 'intimacy vibe' by the individuals or the receiving group. On reflection, it seemed that this absence of agon created an absence in the developing logic of the

order, which would have required a greater embodiment of agon to adequately negotiate consent.

Good Sign

The 'inside/outside' symbol I used as a guide for our explorations was helpful in framing the improvisational work by providing a restriction and consonant interpretive freedom through the distinctness of its binarity and the relative open-endedness of its possible interpretations. It also appeared to liberate the group from an excess of ideological language and positioning and focused the attention of the task on embodied relationships and the formal interactions of these.

At the outset of the project, I used the analogy of witnessing a contract to convince the group that even if the order of consent we built did not work as we hoped or was (contractually) broken, the collective act of performing and witnessing the order would give credence and power to the significance of its intentions and those who performed them. In our closing discussion, I asked the participants if they felt we had addressed the concerns they had first raised around boundaries, trust, power relations, acknowledging one another, and the issue of consent and personal intimacy. The overall response was affirmative. One participant said that "acknowledgement of what's at stake and everyone's physical boundaries are definitely clear", but she was not so sure about power relations. Someone else responded that "the feeling of things being out in the open" made her feel less anxious and "like you can feel more in control of the situation because everyone is acknowledging it, and it's not just in your head". Several participants agreed with this observation, and it affirmed my perception that the most successful aspect of the project was the action of revelation: the making and performing of the order of consent made the

group aware that this order had been absent before, and even in unsuccessfully attempting to make this order into a present, embodied and relational reality, we affirmed consent as a significant condition of the work of theatre and performance and embodied social relations.

CONCLUSION

In this project, the collective body's capacity to build order through participatory relational performance was positioned as a mitigator and witness of the body's capacity to inflict harm and use relationality as a force of violence. Because we were not able to test the workability of our order of consent or have it witnessed by anyone outside of the group, the project lived only in this initial creative stage of the process and could not (following Manzini, 2015:152) attempt to create a "new infrastructure" or as numerous participatory design theorists suggest, meaningfully engage with the organisation as a whole. As this analysis shows however, the design process not only revealed and problematised the complex aims of the project but produced (however unevenly) a mode of investigating a complex social issue through design-as-performance.

Over the course of the project, the participants and I expressed various ambitions for what we hoped an order of consent could potentially achieve, and these fell under two overarching functions: that of bearing witness and that of providing protection. As I have detailed, the order's function of acknowledging the matter of consent, bearing witness to the participants' feelings around bodily autonomy and physical intimacy, was, according to my own analysis and the responses of the participants, notable, and effective. Because the project was not able to be integrated into the participants' everyday experience, the function of generating protection was impossible to evaluate at this stage. Had the project continued into a prototyping stage, this evaluation of protection would have necessarily

rested on the participants own sense of 'feeling' protected rather than any quantitative analysis of whether they were measurably protected by an order of consent, because a collective, embodied, relational order, in whatever stage of its design process, is necessarily subjective and emergent. As many of the participants had feared at the outset of the process, we found no easy or clear answers to the question of how to manage the subjectivity of our bodies and bodies of others. If, as I suggested through this project, an order of consent is embodied by those who generate and enact it, then this order is theirs to witness and use as they deem appropriate, theirs to judge its efficacy, theirs to believe in or cease believing in, and theirs to alter according to their needs.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

In the end a typology will emerge of ways in which the cosmos is seen through the medium of the body.
Mary Douglas in *Natural Symbols* (1973:18)

CHAPTER BREAKDOWN

One

This study supposed an absence of order in contemporary social life and offered a design-based response to this absence, hypothesising order as a designable performance practice that is necessarily participatory, embodied, creative, and relational. The opening perspective of Chapter One portrayed an absence of felt meaning in the 21st century experience of social living and identified the nature of this absence as that of participation, more specifically the structural, participatory experience of order. The participative characterisation of order was motivated by Voegelin's participatory, symbolic definition (2001) in concert with Alexander's (2002) design-led participatory, personal, 'living' interpretation of the term.

Beginning from Alexander's (2002) material, architectural standpoint where order is a structural process and product that may be "built" and "lived" through its affective, participatory relationality, order was advanced, via Lorand (2000) as a dualist phenomenon that is both quantitative (or material) and qualitative (or affective or symbolic). Through Bergson (1944:237-252) order was shown as a "willed" phenomenon, subject to human creativity and consciousness, existing between people and their bodies,

and as such, "alive". Voegelin (2001) conceived order as a participatory, sense-making act of symbolisation that coheres society. The concept of order as a process of symbolism was further justified through Douglas' (2003) argument that the order's symbolic action is generated through the collective relational body, and (via Arendt, 1961) enacts authority. Considering these positions, order was theorised as a two-fold phenomenon—comprising both material (or formal) and symbolic (or affective) actions—that is symbolic, embodied, collective, participatory, creative, regulatory, emergent, and generative of authority.

Alexander's (2002) architectural contention that order is a matter of design was the motivating idea for an order that could be designed outside of the context of the built environment and translated into the relational, embodied environment of performance.

Design (and its shifting definition into the 21st century) was described through Manzini's (2015), Escobar's (2018), and Ingold's (2018) conception of the field as integral to the social imagination and the re-imagining of the social, political, economic, and ecological systems of the emerging contemporary moment. The proposal to use design to generate participatory, embodied order was linked explicitly to the participatory design view that the processes and products of design must be generated in participation with those whom the design serves (including their environment and the existing systems of that environment). Moreover, following the thinking of Björgvinsson *et al.* (2012:10), Ehn (2008), and Manzini (2015) the framing of design was positioned away from "products, objects and things" and focused towards "dynamic systems, processes, ways of being [and] behaviours" (Björgvinsson, 2012:10). In line with Ehn (2008), Manzini (2015), Escobar (2018), and Gatt & Ingold (2013), design itself was presented as a participatory practice

whose processes and products are productive of the social in that they exist as extensions of human practices and the social imagination.

The methodological argument for theorising performance as a mode of design to address an absence of order positioned performance not only as a mode of design but as the mode of designing an embodied, relational order. The shared lens of participation in design and performance was theorised through a detailed outline of the fields, and both disciplines were characterised as practices, ways of knowing, and interpretive lenses. Through Fischer-Lichte (2008), Fleishman (2009), Goffman (1959), and Schechner (2020), performance was presented as an emergent, embodied social action. Performance's potential identity as a design mode was introduced through a characterisation of its interdependent, practice-specific elements of embodiment, ephemerality, mimesis (including repetition), and agon. These identifying elements were proposed as the foundation of a performance-as-design model through which performance could be positioned and interpreted as a design practice.

The chapter closed with a socio-political critique of the design field led by Irwin *et al.* (2015), Escobar (2018), and Manzini (2015) and a rationalization of the study within the contemporary South African context.

Two

Chapter Two opened with a review of the study's guiding literature, starting with Binder *et al.'s* (2011) article proposing performance as a mode of design and a comparison with my performance-as-design model. The framing literature of Alexander's *The Nature of Order* (2002-4), Douglas' *Natural Symbols* (2003), Manzini's *Design Where Everyone Designs* (2015), Schechner's *Performance Theory* (2020), and Goffman's *Behaviour in Public Places*

(1959) further detailed the study's intersecting fields of design, performance, and sociology, incorporating the study's major themes of structural regulation, embodied symbolism, social organisation, and meaning-making. The study's line of reasoning was extrapolated through these five works, summated as: Alexander's notion of designing and "building" a living structural order, Douglas's theory of embodied symbolism as a structural regulator of society, Manzini's concept of designing social well-being and participation, Schechner's representation of performance as a social action, and Goffman's interpretation of the dramaturgical structure of social events and behaviours.

Prefigured by the intersecting conceptual frames and practices of design, performance, and sociology, the methodology section of Chapter Two located the study as one concerned with and investigated through practice. The study's methodological framing began with the notion of design as embodiment, positioning the relational, collective body as the productive locus of design. A practice-based logic (centring the materiality of practice) was established through practice-as-research (Bordorff, 2012) and 'thinking through making' (Ingold, 2013). The methodological framing, specifically the conceptualisation of performance as a mode of design was posed as central to the study's hypothesis, where design was framed as the study's methodology, and performance as the method and mode of design. Performance-as-design was proposed as a "dramaturgical design model" that employed theatre and performance methods, tools, and techniques. The emphasis on the compositional, designerly identity of dramaturgical practice referenced "formgiving"[93] that Kolkinen *et al.* (2012:7 -8) use as a way of interpreting the word "design".

Critically, the study's methodological approach exemplified the characterisation of design that Brandt *et al.* (2013:146) describe as "not one approach but a proliferating family of design practices that hosts many design agendas and comes with a varied set of toolboxes". Following this rationale, performance was identified as a design practice simply through identifying it as such.

Three

The first of the practice chapters established the logical connection between performance-as-theatre and performance-as-design through a detailed extrapolation of the interdependent practice-specific elements of performance that identified it as a particular and "coherent" (Brandt *et al.*, 2013:146) mode of design. These four elements of mimesis (including repetition) embodiment, ephemerality, and agon were illustrated through the rehearsal and performance process of my choral play *Woolworths* (2018) whose practice revealed the play as a social plan: a drafting pattern of relational, embodied social structure.

The generative potential of repetition was presented through the singular plurality of the chorus. The symbolic, relational action of mimesis was shown to exhibit a collective capacity with the potential to produce collectivity. Moreover, performance's mimetic action was illustrated as a function that 'produced' the social and was accordingly proposed as a performance of participatory, social design. The collective body in performance was posed as a method, mode, site, and process of design that manifested the volition and subjectivity of the design process and product. The body itself was positioned as a productive tool and technique of design. The ephemerality of performance was suggested as a productive force that extended beyond the embodied, present moment, and in its unreproducible

presentness acted as a site of design that challenged the commercial identity of design and the capitalist action of reproducible commodity. Through Schechner (2020), Lecoq (2000), and Stanislavski (1989), agon was positioned as productive of attention, and through Mouffe (2005), Björgvinsson *et al*. (2010), Emilsen and Hillgren (2014) as productive of the conditions for negotiation.

Four

The design project of Chapter Four sought to demonstrate the hypothesis of the study by designing order through performance. An absence of order and specifically order's action of authority (through Arendt, 1961; Douglas, 2003) was identified in the event of a second-year chorus class at UCT's CTDPS. This absence of order was perceived as a lack of support, boundedness, coherence, and cohesiveness in the structure of the event and between its participants. As the leader and de facto authority figure of the event, I perceived that its overall structure, constituent parts and participatory experience was unduly dependent on my individual performance of authority and the persuasive tactics I was able (or unable) to enact during each iteration of the event.

Using a conceptual methodological structure of observation, interpretation, and visualisation (Kensing *et al.*, 1998) and a practical exploration led by performance improvisation, I began an investigation to address the absence of order. Sites of absences or weaknesses of order were identified, and these revealed the potential 'nodes' where relational, embodied, affective structures of order were required. The chapter went on to describe the process of exploring these absences of order and improvising ways of designing nodes of order to address them. At the end of the process, nine nodes of order were designed to support and structure the event.

A notable analysis from the process concerned the experience of liminality and the relative unimportance afforded to the action of entering and exiting a space. In giving credence to this disregarded action and experiencing its potential significance, a small action of the relational body was revealed as a powerful action worthy of attention. This experience opened up the potential of developing an embodied, relational order of the entire event. The sacral affect of the fifth node lent the event (and the group) a weight and significance it had lacked and revealed the power of the collective body to overcome the ironic distance of the mind and enact a solemnity of being that could be experienced rather than imagined.

Putting the order we designed into practice was a less successful experience than the designing process itself, and the project failed in its explicit aim of producing an integrated design of order that consistently enacted authority. I attributed this lack of success to time constraints, my failure to consider the external structures that contained the event, and the vacillating commitment of the participants to the aims of the project. Despite these failings, the process of the design project successfully demonstrated the overarching thesis of the study, revealing that order was a material reality of embodied, relational experience, and its failures and absences could be experienced, analysed, and addressed using performance as a mode of design. Moreover, order's primary actions of regulation, meaning-making, and authority were demonstrably generated and experienced through the designing process, despite the fact that these were not constantly sustained when the order was put into everyday practice.

The design process produced investigable results that revealed the necessity for further investigation, and as Manzini (2015:23) suggests, further investment in the process of

designing the conditions for participation. At the outset of the project, the absence of order in the event of the class was only (as far as I could tell) evident to me. Through the process of designing order, the participants became aware of the power and viability of using the relational body as a structuring force, and the order that we built (when it did fitfully succeed) revealed the vacuum it had filled.

Five

The fifth chapter's design project sought to design an order of consent in response to student concerns around physical intimacy and boundaries in the context of practical performance classes and rehearsals at UCT's CTDPS. A participant discussion established the investigative aims of the project to develop an order of consent that would function as a contractual bearing of witness to: negotiate individual and collective physical boundaries and proximity, acknowledge the interplay of power relations and vulnerability implicit in working with relational and physical proximity, acknowledge potential feelings of dissent and generate an outlet for this dissent, build collective and interpersonal trust, and venerate the bodily autonomy of each member of the group. I envisioned this contractual bearing of witness playing out in interdependent group-to-group, individual-to-group, and individual-to-individual modes. I imagined these modes as transferable templates that could potentially be implemented in various classroom, rehearsal, and performance contexts at the CTDPS.

Using a guiding improvisational theme of 'inside/outside' we initially explored the group-to-group mode, establishing it as the collective witness and custodian of the order of physical consent. Thereafter, we experimented directly with ways of performing consent and negotiating personal space in smaller groups and explored how the relational body

could potentially work as a negotiative system. The main point of analysis here was the issue of finding a mode of embodied, relational expression that was not a 'dumb-show' of verbal language, but a language led by embodied relationality over mental and spoken reasoning.

From here, the group developed an individual-to-group (three-part) system that demonstrated: the individual's feeling of personal space, their willingness to physically engage and their sense of proximal vulnerability in relation to the group. This exercise revealed a fundamental struggle of designing order, where the individual demand for unlimited expression and interpretation meets the collective demand for coherence, i.e., the system of order could only work as a system if the interpretive field of its symbolism was consistent across the group. The concluding process of the project investigated an individual-to-individual mode of negotiating consent conducted in pairs and groups of three.

Because the Covid-19 lockdown brought the project to a premature end, the order we designed was not able to be tested or incorporated into the participants' daily routine, and because the order could only be brought to life through performance, the 'product' of the design process (as an ephemeral, embodied action subject to the affect of the present moment) disappeared. The experience of the design process however (and notably its challenges) was particularly generative in revealing the power of embodied relationality as a potential tool of negotiation. While the overarching aim to produce a functioning, reproducible order of consent was not able to be achieved, the aim to acknowledge participant concerns and feelings of comfort/discomfort around physical proximity in performance practice was accomplished during the process. Moreover, as with the

previous project, order's major actions of regulation, meaning-making and authority (if not consistently performed as a recurring system) were experienced by the participants through the design process, inferring that the practice of designing order was itself instrumental in generating an awareness of the parameters of the absence of order. Consequently, the process of validating and addressing participant concerns through designing order affirmed that these concerns were not simply the fleeting thoughts and feelings of individuals, but established, recognisable, and embodied problems that involved and implicated the entire group.

CONCLUDING ORDER

At the outset of this study, I felt an absence of order in the contemporary experience of social life and imagined using performance to design the solution to this absence. The order I perceived as absent was a living phenomenon of regulation, collective authority, and meaning that was performed through an embodied relationality generating material and symbolic actions. I imagined that this order could be designed through the relational, embodied practice of performance whose specific features of embodiment, mimesis, ephemerality, and agon marked the locus of its design identity. The interpretation of this idea formed the conceptual framework of my study and the grounding rationale of its design process. My plan for designing order was not a direct one: the bridge did not look like a bridge on paper, it could only be revealed as a bridge through the action of building. The bridge on paper in this case was a play, or rather, the ensemble play. From the mimetic, embodied, ephemeral world of theatrical performance came the blueprint for an order of social performance where structure, meaning, and authority could be built between people and their bodies.

To say I imagined the order we designed in the group projects is to say I wanted to design a bridge without knowing what a bridge was. The structure of the bridge was obscure to me, I could only imagine the action of connecting one side with another. Through the process of the design projects themselves, the unknown bridge of order was imagined through the collective body in performance and brought to life as a participatory design practice. This action of coherence, where through the process of joining disparate parts together, a whole is not only made, but made comprehensible, is a fundamental consequence of order. The act of discovering and generating the coherence of the projects as we created them, revealed that (although the orders we designed in both projects were not fulfilled or entirely successful) the design process had already begun to generate meaning, and reveal its purpose as an embodied, relational, processual way of knowing and practicing order. Whether or not the bridge was stable, the bridge was shown to be possible.

An Order of the Body

It was months into South Africa's Covid-19 lockdown that I realised I was participating in a project of embodied order on a global scale. Social distancing performed an order that structured and formally regulated people's behaviour, and moreover constituted an authority of public health through embodied relationality. It was not an order of participatory design, but it enacted an order that engendered obligatory participation involving a (massive, global) social collective. Social distancing's direct material aim was to prevent the transmission of disease and its symbolic or ideological aim literally embodied the nomenclature of "social distance", articulating the potent psychic symbol of the digital age, that safety and the safeguarding of identity is achieved through the separation of the

individual body and the collective body. Whether or not the order of social distancing will be recognised as materially effective or ideologically desirable in the long term, its process of embodied, repeated, relational performance successfully enacted regulation, authority, and meaning. It regulated people's behaviour and acted as an authority external to individual influence: to stand in socially distanced lines was to be subject to the authority of a single, collectively embodied line, not the authority of a single individual. In performing the order of social distancing, people were individually and collectively implicated in the mitigation of the pandemic. Social distancing's success and actionability (per Voegelin's hypothesis of a relevant order, 2001:48) allowed for active meaning-making, and through its performance, the pandemic was made socially comprehensible. The radiating effects of social distancing continue to influence social action beyond the experience of its performance: standing in a queue post-pandemic I find myself and the people around me fundamentally altered in our perception of personal space, a now unenforced 1.5 metres still holding us apart. This is the ephemeral power of performance to extend beyond the moment of its living, this is the bridge that begins to build itself.

The embodied order of social distancing was a large-scale, repeated performance that enacted observable material and symbolic actions, and it demonstrably validates my proposal for an embodied, relational order generated through performance. Fundamental to the effectiveness of social distancing was its clarity of relationship between the intended purpose of its order and the performance of its order. Moreover, it was repeated over a considerable period in numerous situations where an absence of 'distance order' was perceived.

As social distancing clearly showed, it is in constant or at least reproducible repetition that an order may be tested and established as materially and symbolically effective, and my design projects did not reach (or were not able to be repeated sufficiently to reach) this iterative testing phase.

Finding What Was Absent

Ingold (2013), Ehn (2008), and others maintain that design is a practice between the material and the imagination, between the product and the people in process; a practice that is neither the bridge nor the plans for the bridge, but the relationship between one side and the other. As Dilnot (1993:56) attests, the chair mimics the spine: it is a material object to sit on, but it is also an embrace, a lap, a giant hand, a lifting of weight, a body imagined. The bridge, as Heidegger says (1997:99), is not simply a material structure but a symbol of ourselves that unites one side with another. The bridge is a process, the bridge is a story, the bridge is entirely imaginary and very real, the bridge is always a relationality. In designing with performance, the relationality between what is imagined and what is made, what is material, and what is symbolic, is held within the body of the maker. When we design with performance, we design that which we are and may only access through collective relationality with one another. In response to an absence of order, we may unfurl the imaginary, internal, and individually unknowable structures that we embody and manifest them into a collective knowing that is both external and internal to our personal bodies, that is both material and symbol, an order that is simultaneously experienced *through* our bodies and is represented *to us* as an autonomous body of power, at once greater than ourselves and of ourselves: a collective order of the body.

From the design projects' straightforward material actions of shoe placement to the more symbolic actions of kneeling on the floor and circling the room, the practice of designing order through performance simultaneously revealed the absence of order and a potential new order, and in doing so, demonstrated the value and significance of order itself. In *The Nature of Order* (2002), Alexander describes a child's birthday party and reasons that the structural elements of the candles, cutlery, the shape of the table, and the position of the guests is not incidental to the event but *is* the event: "It is the structure which has the power to give the occasion meaning, and which leaves such touching feelings in us…and so increases our power to feel" (Alexander, 2002:304). If we take this observation to its opposing logical conclusion and remove every structural element of a birthday party except for the identifying nomination of 'birthday party', the occasion can only exist conceptually in the minds of those who identify it as such, it cannot be collectively generated and embodied as a birthday party.

During the processes of both design projects, it felt as if we were simultaneously discovering something existent and instantly familiar and creating something that had never existed before and held an enormous possibility of structure and meaning. Like the memory of a bridge only dreamt of, the projects revealed both the recollection of an old order and the potential of a new order.

A Bridge Across the Absence

In another anecdote from *The Nature of Order* (2002:437), Alexander recalls visiting Tofuku-ji temple in Kyoto, Japan. He follows a path alongside the temple up into the hills and sits down on the top step, overcome with the luminous aliveness of the place. As he looks out, a blue dragonfly alights on the step next to him, and he is convinced that the

progression of his experience, from the temple to the path to the dragonfly sharing the step with him at that very moment is a deliberate design function of the temple's architectural order, enacted far beyond the borders of its materials.

I often think of this passage and its illustration of the deep, infinitely complex, and interconnected order of things, and the potential of design to simultaneously uncover and create that order, to manipulate material and relational form at the innermost structures of their being and build an order that is lived out and ripples out from life, relational and emergent. In an absence of regulation, meaning, and authority, and an absence of our own participation in these social processes, we wield a living structure of order older than Tofuku-ji temple and younger than our great-grandchildren: the strange and personal architecture of our body, our manifold, shared, and enduring design, our greatest symbol, our darkest and most precious material, our infinite performance, through which we may design our bridges across the absence.

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ADDENDUM