

UNIVERSITY OF READING

Collabowrighting the Hyper(play)text: A Postdramatic Digital Poetics

PhD in Theatre

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DECLARATION

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Michael Rossi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'R'.

johnmichael rossi

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to exhibit how *literary playtexts* can evoke multisensory trends prevalent in 21st century theatre. In order to do so, it explores a range of practical forms and theoretical contexts for creating participatory, site-specific and immersive theatre. With reference to literary theory, specifically to semiotics, reader-response theory, postmodernism and deconstruction, it attempts to revise dramatic theory established by Aristotle's *Poetics*. Considering Gertrude Stein's essay, *Plays* (1935), and relevant trends in theatre and performance, shaped by space, technology and the ever-changing role of the audience member, a postdramatic poetics emerges from which to analyze the plays of Mac Wellman and Suzan-Lori Parks.

Distinguishing the two textual lives of a play as the *performance playtext* and the *literary playtext*, it examines the conventions of the printed *literary playtext*, with reference to models of practice that radicalize the play form, including works by Mabou Mines, The Living Theatre and Fiona Templeton. The arguments of this practice-led Ph.D. developed out of direct engagement with the practice project, which explores the multisensory potential of written language when combined with hypermedia. The written thesis traces the development process of a new play, *Rumi High*, which is presented digitally as a 'hyper(play)text,' accessible through the Internet at www.RumiHigh.org. Here, 'playwrighting' practice is expanded spatially, collaboratively and textually.

Plays are built, designed and crafted with many layers of meaning that explore both linguistic and graphic modes of poetic expression. The hyper(play)text of *Rumi High* establishes playwrighting practice as curatorial, where *performance*

and *literary playtexts* are in a reciprocal relationship. This thesis argues that digital writing and reading spaces enable new approaches to expressing the many languages of performance, while expanding the collaborative network that produces the work. It questions how participatory forms of immersive and site-specific theatre can be presented as interactive *literary playtexts*, which enable the reader to have a multisensory experience. Through a reflection on process and an evaluation of the practice project, this thesis problematizes notions of authorship and text.

NOTES TO THE READER

The reader of this thesis is encouraged to first experience the practice project, a hyper(play)text version of *Rumi High*, available at www.RumiHigh.org (or through the directory on the accompanying DVD, which requires access to the Internet). The written thesis provides direct links to specific sections of the hyper(play)text, and also includes screenshots of the hyper(play)text. For reference, a list of images and a directory of web links used in the written thesis is included in the Appendix. For ease, the reader may choose to read the electronic version of the written thesis (also included on the DVD), in order to access the links and to revisit the practice in tandem with the reading of the written thesis. In line with the fragmentary and multi-linear nature of the play, the reader may shift back and forth between the written thesis and the practice, allowing the reading of both to become one experience.

The written thesis utilizes American English spelling and grammar, except in direct quotes, which shift between British English and American English, as published.

FOREWORD

The topic of *Rumi High* is informed by my experience in the field of arts education, and more broadly public education in New York City (NYC). As a freelance Teaching Artist I have worked with several non-profit organizations that provide supplemental arts programming to public schools. From 2006-2011, I was actively on roster with five arts organizations (Vital Theatre Company, Women's Project, Brooklyn Arts Council, Lincoln Center Institute and Manhattan New Music Project) through which I worked in over eighty schools in NYC. With each organization, I had the opportunity to design curricula specific to my own theatre practice. I worked with student populations that included English-language learners and young people with autism, emotional disorders, and physical disabilities; grade levels ranging from kindergarten to twelfth grade, and higher education at the university level. I also worked with yeshiva schools, all-girls academies, Chinese-immigrant populations, and adult learners. I myself am a product of the NYC public education system. My father is a retired NYC public school teacher, having taught Photography and Special Education in Staten Island, Brooklyn and the Bronx. Public education is a topic of great importance to me. My upbringing and my fieldwork in arts education has inspired and informed many layers of *Rumi High*. In 2011, I took a 'pause' from my work in the classrooms of NYC to train as a practice-led researcher in England. My intentions in developing this play were to explore the play form, to interrogate my own theatre-making practice and to provoke dialogue around the topic of public education through a form that I believe still holds great communicative potential: the dramatic play, now available as hyper(play)text.

INTRODUCTION

[W]e writers write in dreamlike codes, do anything to throw our readers off track, praying no one will catch on that we are putting on display little pieces of our joys, our fears, and our hearts.
– Paul Zindel (1970: vi).

Postmodern literary theory and performance has affected the ways that readers experience dramatic plays as literature. It can be argued that postmodernism has diminished the play's status and relevance as a literary form. Hans Thies Lehmann's notion of the 'postdramatic' suggests that text, as in written language, has not been eliminated from playwriting practice, but its role has been equalized by other elements of performance. The popularity of immersive, interactive and site-specific theatre suggests that 21st century audiences expect to take on a more central role in determining and making meaning. The overarching question that will be addressed by both the practice project and this written thesis, is: Can participatory forms of immersive and site-specific theatre be presented as interactive *literary playtexts*, which enable the reader to have a multisensory experience?

The practice project explores the multisensory potential of written language when combined with hypermedia. This thesis will trace the development process of a new play, *Rumi High*, in order to analyze how digital spaces, enabled by hypermedia and web design, reinvigorate the play form and increase the collaborative potential for playwriting practice in the 21st century. *Rumi High* is presented digitally in a form I name the 'hyper(play)text.' The hyper(play)text presentation of *Rumi High*, accessible through the Internet at

www.RumiHigh.org, will exhibit how plays intended to be experienced as site-specific, interactive and immersive, can be expressed as *literary texts* that evoke multisensory trends prevalent in 21st century theatre. *Rumi High* will exemplify how a play with ‘postdramatic’ tendencies and ‘(syn)aesthetic’ qualities, as defined by Lehmann (2006) and Josephine Machon (2009), re-conceptualizes the elements of drama established by Aristotle in his *Poetics* (c. 335 BC). In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, these long-established elements of drama are deconstructed, re-imagined, discarded and parodied in order to appeal to and challenge contemporary audiences. The popularity of interactive and immersive forms of performance birth a new type of theatre reader, accustomed to reading and receiving information through various media.

Publishing and bookselling industries are increasingly moving literature from print to digital distribution. Literature received through tablets, smartphones and other mobile devices offers a different type of physical engagement with text. Readers have shifted from page-turning and marking margins to tapping, clicking and scrolling to interact with a literary work. Digital technology also expands the opportunities and methods for connecting writers to readers, as well as readers to other readers. Recently, a new field of scholarship led by Kate Pullinger, Digital Literature, has emerged. Pullinger is a Canadian novelist and Professor of Creative Writing and Digital Media at Bath Spa University who writes novels, short stories, and digital fiction. Pullinger’s digital fiction series, *Inanimate Alice* (2005-2012), is a model for writing fiction for digital and interactive platforms. Her work is at the helm of this new literary

field, which considers both 'born-digital' work and the adaptation of pre-existing literary works into digital form, and the affects of these forms on readers' and writers' engagement with text. Pullinger's more recent work, *Letter to an Unknown Soldier* (2014), in which she collaborates with theatre-maker Neil Bartlett, involves a participating public who interact with the work in a co-authored experience. This work is indication that there is space and interest in theatre to be developed as a form of digital literature. While technology has been used to expand notions of reading and writing literature, the form of the play, as literature, has had less than substantial consideration in practice and theory. Postdramatic theatre therefore, requires a revision of the play form as literature.

The hyper(play)text presentation of *Rumi High* will serve as a model of practice for reading and writing plays as digital literature. The reading experience becomes multisensory when sounds, images and written language combine to immerse the reader in an aesthetic world. Through the hyper(play)text, playwriting practice is expanded spatially, collaboratively and textually. Plays are built, designed and crafted with many layers of meaning that explore both linguistic and graphic modes of poetic expression. Establishing these new poetic layers requires a highly collaborative approach, where the postdramatic playwright writes in more a hypothetical, open, or writerly fashion, fostering a process of 'mutual creation.' I refer to this process as 'collabowrighterly,' which expands the collaborative network for writing a play, and blurs the lines between reader and writer, problematizing notions of authorship.

Postmodernism encourages literary and art practices where the creative work is less fixed to a concrete meaning determined by the author. The reader has a more integral role in perceiving the work and may even be situated as a co-author of the work itself. Yet, the ever-growing capitalistic market economy, in the Western world, continues to maintain the concept of authorial control through legal rights that define and protect ownership. While I conduct this research with an awareness of these political and economic realities, these conditions are not the focus of the research. I will however acknowledge that postdramatic forms and practices engaged with digital media further problematize notions of authorship and writing.

This thesis will first establish a convention of interweaving critical strands in relation to historical trends that foreground the selected models of practice. With reference to literary theory, specific to semiotics, reader-response theory, postmodernism and deconstruction, I will attempt to revise dramatic theory established by Aristotle's *Poetics*, considering Gertrude Stein's essay, *Plays* (1935), and relevant 21st century trends in theatre and performance, shaped by space, technology and the ever-changing role of the audience member. This revision of dramatic theory will suggest a postdramatic poetics from which to analyze the plays of playwrights such as Mac Wellman and Suzan-Lori Parks. The linguistic strategies of such contemporary playwrights require an active and alert reader that must work with the text in order to determine meaning. A play is viewed as a mutual creation where readers have increased agency in the experience of the play. Form and content, stemming from the intentions of the playwright, and traces of the collaboratively process, become the determining

factors in how a play is presented both as a *performance playtext* and a *literary playtext*.

A *literary playtext* is composed of a series of sign systems that frame the reading of a play to be imagined as a performance. As exemplified by the models of practice, and later, the hyper(play)text, the use of graphics in the *literary playtext* expands established sign systems where images, layout and typography are layered into the reading and writing process for plays. I will examine conventions of the printed *literary playtext* with reference to models of practice that radicalize the play form. Whereas Wellman and Parks employ linguistic strategies to evoke a sense of site, embodied performance and the situation of the audience, works by Mabou Mines, The Living Theatre and Fiona Templeton problematize how particular types of plays are represented on the page. These works led to innovative book productions that document a specific performance production, while the page itself appears to take on a performative life that requires a different level of engagement from the *literary reader*.

Viewing the *literary playtext* as a combination of sign systems, this thesis will, at times, refer to music composition and notation, as a model from which to consider how an abstract language is established to express the sensory experience of listening to or playing music, and to comprehend structure, melody, mood, dynamics and tempo. With music notation, a high level of competency in reading is required in order for the reader to interpret the various sign systems. The interpretation of a play's didascalia, as defined by Michael Issacharoff, suggests that reading a conventional *literary playtext* also requires a certain level of competency. *Literary playtexts* are designed to adequately

guide the reader towards a process of mutual collaboration. This perspective, where the *literary playtext* is akin to a musical score, establishes playwriting practice as curatorial, where the *literary playtext* and the *performance playtext* are in a reciprocal relationship.

With reference to *Rumi High*, I will expand upon the graphic and linguistic strategies analyzed in the models of practice, all printed *literary texts*, transferring my playwriting practice to a digital realm where hypermedia, web design and the site of the Internet transforms how plays are written and read. These new digital components of the play form will allow for new approaches to expressing the many languages of performance, and to expand the collaborative network, which produces the work. The hyper(play)text becomes a model from which to evaluate and problematize notions of authorship, reading and writing with regards to control and choice as presented to the reader, and rights and ownership with regards to the author(s).

In the next section, I will orient the reader by discussing my research methodology, which is practice-led. I will then discuss my own context as a theatre practitioner, which will provide a foundation to understanding how I came to pursue this cross-disciplinary field of research. This will be followed by an overview of the structure of the thesis, which combines theory, the models of practice and my own practice, to address the research question.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this research project is practice-led, drawing from my training and previous professional practice as a theatre-maker and arts

educator. I will apply postmodern literary theories of reading and writing, and hypertext theory, to contemporary playwriting practices, specifically multisensory theatre, described as immersive, interactive and site-specific.

Patrice Pavis discusses the “*contamination of practice by theory*,” specific to postmodern theatre, explaining that:

theory overflows into practice; it becomes difficult to separate or distinguish the apparatus of production/reception from the spectator's hermeneutic activity. Postmodern art uses and reinvests theory in the process of producing meaning at every place and moment in the *mise en scène*. Text and *mise en scène* become the stake in a signifying practice, opening up a series of tracks, which contradict and cross one another, and then separate again, rejecting a central or global signification. The plurality of readings is guaranteed by that of the enunciators (actor, music, global rhythm of the presentation of sign systems) by the absence or the flexibility of the hierarchy of stage systems. The text to be read and the *mise en scène* to be deciphered are no longer the guardians of a meaning that has to be found, interpreted and transmitted... Theory is no longer nourished by an uncontested a-priori practice; rather theory generates that practice. Postmodern theater raises theory to the rank of a playful activity (Pavis, 1992: 71-72).

The ‘flexibility of the hierarchy of stage systems’ is an attribute of postmodern theatre that has shaped my practice. While the stimuli to create *Rumi High* first emerged through practice, the development of the play has been intertwined with critical theory throughout. Therefore, this written thesis is a companion to the play, neither a before nor after; neither prologue nor epilogue. The ordering of practice before theory, or vice versa, is unnecessary here, as the two have become indistinguishable.

Rumi High addresses the topic of education and critiques predominant systems of schooling in the New York City (NYC) public school system. The play is set in a school building where a multi-linear narrative is activated when the reader, situated as a ‘student,’ makes choice in what paths to follow

throughout the 'school day.' *Rumi High* is intended as a model to explore how digital technology can renew playwriting and play reading processes. Through an analysis of the hyper(play)text version of *Rumi High*, I will highlight the significant ways that digital media fosters a realignment of the *literary playtext* with the *performance playtext* and compliments trends in 21st century performance. The hyper(play)text as presented and discussed in this thesis will contribute new knowledge to the field of theatre, specifically playwriting, while revisiting theatrical and literary debates around the processes of reading and writing.

My playwriting practice is highly collaborative, stemming from solitary writing sessions which translate written dramatic material into performance material through workshops, rehearsals and work-in-progress performance presentations that involve creative input from designers, performers and audience members. The development process for *Rumi High* employs six 'modes of writing:'

- Mode 1: Solitary Writing
- Mode 2: Group Workshops
- Mode 3: Public Performance Presentations
- Mode 4: 'Video-Conference' Rehearsals (enabled by Skype)
- Mode 5: Dialogue on Social Networking Forums (enabled by Facebook)
- Mode 6: Web Design (enabled by iWeb)

In a conventional play development process, the playwright is often writing a *literary playtext* towards a performance production. In other models of practice, the playwright might be writing as part of a devising process with actors and directors, as is the case with Tim Etchells' work with Forced Entertainment. This practice-led research project complicates the conventional linear trajectory of play development, by considering performance as a mode of writing (Mode 3),

and exemplifies how a play can be developed simultaneously as both *literary text* and *performance text*. The six modes combined, present a view of playwriting as highly collaborative and multidisciplinary, positioning playwriting as a curatorial process.

The latter three modes (video-conference rehearsals, social networking forums and web design) were completely new approaches to my practice and actively transformed the first three modes (solitary writing, group workshops and public performance presentations). I began this field of research with no practical experience as a web designer. I made a conscious decision to teach myself the basics of web design in favor of bringing a professional web designer into the process. A 'DIY ethos' led me to embrace web design as a mode of writing, as I experimented with hypermedia to understand how digital practices may be integrated with my practice. Robert Jude Daniels, artistic director of Bootworks Theatre Collective (UK), defines a DIY (Do-It-Yourself) ethos of theatre making as "letting the artists and their definitions speak for themselves" (Daniels 4). Daniels also refers to Anderson's 'Imagined Community' and Turner's 'Communitas' as underpinning the DIY ethos, which supports my notion that the hyper(play)text requires a revised understanding of collaborative practice. Playwriting may also involve the expertise and creative input of graphic designers, typographers, software programmers and other media artists, who in effect, through the argument of this thesis, become recognized as 'collabowrighters.'

In her essay, *Elements of Style*, Parks states: "A playwright, as any other artist, should accept the bald fact that content determines form and form

determines content; that form and content are interdependent” (TCG, 1995: 7). This ‘bald fact,’ that form and content are interdependent, is a notion that I refer to throughout this thesis. Parks refers to her practice as ‘*playwrighting*,’ as opposed to ‘*playwriting*.’ “[T]he word ‘playwright’ in its etymology denotes a craftsman, rather than a writer” (Radosavljevic 105). The hyper(play)text brings together various types of hypermedia (images, video, sound, hyperlinks) in digital space to create a multisensory work. Web design (Mode 6) is often discussed in terms of ‘building,’ which further emphasizes the notion of *playwrighting*, rather than *playwriting*. It is my position that a play must be crafted, where form and content determine one another through building, designing and writing. Considering this position, and to acknowledge Parks’ direct influence on my practice, I adopt Parks’ alternative spelling (‘*playwrighting*’).

Paul Castagno’s two editions of *New Playwriting Strategies, A Language Based Approach to Playwriting* (2001) and *Language and Media in the 21st Century* (2012), widely adopted as establishing a ‘new poetics,’ provides a foundation from which I am able to contextualize my practice in relation to the chosen models of practice. His books “question many assumptions of ‘givens’ about playwriting, while offering alternative premises” (Castagno, 2001: 2). Replacing ‘play’ for ‘novel,’ he adopts Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of dialogism in *Dialogic Imagination* (1982), as an organizing principle for his books, and to suggest that new playwrighting practices produce what Bakhtin refers to as ‘hybrid texts.’ Castagno explains that “[w]hile the hybrid text resisted capture and classification, dialogism had offered a means of describing its inner

workings and mechanisms” (Castagno, 2001: 3). Through a critical analysis of the work of contemporary American playwrights, such as Wellman and Parks, a series of practical writing exercises emerge. For example, in a chapter devoted to Wellman’s ‘Language-Based Character,’ two exercises are outlined. The first, ‘Creating Character from Language Models,’ is an extension of Castagno’s analysis of Wellman’s monologue plays, *Terminal Hip* (1990) and *Three Americanisms* (1993), where characters are either without name, or labeled more generally with names such as ‘Man 1’ or ‘Woman.’ The exercise provides a set of specific tasks that offer an approach to writing a ‘multi-vocal’ character. The tasks involve the following actions: reading the aforementioned plays, viewing paintings, sensing figures, envisioning space and locale, free writing idiomatic expressions, creating a list of architectural terms and forms, concocting and blending the material produced by varying syntax and syllables, and writing monologues for each character (Castagno, 2001: 88-89). The exercise is more detailed than how I paraphrase it here, but I provide this material to exemplify how Castagno’s intertwining of practice and theory provides a model for approaching practice-led research in the field of playwrighting.

While Castagno’s analysis in *New Playwriting Strategies* is particularly focused on contemporary American playwrights, it is worth noting that his recent distinction as Fulbright Scholar 2014 has brought him to the United Kingdom (UK) to research the plays and productions of Sir Alan Ayckbourn. In the next section, I will discuss my own background, situating the development of my practice within both an American and British context.

BACKGROUND

As an Italian-American theatre-maker studying in England, I am aware that American and British theatre traditions, which have intertwined and influenced one another, also have different histories in relation to reading plays as literature. Bonnie Marranca, who termed the 'Theatre of Images' to identify the American experimental theater scene of the 1970's and 1980's, states:

without a doubt one strong contribution to contemporary American playwriting is the use of the American vernacular. It's a terribly exciting, energetic use of language. Also, it has a certain lack of formality that most other drama cultures don't have. American drama is very nonliterary. Whereas, say for example, British drama is very literary. American drama is much more off-handed, casual, much more liberated in all manner of approaches. There is no doubt that that's a major development in the use of nonliterary stage language (Marranca and Dasgupta 239).

Anne Bogart, founding director of the American theatre ensemble, SITI Company, is more critical of her own culture on the topic of plays as literature, furthering this notion of American drama being 'nonliterary' and marked by an 'energetic use of language:'

much of our 'highbrow' mainstream theatre remains an imitation of the Western European traditions. Our native popular entertainments are considered 'low-brow.' But this sense of inferiority and dependence belies the inherent difference between Europeans and Americans. Europeans are, generally speaking, a literary culture. Americans are an aural culture. For us, the *sound* of words takes precedent over their meaning (2001: 38).

Wellman, an American poetic playwright who employs "literary pyrotechnics" in his plays (Marranca and Dasgupta 206), discusses notions of language and meaning in American theatre:

Artists and thinkers of our time are engaged in a war against meaning. Or rather, against the tyrannical domination of meanings so fixed, so absolute, as to render the means of meaning, which is to say the heart and soul of meaning, a mere phantom. In American theatre this happens

when the fact of what is occurring on stage, a representation in itself, is eclipsed by what is supposed to be created: the 'content,' the story, the dramatic action's putative meaning. What is shown annihilates the showing. The true play comes to take place somewhere else, and the physical and spiritual being of theatre vanishes in a cloud of hermeneutical epiphenomena... American drama for the most part, lacks theatrical presence (Wellman, 1984: 59).

Wellman's work has its roots in the writings of Gertrude Stein, as is evident in his suspicion of America's preoccupation with meaning. His plays place an emphasis on dramatic action that takes on a new type of showing mechanism, which echoes Stein's own words:

The English language has been thrust upon Americans. And it is wrong. As static and immobile as are the English, just so ever-moving are Americans. Here is a huge country. Not a mere island. Naturally people move. And they need a moving language. A language that can interpret American life. Nouns and adjectives won't express American life. They are too weak, too immobile. But verbs, adverbs, prepositions and the like ah, they are moving, just as Americans. Obviously we cannot suddenly junk the English language and adopt some other tongue. English is too connotative, too close to us. Our problem is to adapt the English language to American needs. To make it move with us Americans. That is the problem—to write things as they are, not as they seem. Our aim must not be to explain things, but to write the thing itself, and thereby in itself be self-explanatory (Haas 8).

As a practitioner and researcher, I find myself at a crossroads, caught between American and British notions of the literary. Ultimately, *Rumi High*—developed in both England and America (written in English, mostly)—will be available to an international readership accessible through the world-wide-web. Such an endeavor embodies our globalized society, which is interconnected through technology. While the topic of the play is localized (public education in NYC), the play is composed of 'traces' of the writing process, which takes place across various cultures, particularly American, British, Turkish and Italian, which are contained within my own context as author of this work.

My training as a playwright, director and actor, has developed through experiences in both professional and academic theatre. As a playwright, I have a tendency to over-write lengthy unedited and unfinished drafts of plays. As a director, I am eager to bring these drafts into the rehearsal room, and to experiment with like-minded theatre-makers to continue the writing process. This is how, in 2004, I came to form newFangled theatReR, an ensemble theatre company dedicated to the production of new plays. Our work was marked by its innovative use of space, physical theatre and poetic language. As seen in the company name, our work embodies a continuous playing with words and language, both visually and aurally.

As Artistic Director of newFangled theatReR, I gained experience as an independent producer and developed a DIY ethos to making theatre where collaboration was fundamental to the production of both *performance playtexts* and *literary playtexts*. This ethos shaped the aesthetic of the work that we created, as well as my approach to writing and developing new works collaboratively. We produced new plays in Off-Off-Broadway venues such as HorseTRADE Theater Group, an incubator for emerging theatre artists in the East Village. With the exception of a 2007 revival of Wellman's *Harm's Way*, all plays that newFangled theatReR produced, were written by me; and for all productions, I served as the director. As Gerald Rabkin notes, "if ever there should be an identity between the two levels of textuality it should be when the playwright and the director are the same person" (1985: 158). I situate myself within a tradition of theatre-makers who take on this dual role, as evident in the selected models of practice cited in this thesis: Lee Breuer, Fiona Templeton,

Julian Beck and Judith Malina. Even Wellman and Parks have been known to direct their plays. Though my name is attached to an authorial subtitle in all of my plays, (for example: *Rumi High, an intifada by johnmichael rossi*), I must acknowledge that when developing a new play with an ensemble, the notion of complete authorship is suspect. This suspicion of my role as the author, and a desire to grasp more deeply the nature of writing for performance, is at the core of my impulse to pursue a research path; to deepen my understanding of the terminology, traditions and history that frames the scholarly fields of Theatre, Performance and Dramatic Writing in the 21st century.

As my playwrighting practice became increasingly more collaborative, 21st century trends in performance, described as ‘immersive,’ particularly in the UK, expanded my notion of what constitutes a play. I began developing work in site-specific and site-responsive contexts, and experimenting with writing for performance where the audience member has an increased agency over the experience and outcomes of the play. This new approach to playwrighting problematized the actual writing of the play, both as a literary production for potential readers, and as a script for practitioners to collaborate with.

Performance groups at the forefront of the immersive theatre movement, such as Punchdrunk, You Me Bum Bum Train and dreamthinkspeak, generally do not produce literary versions of their performance productions. I believe that there is great value to theatre industries in producing plays as *literary playtexts*, which provide access to the work through a different type of readership, and make possible future performance productions of the work. Coincidentally, upon completion of this research project, Punchdrunk announced the forthcoming

publication of *The Drowned Man Limited Edition Book* (2015), which is a hardcover book that includes over 130 images of *The Drowned Man: A Hollywood Fable* (2013), taken by Julian Abrams. As marketed, the book appears to be a photographic documentation of the production, akin to a museum exhibition catalogue. My doctoral research has led me to consider the limitations of the print medium, which complicates the presentation of contemporary plays marked by their use of multi-media, alternative performance spaces, and audience participation.

STRUCTURE OF THESIS

In this thesis, the Chapters provide critical analyses of selected models of practice, using interweaving critical strands that foreground the practice project. The Chapters are connected by Intervals, which analyze the hyper(play)text of *Rumi High*, and delineate aspects of the collaborative process in relation to critical theory. The Intervals represent a practice-led methodology, where practice interrogates theory, and theory is used to reflect on process. The Intervals enable me to take a different register. Through a first person narrative, I will discuss critical moments of the creative process, and particular aspects of the practice project, that relate to the critical analyses of the models of practice in the Chapters. Josephine Machon's 'scale of immersivity' (2013: 93-102) and Hans Thies Lehmann's 'aspects' of the postdramatic (2006: 145-174) will be used as a guide in evaluating the hyper(play)text in relation to the research question. Each Interval will conclude with a shift in perspective, to an evaluative dimension, where I will reflect on the

effectiveness of choices made, in order to extrapolate on what the practice has enabled me to achieve in relation to the research question. It is through the Intervals that I aim to contribute to the field of practice-led research, providing a model for how the practice-led researcher can critically reflect on his/her own creative practice in order to negotiate critical and practical decisions made in the art-making process.

Chapter 1 provides a historical and theoretical overview in order to contextualize my research project. Landscaping the field of research, I include relevant discourse in dramatic theory, reader-response theory, semiotics, hypertext theory, postmodernism, post-structuralism and deconstruction. I will foreground the forthcoming analyses of the models of practice by citing Roland Barthes, Wolfgang Iser and Jacques Derrida as well as semioticians Michael Issacharoff, Patrice Pavis and Erika Fischer-Lichte. Postmodern analysis of contemporary theatre practices by Bonnie Marranca, Marc Robinson and Elinor Fuchs inform my research and help to establish the models of practice that will be discussed throughout the thesis. To situate the reader, I will clarify my use of terminology, including: Text, Drama, Literature, Audience, Interactive, Participatory and Immersive.

Interval 1 introduces the initial stimuli for *Rumi High*, including historical, cultural, political and biographical contexts that are highlighted as significant 'traces' of the playwrighting process. These traces are positioned as significant influences on the play's form and content. Analysis of the initial stimuli will lead to an explanation of how I came to integrate digital practices with my playwrighting practice.

In Chapter 2, Stein is situated as a pillar of postmodern playwrighting who challenges how we read and experience plays in relation to the Aristotelian tradition, which has shaped the Western reading of the dramatic play text for centuries. How does the juxtaposition of Aristotle and Stein's dramatic theories provide a foundation to discuss a postdramatic poetics? An analysis of form and content in contemporary poetic plays by Parks and Wellman attempts to bridge the gaps between Aristotle's *Poetics* and Stein's essay, *Plays*. These models of practice will lead me to suggest that a poetic use of didascalía enables a multisensory experience of the *literary playtext* and requires a more active reader who participates in the mutual creation of the work. As a bridge to Interval 2, this Chapter considers the strategies that poetic playwrights employ to enable (syn)aesthetic and interactive reading opportunities.

Interval 2 focuses on the 'look' of written language in *literary playtexts*, discussing how my playwrighting practice integrates digital practices, by experimenting with hypermedia. How can hypermedia be used poetically in developing an aesthetic that assists readers and writers in hypothesizing *literary* and *performance playtexts*? The hyper(play)text will introduce the use of images, sounds and fonts as texts that work in concert with written language to enable a multisensory reading experience. The influence of the models of practice in Chapter 2 will be evident in my own poetic use of didascalía, as I re-envision how a play 'looks,' how it is accessed and how readers experience it.

In Chapter 3, I analyze highly graphic print editions of Eugène Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano* and Lee Breuer's *The Red Horse Animation*, and their relation to the performance productions that preceded their literary production.

These models of practice are rare examples of how the *performance playtext* can lead to a *literary playtext* that deviates from the way plays are traditionally presented in print. How does the performativity of the page situate the reader in a role where s/he is empowered to make active choices throughout his/her reading process? This analysis suggests that plays that ‘look’ different can activate the reader to engage with the work in ways that might constitute the act of reading as a performance event, particularly when the *literary playtext* shifts from printed to digital reading and writing spaces.

Interval 3 considers how public performance presentations of work-in-progress and post-performance discussions with attending audiences shaped and clarified the critical frames of *Rumi High*, particularly with regards to the play’s exploration of control and freedom within school structures. I will highlight specific viewpoints expressed in the post-performance discussions that directly influenced the further development of the play as multi-linear, site-specific and interactive. Citing a conflict between Arthur Miller and The Wooster Group over the group’s use of excerpts of Miller’s *The Crucible* (1952) in their play, *LSD (...just the high points...)* (1982), I question issues of ownership of and control of text. The hyper(play)text inevitably complicates authorial rights with regards to reproduction, while the ‘wrighting’ of a play-as-website affords me new ways of controlling the reading experience, even as I attempt to relinquish control of the work. What are the affects and limits of a collaborative playwrighting process? This Interval will distinguish two types of collaboration within a collabowrighterly process.

In Chapter 4, I compare published versions of The Living Theatre's *Paradise Lost* (1971) and Fiona Templeton's *YOU—the City* (1990) to consider the ways that the *literary text* guides the reader to read the play as a performance. How is the *literary reader* situated and guided to make active choices where site and multi-linear narratives are integral to the work? Both models of practice use documentation from previous performance productions with great innovation. Assuming that a play may have an extended run, a performance production implies a plurality of *performance texts*, which might change with each audience, particularly when the work requires the audience to participate. These models of practice are in a liminal zone between documenting *performance texts* that happened and hypothesizing *performance texts* that can happen.

The Conclusion revisits the research question and summarizes the findings and achievements of this practice-led research. I will evaluate the practice project and the process of developing *Rumi High*, while pointing to the possibilities that the hyper(play)text offers as a model of practice for future cross-disciplinary research in the fields of Theatre and Digital Literature.

The structure of this thesis draws from a musical format, which is organized around repetition and variation. The Chapters function as the 'verse,' which continuously returns to the research question, as the 'refrain,' in order to expand upon the argument. The Intervals provide the space for a shift in register, as I 'riff' on the process, reflecting back, as an evaluative method, which functions as the 'bridge' back to the 'melody' of the Chapters. In Chapter 1, the interweaving theoretical strands will establish the 'mood' and 'tempo' of

the thesis in order to foreground the critical analyses of the models of practice in the subsequent Chapters, and the practice project as discussed in the Intervals.

CHAPTER 1 Landscaping the Field of Research

We live in a Mixmaster culture. Everything from mankind's history is available to us at the flick of a dial or the opening of a book
– Richard Foreman (1992: 21).

Divided in two sections, this Chapter provides a theoretical and historical context that is used to develop the hyper(play)text, which considers trends in late 20th and 21st century theatre, in order to contribute new knowledge to the field through practice-led research. Considering Gertrude Stein's notion of the 'landscape play,' in her essay, *Plays* (1935), which suggests that the frame of the work empowers the reader to view a work from a particular perspective, the first section foregrounds my practice project by placing relevant practitioners, works and theories in a frame that will provide the reader with a context for my research pathway. The second section establishes my own understanding, position and use of relevant terminology, which emerges in the first section.

INTERWEAVING THEORETICAL STRANDS

Postmodern Literary Theory

In 1969, Roland Barthes declared *The Death of the Author*, while Michel Foucault questioned, *What Is an Author?* One of the defining debates of the Postmodern era involves challenging the conventional and modern perceptions of text and authorial control within writing and reading processes. Literary theories, established by Roland Barthes, Stanley Fish and Wolfgang Iser emphasized the role of the reader in determining meaning. Concepts of an 'open' or 'writerly' text, where the 'ideal' or 'implied' reader completes the work

and determines meaning suggested that meaning is constantly shifting; ever-changing from reader to reader. Yet, in theatre, particularly avant-garde and experimental performance, these debates were being addressed well before the advent of Postmodernism.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, playwrights such as Alfred Jarry and Gertrude Stein were experimenting with and challenging notions of what a play is. This experimentation led to a repositioning of the audience and a decentralization of the text. Critical theories developed by Bertolt Brecht and Antonin Artaud in the first half of the 20th century foregrounded a wave of Modernist movements from Futurism to Dadaism to Absurdism, that inspired works by performance groups such as The Living Theatre and The Open Theatre, who rejected the text in favor of play structures written around improvisation and the active participation of the audience.

In the late 20th century, semioticians Michael Issacharoff, Anne Ubersfeld, Keir Elam and Patrice Pavis, investigated the relationship between text and performance, considering notions around *mise-en-scène* in relation to the *mise-en-page* and raised debate around translation processes between *performance playtexts* and *literary playtexts*. Elam's semiotic analysis of playwrighting practice suggests that these two types of text hypothesize each other:

Since, chronologically, the writing of the play precedes any given performance, it might appear quite legitimate to suppose the simple priority of one over the other. But it is equally legitimate to claim that it is the performance or at least a possible or 'model' performance that constrains the dramatic text in its very articulation... the dramatic text is radically conditioned by its performability. The written text... is determined by its very need for stage contextualization and indicates throughout its allegiance to the physical conditions of performance,

above all the actor's body and its ability to materialize discourse within the space of the stage (1980: 208).

The play form itself suggests performance through its 'allegiance to the physical conditions of performance.' The *literary playtext* is most certainly 'conditioned' by this intention. However, it can be argued that the *literary playtext* and the *performance playtext* enable one another, rather than 'constrain' one another.

Adrian Page asserts in *The Death of the Playwright?* that Barthes' declaration of the death of the author is "more pertinent to literary criticism than the theatre... the playwright has been 'dead' for some time. Theatrical productions illustrate vividly the freedom which those who work in the theatre assume with regard to dramatic texts" (1992: 1). This is to say that directors, performers and designers will assume a certain level of authorship via their own readership, as they produce a play as performance. Playwright and critic Bert O. States suggests that, "all dramatic texts are hypotheses, yearnings" (1985: 127). In traditional practice, a play is written by a playwright who passes the *literary playtext* to a group of practitioners who produce the work as a *performance playtext*. There is often the presumption that the *literary playtext* precedes the *performance playtext*. This thesis will highlight works where States' position is reversible: the *performance playtext* hypothesizes the *literary playtext*. This research project will consider the complex relationship between the *performance playtext* and the *literary playtext*, and will exemplify a relationship that is more cyclical than linear.

A play will often undergo many types of translation processes: from page to stage, and vice versa. Fiona Templeton's *YOU—the City* (1990), discussed in Chapter 4, exemplifies how translating a *performance playtext* into a printed

literary playtext precipitates an in-depth collaboration between playwright and editor. This printed *literary playtext* appears to function as a documentation of a specific performance production, incorporating the visual aspects and technical details that constitute the *mise-en-scène*. Lee Breuer's *The Red Horse Animation* (1979), discussed in Chapter 3, is published as two entirely different *literary playtexts*, one taking the form of a comic book. Innovative approaches to presenting these plays in printed form highlight the position that the *performance playtext* hypothesizes the *literary playtext*, and suggest that the collaborative network is expanded to include editors, translators, publishers and visual artists.

Considering notions of fidelity and faithfulness to the author's intentions, Erika Fischer-Lichte explains the complex relationship between *performance playtext* and *literary playtext* when she states:

The transformation of the drama's literary text into the theatrical text of a performance can thus only be defined and described appropriately as the translation of signs from a linguistic sign system into those of a theatrical sign system. The drama's literary text is not, in other words, merely transferred into another medium (1992: 192).

Fischer-Lichte's distinction between the 'translation of signs' and 'transference of mediums' suggests that plays encompass a vast field of varying sign systems. The *literary playtext* and the *performance playtext* may simultaneously share sign systems while adopting different sign systems appropriate to the medium, the form and the content. This concept of varying sign systems is critical to the notion that the relationship between these two texts is cyclical, as the hyper(play)text is presented as a model that increases sign-sharing potential.

From Dramatic Theory to Postdramatic Theory

Postmodern literary theory carves the pathway from which to view text as open to interpretation. Yet, the relationship between the *literary playtext* and the *performance playtext* has been complicated by established dramatic theory, which traditionally defines a play with concrete fixed categories and thought processes that are tied to a logical center. Aristotle's *Poetics* (c. 335 BC), which introduces six key elements of tragedy, is our first-known work of dramatic theory. Ancient Greece is often cited as the birthplace of Western drama. Even today, these Aristotelian elements are integral to analyzing plays as literature. Deconstructionist theory, led by Jacques Derrida, challenges commonly accepted notions of writing and reading, particularly of the Western Aristotelian tradition, where the work has a center, and from that center, a concrete meaning, which has been determined by the author. Derrida emphasizes in *Living On*, that a text "is henceforth no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces" (1979: 84).

In 1935, Stein re-imagines the play form in her essay, *Plays*, introducing her concepts of the 'landscape play' and the 'continuous present.' Marc Robinson credits Stein for having:

reanimated language, letting it be heard for its own sensual qualities, no longer just serving stories but now aspiring to the same radiance as, say, a wash of paint on an abstract-expressionist canvas... The rhythms of dialogue, the syntax of sentences, and the physical relationships among characters became as important as what they said (1994: 2).

Robinson's discussion of Steinian aesthetics which 'reanimate language' and highlight the 'sensual qualities' of written language foregrounds his analysis of poetic playwrights Mac Wellman and Suzan-Lori Parks, whose work will be used as models of practice in Chapter 2.

Postmodernism and the metaphorical 'death of the author,' took the anti-textual attitude within the performance world further by inspiring theatrical works marked by non-linear, fragmentary and site-specific qualities that stretched the possibilities of what a theatre space is, and how the event itself is framed. Late 20th century experimental theatre increasingly moved away from the literary world as the dramatic play became overtaken by what Bonnie Marranca names the Theatre of Images, "which exclude[s] dialogue or use[s] words minimally in favor of aural, visual and verbal imagery that calls for alternative modes of perception on the part of the audience" (1996: x). Elinor Fuchs, in *The Death of Character*, discusses postmodern plays that have "an aesthetic of breaks and gaps, surfaces and masks, objectless in its irony, without closure, speaking a strange synthetic language packed with sly quotations and a myriad of references to pop culture" (1996: 6). These works do not reject the text so much as diminish its role, by viewing the text as one of many modes of communication in performance. Pre-dating discourse around immersive theatre, Fuchs labels multisensory dramatic experiences, such as John Krizanc's *Tamara* (1989), as "shopping theatre," which she defines as "the mingling of the active event and the formerly passive spectator in an exciting arena of free choice and co-performance, even though the freedom is somewhat spurious and the choice strictly controlled" (13).

Hans Thies Lehmann introduces the term 'postdramatic,' marking a turn towards performance and the audience, where text becomes "just one element in the scenography and general 'performance writing' of theatre" (2006:4).

Lehmann ties this 'turn to audience' to the writings of Artaud, citing the emergence of Happenings and Events, and the work of The Futurists, Dadaists, Symbolists and later, groups such as The Living Theatre, whose *Paradise Now* (1971) is discussed as a model of practice in Chapter 4. For Lehmann,

the postdramatic theatre is not simply a new kind of text staging – and even less a new type of theatre text, but rather a type of sign usage in the theatre that turns both of these levels of theatre upside down through the structurally changed quality of the performance text: it becomes more presence than representation, more shared than communicated experience, more process than product, more manifestation than signification, more energetic impulse than information (2006: 85).

Lehmann's emphasis on 'presence,' 'shared experience,' 'process,' 'manifestation' and 'energetic impulse' provokes a reconsideration of how text can be used in contemporary theatre. Discussing the work of a range of playwrights from Heiner Müller to Richard Foreman, Lehmann is very clear in stating that postdramatic theatre is not a repudiation of text, asserting, "its valorization of the performance dimension does not imply that texts written for the theatre are no longer relevant or cannot be considered in this context" (6).

In a section titled '*Synaesthesia*,' Lehmann distinguishes between dramatic narration, where "A is connected to B, B In turn to C, so that they form a line or sequence," and the postdramatic where "any one detail seems to be able to take place of any other" (84). He describes a "scenic poetry" that maintains a "disparate heterogeneity," and provokes the reader's meaning-making process as his/her sensory system "seek[ing] out its own [connections],

becom[ing] active, its imagination going ‘wild’” (84). This renewed focus on the reader’s experience and perception of a play resurrects Stein’s notion of the ‘landscape’ play, focusing on the viewpoint or perspective from which the work is experienced. Lehmann explains:

Perception always functions *dialogically*, in such a way that the senses *respond* to the offers and demands of the environment, but at the same time also show a disposition first to construct the manifold into a texture of perception, i.e. to constitute a unity. If this is so, then aesthetic forms of practice offer the chance to intensify this synthesizing, corporeal activity of sensory experience precisely by means of a purposeful impediment: they call attention to it as a quest, disappointment, retreat and rediscovery (85).

This connects to Castagno’s tying of new playwrighting strategies to Bakhtin’s dialogical criticism, referenced in the Introduction. Stein’s plays are dialogical, where dialogue, rather than unfolding logically, is engaged with and informs other texts. Stein’s texts can also be viewed as polyphonic, a musical term, distinguishing a text composed from a multiplicity of voices and perspectives.

Lehmann discusses 'synaesthesia' in relation to Richard Wagner and the Modernist era, as an “*implicit constituent* of theatre presented for contemplation as a *work of mise en scène*,” which in the postdramatic, becomes “an *explicitly marked proposition* for a *process of communication*” (84). This notion is furthered by Josephine Machon’s concept of ‘(syn)aesthetic’ in *(Syn)aesthetics: Redefining Visceral Performance*. Machon describes synaesthesia as “a human capacity for perception which shifts between realms; between the sensual and intellectual; between the literal and lateral” (2011: 15). She employs the term ‘(syn)aesthetic’ to describe a theatre-going experience that is an “artistically induced synaesthesia” (19). Machon’s explains:

(syn)aesthetics provides a discourse that defines simultaneously the impulse and processes of production *and* the subsequent appreciation strategies, which incorporate reception and interpretation.

(Syn)aesthetics is an aesthetic potential within performance which embraces a fused sensory experience, in both the process and the means of production, as it consists of a blending of disciplines and techniques to create an interdisciplinary, intertextual and 'intersensual' work (14).

Drawing from critical theory on phenomenology, Machon later writes *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Performance* in which she defines the “central features of immersive practice... [as] the involvement of the audience, a prioritisation of the sensual world... [and] the significance of space and place” (2013: 70). She provides a ‘scale of immersivity’ which includes twelve criteria to gauge immersivity in performance: In-its-own world, Space, Scenography, Sound, Duration/al, Interdisciplinary/hybridised practice, Bodies, Audience, A ‘contract for participation,’ Intention and Expertise (2013: 93-100).

While Machon acknowledges the potential for certain plays, such as Caryl Churchill’s *Cloud Nine* (1989), to be realized as immersive, for the most part, the individual playwright and the *literary playtext* are neglected in her analysis. Machon is more focused on work by groups such as Punchdrunk, Artangel and dreamthinkspeak, examining the affects of corporeal and ephemeral experiences on the meaning-making process. Despite the usefulness of Machon’s ‘scale’ in analyzing my practice, Machon’s earlier work on (syn)aesthetics is more inclusive of the *literary playtext*, as she refers to the work of Naomi Wallace, Sarah Kane and Caryl Churchill:

The transgressive quality of *playtexts* in performance encourages practical inventiveness from directors and performers alike. They also demand an immediate and emotionally sentient response from the audience... (syn)aesthetic *playwriting* focuses on the live performance and interrogates the essence of the live(d) theatrical event. It is writing

that requires a rich and versatile performance style and asserts a fluid and shapeshifting form that contravenes categorization (2011: 32).

Here, Machon's position supports the notion of a play text as a hypothesis, while suggesting new 'requirements' for writing a play. The hyper(play)text, I will argue, embodies a 'shapeshifting form that contravenes categorization' and enables a (syn)aesthetic reading experience that not only encourages, but insists on 'practical inventiveness.' The experience of reading the hyper(play)text expands the scope of what constitutes a performance, and where performance might take place.

Hypertext Theory

Barthes discusses writing and text in terms of networks, links, nodes, webs and paths, predating the use of hyperlinks and hypermedia in digital texts. The 1990's underwent a wave of technological advances with the rise of the computer and the age of the Internet. Hypertext theory, led by Jay David Bolter and George P. Landow, extended and perhaps idealized certain postmodern literary theories, claiming that hypertext achieves what Barthes alluded to (links, webs, networks) and what Derrida's *Glas* (1974) attempted to do in print. Bolter claims that, "[e]lectronic writing takes us beyond the paradox of deconstruction, because it accepts as strengths the very qualities—the play of signs, intertextuality, the lack of closure—that deconstruction poses as the ultimate limitations of literature and language" (1991: 166). From hypertext theory, emerged hyperfiction, a literary genre that pre-dates the notion of a 'born-digital' work, and remains a niche form that never quite developed beyond the 1990's.

Today, Kate Pullinger's research and creative practice in Digital Literature renews discussion around the ways that technology changes readers'

and writers' understanding of text. Her digital novel, *Inanimate Alice* is an online interactive fiction series that chronicles the adventures of Alice and her imaginary digital friend, Brad. The series began in 2005, and to date spans ten episodes. The experience of reading what Pullinger describes as a 'born-digital' novel, evokes the sense of simultaneously reading a graphic novel and playing a video game. The work is 'born-digital' because it is not adapted from a pre-existing text-only story, whereas an e-book (electronic book) version of a Shakespeare play, for example, is re-presenting a pre-existing text. Ana Abril applies a phenomenological perspective, citing Maurice Merleau-Ponty, to suggest that:

[in] the digital realm our freedom to act is limited in scope by the innate boundaries of the digital world. That is, the participant in *Inanimate Alice* is moving within the imaginary world created by its author and his/her ability to perform any action inside this world is determined by the digital context itself (Abril, 2014: 4).

This suggests a falsehood in presuming that the reader of digital literature is completely free of the author's control of the reading process. In the Conclusion, an evaluation of the practice project will address the ways that the hyper(play)text controls the reader differently than a printed text.

As methods for producing, receiving and perceiving text transform, the relationship between the *literary playtext* and *performance playtext* must be reconsidered. Hypertext theory and the emerging field of Digital Literature opens a critical and practical pathway to begin to re-imagine and innovate the play as a literary form to be read and experienced as an interactive multisensory performance. Barthes states that, "the writerly is the novelistic without the novel, poetry without the poem... production without product" (1970:

5). I can only then assume that the *writerly* is also the play without the play, the performance without the performance. If the roles of reader and writer are constantly shifting back and forth in a cycle of writing and reading and re-writing; if “theatrical representation is finite,” as Derrida states, “and leaves behind its actual presence, no trace, no object to carry off [; If i]t is neither a book nor a work, but an energy” (1967: 312) how can we analyze the processes of reading and writing *literary playtexts* in relation to *performance playtexts*? The hyper(play)text enables these two textual identities, the *literary playtext* and the *performance playtext*, to intersect, interrupt and entangle one with the other; hypothesizing rather than constraining each other.

TERMINOLOGY

Within the frame of this research, some of the terms that I employ hold the potential to confuse, due to either generalized use or changing contexts. Here, I will provide a glossary, which highlights particular viewpoints that inform my use of the following terms: Text, Literature, Drama, Audience, Participation, Interaction and Immersive.

Text

Adopting a Barthesian view of reading and writing, I have engaged in my own playwrighting practice to create *Rumi High* with the following in mind:

Text means *Tissue*; but whereas hitherto we have always taken this tissue as a product, a ready-made veil, behind which lies, more or less hidden, meaning (truth), we are now emphasizing, in the tissue, the generative idea that the text is made, is worked out in a perpetual interweaving (Barthes, 1976: 64).

As Gerald Rabkin notes, “[a]nything we can read as a coherent ensemble of messages constitutes a text... It follows that since performance can be read, it constitutes its own textuality; but it is a complex textuality because it is created from the usually prior textuality of the play or score” (1985: 151). The hyper(play)text presents a model where the textuality of performance is merged with an ensemble of other textualities to enable a multisensory reading experience. Richard Schechner, founder of The Performance Group, states that:

[A] book is many simultaneous dialogues... a changing set of meanings and significance is what keeps a particular text alive. Great texts—whether of literature, visual arts, performances, architecture, or even ‘natural beauty’ ... are forever repositioning themselves as they are newly received and interpreted by different readers who are actually players in ongoing, historically grounded performances (1994: x).

These statements around text liberate the term from the narrow concept of text as written words or language inscribed. If texts are considered tissue, or textiles (interwoven material), the writing process becomes one of weaving. This concept of text supports the notion of playwrighting as a craft.

Barthes explains that, “to interpret a text is not to give it a meaning, but on the contrary to appreciate what *plural* constitutes it” (1970: 5). Speaking of what he calls the ‘writerly’ text, Barthes explains that:

the more plural the text, the less it is written before I read it; and / is not an innocent subject, anterior to the text... This ‘I’ which approaches the text is already itself a plurality of other texts, of codes which are infinite or, more precisely, lost (10).

Drawing from Barthes’ notion of writerly, combined with my adopted spelling of playwrighting, I define ‘collabowrighterly’ as a process which involves performers, designers and readers, who work collaboratively through

workshops and presentations, forming a network that leaves traces of the process into the 'Text.' Interval 3 will identify and discuss different types of collabowrighting which contribute to the plurality of the 'Text.'

It can be said, that technology has increased the plurality of a Text, which may now include hyperlinking to sound, moving and still images, links to relevant contextual information and online chat forums. Hypertext theorist Espen J. Aarseth states:

Texts are cross-products between a set of matrices—linguistic (the script), technological (the mechanical conditions), and historical (the socio-political context); and because of the temporal instability of all of these variables, texts are processes impossible to terminate and reduce (1994: 59).

The hyper(play)text is a play form that enables an interconnected and exponential readership, which provides a playing field for several texts to interact. The plurality of *Rumi High*, the text, is enabled by the hyper(play)text, the work. In his essay, *From Work to Text*, Barthes distinguishes between the 'work' and the 'Text:'

the work can be seen (in bookshops, in catalogues, in exam syllabuses), the text is a process of demonstration, the work can be held in the hand, the text is held in language, only exists in the movement of a discourse; the text is not the decomposition of the work, it is the work that is the imaginary tail of the Text... *the Text is experienced only in an activity of production*" (1977: 157).

Here, I understand that *Rumi High*, the 'work,' is experienced on the Internet via the hyper(play)text. The play will be written through the reading of the hyper(play)text. The reader interacts with the 'work' in order to experience the text, and to determine its meaning. The 'Text' of *Rumi High* is demonstrated by the hyper(play)text, which engages in a dialogue with the reader.

Literature and Drama

Anne Bogart's distinction that Americans are an 'aural' culture as opposed to Europe's 'literary' culture instills the idea that literature is tied to written language, rather than the sound of words, which is just one example of the sensory experience that occurs when reading performance. Marranca states that it is time to "rewrite the history of dramatic literature in a post-Aristotelian poetics" (2012: 124). She suggests that:

it is now necessary to go beyond previous knowledge of the dramatic text to the more complex levels of discourse continental literary theories of the past several decades have opened up... Perhaps if we allow a deeper knowledge of the text as writing and as a form of cultural production, it will be possible to comprehend on a larger scale the language of the stage that each director creates (120).

Here, Marranca is positioning the director as author of the *mise-en-scène*, a text of many texts that are embedded in the dramatic form. Michael Vanden Heuvel discusses the text-based tradition of drama from an Aristotelian perspective, defining drama as:

that form of theatrical expression that is constituted as a literary artifact according to particular 'dramatic' conventions, and empowered as text. Dramas, of course, do not remain merely literary and textual; they are often performed. Nevertheless, the specific fields of pleasure they induce or refuse, and the source of their power to move or distance the spectator, are mainly textual, rooted in literary conventions of narrative, scene, character... This does not mean, however, that there exists a single paradigm of the text that manifests the same affects among its readers or spectators (1991: 3).

Heuvel, here, suggests that the role of the reader is variable and complicated across both types of text. Semiotician Keir Elam asserts that the modes of perception are quite different for these two types of reader (*performance* and *literary*):

It should not be thought that the reader of dramatic texts constructs the dramatic world in the same way as the spectator: not only does the latter have to deal with more varied and specific kinds of information (through the stage vehicles), but the perceptual and temporal conditions in which he operates are quite different. The reader is able to imagine the dramatic context in a leisurely and pseudo-narrative fashion, while the spectator is bound to process simultaneous and successive acoustic and visual signals within strictly defined time limits (1980: 99).

The perception that the reader of a *literary playtext* experiences the work 'in a leisurely and pseudo-narrative fashion' is a dated assumption, and disregards the ways that digital technology can shape and affect a reading experience.

Both Heuvel and Elam's statements discuss drama as a form of text-based theatre, shaped by Aristotelian elements as presented in the *literary playtext*. In line with Lehmann's postdramatic, and appealing to Marranca's call for a 'post-Aristotelian' poetics, many of the early 21st century performance groups creating immersive theatre have re-imagined the experience of a play, and what constitutes text within the realm of performance. Scenography, the use of space, and the participatory role of the audience, distinguishes the work of groups such as Punchdrunk and dreamthinkspeak.

J. Hillis Miller describes a book as a 'portable dreamweaver:'

literary work is not... an imitation in words of some pre-existing reality but, on the contrary, it is the creation or discovery of a new, supplementary world, a metaworld, a hyper-reality. This new world is an irreplaceable addition to the already existing one. A book is a pocket or portable dreamweaver (2002: 18).

The hyper(play)text, accessible through the Internet by using mobile devices such as a smartphone, tablet or laptop, is even better suited for this distinction. Within the work, the reader may be provoked, re-directed and guided to access many other texts, which will inevitably be woven into their meaning-making process. The media, the form and the reading experience itself blur the lines

that separate performance and literature. In this thesis, I use the terms *performance playtext* and *literary playtext*, to distinguish between drama as read through performance and drama as read through a book.

Audience

Susan Bennett hinges performance on the interaction between the audience and the work: “The ideological basis of the play will not necessarily coincide with that of the audience but it is the interaction which will constitute performance” (2003: 30). As Bennett notes, the presence of the audience is required in order to have a performance. She further states that, “it is the interactive relations between audience and stage, spectator and spectator which constitute production and reception, and which cause the inner and outer frames to converge for the creation of a particular experience” (139). What constitutes ‘interactive relation,’ and distinguishes a ‘producer’ from a ‘receiver’ of meaning, becomes questionable in postmodern literary theory, which argues that these lines of communication run both ways.

There are a multitude of terms that have been substituted for or attached to audience: spectator, observer, participant, co-producer, co-creator, public, and witness, to name a few. These terms, at times, imply different roles or expectations of the audience. With certain types of performance, the role of the audience member is perhaps obvious. These tend to be cases where codes of behavior or customs are in place and have been instilled in the theatre-going public. In other instances, particularly newer types of performance, the role is more ambiguous, and require a crafted guidance, or as Machon suggests, a “contract for participation” (2013: 99).

In *The Emancipated Spectator* (2009), Jacques Rancière draws from his own analysis of Joseph Jacotot's 'System of Education' in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991), to call for a 'theatre without spectators:'

Drama means action. Theatre is a place where an action is taken to its conclusion by bodies in motion in front of living bodies that are to be mobilized. The latter might have relinquished their power. But this power is revived, reactivated in the performance of the former, in the intelligence, which constructs that performance, in the energy it generates. It is on the basis of this active power that a new theatre must be built, or rather a theatre restored to its original virtue, to its true essence, of which the spectacles that take this name offer nothing but a degraded version. What is required is a theatre without spectators, where those in attendance learn from as opposed to being seduced by images; where they become active participants as opposed to passive voyeurs (2009: 4).

Rancière channels Brecht's call for a 'Theatre for Instruction,' where the audience member is distanced from theatre's illusory tendencies, in order to form an objective view of the play's issues so that s/he can act to create social change (Willett 69-77). In contemporary performance, situated in Lehmann's postdramatic theatre, the audience is often described as 'witness.' The term 'witness' raises the issue of whether or not the spectator has a social responsibility in relation to what s/he is witnessing. This also evokes a Brechtian view where the spectator is distanced, and compelled to act in response to the politics of the play (91-99). Tim Etchells' manifesto, *Certain Fragments*, consistently returns to this notion of audience as witness in discussing his work with Forced Entertainment: "to witness an event is to be present at it in some fundamentally ethical way, to feel the weight of things and one's own place in them, even if that place is simply, for the moment, as an onlooker" (1999: 17). For Etchells, to pay witness to a performance event implies an active involvement with the material; to 'feel the weight.'

The root of the word 'audience,' *aud*, is grounded with the 'action of hearing,' suggesting that audiences are present at an event as long as they are within hearing distance. Since the 20th century, technology has expanded potential hearing distance, and the term 'audience' in other sectors, has also been applied more broadly to refer to a body of people who are not necessarily physically present at an event. Musicologist, Peter Szendy states: "If listening is not the same thing as hearing, if looking is not seeing, this is because we listen or look while wanting to perceive, intentionally; whereas one hears and sees even without wanting to" (2008: 141). Szendy's focus on listening and looking suggests that a hearing and seeing audience is passive, not acting with intention. Machon's discussion of (syn)aesthetics suggests a highly active reader who experiences form and content as one:

The audience is expected to experience and interpret a whole stage picture that interweaves live performers with design elements, which may involve various technologies, pre-recorded and live soundscapes (including verbal texts) so that divisions between form and content become perceptibly inseparable. All the senses are called into action; that which is visible, audible, olfactory, haptic, tactile and tangible becomes crystallized in performance in the performance format, foregrounding the form of the performance as a semiotic site of transgressive and intertextual communication (2009: 59).

The hyper(play)text requires an active readership; an intentional listening and looking. One of the aims of the practice, in relation to both the form of the play and its content, is to cultivate an emancipated readership where all senses are called into action. Through intentional listening and looking, a (syn)aesthetic experience may emerge.

Due to this research project's cross-disciplinary approach, which involves many different types of text, the term 'reader' will be used instead of

'audience.' A reader, attending a performance or engaging with a book, interacts with the work across a variety of types of text. To distinguish between the two specific types of audiences that are the focus of this research, I will refer to the *performance reader* and the *literary reader*, aligned with my use of *performance playtext* and *literary playtext*.

Participation and Interaction

Peter Brook's discussion at the close of *The Empty Space* foreshadows a movement towards the more empowered *performance reader*:

Assistance—I watch a play... With this assistance, the assistance of eyes and focus and desires and enjoyment and concentration, repetition turns into representation. Then the word representation no longer separates an actor and audience, show and public... The audience too has undergone a change... The audience assists the actor, and at the same time for the audience itself assistance comes from the stage (1968: 156).

All types of readers assist the play as the 'work' comes into fruition. Lines of communication between performer, spectator and space are constantly evolving. The current age of mass media and multi-tasking has provoked a tendency to mix mediums in live performance, offering multisensory experiences and distinct alternatives to the types of engagement offered by film, television and the Internet. The popularity of interactive and participatory performance in the 21st century might lead to conclusions that contemporary consumers of culture want a larger role, or a stake in the event; to have an affect on outcomes. This movement towards a more interactive theatrical experience, where the *performance reader* is participant, or even co-producer of the event, has led to a common misconception that *performance readers* of the past are passive, and do not interact with the performance.

Both 'participation' and 'interaction,' popular terms used in relation to contemporary performance, are quite problematic, and perhaps even misleading. Bettina Brandl-Risi explains that:

it becomes increasingly difficult to decide whether 'progressive,' participatory performances are in fact enabling, while 'traditional' performances have the effect of something like a sedative. Participating through applause, one could add, makes an excellent case for the need and the difficulty to differentiate between immersion and participation: participation requires decision-making, while immersion does not allow such a distance and liberty (2011: 13).

Claire Bishop proposes that participatory art is often operating alongside three possible agendas:

- 1) to create an active subject, one who will be empowered by the experience of physical or symbolic participation... able to determine their own social and political reality...
 - 2) ceding some or all authorial control... to produce, a more positive and non-hierarchical social model...
 - 3) restoration of the social bond through a collective elaboration of meaning
- (2006: 12).

It is my position that the reading, of both *literary playtexts* and *performance playtexts*, are interactive and participatory processes, though the circumstances of reception may have different affects on the meaning-making process. I use Bishop's 'agendas' to critically interrogate the decisions made throughout the practice process. More specifically: why I chose participatory forms of theatre to frame the issues of the play; if the hyper(play)text enables me to cede or assume control of the work; and how this practice has forged a unique social bond through collabowrighting. Interrogating these critical aspects of the practice in relation to Bishop's 'agendas' helps to connect the Intervals to the models of practice discussed in the Chapters.

Immersive

Artaud called for a 'Total' theatre that submerged the audience (1958: 86). Aarseth engages with hypertext theory in a way that channels Artaudian thought, explaining immersion as: "the user's convinced sense that the artificial environment is not just a main agent with whom they can identify but surrounds the user" (1994: 81). The term 'immersive,' has become shorthand to describe theatrical works where the audience is an integral player in the completion of a work, which requires interpretation through sensory response. Machon explains:

'immersive' is now attached to diverse events that assimilate a variety of art forms and seek to exploit all that is experiential in performance, placing the audience at the heart of the work. Here experience should be understood in its fullest sense, to feel *feelingly* - to undergo. From the word (under)go, I wish to be clear that a lot of theatre is experiential and works on its audience in a visceral manner, immersive practice is simply one strand of that (2013: 22).

Machon's notion that the experience of immersive theatre involves feeling '*feelingly*,' is similar to Etchell's description of a witness who 'feels the weight.' Machon further states: "there is no focus on one particular sense but rather a play within the realm of the senses combined in an acknowledgement, manipulation and celebration of the power, promise and potential attributable only to live performance" (75). It is Machon's pinning of immersive practice directly to live performance, that has provoked me to make use of her 'scale of immersivity;' to exhibit how the hyper(play)text reading experience can be considered an immersive event.

Benjamin K. Bergen, a cognitive scientist, explains that in processing language, the "immersed experiencer view claims that when you're

understanding language, you simulate what it would be like to experience the scene that's described... people reading sentences project themselves into mentally simulated experiences of the described scenes" (2012: 68-69). Taking Bergen's linguistic scientific analysis a step further, when the *literary reader* reads a play, s/he must simulate two worlds: the world of the story, and the performance world as described through the didascalialia of the play (the term 'didascalialia' will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2). The *literary playtext* is crafted in ways that enable the *literary reader* to immerse his or herself in a hypothesized theatre-going experience.

Rumi High provokes the audience, through playing the role of student, to write their own meaning of the 'work;' to write into the Text, with their own experiences, both past and present. If "the Text is that space where no language has a hold over any other, where languages circulate," then the so-called 'immersive' performance events by groups such as Punchdrunk become a challenge to producing a conventional printed *literary playtext*, as these works are composed of mostly unwritten languages (Barthes, 1977: 164). In Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, I will suggest that elements of the *literary playtext*: written language and graphics including typography, layout and images, can represent the many aspects of the *performance playtext*. The hyper(play)text will position the *literary reader* to assume the position of a *performance reader* as s/he begins to interact with the text (syn)aesthetically. Interval 1 will introduce the variety of stimuli that shaped *Rumi High* and led to the inception of the hyper(play)text, a form that emerged from the practical dilemma of producing a script for collaborators to use in developing a site-specific and interactive play.

INTERVAL 1
The Stimuli Enmeshes Form and Content

*Sampling, cutting, pasting, referencing—
digital culture is so deep in people now that
we forget there's such a thing as originality*
— *The RZA* (2009: 176).

This first Interval will establish the recurring shift in register that takes place between each Chapter, forming a dialogue between the practice project and the interweaving theoretical strands, in order to expand upon the models of practice. The selected history of theatre, performance and literary theory provided in Chapter 1 provides a frame through which to view the development of *Rumi High*, which emerges from these contexts. Suzan-Lori Parks' notion that "content determines form and form determines content" suggests that, in postdramatic playwrighting practice, form and content supersedes Aristotelian logic (TCG, 1995: 7). The rules established in Aristotle's *Poetics* become adaptable guidelines for postdramatic playwrights, which in effect, opens new possibilities for how the *literary playtext* may be presented. This Interval introduces the initial stimuli for creating *Rumi High*. I will focus on three types of stimuli: the stimuli for the story itself, including narrative, plot and characters; the stimuli for the performance style, specifically site-specific and immersive theatre; and the stimuli for the media, specifically digital hypermedia. The 'traces' of these initial stimuli are embedded in the hyper(play)text and the story of *Rumi High*. Machon's 'scale of immersivity' and Lehmann's 'aspects of the postdramatic' will be used to suggest that *Rumi High*, from the onset, has been shaped by immersive and postdramatic intentions.

First, I will introduce my solitary writing practice (Mode 1) as the starting point from which the other modes of writing become possible. Through Mode 1 a variety of stimuli, historical and personal contexts, are woven together. Each of these stimuli will be discussed in detail in order to illustrate how the form and content of the play took shape. Finally, I will explain the impulse that led me to consider digital reading and writing spaces, integrating web design into my own playwrighting practice, ultimately developing the concept of the hyper(play)text.

TRACES

Jacques Derrida discusses ‘traces’ in writing: “It is not absence instead of presence, but a trace which replaces a presence which has never been present, an origin by means of which nothing has begun” (1967: 372). The traces of stimuli discussed in this Interval will provide a foundation for analyzing the creative practice. As with each Interval, the analysis will highlight critical decisions made in the practice that emerge from and respond to the research questions. Interval 1 should be viewed as a portrait of the enmeshed relationship between form and content.

With this research project, there is no singular performance production to refer to. There are a series of writing events (public and private) that have contributed to the creation of the play. In my practice, performance is part of the playwrighting: performance hypothesizes, provokes and enables the *literary playtext*, which hypothesizes the *performance playtext* and vice versa. The process is cyclical, and enabled by the six modes of writing. Here, I will discuss how Mode 1 (solitary writing) established the stimuli for producing the work, and

enabled the formation of a collaborative network through Mode 2 (group workshops) and Mode 3 (performance presentations), which subsequently expanded with the introduction of digital media to establish Mode 4 (video-conference rehearsals), Mode 5 (social networking forums) and Mode 6 (web design).

According to Paul Castagno, “ Mac Wellman keeps a journal or scrapbook, not in a soul-searching way, but as a compilation of useful materials that can be practically applied. Many of his strange references (his interest in fur balls, or funny words like ‘wiggly’) have arisen from the scrapbook” (2012: 1612). My writing practice is marked by a ‘stream-of-consciousness’ approach, which manifests into a variety of forms of writing from poetry to memoir, reportage to list-making, songs to letters. As a discipline, I aim to write a minimum of thirty minutes daily, which to date, spans sixty-eight journals dating back to 1997. These journals, which I refer to as ‘books’ compose an ongoing work titled, *Cranology*. These books exist in two forms: a set of composition notebooks with handwritten passages marked with date and time, which were later digitally archived as scanned images.

Cranology, Book 34

My playwrighting practice involves an ongoing excavation of *Cranology*. Often it is the case that my subconscious has ‘riffed’ on a theme, idea or concept for a play. This excavation process reveals dramatic textual material in the form of dialogues, monologues, plot structures and character descriptions. As I work in solitude to compile this material into a play, the next step of my process is to open the work up to collaboration with theatre practitioners. This

material functions as seeds for collaboration. The material is then explored through performance-based experimentation in practical workshops (Mode 2). A dialogue between my solitary writing sessions and the workshops emerges.

During the process, Mode 2 was predominantly employed through my work with two ensembles of theatre artists: members of newFangled theatReR, and later, the BEEz (acronym for ‘Badly Edumacated Ensemble’), a group of twelve undergraduate students in the Department of Film, Theatre & Television at University of Reading. I formed the BEEz during the 2012/13 academic year to explore and develop the play’s text. These workshops led to public performances of a work-in-progress (Mode 3) that were presented to live audiences who were then invited to share their experience with the work in post-performance discussions. I also worked with individual members of newFangled theatReR in one-on-one rehearsals via video conferencing.

I also developed a solo performance practice embodying a masked teacher, ‘Mistuh JoMiRo’ who performs an interactive classroom in site-specific spaces, as a series of performance interventions, titled *The S’kool of Edumacation* (also Mode 3). This ongoing solo performance series has developed alongside the political and critical aspects of *Rumi High*, and in many ways has taken on a life of its own. This practice of performance-as-writing has been a major component to the development of *Rumi High*. The writing material from the workshops, performance presentations and solo performances was archived through photography, video and audio, which I later used to reflect on in solitary writing sessions, where I revised the play.

The digital archive of my journals enabled me to locate and return to the initial stimuli for creating a play about education. Images 1, 2 and 3 present three extracts, located in 'Book 34,' the first written traces of *Rumi High*. Image 1 reveals that my initial impulse to write a play about education arises from my experience working in public schools:

Perhaps I need to create a play out of this— a something – an experience... a message, an attack on the wrongs ... on illness that is the New York City public school system.

Here, is expressed not only my impulse to write a play to reflect on issues in the school system, but also my intention to create an experience that would function in a political way: 'to attack the wrongs.'

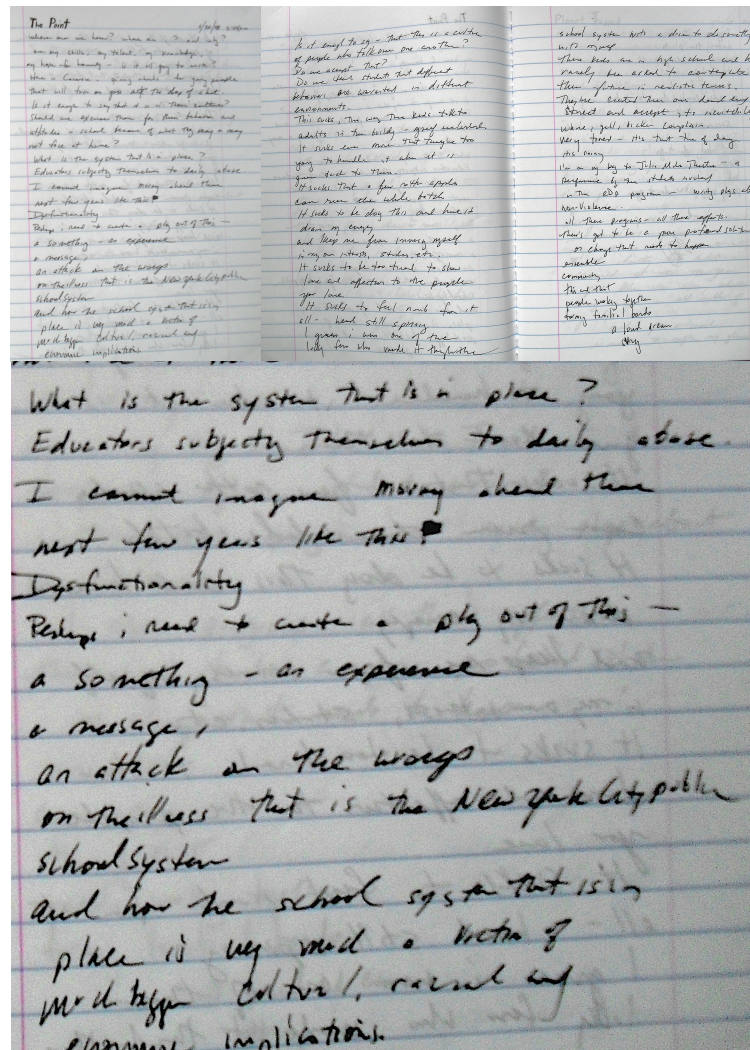


Image 1: 'The Point,' Book 34, 20 May '08, 2:44 pm

Continuing to view this play as an 'experience,' two weeks later, in Image

2, I return to this idea with more specificity:

a new play – perhaps a combination of a few others... a satire of the school system... of education in America... the main character—a Rumi re-incarnate, unknown to he himself... he finds himself in the hostile and shaky work environment – a NYC public school, a la Marat Sade.

My writing, here, is focused on the environment of the school itself. I refer to Peter Weiss' play *Marat/Sade* (1969), a staple of theatre history, which is set in an asylum and takes the form of a play-within-a-play. Weiss' play mixes Antonin Artaud's 'Theatre of Cruelty' and Bertolt Brecht's 'Epic Theatre' to express ideas of class struggle and human suffering to question the nature of revolution and change. The reference to Rumi, the Sufi poet, will be addressed in the next section where his poetry will be highlighted as a stimulus of significance.

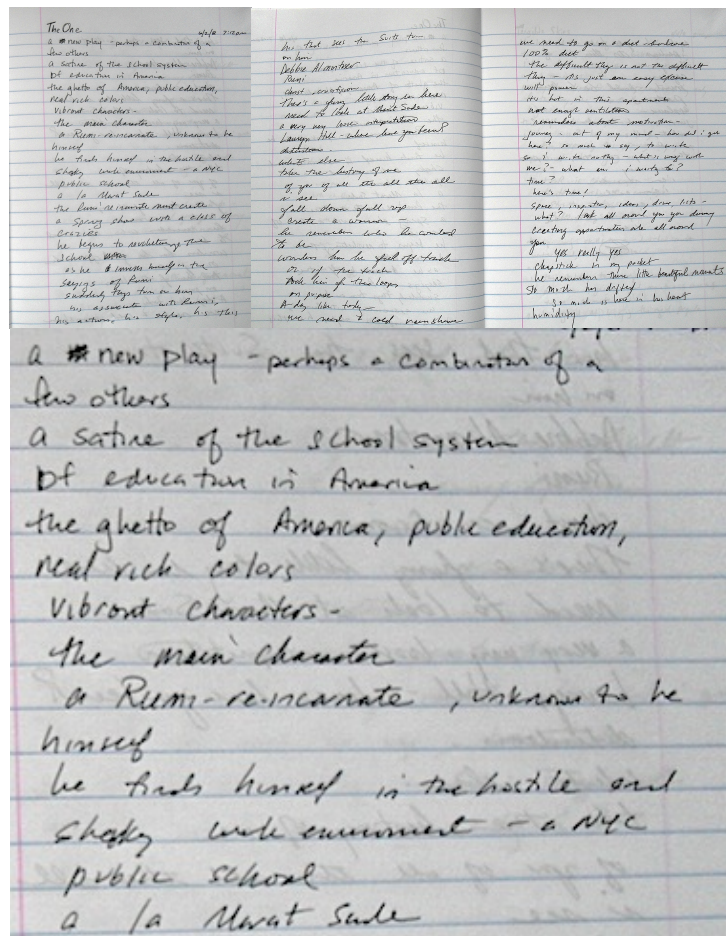


Image 2. 'The One,' Book 34, 2 June '08, 7:12 pm

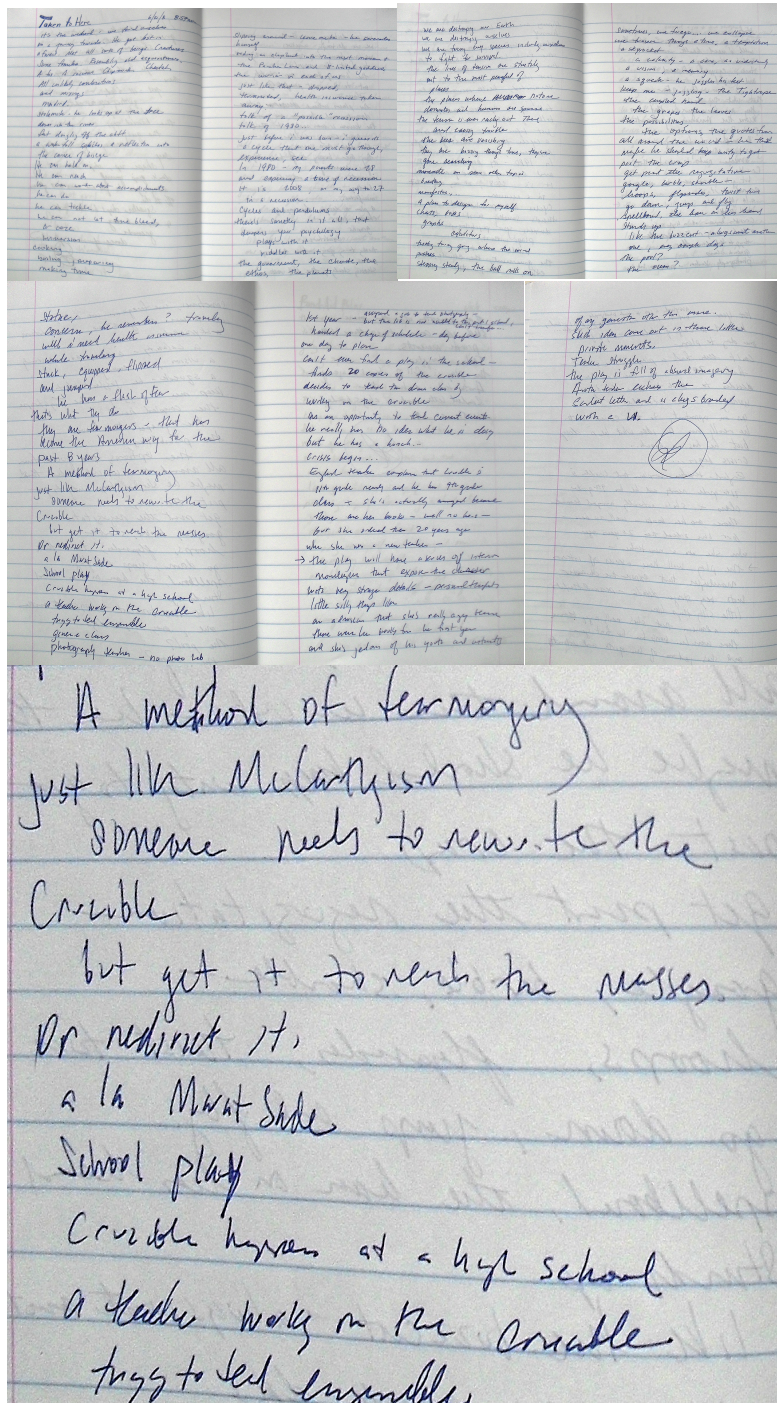


Image 3. 'Taken to Here,' Book 34, 21 June '08, 8:57 am

In Image 3, almost three weeks later, I consider yet another staple of the theatre history canon:

A method of fear-mongering just like McCarthyism... someone needs to re-write *The Crucible* but get it to reach the masses. Or re-direct it. A la Marat Sade... School Play... *Crucible* happens at a high school... A teacher working on *The Crucible*... trying to teach ensemble...

My developing concept for a play about education appears to be accumulating across these three journal entries. Shortly thereafter, ideas for characters, and dialogues begin to appear. Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* (1952) and its critique of McCarthyism will also be discussed in the next section.

These traces of stimuli: my experience within the NYC public school system, Rumi and *The Crucible*, are bound to the play's intentions. *Rumi High* is a treatise and expression of various viewpoints around public education in America. The play reveals itself in part, as a deconstruction of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* intermingled with the poems of Rumi. The play is also inspired by Debbie Almontaser, founder of the Khalil Gibran International Academy (KGIA), which will be discussed in detail in the next section where these stimuli are expanded upon in order to foreground the analysis of the development process and subsequent evaluation of the project.

STIMULI

The stimuli of significance for *Rumi High* includes Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, the poetic writings of Rumi, my personal experience in schools and academic institutions, (as both student and teacher in the US), and the story of Debbie Almontaser. These stimuli ignite, inform and bind the form and content of the play, and open the pathway for the collaborative network. First, I will provide a synopsis of the play, in brief, to further establish the stimuli discussed in the previous section.

Rumi High is set in an unspecified time period in the fictitious town of 'Loose Leaf in New Hampsterdamned, Amerika.' The school, 'Mevlana

Jeluladdin Rumi High S'kool (Q910),’ is a failing small-school in danger of being ‘phased out’ and transformed, ironically, back into a large school. This given circumstance of the play is meant to emphasize the position that the politics around the structuring of school systems, often changing with each new governmental administration, places school communities in constant states of instability. The principal, BIG MIKEY BEE, a bumbling businessman, dressed in a bumblebee suit, parodies qualities of former NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who secured control of the NYC public system in 2002. The character also channels the selfish paranoia of Reverend Parris in *The Crucible*. A first year poetry teacher, DEBI` who wears a headscarf, (which is never qualified with any specific religious association other than that her family heritage is from a place called ‘Yuman’) arrives at Rumi High on the first day of school to the news that her schedule has been changed, and that she will be teaching Drama, a topic which she has no formal knowledge of. She is pointed in the direction of her new classroom, Room D-421, referred to as ‘The Dungeon,’ which is filled with dust, broken furniture and several copies of *The Crucible*. As the play progresses, the school itself boils up into its own crucible of controversy, as interactions between characters, readers and site, encourage the reader to consider critically their own definitions of education, learning and schools.

The Crucible

The Crucible is a staple to high school curriculum in most English classes in America. Liz LeCompte, director of The Wooster Group, explains: “*The Crucible* is probably one of the most frequently performed plays in high schools and colleges and, as such, has a certain degree of instant recognition,

as a sort of theatrical icon” (Aronson 71). *The Crucible* (1953) is a satirical play by Arthur Miller that dramatizes the Salem witch trials as an allegory to critique current events, specifically the McCarthy era in America. The McCarthy era was a period when thousands of Americans under suspicion for being communist were subject to aggressive investigations and questioning before governmental panels. Artists, educators and union organizers were the primary target of these ‘witch hunts’ led by Senator Joseph McCarthy. The play’s title is metaphorical; a crucible is a ceramic or metal container where metals and other materials are subject to extremely high temperatures. The characters represent the metals, and society is the pressurizing container. While Miller draws from the historical truths of the Salem witch trials, borrowing names and events, his play fictionalizes and dramatizes this material in order to construct a story that positions the common man as a tragic figure. In his essay, *Tragedy and the Common Man* (1949), Miller interrogates Aristotle’s criteria for tragedy in the *Poetics*, in order to suggest that tragic figures do not need to have the status of gods and kings. Miller’s essay can be viewed as an attempt to realign Aristotelian dramatic theory with 20th century theatre. This thesis attempts to do the same for 21st century theatre situated in Lehmann’s postdramatic.

In the 1980’s, The Wooster Group used parts of *The Crucible* text in their play, *LSD (...just the high points...)*. Lecompte “set out to stage ‘the perfect high school play,’ ... giving it a certain sense of pageantry combined with ‘bad’ acting... [as] high school productions are frequently adaptations, focusing only on the ‘high points,’ which is how the Group approached the text” (Aronson 71). A conflict between Miller and The Wooster Group ensued due to Miller’s

objection to the group's use of his text. I will refer to this incident in Interval 3, where I address my own use of Miller's text in *Rumi High*.

Rumi

Jeluladdin Rumi is a 13th century Sufi poet and mystic from Konya (now Anatolia, Turkey). His poems were written in Persian, but have since been translated in many languages, particularly English, and he is said to be the best-selling poet in the USA (Tompkins). The popularity of an Eastern poet who represents a Sufi order, amongst an international and particularly Western readership in a post-9/11 era is interesting to note. This is evidence of "Rumi's role as a bridge between religions and cultures" (Barks xvii). John Baldock suggests that: "the essence of Rumi's teaching is that our sensory eye can be transformed into the all-seeing eye" (2005: 8). Attracted to his use of language and imagery, Rumi's poetry had an indelible affect on my own writing practice and the poet is omnipresent, not just in the play's title, but is embodied through the character, JaMz OF FABRIZ. This character is embedded with links that give the reader access to samples of Rumi's poems.

The Small-School Movement

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) signed by President George W. Bush requires schools to meet national goals in learning as measured by standardized tests, in order to receive federal funding. The act places great emphasis on reading, math and sciences, neglecting the arts and creative learning as fundamental to the development of young thinkers. Measuring effective teaching through standardized tests, and punishing schools financially for poor scores undermines the range of life-learning and skill-

building that educators must provide in school settings, and overlooks the implications that neighborhood crime and poverty can have on particular schools that are faced with managing a range of social, emotional and economic challenges (Ravitch, 2014).

In June 2007 I was hired by Vital Theatre Company to help form Brooklyn Theater Arts High School (BTAHS), a new 'small-school' conceived around a mission of theatre arts integration. At that time, in response to the "epidemic" of large high schools in NYC,

Mayor Michael Bloomberg and his chancellor Joel Klein, applied business principles to overhaul the nation's largest school system... They reorganized the management of the schools, battled the teacher's union, granted large pay increases to teachers and principals, pressed for merit pay, opened scores of charter schools, broke up large high schools into small ones, emphasized frequent practice for state tests, gave every school a letter grade, closed dozens of low performing schools, and institutionalized the ideas of choice and competition (Ravitch, 2010: 69).

The 'small-school movement' was predicated on the belief that large urban high schools were to blame for the decline of the public education system. The solution was to divide these large school buildings into several small mission-based schools. BTAHS was part of this movement.

Having attended a large public high school, I was skeptical of the small-school movement. From my perspective, the opportunities that a large school afforded students were critical aspects of my formative years. These opportunities include advanced placement classes, a menu of elective studies to choose from, and various extracurricular activities. Large high schools are not only able to offer an array of opportunities to develop the whole self; they also provide a social model from which to understand how society functions

beyond the walls of the school building. Instilling a sense of community, large schools were often located in the center of the neighborhood, placing education at the center of society. School buildings were more than just settings for instruction and administering tests. They were places to develop as citizens. Despite my political views in relation to the Bloomberg initiative to close large schools, the opportunity to form a new school and develop and deliver curriculum that integrates theatre arts skills with core learning subjects was a unique opportunity to align my theatre-making practice with a progressive pedagogy.

The Story of Debbie Almontaser

In the summer of 2007, Khalil Gibran International Academy (KGIA), another 'small-school' was set to open in Brooklyn. Debbie Almontaser, a Yemeni-American educator, was forming this Arab-themed school that would offer specialized courses in Arab language alongside the standard core-curriculum. The objective "was to establish a school that emphasized critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills through inquiry project-based learning. The Arabic language program was a critical component of the curriculum as well" (Almontaser and Nevel). The focus on Arabic culture, which can be viewed as a creative response to remedy the post-9/11 climate that was suspicious of Muslim and Arabic cultures, instead became a tool for divisiveness.

Almontaser describes the events that took place in the weeks leading up to the school's opening:

those who opposed the school did everything in their power to undermine its opening... they started attacking me based on my ethnicity

and religion. They plastered pictures of me in my headscarf on websites and blogs with unfounded allegations that I was a radical Islamist with an agenda to radicalize youth. They distorted my words in local and national papers to make me seem anti-American (Almontaser and Nevel).

Ironically, KGIA was being characterized as a 'Muslim' school, but is named after Khalil Gibran, a Lebanese Christian. This exemplifies the news media's power to frame information and to use language selectively in order to influence a reader's interpretation. What ensued was not so much a battle of words, but a manipulation of words, for political purposes.

It was reported that Almontaser was a board member for a social service organization that shared space with a youth organization, Arab Women in the Arts and Media (AWAAM). AWAAM sold t-shirts with a slogan that read:

'Intifada NYC.' When this story emerged, the Department of Education insisted that Almontaser be available for an interview with the *New York Post*.

Almontaser complied, with hope that the interview would be an opportunity to clarify her philosophy for KGIA. In that interview, she explained that she had no affiliation with AWAAM, but the reporter continued to discuss the 'Intifada NYC' t-shirts rather than KGIA. When asked about the origin or the word 'intifada,'

Almontaser explained:

[T]he Arabic root word from which the word intifada originates means 'shake off' and that it has evolved over time to have different meanings for different people, but certainly for many, given its association with the Palestinian/Israeli conflict during which thousands have died, it is associated with violence (Almontaser and Nevel).

That interview led to an article that characterized Almontaser as endorsing intifada and as a supporter of terrorism. The Department of Education subsequently ordered Almontaser to issue a public apology. By the end of the

week, the Mayor and the Department of Education forced Almontaser to resign from her position as principal of KGIA, just weeks before the school's opening.

The subtitle for *Rumi High* is 'an intifada by johnmichael rossi.' This is my attempt to reclaim the root meaning of the word as Almontaser explained it to the reporter. The play is suggesting a 'shake off' of ineffective systems of education and presumptions about educators in the media, as shaped by local and national politics, which I believe, affects teaching and learning in schools, subsequently devaluing education in contemporary society.

It was over the course of the 2007/2008 academic year, as evidenced in the excerpts from *Cranology*, when a synergy between the opportunity to form BTAHS and the scandal surrounding KGIA eclipsed my experiences as an educator, a public school student and the son of a public school teacher. These pre-texts forged a vision for *Rumi High*. I began to imagine a play that would critique the public education system through satire. My own personal history in schools and educational environments inevitably began to weave itself into the text. I did not want to write a biographical play about Debbie Almontaser, my father or myself. But, in reflection, traces of each of our stories are embedded in *Rumi High*.

Next, I will discuss the stimuli that helped to determine the performance forms that would eventually complicate producing *Rumi High* as a *literary playtext*. Lehmann's 'aspects' and Machon's 'scale' will be invoked to consider *Rumi High's* engagement with 'Audience,' 'Space,' and 'Time.'

THE PLAY STRUCTURE

The play's structure emulates systems of schooling that remain dominant today, which stem from a time when youth was being prepared for an industrialized society and factories were the model for systems of organization and mass production. Traditionally, a school day is framed by a bell schedule which marks the beginning and ending of classes, activating a rotation to another location within the school building; an assembly line. These familiar frames are used to bring the reader into the world of the play, in order to activate his/her personal memory of school settings. Arts educationalist, Ken Robinson suggests:

everybody has an interest in education... it's one of those things that goes deep with people... Like religion, and money... We have a huge vested interest in it, partly because it's education that's meant to take us into this future that we can't grasp... Nobody has a clue... what the world will look like in five years' time. And yet we're meant to be educating them for it (K. Robinson, 2006).

In *RSAanimate: Changing Education Paradigms*, Robinson examines the history of education and questions the schooling systems that the UK and US have been beholden to for over two hundred years. Robinson cites rising dropout rates, a declining emphasis on the arts and creativity, and increased diagnosis of ADHD as being at the core of the problem of education. He suggests a need for a dramatic change: a shift to an aesthetic education, "in which your senses are operating at their peak, when you're present in the current moment, when you're resonating with the excitement of this thing that you're experiencing, when you're fully alive." Robinson favors this approach over what he implies we currently have: an anaesthetic education that, "shuts your senses off and deadens yourself to what's happening" (K. Robinson, 2008).

In theatre, similar criticism has been made in relation to the passivity of the audience. In *The Emancipated Spectator*, Rancière calls for “a theatre without spectators, where those in attendance learn from as opposed to being seduced by images; where they become active participants as opposed to passive voyeurs” (2009: 4). Pinning the nature of postdramatic texts to a dependency on the reader’s imagination, Lehmann claims that, “both theatre and literature are textures which are especially dependent on the release of active energies of imagination, energies that are becoming weaker in a civilization of the primarily passive consumption of images and data” (2006: 16). It is perhaps a pessimistic view that society is undergoing a ‘weakening of active energies of imagination.’ *Rumi High*, in its critique of education, looks to challenge Lehmann’s attribution to our overconsumption of images and data, as the hyper(play)text uses these postdramatic conditions to enable a (syn)aesthetic learning experience.

In order to evaluate this early stage of the play development process, I will consider specific elements of Machon’s ‘scale of immersivity’ and Lehmann’s ‘aspects’ of the postdramatic. Machon’s discussion of “Audience” in immersive practice, establishes a criteria where the “direct, actual, physical insertion of an individual audience member within the world of the event, into the performance itself, is paramount and absolute” (2013: 98). In *Rumi High*, readers are situated as students who have choice in how to navigate the play. Placing all readers in the role of ‘new student on the first day school,’ echoes Robinson’s position that ‘everybody has an interest in education’ and the play form promotes his advocacy for aesthetic education.

Positioning the reader as a student who must choose their own pathway is informed by Joseph Jacotot's 'System of Education' (1818), a theory designed around the premise of intellectual equality, which suggests that teachers "must teach you that [they] have nothing to teach you" (Rancière, 1991: 15). Jacotot's 'System of Education' (dated in its use of 'men' rather than 'humans') is built on four basic principles: 1) all men have equal intelligence; 2) all men have the faculty of being able to instruct himself; 3) we can teach what we do not know; and 4) everything is in everything. These concepts emerged from a teaching experiment that Jacotot conducted:

called upon to teach the French language, while unacquainted with the native tongue of his pupils, he put into the hands of the latter, Fenelon's *Telemaque*, with a Dutch translation, directing them (through an interpreter) to commit to memory the French text, and to gather the meaning from the version which accompanies it... Their thorough acquaintance with both the subject and the phraseology was ascertained by rigid interrogation, and they were then directed to write compositions in French, deriving all the necessary materials from their model-book. Their success in this exercise surprised even the Professor himself; and on considering the circumstances had been attained without explanations on his part. He instantly resolved to ascertain to how great an extent this principle might be applied, and to *tell* his pupils nothing whatever (Payne v).

In *Rumi High*, DEBI` is required to teach her students 'drama,' a subject about which she lacks formal knowledge. She attempts to do so by referring everything to Miller's play text, which functions as her 'Telemaque.' In Image 4, DEBI` asserts herself as Drama teacher, positioning Miller's text as the syllabus. While the reading experience is centered on the student's viewpoint, the play puts forth the view that teachers are learners, and their learning must be nurtured in order to teach effectively.

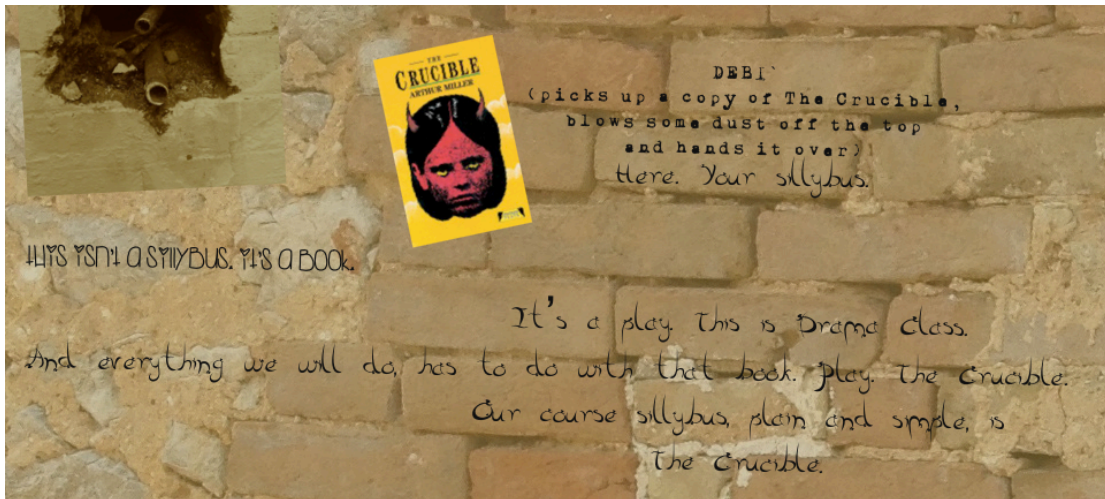


Image 4. Screenshot of excerpt from Scene: 'OHP: Sillybus'

Direct link: http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/3.Ya_Drama.html

Rumi High was stimulated by a desire to provoke dialogue around North American public education, yet the play offers no concrete solutions with regards to how we should be educating our youth. Instead, *Rumi High* satirizes predominant systems of schooling. The world of *Rumi High* is heightened; it is a world of extremes, with larger-than-life characters, humorously crafted in relation to historical and current events. The structure of the play is purposefully confusing, presented as a maze. Citing the popularity of political satire news programs on television, such as *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report*, Castagno suggests that “American audiences prefer political opinions dosed with comic satire and irony rather than earnest or heartfelt” (2012: 2025). In line with my objective in writing the play, Ronald Paulson explains that the satirist “demands decisions of his reader, not mere feelings” and “wishes to arouse [the reader’s] energy to action” (1967: 15). My intention is to place the reader in a position where s/he must learn that by making choices in where to go and who to follow, s/he will construct a unique plot pathway which will critically engage him or her to consider how s/he functions in

this setting, thus forming an opinion of the system itself. For this reason, the role of site and the representation of space becomes a critical aspect of the play. The school structure is satirized as the readers experience, firsthand, how students and teachers navigate the world of education.

As the aforementioned stimuli were being woven together, envisioned as a play, I became intrigued by the growing popularity of Punchdrunk's work in the UK, and the subsequent 'buzz' around immersive theatre. I was also introduced to the site-specific work of Fiona Templeton whose influential *YOU—The City* is a model of practice in Chapter 4. I came to imagine *Rumi High* as a site-specific play that would take place in a space that could represent a school, with rooms, hallways, bathrooms, staircases and a cafeteria. Segments of the play would take place simultaneously throughout the building, with a 'splintering' (multi-linear) narrative where readers must carve their own educational pathway, placing the student at the center of the learning experience.

Lehmann discusses "Space" as an 'aspect' of the postdramatic: "Common to all open forms of space beyond drama is that the visitor becomes more or less active, more or less voluntary a co-actor" (2006: 150). Machon's 'scale' establishes the use of "Space" in immersive theatre where there is "an exceptional awareness of *space* and *place*; a sensitivity explored by the practitioner in the creation of the work and the audience-immersant experiencing the world. The specific location and/or the 'transformation' of that space according to the aesthetic of the event is vital" (2013: 93). In *Rumi High*, the space of the school becomes a meeting point for a body of protagonists who simultaneously constitute an individual and collective body that contributes

to the scenography of the play. As the reader of *Rumi High* makes choices where to go and what to do, s/he is guided to learn that s/he has choice in how to engage with the work.

The use of the school site as a performance frame, where the entire play can never be experienced by an individual, suggests that learning itself is a collective and an endless process; a cycle set in motion by teachers. This view of learning as a collaborative process suggests that educational institutions should exist to provide a foundation from which to build skills that enable young people to take control and shape their own learning beyond the walls of the school. In *Rumi High*, the school setting functions both critically and practically; as a site for learning, where a durational reading experience instills education as the blood vein of society. Machon includes 'Duration/al' work on her 'scale,' where "time is treated as an organic and important experiential element of the event" (2013: 96). This compliments Lehmann's distinction that postdramatic plays use the "specificity of theatre as a mode of presentation to turn *time as such* into an object of the aesthetic experience" (2006: 156). In *Rumi High*, the reader is placed in a durational reading event. The structure of the play suggests that this event might be continuous for the length of a school day, approximately seven hours. Emulating the structure of a school day, the play is divided into nine class 'periods' with several opportunities to leave the classroom to explore narrative threads in other spaces. In the play, the nine-period structure is doubled, as a 'student' will be offered one of two class schedules to follow.

The experience of the school day is expressed through timetables, maps, bells, and dialogue between characters. The play begins with a welcome letter from school's principal, which addresses the reader as a new student at Rumi High and anchors the reader with a temporal knowledge. The letter informs the reader that:

Time at Rumi High is fleeting, and passes at an unnatural rate. Before you know it, it will be June... As you move from period to period within the s'kool day, (YOU) are cutting across an entire s'kool year.

The play is framed within a school day, but actually spans an entire school year. This information pulls the reader out of 'real time,' classifying the play as moving at an unnatural pace. This detail further establishes the play's own unique world, which uses time as part of the 'aesthetic experience.'

The envisioning of Space, Time and Audience as integral to the critical objectives in relation to the stimuli, presented a challenge to my playwrighting practice. In order to share the material with potential collaborators and producers, the work needed to exist in some type of manuscript. How are these elements expressed in a *literary playtext*? The next section will address this dilemma, which was the impetus for developing the hyper(play)text.

THE CONSTRAINTS OF PRINT

Roland Barthes states that, "[t]he writerly text is a perpetual present, upon which no consequent language can be superimposed; the writerly text is *ourselves* writing" (1970: 5). In the late 20th century, Bolter suggests that "[e]lectronic writing emphasizes the impermanence and changeability of texts, and it tends to reduce the distance between author and reader by turning the

reader into an author" (1991: 3). While performance has embraced technology in order to experiment with the performer-audience relationship, as well as notions of site, multi-linearity and multisensory experiences, few 21st century playwrights have engaged with new reading and writing technologies in their practice. Play publishers have made plays available as 'e-books,' mostly from the classical canon of dramatic literature, for example William Shakespeare and Arthur Miller. While these *literary playtexts* can now be read on tablets, smartphones and computer screens, the format of the electronic-book is merely a re-presentation of the non-electronic book, emulating a familiar form rather than allowing the text to be "flexible, dynamic and interactive" (27). Far more has been achieved in the field of Digital Literature, as exemplified by the work of Kate Pullinger. Hypermedia provides the tools for "a new kind of book by changing the surface on which we write and the rhythms with which we read... Electronic writing turns out to be both radical and traditional. It is mechanical and precise like printing, organic and evolutionary like handwriting, visually eclectic like hieroglyphics and picture writing" (4).

Software programs, such as *Final Draft* and *Celtx*, which promote the notion of industry standards, aid in the formalization of what a script is supposed to look like. These programs offer playwrights a tool for formatting their work with consistency in order to send their plays to producers and potential collaborators. These template-based programs also make it difficult for playwrights to deviate from the assumed structures of what a play looks like and how it is read. In the early phases of drafting *Rumi High*, I used *Final Draft* to format and present the play to collaborators. This method enabled me to

distribute the material both electronically and in print. As the play developed into a multi-linear, site-specific and interactive work, the constraints of the software program, designed to format printable documents, seemed to limit, more than enable me in the writing process. Including other types of text, such as images and custom designed fonts, or experimenting with layout and alignment, was not possible. This struggle with the confines of scriptwriting software is what led me to consider the use of hypermedia to write the play.

Bolter refers to 'synaesthesia' to describe the hypermedia reader's experience:

A hypermedia display is still a text, a weaving together of elements treated symbolically. Hypermedia simply extends the principles of electronic writing in the domain of sound and image. The computer's control of structure promises to create a synaesthesia in which anything that can be seen or heard may contribute to the texture of the text (1991: 27).

Web design proved to be a new and flexible space for writing, which more accurately expressed the (syn)aesthetic experience of the play that was taking shape. With Images 5 and 6, I present two versions of the same scene from *Rumi High*, 'OHP: Been to Cheeza.' Image 5 presents the scene as written early in the development process using *Final Draft*. Image 6 presents the same scene, where setting and mood of the classroom is expressed through the images and layout. Characters are presented with their own individual font as their speech is further distinguished through size, color and alignment to express their voice and delivery graphically. The dialogue itself is free of vertical and horizontal alignments, more akin to the listening experience that occurs in a high school classroom. This comparison is just an example of the graphic possibilities that web design offers the playwright, and does not reflect the

play's use of hyperlinks and sound, which deepens the (syn)aesthetic and interactive experience of the play. Interval 2 will discuss the graphic attributes of the hyper(play)text, particularly font, layout and photographic images, as well as the use of media such as hyperlinks and sound.

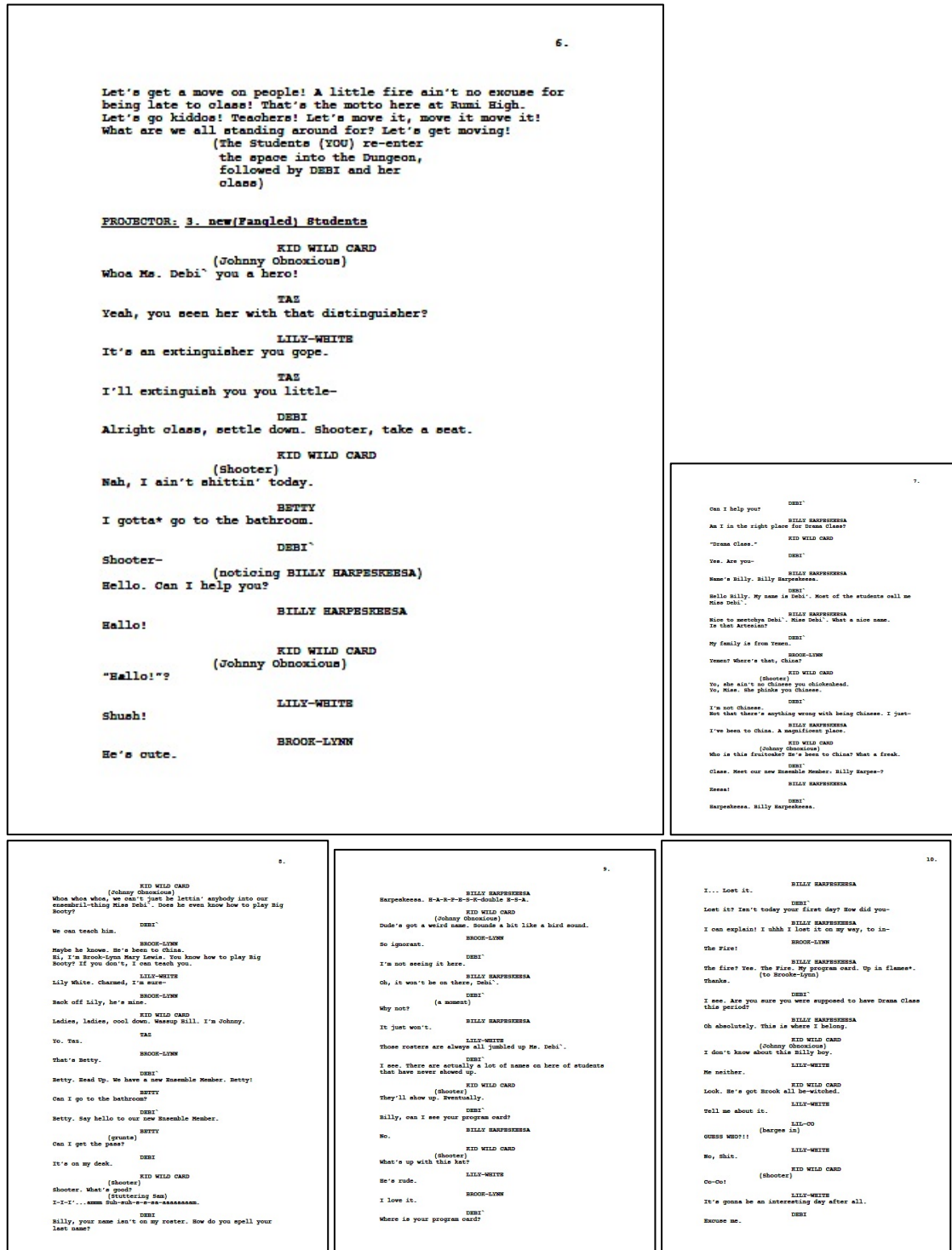


Image 5. Layout of the scene that became 'OHP: Been to Cheeza' as expressed in *FinalDraft*

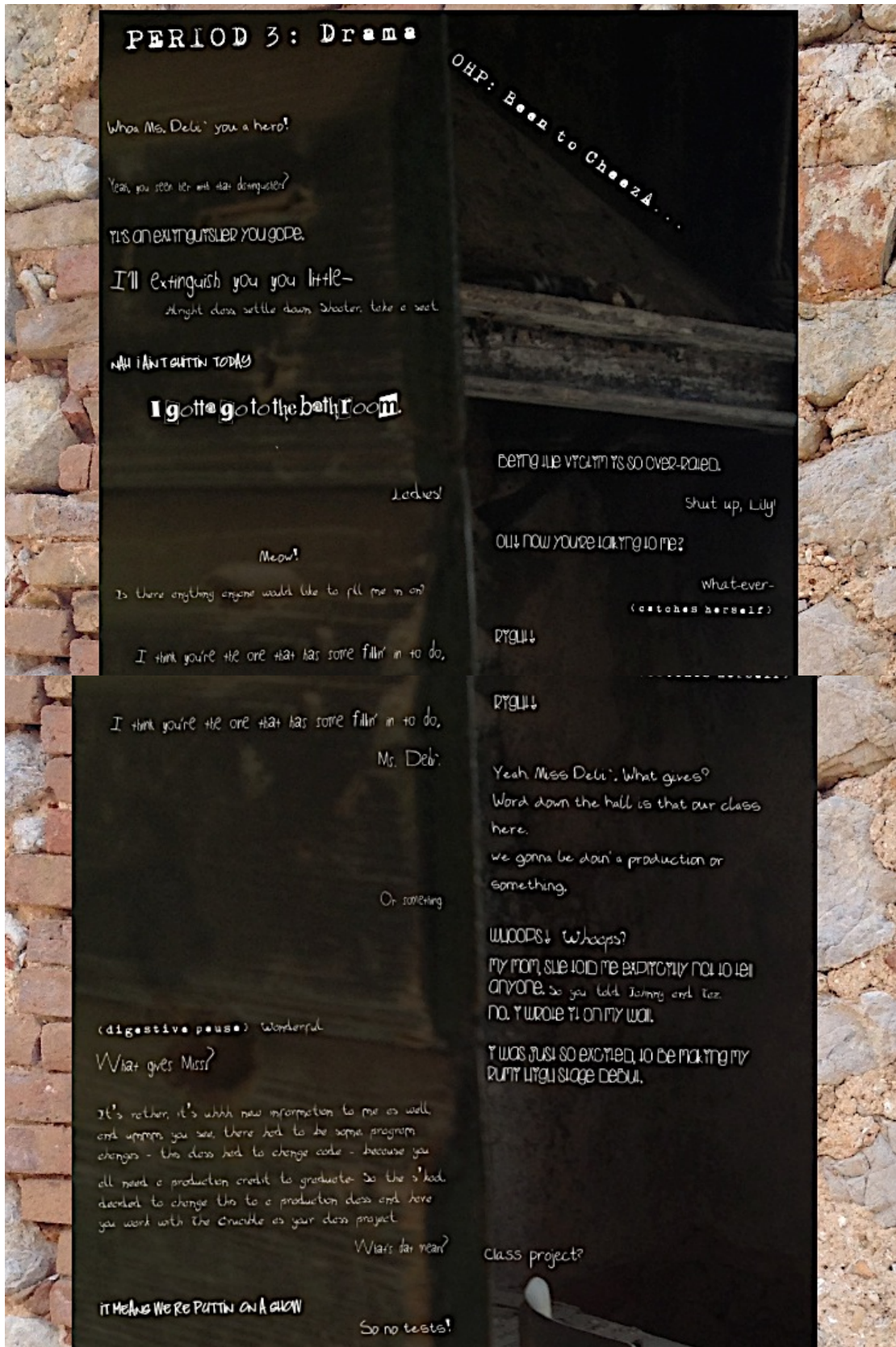


Image 6. Screenshots of scene: 'OHP: Been to Cheeza'
 Direct link: http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/3.Yb_Drama.html

The hyper(play)text of *Rumi High* provides a crossroads where a critique of patterns of behavior in both student and theatre-going populations can be considered through a platform that enables a (syn)aesthetic reading experience. *Rumi High* explores the ideas of both Robinson and Jacotot. Robinson pushes forth a need for an aesthetic education in the 21st century while Jacotot's 19th century view insinuates that fostering the *will to learn* is where the function of the teacher lies. The play operates on two levels. By situating the reader as student, s/he must navigate the world of the play by considering the choices afforded to students in a school setting. As a reader engaging with a hyper(play)text, s/he also must consider the various choices available within a theatrical text, in how s/he imagines the work as a performance. I am attempting to foster theatre audiences to consider their own will to learn by provoking them to interact with a play in new ways. The onus is on the reader to look and listen rather than merely see and hear. The readers are invited to engage with an aesthetic learning experience, leaving behind the anesthetic by making active choices. The choices s/he makes empower him/her to fill the gaps inherent in the play, which becomes a metaphor for the idea that the learner is in control of his or her education.

In Chapter 2, I will analyze linguistic strategies in 'new playwriting' as presented by Castagno, focusing on the work of Wellman and Parks to consider how form and content are enmeshed into a written dramatic language that enables a (syn)aesthetic reading of the text. Without fixing the text to the technical details of a specific *performance text*, the selected models of practice appear to instill Barthes' notion of a writerly text.

CHAPTER 2
A Postdramatic Poetics: Embodied Language and Mutual Creation

*I say that I can't make anything up. I think of
myself as a collage artist. I'm cutting and
pasting memories of my life. And I say, I have
to live in order to tell a life. I would prefer to
tell it because telling you're always in control,
you're like god
– Spalding Gray (1998).*

Interval 1 introduced the stimuli that inform *Rumi High*, citing traces of the process within the frame of Chapter 1's theoretical and historical overview, to suggest that a playwright's intentions combine form and content to shape the work. This Chapter draws from the dramatic theories of Aristotle and Gertrude Stein in order to establish a postdramatic poetics from which to analyze both *literary* and *performance playtexts*. The dramatic play exists in a liminal state between the performative and the literary. Robin Nelson explains, "[t]he inhabiting of liminal space in itself poses a conceptual challenge to the clear categorized boundaries of Aristotelian logic" (2006: 108). Bonnie Marranca declares that, "[w]e can no longer be content to think of drama in the categories of plot, setting, genre, dramatic action, conflict: there are now new possibilities for defining character or the lack of it, and performance space itself" (2012: 126). The postmodern and poetic sensibilities of Mac Wellman and Suzan-Lori Parks prove to be foundational in relation to the practice project, establishing linguistic strategies in playwrighting practice that support the notion of a postdramatic poetics where the reader is engaged in the mutual creation of the work and has increased agency in the meaning-making process.

First, a juxtaposition of Aristotle's *Poetics* and Stein's *Plays*, will provide a foundation from which to discuss a postdramatic poetics. Then, I will discuss Michael Issacharoff's notions around the didascalía of a play, in order to consider how aspects of the *literary playtext* provide poetic and dramatic potentialities that can contribute to the (syn)aesthetically conscious crafting of a play. The following section will point to the (syn)aesthetic potential contained within written language. This (syn)aesthetic potential and poetic use of didascalía is then explored through Wellman's *The Invention of Tragedy* and Parks' *The America Play*. A discussion of the approaches and viewpoints of both playwrights, will each be followed by a close analysis of excerpts of these two plays. I will highlight the linguistic strategies that Wellman and Parks employ to enable (syn)aesthetic and interactive reading opportunities. Their poetic approach to the play form has informed and inspired my practice, particularly as the work transitioned from printed to digital writing and reading spaces. This Chapter concludes with consideration of how hypermedia can be used poetically in developing an aesthetic that assists both readers and writers in hypothesizing *literary* and *performance playtexts*. This will segue into Interval 2, which will discuss the poetic layers of playwrighting afforded by the hyper(play)text with specific reference to *Rumi High*.

ARISTOTLE'S POETICS

Aristotle's *Poetics*, the first known work of dramatic theory, has shaped our understanding of the play form for centuries, establishing six constituent elements for tragedy: plot, characters, verbal expression, thought, visual

adornment, and song composition (Aristotle 26-27). His *Poetics* is a guide in how to perceive a play by identifying what makes a play good, by his criteria. The processes of playwrighting and play reading continue to be governed by Aristotelian aesthetics in the 21st century. As Castagno states:

Although Aristotle was writing about tragic form, his *Poetics* still remains the putative criterion for most dramatic forms. Aristotle's focus on the dramatic rather than the theatrical privileged the literary dimension. Of the six elements, he relegated spectacle to the lowest rung on the hierarchical ladder (2012: 1939).

Castagno's position that Aristotle privileges the literary over the theatrical is interesting to note since Aristotle's work pre-dates the notion of drama as literature.

Plot, defined as "the structuring of the events," was the element that Aristotle placed the most emphasis on (Aristotle 26). For him, a plot must be "both unified and complete, and the component of events ought to be so firmly compacted that if any one of them is shifted to another place, or removed, the whole is loosened up and dislocated" (32). The unity of time and place is integral to Aristotle's theory of drama. For Aristotle, every detail of the play must be tightly woven together to form a causal plot that builds to a climax with a cathartic resolution. He insists upon a well-ordered plot structure where all other elements, including the actions and speeches of characters and scenography are tied to a center that grounds the play in a central theme or idea.

For Aristotle, each character must be consistent in order for the audience to follow the journey of the plot: "even if the person being imitated is inconsistent, and that kind of character has been taken as a theme, he should be inconsistent in a consistent fashion" (43). Here, it can be understood that all

aspects of the character are determined by the play's central idea or thesis.

Aristotle's guide to what makes an effective dramatic play has maintained relevance and resonance for centuries, even as new forms and media have influenced the production of plays, as both *performance* and *literary playtexts*. However, postmodern theories where cognitive and cultural paradigms are de-centered, or multi-centered, begin to influence playwrighting practice throughout the 20th century.

GERTRUDE STEIN'S PLAYS

In her essay, *Plays* (1935), Stein attempts to pin down the nature of plays, and in effect, expands the possibility of what a play could be. For Stein, "a play didn't have to tell a story... the creation of an experience was more important than the representation of an event" (Marranca, 1977: ix). Stein's emphasis on the experience itself places a focus on the reader as determiner of meaning, which inevitably loosens Aristotle's concrete structure. For Stein, the play is center-less, and the experience of the play is created around the reader's own unique perspective. This notion supports her concept of the 'landscape' play.

A landscape comprises things and people to be viewed in relation to each other. It doesn't have to come to you, you must discover for yourself what is there. This pictorial composition replaces dramatic action, emphasizing frontality and the frame, flatness and absence of perspective. The play is just there. It has no center. Whatever you find in it depends on your own way of looking.... [it] makes itself known to you according to your individual powers of perception: you complete the view (xi).

Viewing plays as landscapes, the reader's experience is no longer framed by a linear plot that is tied to a central thought. Thus, new framing devices emerge in

Stein's plays. As Marranca notes:

Stein always rearranged the elements of dramatic structure, and laughed at the idea of acts, scenes, chapters, pages and volumes, which she spread throughout her plays, frequently disregarding numerical sequence and breaking any linear flow by moving from the exaggerated build-up of some scenes to the brevity of others or to the constant interruption of the curtain... Her plays demolish arguments about the correct way to do a play, because the relations among author, text, reader and spectator are confounded by the structures of the works (xiii).

This suggests that form and content determine the look, structure and stylistic qualities of a play. There is no formula or blueprint for playwrighting. In Stein's plays, stage directions are not focused on the practical business of the stage, but rather the happenings within the reader's mind.

By making deft use of only the staples of dramatic structure, she is able to bracket experiences, and further break them down into their constituent elements, making directions as she goes. 'Acts' and 'scenes' function like frames around paintings, directing and focusing our attention on discrete sections of the perceived world (M. Robinson 14).

Marc Robinson, here, suggests that the 'staples of dramatic structure,' presumably of Aristotelian origin, are relevant, but are transformed by the intentions of the form and content.

Even the text on the printed page announces itself as a unique spatial composition, each play evolving another arrangement of words and sentences and sounds... [Stein] wrote plays that consist of lists, objects, letters, sentences, and aphorisms" (Marranca, 1977: xii).

Stein experiments with language both aurally and visually. She employs strategies, such as the repetition of words and phrases, combined with non-traditional verb tenses and use of punctuation. In Image A, Stein's layout for her play, *Four Saints in Three Acts*, exemplifies how Stein experimented with the layout, structure and language of the play form itself (Stein, 1990: 600-601).

Throughout this thesis, I will include images of *literary playtexts* in this manner,

in order to emphasize the visual dynamic of play reading.

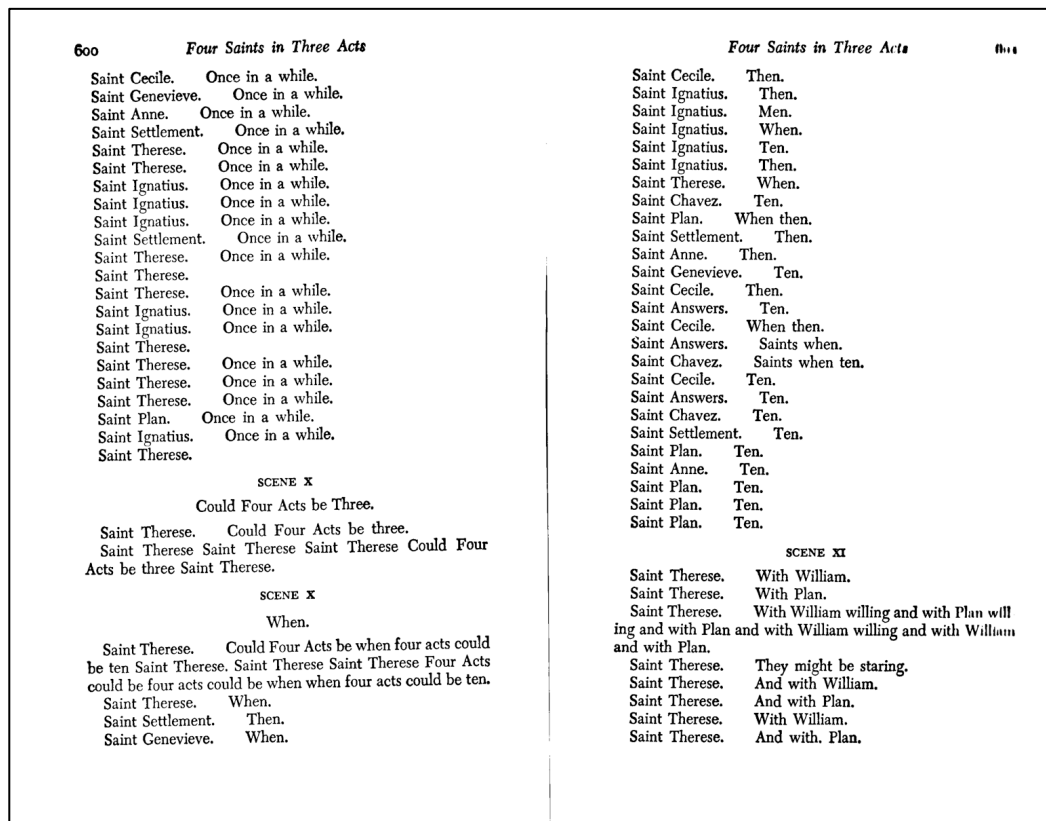


Image A. Sample text from Gertrude Stein's *Four Saints in Three Acts*

Reader-response theory and hermeneutics provides discourse from which to consider the relationship between the reader and the play. Wolfgang Iser states:

Presentness means being lifted out of time—the past is without influence and the future is unimaginable. A present that has slipped out of its temporal context takes on the character of an event for the person caught up in it. But to be truly caught up in such a present involves forgetting one's self. And from this condition derives the impression readers sometimes have of experiencing a transformation in reading (1980: 156).

This ideological framework defies the causal plot structure that Aristotle prescribes for drama. Stein was a student of psychologist William James, and her larger body of written work which includes novels, poetry, short stories and operas as well as plays, is anchored within James' notion of the "continuous present," which can be described as the reader's experience of time as fluid

with many events occurring simultaneously in his/her mind (R.S. Miller 19).

Stein places the reader in a continual state of presence. Marranca explains that through Stein's "spatial conception of dramaturgy... the activity of thought itself creates an experience" (1977: x). Stein's plays and her writing about plays continually explored how textual knowledge differs from performance knowledge.

In *Plays*, Stein states: "In the poetry of plays words are more lively words than in any other kind of poetry" (1935: xxxix). She simultaneously celebrates and agonizes over the peculiar nature of plays in relation to time, and claimed that a "play is exciting and it moves but it also stays" (lii). I highlight Stein's essay, *Plays*, and her plays, as a stark contrast to Aristotle's formulaic criteria for the tragic play in *Poetics*. Stein's foundations in the Jamesian ideology, of a continuous present, and her concept of the landscape play present playwrighting as an art of framing, where words are 'lively' and plays 'move and stay.' Playwrighting is positioned as curatorial, a crafting of an experience, more than telling a story.

The work of Wellman and Parks represent a Steinian heritage of playwrighting, which continues to deconstruct and reinvent Aristotelian elements of drama. Before moving into the work of Wellman and Parks, and their deployment of a Stein-inspired postdramatic poetics, I will first discuss Issacharoff's four types of didascalía, in order to support my analysis of the models of practice, where the didascalía itself becomes an aesthetic layer that contributes to the reader's (syn)aesthetic reading of the play.

POETIC DIDASCALIA

The printed *literary playtext* follows particular conventions that have become the standard in order to aid the reader in imagining a theatrical performance. For example, the layout of words on the page is typically structured left to right, top to bottom, in a neutral font, (such as Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial). Character names placed to the left of, or centered above their respective speech is the standard way of distinguishing lines of dialogue. The use of *italics* and (parenthesis) will often denote particular aspects of the performance specific to movement and expression of characters, and physical attributes of the performance space. The use of **bold**, underlined and CAPITALIZED text is often employed to emphasize the theatricality of the text, particularly the delivery of verbal speech. Images are rarely used and typically marginalized to the front cover or appendix, though even with these conventions, qualities of the printed text will vary from publisher to publisher.

Aspects of the *performance text*, including actors' gestures and movement, lighting, sound, setting and costume, are commonly referred to as 'stage directions,' and are signified in a way that textually distinguishes these details apart from verbal speech. Issacharoff discusses stage directions as contributing to the 'didascalia' of the *literary playtext*. Didascalia encompasses "the portion of the playscript not spoken on stage during a performance" (1989: 16). He distinguishes four types of didascalia: extratextual, autonomous, unreadable and normal, each of which employs various combinations of verbal and visual codes. In brief, the extratextual consists of descriptive text outside the body of the play: introductions, essays and sometimes, prologues and

epilogues. Autonomous didascalía is described as “spurious stage directions, not meant to guide stage presentation or clarify nuances of the dialogue, or they explicitly contradict the dialogue” (20). Unreadable or ‘technical’ didascalía is “couched in technical terminology and intended solely for the stage manager or producer” (22). “Normal” didascalía lacks an “implied reader,” and occurs in all plays, to the benefit of both “general reader” and “producer” (23).

The deployment of didascalía mixed with dialogue is what distinguishes a play form from other literary forms. The didascalía is often describing or establishing aspects of the play that are concerned with Aristotle’s dramatic elements: mimetic action, plot and visual adornment. The *literary reader* inevitably reads a play through two lenses simultaneously. Ryan Claycomb explains that stage directions,

tell us how and to what degree we should be reading *toward performance*. Understanding how we must read the narrative play within the narrative of production found in the secondary text will often give us important clues both to the implicit model of narrative communication being deployed in a given text, but also to how we might begin interpreting the narratives to be staged (2013: 161).

Pavis suggests that the textual status of stage directions is loosened by the *mise-en-scène*. He makes the presumption that practitioners who become authors of the *mise-en-scène* liberate the text from the didascalía of the *literary playtext*. The *mise-en-scène*, which forms the *performance text*, is

free to put into practice only some, or even none of these stage directions. It is not obliged to carry out stage directions to the letter, reconstructing a situation of utterance identical in every aspect to the one prescribed. Stage directions are not the ultimate truth of the text, or a formal command to produce the text in such a manner, or even an indispensable shifter between text and performance. Their textual status is uncertain (1992: 29).

This theoretical premise is voided in the eyes of the law, which has protected authors to ensure that their play is staged as intended and implied by their text.

The poetic layers of a performance production can be lost in the *literary playtext*, or overly descriptive didascalía can hinder the reading experience. In *Postdramatic Theatre*, Lehmann states:

By regarding the theatre text as an independent poetic dimension and simultaneously considering the 'poetry' of the stage uncoupled from the text as an independent atmospheric poetry of space and light, a new theatrical disposition becomes possible. In it, the automatic unity of text and stage is superseded by their separation and subsequently in turn by their free (liberated) combination, and eventually the free combinatorics of all theatrical signs (2006: 59).

The playwrights and plays discussed in this Chapter appear to employ didascalía with a poetic sensibility that allows the reading of such details to contribute to the reader's (syn)aesthetic reading experience. To compliment Lehmann's notion of the 'poetry of the stage,' Claycomb celebrates the openness of didascalía in contemporary play reading practices:

we usually read these impossible prescriptions not as impossibly prescriptive but as wildly flexible, with the gap between text and performance filled not with the possibility of pure invention (as Shakespeare's absent stage directions typically engender) but with an interpretation or translation of what we might call figurative or metaphorical prescription... In these cases, playwrights acknowledge an open-endedness inherent in the artwork itself, suggesting that its coherent boundaries exist somewhere beyond the text and in the context of production (2013: 173).

Castagno's discussion of new playwrighting focuses on playwrights who are often referred to as poetic or language-based writers. They are distinct because of their innovative use of words for the purposes of theatrical performance. In new playwrighting, it appears that Issacharoff's four types of didascalía are blended together as the 'normal' becomes poetic. Whereas play reading, in

general, requires a certain level of familiarity and competency in reading, new playwrighting appears to engage even more complex sign systems to evoke the world of the play and a sense of performance.

EMBODIED WORDS

Elin Diamond explains that, “to think about theater writing is to envision immediately a writing that ‘will do’ that empowers speakers with vital words, incites bodies to move in space” (1997: 83). The postdramatic playwrighting tradition embraces ambiguity and celebrates gaps and breaks that must be filled by the reader. Words themselves can enable a *literary reader* to have a (syn)aesthetic experience. As Benjamin K. Bergen explains, language “depends on embodied simulation. While we listen to or read sentences, we simulate seeing the scenes and performing the actions that are described” (2012: 15). A.N. Whitehead writes of a word as an event that is either “directly known... or only vaguely known by its dated spatio-temporal nexus with events which are directly known” (1979: 182). Barthes’ notion of the ‘pleasurable’ and ‘writerly’ text turns the meaning-making process itself into an event. Machon acknowledges the powerful effect of words on readers in her theory of (syn)aesthetics:

An individual may perceive scents or words for certain colours, or a word as a particular smell, or experience tastes as tangible shapes. So in terms of this neurocognitive condition, synaesthesia is defined as the production of a sensation in one part of the body resulting from a stimulus applied to, or perceived by, another part (2011: 13).

The corporeal appreciation that words might induce, distinguishes “the style of (syn)aesthetic *playtexts* in that both form and delivery of the text cause the

receiver to re-perceive and recognize the embodied nature of verbal language in an experiential way” (40). The postdramatic reading experience becomes (syn)aesthetic and multisensory as written language itself triggers simulation and synesthesia.

In order to consider how Aristotelian logic and Stein’s emphasis on the reader’s experience intertwine in postdramatic theatre, I will analyze how Parks and Wellman use written language to establish an embodied play reading process that situates the reader as an active player in the world of the play.

Discussing the plays of Wellman and Parks, Robinson explains:

these plays welcome obstacles to their action, digressions from their narrative course. They grow steadily more layered; the density, in fact, seems part of a strategy to envelop the spectator in a world of language. ‘Involvement’ is redefined as a total, often disorienting experience, not the temporary visitation it is in many other plays (1994: 182-183).

Both playwrights employ various literary strategies that overwhelm the reader with language to forge a (syn)aesthetic reading experience where the reader ‘involves’ his/herself with meaning-making on a variety of levels, while fostering an ethos of ‘mutual creation,’ that I propose is the foundation for postdramatic play reading and making practices. Here, I apply Machon’s suggestion that (syn)aesthetic playwrights are “painting corporeal images in multisensory ways” (2011: 75).

Parks’ *The America Play* (1994) and Wellman’s *The Invention of Tragedy* (2005) will exemplify how the text enables the *literary reader* to have a multisensory reading experience that not only hypothesizes a performance, but also constitutes a performance. Both playwrights are part of a tradition of poetic theatre where written language is a primary element of the theatrical

experience. In the spirit of Stein, their plays are lively, and their works have been described as evoking a “langscape” (Carlson 145). How the text is presented on the page is as relevant to how it is represented on the stage (or performance space). Issacharoff discusses “unruly didascalia” which forms a “maximum code mesh” where “instances of a (normally) coherent system [are] being made to break down for experimental purposes” (Issacharoff and Jones, 1988: 66). It is my position that the plays of Parks and Wellman achieve a ‘maximum code mesh’ through their poetic layering of language, which is embodied by the reader in both the dialogue and didascalia of the play.

MAC WELLMAN’S *THE INVENTION OF TRAGEDY*

Wellman is an American playwright and poet, who denounced what he calls “The Theater of Good Intentions” in an essay of the same name (1984: 59-70). Since the 1980’s, his work continues to rebel against theatrical conventions bound to Aristotle and rooted in 20th century preoccupations with realism and naturalism. In his essay, *Poisonous Tomatoes: A Statement on Logic and the Theater*, he states, “it is not *interesting* at this point in human time to portray the real world as it seems to be in its own terms; but it is interesting to unfold, in human terms, the logic of its illogic and so get at the nut of our contemporary human existence” (1994: ix). In Wellman’s plays, Aristotle’s centered logic, which Castagno refers to as “common-sense” logic, is loosened (2012: 361).

Wellman is the head of the graduate program in playwrighting at City University of New York, Brooklyn College, and has mentored a range of young playwrights including the Pulitzer Prize winning Annie Baker, Young Jean Lee

and Kelly Copper of Nature Theatre of Oklahoma. In a recent article in *The New York Times*, Baker reveals the 'secrets' to Wellman's teaching: "He refuses to talk about structure. He refuses to elucidate any rules of writing. He gives you books that will change your life" (Soloski). Wellman describes a play as a 'mutual creation,' viewing his stage directions as provocations that inspire possibilities for designers, directors and performers:

I think you do better in collaborations when you try to inspire somebody to come along a parallel track, saying 'something strange happens,' rather than telling them what to do. It's better to suggest, give them an image to think about rather than a command, and ultimately, it's just as precise if not more. The designers that I like to work with best—I never even talk with them about what the play is about. Why should I? The play's not necessarily going to be about what I wanted it to be about; it's a mutual creation (Hughes 61).

Wellman's ethos of playwrighting as 'mutual creation' implies a collaborative process that does not position the playwright as a 'god-like' figure who roots the play in concrete meaning.

Wellman's plays are cluttered with historical and mythological references, local and global, ancient and contemporary, interspersed with 'bad' language and vivid images of mysterious unknowns that the reader is left to unpick, grabbing hold of all that seems familiar or referential.

A signature of Wellman's dramaturgy is his reliance on 'Bad English.' Bad English is made up of incorrect syntax, misplaced words, slang, profanity... Bad English provides an option for multivocal texturing since the playwright can juxtapose it with more normative syntactical choices. It is a formalistic device because the playwright is drawing attention to language function versus meaning (Castagno, 2012: 5690).

Peter Shillingsburg suggests that: "punctuation is a coarse substitute for intonation and gesture" (1997: 80). Wellman uses punctuation marks as if they were dynamics in a musical score; a lone question mark can orchestrate a

physical moment, a facial expression, or perhaps a shift in lights or sound. Wellman misspells and stacks words to create new words. He uses grammar unconventionally to produce clues that provoke active thinking and forge a pathway to mutual creation. Bergen suggests that, "grammar appears not to be telling you what to simulate, but rather, how to simulate—what perspective to simulate the event from. Instead of acting as the script in this case, grammar is acting as the director" (2012: 114). Wellman states:

Inevitably, if you start mismatching pronouns, getting your tenses wrong, writing sentences that are too long or too short, you will begin to say things that suggest a subversive political reality... Most bad language describes a spiritual condition that is not grammatical, but it is *real*. I'm more interested in the world than language. I'm more interested in syntax than grammar... Syntax is the flow of meaning through language. Grammar is the set of shackles that gets imposed in meaning (Marranca and Dasgupta 209).

Wellman uses grammar in an unsettling way, while asking for a director to mine through the Text's invitation to mutual creation, or for the *literary reader* to become the director of the experience.

Perhaps Extratextual

The Invention of Tragedy is a choral play divided into seventeen choral passages that enact the story of a cat that refuses to belong. I should note, that I had the opportunity to work on this play, serving as Assistant Director to Ken Rus Schmoll on two workshop presentations, one at New York University and the other at Classic Stage Company, both referenced in Wellman's most recent anthology of plays, *The Difficulty of Crossing the Field* (2008) which includes *The Invention of Tragedy*. This is the only model of practice that I have worked on, or seen as a live performance production.

As seen in Image B, Wellman orientates the *literary reader* by providing a set of 'Notes' at the start of the play (2008: 261). This type of extratextual didascalia is common in most *literary playtexts*. The 'Notes' introduce a trademark of Wellman's plays: the use of an asterisk (*) to denote overlapping dialogue. At times, the overlap is minor and at other times, full monologues are intended to be happening simultaneously. Castagno attributes the asterisk to enabling Wellman's "verbal onslaught... an effect similar to overlapping musical rounds" (2012: 5538). This strategy of employing new types of notation is common in new playwrighting. Caryl Churchill is another contemporary playwright who employs a similar strategy, with her use of the forward slash (/) to indicate overlaps in dialogue. Castagno explains that: "Overlapping or dovetailing dialogue is a regular phenomenon of general discourse. The collision of speeches on stage can be a highly effective means to build pressure in a scene, realizing the payoff as a relief in the pent-up tension" (4019). While the experience of this 'verbal onslaught' is indeed different for *literary reader* and *performance reader*, there is something similarly overwhelming about *listening* to overlapping dialogue and *looking* at a page of text that indicates speech is overlapping. In both cases, an anxiety ensues: where to *look*, and what to *listen* to, collide. Both readers must make quick choices, or surrender to the overall landscape of language. The *literary reader* however, does have the option of reading each text separately. If the text were overlapping visually, the affect of reading the text might be experienced more (syn)aesthetically.

The Invention of Tragedy

The Invention of Tragedy has been in several workshops since 2005, all under the direction of Ken Rus Schmoll, at New York University's Write Act program and at Classic Stage Company. Thanks to the Corporation of Yaddo and the MacDowell Colony. Thanks also to the Write Act program at NYU and to the Classic Stage Company, Brian Kulick, artistic director.

NOTE

The occasional appearance of an asterisk in the middle of a speech indicates that the next speech begins to overlap at that point. The overlapping speeches are all clearly marked in the text.

The Invention of Tragedy by the chorus of students, all alike and all unlike, at _____ School in _____ City in the State of New _____. There are 1,001 of them, and they are trying like the devil to tell a simple story. Perhaps the story about the tragedy of the SANDWICH MAN with sandwich boards on which nothing is written and hence with nothing to say.

Perhaps there are not 1,001 of them, things being what they are. Perhaps there are fewer kids; perhaps there are some adults scattered discreetly here and there. All are seated politely on benches and risers in a large (theatrical) space. But if there are fewer people, the remainder of the chorus may be made up of rows and rows of dolls, mannequins, objects, pieces of lumber, and so forth.

Image B. Extratextual didascalia in *The Invention of Tragedy*

The next 'Note' describes the work as a play-within-a-play performed by a "chorus of students, all alike and all unlike, at _____ School in _____ City in the State of New _____" (2008: 261). Wellman appears to be literalizing the postmodern notion of gaps and blanks in art and literature. He is requiring an alert engagement from the reader, who must fill in these blanks with an active imagination. Further, in this extratextual didascalia, Wellman uses the word 'perhaps' four times. This repetition activates the reader's imagination, by continuously guiding the reader to imagine a realm of possibilities. Wellman poses the possible rather than finite. Helen Shaw suggests that Wellman's,

airy composition leaves ample room for a director to maneuver. He also delights in nothing so much as causing other people trouble. With a simple stage direction he knows he can throw one director, one stage manager, four designers, and a handful of actors into paroxysms of delicious dismay. Setting those puzzles for others to solve actually leads to what he thinks of as 'accuracy' (Shaw xi).

This notion of 'accuracy' suggests an alert and active readership that will contribute to the mutual creation of the work. Wellman himself admits that,

when I'm absolutely puritanical and Lutheran about the stage directions, it doesn't make the people doing my plays any more rigorous in practice... I began to have a mad desire to put in stage directions like 'something strange happens' or 'there's a furry pause.' Nobody ever got those wrong, but when I said, 'there's a door up left,' they always got that wrong (Hughes 58).

With Wellman's 'Notes,' where circumstances are couched in 'perhaps,' extratextual didascalia enmeshes the technical and autonomous. Rather than prescribing the *mise-en-scène*, Wellman provokes the reader to imagine the *mise-en-scène*.

Pauses and Silences

Here, I will focus on Wellman's poetic and playful use of the words 'pause' and 'silence.' In Image C, at first glance, the text of Wellman's play appears fairly conventional, with numbered choruses taking on the traditional format of character name appearing in 'all-caps' to the left of and above dialogue, while stage directions and other non-verbal details are distinguished in italics. A closer look reveals that the text appears to be challenging the reader's preconceived notions of language and play form. The scene heading presents itself as a puzzle to be decoded. The scene heading is adorned with a symbol (rather than a number). The symbol may be interpreted as a greater-than-or-equal sign (\geq) except the bottom line is wavy. The title of the scene is an alliterative pun, which reads: 'CATECHRESIS CATATASTICAL.'

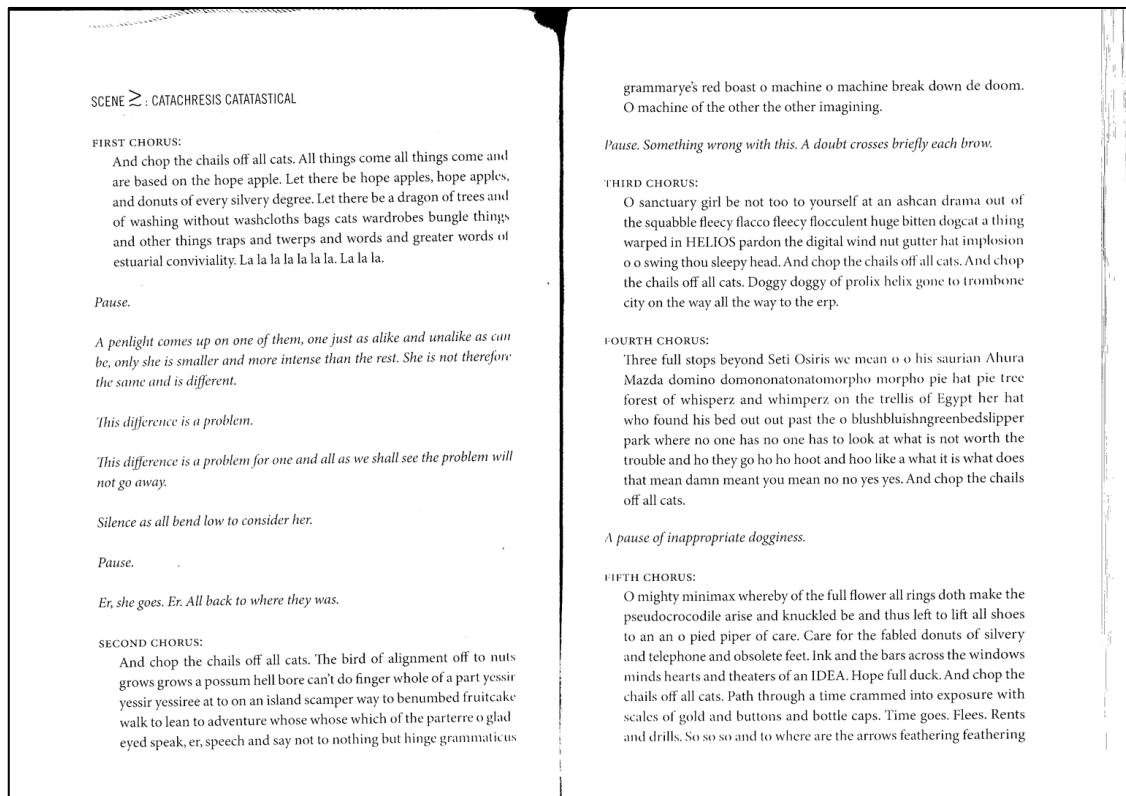


Image C. Pages 262-263 from *The Invention of Tragedy*

After the first chorus, seen on the left-hand side of Image C, Wellman offers: “*Pause.*” This ‘pause’ is followed by three sets of stage directions that describe non-verbal actions in relation to one of the characters. The next stage direction reads: “*Silence as all bend low to consider her.*” This description is followed by another “*Pause.*” This juxtaposition of ‘pause’ and ‘silence’ is a reminder that a ‘pause’ is ambiguous, and does not necessarily need to be silent. On the right-hand side of Image C, Wellman expands upon the next pause: “*Pause. Something wrong with this. A doubt crosses briefly each brow.*” Two chorus passages later, he offers: “*A pause of inappropriate dogginess.*” This descriptor, which suggests that there are different types of pauses, is crafted in relation to the verbal speech that precedes it, and humorously placed within a play about a chorus of cats. The reader must imagine within this context, what a ‘doggy’ pause might mean within a cat’s world. After continuous

repetition of different types of pauses experienced by the cats, the reader likely cannot avoid the relationship between 'pause' and 'paws.'

Taglines and Nouning

Wellman lays his dialogue out in a mixture of prose and verse. He plays with repetition of words as well as sounds and gestures.

He will work a tag line throughout a play until he exhausts its potential... Rather than strive for unity, Wellman creates dramaturgical interest through difference and surprise, energizing the gaps between disparate, albeit contiguous elements (Castagno, 2012: 1545).

The play's opening line, 'And chop the chails off all cats,' or variations of this line, recur throughout the play. Seeming plot-less, in the Aristotelian sense, Castagno explains: "If not for the underpinnings of repetition and tag lines, his plays would lose any sense of gravity or architecture, as images and sounds appear, transfigure, disappear and reemerge" (5554). Wellman has coined the term 'nouning,' which is described as:

[t]he linear stacking of word signifiers... creates a fission-like reaction, what he describes as the *radioactive effect of language*. This term, *radioactive language*, locates the site of 'fission' in the observer: meaning is absorbed contextually in the gaps between words, then through continual deferring until the destination is reached. Fission is the simulacrum of conflict, here displaced to the spectator rather than the actors (5579).

An example of 'nouning' can be seen in Image D, on the right-hand side, where ANSWERER's first line reads:

I am here to announce, er. I am her to er here to pronounce and enounce and denounce and renounce a total that is TOTAL expostulation of cats er. A total exposure of cats er. A TOTAL I mean TOTAL departure of cats.

"Nouning defers intention to favor sense experience" (5588) and is aligned with Machon's position that:

a verbal play activates the (syn)aesthetic-sense, engaging the noetic within interpretation, demanding that the imagination is harnessed and actively engaged... Words themselves, via their sound and form and their disturbed 'meaning' have the potential to transmit emotive and sensate experience, etching themselves into the perceptive faculties of the holistic body. This ludic disturbance of language can discomfort and unsettle the audience in a sensate and cerebral manner. It causes a (re)cognition of language and allows a re-perception of ideas, events, states, experience, to achieve a new point of verbal making-sense/sense-making (2011: 74).

Wellman's 'nouncing' technique not only requires a reader's alert engagement, to trace meaning within speech that is simultaneously deconstructing and re-constructing language both visually and aurally, s/he also experiences a "spectacle with language" (Castagno, 2012: 3875). Recalling that Aristotle places spectacle at the bottom of his hierarchal system, postdramatic plays appear to re-order or equalize the Aristotelian elements of drama.

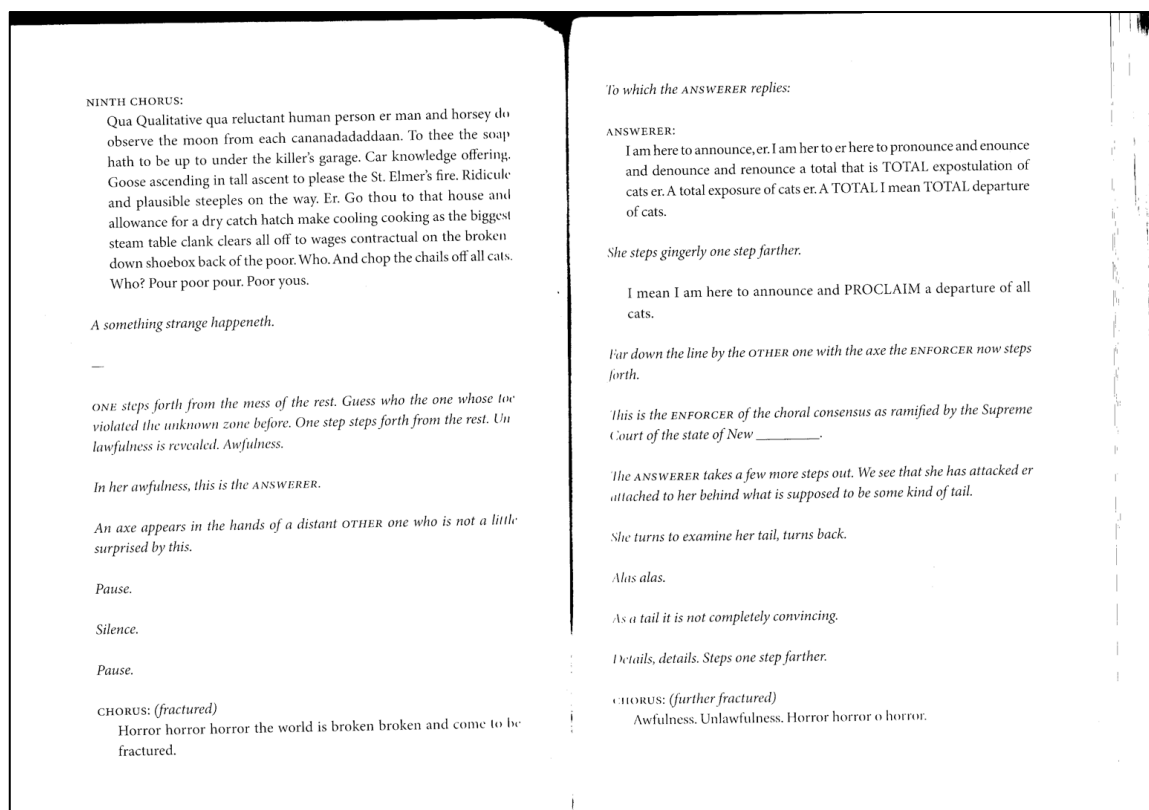


Image D. Nouncing in *The Invention of Tragedy*, pages 266-267

Re-Centered on Riddles

The Invention of Tragedy is rich with layered language and cluttered with invented, obscured and fragmented words, as well as abstract symbols. The play is most certainly a landscape of language. Embedded in Wellman's 'bad language' are deeper, historical and mystical ideas that connect to the play's title:

traces of the myth of Osiris, a paean to the origins of Egyptian theatrical traditions that may be traced to the origins of tragedy... the figure of Hare appears an oblique referant to the classical hamartia, or 'error in judgment.' ... Hare ultimately provides a salvo of meaning to the play, when he suggests that it is the need for individualism that leads to tragedy: that it happens to the person who steps out of the chorus. This double entendre marker refers back to Thespis, who of course as the first actor, stepped out of the dithyramb chorus and created the opportunity of the tragic hero. Thus, if we work hard enough, and are patient, and understand the arcane and oblique references, Wellman ultimately answers the riddle of his title, *The Invention of Tragedy*—a trail from the myth of Osiris through Thespis and the birth of Greek tragedy (Castagno, 2012: 5612).

It might be said, ironically, that Wellman's play is highly Aristotelian, in that every aspect of the play, ultimately, is tied to the play's centered thought; to tell the 'tale' of the invention of tragedy. Whereas Aristotle is reflecting on the ideal or perfect tragedy, Wellman reaches back further to adapt and re-tell the myth of the beginning of tragedy, in order for the 'active' and 'alert' contemporary reader to consider one's need for individualism as the first tragic act.

This analysis has exhibited some of the ways that Wellman subverts the *literary reader's* experience of written language, and deploys a host of linguistic strategies through an 'onslaught of language,' deferring meaning until the last possible moment. "Reading or watching Wellman's plays is like taking a rollercoaster ride on tracks of speech... He writes with the conviction that plays

are animate” (M. Robinson, 1994: 192). This conviction in Wellman’s writing captures the American sensibility, referenced in the Introduction, that Stein describes decades earlier: “ever-moving are Americans. Here is a huge country... Naturally people move. And they need a moving language. A language that can interpret American life. Nouns and adjectives won’t express American life. They are too weak, too immobile” (Haas 8). Parks’ writing, which I will discuss in the next section, also embodies this American sensibility, which is the undercurrent of a playwrighting practice where the physical experience of language informs the *literary playtext*.

SUZAN-LORI PARKS’ *THE AMERICA PLAY*

Parks is an African-American playwright best known for her Pulitzer Prize winning play, *Topdog Underdog* (2002). She has written films and novels and has appeared in, and directed work-in-progress presentations of her plays. She defines a play as "a blueprint of an event" (TCG, 1995: 4) and similar to Wellman’s ethos of mutual creation, explains: "I provide the map... a map of a piece of land. And what I try to do is say there are 10 roads, 20, 50 roads—take one... a bad play only has a one-way road" (Jiggetts 312). She produces a series of solo performances, *Watch Me Work*, where she performs with a red typewriter in a public space, such as the lobby of The Public Theatre in NYC. This act of performing the writing process, which I have participated in, is an invitation to the audience to ‘work’ alongside Parks, on their own projects. The tapping of her typewriter creates a perpetual soundscape to the event, which culminates with an open dialogue between the participants and Parks.

The America Play is Parks' attempt to put "Known History squarely center stage—and from there proceeds to signify the exclusion of black America from that history" (Malkin 175). The play is divided into two acts: 'The Lincoln Act' and 'The Hall of Wonders.' The Lincoln Act is a long monologue presented by THE FOUNDLING FATHER AS ABRAHAM LINCOLN, a gravedigger by profession and a self-proclaimed impersonator of Abraham Lincoln who performs re-enactments of Lincoln's assassination in the 'Great Hole of History' where Parks locates the play. The Hall of Wonders is divided into seven parts, labeled 'A' through 'G' with accompanying titles.

For the purposes of this analysis I have consulted two published versions of Parks' *The America Play*. The first, published by the Dramatists Play Service Inc. (1995), is what theatre professionals would refer to as the 'actor's edition.' The actor's edition often includes material that documents details of a specific production, such as a photograph, a ground plan, a properties list and an acknowledgment of members of the production team. The stage directions included in the actor's edition typically reflect the staging and technical elements from a specific performance production, often the first. As Patricia A. Suchy contends: "The modern practice of publishing 'acting versions' of scripts with stage directions taken from original productions further confounds the problem... [that] authorship of the stage direction may be multiple, and extremely difficult to pull apart (1991: 71). The Dramatist Play Service version of the play documents the details of the 1994 production at the Joseph Papp Public Theatre in New York.

The second version appears in *The America Play and Other Plays* (1995), published by Theatre Communications Group (TCG), a collection of plays by the playwright that includes three essays, also by Parks. These three theatrical manifestoes function as extratextual didascalia that help to frame the reader's experience, in order to, as Parks explains, "give those readers, scholars, directors and performers of my plays a way in—so that instead of calling me up they can, with this 'guide,' dive into an examination with great confidence" (TCG, 1995: 6). It is significant to note that Parks, here, is identifying her audience in a variety of roles that includes both practitioners and non-practitioners. This analysis will exhibit subtle differences between these two versions, in order to highlight how the inclusion and exclusion of information can shape the reader's experience and interpretation of a *literary playtext*.

The Physical Act of Language

Parks, through her use of historical appropriation and (de)constructed language, implies a certain physical embodied experience or approach to reading her works. She encourages her readers to dance, to move around, and to speak aloud: "Language is a physical act—something that involves yr whole bod. Write with yr whole bod. Read with yr whole bod. Wake up" (18). This notion is aligned with Machon's position that "*playwriting* can be perceived as a physicalized practice in itself, with an indefinable nature and inherent resistance strategies" (2011: 71). Parks' plays are to be read as they are written, as corporeal acts. She describes words "as spells in our mouths" and insists:

Language is a physical act. It's something which involves your entire body—not just your head. Words are spells in which an actor consumes and digests—and through digesting creates a performance on stage.

Each word is configured to give the actor a clue to their physical life (TCG, 1995: 18).

Similar to Wellman, Parks views playwrighting as a process of providing clues.

These clues activate the reader's imagination and provoke accuracy in interpreting the text.

In discussing her use of language in plays, Parks describes her playwrighting as,

an attempt to get things on the page how I think they sound to me... It's a recording of, not only the way words sound, but what that means. The difference between 'k' and 'o.k.' is not just what one might call black English versus standard English, for example. Or black English versus mid-Atlantic English (Jiggetts 310).

In *Elements of Style*, Parks includes a section labeled, '*foreign words & phrases*' where she provides definitions and pronunciations for unique words that appear in the dialogue of her plays. Many of the words that she includes require the reader to read aloud, using his/her entire body to capture the essence of the expression. For example, the word 'Ssnuch,' used in her play, *Betting on the Dust Commander*:

Ssnuch /ssnəch!/ (Air intake sound not through mouth or throat but in through the nose.) A fast reverse snort, a bug sniff (usually accompanies crying or sneezing). 'Snnnnuch. Blowings hard. For me' (TCG, 1995: 17).

While the *performance reader* experiences Parks' unique language through the director and performer's representation of the text, the *literary reader* must put Parks' language in his/her own body. This 'guide' that Parks provides enables them to do so, and establishes a different type of reading experience.

Interestingly, the 'actor's edition' does not include this glossary of words.

Jeanette R. Malkin notes "the difficulty in reading this transcription of a form of black language," explaining that:

It comes alive... and becomes transparent when read aloud, when performed as an oral text. The obscure written form attests to a conscious rejection of standardized scripture as itself a form of control. The reader's difficulty in scanning Parks' texts is increased by her transcription not only of black speech, but also of black 'voice': the visceral soundings of her figures. Nonsemiotic noises are often written onto her pages as musical moans that evoke an uninscribed... preliterate world (1999: 159).

This quality of Parks' language connects to Anne Bogart's view that "Americans are an aural culture... the *sound* of words takes precedent over their meaning" (2001: 38). If we combine Parks' cue to 'read with yr whole bod' with Malkin's declaration that the work 'comes alive' when read aloud, the experience of reading Parks' plays can be considered an embodied experience. The reader of Parks' play becomes performer of Parks' text, uttering the character's verbal speech and moving with language as the reading itself, becomes a co-authored performance.

Architecture of Spells and Rests

Parks structures her play around gaps to be filled. These gaps appear as non-traditional stage directions in the body of the text. Suchy suggests:

a play's literary text is made entirely of stage directions, including the lines that are spoken aloud. The priority Aristotle gave to plot, character, and thought over diction reveals that this idea is not really as radical as it may sound; and in modern times with the concept of 'sub-text' or the idea that much of the play's meaning can be discovered beyond the surface of its language, the uttered lines of a play seem skeletal, only *suggestive* of dramatic life (1991: 72-73).

Instead of pauses, Parks composes her play with '(rests)' and 'spells.' For all intents and purposes, the *performance reader* would not be aware of Parks' use of '(rest),' which is an indication to "[t]ake a little time, a pause, a breather; make a transition," or a 'spell,' defined as "[a]n elongated and heightened (rest)" (TCG, 1995: 16). In the *literary playtext* there is a direct call to attention through

notation. The *performance reader* is not necessarily aware of these moments as signified by Parks. Unbeknownst to the *performance reader*, (rest)s and spells are experienced through the performer and the staging, and the *performance reader's* role is to fill these gaps with his/her own interpretation of what is taking place. The *literary reader* however, is asked to fill these gaps with an awareness of Parks' placement of distinctly different types of pauses.

Parks describes 'spells' as "the place where the figures experience their pure true simple state. While no 'action' or 'stage business' is necessary, directors should fill this moment as they best see fit" (16). Does this mean that the (rest)s and spells are actually messages to the director rather than the performer, or designer? She also discusses the visual presentation and their affect on the look of the *literary playtext*: "[d]enoted by repetition of figures' names with no dialogue. Has sort of an architectural look" (16). Parks' text on the page takes on an architectural quality, as the placement of character names and dialogue create block-like shapes. This graphic quality has the potential to shape the *literary reader's* interpretation of the aesthetic world of the play. In Parks' writing, the landscape play becomes a 'cityscape' play. Parks literally places blanks on the page, with each book opening becoming its own architectural landscape with gaps becoming the windows of the 'cityscape' that the reader must peer into and fill with his/her own imagination. Does the *performance reader* experience the 'architectural look' that Parks describes?

Parks is re-organizing the types and amount of information that is given to the reader through the *literary playtext*, and challenges the reader to make connections between the corporeal, visual and psychological experiences of the

text, and blank space on the page. As suggested in the analysis of Wellman's *The Invention of Tragedy*, Parks' playwrighting style too, can be considered Aristotelian, in the sense that every detail of the *literary playtext* is tied to a center; the center itself is adapted to the play's binary life: form and content.

Footnotes to History

Parks includes 'notes' in the body of her play, incorporating a type of academic referencing into her work. In the collected works edition, these notes take the form of 'footnotes' while in the 'actor's edition' they appear as 'endnotes.' The collected works edition has a total of fifteen footnotes while the actor's edition has twelve endnotes. The difference in quantity is due to the fact that three of the footnotes are from bracketed, or 'optional' text, as noted in the text of Image E (TCG, 1995: 158). This variation of footnotes versus endnotes might seem slight, however there are implications about the reading experience here. A 'footnote' allows the reader to find the reference and fold it into his/her interpretation of the text almost instantaneously. The 'endnote' pushes the references to the back of the book, further interrupting the reader's momentum as s/he must find his/her way to the back of the book in order to link information. Assuming that the actor's edition is primarily for the actor, this implies that the actor's reading experience is less about momentum, since s/he will presumably be reading the text multiple times in order to analyze and prepare to play a character. Further, the *performance reader* has no awareness of these 'notes.' The *performance reader* experiences the notes indirectly, through the performer who is aware of the notes, internalizing such information and layering this academic backstory into the performance.

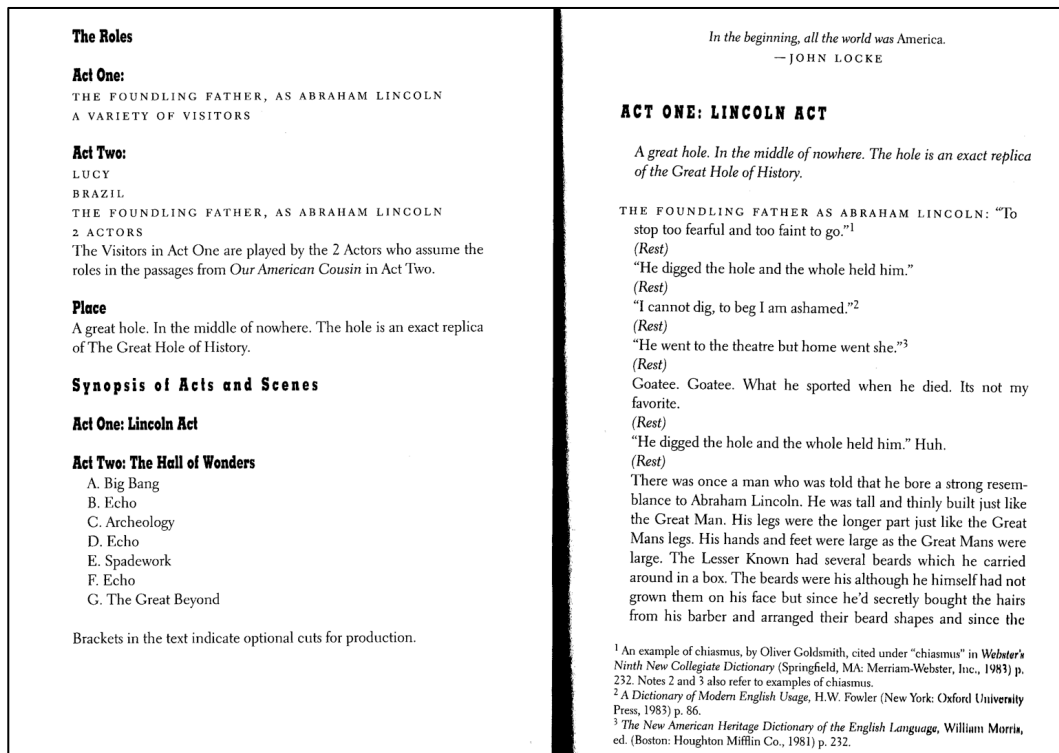


Image E. Footnotes in *The America Play*, pages 158-159

The 'notes,' in one sense, function as a method for guiding the reader in the meaning-making process, as would be the case in an academic paper.

However, Parks' notes seem to be functioning in a different manner, as autonomous didascalia. In Image F, two footnotes appear. The first, is a

footnote to the line, "Thus to the tyrants," and reads:

Or 'Sic semper tyrannis.' Purportedly, Booth's words after he slew Lincoln and leapt from the presidential box to the stage of Ford's Theatre in Washington D.C. on 14 April 1865, not only killing the President but also interrupting a performance of *Our American Cousin*, starring Miss Laura Keene (165).

The second, is a footnote to the line, "The South is avenged," and reads:

"Allegedly, Booth's words" (165). The use of 'purportedly' and 'allegedly' to frame this information suggests that Parks herself is not entirely trusting of history, as it has been written. Just as her play challenges notions of language, in order to reclaim black history, she uses this form of academic referencing to

question accepted history, which puts the reader in a state of uncertainty. This aspect of the text deepens the work's exploration and interrogation of history, provoking the reader to consider who gets to write history.

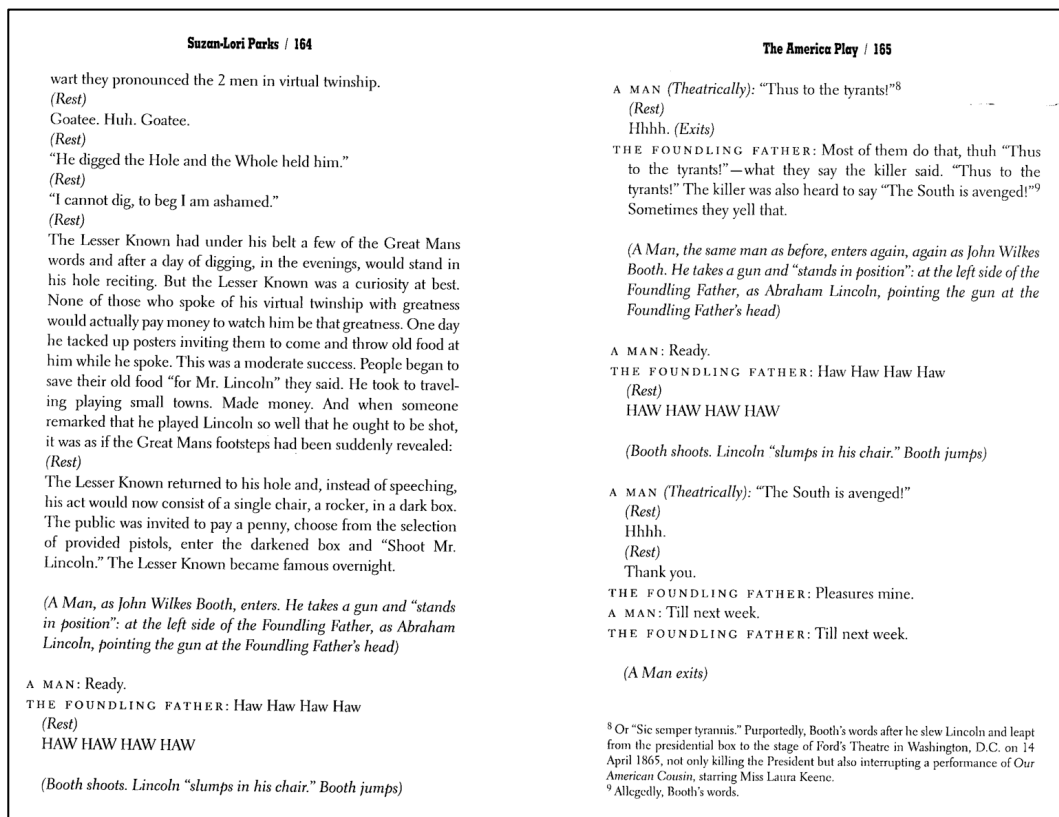


Image F. Footnotes in *The America Play*, pages 164-165

We have now seen exhibited in the collected works edition, that the right to orchestrate spells and (rest)s is given to the director, while word glossaries and accompanying essays are used to guide and frame the *literary reader* towards a more anchored and active reading of the play. In the actor's edition, a more limited scope of information is provided, with the omission of essays, including the glossary of words and with footnotes marginalized to endnotes.

Repetition and Revision

In Parks' plays, Aristotelian logic unravels as a new type of play emerges. In *Elements of Style*, Parks discusses her theory of 'Rep & Rev' (short for 'repetition and revision'), which is in an "attempt to create a dramatic

text that departs from the traditional linear narrative style to look and sound more like a musical score” (9). This is similar to Wellman’s use of the asterisk and his strategy of nouncing, both techniques that are similar to aspects of musical notation. Parks attributes ‘Rep & Rev’ to a jazz aesthetic, as opposed to dramatic structures that follow a causal structure. As Malkin notes,

Parks' use of 'rep & rev' is more than just a structural borrowing from a musical language; it is an ideological component of her writing. To 'repeat and revise' is to reject linearity and causal rationality in favor of a spatially open view of time and process. It is to favor multi-directionality and re-visions of a 'past' as definitions of progress (1999: 157).

‘Rep & Rev’ takes place in many layers of *The America Play*. Structurally, in Act I, the re-enactment of Lincoln’s assassination as performed by THE FOUNDLING FATHER occurs seven times. Act II, divided into seven parts, follows the path of LUCY and BRAZIL in search of their husband and father. As they excavate the ‘Great Hole of History,’ language is recycled. Both LUCY and BRAZIL quote bits of wisdom inherited from THE FOUNDLING FATHER, appropriated excerpts from famous speeches by Lincoln, which are alluded to in Act I. This appropriated text becomes haunting, first heard via THE FOUNDLING FATHER (perhaps activating the reader’s pre-existing familiarity of the historical text), and then recycled by his own family members, who must piece these words together with assorted objects found in the ‘Great Hole of History,’ in order to come to terms with their loss.

Here, I will analyze the closing scene of Act II, ‘G: The Great Beyond’ (Images G, H and I) where the three main characters of the play converge for the first time. The scene heading appears in a bold font, slightly larger than that of the dialogue. A stage direction sets the scene: “*Lucy and Brazil watch the*

TV: a replay of 'The Lincoln Act.' *The Foundling Father has returned. His coffin awaits him*" (TCG, 1995: 194). LUCY and BRAZIL have come to excavate the 'Great Hole of History' to search for the remnants of THE FOUNDLING FATHER. Parks' previously defined (rest)s appear like stage directions, italicized and in parenthesis. In this sample of text, the architectural look of Parks' spell(s) can be seen where character names appear without dialogue, and without colon. In relation to the circumstances of the scene, as driven by the dialogue, the spell(s) take on a significant role in the interpretation of the text. Iser identifies 'blanks' in literature to be one of two "basic structures of indeterminacy" and explains that, "as blanks suspend connectability of textual patterns, the resultant break in good continuation intensifies the acts of ideation on the reader's part, and in this respect the blank functions as an elementary condition of communication" (1980: 189). As BRAZIL describes the action on the television screen, a replaying of what has already been experienced in Act I, Parks' spells function as emotional 'blanks' to be filled by the reader, as both LUCY and BRAZIL acknowledge his death.

In this scene, 'Rep & Rev' manifests through verbal speech. With each uttered 'Howuhboutthat!' a transformation takes place. First, LUCY's utterance is an acknowledgement of the scene on the television screen (itself a 'rep & rev' of Act I). Second, sans the exclamation point, LUCY responds, with less excitement, to BRAZIL's observation: 'They just gunned him down uhgain.' The punctuation takes on a major role in guiding the reader and performer to interpret the text, just as dynamics in a musical score guide the musician through the expressivity of the composition. The third 'Howuhboutthat!'

reemploys the exclamation point as BRAZIL states, ‘He’s dead but not really.’ Ironically, they watch THE FOUNDLING FATHER on replay on a television screen in which the sound does not work, while his ghost appears. The dialogue then deviates from the call and response rhythm of LUCY’s ‘Howuhboutthat’ to BRAZIL’s observations. A (rest) introduces THE FOUNDLING FATHER into the dialogue, followed by a series of spells. Then, LUCY’s ‘Howuhboutthat.’ (sans exclamation point, with period) reads as a response to BRAZIL’s realizing ‘Whoah,’ which leads to a medley of repetitions: ‘Zit him?’ to ‘Its him’ to ‘He’s dead?’ to ‘He’s dead.’ The final transformation in this sequence occurs when BRAZIL inherits LUCY’s language, uttering ‘Howuhboutthat.’

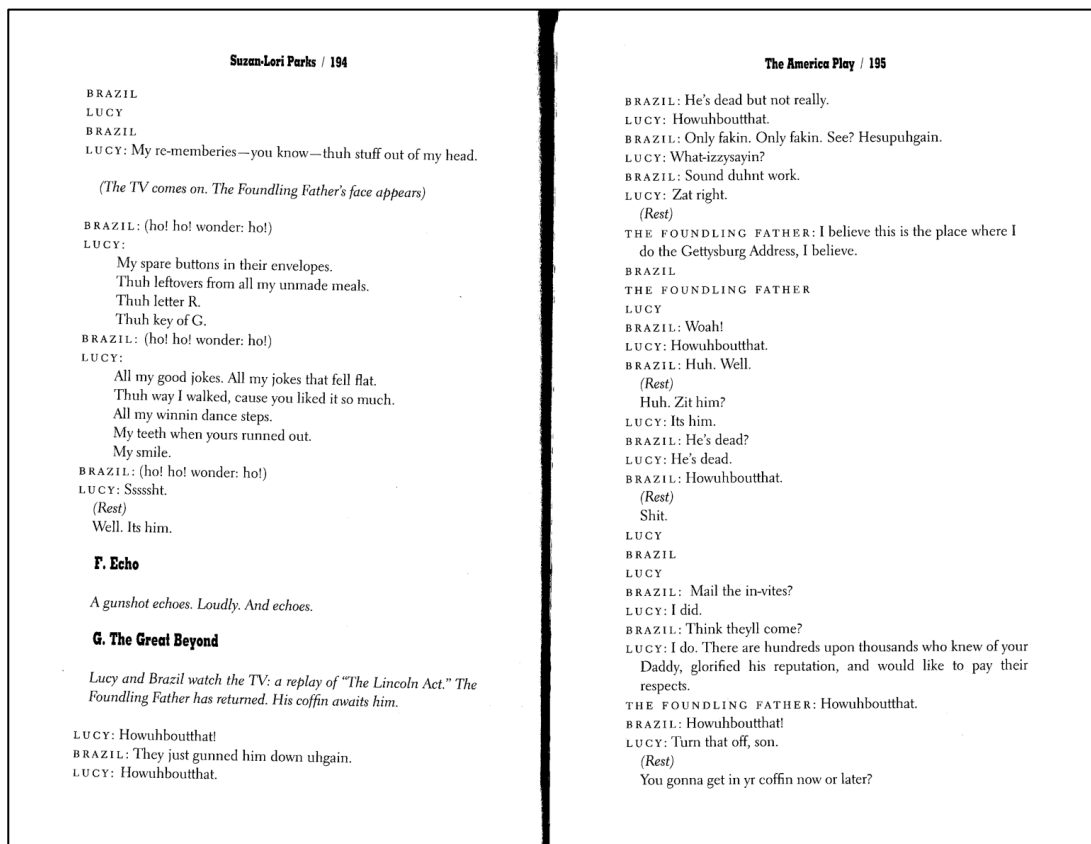


Image G. ‘Scene G The Great Beyond’ from *The America Play*, pages 194-195

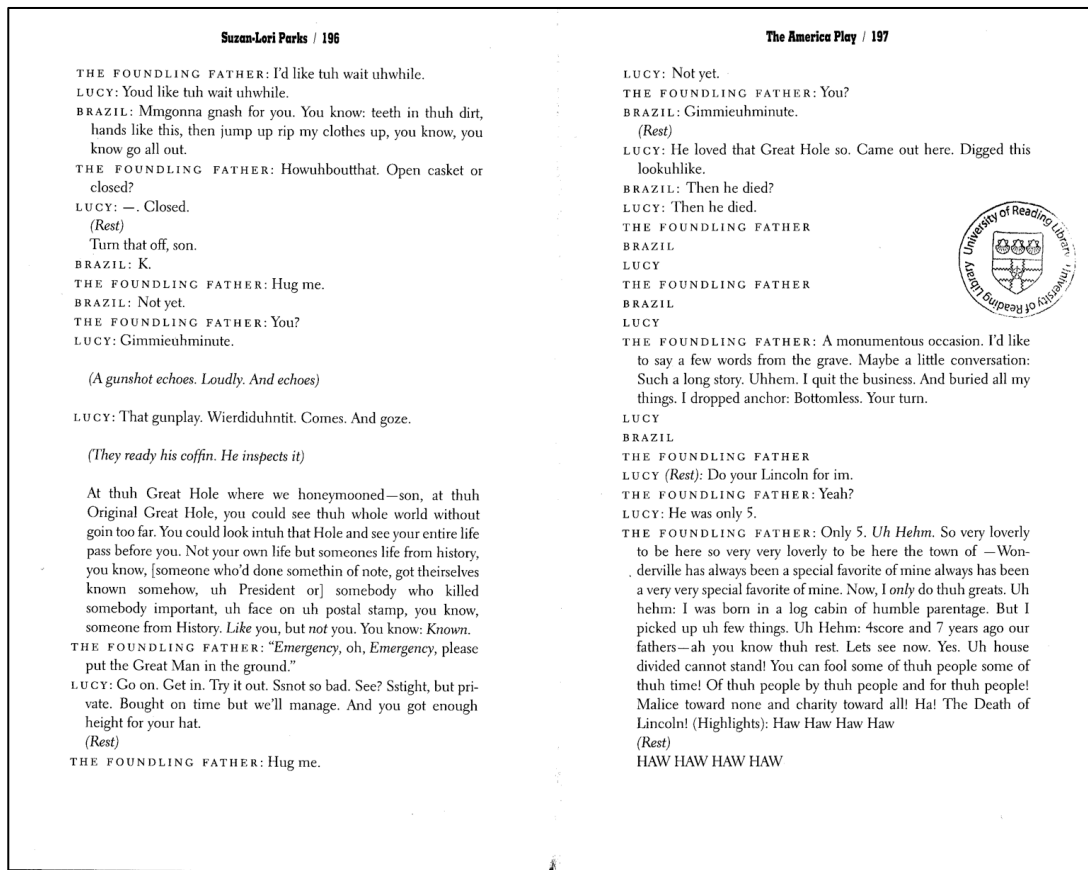


Figure H. 'Scene G The Great Beyond' from *The America Play*, pages 196-197

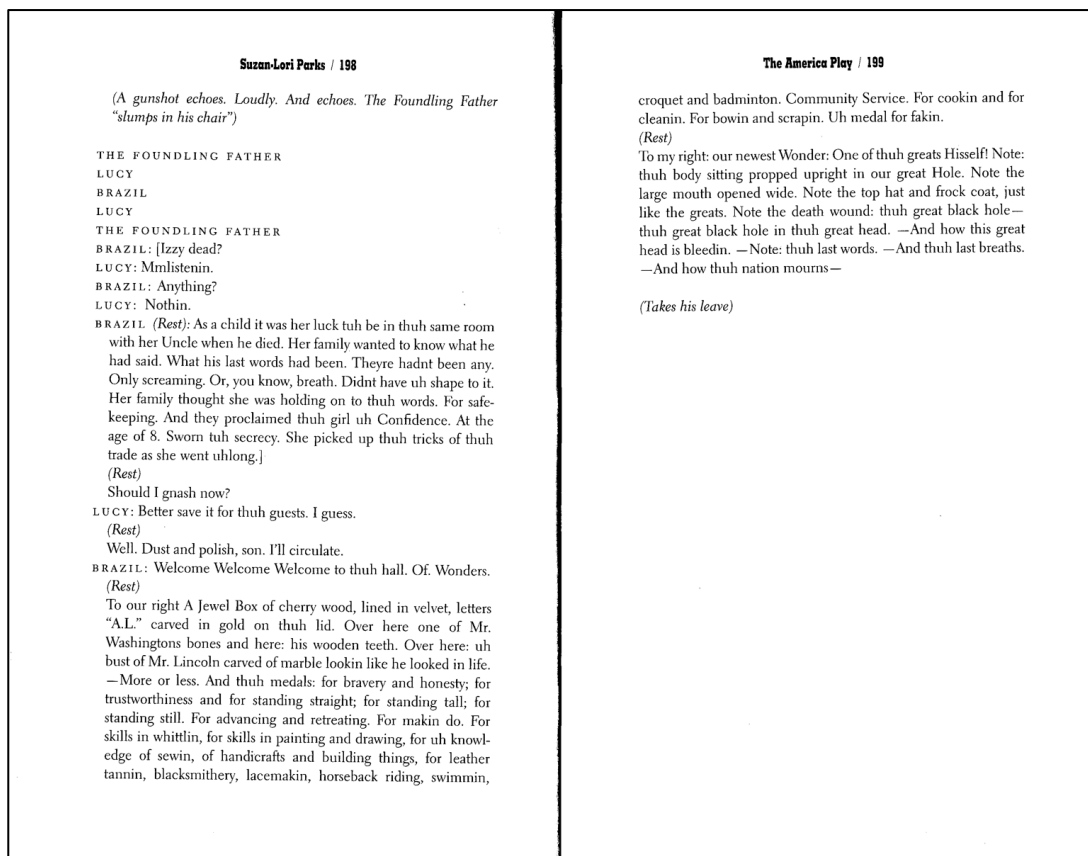


Figure I. 'Scene G The Great Beyond' from *The America Play*, pages 198-199

In this sequence of dialogue the *literary reader* must imagine both physical and psychological states, whereas the *performance reader* observes the physical life of the characters on stage, and constructs his/her own interpretation of the psychological shifts that are occurring. Marc Robinson considers Parks' spells and rests as "measured silences" where "we start to perceive all the aspects of theater we'd normally ignore pre-eminently the drama of time passing. During these passages, time no longer moves the way it does in other drama. It is now seen, heard, *felt* as it passes" (1994: 192). Robinson's suggestion that time is 'felt' echoes Machon's notion of feeling 'feelingly' and Etchell's witness who 'feels the weight.'

The two versions of Parks' *The America Play* exemplify how the extratextual didascalia is critical to framing and implying readership, which ultimately empowers him/her to engage in a co-authored experience of the work. Her viewpoint that a play is a 'map' of many possible pathways is further emphasized by her use of spells, rests and notes which require the reader of both types of text to actively engage with a variety of types of information, to travel through the 'cityscape' of language, in both mind and body, to consider Parks' larger political ideas which the experience of the play is centered around.

NEW PLAYWRITING PRACTICES

This Chapter has exemplified how the plays of Parks and Wellman mark a new linguistic approach to playwrighting that transforms Aristotle's elements of drama and Stein's landscape play into a postmodern 'langscape' which enmeshes didascalia poetically, and presents the play as a mutual creation

where every detail of the text is layered with possible meaning for the reader to navigate and interpret through a highly active engagement with the text. This new playwrighting practice empowers the reader to determine meaning but also challenges him or her to be actively engaged in an ongoing search for meaning. This call for participation is embedded in the text, and inherent to a postdramatic sensibility that is well positioned for bringing hypertext theory into playwrighting practice. Alexandra Saemmer explains:

Some hypertextual reading situations correspond to the idea that we always have to search somewhere else, again and again. Such a reading may ideally stimulate the most prolific, alert, hyper-attentive minds, driven by an unquenchable curiosity. To become a creative act of understanding, this kind of reading, however, requires a tremendous ability to remember, as well as some cognitive and technical skills to produce efficient 'cheat sheets': screenshots, bookmarks, annotations and so on (2014: 34).

Through web design, the play itself becomes site-specific and takes Stein's notion of the landscape play to new territory, as words and images are designed in layers on the computer screen (framed by webpages) to create a work that the reader can travel through virtually. "Hypertext comes as a web of text, like a landscape that cannot be seen all at once but can be explored along many different routes" (Kolb 323). Images, links and other types of hypermedia become part of the larger text that enables the play to be experienced as multisensory. No longer does the playwright need to rely on lengthy descriptions to evoke the world of the play. Other types of text can function in this manner, which enables a more (syn)aesthetic reading experience.

The hyper(play)text provides a model of practice where playwrighting can include many forms of writing. As Bolter states:

Electronic writing is both a visual and verbal description. It is not the writing of a place, but rather a writing *with* places, spatially realized topics. Topographic writing challenges the idea that writing should be merely the servant of spoken language. The writer and reader can create and examine signs and structures on the computer screen that have no easy equivalent in speech (1991: 25).

Stage directions and other types of didascalia can be written free of technical language, and take on a more poetic life. The play itself might not be intended to take place on a stage (as is the case with *Rumi High*) rendering the term 'stage direction' obsolete. Interval 2 highlights aspects of the hyper(play)text of *Rumi High* as a visual 'lanscape' composed of re-imagined dramatic material. Similar to how the analysis of both Parks' and Wellman's plays considered Aristotle's and Stein's notions of the play form, this analysis of *Rumi High* will also be situated in relation to the adherence and breaking of dramatic conventions.

INTERVAL 2

Linguistic and Graphic Layers in the Hyper(play)text

If we focused not on something arbitrarily called '8th grade reading,' but on engaged readers, we might have a better chance at turning nonreaders into voracious readers
– Deborah Meier (2013).

Chapter 2 expanded upon established dramatic theories by Aristotle and Gertrude Stein to suggest that the linguistic strategies of contemporary playwrights, Mac Wellman and Suzan-Lori Parks point to a postdramatic poetics, which requires an active and alert reader that must work with the text in order to determine meaning, through a process of mutual creation. Further, the 'look' of written language, including layout and the use of symbols to guide the reader to engage with the *literary playtext*, can contribute to a (syn)aesthetic reading experience. This Interval focuses on the graphic attributes of the hyper(play)text, specifically the use of font, to express character, and the juxtaposition of images with written language, and links to sound, to evoke a sense of site. Postdramatic playwrighting through the hyper(play)text becomes a process of layering. As new poetic layers emerge, didascalia becomes enmeshed in the (syn)aesthetic world of the play.

Reflecting on the process, specifically Mode 2 (group workshops), Mode 3 (performance presentations) and Mode 6 (web design), I will evaluate the ways in which *Rumi High* engages with Lehmann's 'aspects' of 'textscape' and 'media' (2006: 148-174); and Machon's notions of 'in-its-own-world,' 'scenography,' 'sound' and 'hybridised practice' (2013: 93-98). I will first discuss my approach to using unconventional spelling, grammar and syntax as an

intentional cacography that establishes the aesthetic world of the play, an approach that emerges from the models of practice in Chapter 2. Form and content are in a reciprocal relationship as a poetic, playful (or ‘bad’) use of language helps to establish the political intentions of the play, as introduced in Interval 1. Then, I will discuss my collaboration with the BEEz in a workshop, and a subsequent performance presentation, exploring different fonts to distinguish character. This last section discusses scenographic design in the hyper(play)text where photographic images are collaged and juxtaposed with text, and interspersed with hyperlinks to sound.

ERRORS

Cacography is bad spelling and/or handwriting. Roland Barthes discusses the use of “intentional cacography” where denotation and connotation “enables the text to operate like a game, each system referring to the other according to the requirements of a certain *illusion*” (1970: 9). To describe the experience of reading as a game is important. Alert engagement and competency is required in order to solve complex games and puzzles. The attraction of the work of Wellman and Parks, to me, is that at first glance, their plays appear to be puzzles on the page. They need to be decoded. The decoding process takes place through a close reading, directing or performing of the *literary playtext*.

Defining immersive theatre as ‘in-its-own-world,’ Machon states: “From the outset the immersive world should exist on its own terms and will be created... according to the parameters of its own existence. Here the *feeling* of being submerged in another medium – as with immersion in water – is established

from the outset (2013: 93). *Rumi High* aims to submerge the reader in a world of linguistic wordplay. The reader's first encounter with *Rumi High* invites the reader to 'Click [here](#) to begin your s'kool journey.' A letter of welcome from the school principal (Image ↗) follows with peculiar words such as: 's'kool' and 'edumacation.' These unlikely spellings of familiar words ('school' and 'education') are bringing the reader into a world where language appears unconventionally. Here, *Rumi High's* world of linguistic wordplay is established through misspellings that are established in a formal letter from the school's authority figure. The reader may be at first confused by this quality, but s/he will soon be guided to incrementally experience written language in a different way. Atypical spelling becomes the norm in this world, challenging the reader's notion of error in written language. The play form itself complicates conventions of written language, as *literary plays* fundamentally communicate through a minimum of two registers; dialogue, representing verbal speech, and descriptive, representing the practicalities of staging. In *Rumi High*, both of these registers are expressed through irregularities in spelling, grammar and punctuation. The reader's eyes may be challenged, and could provoke him/her to speak the play aloud, in order to obtain a deeper understanding of how the text is operating. This strategy is connected to Parks' suggestion that language is a physical act.



Image ↗. BIG MIKEY BEE's '[Welcome Letter](#)'

Direct link: http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/Rulez_&_Regulationz.html

Rumi High challenges the *literary reader's* understanding of what constitutes an error. James M. Harding makes a distinction between how a *literary reader* interprets error in print, and how a *performance reader* identifies error in performance: "If you pick up a book and see blurred type or a typo, you the reader, make the correction, see the way it ought to be, the way it was written in the first place... But errors are much harder to identify in performance" (2000: 204). The practice project is influenced by Parks' method of using the play form to question established written history, asking who gets

to write whose history? *Rumi High* asks what makes one spelling right? Who controls the rules of written language? Within the hermetically sealed world of *Rumi High*, linguistic and grammatical errors appear as the norm, and errors become more difficult to identify. Influenced by Wellman's use of Bad English, and considering formal education's emphasis on 'correctness' in reading and writing, particularly spelling and grammar, the play deconstructs language commonly used in school settings. Influenced by Parks' attempt to write language as she hears it, I began to experiment with the sound of these formal words combined with an exaggerated colloquial urban speech (see Appendix III). The notion of error, or right and wrong is turned upside down.

CONSISTENT CHARACTERS

Aristotle insists that characters must behave consistently in relation to the central idea of the play. In the hyper(play)text, I use a different font to distinguish each character. This allows the reader to visualize the character through the graphic quality of written language. Chip Kidd, in his introduction to Simon Garfield's *Just My Type*, refers to the alphabet as

twenty-six purely abstract symbols that in and of themselves mean absolutely nothing, but when put together in the right combinations can introduce into the heads of readers an infinite variety of sounds, smells, tastes, feelings, places, people, characters, situations, feelings, ideas (Garfield xii).

Well-crafted written language can induce a synaesthesia. Garfield's 'book about fonts,' provides a detailed overview of the historical and cultural development of font design. Garfield's work was a significant reference point during the font-choosing phase of the process.

Lehmann discusses the ‘aspect’ of text in terms of the ‘textscape,’ which “designates at the same time the connection of postdramatic theatre language with the new dramaturgies of the visual and retains reference to the landscape play” (2006: 148). In defining “Interdisciplinary/hybridised practice,” Machon suggests that words become “a textured layer in the sensual world of the event” (2013: 97). In the hyper(play)text, the characters are presented through their verbal speech, as the appearance of their speech, expressed through font design, distinguishes each character. At the onset of the play, I use the traditional convention of marking lines of dialogue with a character heading at the center above the line of dialogue. As the reader progresses through the play, these character headings fade away as his/her eye is trained to associate each character with a specific font. By Period 3, the guidance of the character headings has disappeared. Font size, color and layout guide the reader in visualizing and imagining the characters’ physical life within the play. The look of verbal speech is designed to influence the readers’ interpretation of the character, which may include the tone and delivery of verbal speech as well as physical appearance and gesture. This approach risks losing the reader who may not be as attuned to how this new graphic layer is operating.

Character Naming

In *Rumi High*, there is no character list, and no formal descriptions of characters. Different characters announce themselves as the reader navigates the play. It is a deliberate choice not to include images of performers, or drawings of characters as imagined in the hyper(play)text. Discussing character in literature, Wolfgang Iser states:

Our mental images do not serve to make the character physically visible; their optical poverty is an indication of the fact that they illuminate the character, not as an object, but as a bearer of meaning. Even if we are given a detailed description of a character's appearance, we tend not to regard it as pure description, but try and conceive what is actually to be communicated through it (1980: 138).

Descriptions of characters are embedded in the dialogue and story of the play, and at times, the characters' names themselves frame the character as a 'bearer of meaning.'

The importance of character naming is often overlooked by writers, or confined in terms of its scope. Wellman's choices remind us that a character's name may offer an interesting sound quality, a relation to a societal question, a way to 'point' a script, or establish class or mental state. Ultimately, the sum total of the character list helps to create the overall mood or flavor in a particular piece (Castagno, 2012: 2988).

Rumi High contains seventeen characters. There are seven characters presented as students at Rumi High: LILY-WHITE, KID WILD CARD, TAZ, BROOKE-LYNN, LIL-CO, BETTY and BILLY HARPESKEESA. Eight characters are staff members at the school: DEBI, TEECH, BIG MIKEY BEE, PEA-KEATON, JIM-GYM, SIGNOR(A) BLOK, MISS WHITE and MISS PLACE`D CLAUN UFFGOOD INTENZIONE. The characters of LILLIAN-BERG and JaMz OF FABRIZ function outside of this dichotomy and are represented in a different manner than the other characters. LILLIAN-BERG will be discussed in more detail in the next section. JaMz of FABRIZ is only referenced in the didascalia. References to 'SECURITY' and the 'CLACKAZ' in the didascalia suggest two possible larger bodies of characters, or choruses.

The naming of MISS PLACE`D CLAUN-UFFGOOD INTENZIONE, a pun, is perhaps the most overt example of layered meaning embedded in the name itself. She first appears as a clown, and introduces herself as a substitute

teacher, who has lost her voice. In the play's final period, the character appears in court, and reveals herself to be Rumi High's former drama teacher, 'John E. Drama.' John E. Drama is an escapee from the 'Rubber Room' who has been posing as a clown posing as a female substitute teacher to seek revenge on the school's principal for mischaracterizing him as a bad teacher. The 'Rubber Room,' is a term used in NYC, to refer to the reassignment center where teachers, accused of misconduct, await the resolution of their cases. MISS PLACE'D CLAWN-UFFGOOD INTENZIONE` is literally a 'misplaced clown of good intentions.'

For some characters, details of gender, race or ethnicity are left ambiguous, and this ambiguity is signaled by the character name. For example, SIGNOR(A) BLOK, the biology teacher, employs a suffix, '(A),' which suggests choice in whether the character is read as a male or female. The workshops and performance presentations, in which both male and female performers developed the role, led to this detail. Providing the pronoun 'Signor/a' also suggests that s/he is of a different culture, in contrast to the play's general use of 'Miss' and 'Mister.' This otherness is also supported by the character's verbal speech, which signifies an accent but does not concretely define his/her origin.

The character of BETTY, traditionally a female name, is introduced in BIG MIKEY BEE's welcome letter as a male student. In the letter, BETTY is presented as a character of mischief that should not be trusted. He is described as a 'master of disguises.' The song, *A Boy Named Sue* by Shel Silverstein, popularized by Johnny Cash's 1969 performance at California's San Quentin State Prison, tells the story of a boy who seeks revenge on his father who

abandoned him at the age of three. The boy suffers a life of ridicule because of his feminine name, 'Sue,' which he views as his father's only contribution to his life. BETTY's background is mysterious, but his status amongst the student body and within the walls of Rumi High reverses the idea that someone may be bullied because of the assumed gender of a name.

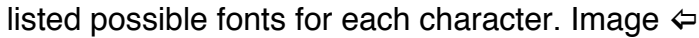
In dialogue between characters, DEBI` is described as wearing a headscarf, and she tells the students that she is from a place called 'Yuman.' The accent mark at the end of her name is perhaps the first hint of her otherness, compounded with the fact that each character appears to have his/her own way of pronouncing her name, as reflected in the various spellings that emerge (Debby, Deb, Debbie, Deb-E). This confusion over the pronunciation of DEBI`'s name, and whether or not DEBI` is her forename or surname (the students call her Miss Debi`) is not resolved until the courtroom scene at the end of the play.

Font-as-couture

Referring to an analogy of 'Font-as-couture,' Garfield explains that "some type is meant to be seen rather than read," and cites Adrian Frutiger's comparison between font designers and dressmakers, both "[c]lothing the constant, human form" (2011: 50). This concept of font 'dressing' the 'human form' led me to consider how fonts could function as a type of costume design in the *literary playtext*.

In order to determine the most suitable font for each character, I conducted a workshop with the BEEz (see Appendix V), to explore possible fonts for each character. In my solitary writing sessions, I browsed

www.DaFont.com, a website that provides a database of downloadable fonts designed by a multitude of designers. The fonts are free to use as long as the individual designers are credited. My use of twenty-one different fonts by eighteen designers inevitably expands the collaborative network, as I acknowledge these designers as collabowrighters (see Appendix IV). I scanned the font archive, considering the aesthetic look of the font as well as the name of the font in relation to each character ('Beehives are Sticky' and 'Bizbee' were two fonts that I considered for BIG MIKEY BEE). Many of the fonts that I explored are handwriting fonts. These fonts suggest to the reader that the character's verbal speech is being expressed in the manner that they themselves would be writing the words they speak. The use of handwriting fonts breaks the convention of expressing a play text through neutral fonts that provide ease to reading.

I compiled a chart that listed possible fonts for each character. Image  shows an example where eight possible fonts were considered for the character of LIL-CO. The fonts highlighted in yellow proved most effective in the practical workshop. LIL-CO is a troubled student, who returns to Rumi High after being suspended for an extended period of time. She is disruptive and angry, yet maintains influence over her classmates, who both fear and enjoy her antics. She is clever, but that cleverness is hidden by her inability to behave appropriately within the school's hierarchical structures. Her speech, which is a mixture of broken English, street slang and digital text-speak, reflects a character who is academically challenged and struggles to express herself in a formal setting. LIL-CO is clothed in the 'Acki Preschool' font, which is sloppy

and childlike, with letters appearing disjointed, broken or backwards. The title of the font itself suggests the handwriting of a pre-school student, which is in line with the academic level of competence for LIL-CO. In the world of formal education, LIL-CO behaves and speaks in the manner of an unruly pre-school student. The profane roughness of her verbal speech juxtaposed with the childlike appearance of the text becomes jarring; almost tragic.

CHARACTER	FONT NAME	SAMPLE TEXT
LIL-CO	<i>inclined letter</i>	Excuse you! Was good my Gaws? Lookin' good Lilygirl.
	WHOA	EXCUSE YOU! WAS GOOD MY GAWS? LOOKIN' GOOD LILYGIRL.
	<i>arsenal white</i>	excuse you! was good my gaws? lookin' good lilygirl.
	<i>bedspread assassin</i>	Excuse you! Was good my Gaws? Lookin' good Lilygirl.
	<i>Asylum</i>	Excuse you! Was good my Gaws? Lookin' good Lilygirl.
	<i>ACK! PRE-SCHOOL</i>	Excuse you! WAS GOOD MY GAWS? LOOKIN' GOOD LILYGIRL.
	5 years old	Excuse you! Was good my Gaws? Lookin' good Lilygirl.
	Batty Girl	Excuse you! was good my Gaws? Lookin' good Lilygirl.

Image ↵. Chart reflecting eight fonts considered for the character of LIL-CO

I worked with the BEEz to experiment with their delivery of character speeches as printed in various fonts. A physical exploration of the character was facilitated as we collectively considered how the visual attributes of each font design affected their readings and subsequent performances of the text. From physical exploration, we moved into experimentation with vocal qualities considering how the font influenced tempo, pitch and accent. We then reflected on this experience of reading the text in different fonts, and examined the ways in which delivery and physicality transformed with each font. Documenting this

practical exploration, I then reviewed the material and considered which fonts appeared to evoke a more dynamic sense of the character. I also considered the legibility of each font, testing its readability on various screen sizes. Garfield states:

Legibility is also defined by a less formal characteristic: taste. This is not the same as trendiness; rather it is popularity demonstrated by mass consumption. We like to think of our cultural tastes improving and maturing with age, but in the case of type design something else also happens: we are simply worn down by over-exposure (2011: 53).

Garfield's suggestion that readers are 'worn down by overexposure' connects with Robinson's critique of an 'anesthetic' education, and Rancière's disdain for the 'passive' spectator. My intention in using a mixture of fonts is to inspire a more active reader, who is provoked to search for meaning in these new graphic layers. The reader must maintain an acute memory in order to associate specific fonts with each character.

The results of the workshop were translated into a performance presentation on 10th June 2013 at University of Reading. This presentation combined the practical work with the BEEz and my solo performance practice. Mistuh JoMiRo framed the performance, which set the Bulmershe Theatre as an interactive classroom. The BEEz, who played only student characters, entered the space with audience members, and a bell marked the beginning of the session. The scenes performed were selected at random by *performance readers* who were invited by Mistuh JoMiRo to pull numbers from a hat. With each scene selection, Mistuh JoMiRo cast specific *performance readers* in teacher roles. The text of the selected scenes was projected on the wall for all to read. This interactive and collective reading experience, framed within a

classroom setting, allowed me to explore improvisation strategies, while testing the affects of the various fonts on individual 'cold' readings of characters. This allowed me to observe how the fonts shaped and informed readers who were not familiar with the characters. Image 4 shows a complete listing of each character and their respective font as it appears in the hyper(play)text, a direct result of the practical workshop and performance presentation. Next, I will discuss a selection of characters in relation to their fonts.

CHARACTER	FONT NAME	SAMPLE TEXT
LIL-CO	fox preschool	Excuse you! Was good by GAW? LOOKY good ULLPghL
LILY-WHITE	ELS GO	YOU KNOW MY MOM, RIGHT? MISS WHITE, SHE SOUD TO ASK YOU IF YOU HAD OUR SYMBUS YET. BECAUSE TECHNICALLY IF THERE'S NO SYMBUS, THERE'S NO CROSS, WHICH MEANS NOTHING HAS BEGUN.
TAZ	Pass it My Favorite	Isn't her favorite's into by de reading
KID WILD CARD (Johnny)	In Between	That's real good of you Teach. But frankly, I prefer to do nothing during the summer.
KID WILD CARD- (Shooter)	Peak	I DROP TEN RIMS NOW I MISS A WEEK OF CLASS EXCUSED
KID WILD CARD- (Stuttering Sam)	Parkinson's	Th-th-th-th-that's Oookay. S-s-s-s-some, one class a-c-c-c-can go.
KID WILD CARD- (Kristopher W Carder)	DJ GROSS	HAD A TOWN
BILLY HARPEKKEESA	Prince Valiant	Name's Billy. Billy Harpeskeesa.
BROOK-LYNN	the girl next door	Back off Lily, he's mine.
BETTY	Ransom Note	Put...OV...Pite
DEBI'	ferre Inspired	It's a play. It's a Drama class and everything we will do has to do with that book play The Crucible. Our course syllabus plan and sample to The Crucible.
BIG MIKEY	beehives are sticky	Miss Debbi. On time. Just like a good verb!
MISS WHITE	Learning Curve	Miss White. I'm the senior English teacher here on staff and
TEECH	A Lincoln font	Good morning class! Welcome to the history of New Hampshire.
SIGNOR(A) BLOK	Mr. Ortiz	To get started I am going to give you a simple assessment.
PK	DIGITAL 7	THREE CLASSES. TENTH TWO TWELFTH. NINETY-SEVEN COPIES THIS. FOUR PAGES. FIFTY-EIGHT COPIES THAT. THREE PAGES.
JIM-GYM	Slim Jim	I've always wanted to get myself underneath one of those scarves. An unveiling.
LILLIAN	3CURD JANE	YOU WON'T GET IT UNTIL YOU DO IT.
MISS PLACED	@rdinary Day	Wh@ps!
The Draconian Typewriter	Draconian Typewriter	(bell rings)
RUMI HIGH logo	COLLEGED	RUMI HIGH

Image 4. Chart reflecting characters' 'Font-as-couture' with sample line of text

At the start of the play, KID WILD CARD appears to be playing three student characters, denoted by sub-names placed in parenthesis: (Johnny Obnoxious), (Shooter) and (Stuttering Sam). The other characters respond and interact with him as three separate individuals. KID WILD CARD is expressed in three fonts, one for each identity. 'Johnny Obnoxious' is designed with 'In Between,' which appears tentative and sloppy, with particular parts of letters emboldened as if they had been written over. 'Shooter,' who mostly raps, is experienced through the 'PEAK' font, which is an urban-graffiti styled lettering that appears in all uppercase. 'Stuttering Sam' is presented with the 'Parkinson's' font, which has the shaky hand quality of a person suffering from Parkinson's disease. Here, the hand not having control, and struggling to express what the mind is trying to transmit, becomes a metaphor for a character that struggles to get words out of his mouth. The shifts between each KID WILD CARD personae are marked by a change in font, as can be seen in Image ↩, where the character delivers a monologue across his three identities. At the play's onset, it is ambiguous whether KID WILD CARD has split personalities, or if this is intended to be a dramatic device that presents an actor 'playing' multiple roles. A fourth font for KID WILD CARD, 'DJ Gross,' emerges when the character, 'finds himself,' and reclaims his given name, 'Kristopher Wallace Carter.'

BETTY, from the start of the play, is introduced with a veil of darkness. In the welcome letter, he is described as dangerous and persuasive. The font used for BETTY, 'Ransom Note,' is listed in *Not My Type*, as one of 'The Worst Fonts In The World,' "best used for comic effect" (Garfield 310). Ransom Note appears as a collaged alphabet composed of letters that have been cut from magazines. This font is appropriate for BETTY, a 'master of disguises' who at certain points passes secret notes to students. This font presents challenges in the hyper(play)text as particular letters, in either upper-case or lower-case, are not legible against certain backdrops. BETTY's speech, riddled with slang, is already difficult to read as 'plain' font. This issue of legibility required me to adjust every letter of every word to either a lower-case or upper-case, whichever appeared more legible within a given scene. The coloring, spacing and sizing of the text became integral to building the hyper(play)text.

The character of LILLIAN-BERG is the only character that exists outside of the walls Rumi High. She is a university professor and mentor to DEBI`, and appears in a number of scenes when DEBI` comes to her for advice. Her advice to DEBI` on how to survive teaching is absurdly framed by her own obsession with death, following her recent redundancy in higher education. She appears digitally, via video conference calls with DEBI`. This virtual identity for LILLIAN-BERG emerged from the practice, which involved a series of workshops, via video-conferencing with newFangled theatReR member, Sevrin Anne Mason. Rehearsing this character led to a discussion of how scenes involving LILLIAN-BERG could happen in a site-specific performance. Ironically, we were already tackling this challenge within the process; rehearsing together

from two different geographical locations. Developing the character as digitally represented led to consideration of how the character might appear on the screen (as a talking head) and how sound quality could be expressed to suggest delays, interruptions and disconnections. We recorded the scenes with gaps for DEBI`'s speech, and presented this material as part of the staged reading in Reading, UK in December 2012. The actress playing DEBI` performed in an office space with a laptop that played Mason's pre-recorded performance. The decision to use the 'Absurdisans' font, which is fractured yet readable, was a result of this practical experimentation. The font is a highly graphic optical illusion, as the letters themselves are incomplete, perhaps suggesting a malfunction in the Internet connection. The font is readable, as it appears to be playing tricks on the eyes.

An eighteenth character, 'The Draconian Typewriter,' frames the play at the on-set, and provides the didascalia of the play throughout. S/he assigns the reader, cast as '(YOU),' speech and actions at certain points in the play. 'The Draconian Typewriter' communicates with the 'Draconian Typewriter' font, which harkens back to the golden age of print when the typewriter formalized the appearance of text. Establishing a consistent voice as the controlling mechanism of the play, 'The Draconian Typewriter' attempts to be 'draconian,' while scribing a play where the reader is being empowered to free his/herself from the shackles of print, to break the rules of the school and to redefine reading and writing.

This new layer, a 'Font-as-character,' exemplifies how the play maintains a visual consistency for character that is aligned with Aristotle's criteria. The

juxtaposition and at times, transformation of fonts becomes a part of the play's ongoing layering of suggestive meaning that not only informs the reader's interpretation of character, but also influences their decision-making process in choosing which characters to follow. The use of font has the potential to influence how the reader imagines the character, and how the performer might present the character as part of a *performance text*. The 'look' of the character's verbal speech can be used as poetically as the word choice.

SCENOGRAPHIC GRAMMAR

Machon's scale emphasizes scenography and sound as integral to the immersive experience: "design is key to the experience of the space and the otherworldliness created," and "[s]ound is a vital component of the experience" (2013: 95). Lehmann states:

Media images are... nothing but representation. The image as representation gives us... the feeling of being always on the track of something else. We are hunters in search of the lost treasure. Always 'in the picture', we are on the scent of a secret – but in doing so at any moment already 'content at the end' because we are satisfied by the image. The reason for this that the electronic image lures through emptiness (2006: 171).

Gunnar Liestol states: "Different senses favor different media and different types of communication. Orality favors hearing, whereas literacy favors the visual faculties. Hypermedia integrates the two" (1994: 109). In *Rumi High*, I use images and hyperlinks to sound to create the school setting which contribute to the hyper(play)text's highly graphic, multisensory and hybridized quality.

Visual Grammar

Referring to the Theatre of Images, Marranca describes “a theatre devoted to the creation of a new stage language, a visual grammar ‘written’ in sophisticated perpetual codes. To break these codes is to enter the refined, sensual words this theatre offers” (1997: xiv). In *Rumi High*, the Aristotelian notion of unity, with regards to setting, including time, is maintained, as the entire structure and world of the play are united in one building, the school. How images are designed and arranged in relation to each other and other texts forges a visual grammar. Approaching the play as *(web)site-specific*, iWeb allowed me to frame the play within the architecture of a large school building and the structure of a school day. Different web pages set the different locations within the school building (classrooms, hallways, bathrooms) and times of the day (class periods). For each of these locales, the web pages become performance spaces where images, words and links interact to create the scene.

The visual grammar of *Rumi High* originates from my own personal library of photographs documenting my experience teaching in NYC schools, and from stock photos found on the Internet (see Appendix VI). The images are cut, cropped, fragmented, manipulated and overlapped in order to design the various spaces of this fictional world. The juxtaposition and manipulation of images and words creates an aesthetic flavor that coats the reading experience with a particular understanding of the world of the play. I establish a visual aesthetic by collaging and manipulating images of actual school architecture and interiors, to create a mixture of distorted images that evoke the chaotic

world of the play. “Collage, or collage-like effects, in fact appear inevitable in hypertext environments, and they also take various forms... it also happens when authors *write with* and, one might say, *along with* texts by others” (Landow, 1994: 38). As previously stated, there are no graphic depictions of the characters. They are embodied through text, expressed through font, color, and layout and written language in the form of speech. The hyper(play)text does occasionally supply the reader with literal images, particularly props. For example, the green bandana that signifies that the reader is following BETTY, or the copy of *The Crucible* that DEBI` hands to LILY-WHITE appear graphically.

Image ↔ and Image † exhibit two scenes in *Rumi High*, presenting two different settings and events in the story of the play. Headings at the top keep the reader aware of when and where s/he is within the world of the play: PERIOD 2: History; and PERIOD 4: Stairwell #7. Each scene has a title denoting the start of a scene, signified by ‘OHP’ (overhead projector). Images that denote location appear in two ways: as ‘page background’ and as ‘browser background,’ (terms defined by iWeb). The ‘page background’ and ‘browser background’ for each locale is kept fairly consistent throughout the play. If the reader were to visit History class in Period 5, the same tea-stained parchment paper (as ‘page background’) and world map motif (as ‘browser background’) appears. In some cases, I distort, alter or reverse these background images. The hyper(play)text establishes a space where graphics, images, typography and layout can create a scenographic sensibility that immerses the reader in the fictional world of the play, while simultaneously guiding the reader through a

Aural Grammar

Sound is used in the hyper(play)text generally in two ways: atmospherically (sound effects and music) and representation of verbal speech (pre-recorded voice-overs). Hyperlinks at the beginning and end of classroom scenes activate the ringing of a bell ([‘bell ringz’](#)), establishing the sense of temporal aspects of a school day, where class periods begin and end with a bell. The percussive beats, created by TAZ in [‘OHP: back at it,’](#) are activated when the reader selects a [‘\(beatz\)’](#) link to underscore KID WILD CARD’s free-style rap, providing a sense of the tempo and temperament for these characters. These are examples of an atmospheric use of sound. Similar to the use of fonts, sound effects were downloaded from a free online database, www.freeSFX.co.uk, where a host of sound designers contribute their creative work for public use.

There are other instances in the play, when characters make announcements or are inadvertently overheard on the school’s intercom system. This was an opportunity to explore the use of pre-recorded voice-overs as a layer within the hyper(play)text. In June 2014, I collaborated with members of newFangled theatReR, Seth Reich and Jason ‘SweetTooth’ Williams, to record these sections of the play. I was aware that using the voices of these particular actors would concretize the vocal qualities of certain characters, which contradicts my reasoning for not including images of characters. When considering that the overall work requires the reader to experience the characters through their interpretation of the text, these audio recordings stand out as particularly jarring in relation to the rest of the play. For example, in

[‘OHP: Substitoot Teachuh,’](#) there is a moment when [‘the IntraCom comez on.’](#) If the reader selects this link, s/he will overhear a conversation in the principal’s office, concretizing the vocal identity of BIG MIKEY BEE and PEA-KEATON. DEBI` is also in the scene, but I did not want the character of DEBI` to be connected to a specific voice type or accent. I used a series of sound effects to score the scene so that her lines are masked and drowned out by static and mechanical noises, which contribute to the given circumstances of the scene. This allowed me to use audio, while still providing gaps to be filled. DEBI`’s text can be read as written language by a student who accesses the scene by way of a different pathway.

THE CONSTRAINTS OF HYPERMEDIA

As the play grew in length and the plot became more complex, I found that the use of different fonts to distinguish each character became a tool for me to more easily track, edit and refine each character’s journey throughout the play. Previously, I had been constructing the play’s complex structure through a series of graphs and charts (see Appendix V). However, the practice of using unconventional fonts in the hyper(play)text also raised challenges. Computer software systems are equipped with a standard set of fonts. The fonts that I use in the hyper(play)text are only readable on computers where users have also downloaded those specific fonts. Otherwise, the text will default to a ‘plain’ font, such as Arial or Times New Roman. The solution to this dilemma was to place portions of text in a ‘textbox,’ that could be re-positioned, tilted at varying degrees. The tilted textbox presents the font as an image, thus preserving the

various font designs and becoming readable on all computers. This brought a new design variable to be layered into the play's poetic life, as all written language is tilted, forging an unbalanced reading of the play. Whereas scriptwriting software programs presented challenges to creating a play text that could represent the play I imagined, the increasing complexity of the hyper(play)text form, became problematized by the conditions of a potential reader's interface.

In Chapter 3, I will return to print media, to analyze three distinctly unique print versions of two plays, Eugène Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano* and Lee Breuer's *The Red Horse Animation*, where experimentation with the play form in print, become a starting point from which to imagine a play in digital form. The text itself becomes a performing agent that invites the reader to participate in a co-authored performance. These exceptional *literary playtexts* will prove to be critical in shaping my playwrighting practice, as they exemplify literary productions that in part, document a pre-existing *performance text*, while provoking an unconventional play reading experience, within the pages of a book.

CHAPTER 3

The Postdramatic Mise-en-page: Hypothesis and Documentation

A book is made from a tree. It is an assemblage of flat, flexible parts (still called 'leaves') imprinted with dark pigmented squiggles. One glance at it and you hear the voice of another person, perhaps someone dead for thousands of years. Across the millennia, the author is speaking, clearly and silently, inside your head, directly to you. Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people, citizens of distant epochs, who never knew one another. Books break the shackles of time; proof that humans can work magic
– Carl Sagan (1983: 307).

In Chapter 2, the analyses of plays by Mac Wellman and Suzan-Lori Parks pointed to the possibility that written language can establish new types of sign systems by considering the visual attributes of a *literary playtext*. Interval 2 introduced the notion of a scenographic grammar where graphics and hypermedia, such as links to sound, enable a (syn)aesthetic reading experience. The 'look' and sound of a *literary playtext* becomes integral to the *literary reader's* perception of the work, more in line with that of the *performance reader*. In this Chapter, the analysis returns to the print form, to consider the theatricality of the page.

The selected models of practice, highly graphic print versions of Eugène Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano* and Lee Breuer's *The Red Horse Animation* suggest that literary production creates a 'mise-en-page' in relation to the mise-en-scène. The play text becomes a work of visual art as well as literary art. These printed *literary playtexts* adapt and abandon conventions that often operate to maintain an ease of reading. It is my position that these

unconventional play texts require a more active, alert reader. As exhibited in Chapter 2, the reader of postdramatic plays must be continuously present, yet consciously active in making choices with each aspect of the reading process.

While these printed versions of the play include details or aspects of the *performance text*, the format and design of the book itself, and all of its textualities, is radically different compared to how play texts are traditionally published. Erika Fischer-Lichte claims:

Books and typeface function as media which convey the drama's literary text and have no impact on the constitution of the meaning. And where the drama appears—whether in a magazine, as part of collected works, or in paperback form—has just as little effect. By contrast, actor and stage space comprise media which always introduce certain signifying qualities into the process of conveying meaning and thus cannot be used to convey meanings without altering the meaning (1992: 192).

Here, Fischer-Lichte gives more agency, in the meaning-making process, to the theatrical frames of the *performance text* (theatre space, actors), and discounts the potential effects that the materiality of the *literary playtext* might have on the *literary reader's* experience. In most cases, Fischer-Lichte's position is true.

However, the tactile and aesthetic qualities of a book, including its cover, paper quality, weight, use of color, typography and layout, can affect meaning, and with particular works, such attributes should not be overlooked.

Counter to Fischer-Lichte's downgrading of the media of the book, Jay David Bolter considers writing as a process dictated by its medium of dissemination:

How the writer and the reader understand writing is conditioned by the physical and visual character of the books they use. Each physical writing space fosters a particular understanding both of the act of writing and of the product, the written text. In this late age of print, writers and readers still conceive of all texts... as located in the space of a printed book. The conceptual space of a printed book is one in which writing is

stable, monumental and controlled exclusively by the author. It is the space defined by perfect printed volumes that exist in thousands of identical copies. The conceptual space of electronic writing, on the other hand, is characterized by fluidity and an interactive relationship between writer and reader. These different conceptual spaces foster different styles and genres of writing and different theories of literature (1991: 11).

Increasingly, society is engaging with reading material electronically; magazines, newspapers and books are now available in digital forms. While it becomes increasingly more common for readers to engage with literature on the screen, these manifestations of text have been beholden to the reader's familiarity with how they engage with print.

All sites on the Web, including literacy works, dwell together as inhabitants of that non-spatial space we call cyberspace. Manipulating a computer is a radically different bodily activity from holding a book in one's hands and turning the pages one by one... bodily habits have been permanently wired by the age of the printed book (J.H. Miller 12).

This suggests that Parks' intended corporeal experience for the *literary reader* can be expanded upon with digital media.

Both of the models of practice discussed in this Chapter are examples of the *performance text* preceding the *literary playtext*. These *literary playtexts*, in some respects, can be viewed as a documentation of a specific performance production. For example, in the 1956 Grove Press edition of *The Bald Soprano*, photographic images of actors in costume, and notes describing the staging, frame the reader to understand what happened in a specific performance production of the play, similar to didascalia in the actor's edition, as discussed in Chapter 2. In this Chapter's model of practice, the innovative design of the book itself creates a space for the reader to imagine the play outside of the confines of the time and place of performance production referred to. The documentation of a specific performance production is woven into the

hermetically sealed world of the play, rather than fixing the reader to precisely what happened in the performance production. This quality of documentation raises question around intentions in publishing plays. Is the published play a script for practical use, or a *literary text* for reading pleasure? Is the published play intended to archive and thus historicize a specific performance production? Ryan Claycomb explains how this documentary layer of didascalia contains four possible understandings:

When the script hews closely to an original production, the utterance is more specifically, 'Here's how *we produced* this play (and how it might be produced again)' ... the implied predicate of the implicit address of playscript narration is as shifty as its subject. "Produce" in this context may mean 'did produce' as in the previous context, 'could produce,' 'might produce,' or importantly, 'should produce' (2013: 162-163).

The *literary playtext*, re-imagined, raises question around how traces of a former or significant *performance playtexts* influence the *literary playtext*, and whether or not these traces fix the reader to what happened, or provoke the reader to envision what is happening.

First, I will introduce Ionesco and his play, *The Bald Soprano*, to frame an analysis of The Grove Press edition of the play, with occasional reference to the Samuel French actor's edition. This analysis will broaden the scope of possibility for how a *literary play* is expressed, while furthering the previous Chapter's notion of poetic didascalia. Then, I will introduce Breuer and Mabou Mines to analyze *The Red Horse Animation*, which was adapted from a *performance text* into two distinctly different *literary texts*, both highly graphic and innovative in its use of 'meaningful media.'

EUGENE IONESCO'S *THE BALD SOPRANO*

Eugène Ionesco is a Romanian playwright and one of the foremost figures of the French avant-garde theatre in the 20th century. It was his position, as expressed in his essay *Experience of the Theatre* that “[d]rama lies in extreme exaggeration of the feelings, an exaggeration that dislocates flat everyday reality. Dislocation, disarticulation of language too” (1964: 25). He claims having started writing plays because he hated the theatre, having preferred to read literature and essays, and attend the cinema. It was from this non-theatre background, that Ionesco aimed “[t]o push drama out of that intermediate zone where it is neither theatre nor literature... to restore it to its own domain, to its natural frontiers” (24). Similar to Stein, Ionesco discusses drama as an “eternal and living presence” (32).

The Bald Soprano is Ionesco’s first play and explores the futility of communication in the modern era, crafted around characters that speak a dialogue riddled with non-sequiturs. Ionesco has attributed the writing of the play to his failed attempt to learn English. Referring to an ‘English-French Conversational Manual for Beginners’ he explains that the text of the play “started off as a lesson (and a plagiarism)” where the

inspired yet simple sentences which [he] so painstakingly copied into [his] schoolboy’s exercise-book, detached themselves from the pages on which they had been written, changed places all by themselves, became garbled and corrupted (184).

In an attempt to confront his own struggle to grasp the English language, he wrote a play to interrogate the manual and its content, specifically the phrases used to teach English. He explains:

A whole section of the play is made by stringing together phrases taken from my English Manual; the Smiths and the Martins in the Manual are the Smiths and the Martins in my play, they are the same people, utter the same maxims, and perform the same actions or the same inactions (183).

As a result, Ionesco wrote a didactic work for the theatre that has become one of the quintessential plays within the avant-garde theatre canon.

For this analysis I will focus primarily on the 1956 Grove Press edition of the play, which has the subtitle 'an anti-play.' The Grove Press edition expresses the play as translated by Donald M. Allen, through typographical interpretations by Massin and photographic interpretations by Henry Cohen. This version of Ionesco's play includes acknowledgment of the directors and actors involved in a specific production: "Based on the Nicolas Bataille production, with the collaboration of the actors of the Théâtre de la Huchette" (Ionesco, 1956). By 'basing' it on the Paris production, The Grove Press edition gives a certain level of authorial credit to the director, whose name appears in several notes throughout the text. Furthermore, images of the actors become part of the text, as the text itself becomes a partial documentation of the Bataille production. The Grove Press edition also includes a previously unpublished scene that the *performance reader* of the Bataille production would not have experienced. This extra scene however, is not expressed through typography and photography.

For comparison, I will also refer to the 1958 Samuel French (actor's) edition, with translated title, *The Bald Prima Donna*, and subtitle, 'A Pseudo-Play in One Act.' The Samuel French edition is translated and adapted by Donald Watson, and also gives reference to the same Bataille production noting

that, “Bataille made several alterations in this, the original text, for his production. One or two of these alterations have been noted. Several other small changes were made by the Author in the text published by Gallimard” (Ionesco, 1958: v). Both editions give reference to a previous edition published by the French publisher Éditions Gallimard, from which both Allen and Watson created their respective translations. Both also refer to the Bataille production, which since 1957, has been in permanent repertory at Théâtre de la Huchette in a double-bill with Ionesco’s *The Lesson*. This extratextual didascalia provides a context that suggests that the *literary playtext* and the *performance playtext* are in a reciprocal relationship that influences future productions of the play, in both forms.

A Distorted Playtext

The Grove Press edition is a hardcover book with glossy front and back covers, designed in black and white, as is the rest of the book. The back cover appears as the backside view of the front cover, as if the book itself were transparent (Image ≈). All of the words on the back cover are printed backwards. Within the book, there are no page numbers, which requires the *literary reader* to track his or her journey in a different way. The reader’s perception of text, and how a book is read, is already being challenged.



Image 2. Front (left) and back (right) covers of Grove Press edition

In Image 2, the title appears in large print across both pages. The text is already performing through size, space, and boldness. Here, the page is not the frame, but rather the book opening itself functions as a frame. As will be seen in the selected images, the frame often shifts and re-positions itself throughout the reading experience. At times, the book opening is fractured as text and images ‘bleed’ off of the page onto the next page, or into the blank space that goes beyond the reader’s hand-page interaction. Each page opening becomes its own unique experience, a setting to be inhabited through imagination. Ionesco describes the aesthetic world of the play as a “collapse of reality:”

The words had turned into sounding shells devoid of meaning; the characters too, of course, had been emptied of psychology and the world appeared to me in an unearthly, perhaps its true, light, beyond understanding and governed by arbitrary laws (1964: 185).

The layout and structure of the book itself appears to be designed in concert with Ionesco’s intentions and reflections on the play.



Image ç. Title page of Grove Press edition

Three pages are devoted to introducing the play's six characters, providing their name, the actor's name from the Bataille production (smaller and in parenthesis), and iconographic black-and-white full-body, frontal, posed images of the actors as the characters (Image √). The six characters appear in a line across the two page openings, in the order of appearance in the play. These images, and acknowledgment of the actor's names, present the text as a documentation of the cast and costume design for the Bataille production, and provide the reader with a concrete visualization of each character. In the Samuel French edition, where the actor's names are also included, such a detail would only hold significance if the reader were familiar with these actors. The font style varies for each character name. The female characters, *Mrs. Smith* and *Mrs. Martin*, are both *italicized* while their husbands, Mr. Smith and Mr. Martin are not. The Smiths' and Martins' dialogue follows suit; *Mrs. Smith* and *Mrs. Martin* both speak in italics, while their husbands do not. **Mary the**

Maid and **The Fire Chief** both appear in **bold** type, as does their speech. At the start of the reading experience, conventions are being established for this unconventional play text. Yet, these conventions will soon dissolve, presenting the text as ever changing, in concert with the aesthetic world of the play.

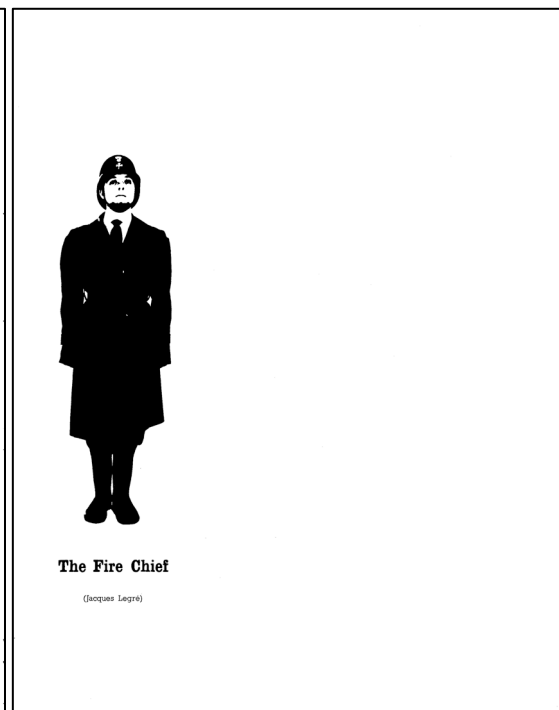
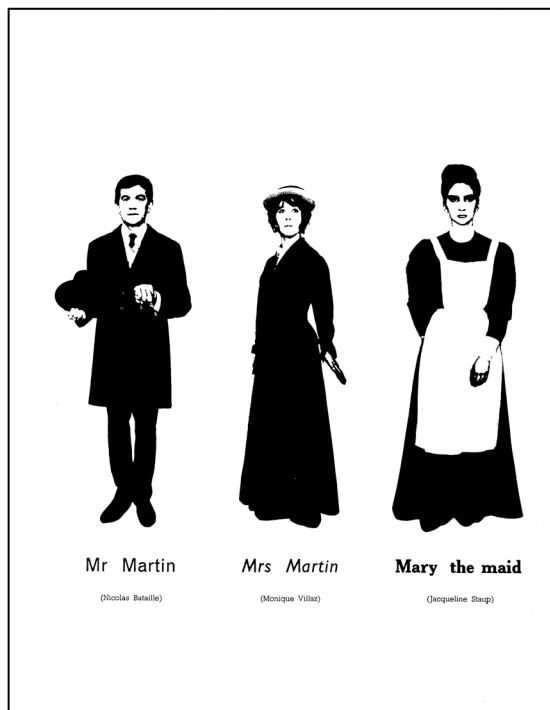
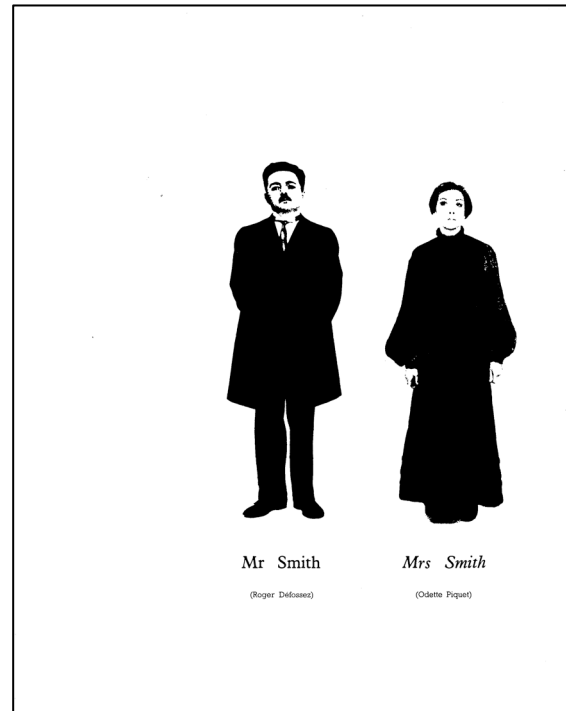


Image √. Character pages in Grove Press edition

The typographical and photographic interpretations, brought together by Massin and Cohen, reflect Ionesco's position that, "theatre appeals as much to the eye as to the ear. It is not a series of pictures, like the cinema, but architecture, a moving structure of scenic images" (1964: 27-28). The setting of the play is never represented with images, and is first introduced with white text against a black page (Image f). The text is arranged architecturally, in a poetic manner, in the bottom right hand corner of the page, with centered alignment. The layout of the text appears to be emphasizing the 'Englishness' of the setting and the characters, by breaking up the lines so that the word 'English' appears on every line, but one. In the Samuel French edition (Image ©), the language also emphasizes this Englishness through repetition, but the text is arranged in a justified block where the word 'English' does not appear as prominently. In the Samuel French edition, the opening description of the setting is cluttered with the letters 'C,' 'R' and 'L' (denoting Center, Left and Right) to document the movement of the actors and the position of set and props. The text is providing a blueprint of the Bataille production. The text also acknowledges the rising curtain, to signify that this is a play, to be performed in a theatre. The text here, dominated by technical didascalia, also includes reference to the theatre space and staging details, diminishing the presence of the word itself. The Grove Press edition, in its minimalism, manages to bring the reader into the play by allowing him or her to imagine the world more freely.

A middle-class English interior,
 with English armchairs.
 An English evening.
 Mr. Smith, an Englishman,
 seated in his English armchair
 and wearing English slippers,
 is smoking his English pipe
 and reading an English newspaper,
 near an English fire.
 He is wearing English spectacles
 and a small gray English mustache.
 Beside him,
 in another English armchair,
 Mrs. Smith, an Englishwoman,
 is darning some English socks.
 A long moment of English silence.
 The English clock
 strikes 17 English strokes.

Image f. Description of setting in Grove Press edition

THE BALD PRIMA DONNA

SCENE—*The living-room of the Smiths' house in a London suburb.*

It is a small, typical, old-fashioned, middle-class English living-room, with a fireplace back C and doors R and L. The door L leads to the hall. There is a wing armchair L of the fireplace, a couch down L and a round table R of the fireplace. A carver armchair is L of the table and an upright chair R of it. Below the table is a stool. A small occasional table stands down R, and in the corner, up L, behind the wing armchair there is a table with an old-fashioned horn-type gramophone. A large marble clock is C of the mantelpiece. Down L, set on and off stage, are shelves carrying china and a copper kettle, etc. Down L, also set on and off stage is a small recess with clothes-hangers. The room is lit by wall-brackets R and L.

When the CURTAIN rises, it is a typically English evening at home. Typical English MR SMITH, in his favourite armchair L of the fireplace, wearing English slippers, is smoking an English pipe and reading an English newspaper. He is wearing English spectacles and has a small grey English moustache. Typically English MRS SMITH is seated in the armchair L of the table, darning English socks. There is a long English silence. An English clock chimes three English chimes.

Image ©. Description of setting in Samuel French edition

In the Grove Press edition, the font that is used to describe the setting remains consistent throughout the book in providing the stage directions and other types of didascalia. The stage directions appear the most consistent, aesthetically, but whether or not the 'voice' of didascalia itself is consistent, and trustworthy, becomes questionable as the play progresses. Standard punctuation is used in the stage directions. 'Pauses' are offered in a consistent fashion, in parentheticals and read simply as a 'pause' with no descriptive linguistic detail. Aside from question marks, there appears to be no use of punctuation in the dialogue. The stage directions often float near the edges of the page, except when they pertain to specific characters in which case they appear along with the character's image or speech. For example, in Image μ , an image of a headless Mr. Smith sitting and reading the newspaper is accompanied by a stage direction which reads: "Mr. Smith continues to read and clicks his tongue." The text is arranged in the shape of the top of Mr. Smith's head. Here, the image and the text, are working with one another to create this non-verbal moment. Placing Mr. and Mrs. Smith on opposite pages, separated by the seam of the book opening, creates a divide and formality, which further emphasizes the futility of language that the play is centered around.

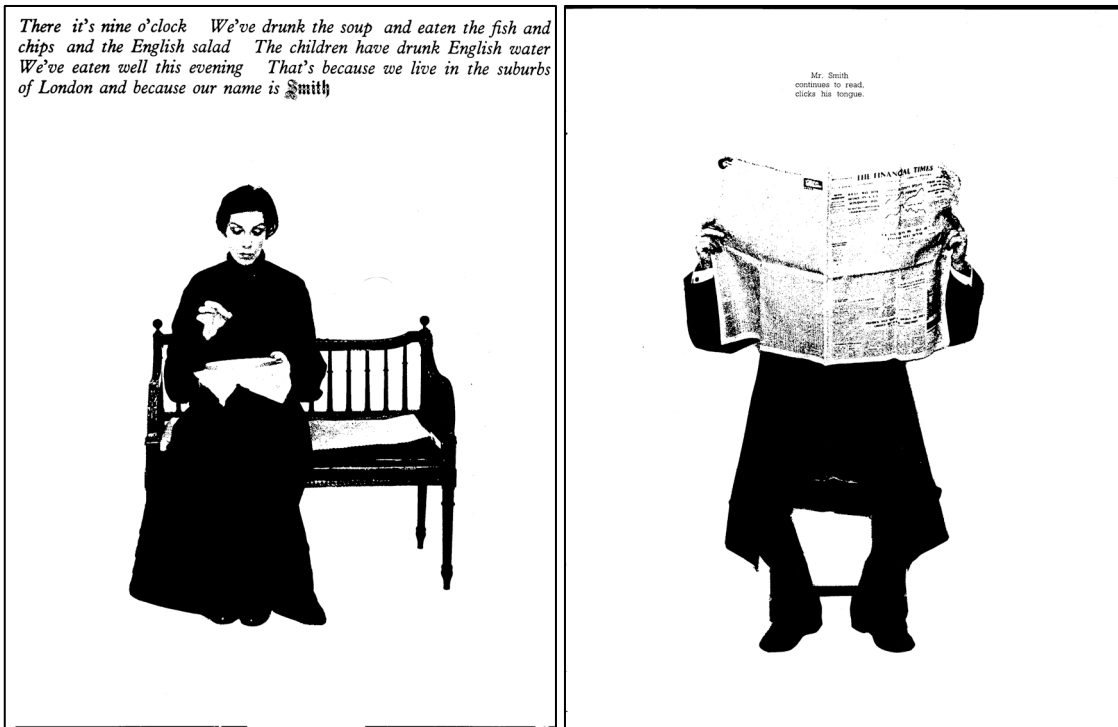


Image μ . Stage directions form the top of Mr. Smith's head

At times, the pages take on a scroll-like quality, as in Image β , where the bottom of the left page cuts the image of Mr. Smith, which continues at the top of the right-hand page. Benjamin K. Bergen states:

Hebrew and Arabic, are written right to left. Traditionally, Chinese was written top to bottom, and then right to left. So although there's a statistical preference for writing systems to go in one direction, people write and read in different directions, depending on the language and, as far as we know, there are no global cognitive advantages to any one direction or the other (2012: 185).

The design and layout of the book is keeping readers active by forcing them to shift from horizontal reading to vertical reading. Previously, two-page openings were the frame, and now a single page becomes the frame and runs top-to-bottom.

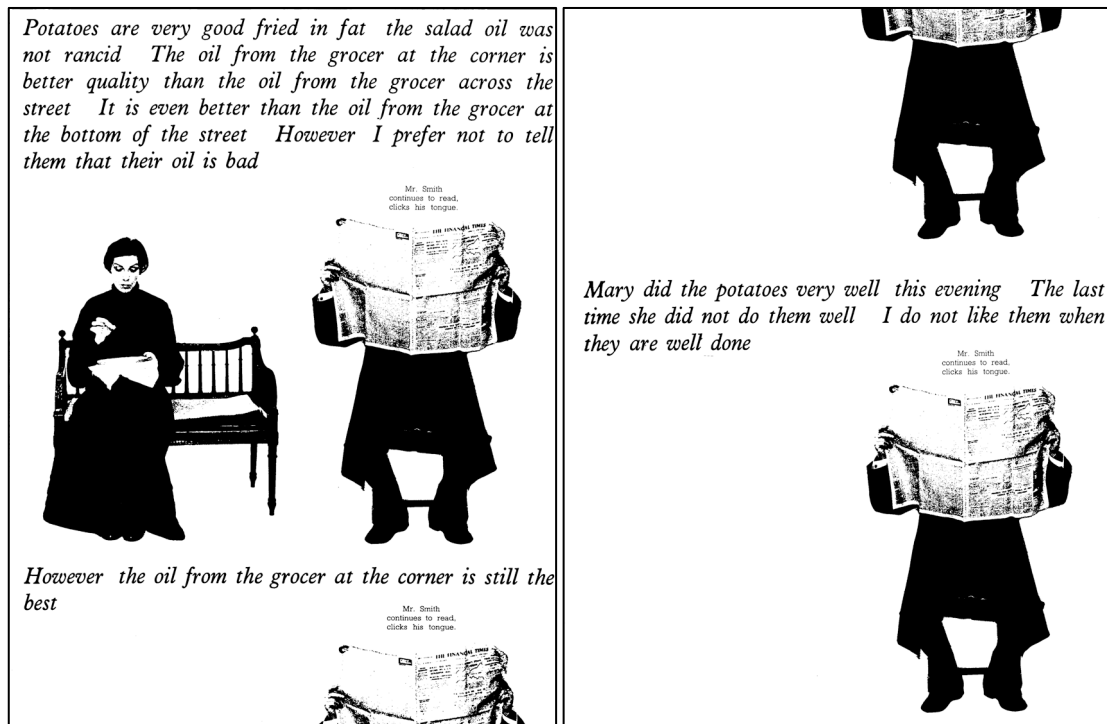


Image B. Scroll-like framing

In Image Δ, the heads of the characters are attached to the left side of their lines of speech. This approach appears to be borrowing from the conventional play format where the character name would appear to the left of dialogue. The directionality of the heads and the facial expressions change with Mr. and Mrs. Smith's lines of dialogue, creating the sensation of a stop-motion animation for the reader's eyes. In this dialogue, Mr. Smith mentions the death of Bobby Watson, whose name appears in a different font. References to Bobby continue to use this font, but only for the name itself. The dialogue reveals that the Smiths are speaking of two Bobby Watsons, a wife and a husband. Massin uses typography to challenge the reader's interpretation of text, as Ionesco's play text gradually reveals that Bobby Watson is "impossible to identify, because... three quarters of the town, men, women, children, cats and ideologists were all called Bobby Watson" (1964: 184-185). In front, the two Bobby Watsons that are being discussed are non-distinguishable. The

appearance and layout of the text is forcing the reader to question their own reading every step of the way.

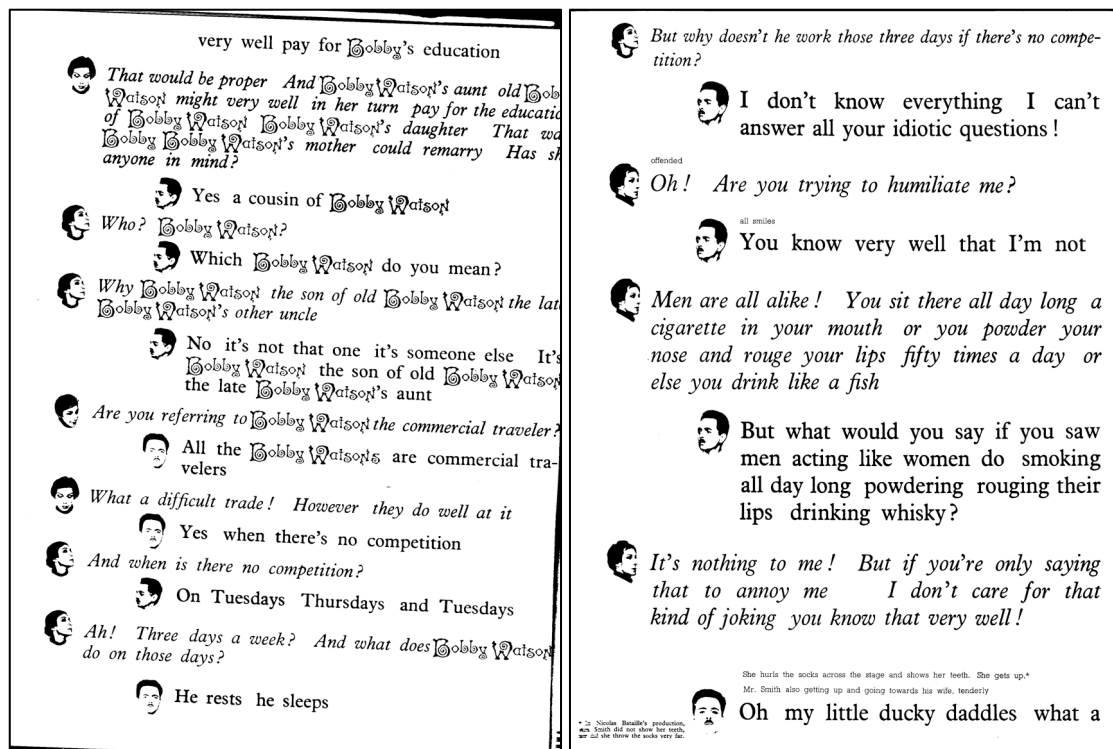


Image Δ. Character heads replace character names to denote dialogue

In a scene with Mr. and Mrs. Martin (Image †) the stage directions read: "Mr. and Mrs. Martin sit facing each other, without speaking. They smile timidly at each other. The dialogue which follows must be spoken in voices that are drawling, monotonous, a little singsong, without nuances*." An asterisk appears with smaller footnote directly below the text, which contradicts this: "In Nicolas Bataille's production, this dialogue was spoken in a tone and played in a style sincerely tragic." This tendency to contradict continues later in the text: "They kiss him.*" An asterisk denotes: "In Nicolas Bataille's production, they did not kiss the Fire Chief." There are two ways to read the stage directions of this text: as telling the story of the Bataille production; or, as operating in collaboration with Ionesco's text, as an extra contradictory layer. Acknowledging the performance as a contradiction to the text highlights the *performance text's*

potential for subverting the authority of the text, as well as the capacity for it to conspire and build upon the text that the author put forth.



Image †. Mr. & Mrs. Smith's dialogue

In a four-way dialogue between the Smiths and Martins, several page openings are used to express a repetition of awkward silences that permeate the scene (Images ø, π, «, j and ç). These full-page openings are devoted to all four characters sitting (paired on each page) and one verbal exchange per page. Thought bubbles filled with "hm" and then, "hm hm" and so on, draw out the scene across five page openings until Mr. Martin asks: "Don't you feel well?" (Image «). What happens for the *literary reader* in the redundant act of turning pages? Is the page turning a passive action or a respite from the play's action to think, to consider and to reflect, in order to actively make meaning? As the heads of the characters change position, a dialogue emerges (Image j). A few pages later, in a surreal transformation, the thought bubbles replace the heads of the characters (Image ç).



Image \emptyset . Smiths and Martins, example 1

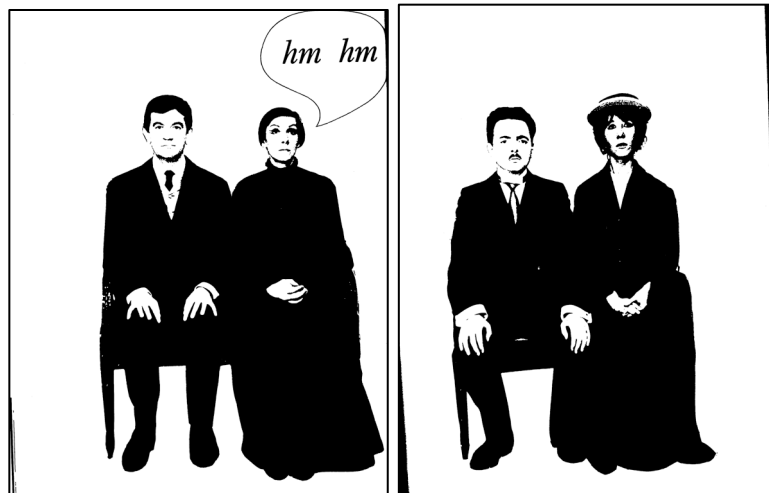


Image π . Smiths and Martins, example 2



Image \leftarrow . Smiths and Martins, example 3



Image j. Smiths and Martins, example 4

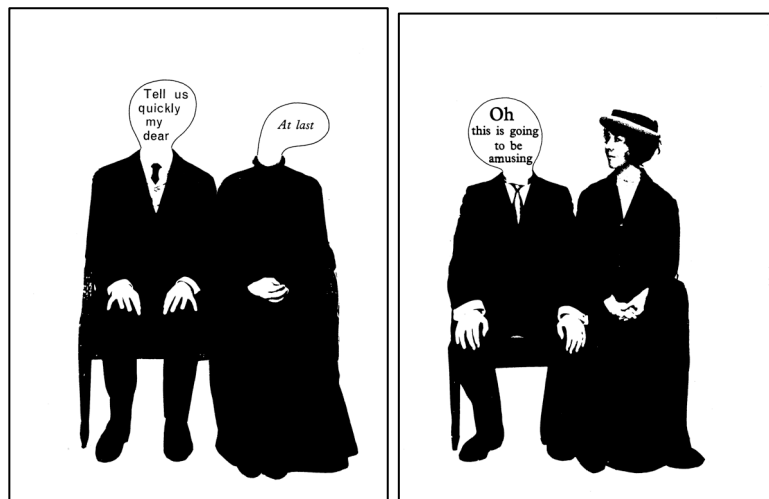


Image c. Smiths and Martins, example 5

In Image ∞, The Fire Chief enters with a full body image and his speech appears in waves. The wavy text affects the following dialogue, as all characters' fonts begin to appear in this 'wavy' manner (Image §). Images and fonts begin to shift between wavy, straight and slanted from speech to speech. Even the stage directions, which to this point have been the most consistent visual factor, appear in waves. The Fire Chief tells three stories (Image ¶). His first story, 'The Dog and the Cow,' appears with a decorative frame, with title and two lines of text. His second story appears frameless and without title, in a Gothic-style font. His third story, presumably titled 'The Cock,' appears in a completely different font and the title reads "THE" followed by an image of a

cockerel. It can be imagined by the *literary reader*, that the Fire Chief's delivery and manner of storytelling transforms from story to story.



Image ∞. The Fire Chief's entrance

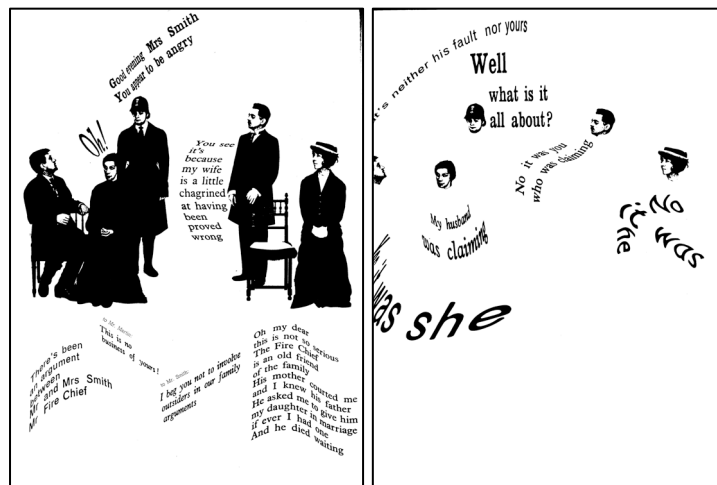


Image §. The affect of the Fire Chief's text

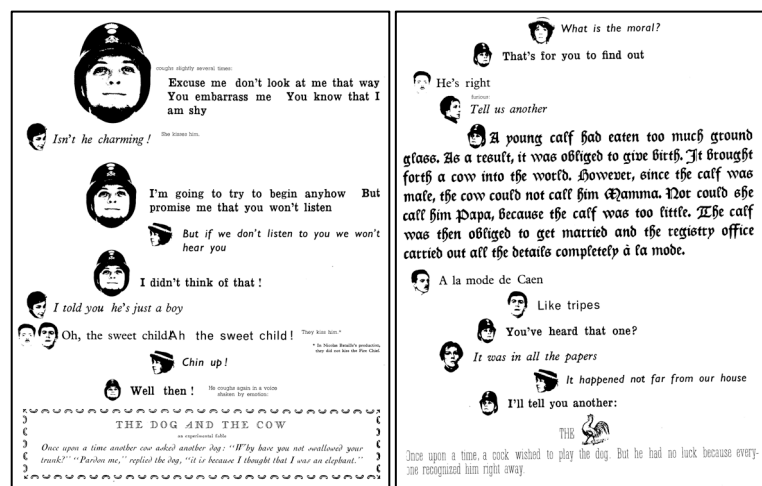


Image ¶. The Fire Chief's stories

Disjointed Didascalia

The Grove Press edition is mostly absent of technical didascalia. Concrete documentation of the Bataille production only appears in the initial references to the production, and through the use of images of the actors' images. Notes on the production, denoted by an asterisk, refer to the production, but appear to function similar to Parks' footnotes, creating an ambiguity for the reader in determining what is, as opposed to what was. In the next set of images, it appears that there is a loosening of these frames of didascalia, as references to the performance emerge, and read quite jarringly, since such aspects of performance were not previously invoked.

The clock is a recurring symbol in the stage directions, often marking the striking of the clock. One stage direction reads: "This striking of the clock must be so loud that it makes the audience jump. The Martins do not hear it." This is the first reference to an 'audience,' placing this work in the context of a live theatrical performance and establishing an overt display of the text's technical didascalia. Here, the *literary reader* is placed as an outsider or sub-audience.

The Maid's story, 'The Fire', takes up a full page with a frame that evokes a quality of burnt paper (Image 82). A stage direction reads: "She recites the poem while the Smiths are pushing her off stage" (Ionesco, 1956). This is the first mention of a 'stage,' and the only follow up to the previous mention of an audience. These instances, where stage language appears, are few and far between. They almost seem to be errors, since the rest of the play text is crafted in a way that abandons any need to remind the reader that this is a play. In Chapter 4, the models of practice are far more entangled with stage

language, as the reader struggles between reading in a continuous present and reading about a past event.

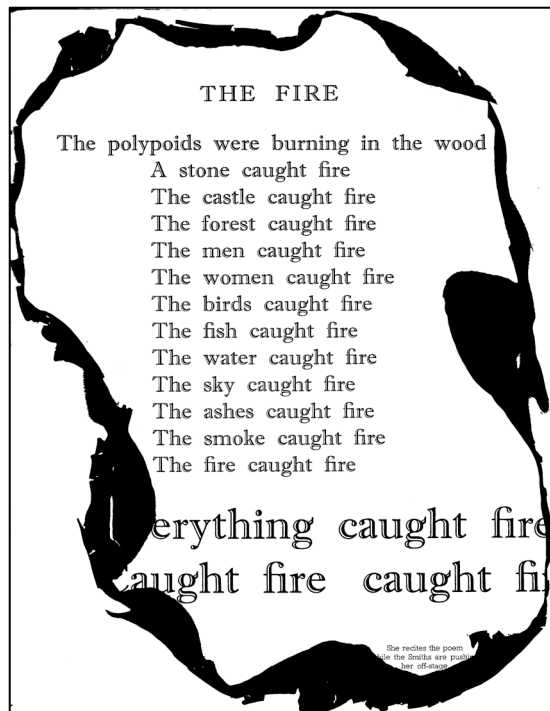


Image 8. The Maid's story

Text Gone Mad

As exemplified in the remaining images, Massin's typographical layout expresses a collision of many texts as chaos takes over the page. Ionesco provides explanation of the play as a didactic:

wise and elementary truths, when strung together, had gone mad, the language had become disjointed, the characters distorted; words, now absurd, had been emptied of their content and it all ended with a quarrel the cause of which is was impossible to discover, from my heroes and heroines hurled into one another's faces not lines of dialogue, not even scraps of sentences, not words, but syllables or consonants or vowels (1964: 185).

The text becomes more and more fragmentary across multiple pages and the language nonsensical. Yet, a landscape is offered for the reader to frame and choose what to focus on. S/he steps back, literally and figuratively, to take in the larger picture, which is one of chaos and confusion.

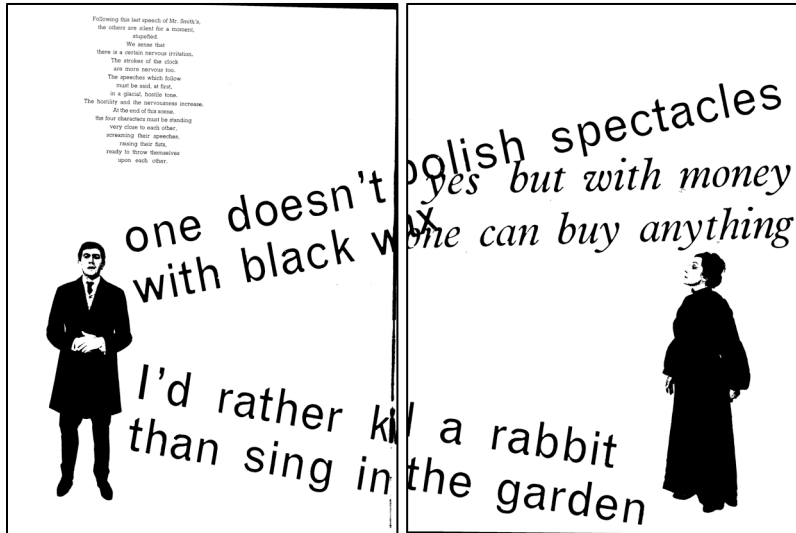


Image 119. Text 'gone mad,' example 1

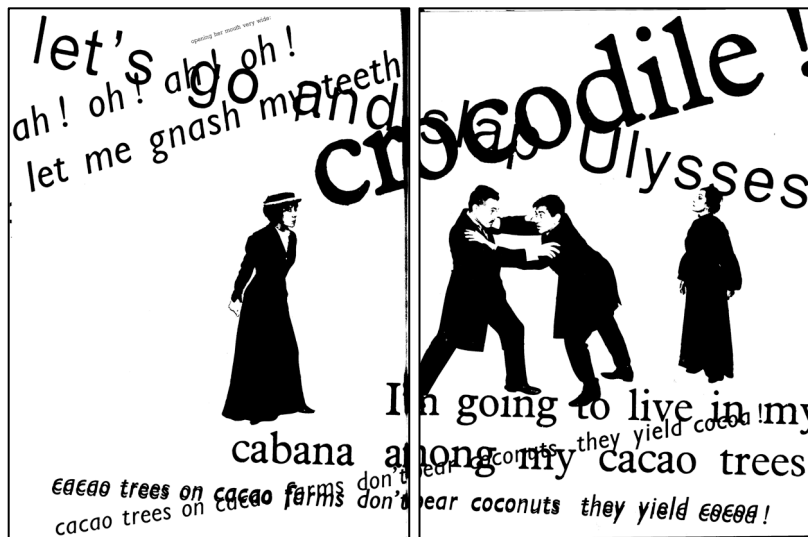


Image 120. Text 'gone mad,' example 2

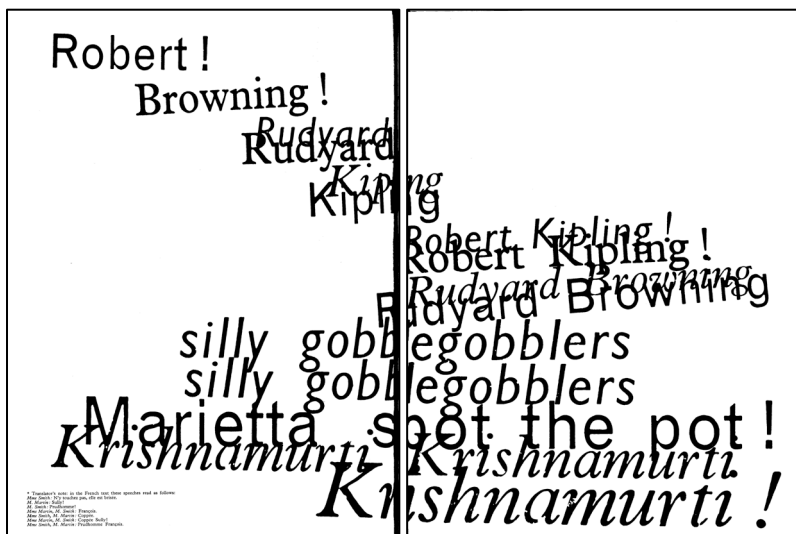


Image 121. Text 'gone mad,' example 3

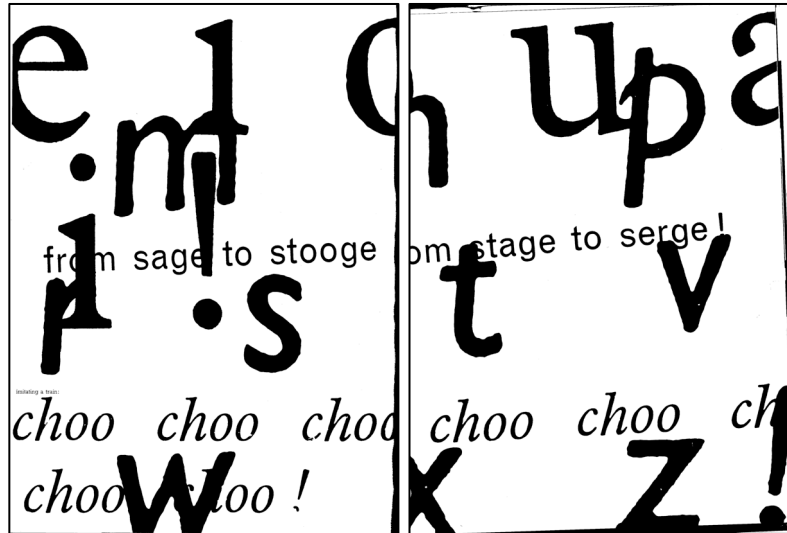


Image x⁷. Text 'gone mad,' example 4



Image y⁶. Text 'gone mad,' example 5

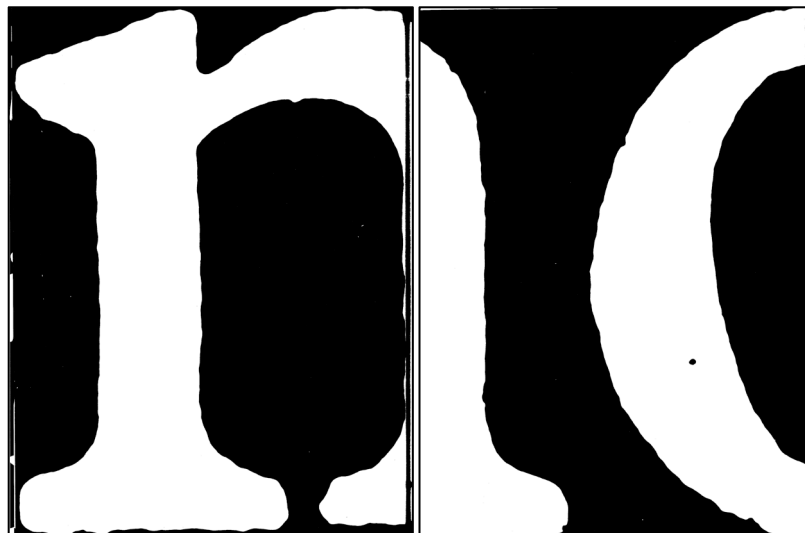


Image x⁸. Text 'gone mad,' example 6

The madness of the play is presented as a linguistic chaos until, as the text indicates, the world of the play restores itself back to its opening scene, suggesting that the play is timeless, with the Smiths and the Martins reversed, repeating the story on an endless loop. In the Grove Press edition, by changing directionality of written language, distorting images and experimenting with layout, this *literary playtext* produces a highly active reader.

As an acknowledgment of the performance production's influence on the playwright, a note reads:

When first produced some of the speeches in this last scene were cut or shuffled. Moreover, the final beginning again, if one can call it that, still involved the Smiths, since the author did not have the inspired idea of substituting the Martins for the Smiths until after the hundredth performance (Ionesco, 1956).

This detail supports Susan Bennett's notion that:

The playwright invariably shapes a text and the director invariably shapes a production to provoke particular expectations and responses within an audience. The interactive nature of theatre is particularly evident from the rewriting a playwright often chooses (or is called) to do while a play is in rehearsal and from cuts or changes a director makes after previews, try-outs or indeed during a run. Clearly then, the audience affects not only the performance but the dramatic text too (2003: 9).

The Grove Press edition concludes with a previously unpublished scene and Ionesco's own commentary on how he envisions the end of the play in a section titled: 'The Bald Soprano: Several other possible unpublished endings.' The relationship between the Bataille production, to both the Samuel French and The Grove Press editions, and Ionesco's own writings on the play, reflect a cyclical process where *literary* and *performance playtexts* influence one another, as multiple versions of both types of text may come to fruition. In the next section, I will analyze two different printed versions of Breuer's *The Red*

Horse Animation, both derivative of a specific *performance text* which are radically different, yet appear to be bound to one another, as well as the performance production.

LEE BREUER'S *THE RED HORSE ANIMATION*

Lee Breuer is one of the founding Artistic Directors for the experimental theatre collective, Mabou Mines, which formed in 1970 in NYC. The group has since prevailed as a long-running avant-garde institution and is associated with the conceptual art movement. Their extensive work with the writings of Samuel Beckett throughout the 1970's and 1980's established them within a theatrical context. In the early days, all founding members held the title of Co-Artistic Director, establishing an unorthodox organizational structure that continues to this day.

Lee Breuer's *The Red Horse Animation*, is part of a trilogy of plays, *Animations*, performed by Mabou Mines, and was the company's first production. The story is presented through movement, speech, music and acting by three performers who come together to form and animate the image of the red horse. "The story told is not linear but a series of images held together by an outline that implies both an organizational structure and the pictorial outline of a horse" (Shank 299). The work explores notions of identity, self and other, and chronicles the shaping of a young person's romantic notions into a mythology of self.

Statements by Breuer have suggested that *The Red Horse Animation* is not a play. Theodore Shank explains:

These animations, according to a company statement, are non-literary theatre works. The emphasis is on performance, not text. They are not plays. They should not be read. They are read collectively. Material is intimately bound to the lives and personalities of the performers... The art of acting is their primary tool of communication... the scripts are only the starting point in the process of development (2002: 301-302).

It is also interesting to note that this work was not produced in a theatre space, but instead museums; the Guggenheim Museum (1970) and the Whitney Museum (1972).

The Red Horse Animation was ultimately published as two distinctly different *literary texts*: a comic book, and a hardcover book that includes the full trilogy. The comic book version, published by Rapoport Printing Company (1976), with art by Ann Elizabeth Horton, was later re-printed in black-and-white in Bonnie Marranca's *The Theatre of Images* (1977). This analysis refers specifically to the re-print version of the comic book. The original publication was in color and the media of the comic book is quite different from the black-and-white re-print, which is included in a book that is couched in critical theory and other works that represent the Theatre of Images. Accompanying the re-print edition of the comic book version is a page with production history, which reads: "A conventional script of *The Red Horse Animation* does not exist. The comic book published here... was taken from the stage production by Mabou Mines" (22). The notion of being 'taken' from the *performance text* is an interesting word choice to characterize this particularly 'unconventional' *literary text*. What has it taken from the stage production? As Marranca states:

The use of the comic book form to document a performance is nothing short of a radical departure from theatrical convention. It means simply that the dramatic form, as we have traditionally known it, is entirely inadequate to convey the sense of performance (1996: 117).

This publication pre-dates the popularity of the graphic novel, which has since established the comic book form as a respected form of literature. Marranca suggests that the comic version “quotes” scenes from the *performance text*, and provokes “a process that is very personal and *not* a passive reading experience” (117).

The trilogy version of *The Red Horse Animation* appears in *Animations*, published by Performing Arts Journal Publications (1979), which includes the full trilogy. This hardcover book is described as:

an original concept for the typographical layout of each animation that would express its individuality as a text while at the same time suggesting how it looked in performance... Overall there is a high iconic quality, which reinforces the texts' appearance as poetry, and Breuer's position as an imaginative writer whose writing has a life of its own on the page. It is the kind of writing that incorporates its own written signs as an idiosyncratic grammar (Marranca, 1984: 48).

The book has a hardcover, which is red, with no image. The title, *ANIMATIONS*, appears across the top in white lettering, with a white line running across the width of the book. Towards the bottom, ‘LEE BREUER’ appears smaller, also in white with a white line running below. The shape of the book is rectangular, with landscape orientation. A ‘Table of Contents’ breaks down the three parts of the trilogy, each accompanied by a photograph. Font is sleek, and appears in all capital letters. There is also an ‘Author's Preface’ which frames the trilogy. In *The Red Horse* section of the book, a production page indicates the place and date of the premiere as well as the cast and production team, stating: “Written and conceived for the stage by Lee Breuer. Produced and realized by Mabou Mines” (Breuer 31). An interesting distinction

is made here, as Breuer attributes the writing and conception to himself, and production and realization to Mabou Mines, (which is inclusive of Breuer).

Rhetoric of Images

Here, I will compare scanned images from both versions, to exhibit how two approaches to creating a *literary playtext*, derivative of the same *performance text*, share certain attributes in telling the story, while taking on a different aesthetic. This is to emphasize that, just as a *literary text* often leads to many performance productions, a *performance text* can ostensibly lead to many literary productions. As was the case with The Grove Press edition of *The Bald Soprano*, *The Red Horse Animation* is an example of the *literary text* both liberating itself from and incorporating aspects of a specific performance production. With both versions, there is no real indication of how *The Red Horse Animation* is or was performed. Instead, still images of actors performing, in the trilogy version, and illustrations, in the comic book, require the reader to link text and image to imagine the performance.

On the first page of the comic version (Image ③), a body of text appears in capital letters, surrounded by a frame, composed of hand-drawn floating bodies. The quality of the drawings is part cartoon-like and part psychedelic, similar to the illustrations of Peter Max. A second look at the frame drawn in the first page of the comic book version reveals a forced perspective which might allow the reader to view the page as a threshold, to enter into the text, where a series of lines create a silhouette of a horse in two areas. Within the body of the text, particular words appear slightly bolder than others: PRETEND, ACTS, LAID OUT, LINE, WHY NOT, OUTLINE, TAKES ME, ANIMATE, STORYLINE,

LEANINGS, FALLING, FLAT, SLOW LEAK, SUCKER, CAN'T MOVE, OLD STORY, CHANGING, GOT and HELL. The simple choice to embolden particular words places an emphasis on these words, which are part of the larger body of the text, but also becomes resonators of individual concepts. A network of themes and ideas is drawing the reader into the text.

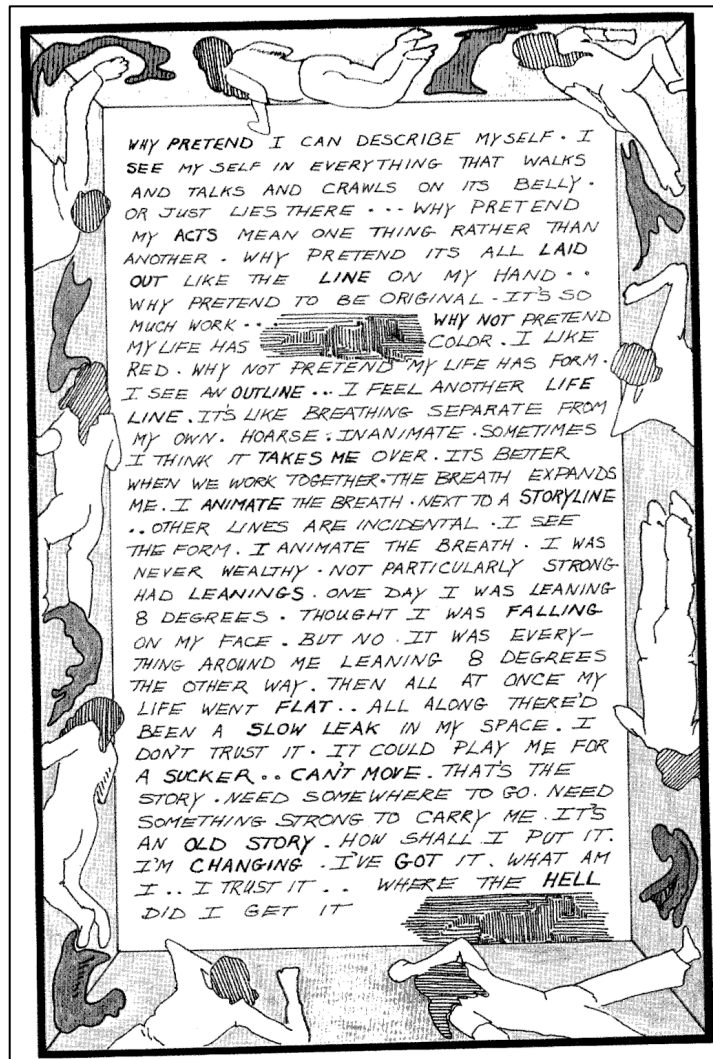


Image 8. First page of *Red Horse* comic version

The trilogy version also employs text in capitals, as seen in Image 9. The only punctuation used appears to be periods. Pages are divided into three equal columns, framed by vertical lines. Page numbers appear in the upper outer corners of each page, (the comic version makes no use of page

numbers). The first page is split into three columns, headed each with a photograph of a different face. Each column is labeled: OUTLINE, LIFELINE and STORYLINE, establishing Breuer's exploration of the relationship between words and lines; he is cleverly structuring the work with these 'lines' of text. The distribution of images and written language creates the sense that these three 'lines' are characters, each speaking the text within their respective column, taking on the quality of an internal monologue. Text is arranged in a manner that suggests that these speeches are happening in relation to one another, not necessarily dialogically, but perhaps through a different type of delivery and tempo. The columns are preserved on the second page and throughout.

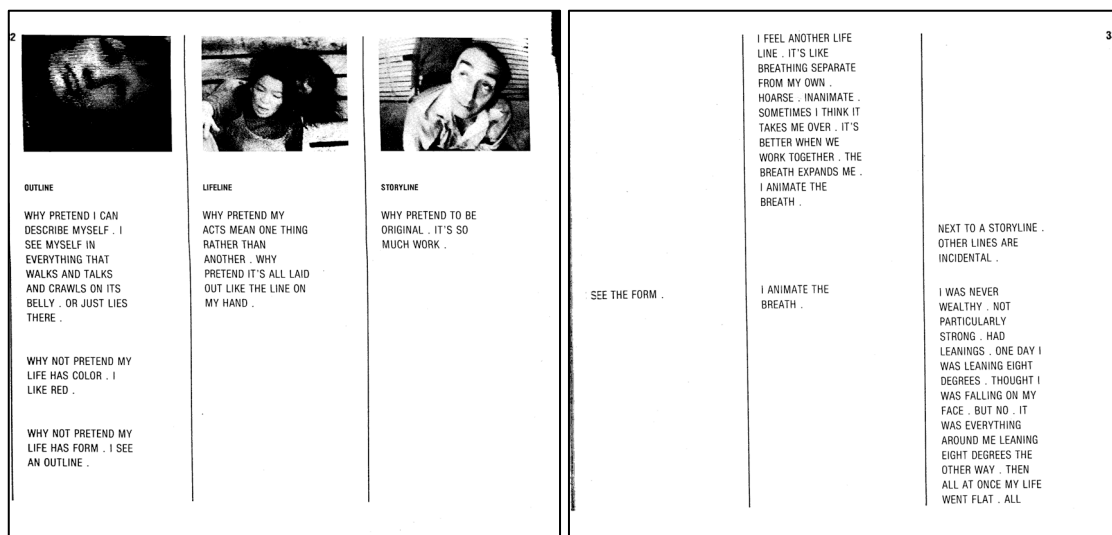




Image . First page of *Red Horse* anthology version, pages 32-33

Photographic images of the performers at times adhere to the lines of the columns and sometimes disrupt this convention. “Alternating the vertical and horizontal placement of text and photograph creates a challenging dialectic, and transvalues the notion of caption as well” (Marranca, 1984: 48). The photographs appear to be taken in workshop/rehearsal settings and are tableaux of company members, the same three faces introduced at the start of

the book. Marranca asserts:

The intrusion of the photographs from the performance as 'inter-texts' makes reading the animations more than a literary experience; one can read the rhetoric of the images, too. Together, then, the text and image interact in a sophisticated performance of their own... each supplying information the other cannot (48).

In Image , the written language, presumed verbal speeches for the three lines, is a portion of the same text that appears on the first page of the comic book. Ellipses that appear in the comic book version appear to be dividing the text into portions that compliment the distribution of text in the columns in the trilogy version. Beyond this starting point, the text is redistributed in a different order and manner in both versions.

In the comic book's next pair of pages, written language and graphics bring the reader into the setting: 'The Gobi Desert' (Image ). At times the page itself is a frame, and more often there are many framed images within a page. Words are integrated into the images, and help to form the images themselves. The written language is at times framed within literal images ('I LOOK AT MY FACE' appears in a rock). In other instances, the words form the image ('THE GOBI DESERT IS RED AND YELLOW' forms the lines of the landscape of the Gobi Desert). The comic book convention of thought bubbles to express verbal speech is also used for dialogue, as seen in the bottom right-hand page.

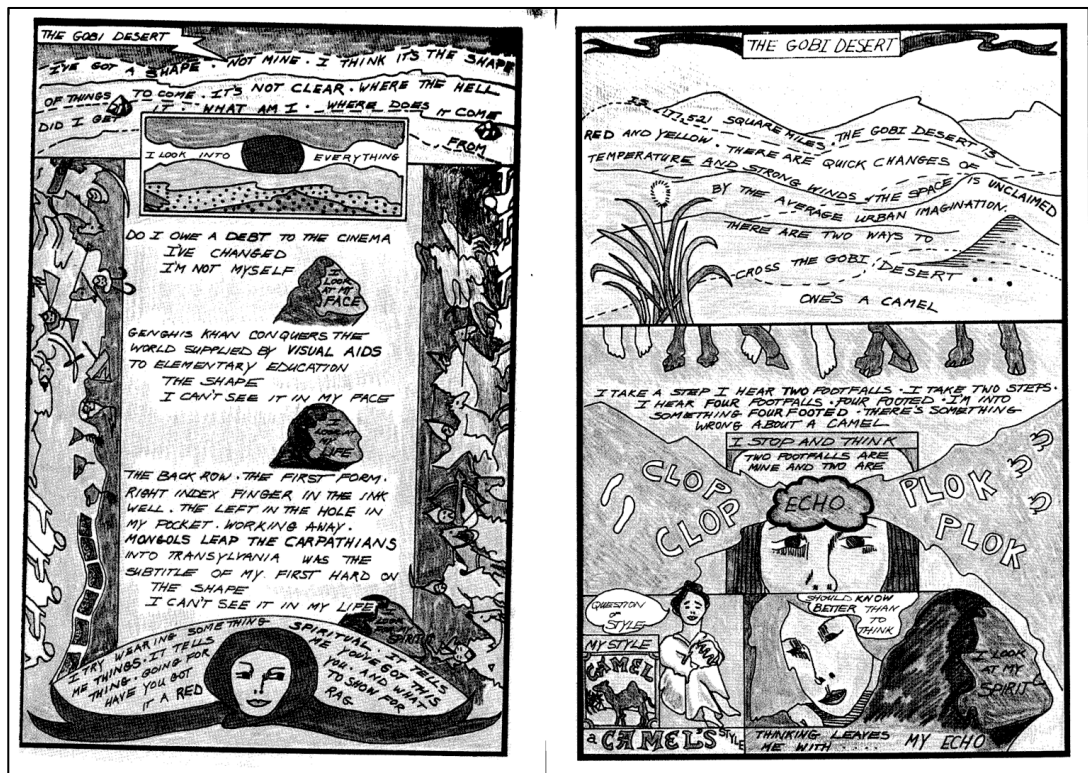


Image . The Gobi Desert in comic version

In the trilogy version, the text referring to the Gobi Desert appears, but no graphics. The vertical arrangement of text seems to be creating a reading that is understood as parallel, or overlapping horizontally. The geometrical mapping of the text guides the reader while giving him or her options on how to order his or her approach to the reading. Marranca suggests that the layout enables the reader to become a co-author:

Those free spaces, which appear where there are no photographs allow the reader time to dream as it were, just as the filled-in (photographic) spaces which 'quote' scenes from the performance, allow time to think beyond or along with the image. The 'meaning' rests between the text and the image. This gives the reader a creative role in the 'making' of the animations, since he must situate himself somewhere between the text and the performance to make the provocative transference between the literal and the metaphorical. The emphasis then shifts from the text to the reader (1984: 48).

Again, the media of the book takes on a significant role within the reading and meaning-making process. Reading is more physical, requiring a continuous

shift from up to down, left to right, as the reader is guided by blank space or gaps on the page, which s/he must fill.

The comic book, without announcing or declaring a song, alludes to sound. In Image 7, a thought bubble reads: 'I WHICH I... IN WHICH I DEMONSTRATE MY SOUND.' There is an asterisk that notes 'COPYRIGHT PHILIP GLASS 1968.' Below the bubble, the graphics incorporate a pattern of lines and dots that appears in a similar fashion as percussion charts in musical notation. The pattern underlays the smaller framed moments that appear on the bottom half of the page. Beneath, in larger text, reads: 'THAT'S MY SOUND NOW.' The written language, the reference to Philip Glass and the pattern of lines and dots leads the reader to imagine, and perhaps hear a song, as the graphics create a rhythm to be internalized. In the trilogy version the reader is provided with a more distinct musical notation (Image 8), which denotes in cursive handwriting: 'Music for The Red Horse Animation by Phil Glass 1971.'

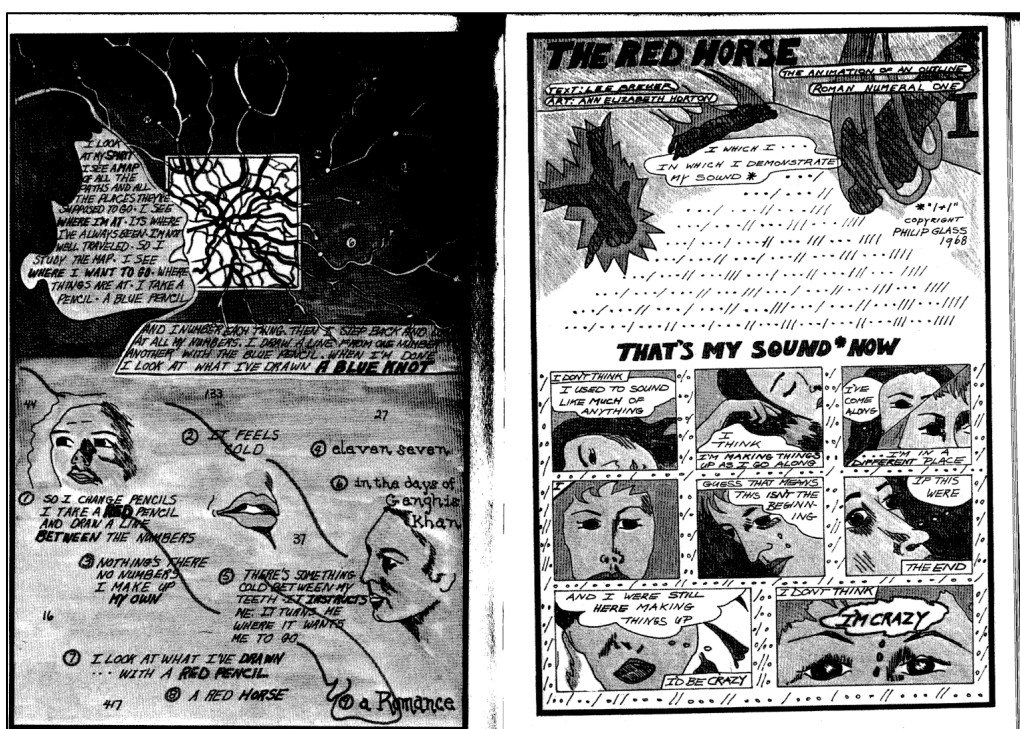


Image 7. 'Sound' in the comic version, example 1



Image ❷. 'Sound' in the comic version, example 2

The trilogy version does not include any specific graphic image that alludes to music notation. Its only reference to Philip Glass is on the production page, which credits him for 'Music.' Seven pages into the work itself (Image ❸), the same text that appears in the comic book referring to sound appears: "IN WHICH I DEMONSTRATE MY SOUND" (Breuer 39). A black box on the right side of the page is filled with white text that through its use of bold and non-bold features creates a visual pattern. The text itself reads as a repetitive phrase: TIC A TAH DAH' with DAH's appearing in bold and adding or subtracting DAH's with each repetition. Reading this text aloud in comparison to the notation in the comic version might lead the reader to find shared patterns between the 'dots and lines' and the 'TIC A TAH's' and 'DAH's.' Through the graphic layout and the onomatopoeic use of language that 'reps and revs,' a musical experience of text is forged.

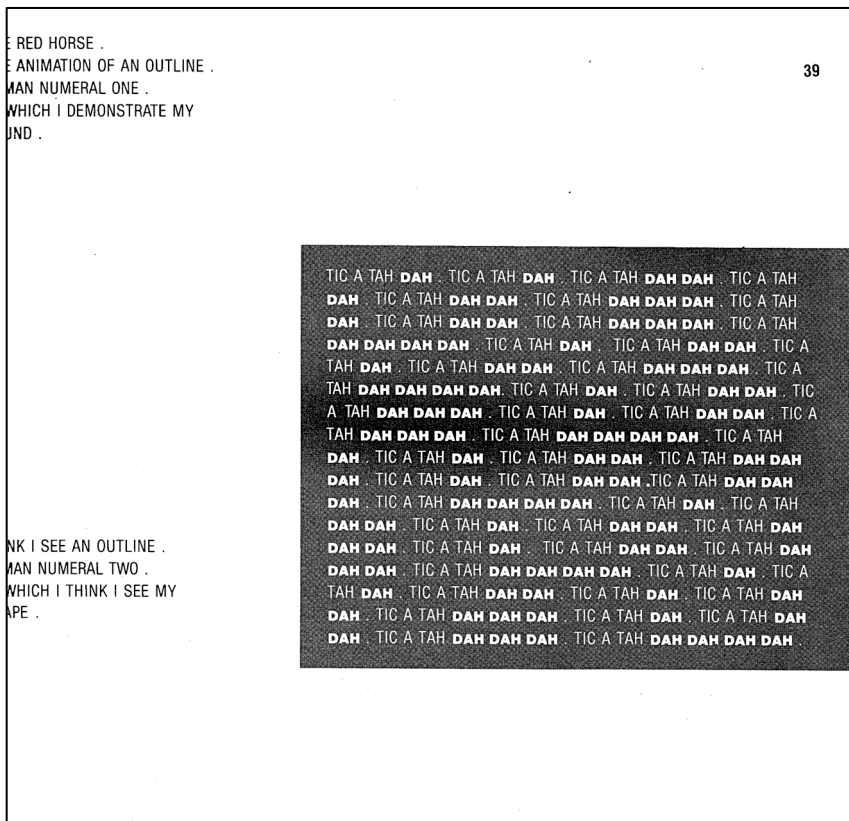


Image 3. Sound in the trilogy version

It is evident that these two *literary texts* have a relation to one another, as the trilogy version came after the comic book, and therefore ‘quotes’ both the *performance text* and its previous *literary text*. The highly graphic qualities of the text and the decisions made in the materiality of the book itself have a role in shaping the reader’s experience of the work. These graphic qualities are influenced by, if not directly derivative of, a pre-existing *performance text*, through the use of photographs and drawings that ‘quote’ the work. Both versions of *The Red Horse Animation* make little effort to explain to the reader how the story was presented in performance, whereas The Grove Press edition of *The Bald Soprano*, at times, refers back and explains details of Bataille production. These works reinforce the reciprocal relationship between *literary* and *performance playtexts*. The models of practice in this Chapter have been instrumental in the development of the hyper(play)text, as the process for *Rumi*

High continuously shifted between the six modes of writing, which was shaped by *performance playtexts* and *literary playtexts* in progress. Interval 3 will further highlight the ways that these two types of texts inform one another, when performance is viewed as an act of writing, and playwrighting encompasses a collaborative process that includes participating *performance readers*.

INTERVAL 3 Controlling Bodies, Texts and Process

Sometimes I sensed that the books I read in rapid succession had set up some sort of murmur among themselves, transforming my head into an orchestra pit where different musical instruments sounded out, and I would realize that I could endure this life because of these musicales going on in my head
– Orhan Pamuk (2002: 244).

Both *literary readers* and *performance readers* receive and experience information in different ways, which inevitably shifts the meaning-making process, and potentially provokes different performance productions and literary productions of the same work. Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 exhibited how a variety of textual layers, including layout, typography, wordplay and linguistic experimentation, and experimentation with grammatical norms, with an awareness to the publishing standards of the day, can become tools for situating and guiding *literary readers* towards an active consumption. This Interval highlights how performance presentations (Mode 3) enable collaboration with *performance readers* that ultimately shape the production of the *literary playtext*. I will identify specific instances where *performance readers* engaged with the work-in-progress and provided feedback that led to specific creative decisions made in the hyper(play)text.

First, I will discuss the performance presentations that took place in Reading, UK (December 2012) and NYC, USA (January 2013). I will quote various *performance readers*' voices from both performance presentations. These viewpoints reveal how control manifested itself as one of the primary themes of the play. I will consider Lehmann's 'aspects,' specifically 'Body'

(2006: 162-165), and Machon's 'scale,' including 'Bodies' 'Audience' and 'A contract for participation' (2013: 98-100), in relation to these viewpoints. Acknowledging the *performance readers* as collabowrighters and considering the discussions around 'control' that emerged from the performance presentations, I will then revisit Michel Foucault's *What is an Author?* and Roland Barthes' *The Death of the Author* within a postdramatic context where deconstruction, appropriation, borrowing, cutting, collaging, and 'mashing' are now common techniques in both printed and digital media. A conflict between Arthur Miller and The Wooster Group over their unauthorized use of the text of *The Crucible*, will foreground my own use of Miller's play text, and new notions of collaborating in the postdramatic era. I will refer to Machon's 'scale,' specifically 'Expertise' (2013: 100) to discuss authorship and collaboration, specific to this practice-led project. To conclude, I will discuss my notion of collabowrighterly identifying two types of collabowrighting: 'appropriated' and 'deferred'.

CONTROL

Both performance presentations were site-responsive, working in multiple locations within a building; respectively the Minghella Building at University of Reading, UK and the Vital Theatre Company spaces at the McGinn-Gazale Theatre, NYC, USA. These work-in-progress, script-in-hand performances of the play explored the multi-linear aspects of the work, which gave agency to the audience in choosing their pathways, and to the performers in improvising around scripted structures. The closeness in date puts the two

performance presentations in direct relation to one another. The cultural difference in readers and performers for each performance yielded both contrasting and similar responses to the work in development. I observed that the NYC performance appeared to yield a more subversive interaction with *performance readers*. This may be an effect of culture, as both readers and performers had first-hand experience as students and/or teachers in an American public school system. Lehmann asserts: “Cultural notions of what ‘the’ body is are subject to ‘dramatic’ changes, and theatre articulates and reflects these ideas” (2006: 162). The post-presentation discussions with performers and *performance readers* facilitated a dialogue, which inevitably informed the development of the hyper(play)text, particularly the poetic approach to guiding readers through the experience of the play. In Lehmann’s postdramatic, the body is described as “an *agent provocateur* of an experience without ‘meaning,’ an experience aimed not at the realization of a reality and meaning but at the experience of potentiality” (163). Machon suggests that in immersive practice, “bodies can become simultaneously sight, site and cite of the performance... the audience-participant’s body ‘co-authors’ the work” (2013: 98). The performance presentations gave me the opportunity to observe ‘co-authoring’ bodies in motion, and to analyze the ways in which established rules within the world of the play were adhered to or challenged, to consider ‘potential’ future readings.

By situating readers within a familiar framework, the structure of a school day, I was attempting to activate the reader’s memory of their past experiences within educational settings. In NYC, both Frances Rossi and Patricia

Sutherland-Cohen responded to the manner in which the experience did lead to a reflection on their past. Rossi stated:

I felt myself going right back, getting up when the bell rang, going where the teacher told me where to go, following the instructions during the fire drills, and going to the class on my program card... We are really programmed, and that really hasn't changed very much... I really didn't have to follow these rules... But you go right into that. It's unbelievable that that would happen in this type of situation.

Sutherland-Cohen added:

It was the little things that this experience was able to bring back... The little underneath conversations that the students had... Passing notes to another student to cut class... You could hear other bits of conversation. I couldn't hear everything... you always knew from the conversations that there were other things going on... it made you curious, or it made you stop caring... It was nice to see that, and I'd be interested in how you bring it together on the page.

In NYC, the world of the play appeared to resonate with readers more deeply, which perhaps empowered them to participate more actively.

Head of Security

In both performance presentations, I played the role of 'Head of Security,' framing the experience as the first point-of-contact as *performance readers* entered the space. The 'Head of Security' was a hybrid of performer and stage manager, allowing me to ensure that the technical aspects of the performance were realized. This role also enabled me to document the performance by capturing the performance, as a roving surveillance camera. In

Reading, Anne Latta suggested:

If you take the piece just as it was tonight, I think you're very clearly looking at the balance between control, authoritarianism, and freedom... Look at the figure that you played. I was very conscious of him. I was in the corner here. You were coming in. You were dressed all in black. You were continually photographing us with your mobile. I actually called you God. I said 'Here's God again.' There was some sort of controlling

element in the way that you came in... There was a consciousness of you sliding in and sliding out, exercising a certain type of control.

Edina Husanovic` agreed:

There was a really strong element of control. But also there was this subversive element that kept creeping through... I don't know if the audience really felt free to choose... but one might get affected by this subversive element, and start exploring a bit more.

Latto added:

The more I think about it, the more I think the whole thing was about control. Your cast was controlled by your script. They were controlled by *The Crucible* script, and all the time we're sort of being controlled as to who to think about.

This interpretation of the play, as an exploration of control, at first perplexed me. My intentions were to increase the audience's freedom in navigating the play by giving them choice in where to go and what to watch.

The post-presentation discussion forced me to acknowledge that I was indeed the one who 'controlled' the script in many respects; beginning with arranging the words on the page, in directing the staging, and ultimately performing in the presentation as 'Head of Security.' I came to embrace aspects of control within the process, acknowledging and gaining a self-awareness around the ways I am controlling the work, which allowed me to think more critically about the themes, structure and frames of the play.

Writing Assignments

Due to the participatory nature of the work, the playwrighting practice must somehow find a way to balance scripted material with guidance, in order to enable improvised material to manifest in collaboration with the text. Sevrin Anne Mason, who developed and performed the role of MISS WHITE in NYC,

describes her experience improvising with *performance readers*. She offers an apology to her 'students' and expresses gratitude for their participation:

Having not had people in those chairs ever before, and having to improvise, I had no idea what I was going to get from the audience. I was conflicted about whether I should try to be a real English teacher and really try to make these teachable moments... There was going to be roughly twenty minutes that I had with you guys to improvise. How was I gonna make that time compelling to you? I felt conflicted about what an awful experience I was giving you. I felt so bad about it. But this is the very first time we've had audiences in seats and I think that as this goes on and as we continue to work on it, these experiences that we have with audiences will help us... We just had no idea until today, so thank you all for enduring us.

The scene that Mason is referring to, involves the character of MISS WHITE giving her students a writing assignment: to write an alibi proving that they did not put gum on a chair. Following a scripted monologue, Mason was to perform a class session where 'students' were expected to complete a writing assignment, followed by a public reading of these alibis. In the hyper(play)text the reader is provided a [link](#) to download a writable document with the assignment details. If the reader sends their writing assignment to MISS WHITE's e-mail (MissWhite@RumiHigh.org) his/her text will eventually appear as part of the hyper(play)text, for future readers.

In Reading, James MacDowell responded to a scene in history class when TEECH asks 'students' to join the scripted characters to participate in a collective reading of a piece of text that he wrote for class:

When there was the play within the play... that I was required to play a role in, I was wondering what the characters, as in the student characters, had at that point. They had the script that I had but I was obviously aware that they had another script. Were there two things side by side there? I don't really know how I imagined it looked, but I wondered how it looked.

MacDowell was correct in assuming that the performers had a different version of the script that integrated their lines with TEECH's play. MacDowell was given a play text of TEECH's play. MacDowell's response inspired the use of the pop-up links in the hyper(play)text which provide a version of TEECH's history play that he shares with the 'students.' I created a link inviting the reader to '[read ahead](#),' which activates a pop-up screen with the 'clean' script. In Image [--], a screenshot displays the pop-up window on the right, overlaying the scene with the link.

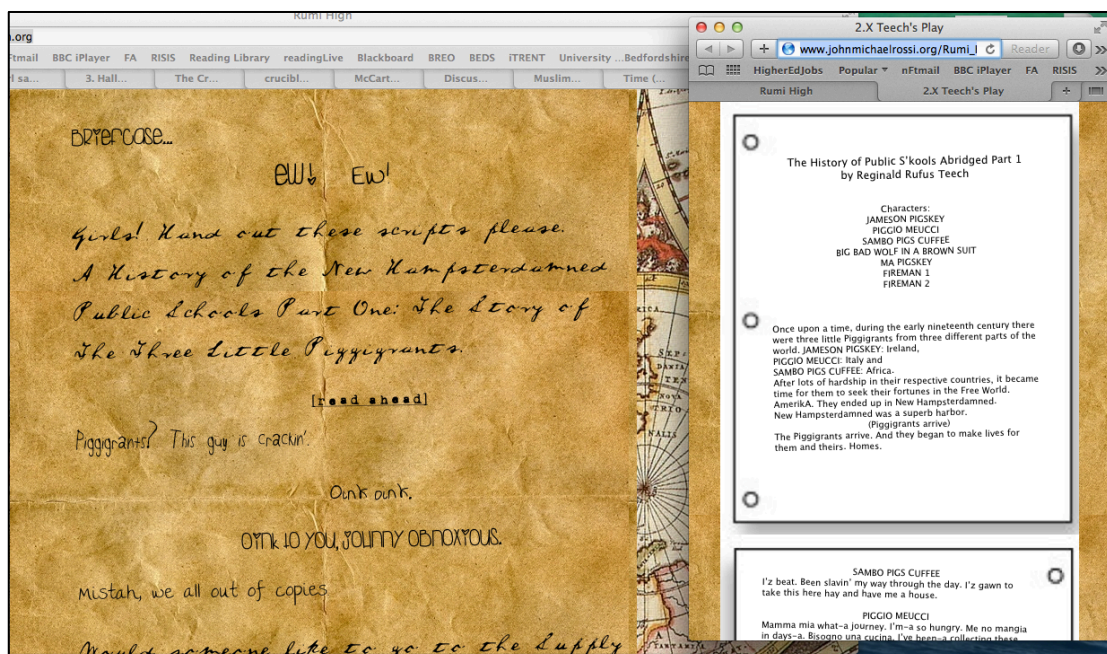


Image [--]. Screenshot of '[OHP: Mini Lesson](#)' with 'pop-up' of TEECH's script
Direct link: http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/2.Xa_History.html

The examples of Mason's experience performing an improvised structure that requires the reader to complete a writing assignment, and MacDowell's response to his experience as a participating 'student,' exemplify two instances where the performance presentation led to consideration of how the *literary playtext* might achieve these interactive aspects of the play. As the type of

interaction transforms, how does the performance of signaling a reader towards interaction translate from *performance playtext* to *literary playtext*?

Crowd Control

In considering the challenge of how to signal to a reader, my playwrighting practice explores ways to expand the sign systems in the *literary playtext* by intertwining graphic elements with linguistic wordplay and hypermedia including links to sound, alternative narrative pathways and other websites. This complex system of signs increases the reader's agency in choice-making while also requiring a high level of engagement and competency with this new type of reading process. In *Rumi High*, the hyper(play)text employs the use of hyperlinks not only to enable the reader to travel through the plot, but to link the reader to contextual information both within and beyond the web domain of www.RumiHigh.org. The experience of the hyper(play)text has the potential to adapt itself to each reader, a feature perhaps more akin to videogames. David Kolb explains that hypertext:

comes as a web of text, like a landscape that cannot be seen all at once but can be explored along many different routes. The author cannot control which links the reader will pursue, and in some systems the reader can create new units and links, so that the web changes and grows. The roles of author and reader begin to shift as the being of the text changes (1994: 323).

While the reader is guided to understand that s/he chooses how to navigate the play, via the links offered by 'The Draconian Typewriter,' these links are crafted to bring the reader along particular pathways based on their choices. This represents an element of control I maintain as web designer, and owner of the web domain. It can be argued that despite the reader's increased level of

choice, the possibilities are still somewhat fixed, prescribed or controlled by an authoritarian force.

Machon suggests that, "[i]mmersive work has to *enable* the audience to be willing participants" (2013: 43). Immersive theatre groups have employed a variety of ways to enable the reader to participate, establishing rules, guidelines and disclaimers, all of which are disbursed in a variety of ways. Even elements that seem to be outside of the frame of the event, such as encountering an advertisement, purchasing a ticket or arriving at the performance site, may already operate to frame the reader's experience and guide him/her on how to engage with the work. A 'contract for participation' may be explicit or implicit, but most importantly, must "invite varying levels of agency and participation, according to how far the audience-participant is prepared to go" (100).

In eighteenth century French opera, the institution of 'The Claque' exemplifies a historical moment when the codes of audience behavior were being transformed as the audience member's role as 'applauder' was being orchestrated in highly performative ways. Claqueurs were

strategically operating actors within the audience [with the] aim to produce synchronizing effects by which the aesthetic and economic success or failure of a performance can be steered and by which achievements are being acknowledged in a collective process (Brandl-Risi 15).

The claqueurs were avid fans and experts on the medium, usually students who were given free admission to the standing room, and orchestrated by a 'Chef du'claqueur.' The Chef du'claqueur was paid by the clients, which included both performers and producers. He purchased the tickets for his team of clagues and kept the remaining money for himself.

At the highest point of The Claque era, up to one hundred claqueurs would be planted throughout the audience. Bettina Brandl-Risi explains that the team of claqueurs encompassed many specific roles:

Besides the tapageurs (the vehement clappers) there were e.g. the connaisseurs (who were supposed to utter murmurs of approval from the more expensive seats and were asked to recite verses and make commentaries), the rieurs (those who laughed), the chatouilleurs (who were supposed to entertain their neighbors through snuff and treats or cheerful conversation), the pleureuses (those who had to weep, mostly women), the chauffeurs (who had to go into raptures in front of posters and extol the performance), and of course the bisseurs (calling for encores) (2011: 15).

In *My Life in the Claque*, Joseph Wechsburg recalls his experiences as a member of the claque at the Vienna Staatsoper. He describes the complexity and the great responsibility placed on the claqueur, speaking of certain shows being more difficult than others:

Take for instance the second act of 'Carmen,' a claqueur's nightmare. You start working right after Carmen's gypsy song... and you applaud after her dance with the castanets. Then Escamillo enters (applause) sings his famous 'Couplets' (applause), and he leaves (more applause). By that time, the public is likely to applaud spontaneously after each number... The trouble is that the enthusiastic listeners are apt to break into 'wild' applause in the wrong places, such as in the middle of the aria, after an effective high C. In Vienna, where opera was a way of life and even the small boys discussed opera as they discuss baseball in this country, 'wild' applause was considered heresy and one of the claque's functions was to influence public acclaim into orderly channels (1944: 22).

Wechsburg speaks of claque-ing as if there were a prescribed script that determines how the audience is expected to participate in the event. The performance here, is being protected from 'wild applause' in favor of an audience that behaves in 'orderly channels;' a mechanism of crowd control.

This need to control an audience still exists today in various aspects of the performance frame. From announcements before a show (to turn off mobile

phones and to pre-open candy wrappers) to warnings (about the use of gunshots, smoke or strobe lights), to rules on how to enter and exit the space, our experience is constantly being guided and controlled. The act of ‘papering the house,’ often done on nights when press is expected to be in the audience (or if ticket sales are low) can also be viewed as a form of claque-ing. The ‘papered’ public suddenly has a responsibility to the production; to be a positive audience member, perform their enjoyment of the performance.

In 1896, Alfred Jarry premiered his play, *Ubu Roi*, a grotesquely comic attack on cultural rules and conventions. The play deploys a linguistic spectacle of words, referred to as ‘Ubu-speak,’ which appears as radical on the page, as it did on the stage. For the play’s opening in Paris at the Théâtre de l’Oeuvre, Jarry formed a ‘counter-claque’ to provoke the audience.

Jarry had decided that he needed a faction in the audience that was independent of his known friends, and the patrons of this establishment were charged with forming the main body of his ‘counter-claque’ Planning was careful. Jarry told them: ‘...The performance must not be allowed to reach its conclusion, the theater must explode.’ If the play was being well received they must unleash cries of protest, and shouts of ecstatic admiration if the audience booed it. They should provoke fights with their neighbors and, being situated in a circle, bombard the stalls with projectiles (Brotchie 160).

Jarry’s orchestrated ‘counter-claque’ aimed to provoke the audience to interact with the work by planting audience members who would disrupt the performance. This captures an attitude that is implicit in the aesthetic world of the play. Jarry used the claque-method as a control mechanism to create chaos, a lack of control that would shape how the play is experienced.

In *Rumi High*, the character of BETTY was written to provoke students to follow an alternative pathway that deviates from the class schedule that is

prescribed by The Draconian Typewriter. BIG MIKEY BEE's welcome letter ends with a warning:

I must warn (YOU): There is a corruptive element within the walls of Rumi High, known as 'the CIAckAz.' This gang of do-nothings, led by a master of disguises, who goes by the name of Betty, is incredibly dangerous and your education would be best served by avoiding any affiliates of Betty at all costs.

BETTY and 'The CIAckAz' were inspired by Jarry's counter-claque and encourage the reader to break away from prescribed class structure.

In Reading, the majority of the audience followed the class schedule and moved as a large group, opting to ignore BETTY's provocations, which were performed through acts of note-passing and direct address whispering. In Reading, Diana Trinder, who chose not to follow BETTY, described her interaction with the character:

He just gave me a look and I wanted to see what was going on, so I did feel the free will came in, but I think that's probably because I think back to my childhood, and I was good girl in school, and I wished I'd been the naughty girl, and I had the chance to sneak out with the naughty boy in school and see what was going on.

In NYC, Gwen Reitz remarked on the effectiveness of BETTY's provocations in relation to the overall experience:

I felt like I came to the school very open-hearted, like I was ready to learn and have a good day, and I was a bit surprised how quickly I just didn't give a shit. Thirty seconds into American History, and Betty was like, 'Wanna cut?' and I was like 'Sure.' I've been to four classes. Has anyone else been to four classes? I've been in and out. It's been awesome. The thing that surprised me was how quickly the play reflected the worst part of the education system because I enjoyed High School. I had teachers that were really inspiring. I teach, and I hope that I am inspiring... It captured the very dead feeling that can be out there... and it isn't always out there... But can be out there, and just how quickly that makes you check out and how quickly you just don't care what the lesson is about... instead the thing that you're really interested in is timing, nuances of the people around you.

The reader that follows BETTY accesses 'green' pages (the color of the 'The CIAckAz'), which reveal different bits of narrative, or alternate 'green' versions of scenes. In Image %, the same scene is presented for two different readers; a follower of BETTY encounters the scene as tinted in green and marked with the green bandana (left). The wandering student who happens upon the scene via a different pathway views the scene without the green tint (right). Ultimately, following BETTY throughout the play will give the reader a different perspective on the events that take place in the school. At first, this pathway may seem to afford the most freedom. Yet, the more the reader follows BETTY's pathway, the less choice s/he has to return to or discover other pathways. The reader shifts from being controlled by the school's established structures to being controlled by BETTY's orders and the lure of The CIAckAz, as the choice of links begins to diminish.



Image %. Screenshot of variations of scene: '[OHP: The OOOFT Meeting](http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/1.3z_OOOFT_Meeting_w_BAG.html)' (left) and '[OHP: The OOOFT Meeting](http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/1.3_OOOFT_Meeting.html)' (right)

Hidden Secrets

The experience of performing the Security Guard for both presentations prompted the concept that the performance would employ the use of surveillance cameras throughout the performance space, which would be screened in the 'Security Room' as a multi-media overview of the entire play. BETTY leads the reader to the 'The Portholez' (Image X), where a series of hidden links have the potential to take the reader to various parts of the play out of sequence. S/he may choose links that give access to archived traces of the developmental process, or to spaces completely outside of the play's domain. By chance, readers may access the 'Security Room,' where a series of maps provide an overview of the entire play structure (Image >).



Image X. Screenshot of 'OHP: Chooze Wizely'

Direct link: http://johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/5.Yd_Portholez_3.html



Image > Screenshot of [Security Room](#)

Direct link: http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/Security_Room.html

George P. Landow explains, "hypertext authors employ important visual elements in the form of graphic overviews or directories that they create to assist readers" (1992: 45). In a Skype workshop with Niluka Hotaling, who both designs and performs for newFangled theatReR, we discussed the expansive world of the play, and how it might be expressed. She suggested the concept of a 'marauder's map,' a reference to *Harry Potter*, where a map provides the user with a power to view other locales in real time. She suggested that the website provide access to a 'marauder's map' where the reader can choose where to go. The Security Room gives access to two types of 'marauder's maps.' Clicking on one of the 'screens' in the 'Security Room' leads to a [spider-map](#), which depicts the entire plot structure of *Rumi High* with links to individual scenes labeled with their 'OHP' title. Another 'screen' leads to a map of the ground plan for Rumi High, which includes links to scenes placed according to

location and period (Image \$). Each school locale is signified by either its ‘page background’ or ‘browser background’ image. Each area contains a chronological listing of all of the scenes that occur in these spaces.

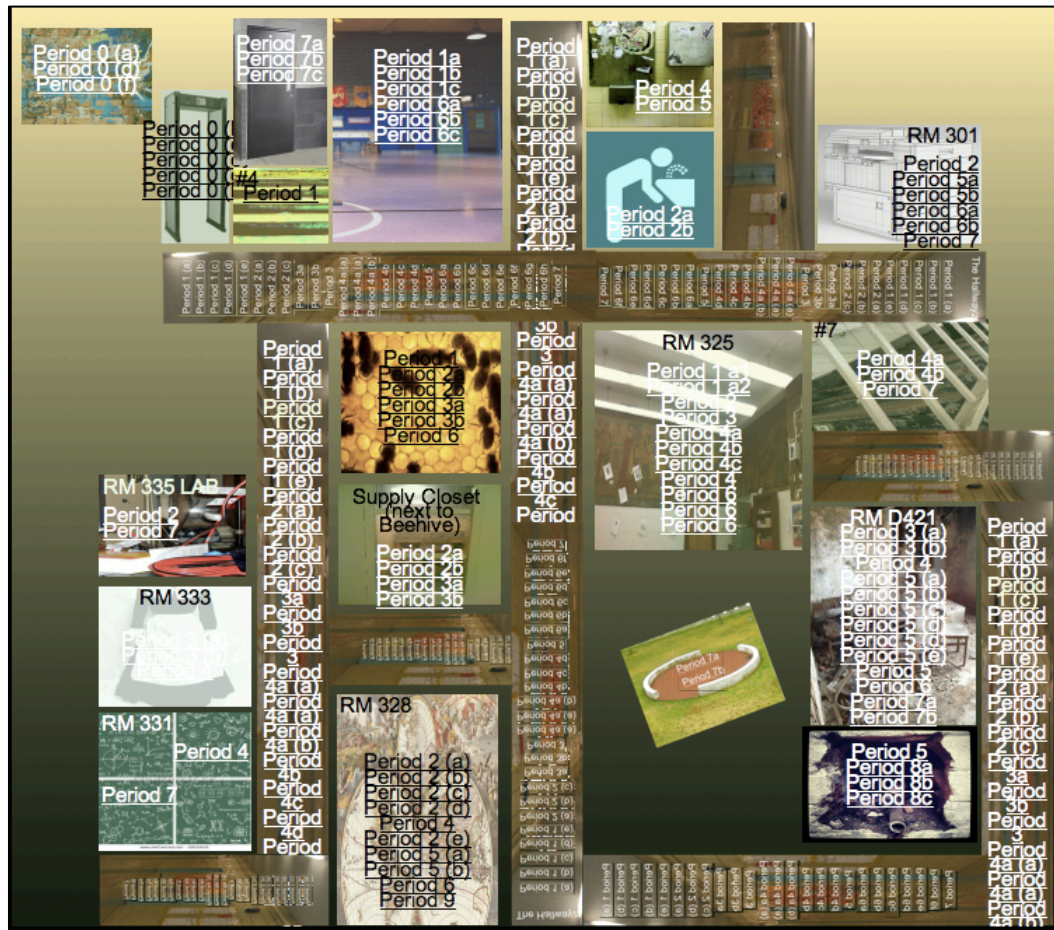


Image \$. Screenshot of [Map of Rumi High](http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/Security_Room.html)
 Direct link: http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/Security_Room.html

The hyper(play)text makes it possible to unify a complex plot with many strands and subplots in one location. These two visual maps were also used as a tool, to manage and track the complex web of choices that the reader would need to work through as the hyper(play)text was designed. This was similar to how the use of fonts allowed me to track each character’s pathway. Whether or not the reader accesses these maps is dependent on his or her increasing awareness that s/he must actively search for ‘links’ to alternative reading routes. The hyper(play)text cultivates a working reader who must be active and

alert, making acute decisions that will determine in part, the narrative that s/he experiences.

The hyper(play)text uses different types of text in a matrix of sign systems. The text performs eternally, becoming center-less, as the reader interacts with the text in the continuous present. George P. Landow acknowledges that hypertext can be disabling and disorienting as much as enabling and empowering:

Although this absence of a center can create problems for the reader and the writer, it also means that anyone who uses hypertext makes his or her own interests the de facto organizing principle (or center) for the investigation at the moment. One experiences hypertext as an infinitely decenterable and re-centerable system, in part because hypertext transforms any document that has more than one link into a transient center, a directory document that one can employ to orient oneself and to decide where to go next (1992: 12).

As the possibilities for expressing various aspects of the play expanded, I was often caught between using the hyper(play)text to control the reader's experience and increasing their choice in how to navigate the play. In the next section. I will refer to a conflict between The Wooster Group and Arthur Miller over their use of the text of *The Crucible*, in order to suggest that digital media and the hyper(play)text further problematizes notions of authorship and ownership of text.

AUTHORITATIVE GRASPS

Machon discusses 'Expertise' to offer the final criteria for immersive practice requiring makers to have "an authoritative grasp of the artistic potential and creative constraints of the form and of the 'contract for participation' in order to enable the participant in the event to have full, undeniable immersive

experience” (2013: 100). This practice-led research interrogates my own ‘authoritative grasp’ as I explore, through practice, the ‘potentialities’ and the ‘constraints’ of this new form of playwrighting.

Barthes declared that, “to give writing its future; it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author” (2002: 7). For *literary playtexts*, the law problematizes Barthes’ notion, when directors, designers and actors, who first approach the dramatic text as *literary readers*, through practice, translate the *literary playtext* into a *performance playtext*. Foucault puts forth a legal and social conception of authorship:

[T]he author is not an indefinite source of significations which fill a work; the author does not precede the works; he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction (2002: 21).

Foucault attaches the ‘Author’ to ownership, equating a written work to marketable goods over which the ‘Author’ has certain rights and responsibilities. For the purposes of this discussion, I lean on Foucault’s distinction that the term ‘Author’ is bound up with socio-economic implications, protected by law. It is my position that the law, which generally speaking, is designed to protect the ‘author’ by endowing ‘exclusive rights’ to his or her ‘work,’ is in conflict with postmodern notions that empower the reader to determine meaning for his or herself. The conflict between law and theory is further complicated in postdramatic theatre where the text is decentralized, and new definitions of writing and new models for writing collaboratively prevail.

The Miller-Wooster Conflict

In 1982, The Wooster Group began development on a new work, *LSD* (...just the high points...), which deconstructs Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, and integrates the writings of Beat poets such as Timothy Leary, Allen Ginsburg and Jack Kerouac. The Wooster Group's 'postdramatic' deconstructions, specifically *LSD*, raise debate around respecting the source text, copyright law, and responsibility or fidelity to the 'Author.' *LSD* can be considered an example of Barthes' definition of text as:

a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture... [where] the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them (2002: 6).

Communicating with The Wooster Group through his agents, Miller looked to the law for protection from what he felt was a violation of his 'exclusive rights' as the 'Author' of *The Crucible*.

Foucault's notion that the author is a functional principle of socio-economics helps to understand how and why Miller is empowered by the law.

Peter Lamarque emphasizes Foucault's point that,

the mere act of writing (writing on the sand, jottings on the envelope) does not make an author. An author so designated is a more weighty figure with legal rights and social standing, a producer of texts deemed to have value... [it] is about social conventions and a class of persons engaged in particular acts; it is not about a persona, a fictional character, or a construct of the text (2002: 81).

Miller felt his play was being misrepresented. Allegedly, according to members of the Group, Miller was concerned that the production of *LSD* would complicate and confuse a potential Broadway revival of his play. The Wooster Group

asserted that they were not producing Miller's play, but were deconstructing a well-know historical play text to create an entirely new theatre work. The Wooster Group continued to adapt *LSD*, diminishing their use of Miller's text until group member Michael Kirby eventually wrote an entirely new text to replace the sections where they were using Miller's text. This was not enough to satisfy Miller. The dispute between Miller and The Wooster Group never made it to the courts. Ultimately, *LSD* was closed as a result of threats from Miller that invoked the law. As David Savran notes, "Miller's own reading of the play is distinguished from all others not because it is more correct but because it is empowered by the force of law" (1986: 219). This dispute between artists raises questions regarding the nature of text itself, and of its ownership.

This thesis asserts that the collaborative potential in playwrighting practice has been increased by the hyper(play)text's use of new poetic layers to express various aspects of the play, specifically its postdramatic 'aspects' and immersive forms. As playwright, I have maintained a certain level of control over the creative process for *Rumi High*. I have also become critically conscious of my continual shift between ceding and reclaiming authority over the text. I define my writing process as 'collabowrighterly,' where the lines between author and reader are blurred to encourage a heightened interactivity between writers and readers in the meaning-making process. This thesis has acknowledged the authorial input that performers and theatre-makers have always contributed to the writing of a play, and reflects on a process of mutual creation that has increased their agency in the writing process. The notion of a collabowrighterly process assumes an expansive definition of text, and situates

readers (inclusive of practitioners) as co-authors, who are part of an infinite readership. Playwrighting practice may include the work of graphic designers, multi-media artists and software programmers, to shape the work, as evidenced by this practice project.

The collabowrighterly process is inevitably cross-disciplinary, and the hyper(play)text presents a model of collaborating that is even more expansive than the conventional collaborative network for theatre-making. My collaborations with members of newFangled theatReR and the BEEz represent practices that are often seen in theatre-making processes. It can be argued that this practice project gives more authorial agency to various types of theatre-makers, and credits them more integrally to the overall work. Even the wide network of *performance readers*, who I cite as collabowrighters, represent the view that the audience does indeed shape a theatrical work, as it evolves from performance to performance, production to production. The introduction of digital technology to enable collaboration is evident in the Skype rehearsals, which allowed international collaboration, and the Facebook forum, which made possible a continuous streaming dialogue. My solo performance practice and the workshops and presentations impress the notion that there are different modes of writing, and that playwrighting occurs through performance, not towards it. The postdramatic context that *Rumi High* emerges from also suggests two forms of collaboration: ‘appropriated collabowrighting’ and ‘deferred collabowrighting.’

Appropriated Collabowrighting

In contemporary popular culture, the form known as the ‘Mashup,’ prevalent in the music industry, where the artist’s “creation is often neither entirely the product of his own creativity, nor distributed online with the original copyright holder’s permission,” complicates common assumptions around authorship and ownership (Kinsey 304). Caroline Kinsey discusses the complications of The Copyright Act of 1976 and its ‘fair use’ doctrine in relation to this 21st century ‘Mashup’ phenomenon, which may include “sculptures, paintings, video, audio or audiovisual works... [or] any combination of these forms” (306). While literary and theatrical works are not included in any known definition of the ‘Mashup Artist,’ (a term more associated with digital media), for the purposes of this research, I will consider plays as ‘Mashup-able.’

Miller himself was deconstructing the stories of real people, and transforming the events of the Salem Witch trials into his own dramatic commentary on the McCarthy era. At the start of *The Crucible*, Miller offers the following disclaimer:

As for the characters of the persons, little is known about most of them excepting what may be surmised from a few letters, the trial record, certain broadsides written at the time, and references to their conduct in sources of varying reliability. They may therefore be taken as creations of my own, drawn to the best of my ability in conformity with their known behavior, except as indicated in the commentary I have written for this text (1952: 2).

It can be argued that LeCompte was continuing the cycle of appropriation by treating Miller’s iconic dramatic material as a historical document, to be deconstructed into a commentary on contemporary debates around interpretation.

Rumi High places *The Crucible* play text in an inner-city classroom, where the themes of Miller's play infest the school setting, becoming part of a critique of the NYC public school system. Miller's text was appropriated and embedded into *Rumi High* in two ways. First it was appropriated when the students rehearse, adapt and ultimately perform parts of *The Crucible*. In a workshop with the BEEz, that included watching the 1996 film adaptation, the group members improvised a thirty-minute performance that deconstructed Miller's play. This improvisation was filmed and later translated into the play that the student characters perform, *The Confuciblez*. Second, more subtle, fragments of Miller's text seep into the dialogue of the play. I began this approach to appropriating pre-existing text by copying and pasting lines of text into the developing text of *Rumi High*. At first, I italicized the text from *The Crucible* until the textual fragments were blended into the play. In addition to the text, some of the characters in *Rumi High* also echo the behaviors of characters in *The Crucible*. For example, BIG MIKEY BEE channels Reverend Parris and LILY-WHITE behaves akin to Abigail Williams.

I also exercised 'collaboration through appropriation' with Rumi's poems. I surveyed several collections of Rumi's writing, searching for poems that resonated with the storyline. In practical workshops, I experimented with different characters performing specific poems, to interrupt the plot, using the Rumi text to provide the reader an inner life of each character that runs counter to his/her appearance and behavior within the story. Rumi's poems appear when a reader clicks on JaMz OF FABRIZ. Through this method of collaboration through appropriation, texts are 'mashed up' as Miller and Rumi

posthumously become a part of the network of collabowrighters. The font designs and sound effects used in the hyper(play)text, it can be said, also have been appropriated. While this material is free to use, the intentions of the designers were not specific to *Rumi High*.

Deferred Collabowrighting

Rumi High situates the reader as a 'student,' to experience a school setting, where learning is the objective. What is to be learned is never clearly defined. Hyperlinking is the primary tool for conceiving and constructing a multi-linear narrative that positions the reader as a highly active choice-maker within a dramatic structure. As Barthes states:

the work itself functions as a general sign... The Text... practises the infinite deferment of the signified, is dilatory; its field is that of the signifier and the signifier must not be conceived of as 'the first stage of meaning,' its material vestibule, but, in complete opposition to this, as its *deferred action*. Similarly, the *infinity* of the signifier refers not to some idea of the ineffable (the un-nameable signified) but to that of *playing* (1977: 158).

Each reader, as student, will inevitably *break* this Text into his/her own meanings, which will ricochet between individual and collective experiences within the frame of the 'work.' Each reader has the opportunity to construct their own narrative; one of many possible scripted narratives. Gunnar Liestol states:

In reading hypertext fiction the reader not only recreates narratives but creates and invents new ones not even conceived of by the primary author. In hypertext fiction the key principles of narrative structuring, and thus the basic operations of authorship, are transferred from author to reader, from primary to secondary author... With hypertext fiction the reader is invited to take interactive part in the operations of what we may call the narrative machinery (1994: 98).

It is my aim, with *Rumi High*, to provoke the audience, through playing the role of student, to write their own experience of the 'work;' to write into the Text, with their own experiences, both past and present. Here, the action of reading is not

deferred so much as it is forged. The readers may not realize until after the experience that they have co-authored this work. This is deferred collabowrighting, as the reader's understanding and acknowledgment that s/he has contributed to the creation of the work and future readings, may not be immediately apparent.

The digital tools used to aid this writing process, not only opened pathways of collaboration, but manifest into the play itself. For example, social networking became a significant writing tool in developing *Rumi High*. By establishing a Facebook group page, *The S'kool of Edumacation*, I formed an ever-expanding network of educators, former students and artists, totaling 137 members, who share video, articles, images, personal comments and 'likes,' writing an ongoing dialogue around education that creates a content stream, that inevitably leaves its 'traces' in the play. Similarly the post-show discussions allowed *performance readers* to contribute to and engage with the work in a manner that ultimately influenced the on-going wrighting of the play.

My notion of a collabowrighterly process suggests an infinite opening of the meaning-making process continuously surrendering authorial control. If the 'Text' is a 'deferred action,' the processes involved in the publication of a printed *literary playtext*, the production of a *performance playtext* and the designing of a hyper(play)text, all collabowrighterly, should place into question whether or not I am the sole author, and whether any of the collabowrighters have authority over the 'work.' Yet, with the hyper(play)text, authorial control is further instilled by my ownership of the domain and website. It can be argued that my choice to purchase a web domain, that I own, and to construct a site

with hidden pathways, is only deepening and expanding my control of the reading experience. Perhaps, ultimately, the reader of the printed *literary playtext* has more choice in how to engage with the work.

As I encourage readers to become writers, to transform the play into their own creation, the notion of a collabowrighterly process is further problematized when my name appears in the byline (*Rumi High, an intifada by johnmichael rossi*). As I textually claim authorship, this research suggests that we must consider the ways authorship implies ownership, considering both the law and critical theory. Further, how does written language and established conventions, within performance and literary production processes, instill a sense of the author's power to control how a text is interpreted, and ultimately used. While I acknowledge my authorial control as 'initial writer,' my playwrighting practice includes workshops, rehearsals and performance presentations with designers, performers, *performance readers* and *literary readers*. If all participants are collabowrighters, is the work controlled by my vision? Or, does the ever-expanding network of collabowrighters continuously (re)shape my own authorial vision? Is the 'grasp' loosened or tightened?

Chapter 4 will introduce two models of practice where site and narrative structure require the *literary reader* to interpret many types of texts in order to comprehend the play as a performance. These works were produced as *literary playtexts* that simultaneously enable a reading experience, and document a *performance playtext*. With *Paradise Now*, the work was devised collaboratively by members of The Living Theatre, and toured internationally before being produced as a *literary playtext*. With *YOU—the City*, Fiona Templeton was

playwright, director and performer for the premiere production, which also toured internationally prior to literary production. Both models of practice will highlight how the literary production precipitated collaboration with publishers and visual artists to produce a unique *literary playtext* that both considers and abandons established conventions for how a *literary playtext* appears in print. Analysis of these *literary playtexts* will help to further contextualize the graphic and linguistic choices I made in practice, particularly with regards to situating and guiding the reader poetically.

CHAPTER 4
Reading and Writing Interactive and Site-Specific Plays

<p><i>In quella parte del libro de la mia memoria dinanzi a la quale poco si potrebbe leggere, si trova una rubric la quale dice: Incipit vita nova. Sotto la quale rubric io trovo scritte le parole le quali è mio intendimento d'assemblare in questo libello; e se non tutte, almeno la loro sentenzia.</i></p>		<p><i>In that part of the book of my memory before which little may be read is found a rubric which says: 'The new life begins.' Below this rubric I find written the words which it is my intention to transcribe into this little book: if not all of them, at least their gist.</i></p>
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—Dante Alighieri (2-3).

The previous Chapters and Intervals suggested that a *literary playtext*, which is a web of sign systems, visual and linguistic, requires a particular level of competency on the part of the reader. The possibilities of what constitutes text are expanded in postdramatic theatre, where the *performance playtext* and the *literary playtext* are in a reciprocal relationship. The web of sign systems increases in complexity. Didascalia, which functions to guide the reader to imagine the play as a performance, can be used poetically, weaving documentation of *performance texts*, and new formats and types of media, to bring the reader into the experience of the play. The models of practice that will be discussed in this Chapter are site-specific, and experiment with narrative. With these works, the *literary reader* is placed at a crossroads between the *performance playtext* and the *literary playtext*. The didascalia often shifts between documenting a historical performance production and provoking future potential performance productions.

Thomas R. Whitaker states that, "[l]anguage itself is a participatory act. Even when mediated by print, our meanings inhabit a field that cannot finally be reduced to a collection of determinate objects" (1977: 8). The *performance reader* and *literary reader* will inevitably engage with similar and different modes of perception. Site-specific plays, where the audience moves through a variety of spaces tied together or framed by a fictional world, have a tendency to experiment with narrative, and to place the audience at the center of the experience, rather than following the story of one character identified as a protagonist. Elinor Fuchs discusses new playwrighting in a way that channels Stein:

Every dramatic world is conditioned by a landscape imaginary, a 'deep' surround suggested to the mind that extends far beyond the onstage environment reflected in a dramatic text and its scenographic representation. This spatial surround both emerges from the text and shapes its interpretation, guiding the 'visitor' to a reading in depth of the dramatic world's scale and tone (2002: 30).

Fuchs is acknowledging the dual pathway of the relationship between text and performance, in stating that the 'landscape imaginary' both 'emerges from' and 'shapes' the text.

This Chapter will consider how the *literary reader* is situated, and guided to understand the ways that site and participation are integral to the work. First, I will introduce each artist with a brief discussion of the work. I will begin with The Living Theatre's *Paradise Now*, followed by Fiona Templeton's *YOU—the City*. Once a context for each play has been established, I will then lead a comparative analysis of particular excerpts from each play.

THE LIVING THEATRE'S *PARADISE NOW*

The Living Theatre has been producing political and socially conscious theatrical events since the 1940's. Julian Beck and Judith Malina founded the group as part of a mission to inspire 'The Beautiful Non-Violent Anarchist Revolution.' Influenced by the writings of Artaud, which instilled a sense of the ritualistic in their work, Malina was also a student of Erwin Piscator, a theatre director and producer who worked closely with Brecht in developing the 'Epic Theatre.' Audience participation is always part of their work, which they view as an attempt to extend the possibilities of political change. Instead of observing characters having a dialogue, their works surrounded the audience in a collage of poetry, movement, dance, group activities, and poetic texts recited in unison. The Living Theatre is a model for exploring methods of inclusion, asking readers to participate in the work more directly; to make their own meanings. Most of their plays are devised collaboratively, and are in part, improvised within a written structure. For the Living Theatre, improvisation is "one of the keys that could open a morbidly textual theater to the protean chaos of everyday life and epistemological uncertainties of modernity" (Sell 73).

Paradise Now was a "spiritual voyage and political voyage... for the actors and the spectators" (Malina and Beck 5). The play is less theatrical storytelling than it is physical, spiritual and mental training that prepares the reader for revolution. Malina and Beck ultimately fixed the group's improvisations and pre-written structure for *Paradise Now* to a printed form. Considering the Living Theatre's initial rejection of text, and their resistance to authorial control, it is ironic that *Paradise Now* was "codified in a way that led

back to text” (Innes 65). As stated in the book: “Writing down ‘Paradise Now’ did not begin until six months after the premiere. This means that it was not read by the actors until more than a year later, when the writing was completed, more than fifty performances after the premiere” (Malina and Beck, 1971). As seen with previous models of practice, most published plays will acknowledge and reference the first professional production of a play. That performance production, in most cases, would have constituted a plurality of *performance playtexts*. Both of this Chapter’s models of practice have toured internationally, inevitably adapting to space and the changing body of *performance readers*. How does the *literary playtext* reflect and translate the variance that might have taken place from performance to performance?

The introductory section of the book, ‘Preparation,’ guides the reader to understand how the piece was performed, as well as the intentions of the work. Referred to as a ‘voyage,’ the play shifts between poetic language alluding to a spiritual journey, and theatrical terminology, referring to ‘actors,’ ‘spectators,’ and the areas of the ‘performance space.’ The ‘Preparation’ explains the play’s ‘Rung’ structure, which is designed around ‘The Social and Political Revolutions,’ and uses the physical body as a metaphor for the structure of the play. If the play is successful, the entire body is prepared to take the part in the collective revolution. The book begins with a chart (Image ✪), which illustrates structure of the play, set in between two anthropomorphic diagrams: to the left, a male body marked with Hebrew writing, and to the right, a male body marked with Asian symbols, and references to yoga preparations. The inclusion of this chart as part of the *literary playtext* already establishes a unique play reading

experience, placing the reader in relation to these diagrams to consider the transformation that s/he might undergo through reading this play.

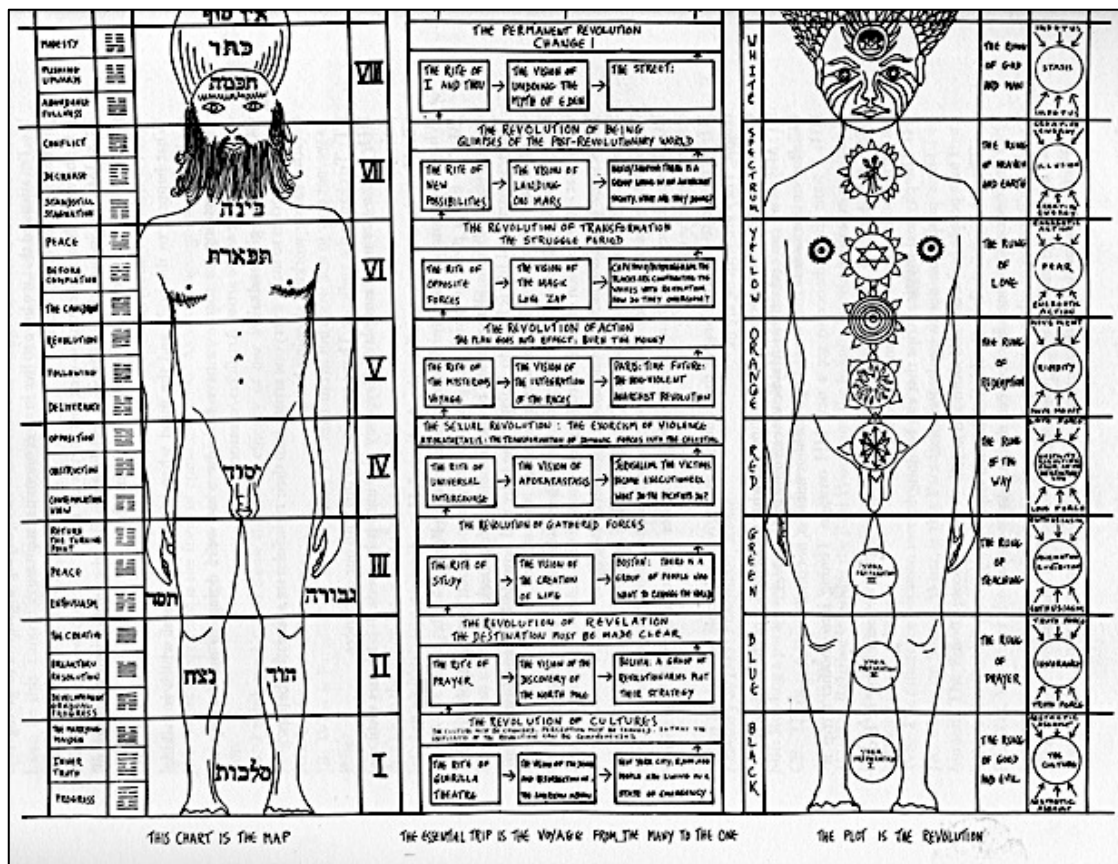


Image 5. The Chart for *Paradise Now*, pages 2-3

Rather than numbered scenes, the play is structured on eight conceptual 'Rungs.' Each 'Rung' represents a section of the human body, structuring the play vertically, from the foot to the head. Each 'Rung' is composed of a 'Rite,' a 'Vision' and an 'Action,' each fulfilling an aspect of revolution. The 'Rites' are physical, spiritual and ritualistic ceremonies that culminate in a 'Flashout,' which activates the performance of a 'Vision.' The 'Visions' are cerebral images that, when combined with the 'Rites,' lead to an 'Action.' The 'Actions' are representations of political conditions performed by actors and spectators. The 'Actions' "are introduced by a text spoken by the actors" (Malina and Beck 5). Each Rung also includes a section titled 'The Revolution of Revelation' that

provides 'Guides' composed of references to The I Ching, The Hasidic Rungs, Yoga Preparations and The Kabbalah. These 'Guides' are:

intended as 'preparation' for the actors, or cues for the emotional states to be created at each point in the structure, there is no discernable link between these 'texts' and anything physically performed on the stage. Yet they take up over a third of the script and are given a central function of embodying the 'individual spiritual change' that is seen as the prerequisite for 'exterior political change' (Innes 65).

The published text of *Paradise Now* also includes photographs by Gianfranco Mantegna documenting the production. The photographs give a sense of the type of spaces The Living Theatre performed in, and instills the sense of ambiguity between performer and spectator that permeates the play.

FIONA TEMPLETON'S *YOU—THE CITY*

Fiona Templeton is a Scottish-born director, playwright, poet and performance-maker. Her work has an explicit focus on audience and environment, where language, space, and time, is explored as an art of relation. Her plays are densely poetic and have ranged in production scale from intimate spaces to citywide works. She is the co-founder of the 1970/1980's UK performance group, Theatre of Mistakes, whose work, has since been archived in *An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes* (2009), a series of sixteen e-books composed of texts, letters, diagrams, photographs and artworks. The e-books, produced by Marie-Anne Mancio, are described as "part introduction, part photo-essay, part question and part gossip" (Mancio). Templeton is currently the founder and Artistic Director of The Relationship, a performance group founded in 2000 that explores the relationship between audience and performer through language and movement.

YOU—the City is a site-specific play that is performed for an audience of one. It was first produced in NYC (1988), and re-produced in London (1989) and Hague (1990). Templeton both directed and performed in these productions. Performers are intended to perform on a loop, passing on the audience member, referred to as ‘client,’ from scene to scene, in order to retrieve the next ‘client’ within a carefully constructed timetable. In production, clients are scheduled to arrive one at a time, every twenty minutes. The client is taken on a journey where performers are enacting a highly detailed performance structure, which is expressed in the *literary playtext* through various flowcharts and tables (Images ⇆ and ⇆). Templeton defines her play as “site-specific,” and “radically interactive” and notes that the text “does not read as dialogue, but as poetic monologue, with the cues dependent upon the client, her or himself, or yourself” (1990: vii). James Sherry, editor for the published version of the play, explains: “The narrative of *YOU—the City* is therefore not a story but a sequence of separate scenes, linked by one or more of the actors guiding the client from one event to the next” (2009: 1).

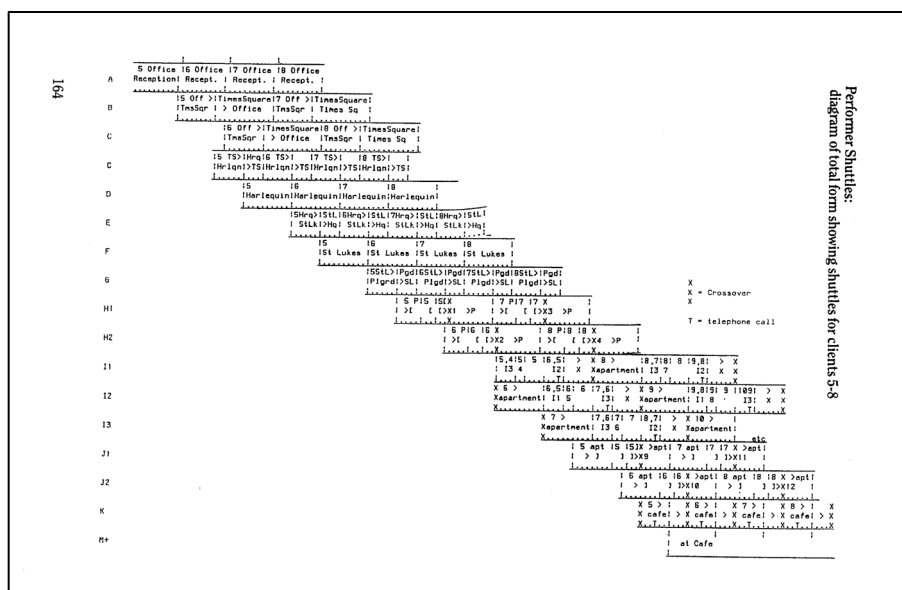


Image ⇆. Performer Shuttle diagram

6. Performer/Client Timetable: Manhattan May-June 1988

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	X H/I/J/K	OVER I	APT CALL	APT J	K	CALL	L
													<u>4:20</u>	
													<u>4:30</u>	
													<u>4:40</u>	
3:00	3:09	3:17	3:24	3:34	3:40	3:50	3:56	<u>4:07</u>	<u>4:17</u>	4:30	4:33	4:47	4:50	4:53
3:10	3:19	3:27	3:34	3:44	3:50	4:00	4:06	<u>4:17</u>	4:27	4:40	4:43	4:57	5:00	5:03
3:20	3:29	3:37	3:44	3:54	4:00	4:10	4:16	<u>4:27</u>	4:37	4:50	4:53	5:07	5:10	5:13
3:30	3:39	3:47	3:54	4:04	4:10	4:20	4:26	<u>4:37</u>	4:47	5:00	5:03	5:17	5:20	5:23
3:40	3:49	3:57	4:04	4:14	4:20	4:30	4:36	4:47	4:57	5:10	5:13	5:27	5:30	5:33
3:50	3:59	4:07	4:14	4:24	4:30	4:40	4:46	4:57	5:07	5:20	5:23	5:37	5:40	5:43
4:00	4:09	4:17	4:24	4:34	4:40	4:50	4:56	5:07	5:17	5:30	5:33	5:47	5:50	5:53
4:10	4:19	4:27	4:34	4:44	4:50	5:00	5:06	5:17	5:27	5:40	5:43	5:57	6:00	6:03
4:20	4:29	4:37	4:44	4:54	5:00	5:10	5:16	5:27	5:37	5:50	5:53	6:07	6:10	6:13
4:30	4:39	4:47	4:54	5:04	5:10	5:20	5:26	5:37	5:47	6:00	6:03	6:17	6:20	6:23
4:40	4:49	4:57	5:04	5:14	5:20	5:30	5:36	5:47	5:57	6:10	6:13	6:27	6:30	6:33
4:50	4:59	5:07	5:14	5:24	5:30	5:40	5:46	5:57	6:07	6:20	6:23	6:37	6:40	6:43
5:00	5:09	5:17	5:24	5:34	5:40	5:50	5:56	6:07	6:17	6:30	6:33	6:47	6:50	6:53
5:10	5:19	5:27	5:34	5:44	5:50	6:00	6:06	6:17	6:27	6:40	6:43	6:57	7:00	7:03
5:20	5:29	5:37	5:44	5:54	6:00	6:10	6:16	6:27	6:37	6:50	6:53	7:07	7:10	7:13
5:30	5:39	5:47	5:54	6:04	6:10	6:20	6:26	6:37	6:47	7:00	7:03	7:17	7:20	7:23
5:40	5:49	5:57	6:04	6:14	6:20	6:30	6:36	6:47	6:57	7:10	7:13	7:27	7:30	7:33
5:50	5:59	6:07	6:14	6:24	6:30	6:40	6:46	6:57	7:07	7:20	7:23	7:37	7:40	7:43
6:00	6:09	6:17	6:24	6:34	6:40	6:50	6:56	7:07	7:17	7:30	7:33	7:47	7:50	7:53
6:10	6:19	6:27	6:34	6:44	6:50	7:00	7:06	7:17	7:27	7:40	7:43	7:57	8:00	8:03
6:20	6:29	6:37	6:44	6:54	7:00	7:10	7:16	7:27	7:37	7:50	7:53	8:07	8:10	8:13
6:30	6:39	6:47	6:54	7:04	7:10	7:20	7:26	7:37	7:47	8:00	8:03	8:17	8:20	8:23
								<u>7:47</u>	<u>7:57</u>	<u>8:10</u>				
								<u>7:57</u>	<u>8:20</u>					
								<u>8:07</u>						
								<u>8:17</u>						
								X H/I/J/K	OVER I	APT CALL	APT J	K	CALL	L

(underlined = fake)

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Image 6. Performer/Client Timetable

Similar to *Paradise Now*, the book version of *YOU—the City* came after several performance productions, which includes three different cities as performance sites. The play was published in 1990 by Roof Books and includes the New York script of the performance as well as instructions, notes, maps, charts and photographs. The book includes a street map of NYC and a photograph of Times Square, the meeting point for the client (Image 6). While the book itself, particularly the accompanying photographs, functions as a documentation of the NYC production, the book is designed in a way that allows the *literary reader* to imagine the experience of the play in other cities. Sherry identifies the book of *YOU—the City* as a documentation of the performance production:

YOU—The City documents the text, the action of the events, and commentary about both. Providing a more complete document of the work than the usual publication, the book published by Roof attempted to prevent the reader from becoming lost in the text, hypnotized by artistic technique. The text itself is one stage of meaning among others, not the whole meaning (2009: 5).

He speaks of documentation as one of many 'species of text' that appear in this book: "to make the reader aware of separate species of text, to treat them both independently and together, and at the same time to make it really easy to read the spoken words without interruption, as a kind of poetry" (4). He also discusses the process of translating *YOU—the City* in a way that embodies Templeton's scripted poetic experience:

Templeton was forceful in her insistence that the performers speak poetry, a subset of the textual materials in the book. In some sense, then, I have begun to think of the other material and the connections among them as its poetics. By highlighting this textual taxonomy we can see both the independence of the components and the necessity of their interaction to complete the performance. In theatrical texts that are not environmentally aware, this interaction is assumed, thus glossing over the interactions of the various species of text—spoken word, directions to the actor, and documentation of the performance, including pictures and comments. In contrast, the divided text of *YOU—the City* highlights how our thinking extends beyond the spoken word to location to comment to a wide variety of components of the ecosystem (4).

Sherry characterizes this theatrical text as 'environmentally aware,' and suggests that the layout of the book is designed to increase the *literary reader's* awareness of environment as integral to experience of the play. Sherry however, admits, that this is a play of logistics rather than plot, and that "simply reading the text it is somewhat difficult to imagine" (8). This does not disqualify the (syn)aesthetic potential of the *literary playtext* as much as distinguish the different perception strategies that are required for *performance playtexts* and *literary playtexts*.

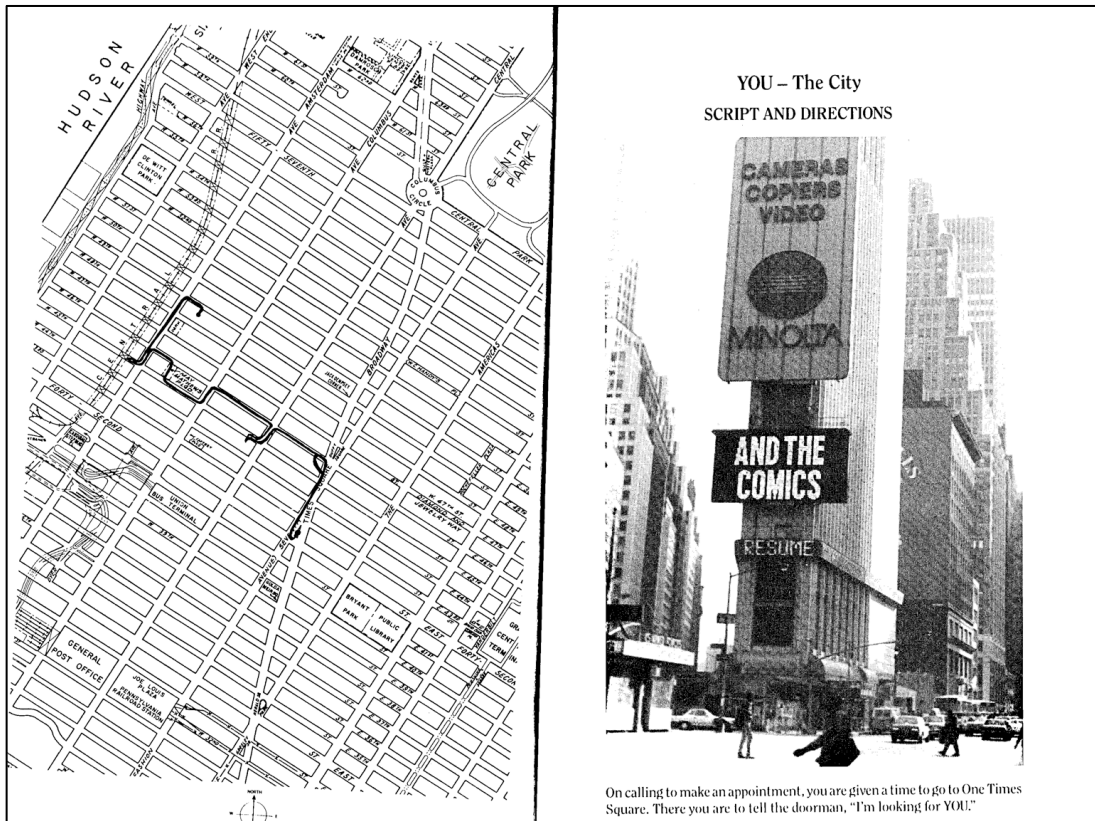


Image ♣. Map of journey for NYC production of *YOU—the City*

The book includes three introductory sections: 1. The book, the script and textual variations; 2. The Story (The story of the act from the client’s point of view); and 3. Manhattan production May-June 1988 (details of casting and itinerary). Templeton states that in order to read this script, “you may need to understand the presentation differs from that of a conventionally staged play” (1990: vii). Templeton understands that readers have been accustomed to engaging with *literary playtexts* in a particular way. Therefore, she must prepare the reader with extratextual didascalia. Section 1 prepares the *literary reader*, addressing him/her directly: “To the reader: on the script” (vii). Templeton is consciously framing the experience for a *literary reader*, rather than a practitioner. She identifies the book as a ‘script,’ and defines *YOU—the City* as a ‘play.’ This is worth mentioning because Breuer was specific in stating that *The Red Horse Animation* is not a play, instead classifying the work as a ‘stage

image,' which lacks a 'conventional script.' Christopher Innes states that, "to be reproducible there must be a core text. The play itself is then identified with this script" (2000: 58). In order to give a 'work,' a continued life, beyond performance, and to produce future performances, a script is necessary. Innes' statement implies that a script is for the practitioner, rather than *literary reader*. James M. Harding provides a definition of script that is apropos to this model of practice and my position that the *literary* and *performance playtexts* hypothesize each other: "The script is an enactment of researched actual events mixed with probabilities" (2000: 209).


The book version of *YOU—the City* provides a multitude of framing devices: scene headings provide locations, maps give an overview of the performance site and flow charts give insight into the plot structure. These 'species of text' are not provided for the *performance reader*, but rather these scripted elements of the play are experienced: the map that the *literary reader* holds and surveys, is walked and felt by the *performance reader*; the photographs that are viewed by the *literary reader* are witnessed by the *performance reader* who will create snapshots in his/her own mind; the scene headings structure the experience for the *literary reader* in a literal sense by cuing him/her to imagine re-locating, while the *performance reader*, unaware of such headings, physically moves from location to location. The *literary reader* passes from page to page, as the *performance reader* passes from site to site.

Sherry and Templeton's approach is to divide the text into columns where different elements of the play can be tracked. This approach to laying out the *literary playtext* in a poetically graphic manner demonstrates that there is an

attempt to create an aesthetic experience for the *literary reader*. Although the *literary reader* does not experience the chaotic exchange of dialogue via a live performer or the physical journey from site to site, s/he experiences a different chaos through the dissemination of information that they must navigate from page to page.

This Chapter's models of practice represent performance productions where the *performance reader* is engaged in a highly interactive experience. Site is integral to the experience of each play. As *performance playtexts*, they toured internationally, and were adapted with each site and audience. In the next section, a comparative analysis will consider the ways these particular *literary playtexts* situate the *literary reader*.

IMPLICATIONS OF 'YOU'

In the book version of *YOU—the City*, Templeton addresses the reader directly as a 'client.' The book situates the *literary reader* in a way that implies that, though not present at the live performance, s/he is included in the experience of the play's voyage as s/he takes on this integral role. The book includes a 'Client Questionnaire' (Image ) that the *performance reader* is asked to fill out at the start of his/her appointment. As can be seen in the questions, there is an emphasis on the word 'you,' which appears in almost every question, and functions in a similar manner as the word 'English' does in the opening section of *The Bald Soprano*. Including this questionnaire presents the book as a type of workbook. The reader can choose to fill in the blanks, manually or mentally.

CLIENT QUESTIONNAIRE

A. Your name _____
 Your address _____

B. Why you? _____

C. Are you now or have you ever been? _____

D. Isn't that exactly why you're here? _____

E. What is this making of you? _____

F. If you can't know if you mustn't ask, why look? _____

G. Do you know where you're going? _____

H. You see enough of yourself, don't you? _____

I. Do you believe you can act? _____
 Will you yield anyway? _____
 Should I be sorry that I could not satisfy you in person? _____

J. Are you to end there? _____

K. Does it help? _____

THANK YOU

Image 101. Client Questionnaire

Templeton's play takes the form of a series of poetic monologues composed of "non-naturalistic text [that] is delivered naturalistically" (1990: 139). Every line of speech employs the word, 'you.' Templeton explains that, "the word 'you' is the pronoun of recognition, of reply, of accusation, of balance; beyond the visual, animate, returnable; 'you' assumes and creates the relationship" (139). It is important to remember that the written language itself captures a sense of site, space and environment, supported and framed by the other 'species of text.' Stanton B. Garner explains:

Templeton's text approximates a kind of transurban speech, a running stream of language—overheard, received, thought, spoken—that constitutes the city as interrelational space. That this text is passed on (like the clients) between the play's performers underscores the jointly monologic and collective nature of urban discourse... The pronoun *you*, of course, is at the center of the discursive stream... *you* is established as one of the play's principal scenic terrains (2002: 106).

The repetition of the word 'you,' spoken by the performer, prevents the *performance reader's* passivity by addressing him or her directly with each 'you.' Sherry explains:

[I]f you are only in the role of watching performers, you might be able to separate yourself from the action. But if the performers are constantly telling things to 'you' while you are watching the scene, saying 'you' over and over, inviting your engagement, but not indicating in any clear way how to react or even whether to react, your sense of self begins to break down (2009: 5).

The book must somehow translate this interrelation between performer and *performance reader* so that the text itself overwhelms the *literary reader* into a state of heightened self-awareness where many aspects of the work place an emphasis on 'you.'

Next, I will analyze 'Act I, Scene ii – From Times Square to the Harlequin.' In the far left-hand column, Templeton and Sherry provide the *literary reader* with 'the unintentables' (Images ☒ and ☑). The unintentables consist of overheard conversations and anecdotes from clients, performers and production members. Templeton explains that this column allows the reader "to imagine the experience of the performance" (1990: viii). One unintenable reads as follows: "But all of these people that were selling on the street, there on Broadway were making screwy gestures, all signaling me away from her, and they came over to make sure I was all right" (14). This particular anecdote reminds the *literary reader* that site-specific performance manifests scenarios where bystanders are unaware that they are partaking in a performance, and that the client inevitably becomes a performer as well. The unintenable' column documents the *performance reader's* experience in order to guide and

provoke the *literary reader*, forming an intersection between the two potential readers of the ‘work.’


<p>ACT I</p> <p>Scene ii – <i>From Times Square to the Harlequin</i></p> <p>Performer C</p> <p>CONSUMED CONSUMER</p> <p>Female or Male</p> <p>Improvisation/Interruption Strategy</p> <p><i>... and you are there... and lets you care... understands the world you share... brings you closer to living... Takes you beyond the news... and you'll also get, absolutely free, perfect for your bed, your... your... puts it all right in your hand.</i></p> <p>This is an example of a TV commercial you can adapt for your own use. Any well-known public songs, ads, bywords, fictional clichés, idioms, billboards visible as you walk along and so on are suitable, as long as the word “you” features prominently. It is also preferable to drop the actual brand name, punch word or personality, so that while its recognition is implied, the “you” surfaces in its stead. Even embed it in this column.</p> <p>Your “you” is the most locally (culturally) variable.</p> <p>Action—6 minutes</p> <p>You exert a mercenary charm to mitigate your vehemence, but both wear through to the victim as you make your way from the high retail to the lowlife.</p>	<p>ACT I—Scene ii</p>  <p>You're back. You'll love that sound. Yes, I'd like you to meet... you come alone, you're very brave, you've got something. You wanted to come. You wanted to see it. You wanted me to be a nobody. You're talking about you went under cover. You have a whole new identity. They'll change your lifestyle. You'll get a new number. Dead before you get there. They're not your typical everyday person. It wouldn't take you long to figure them out. How do you get somebody to say I'll talk? I think you have to point out that</p>
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Image 8. Act I, Scene ii, *YOU—the City*, pages 12-13

<p>You constantly invent your “you”. You believe (and imitate) every “you” you hear or read.</p> <p><i>One guy thought that Janet broke character. He was saying, it's very bad, she said, "I don't want to make you bridle." And I said, "That's a line from the text," and he said, "No, no, she was talking."</i></p> <p><i>This bum came up and tried to parhandle money, and the woman I was with started to wonder, she was just getting ready to go with him...</i></p> <p><i>But all these people that were selling on the street, there on Broadway were making screwy gestures, all signaling me away from her, and they came over to make sure I was all right.</i></p>	<p>ACT I, Scene ii</p> <p>the tools you have available enable you. Now you see the major changes within, that people are not only speaking about it but writing books. You have the person who's caught in a jam. And that would've been you. You'd be out of a plate-glass window. It could be you. Pretty soon you're filthy rich. If you see an unattended package or bag... If you or someone in your family has an accident... I'm ready to answer your question. I don't want to make you bridle. You have to compare every other figure. You'll have considerable evidence. You'll sit down with five or six of you. Do you immediately decide? You can't generalize. When you decide, who makes the decision? You can see the way it will literally envelop, you'll see figures popping up. You have surveillance on the outside, you have protection on the inside. You like being the center of attention. You like being the star of the show. You like living on the dark side. You're not really but you like pretending. Billions of you have watched me. If I said you could have this, it's because you don't really understand it. You've got some room. Put in something that really means something to you. Figures you can act on. Ways to make it grow. It takes you through step by step. We'll give you... (You want fluff? You were there for about two years. Have you ever come close? You thought you licked it? And they're going to tell you all about it. Have you ever had threatening phone calls? Even if you had no credit problems.) Did you see them stuffing twenties in their pockets and not having enough room for it? If you take a look at the garbage collection industry... Let me ask you what happens. Where you stand. I'm not suggesting you can easily. However you have to recognize they're doing it under the guise of representing you. You have to be careful, you know. (Any place you have them longstanding, you have it bad. I want to ask you how you feel about the passing of these guys. You have to have a look at what the prevailing community standards are. Can you imagine keeping three or four million under your bed?) How do you get from where you were to where I am today? Your own guide, everything. Did they say we want you to? I said how well do you pay? We don't know you. You don't know us. We'll know all about you before we do anything with you. Have you ever been or are you now? Do you know anybody within? Have you ever done any business? Is that because you looked like you lied a lot? If I'm going too fast for you, you'll start receiving... See you later. When you decide to keep it. What do you do with all your ill-gotten gains? Did you ever get assurance a sentence would be easy? You claim hundreds are scot free. You're talking a lot more than you seem to think. (You never say this but you have to get them out. What was that story you told? About the bird on the plane?) Also you are liable to get one of the nicer things that could happen to you. Do you have one yet? I mean, wouldn't you just die for it? You have to register. I can't give you anything but... If you're pregnant, if you're a laid off worker, if you're smoking, oh you're right, you weren't in it. If you get your phone call made, you're thrown in with a group of people who maybe don't like you. You devastate your family. If you realize this, you go in, you're going</p>
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Image 9. Act I, Scene ii, *YOU—the City*, pages 14-15

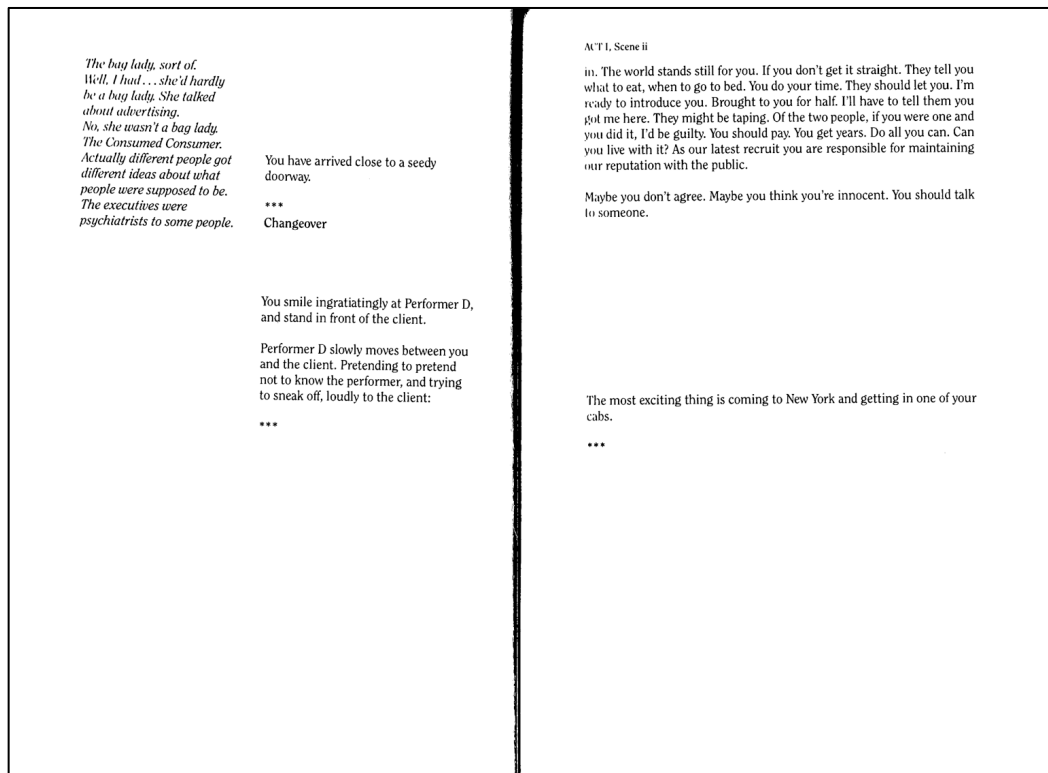




Image ☒. Act I, Scene ii, *YOU—the City*, pages 16-17

The inner left-hand column provides directions that run alongside the characters' verbal speech, which assumes the entire right-hand page. All columns are subject to interruption by photographs, as seen in Image ☒. The directions address 'you,' who in this column is intended to be the performer(s). A length of time (6 minutes) is established for the 'Action' and a direction follows: "You exert a mercenary charm to mitigate your vehemence, but both wear through to the victim as you make your way from the high retail to the lowlife" (1990: 12). The first lines of verbal speech in the right-hand column read: "You're back. You'll love that sound. Yes, I'd like you to meet..." and continues with every sentence employing the word 'you' (13). The *literary reader* must shift back and forth between envisioning the actions and behaviors of the 'you' of the directions column, and interacting with the text of the right-hand column, which addresses him/her directly as 'you' in each line of text.

The book version of *Paradise Now* situates the *literary reader* in the present tense, but never addresses him or her directly in the didascalia, which often refers to ‘spectators.’ The play begins with ‘Rung I,’ and the language in its opening passage excludes the *literary reader* from the implied gathering, placing him on the outside of the action: “When the audience has almost completely assembled, the actors enter the theatre, mingling with the spectators in the aisles, and on the stage and in the lobby” (Malina and Beck, 1971: 15). The reading experience would be different if it read: ‘As *you* assemble with the others, the actors enter and begin to mingle with *you* in the aisles.’ The *literary reader* is given a different role, as an observer, a sub-set of the audience that, though in the present tense, feels secondary to the spectators referenced.

With *YOU—the City’s* continuous use of ‘you,’ Garner appropriately raises the question: “What is the relationship of this *you* to the spectator and to the performer’s equally intimate/depersonalized *I*?” (2002: 106). Similar to Templeton’s use of ‘you,’ *Paradise Now* strategically places the word ‘I’ within the ‘Phrases’ (Images  and ). This situates both *performance reader* and *literary reader* to consider his/her position in relation to the statements allocated to the performers:

I AM NOT ALLOWED TO TRAVEL WITHOUT A PASSPORT.
I DON’T KNOW HOW TO STOP WARS.
YOU CAN’T LIVE IF YOU DON’T HAVE MONEY.
I’M NOT ALLOWED TO SMOKE MARIJUANA.
I’M NOT ALLOWED TO TAKE MY CLOTHES OFF
(1971: 15-18).

Each of these phrases is followed by a description of how the lines of text are used by the actors:

He goes to the spectator and repeats this phrase. With each repetition, his voice and body express greater urgency and frustration. He speaks only this phrase. If the spectator addresses him, he listens to the spectator but repeats only this phrase” (15).

These descriptive portions of text that follow each of the ‘Phrases’ form the didascalia, a mixture of extratextual, autonomous and technical, as defined by Michael Issacharoff. By providing this information in a state of ‘if,’ Malina and Beck keep the play ‘open’ to possibility, hypothesizing how the ‘spectator’ might choose to interact. These descriptive portions are in a liminal state between semi-documentation and hypothesis. Remembering that Malina and Beck translated the performance script into book form based on six months of performances, these descriptions might be a summation of what occurred, or what Malina and Beck intended to occur. For the *literary reader*, these descriptions can only be hypothetical.

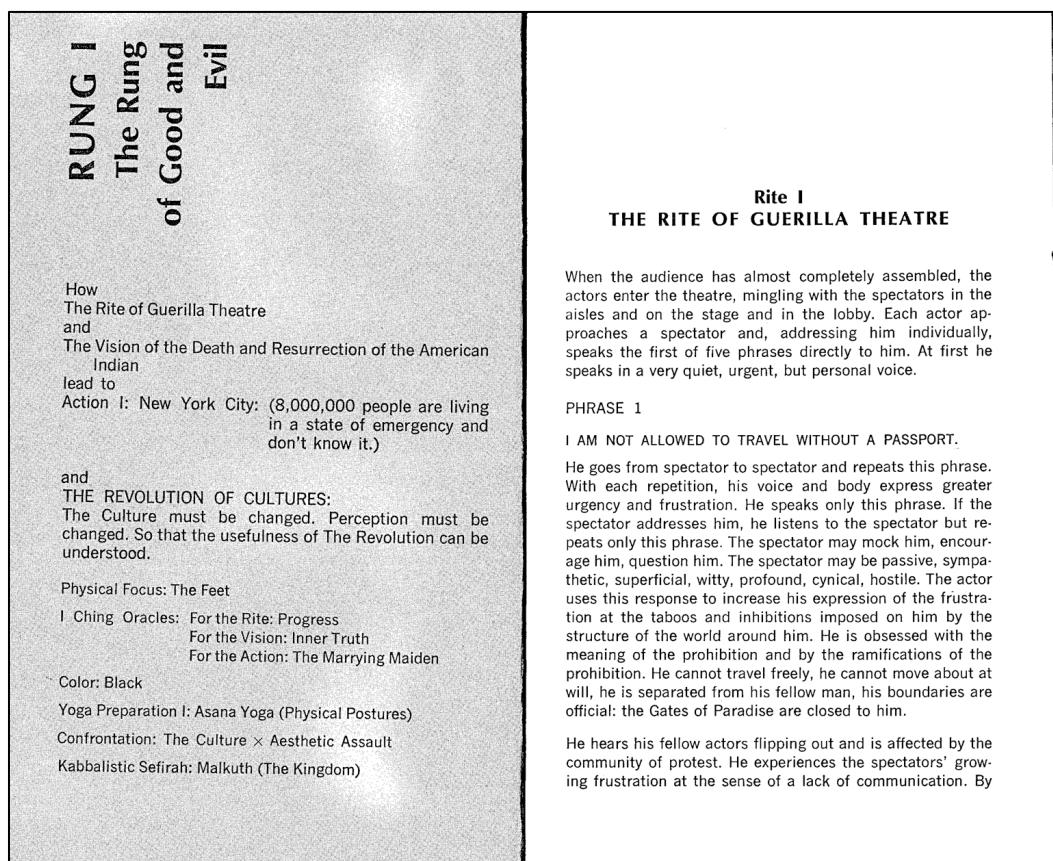


Image . Rung I, *Paradise Now*, pages 14-15

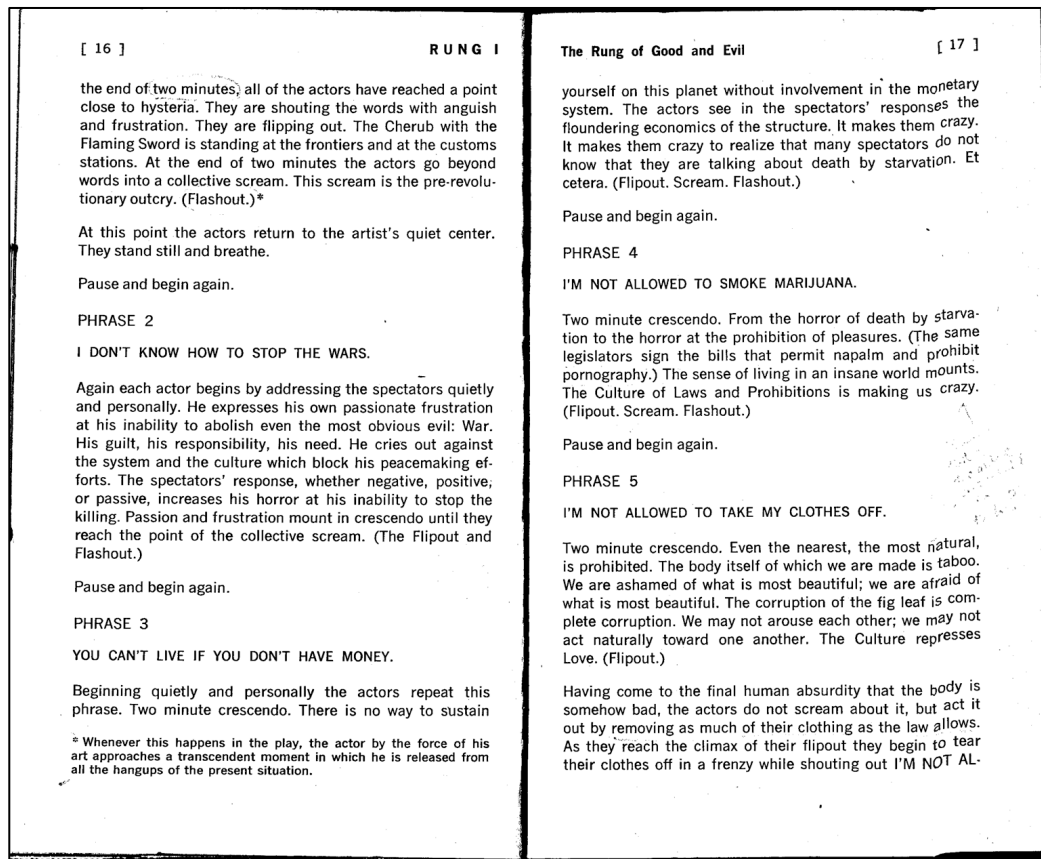


Image 5. Rung I, *Paradise Now*, pages 16-17

The intention to increase levels of consciousness and self-awareness in relation to the content of the play is at the core of both *Paradise Now* and *YOU—the City*. The intended experience hinges on the reader's ability and willingness to make active choices. The form situates the reader as subject and fosters his or her direct involvement and multisensory experience of the content. The next section will explore how the reader's increased self-awareness is guided through improvisational gaps that parallel the experience of the *performance playtext*.

IMPROVISATIONAL GAPS

Kai Van Eikels claims that "participation has to be negotiated every time you enter some kind of participatory situation" (2011: 22). Richard Schechner

suggests that, “[i]n participatory situations game structure replaces aesthetics. Instead of events being worked out beforehand, there is a ‘game plan’ a set of objectives, moves and rules that are generally known or explained. The game plan is flexible, adapting to changing situations (1994: 78). ‘Negotiate,’ ‘flexible’ and ‘adaptable,’ terms used here by Eikels and Schechner, are fundamental to training in improvisation. All three of these models of practice describe, suggest or allude to an improvisatory aspect, which involves both performer and reader. The notion of game structure replacing aesthetics also implies a certain level of competency on the part of the reader, to engage with the work.

YOU—the City includes two sets of appendices: ‘Notes to the Directions (On Performance)’ and ‘Notes to the Directions (On Structure).’ These two sections emphasize the interactive nature of the piece, which is contingent on several variables, in order to work successfully. Sherry explains: “The audience-of-one participates in the play according to a general set of rules and logistics established for the performance as a whole... The addenda read like a battle plan: everything accounted for including chance” (2009: 3). Sherry furthers his concept of battle-plan poetics by explaining:

[L]ogistics replaces the narrative and hence informs the theatrical structure. Whereas narrative is often associated with the story of an individual or the collective story of multiple individuals, by using logistics to replace a story line that runs from the beginning of the play to its end, Templeton again points out that relationships rather than individuals lie at the core of any understanding of our environment (6).

YOU—the City is structured around improvisational ‘gaps.’ While encouraging and provoking improvisation, the performance is still controlled by Templeton in that there are specific delineations of time for each scene, and a particular allowance for which lines can be cut. In a section titled, ‘Textual Variations,’

Templeton explains that ‘variables,’ marked with brackets, require the performer to adapt the text to the ‘client’ based on gender, dress and physicality. She warns the performer: “Be observant, not insulting” (1990: viii). ‘Droppables,’ marked by parenthesis, are sections that the performer may choose to drop in the interest of time if improvisation lengthened a particular section. Templeton advises: “Cut, don’t blurt” (viii). Finally, she explains how to approach what she refers to as ‘Improvisation/Interruption Strategies’ and stresses that if any text is to be improvised, “all improvised lines must use the word you” (viii). It appears that more freedom requires more guidelines.

In one ‘strategy,’ Templeton provides the ‘Performer’ with a sample text from a TV commercial and states:

This is an example of a TV commercial you can adapt for your own use. Any well-known public songs, ads, bywords, fictional clichés, idioms, billboards visible as you walk along and so on are suitable as long as the word ‘you’ features prominently. It is also preferable to drop the actual brand name, punch word or personality, so that while it’s recognition is implied, the ‘you’ surfaces in its stead (12).

These ‘strategies’ are guides, giving the performer a framework from which to choose his/her actions. This flexibility allows the performer to interact with the ‘client’ by responding to his/her appearance and mannerisms and to the site, adapting to the ever-changing landscape of a city. This approach also allows the play to be adaptable with time. If *YOU—the City* were staged today, the performer would not be bound to dated cultural references, or the sites where Templeton staged the play.

In *Paradise Now*, the first ‘Rite’ ends when “any actor who feels like it, who is so moved, can make a signal to everyone present,” and it is explained that, “the signal is intended to locate and communicate where the actor is at in

relation to himself, his surroundings, the performance and everyone else” (1971: 19). The actors have the freedom to end and begin sections of the play, within a framework that has been pre-determined. “The text is hardly a conventional dramatic 'script' since it reveals less than a quarter of the performance time was actually scripted, to allow spontaneous action (either by members of the group, or by the audience) to be incorporated” (Innes 65).

The time factor in *YOU—the City* is perhaps completely absent for the *literary reader*, whereas in the live presentation, timing is everything. In *YOU—the City*, the *performance reader* is less in control of the reading experience and “not previously instructed either to respond or to remain silent. The game is to be discovered” (Templeton, 1990: 146). For the *literary reader* the ‘game’ is laid out. S/he is aware of the ‘game’ as framed by the extratextual didascalia, while the *performance reader* is subconsciously integrated into the ‘game’ to be discovered. Templeton explains that, “the client who relaxes in the moment of the play, allowing the text and structure to build information that need not be retained consciously, will probably derive more from the experience than one who tries to figure out ‘what it is about’” (146). But, the *literary reader* is already told what the play is about, as Templeton’s supplemental components to the script explain the intentions and logistics of the play. Over-guiding the *literary reader* and including too much documentary material can reveal the architecture or mechanics of the game, making it difficult to play along or engage as intended. The published version of *YOU—the City* progressively becomes more of a manual or guide for actor and director, than a *literary playtext* for *literary reader*.

This Chapter's models of practice highlight creative and innovative approaches to presenting multi-linear and site-specific plays, where improvisational gaps place the reader at the center of the experience. These printed *literary playtexts* expand the potential for presenting site-specific and interactive plays as literature. The six models of practice in this thesis combine to suggest that postdramatic writing must employ didascalía in more innovative ways. As the media used to produce the text shifts from page to screen, book to website, print to digital; the media of the work embeds didascalía in order to increase the reader's potential for engaging the *literary reader* in a (syn)aesthetic experience,

George P. Landow pushes the *literary playtext's* potential in the direction of the hyper(play)text, when he encourages us to "abandon conceptual systems founded upon ideas of center, margin, hierarchy, and linearity and replace them with ones of multilinearity, nodes, links and networks" (1992: 2). Gunnar Liestol suggests a danger in moving in this direction: "multilinearity and the reader's increased influence on meaning production also have a negative side: the efficiency of communication decreases" (1994: 111). Acknowledging Liestol's position, that such an endeavor risks a breakdown in communication, this thesis suggests that the aesthetic and logistical aspects of the play are fused in the hyper(play)text, and didascalía functions as the training ground for developing the reader's competency for engaging with these types of plays. Plays, games and hypertext each require a high level of reading competency. The hyper(play)text combines these sign systems, and attempts to guide the reader to develop a hybrid of reading competencies required to engage with the work.

CONCLUSION

*You do have a leash, finally, as a writer.
You're holding a dog. You let the dog run
about. But you finally can pull him back.
Finally, I'm in control. But the great
excitement is to see what happens if you let
the whole thing go. And the dog or the
character really runs about, bites everyone in
sight, jumps up trees, falls into lakes, gets
wet, and you let that happen. That's the
excitement of writing plays—to allow the thing
to be free but still hold the final leash
– Harold Pinter (Cusac 32).*

The Grove Press edition of *The Bald Soprano* provides two alternate endings for the play, without typographical interpretation. Ionesco himself suggests “thirty-six other endings are possible and... as many thoughts” (Ionesco, 1956). The ending that is usually played, reads as follows:

The words cease abruptly. Again, the lights come on. Mr. and Mrs. Martin are seated like the Smiths at the beginning of the play. The play begins again with the Martins who say exactly the same lines as the Smiths in the first scene, while the curtain softly falls (Ionesco, 1956).

Rumi High concludes with a link back to the start of the play, placing the reader in a continuous feedback loop. Mark Fleishman describes practice-led research as “a series of embodied repetitions in time, on both micro and macro levels, in search of a difference” (2012: 30). Geoffrey H. Hartman describes Jacques Derrida’s ‘scene of writing’ as a “multi-ring but intersecting circus leading to one intense, ongoing act of reading” (1981: 4). The reader of *Rumi High* has the option to revise his/her experience by starting over, ‘searching for difference;’ by writing different choices through an ‘ongoing act of reading.’

How can participatory forms of immersive and site-specific theatre be presented as interactive *literary playtexts*, which enable the reader to have a

multisensory experience? This practice-led research presents the hyper(play)text of *Rumi High* as a model of practice for reading and writing plays as digital literature. In Lehmann's defining of postdramatic theatre, he suggests that "[t]he historical drifting apart of text and theatre demands an unprejudiced redefinition of their relationship" (2006: 46). The hyper(play)text widens the scope of what constitutes text in a theatrical context, and how different types of texts might be used to produce a (syn)aesthetic reading experience. The hyper(play)text re-imagines long-established Aristotelian elements of drama to experiment with the multisensory potential of written language combined with hypermedia in order to re-establish the literary integrity of plays. Placing the reader at the center of the experience, the principles of Stein's 'landscape' play are realized in a digital reality that places the reader in a continuous present. Playwrighting practice is expanded spatially, collaboratively and textually, as the hyper(play)text is built, designed and crafted with many layers that explore both linguistic and graphic modes of poetic expression. The reading experience for *Rumi High* aims to be a multisensory event where the reader interacts with sounds, images and written language in a manner that can be broadly viewed as a performance event. This new approach to playwrighting requires a creative and innovative hypothesizing, through written language and other types of text that invite new layers of collaboration, and a more flexible envisioning of the play through a process of mutual creation.

First, I will evaluate the practice project as a response to the research question, considering how the development of the hyper(play)text expands

playwrighting practice. I will then discuss visions for *Rumi High* that were not realized in this hyper(play)text version, acknowledging areas where my lack of technical skill prevented the play's development. Then, I will briefly address the issues around authorship and ownership that are complicated by digital media and my notion of collabowrighting. The Conclusion will point to the possibilities that the hyper(play)text affords this cross-disciplinary research in the fields of Theatre and Digital Literature, positioning *Rumi High* as a model of practice in this new territory.

NEW PRACTICES IN PLAYWRIGHTING

With the increasing popularity of digital literature, the tactile experience of reading, whether on screen, tablet or smartphone, as well as the variety of interfaces (Apple, Samsung, HTC), media can now assume a greater agency in how the reading process is affected. Each of these aspects of reading increases the number of layers that contribute to the reader's choice making and meaning-making processes. The reader may choose to read the play on a variety of devices (laptop, tablet, smartphone), and the choice of media and their sight, (with regards to screen size), and site, (with regards to their physical location), may affect the choices made within the play's multi-linear narrative. The reading pathway could vary with each individual reading based on the choices made by the individual reader. Experienced as 'live' on the Internet, the hyper(play)text shifts the site of reading, as the play-reading experience itself becomes performative.

In *Rumi High*, choice in navigating between the classroom scenes and the scenes that take place beyond the classroom walls, to construct one's own narrative, is symbolic of the shift from an anaesthetic education to an aesthetic education that Ken Robinson calls for. Each reader must make a choice, in his/her role as 'student,' as to what kind of learning experience s/he wants. Yet, it may be argued that the 'trick' of the play is, that no matter what choices the reader makes, s/he is always involved in an aesthetic experience. Similar to Rancière's call for a new type of theatre spectator, Alexandra Saemmer suggests that hypertext requires a new culture of reading:

Hypertext is a projection room where parent texts and related texts succeed and overlap one another and where more or less blurred memory traces 'split-up,' meet or deceive our 'horizon of expectations.' Hypertext is also a risky 'toy.' In its extreme stage, hypertextual reading becomes the symbol of a society characterized by lack of concentration and fleeting attention. It illustrates in a powerful, literally 'palpable' way, the extent to which the obsession with 'frenetic clicking' is grounded on a failure to remember: a failure exploited by a 'compulsive capitalism' that has invaded the digital network. A new culture of interpretative reading may be needed" (2014: 28).

The hyper(play)text, in its effort to enable (syn)aesthetic playwrighting practice, takes many risks in its integration of the *literary reader* with *performance reader*. This new 'voracious' reader is an active participant: looking, listening, embodying, interpreting, performing and writing the text. Szendy's notion of listening and looking (as opposed to hearing and seeing), places an emphasis on the reader's intention to make meaning, beginning with his/her initial choice to engage with the work. The hyper(play)text also requires a certain level of competency, both in play reading, and in reading hypermedia, despite efforts to guide the reader through a poetic use of didascalía.

The media that is used to present and frame a given text, is various and ever-evolving, which in effect allows a great many texts to re-invent themselves in other forms.

Those who feel threatened by hypertext and associated technologies might do well to remember that, after the introduction of spacing between words made reading to oneself possible in fourteenth century universities, private silent reading [was] forbidden in the classroom... Similarly, when books appeared, many faculty members feared these dangerous new teaching machines, which clearly ceded much of the instructor's knowledge and power to the student... hypertext answers teachers' prayers for active, independent-minded students who take more responsibility for their education and are not afraid to challenge and disagree (Landow, 1992: 163).

The hyper(play)text and the concept of a play-as-website, will soon be outdated. Technology is rapid in its evolution, and the critical reflection that academic research requires cannot operate at the same pace, if it is to be meaningful and effective. This is why, inevitably, in the creative arts, practice should lead research.

The relationship between artistic practice and writing, in the context of academic research, is a challenging and much debated topic. Increasingly, academics whose methodology involves practice, are required to produce a surplus of documentation-as-data, in order to legitimize a form of knowledge production which is experiential, multisensory and not always best articulated through traditional academic writing formats. Considering Patrice Pavis' Postmodern notion of "*contamination of practice by theory*," where "theory generates practice," this thesis presents itself as a model for practice-led researchers, exhibiting how critical reflection intertwines creative practice and theory (Pavis, 1992: 71-72). The structure of the written thesis demonstrates an approach to critical reflection that emphasizes the interrelationship between

case studies and practice, expressed through a detailed discussion of decisions and choices in relation to practice, at both micro and macro levels. Developing the hyper(play)text transformed my playwrighting practice in a variety of ways. My notion of writing expanded to 'wrighting,' where graphics, typography and performance itself, are considered types of text. The play form brings these texts together to engulf the reader in a combination of sign systems. Sight and site became integral to playwrighting, as digital spaces for creating and presenting material opened new opportunities for collaboration across a wider network of contributors. Expanding upon the notion of performance-as-writing, and bringing new art forms into my practice, the process of developing *Rumi High* as a hyper(play)text incrementally increased the work's collaborative potential. Interestingly, in the latter phase of production, when my laptop computer became the site for finalizing the details of the hyper(play)text, my practice fused Mode 1 (solitary writing) and Mode 6 (web design); I was alone, collaborating with machine, rather than human being. In producing a *performance text*, the process usually builds towards a communal experience. In the future, I would prefer to work with a team of web designers, graphic designers and software programmers, to achieve the vision and intentions of the play. As director/playwright, despite a 'DIY ethos,' I am more interested in playwrighting as a curatorial practice that brings together various types of expertise in a collabowrighterly process, rather than developing my own technical facility in web design. While the hyper(play)text expanded my notion of the play, text and the act of playwrighting, I suspect that my playwrighting practice will return to notebook and pen to 'wright' my next play. However, as a

result of this research project, I will carry the knowledge of what a *literary playtext* can become in a hyper(play)text production. The next section will discuss three features for the hyper(play)text version of *Rumi High*, that were not achieved with this practice project, but would be possible.

POSSIBILITIES

Once I entered the territory of digital literature, the possibilities of how a play might be presented became endless. There are many concepts and visions that I developed for *Rumi High* that ultimately were not realized as part of this research project. This is a reality of all theatrical production; limitations, whether financial, temporal or practical, will limit aspects of production. Making theatre is an ongoing process of adapting to circumstances. Repetition and revision is the training that helps to develop these skills.

The hyper(play)text has the capacity to engage with more complex and advanced use of media, particularly sound, video and animation, which were types of text that I generally did not engage with, aside from a minimal use of sound. Interacting with a network of artists and educators, through the popular platform of Facebook, I began to consider how readers might interact with other readers (through a live chat screen, as part of the text) and how they could take on a 'speaking' role (by writing into the play's improvisational gaps), leaving traces of their own reading experience. Here, I will discuss three features for the hyper(play)text of *Rumi High* that would increase the play's (syn)aesthetic potential: The Log-In, The Chat Screen and The Write-In.

The Log-In

The reader would enter the hyper(play)text by creating a username and password. This would become a framing device that stages the reader in an act of 'enrolling' in the school. S/he would create a username, which the hyper(play)text would then employ, to address the 'student' by his/her name throughout the play, instead of using '(YOU)'. The reading experience would become more personalized. In the 'Homeroom' scene, for example, the reader's name would appear on the attendance sheet, alongside the scripted characters' names. Further, a touch-screen and stylus could enable the reader to inscribe his/her own handwriting onto the sign-in sheet, allowing his/her handwriting to become part of the landscape of fonts. If the reader were to follow BETTY, s/he would be addressed by his/her name, increasing the reader's sense of agency in the experience.

The Log-In feature would also help to address issues of temporality within the experience. The temporal aspect of *Rumi High* is a critical aspect of the play, as the reader is situated within the context of an entire school day. In performance, the time frame could be fixed by production elements. As with all *literary playtexts*, the *literary reader* is free to set the pace of his or her reading, including stopping and starting. In order to achieve this sense of controlled time, and limitations of engagement, the hyper(play)text could possibly impose time limits on the reader at specific points in the play. During a class period, a clock might hold the fast reader at the site of reading longer than desired, or interrupt the slow reader, relocating him/her to the next site. Placing such temporal controls could deepen the experience in relation to the content of the play, but

also runs the risk of losing the reader, who may become frustrated by the inability to save his/her place, and to pace the reading process according to his/her needs.

In the hyper(play)text of *Rumi High*, one of the aspects that I view as a flaw, is that the web pathways are masked. No matter where the reader clicks, the web browser always reads: 'www.RumiHigh.org.' This is because my personal domain, (www.johnmichaelrossi.org), is being used to host the play, (further instilling my control and ownership of the hyper(play)text, which will be discussed in the next section). This prevents the reader from trying to decode the pathways, but also requires the reading of the play to occur in one session. Alternatively, the Log-In feature could provide the reader with a username and password that would allow him/her to stop and start, to save, to retrace steps, and to backtrack in order to discover alternative pathways. This would be quite a different experience than a hyper(play)text with time constraints, but might prove to increase the play's interactive potential as readers begin to engage with play reading more epically, as they might a video game, or television series.

The Chat Screen

In order to increase the interactive capacity for the reader, and to engage with the 'liveness' of the internet, the hyper(play)text might include a live chat screen. This feature would allow readers to communicate with each other, as 'students,' in 'real time.' The Internet presents the globalized society as eternally interconnected. Reading the hyper(play)text would become communal as readers in various parts of the world would be logged into *Rumi High*, where

each web page would function as a live ‘chatroom.’ If two or more reader’s happened upon the same site, they would be able to dialogue and share information with one another, potentially influencing each other’s reading experience. This would achieve the effect of Punchdrunk’s trademark ‘cabaret space’ where *performance readers* are free to remove their mask, and socialize with each other, with the option to return to the performance, with a new shared knowledge.

The Write-In

In *Rumi High*, there are two different classroom scenes where the students are given a writing assignment that is to be collected at the end of the class period. MISS WHITE requires students to write an alibi, to prove that they did not stick gum on the chair. TEECH invites students to imagine a fictional world on the other side of the ‘portholez,’ and to write the history of that place. In both instances, the reader is given the option to click on a link that automatically downloads a writable document to complete the assignment. They are provided with an active e-mail address (MissWhite@RumiHigh.org and MisterTeech@RumiHigh.org) to submit their work. If the reader does so, their writing will later be added to the hyper(play)text for future readings. Unfortunately, this process is delayed, as the addition of their text is dependent on my availability to receive the material, and to adapt the design of the page, to include their work. This delay prevents the reader from receiving the satisfaction of seeing his/her words become part of the play. It also may be assumed, cynically, that work is being censored, as it must be sent to the ‘teacher,’ before being added. In a more advanced hyper(play)text production,

the 'write-in' feature would be instantaneous, similar to how readers of blogs or news articles can often write commentary, forming an ongoing dialogue that extends from the initial writing.

These three features suggest that the hyper(play)text certainly enables the author, or owner of the website, to maintain a certain level of control over the reader's experience. However, with each new feature, choices in how to frame the reader's experience in relation to the content play, suggest that every aspect of form must be considered critically. The next section will consider how the hyper(play)text highlights aspects of digital culture that problematize longstanding notions of authorship

ISSUES OF AUTHORSHIP

As a result of this practice-led research, this thesis puts forth a model for critical practice, and proposes that playwrighting in the 21st century requires a broader definition of a *literary playtext*. How a play is accessed, how it looks, how it is read, and how it is built or designed, become integral to playwrighting and play reading practices. The hyper(play)text takes the play form into new territory where the site of reading, the Internet, enables a worldwide readership to access the play at any time, from any place. The reader also chooses the media with which to engage with the work: desktop computer, laptop computer, tablet, smartphone or more recently, a wristwatch. The Internet enables the mass distribution, piracy and unintentional plagiarism of pre-existing works across the globe. Thus, the hyper(play)text makes *Rumi High* available to unauthorized use and misuse. The satirical world of the play, and the framing of

'The Draconian Typewriter,' perhaps suggests that this might be an intention of the work.

The hyper(play)text problematizes ongoing debates around authorship and author's rights, which in the 21st century, have been renewed in other creative industries, due to digital media. The text of *Rumi High* collaborates with other texts, both pre-existing texts and potential future texts. My use of pre-existing texts, particularly Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* and poems by Rumi, as well as the digital linking to contextual material online, subverts the notion of copyright and intellectual property. *Rumi High's* intentional use of appropriated texts subjects the work to legal scrutiny, even though the work itself acknowledges these original texts and their authors. This issue has had particular currency in the music industry where recent disputes over an artist's inadvertent use of another artist's melody or musical phrase have received attention in the press.

In the US, a federal court awarded Marvin Gaye's family \$7.4 million in a suit against Pharrell Williams and Robin Thicke that alleged that their hit song, *Blurred Lines* (2013), was a 'copy' of Gaye's *Got To Give It Up* (1977), as the two songs had substantial similarities. "Howard King, lead attorney for Williams and Thicke, told the panel that a verdict in favor of the Gaye family would have a chilling effect on musicians who were trying to recreate a genre or homage to another artist's sound" (Associated Press). Another recent dispute, between Tom Petty (US) and Sam Smith (UK), over the similarity between Petty's *I Won't Back Down* (1989) and Smith's *Stay With Me* (2014), was settled out of court, when Smith agreed to pay royalties to Petty, giving him songwriting credit

for *Stay With Me*. It was alleged that Smith's song "closely resembled" Petty's; Smith claims that he had never heard Petty's song, and Petty described the situation as "nothing more than a musical accident" (Guardian Music). In both of these cases, the alleged 'copycats' claimed that these similarities were not intentional, though Williams and Thicke have acknowledged the influence that Gaye's music had on their own artistic development. The hyper(play)text is vulnerable to such disputes if the play were to become a commercial success.

This practice-led research project focuses on the play form as *literary playtext*, and playwrighting practice as a process of 'mutual creation.' *Rumi High* continues an avant-garde theatre tradition of deconstructive readings of *The Crucible*, as initiated by The Wooster Group. "*L.S.D.* demonstrates that every reading is a political act; every interpretation, an exercise of power" (Savran 219). It is my position that making use of pre-existing authored material to create a new work increases the value of the original material, by generating a renewed interest in the original work, and the author. It is worth noting the phrasing of the copyright statement published in *Paradise Now*, which reads: "The play 'Paradise Now' is not private property: there are no performance royalties to pay: it is free: for any community that wants to play it" (Malina and Beck, 1971). In the spirit of The Living Theatre, I write the play in a public space, the world-wide-web, which opens the work to anyone who chooses to access it. I encourage the open reading, performing, producing and transforming of *Rumi High*.

Rumi High subverts the notion that a dramatic work can ever be controlled, and asserts that the playwright should not attempt to control it

beyond performance productions that seek their direct involvement. I leave monetary compensation out of this discussion, as the relationship between the market economy and authorship would constitute a thesis in and of itself. My goals in writing *Rumi High* are not financially motivated. However, should I choose to use the work for profit, either through a performance production, or by initiating a paid access system to the hyper(play)text, would this be contradictory to the ethos of the work itself, as David Savran claims to be the case with Miller and The Wooster Group?

I must acknowledge that through the development of *Rumi High* as a practice-led research project for the purposes of completing a doctoral degree, I do benefit from a particular type of economic agency. While I am not profiting financially from literary or performance productions of *Rumi High*, the academic context that the work sits within, alongside the doctoral degree that it is associated with, enable me to follow a particular career trajectory. As a result, I become eligible for high-level positions in academia, which may give me access to opportunities for publication and access to funding streams for future practice-led research projects. Considering this type of cultural economy, an alternative to the market economy, it might be argued that my notion of collabowrighting is further problematized. If *Rumi High* was produced as 'pay-to-access' hyper(play)text, it can be expected that collabowrighters might ask for, and be eligible for monetary compensation. In the economy of 'mutual creation,' how are collabowrighters compensated for their contributions? They are acknowledged within the hyper(play)text and in the written thesis. As a result, collabowrighters can reference their role in the creation of *Rumi High* on

résumés, web profiles, and job applications and grant proposals. For some, I have already served as a referee on applications. I have also been asked to attend rehearsals and performances of creative works in development, or to read drafts of written material, providing critical feedback and practical advice. In addition, new collaborative partnerships, job opportunities and projects, apart from me, have emerged as a result of having met through the process of working on *Rumi High*. Thus, a 'network' has been formed, where engaging in an act of mutual creation requires an entrepreneurial ethos that suggests an economic agency based on cultural sharing, where the exchange mechanisms are more expansive, yet at times more ambiguous, than the directness of monetary compensation.

It should also be noted that several of the *Rumi High* collabowrighters have been involved with previous projects led by myself. It can be expected that I will continue to approach these artists for future projects. This is evidence of my commitment to the concept of playwrighting as an act of mutual creation, and situates, more definitively, my approach to theatre-making practice as ensemble-based. This understanding and reflection of my own creative practice is intricately tied to the selected models of practice, through which a detailed study and analysis enabled me to clarify my intentions, my methodology and my ethos as creative practitioner, researcher and educator.

Jay David Bolter puts forth a 'metaphor of mind for our age:' "mind as a network of signs, of which the computer is the embodiment. To understand the mind as a network of signs is also to understand the mind as a text... a writing space filled with interwoven signs" (1991: 208). If we are to understand the

mind as a text, we ourselves become writing bodies. These bodies are endlessly producing and receiving texts, both intentionally and unintentionally. Presuming that creative output is a conscious act, postmodern literary theory tells us that the authorial intentions that lead to any type of creative work, may never match the meaning discovered in the work's output. Authorial intentions are merely traces of a process, which continue with each reader, whose own context is combined with the given circumstances of the reading event, to yield both meanings intended and meanings unimagined. All the writer can do is write with an awareness of this plurality of meaning contained within a creative work. This is an ethos of mutual creation. Mutual creation is not unique to plays. Playwrighting practice however, because of the play's binary identity, involves many collaborative layers where a host of individual and collective intentions lead to a text that is densely populated with multi-authorial traces.

AFTERWORD

All texts prove to be interdependent, and derivative of pre-texts which in order to maintain relevance, must forge new texts. These new texts are forged through adaptation, appropriation, deconstruction and even ignorance to pre-texts. I have referred to my own autobiographical context throughout this thesis. I too, am a text, weaved together with collaborative threads. As a starting point to explain the epigraphs that frame each chapter, I quote Bonnie Marranca:

America has always been a culture of more ethnic diversity than any other in the West, and, singularly, it has been for centuries the land where people have come to escape their own histories and cultures even as they cling fiercely to those values and symbols left behind. There is more than a little truth in William Gass's contention that the only history America can have is a geographical one (2012: 209).

The epigraphs combined, form a network of texts that hold a geographical context that maps my personal history and development as a writer.

I was born and raised in Staten Island, the only borough of NYC not connected to the subway system, reliant on bridges and the Staten Island Ferry to connect to rest of the city. In 2001, I moved to Boston where I attended Emerson College. My years in Boston were critical to my development as a theatre-maker, providing me with practical training and historical underpinnings that I continue to draw from. Upon completion of my undergraduate degree, I moved back to NYC, residing in Brooklyn, where I pursued a Master's degree and began teaching. During this period, I also spent an extensive amount of time in Turkey, as a result of a five-year relationship with my then-partner, a native of Turkey. Prior to moving to London, England, to begin my doctoral research, I was engaged in a genealogical study that involved trips to Italy to

trace my family lineage. In 1900, my great grandfather, Ernesto Rossi, emigrated from Naples, Italy to NYC, USA. This genealogical research enabled me to prove that Ernesto Rossi never renounced his Italian citizenship, in effect making me eligible to reclaim my own Italian citizenship, becoming a dual citizen, of the United States and Italy.

This thesis begins with a quote from Paul Zindel, published in his Pulitzer Prize winning play, *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds* (1970). Zindel has written numerous works of fiction for youth, mostly semi-autobiographical, set in Staten Island. Zindel and I both were raised in the small predominantly Polish town of Travis in Staten Island. Many of the references to characters and places in his books are closely associated with this town's history.

Richard Foreman is a playwright, theatre director and founder of the Ontologic-Hysterical Theatre in NYC. He was also born in Staten Island. Foreman himself has written about the influence of Gertrude Stein on his work, and scholars such as Marc Robinson have written extensively on Foreman's intense focus on the viewer's perspective and his use of the continuous present. Foreman's concept of a 'Mixmaster culture' is evident in the hyper(play)text and the thesis' suggestion that a play is 'mashup-able.'

Robert Fitzgerald Diggs, better known as RZA, is the leader of hip-hop group Wu-Tang Clan, originally composed of ten rappers from Staten Island and Brooklyn. In the 1990's, they recorded music on the island, and often referenced life in the borough in their lyrics. During this era, Wu-Tang not only produced music but defined hip-hop culture, as they developed new and

innovative business models for rap groups, and endeavored to other types of creative output, including a clothing line (Wu-Wear) and video game development, which contributed to a sub-culture of 'Wu.' Though RZA is speaking from a musical context when he refers to 'originality' and 'sampling' in a 'digital culture,' these words can be applied to the hyper(play)text, as I have suggested that plays are 'Mashup-able.'

Spalding Gray is a monologist and co-founder of The Wooster Group. In this thesis, the group's *LSD* is referenced in relation to my own deconstruction of *The Crucible*. Gray's practice of writing and performing autobiographical monologues is deeply contextualized by his self-definition as a 'collage artist' who lives 'in order to tell a life.' In 2004, Gray's body was found in the East River, near Brooklyn. Having suffered from depression, his drowning is believed to be a suicide. He was reportedly last seen on the Staten Island Ferry.

Deborah Meier is an American educator often associated with establishing the foundational principles behind the small-school movement, based on the progressive ideals of John Dewey. Meier is a native New Yorker, and her work in public education has affected great change in the NYC system, and she has also spent a substantial portion of her career in Boston, working as a principal. Meier's urging of educators, to develop 'voracious readers,' is aligned with the hyper(play)text of *Rumi High*, which is focused on cultivating active readers.

Carl Sagan, a native of Brooklyn, is an astronomer and cosmologist, recognized for his contributions to scientific research on extraterrestrial life. Sagan's inclusion in this network of writers no doubt stands out, but his

musings on writing as ‘magic’ captures a spirit that has guided this research project. If books ‘break the shackles of time,’ the hyper(play)text perhaps opens the pathway to a multisensory continuous present.

Orhan Pamuk is a Turkish novelist, awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2006. His novels are, at times, semi-autobiographical, and are often composed of complex plots with characters that struggle with the clash between Western and Eastern cultures. He is a fierce advocate for freedom of speech, a right that the Turkish government, historically, has not strongly protected. The selected quote from Pamuk’s novel, *The New Life*, echoes the parallels between music composition and the play text that this thesis illuminates.

Dante Alighieri is an Italian poet, born in Florence, from which he was exiled due to his political activities. In exile, Dante writes his epic poem, *The Divine Comedy*, which tells the story of a man’s journey through Hell, Purgatory and Heaven. Dante’s quote in the opening of *In La Vita Nuova* suggests that the notion of mind as text is not particular to the digital era.

Harold Pinter is a British playwright who also directed, performed and wrote for film, television and radio. Pinter’s artful use of ‘pauses’ in the stage directions of his plays, often referred to as the ‘Pinter pause,’ is viewed as a trademark of his work. Pinter’s work in theatre has been significant on the stage of world politics, as he has spoken out against the abuses of state power around the world. Each day, as I walk around the corner from my East London flat in Clapton, I take a ‘pause’ to view the blue plaque that marks Pinter’s childhood home, and consider: “the excitement of writing plays—to allow the thing to be free but still hold the final leash” (Cusac 32).

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APPENDIX I. List of Images (included in thesis)

INTERVAL 1

- Image 1. “*The Point*,” Book 34, 20 May ‘08, 2:44 pm
- Image 2. “*The One*,” Book 34, 2 June ‘08, 7:12pm
- Image 3. “*Taken to Here*,” Book 34, 21 June ‘08, 8:57 am
- Image 4. Screenshot of excerpt from Scene: [‘OHP: Sillybus’](#)
- Image 5. Layout of the scene that became ‘OHP: Been to Cheeza’ as expressed in *FinalDraft*
- Image 6. Screenshots of scene: [‘OHP: Been to CheezaA’](#)

CHAPTER 2

- Image A. Sample text from Gertrude Stein’s *Four Saints in Three Acts*
- Image B. The first page of *The Invention of Tragedy*
- Image C. Pages 262-263 from *The Invention of Tragedy*
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- Image E. Pages 158-159 of *The America Play* (TCG)
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INTERVAL 2

- Image ↗. BIG MIKEY BEE’s [‘Welcome Letter’](#)
- Image ⇐. Chart reflecting eight fonts considered for the character of LIL-CO
- Image ⇑. Chart reflecting characters’ ‘Font-as-couture’ with sample lines of text
- Image ↶. KID WILD CARD monologue in Scene: [‘OHP: On the Burrow’](#)
- Image ↔. Screenshot of excerpt from scene: [‘OHP: MINI LESSON’](#)
- Image ↓. Screenshot of excerpt from scene: [‘OHP: Under the staircase’](#)

CHAPTER 3

- Image ≈. Front (left) and back (right) covers of Grove Press edition
- Image ç. Title page of Grove Press edition
- Image √. Character pages in Grove Press edition
- Image f. Setting page of Grove Press edition
- Image ©. Description of setting in Samuel French edition
- Image μ. Stage directions form the top of Mr. Smith’s head
- Image β. Scroll-like framing
- Image Δ. Character heads replace character names to denote dialogue
- Image †. Mr. & Mrs. Smith’s dialogue, example 1
- Image ø. Smiths and Martins, example 1
- Image π. Smiths and Martins, example 2
- Image «. Smiths and Martins, example 3
- Image j. Smiths and Martins, example 4
- Image ç. Smiths and Martins, example 5
- Image ∞. The Fire Chief’s entrance
- Image §. The affect of the Fire Chief’s text
- Image ¶. The Fire Chief’s stories
- Image ∂. The Maid’s story
- Image №. Text ‘gone mad,’ example 1
- Image ∓. Text ‘gone mad,’ example 2
- Image ℓ. Text ‘gone mad,’ example 3
- Image ×. Text ‘gone mad,’ example 4

Image ʝ. Text 'gone mad,' example 5
Image ʞ. Text 'gone mad,' example 6
Image ⑥. First page of *Red Horse* comic version
Image ʃ. First page of *Red Horse* anthology version, pages 32-33
Image 𠄎. The Gobi Desert in comic version
Image ʔ. 'Sound' in the comic version, example 1
Image ʃ. 'Sound' in the comic version, example 2
Image ʞ. Sound in the trilogy version

INTERVAL 3

Image [--]. Screenshot of '[OHP: Mini Lesson](#)' with 'pop-up' of TEECH's script
Image %. Screenshot of variations of scene: '[OHP: The OOOFT Meeting](#)' (green version) and '[OHP: The OOOFT Meeting](#)'
Image X. Screenshot of '[OHP: Chooze Wizely](#)'
Image >. Screenshot of [Security Room](#)
Image \$. Screenshot of [Map of Rumi High](#)

CHAPTER 4

Image ʘ. The Chart for *Paradise Now*, pages 2-3
Image ʃ. Performer Shuttle diagram for *YOU—the City*
Image ʃ. Performer/Client Timetable for *YOU—the City*
Image ʘ. Map of journey for NYC production of *YOU—the City*
Image ʘ. Client Questionnaire
Image ʘ. Act I, Scene ii, *YOU—the City*, pages 12-13
Image ʘ. Act I, Scene ii, *YOU—the City*, pages 14-15
Image ʘ. Act I, Scene ii, *YOU—the City*, pages 16-17
Image ʃ. Rung I, *Paradise Now!*, pages 14-15
Image ʃ. Rung I, *Paradise Now!*, pages 16-17
Image ʃ. Scene A1, *TAMARA*, pages 20-21

APPENDIX II.
List of Hyperlinks (included in thesis) and their web pathways

INTERVAL 1

OHP: Sillybus: http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/3.Ya_Drama.html

OHP: Been to CheezA: http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/3.Yb_Drama.html

INTERVAL 2

Click [here](http://www.RumiHigh.org) to begin your s'kool journey: www.RumiHigh.org

Welcome Letter: http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/Rulez_&_Regulationz.html

OHP: On the Burrow: http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/6.6b_KWC.html

OHP: MINI LESSON: http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/2.Xa_History.html

OHP: Under the staircase:
http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/4.1b_LILY_+_BILLY.html

('bell ringz'): http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Media/long_bell_ring.mp4

OHP: Substitoot Teachuh: http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/1._Homeroom.html

OHP: back at it: http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/0._KWC_+_TAZ_1.html

(beatz): <http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Media/Kuttin.mp3>

the IntrAcom comez on: <http://johnmichaelrossi.org/Media/1.1ADeBEE.mp3>

INTERVAL 3

link: <http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Media/IngleshAssignment.doc>

OHP: MINI LESSON: http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/2.Xa_History.html

OHP: The OOOFT Meeting (green version):
http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/1.3z_OOOFT_Meeting_w_BAG.html

OHP: The OOOFT Meeting:
http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/1.3_OOOFT_Meeting.html

OHP: Chooze Wizely: http://johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/5.Yd_Portholez_3.html

Security Room: http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/Security_Room.html

spider-map: http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/Pathwayz_1

Map of Rumi High: http://www.johnmichaelrossi.org/Rumi_High/Pathwayz_2.html

APPENDIX III.
Cacographic Glossary of Selected Words and Phrases from *Rumi High*

EDU-SPEAK & ACRONYMS

AlibEyez, A written ass-ess-meant that enforces the notion of 'If-You-See-Something-Say-Something.'

Ass-Ess-Meant, an examination

Chief Fire Chief, one of MISS WHITE's many positions at Rumi High

CM: Confidential Matter

Edumacation

OOOFT: Organization Of Overly F_____ Teachers, The Teacher's Union

OHP: Over-Head Projector

S'kool

Ingle`sh

Shedule, a pattern of redundancy

Sillybus, a prescription for learning

PEOPLE & PLACES

AfreakA

Amerika

Cafeternasium, a hybrid space that doubles for eating and physical edumacation

Cheeza

Doodle Lane

Gumtear Road, location of Rumi High

Loose Leaf, city location of Rumi High

Mevlana Jeluladdin Rumi High S'kool (Ω910) a.k.a. Rumi High a.k.a. MJRHS

New Hamperserdamned, state location of Rumi High

The Boarz of Edumacation, the organizing body for the public edumacation system

The CIAckAz, BETTY's gang

The Dungeon, Room D-421, where Drama class takes place

The EyeRich, descendants of EyeLand

The EyeStallions, descendants from EyeStallonia

The 'The' University, LILLIAN-BERG's place of employment

West Hamptserdamned

Yuman, where DEBI's family is from

SLANG

Snickasnuff, to humiliate

Gawz, people, crew, friends

Rims, rhymes

APPENDIX IV.
List of Collabowrighters

MEMBERS OF newFangled theatReR

Ashleigh Beyer
Megan E. Carter
Hasret Esra Cizmezi
Niluka Hotaling
Bret Jaspers
David Kane
Howard Klein
Megan Raye Manzi
Sevrin Anne Mason
Cheryl Pawlowski
Seth Reich
johnmichael rossi
Seth Soloway
Justin Sturges
Morgan Lindsey Tachco
Jason 'SweetTooth' Williams

MEMBERS OF The BEEz

Luke Bevan
Immy Clayton
Chessy Hayden
Mukundwa Katuliiba
Jack Lovegrove
Sam Mitchinson
Lewis Pilcher
Amber Rose
Peter Sherwood-King
Sam Thornton
Daisy Trinder
Annabel Williams
Bethan Williams-James

MEMBERS OF *The S'KOOL OF EDUMACATION FACEBOOK GROUP*
(Deferred Collabowrighters)

Adama Jackson, Alan Silberlight, Amanda Hinkle, Amber Rose, Angela Rodriguez, Angie Melendez, Annabel Williams, Anne Rhodes, Anthony Richard (Lodico), Ashleigh Beyer, Ashley Zaragoza, Athena Leonardo, Becky Utech Gaugler, Belinda Mello, Bethan Williams-James, Bret Jaspers, Bridget Rush Hernandez, Brooke Que, Carl Kornell, Chernice Miller, Cheryl Pawloski, Chessy Hayden, Corey Brown, Craig Stoebling, Daisy Anastasia Trinder, Damien Contessa, Dana Lawit, Danielle Duffy, Daria McCloskey, David J. Goldberg, Dax Valdes, Debbie Lipkowitz Brumer, Donna Rubin, Edina Husanovic, Eilileen Olivia, Emilio Rodriguez, Erica Giglio-Pac, Esra Cizmezi, Evelyn Tainsky, Frances Rossi, Gabriel Eugene, Godfrey L. Simmons, Gwenyth Reitz, Harold Watson, Jack Lovegrove, Jad Bernardo, James MacDowell, Jamie Winnick, Jason 'SweetTooth' Williams, Jay Strumwasser, Jenna Rossi-Camus, Jo Mi Ro, John Bell, John Edward Rossi, John Lucadamo, John Stillwaggon, John Villone, johnmichael rossi, Jonathan Koza, Judy Catalano, Judy Schneeberg, Julie Doyle, Justin Sturges, Katherine Toukhy, Kelli Buck, Knarf Ittezzam, Leslie Carmen Irizarry, Lewis WJ Pilcher, Linda Ames Key, Linda Ocasio, Ljugene Caroline, Marcia Meshel, Marilyn Byrd, Mark Thiel, Marni C. Gold-Ernay, Martin Cole, Martin Dittus, Maureen Bailey Sinnott, Megan E. Carter, Megan Raye Manzi, Melissa King, Melissa Kogut, Melissa Shaw, Mike Farina, Mike Halverson, Morgan Lindsey Tachco, Mukundwa Katuliiba, Nedra Gallegos, Nicole Vought, Niluka Hotaling, Noma Blechman, Norm Scott, Nubia Marin, Oliver James Hymans, Patricia Ruffin, Patrick Noone, Paul Carpenter, Philip Alexander, Phyllis Solar, Rachel Evans, Rachel Parsons, Rafael Sochakov, Rich Northup, Richard Hall, Richard Lipscomb, RM Sanchez-Camus, Robert Haberski, Robert Michelin, Robert Van Brunt, Rosalie Ariotta Friedland, Sabrina Jacob, Sade Namei, Sam Mitchinson, Sevrin Anne Mason, Shannon Reed, Shaquille Mortley, Sharon Alexander Green, Shawn henry, Sheila Jackson, Shelah Marie (Roulhac), Stephanie Gilman, Taniqua LA Harbor, Taryn Matusik, Temesgen Tocruray, Thea Platt-Glasser, Thomas Gleisner, Tommy Salvato, Troy DeWeever, Tsilya Skibityanskaya, Ugo Anyanwu and Vincent Ingrisano

CAST LIST FROM DECEMBER 2012 PERFORMANCE PRESENTATION (READING, UK)

DEBI`:	Immy Clayton
KID WILD CARD:	Sam Mitchinson
TAZ:	Peter Sherwood-King
BETTY:	Lewis Pilcher
LILY-WHITE:	Daisy Trinder
BROOKE-LYNN:	Chessy Hayden
LIL-CO:	Mukundwa Katuliiba
BILLY:	Bethan Williams-James
BIG MIKEY BEE:	Luke Bevan
MISS WHITE:	Annabel Williams
TEECH:	Jack Lovegrove
MISS PLACE`D:	Amber Rose
JIM-GYM:	Richard Hall
PEA-KEATON:	Sam Thornton
SIGNOR(A) BLOK:	Rosie Lovell
LILLIAN-BERG:	Sevrin Anne Mason
HEAD OF SECURITY:	johnmichael rossi

CAST LIST FROM JANUARY 2013 PERFORMANCE (NYC, USA)

DEBI`:	Morgan Lindsey Tachco
KID WILD CARD:	David Goldberg
TAZ:	Troy Deweever
BETTY:	Niluka Hotaling
LILY-WHITE:	Adama Jackson
BROOKE-LYNN:	Ashley Zaragoza
LIL-CO:	Shaquille Mortley
BILLY:	Rafael Sochakov
BIG MIKEY BEE:	John Stillwaggon
MISS WHITE:	Sevrin Anne Mason
TEECH:	John Stillwaggon
MISS PLACE`D:	Linda Ames Key
JIM-GYM:	Vincent Ingrisano
PEA-KEATON:	Melissa Shaw
SIGNOR(A) BLOK:	Melissa King
SECURITY:	Howard Klein, Chernice Miller, johnmichael rossi

LIST OF FONT DESIGNERS (APPROPRIATED COLLABOWRIGHTERS)

FONT DESIGNERS
<i>Acji Preschool</i> by Anke Arnold
<i>ELS GO</i> by Des Gomez
<i>Pizza is My Favorite and the girl next door</i> by Kimberly Geswein
<i>In Between</i> by Scarlett
<i>PEAK</i> by kaboom creative
<i>Parkinson's</i> by Rick Walton
<i>DJ GROSS</i> by SDFonts
<i>Prince Valiant</i> by Dieter Steffmann
<i>RentomNote</i> by Divide-by-Zero
<i>farsi Inspired</i> by Veronica-Shiva KCB
<i>beehives are sticky, @ridinary Day and Slim Jim</i> by FontPanda
<i>Learning Curve</i> by Blue Vinyl
<i>A Lincoln font</i> by Steve Woolf
<i>MR. ORTIZ</i> by DyslexicEnglishTeacher
<i>DIGITAL 7</i> by Style-7
<i>3CURD JANS</i> by Azmi Kamarullah
<i>Draconian Typewriter</i> by Nicolas Coronado
COLLEGED BY imagex

APPENDIX V. A Timeline of Practice

MAY 2012

I begin a solo performance practice, developing the character of 'Mistuh JoMiRo' a masked figure who performs interactive and site-specific classrooms in a serial piece titled, *The S'kool of Edumacation*. This work allows me to explore first-hand, the performer-audience dynamic in interactive and participatory performance. Through this practice, a methodology of performance-as-writing is developed, and becomes integral to the development of *Rumi High*. The first performance takes place as part of 'Live Art Drop-in Centre,' a DIY flash event at The Alleyway, in East London.



Promotional Material for Live Art Drop-In Centre

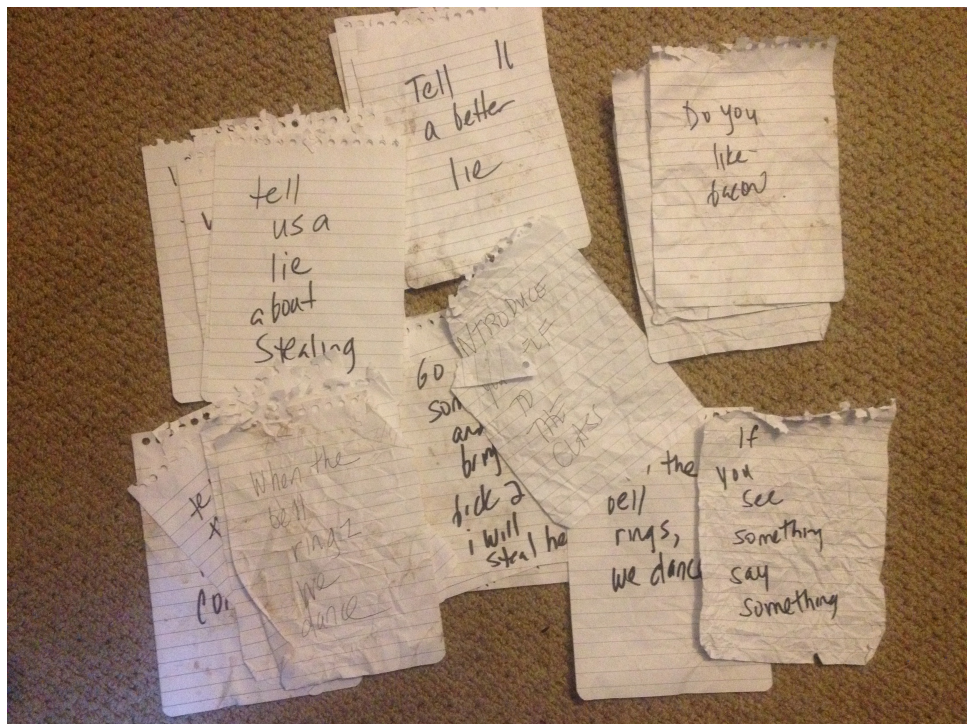
The S'kool of Edumacation and the character of Mistuh JoMiRo, as a solo performance series was developed alongside the political and critical aspects of *Rumi High*, and in many ways has taken on a life of it's own. Returning to this form of performance-as-writing has been a major component to the writing of *Rumi High*, and there are two subsequent performances following this inaugural showing. With each performance, a new set of collabowriters contributes to the development of *Rumi High*.



Mistuh JoMiRo selfie.



The participants in 'The S'kool of Edumacation' (May 2012)



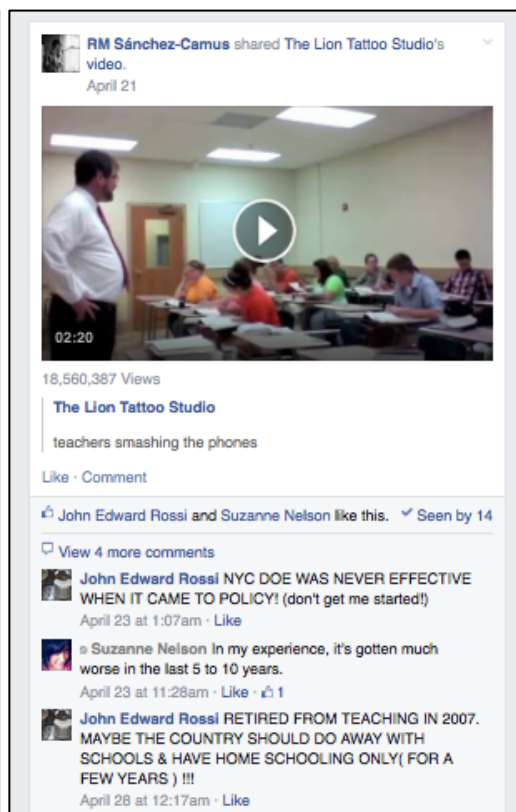
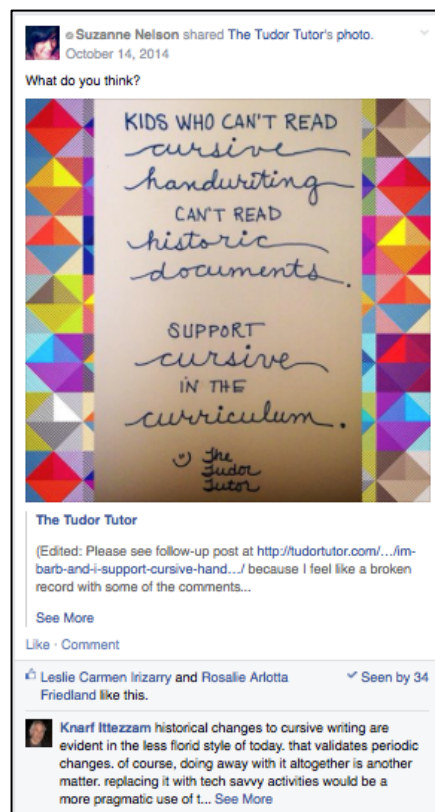
Textual Residue from the May 2012 performance.

SEPTEMBER 2012

I form an online group, 'The S'kool of Edumacation,' created through *Facebook*, which allows an online community of invited educators and artists to dialogue in a forum devoted to the topic of public education. Here, members of the group are free to 'share' contextual material, and to write their own commentary, express their agreement or disagreements in the form of 'likes.' To date the group has 134 active members.



Screenshot of Group Page for 'The S'kool of Edumacation'



Samples of 'shared' posts and subsequent dialogues

OCTOBER 2012

Continuing my work with members of newFangled theatReR, I conduct one-on-one live video rehearsals through *Skype*, a free voice, video and text messaging application, which enables me to work with overseas artists, in different time zones and locations. Previously, newFangled theatReR's practice has been group-oriented and movement-based. The one-on-one rehearsals through webcam required a new approach to developing work.



Skype Rehearsal with Bret Jaspers to develop TEECH



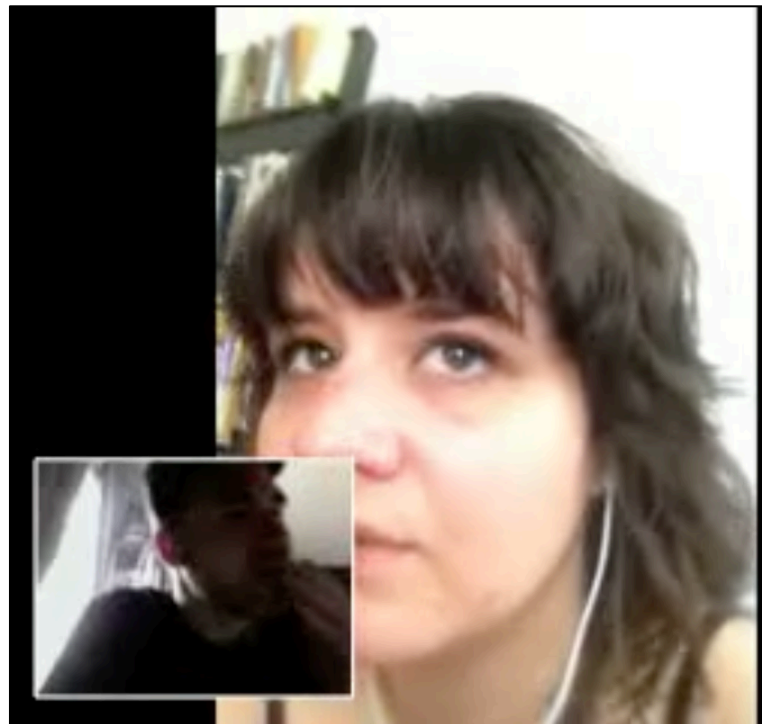
Skype Session with Howard Klein (Costume Design)



Skype Session with Niluka Hotaling (Set Design)



Three-way Skype rehearsal with Sevrin Anne Mason and Bret Jaspers



Skype rehearsal with Morgan Lindsey Tachco to develop DEBI

NOVEMBER 2012

At the University of Reading, I form a theatre group of twelve undergraduate students in the Department of Film, Theatre & Television to develop *Rumi High* over the course of the 2012/13 academic year. The group meets me every fortnight in a four-hour workshop to explore and develop the play's themes and text-in-progress. The group adopts the name, the BEEz, (an acronym for the 'Badly Educated Ensemble').

MJRHS(Q910) the B.E.Ez WORKSHOP #1
Thursday, 1 November 2012 6p-10p, Bob Kayley Theatre

SCHEMA:

- 6:00-6:20: **Check-In, Framing & Fang-Up (Warm-Up)**
Crazy Eights
The Knot
Pass The Clap
- 6:20-6:45: **'Walking the Grid' through S'kool: MISS WHITE: Control, Power & Appearance**
- *Stop & Go, Levels, Tempo, Shape, Size, Interaction (add Music)*
- *Drawing from personal histories, participants will develop a physical life of a 'controlling' teacher, focusing on aspects of Control, Power and Appearance.*
- 6:45-7:25: **Dual Flocking Around S'kool** (with music from edumacation playlist)
- *Quick Brainstorm of Student Stereotypes*
- *Focusing on the character of MISS WHITE, participants will be called in pairs to lead the 'dual flock.' One will take on an exploration of MISS WHITE to lead their flock, the other will choose a Student Stereotype to lead their flock.*
- 7:25-7:40: BREAK
- 7:40-9:40: Work-Through of PERIOD 2
- *The Group will work through the current draft of PERIOD 2, up on their feet, stopping and starting.*
 - o *Where are characters and what are they doing when not 'written in?'*
 - o *Which scenes may be taking place simultaneously?*
 - o *Which locales are defined in the text?*

Tentative Casting for Workshop #1:

DEBT IMMY
BIG MIKEY BEE: SAM T.
MISS PLACE'D AMBER
MISS WHITE: BELL
SIGNOR BLOK: -----
PEA-KEATON: LEWIS
JIM-GYM: (TOM)
TEECH: LUKE
LILLIAN-BERG (BETHAN)
TAZ: JACK
LILY-WHITE: DAISY
BROOKE-LYNN: CHESSY
KID WILD CARD: SAM M
BETTY:
BILLY H.: PETER
LIL-CO MUKUNDWA
JaMz of FABRIZ: -----

??? GEMMA, ROSIE, KADISHA, JASMINE ???

- 9:40-10:00: **Wrap-Up & Next Steps**
- Feedback, Questions and Concerns
- Important Dates to Consider

Supplies:

IPOD with edumacation playlists
Copies of PERIOD 2 (18)

Workshop #1 Plan

MJRHS(Q910) the B.E.Ez WORKSHOP #2
Thursday, 15 November 2012 6p-10p, Bob Kayley Theatre

SCHEMA:

- 6:00-6:20: **Check-In, Framing & Fang-Up (Warm-Up)**
Shakedown & Stretch -- WestSide Story -- Pass The Clap
- 6:20-7:20: **'Walking the Grid' through S'kool: Simultaneous Performance**
- *Stop & Go, Levels, Tempo, Shape, Size, Interaction (add Music)*
 - *Carving out Space—participants will mark a 's'kool' space in the space, creating a sign, and creating physical actions in that space. Once established, participants will tour the 's'kool,' to familiarize themselves with the locales. They will then return to their devised spaces.*
 - *Each participant will be given their character role for the day, and will be asked combine character with space. Once established, they will be guided through an improvisation through these spaces. (traveling through a s'kool day)*
- 7:20-7:40: BREAK
- 7:40-9:30: Work-Through of PERIOD 3
- *The Group will work through the current draft of PERIOD 3, up on their feet, stopping and starting.*
 - o *Where are characters and what are they doing when not 'written in?'*
 - o *Which scenes may be taking place simultaneously?*
 - o *Which locales are defined in the text when?*

Tentative Casting for Workshop #1:

DEBI' BETHAN
BIG MIKEY BEE: LUKE
MISS PLACE'D CHESSY
MISS WHITE: DAISY
SIGNOR BLOK: PETER
PEA-KEATON: IMMY,
JIM-GYM: SAM T.
TEECH: JACK
LILLIAN-BERG MUKUNDWA/ CARRIE-ANNE
TAZ: SAM M
LILY-WHITE: BELL,
BROOKE-LYNN: AMBER
KID WILD CARD: LEWIS
BETTY: ROSIE
BILLY H.: PETER
LIL-CO MUKUNDWA/ CARRIE-ANNE
JaMz of FABRIZ: CARRIE-ANNE / LEWIS

- 9:30-10:00: **Wrap-Up & Next Steps**
- Feedback, Questions and Concerns
 - Presentation
 - o Approach to Staged Reading
 - o Use of Space
 - o Scripts/Binders/Drafts
 - o Dec 10th
 - o Rehearsal weekend before?
 - Next Term

Supplies:

IPOD; Copies of PERIOD 3 (18); location signs;

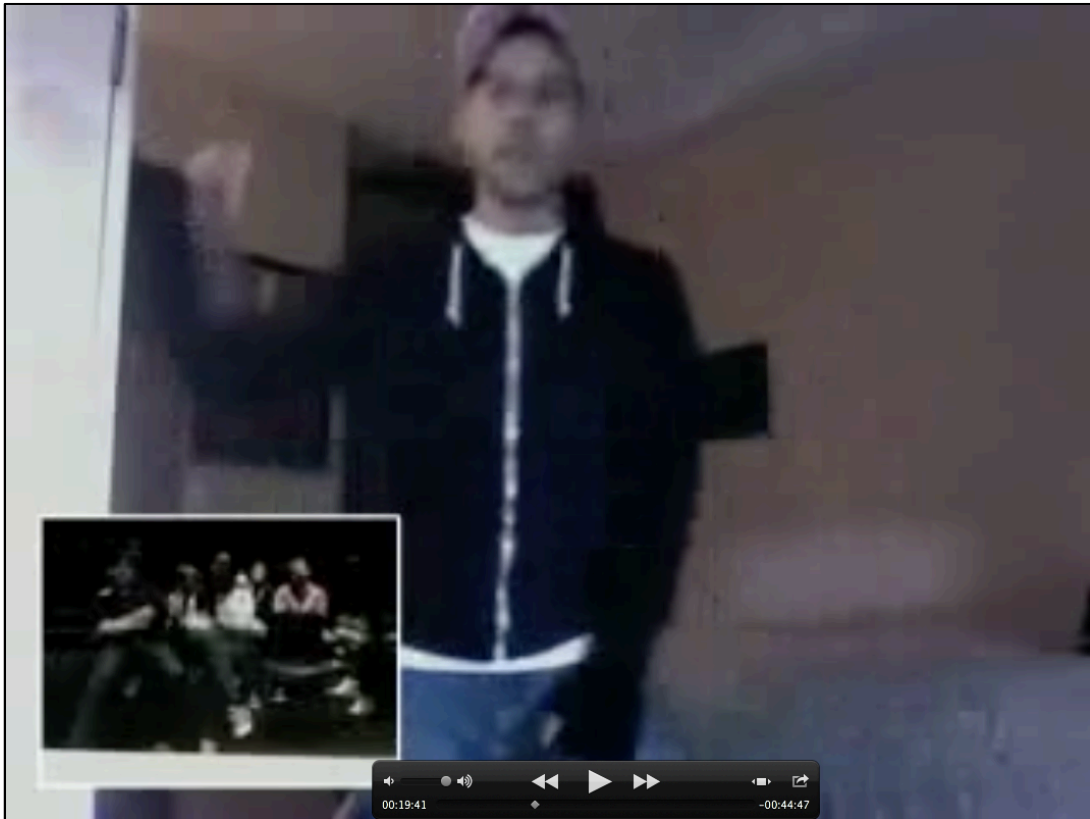
Workshop #2 Plan

MJRHS(Q910) the B.E.Ez WORKSHOP #3
Thursday, 29 November 2012 6p-10p, Bob Kayley Theatre

SCHEMA:

- 6:00-7:00 **Skype-In David Kane via Providence, Rhode Island**
- DK background and thoughts on JM's writing; how to approach
 - Kid Wild Card Workshop
 - o Shifting across the three personas
 - o Approaching the Text: Shooter's 'Rims'
 - o Read-Through of KWC/DEBI' scene from Period 3
- 7:00-7:20: **Check-In & Framing**
- Confirm Rehearsal and Presentation Times and Details; PaR Discussion
 - o Reading & Scripts, Binders, Costume, Props, Space, etc
 - New Ideas:
 - o BETTY
 - o Script Layout- Lettered scenes
 - Casting for Presentation; additional actors?
- 7:20-7:40: BREAK
- 7:40-7:50: **Quick Fang-Up**
Shakedown & Stretch -- Pass The Clap
- 7:50-8:30: **'Walking the Grid' Locating a Character's Center**
- *Stop & Go, Levels, Tempo, Shape, Size, Interaction (add Music)*
 - *Character Walks & Locating your character's Center of Energy*
 - *Developing Habits, Mannerisms*
 - *JM will work one-on-one with each participant to flesh a vocabulary of actions and mannerisms for each character*
- 8:30-9:30: **Work-Thru Re-Structured Period 1**
- 9:30-10:00: **Wrap-Up & Next Steps**
- Feedback, Questions and Concerns
 - Costume Ideas
 - Next Term
- Tentative Casting for Presentation:*
- DEBI' IMMY
 - BIG MIKEY BEE: LUKE
 - MISS PLACE'D AMBER
 - MISS WHITE: BELLE
 - SIGNOR BLOK:
 - PEA-KEATON: SAM T.
 - JIM-GYM:
 - TEECH: JACK
 - LILLIAN-BERG [RECORDED?]
 - TAZ: PETER
 - LILY-WHITE: DAISY
 - BROOKE-LYNN: CHESSY
 - KID WILD CARD: SAM M
 - BETTY: LEWIS
 - BILLY H.:
 - LIL-CO:
 - JaMz of FABRIZ:

Workshop #3 Plan



Skype session with David Kane working on *KID WILD CARD* in tandem with BEEz workshop

DECEMBER 2012

Having worked with the BEEz for one term, we present a staged book-in-hand performance of excerpts of *Rumi High* throughout the Minghella Building at University of Reading. The focus was to explore how *performance readers* would move through a performance site where a variety of simultaneous performances were happening throughout the building. The BEEz were challenged with presenting material that was intermingled with improvisational structures that accounted for the timing and sequencing of simultaneous scripted scenes. In their binders, was a revised printed script that was arranged in a fashion specific to each character's pathway. The printed form was already presenting challenges to the writing and reading process for this play.

The performance presentation is also designed to explore how the themes of the play, which emerged from an American context, would resonate in the UK. The BEEz themselves were particularly engaged with the material, but I am curious to see how an audience who are not part of the development process will respond. A post-performance discussion is facilitated with the *performance readers*, which includes academics, university staff, postgraduate and undergraduate students and members of the BEEz. The participants of this performance event and post-performance discussion were major contributors to the writing of this work.

the B.E.E.Z

present

RUMI HIGH

An Interactive Multi-Localized Staged Reading
of the first parts of *Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi High School (1910)* by *johnmichael rossi*



MONDAY 10th DECEMBER 6:30p

Starting in Bob Kayley Theatre, Minghella

(latecomers welcome)

(be prepared to travel spaces)

(be prepared to get a'kooled)



Poster for December 2012 Performance Presentation



Skype Session with Sevrin Anne Mason to produce footage for LILLIAN-BERG scenes. Footage was used with live actors in the December 2012 performance

MIRHS(0910) the B.E.Ez REHEARSAL			
<i>Sunday 9th December 2012 4p-10p, Minghella Building</i>			
SCHEMA:			
4:00-4:20	Check-In & Framing		
	- Framing The Day's Plan; working simultaneously		
	- Review Space Designations and Use of Signs		
	- New Scripts & FlowChart; Review New Material (See Attached)		
	- Costumes and Props		
	- Running Tech/Sound and Set-Up/Breakdown		
	- BETTY and SECURITY GUARD as extra eyes; dipping into a cartoon world		
4:20-4:40	Warm-Up		
	- Pass The Clap		
	- Walking The Grid- Character Centers; Walks & Habits		
4:40-6:10:	Work-Thru Script (PERIOD 1)		
6:10-6:20:	BREAK		
6:15-8:20:	Work-Thru Script (PERIOD 1-2)		
8:20-8:30:	BREAK		
8:30-9:45:	RUN-THROUGH (TIMED)		
9:45-10:00:	NOTES & FIXITS & PLANS FOR 2MORO		
<u>New Materials to Go Over:</u>			
Lillian Scenes		d. Stayin' Put	Pages 56-58
Start	Page 1	PASSING	Page 65
A1. The first...	Pages 3-5 BETTY notation	C1. Beehive...	Pages 88-92
b. (end)	Page 39	d.	Pages 93-97
B. Jim-Gym	Pages 40-41	D1. (start)	Page 98
C3. The Copy...	Pages 45-46	E. & e.	Pages 109-114
c. Ass-Ess-Ment	Pages 53-55		

Rehearsal Plan for December 2012 Performance Presentation

SPACE	SET-UP	BREAKDOWN	WHO
BOB KAYLEY	Place Chairs in Rows facing HR; table at HR; Homeroom sign on door/ Ingesh and Science Signs Underneath; MS. PLACE'D props set	Put Away Chairs; Leave one table and 2 chairs set with JM airbook and projector; Box Up Props, Throw Away Trash	AMBER, BELLE, DAISY, ROSIE, BETHAN, MUKUNDWA
BULMERSHE	Place chairs in a circle Upstage; Drama Sign on Door	Put Chairs Away, Box Up Props, Throw Trash Away	IMMY, PETER, SAM M, CHESSY,
STUDIO	Place chairs in rows facing back of houses; table at back of house; Lewis Camera in Back House Left corner; History Sign on Door; all black curtains open to show walls	Put Chairs Away, Table To Side; Breakdown Camera, Throw Trash Away	LEWIS, JACK, SAM T., RICHARD,
MEETING ROOM	Big Mikey Sign on Door; Faculty Sign Underneath	Throw Trash Away, Fix Chairs	LUKE
OUTSIDE OF BOB KAYLEY	Set Table and Chair; Props	Return Table; Throw Trash Away	LUKE
	BOB KAYLEY 	BULMERSHE 	STUDIO

Site Plan for Performance Presentation

MEVLANA JELULADDIN RUMI HIGH S'KOOL
666 Gum-tear Road, LooseLeaf, New Hampsterdamned
Principal, Mr. Michael Bee

PROGRAM CARD

S'kool: Q910
Term: Autumn 2012

NAME: _____ **STUDENT NO.** _____

Period 1: Homeroom	TBD
Period 2: <u>Ingle`sh</u>	MISS WHITE
Period 3: <u>MathematiX=why?</u>	MR. PEA-KEATON
Period 4: -In Language	TBD
Period 5: Lunch	---
Period 6: Biology	SIGNOR BLOK
Period 7: <u>Fizzz Ed</u>	JIM-GYM
Period 8: Drama	TBD
Period 9: <u>AmerikAn</u> History	MR. TEECH

Program Card X given to select Performance Readers

MEVLANA JELULADDIN RUMI HIGH S'KOOL
666 Gum-tear Road, LooseLeaf, New Hampsterdamned
Principal, Mr. Michael Bee

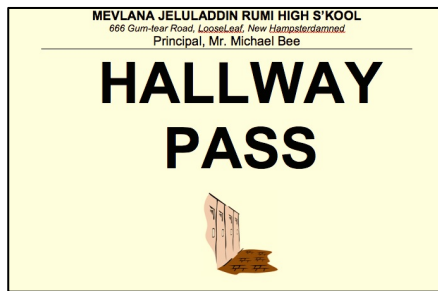
PROGRAM CARD

S'kool: Q910
Term: Autumn 2012

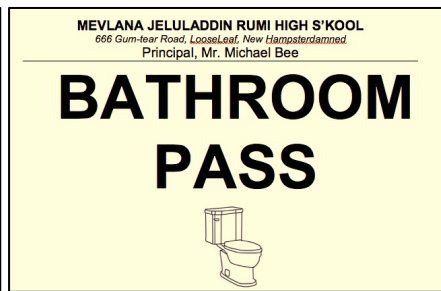
NAME: _____ **STUDENT NO.** _____

Period 1: Homeroom	TBD
Period 2: <u>Ingle`sh</u>	MISS WHITE
Period 3: <u>MathematiX=why?</u>	MR. PEA-KEATON
Period 4: -In Language	TBD
Period 5: Lunch	---
Period 6: Biology	SIGNOR BLOK
Period 7: <u>Fizzz Ed</u>	JIM-GYM
Period 8: Drama	TBD
Period 9: <u>AmerikAn</u> History	MR. TEECH

Program Card Y given to select Performance Readers



Hallway Pass Prop



Bathroom Pass Prop



The Head of Security greets the new 'students' at Rumi High



MISS PLACE`D CLAUN-UFFGOOD INTENZIONE` welcomes the class



BIG MIKEY BEE and MISS PLACE'D CLAUN-UFFGOOD INTENZIONE`



An overhead scene between LIL-CO and DEBI`



TEECH distributes scripts to the students. Performance reader, James MacDowell (right) is selected to participate.

JANUARY 2013

Three weeks after the performance presentation in Reading, UK, I return to NYC to present revised material in a similar fashion. Vital Theatre Company provided access to their theatre spaces, to run an intensive three-day workshop, followed by another book-in-hand performance of material from *Rumi High*. I revise the script based on the Reading presentation, and adapt the staging plan according to the new space. The cast includes newFangled members, alumni from BTAHS and former colleagues in arts education. This event culminates with a post-performance discussion with the *performance readers*, which includes educators, artists and patrons of the theatre.

**SPECIAL
INVITE!**

VITAL
THEATRE COMPANY

newFangled
theatreR

present

RUMI HIGH

An Interactive Multi-Loaled Staged Reading
of the first 3 periods of *Mevlana Jeluladdin Rumi High S'kool (2910)* by *Johnmichael rossi*



SATURDAY JANUARY 5th

at 6:47pm

Vital Theatre Company

2162 Broadway, 4th Floor, NYC

Please RSVP by Friday January 4th 3pm to JM@newfangledtheatrer.org

Poster for January 2013 Performance Presentation

MEVLANA JELULADDIN RUMI HIGH S'KOOL

666 Gum-tear Road, LooseLeaf, New Hampsterdamned

Principal, Mr. Michael Bee

PROGRAM CARD

S'kool: Q910

Term: Autumn 2012

NAME: _____ STUDENT NO. x _____

Period 1: Homeroom TBD

Period 2: AmerikAn History MR. TEECH

Period 3: Ingle`sh MISS WHITE

Program Card X

MEVLANA JELULADDIN RUMI HIGH S'KOOL

666 Gum-tear Road, LooseLeaf, New Hampsterdamned

Principal, Mr. Michael Bee

PROGRAM CARD

S'kool: Q910

Term: Autumn 2012

NAME: _____ STUDENT NO. y _____

Period 1: Homeroom TBD

Period 2: Biology SIGNOR BLOK

Period 3: Drama MS. DEBI'

Program Card Y

The Ensemble:

Troy Deweever
David Goldberg
Niluka Hotaling
Vincent Ingrisano
Adama Jackson
Linda Ames Key
Melissa King
Howard Klein
Sevrin Anne Mason
Chernice Miller
Shaquille Mortley
Melissa Shaw
Rafael Sochakov
John Stillwaggon
Morgan Lindsay Tachco
Ashley Zaragoza

This workshop presentation of *Rumi High* is part of research being conducted by johnmichael rossi for his practice-based PhD at the University of Reading. The play will be in development throughout 2013, leading to a site-specific performance production in England, and a digital book available to download through the web (expected Fall 2013).

Post-Presentation Discussion Points

- How did the Play make you think about education? And what?
- Participation and Choice—Where did you go and why?
- Splintering Narratives—What pieces of the story did you gather?
- How do you imagine the script to look? How might this play be experienced or read in book form?

A Very Special Thanks To: Vital Staff: Stephen Sunderlin, Linda Ames Key, Travis Bell, Beanie Matias, Stephanie Lias, Sage Clemenco, Jason Kovati, Professor Lib Taylor, Dr. Teresa Mujas, newFangled theaReR: Megan Baya Manzi, Jason Sweet Tooth, Williams, Justin Sturges, Morgan Lindsay Jacobo, Seth Soloway, Seth Reich, David Kane, Ezra Cizzoad, Ashleigh Beyer, Niluka Hotaling, Megan E. Carter, Howard Klein, Sevrin Anne Mason, Bret Jaspers, Cheryl Pawlowski, the BEEz: Luke Bevan, Izzy Clayton, Chassy Hayden, Mukondwa Katuliba, Jack Lovegrove, Sam Mitchinson, Lewis Elcher, Peter Sherwood-King, Sam Thornton, Daisy Tootler, Annabel Williams, Richard Hall, Baloo, Williams-James, Rosie Lovell, Amber Rose

Back of Program Card



MISS WHITE (right) gives the 'students' a writing assignment



DEBI` (left) keeps order during the Fire Drill scene



DEBI` (left) explores The Crucible with the 'students'

FEBRUARY 2013

During the Winter 2013 term, I begin to consider other ways of formatting a script, in a way that would more adequately reflect the aesthetic world of the play; that would also function as an aid to practitioners and readers to follow the complex plot structure. I focus the remaining workshops with the BEEz on exploring the use of Rumi's poetry and *The Crucible* as stimuli.

MJRHS(Q910) the B.E.Ez WORKSHOP #3 (Spring Term) <i>Thursday, 14th February 2013 6p-10p, Bob Kayley Theatre</i>	
SCHEMA:	
6:00-6:15:	Check-In & Chocolate: Happy Valentine's Day
6:15-6:45:	Sharing & Discussing Rumi <ul style="list-style-type: none">- What do the BEEz know about Rumi, if anything?- Have they heard of Rumi prior to their involvement in this project?- Do they know of Sufism?- Have they ever seen the image of a whirling dervish?
6:45-7:15:	Flocking to Sufi Music <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Walk the Grid as an Entry Point. Consider the characters in <i>Rumi High</i>. Consider the music. Move through space with the music.- Flocking, song to song, exploring the characters of the play and the music. How might this music transform them?
7:15-7:45:	Transforming Rumi Transforming <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Scatter the space.- Take on your <i>Rumi High</i> character- Search for a Rumi Text (hidden throughout the space).- Place yourself somewhere in the 's'kool'—engage with that space physically, make it specific and active- Recite the Rumi Text- Explore the text, work with the text, make connections to it.- Pause.
7:45-8:15:	Performing Rumi Text <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Each participant will present their work.
8:15-8:45:	Wrap-Up <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Thoughts and Feedback- Next Workshop: 28th February- Crucible focus- possibly in Cinema- Questions, Concerns, other Developments

Workshop Plan: Rumi

MJRHS(Q910) the B.E.Ez WORKSHOP #3 (Spring Term) <i>Thursday, 28th February 2013 6p-10p, The Cinema</i>	
SCHEMA:	
6:00-6:10:	Check-In <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Updates on the Project—Writing, Research, etc.- Frame Today's Workshop
6:10-8:00:	Film Viewing: <i>The Crucible</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- With Jot-It-Down Sheet
8:00-8:15:	BREAK
8:15-9:15:	De-Constructing/Breaking Open <i>The Crucible</i> <p><i>Long-form improvisation based on remembered moments.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Every minute, a participant will be prompted to join into the improv, playing a <i>Crucible</i> character of choice (there can be more than one of the same character; you also may play more than one character as you see fit).- Every five minutes, someone will be prompted to name and declare the next scene.- You may use the lines of text jotted down; you may change those lines around and improvise your lines within the context.- Remember- the goal is to tell the story of <i>The Crucible</i>.
9:15-9:45:	Wrap-Up: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Thoughts, Feedback, Reflections- Next Workshop: 14th March in TV Studio: RUMI text

Workshop Plan: The Crucible

DE-CONSTRUCTING/BREAKING THE CRUCIBLE

While watching the film version of *The Crucible*, jot down the following:

CHARACTERS OF INTEREST TO YOU:

(imagine who in Rumi High would play which characters)

NAME AND LIST MEMORABLE MOMENTS AND/OR SCENES:

AT LEAST 10 LINES OF TEXT THAT GRAB YOU:

The Crucible Devising Worksheet

MAY 2013

During the Summer 2013 term I explore typography and graphic design, and begin experimenting with using different fonts to reflect character voices. Using a variety of fonts, the collaborative network begins to expand beyond the parameters of theatre-maker and theatre audience, to include font designers. These workshops culminate in a final BEEz Performance Presentation in June 2013.

MJRHS(Q910) the B.E.Ez WORKSHOP #1 (Summer Term)

Thursday, 9th May 2013 6p-8p, The Studio

SCHEMA:

- 6:00-6:20: **Check-In and Updates**
- Discuss PhD focus changes
 - Discuss focus of Summer Term workshops and vision for a June presentation
 - Tentative Autumn Plans
- 6:20-6:50: **Warm-Up**
- Pass the Clap into Pass the Word
 - Walk the Grid to explore Handwriting
 - Mime the motions of your handwriting; graffiti a wall or flat surface with this movement
 - Transfer this handwriting movement into your arm, leg, head, entire body
 - Choose a character from *Rumi High* and imagine their handwriting as action, explore it and transfer it into your body. The group will try to guess what character you are representing in this manner.
- 6:50-8:00: **Reading through Font & Color**
- Workshop font and color variations of:
 - Lil-Co and Lily-White
 - Taz and Kid Wild Card
 - Review full font chart for various characters- reading for one-liners

Next Workshops: 23rd May 6p & 6th June 6p; Presentation TBD

Font Workshop Plan

JUNE 2013

On 10th June 2013, a second performance presentation happens; this time, contained to one theatre space in the Minghella building. This performance combines my solo practice, Mistuh JoMiRo, with the work that the BEEz had been developing with the script, and is designed around a gaming structure that cast *performance readers* to read and perform scripted material alongside the BEEz within a classroom setting orchestrated by Mistuh JoMiRo. Again, a post-performance discussion follows, with a particular focus on the affect of the font and typography, which was projected on the wall, to be read aloud by performers and *performance readers*.

Mistuh JoMiRo & the BEEz
present

RUMI HIGH

a FONTastic interactive 'cold' reading with
(YOU)



Monday 10th June at 6:30pm
The Bulmershe Theatre
Please RSVP to jmrossi@me.com

Warning: Attendants may be asked to
read from the "hyper(play)text"

Poster for June 2013 Performance Presentation

PROJECTION: "RUMI HIGH an intifada by johnmichael rossi"

JACK in Place for Tech [Projector/Sound/Video]

MISTUH JoMiRo set at desk w/ face down

6:25pm: doors open: JACK opens doors: "MISTUH JoMiRo is ready for you."

BETTY'z CLACK of NAUGHTY STUDENTS enter the classroom with the Audience ('students'). All take their 'assigned' seats.

6:30pm:

SOUND: The bell rings

MISTUH JoMiRo sits up-

PROJECTION: "Scene Index"

MISTUH JoMiRo IMPROV:

Interacts with class; sets tone

Inspects Students; Provokes Students

MISTUH JoMiRo introduces THE HAT

||: MISTUH JoMiRo selects a 'student' to pick a slip out of hat

MISTUH JoMiRo provokes 'student' to read the slip aloud

'Student' reads slip

PROJECTION: "[SCENE #]"

SOUND: Sufi Music Plays

MISTUH JoMiRo casts the scene, gives out placards;

MISTUH JoMiRo cues JACK: **SOUND OUT**

MISTUH JoMiRo gestures for them to begin reading.

'Students' read scene to end

MISTUH JoMiRo gestures for applause

PROJECTION: Scene Index :||

Repeat- ||: (...) :|| until...

7:17pm:

JACK sneezes to cue JoMiRo that we are nearing end

MISTUH JoMiRo on standby for lights

7:20pm:

SOUND: Bell ring

LIGHTS: Out

PROJECTION: ipad off

Between each scene reading, a performance action takes place:

After FIRST reading:

A student behaves naughty; throws a paperball or shoots a rubber band.

MISTUH JoMiRo investigates, identifies the problem child and sends him/her to the "Do-Nothing Chair"

After SECOND reading:

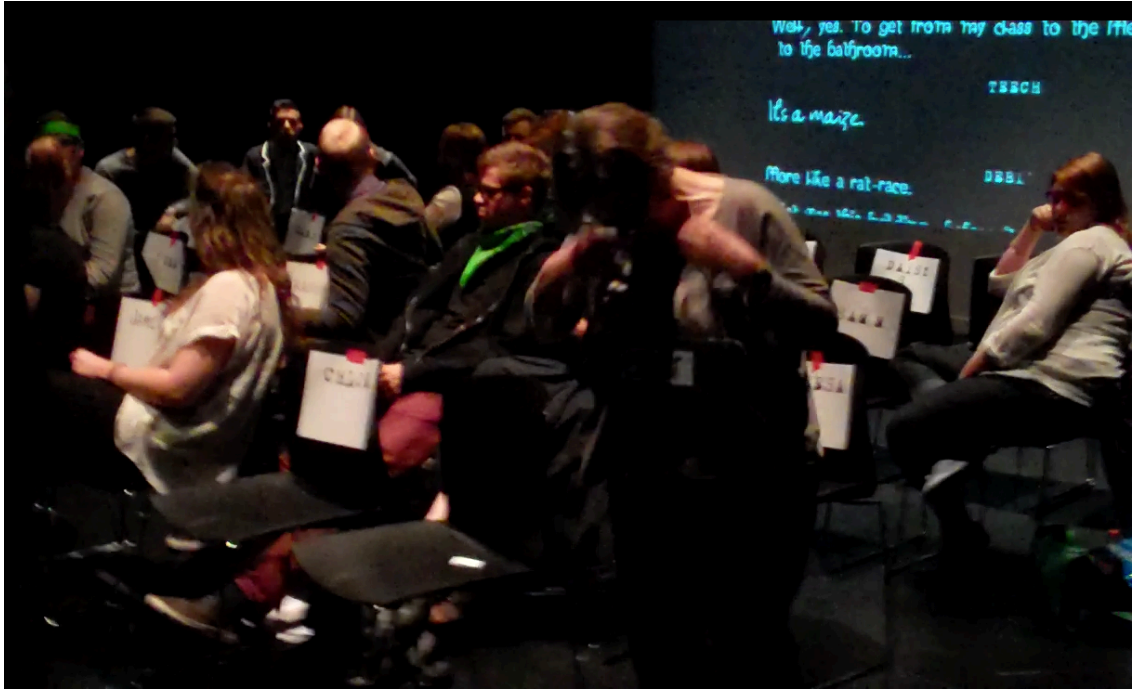
MISTUH JoMiRo catches Lewis filming the class. He plays with the camera, and allows Lewis to get up and film from all angles. Students see this as a green light to use their own smartphones/cameras to document the class.

After THIRD reading:

TBD

[etc.]

June 2013 Performance Presentation Structure



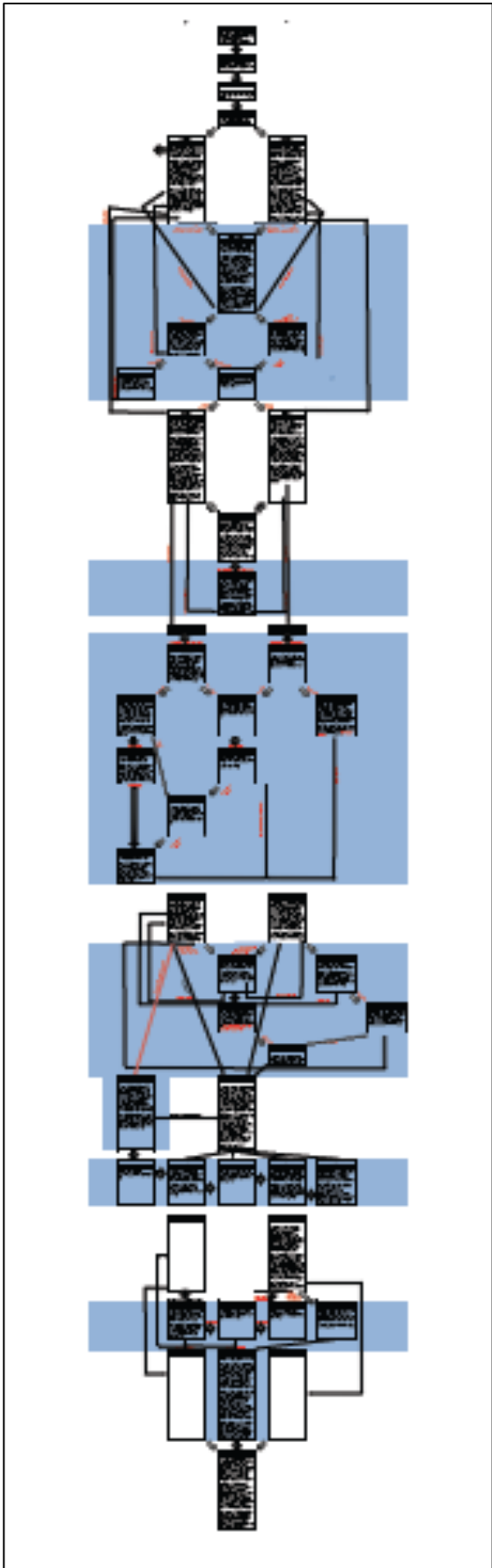
Projected script with various fonts in June 2013 Performance Presentation



Mistuh JoMiRo and the BEEz in June 2013 Performance Presentation

JULY 2013—MAY 2014

As the play continues to develop, the shift to a digital writing and reading space becomes inevitable. Scriptwriting software programs continue to limit how I arrange and format material. I begin to transfer material to a new format, building, designing and conceptualizing the play as a website. As I collaborate with the software program *iWeb*, I begin integrating beginner's level web design into my writing practice. I purchase a web domain www.RumiHigh.org and decide to make the site live, as a work-in-progress so that collaborators can be referred to the site to stay up to date on changes and developments. A series of maps, charts and graphs aid the process.



Visual map of plot structure

PEA-KEATON	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

JIM-GYM	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

SIGNOR(A) BLOK	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

TEECH	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

LILLIAN-BERG	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

BILLY HARPEKESKA	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

LIL-CD	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

JAMZ OF FABRIZ	[Red bar]								
SECURITY	[Red bar]								
CLACKERZ	[Red bar]								
STUDENT 'X'	[Blue bar]	[Green bar]	[Yellow bar]	[Orange bar]	[Red bar]	[Black bar]	[White bar]	[Grey bar]	[Light blue bar]
STUDENT 'Y'	[Blue bar]	[Green bar]	[Yellow bar]	[Orange bar]	[Red bar]	[Black bar]	[White bar]	[Grey bar]	[Light blue bar]

Scene and Character Breakdown, Part 2

JUNE 2014

I begin to focus on the role of sound within the hyper(play)text, having accumulated a variety of sound effects from the performance readings (such as bells, alarms and pre-recorded music). I explore where in the play, the use of sound would be most effective to expand the reader's multisensory experience. There were a number of opportunities within the script to experiment with the use of recorded dialogue that the reader might overhear from specific locations within the school. I meet with two members of newFangled theatReR to record these voice-overs, uncertain which, if any, would be included in the hyper(play)text.

JULY 2014

In July 2014, Mistuh JoMiRo appears at the International Federation of Theatre Research conference in Warwick, UK. In collaboration with Dr. Myer Taub, who performs the character of JuJu the Pig, we perform a series of interactive classroom scenarios across three mornings. The performances take place outdoors, behind the Warwick Arts Centre, where an exterior wall was used as a chalkboard to write messages to the participants. On the third day, Mistuh JoMiRo and JuJu the Pig's performance is interrupted by staff at the Warwick Arts Centre, who threaten to call the police, accusing the characters of vandalizing the building. After being reprimanded by the authoritarian figures, a fourth, unplanned performance takes place: JoMiRo and JuJu scrub the walls, performing as punished school children.



Mistuh JoMiRo instructs a 'student'



JuJu the Pig interrupts Mistuh JoMiRo's lesson.

NOVEMBER 2014

Mistuh JoMiRo appears in a classroom at the University of Bedfordshire, performing to a group of 2nd Year Performing Arts undergraduates, engaging students to think critically about the relationship between education, economy and the value of knowledge. This performance intervention takes place in the context of a political performance unit where students are debating issues around the cost of tuition in UK higher education.



Mistuh JoMiRo instructs a student at University of Bedfordshire

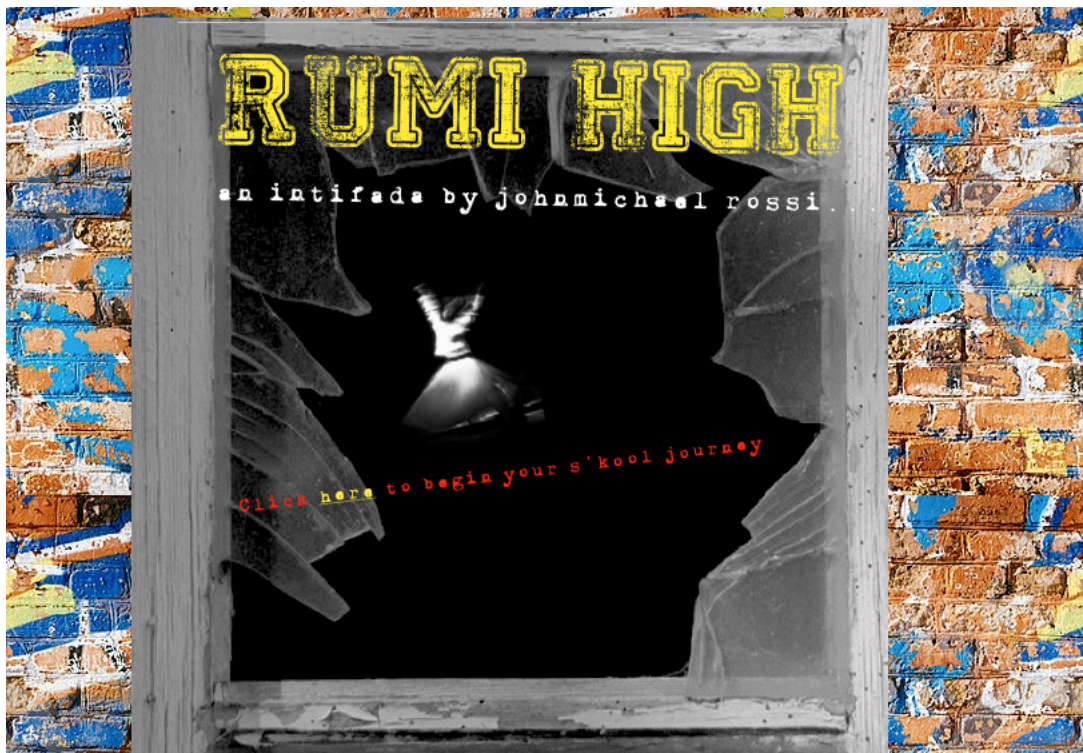


Mistuh JoMiRo challenges a student at University of Bedfordshire

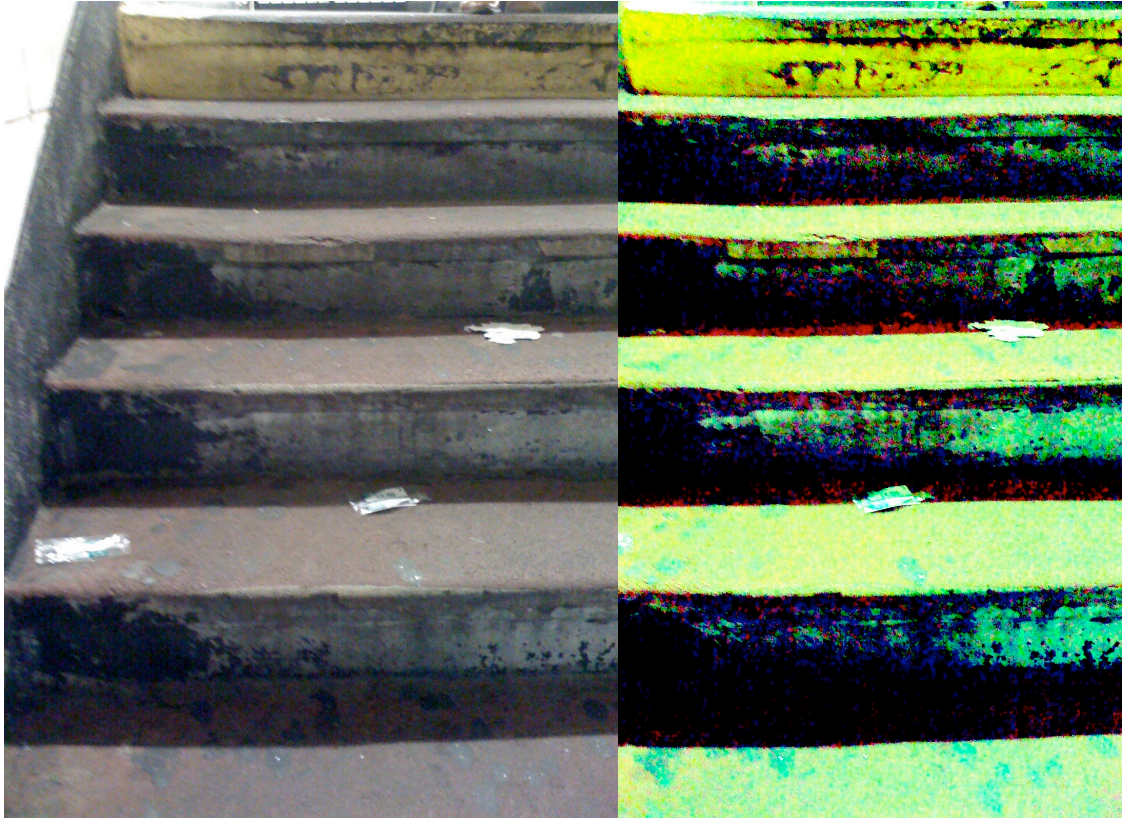
APPENDIX VI.
Sample Image Transformations from the Hyper(play)text.



Stock Images from Internet, manipulated and used for home page for Rumi High.



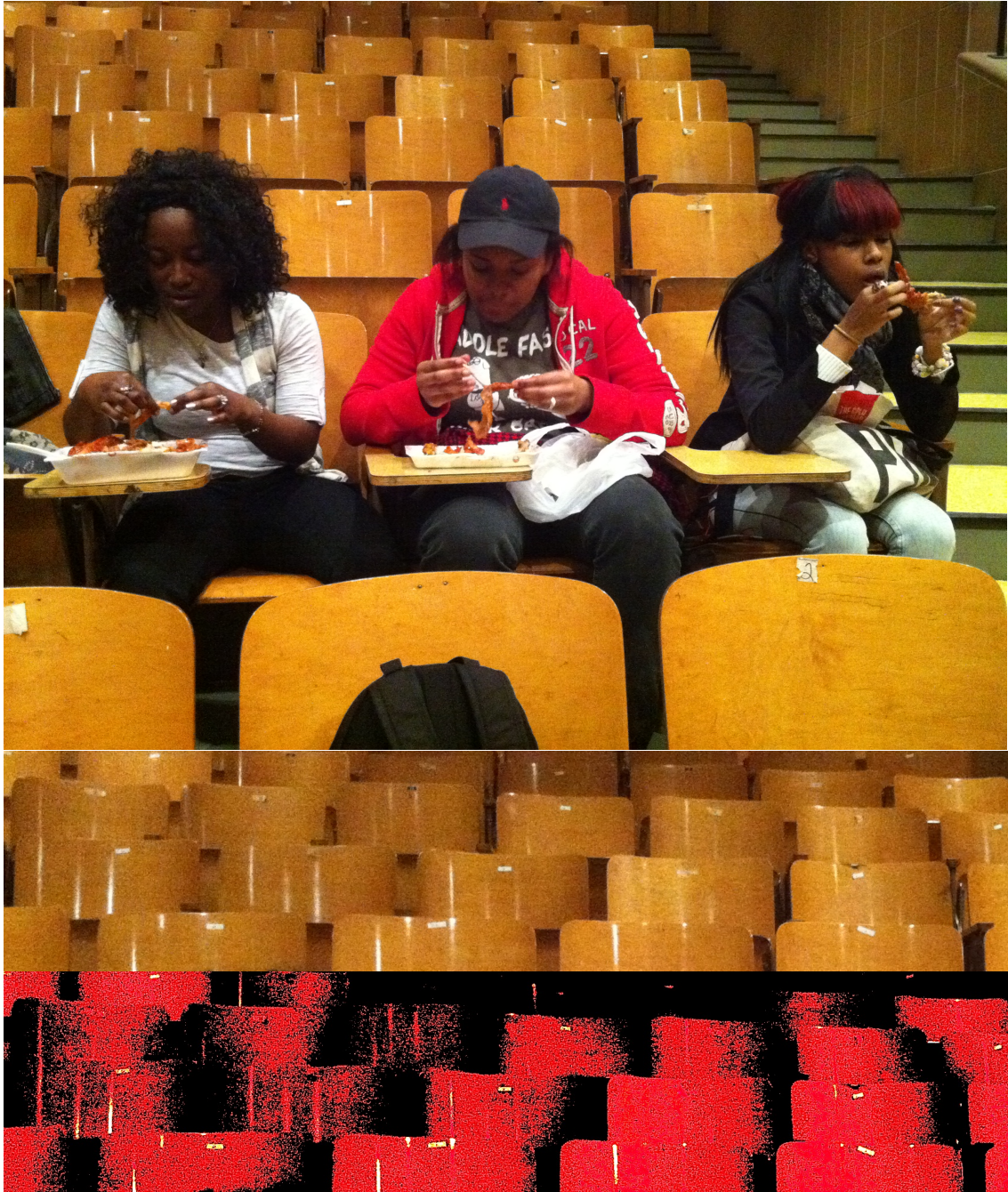
Homepage for www.RumiHigh.org



Photograph of school staircase, manipulated with green tin to create 'Staircase #7'



Photographs of abandoned school house in Croatia, used for Drama Class



Three-step cut, crop and adapt process to create background for secret performance of The Confuciblez

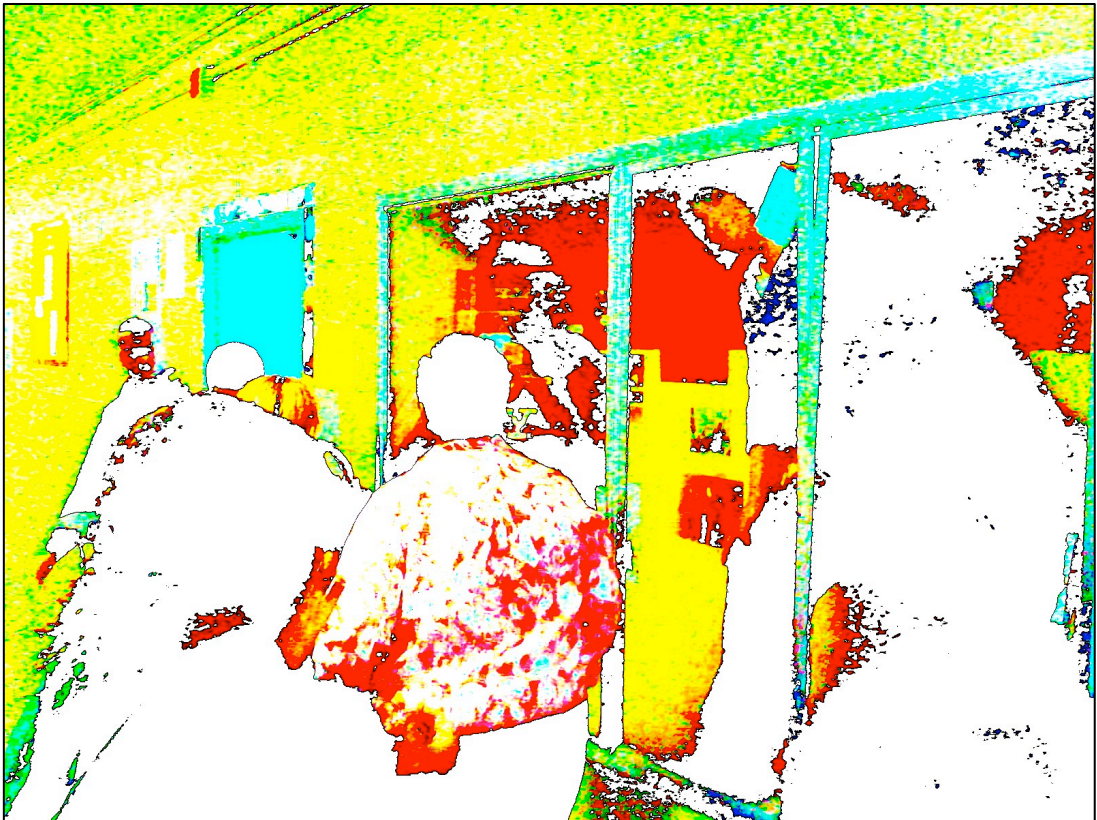


Image Transformation for Hallway scenes

*There is a way between voice and presence
where information flows.*

*In disciplined silence it opens.
With wandering talk it closes.*

- Rumi ('Only Breath,' Barks, 32)