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Authority, Quotation, and Collective Composition in 20th and 21st Century U.S. Theatre and Drama

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To Kelly, Jack, and Emily

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ABSTRACT

Authority, Quotation, and Collective Composition
in 20th and 21st Century U.S. Theatre and Drama

Scott Proudfit

My dissertation argues that certain continuities among U.S. theatre collectives in the 20th and 21st centuries have gone unnoticed largely because the aesthetics and politics of these companies are seemingly so unrelated. These continuities, which connect the 1960s' anarcho-pacifist spectacles of the Living Theatre to the contemporary "community" theatre of Cornerstone Theater Company and the 1990s' anti-narrative performance art of SITI Company to the 21st century pop-culture commedia of the Actors' Gang, are revealed only when the collectively written drama texts of these theatres are analyzed alongside the companies' rehearsal processes, performances, and organizational histories. Through the application of an interdisciplinary methodology (part history, part performance analysis, part textual reading), it is made apparent that these collectives all challenge hierarchical authority within their creative processes while at the same time specifically challenging the concept of authorship as a necessary assumption behind any work of art.

These challenges to authority, my dissertation argues, are made possible through these theatres' creative methods of quotation which not only allow for a democratic writing process (in which no member of the collective is required to act as playwright) but also model, on the pages of the drama text and in performance, types of collectivity that are then shared with the communities attending these productions. However, as each of these case studies reveals, quotation proves as problematic for these collectives in terms of challenging "author-ity" (both authorship and authority) as it appears initially liberating. Quotation evokes and invokes the

authority of those being quoted even if the quotations are being used ironically or to opposite ends as the words traditionally have been read. Quotation—particularly the technique of pastiche—can also prove problematic to theatre collectives attempting to distance themselves from those figures of authority depicted in their productions. Unlike parody, which holds that which is quoted at arm's length, enabling criticism, pastiche draws those quoting closer to those texts, and therefore those authorities, quoted.

Broadening this argument beyond collectives, my last chapter looks back at Eugene O'Neill's use of quotation in his composition of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (1941). This reading re-imagines U.S. drama in general as, from this traditional "beginning," a category best defined by its dedication to collective creation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION 12

Establishing Continuity Among Collectives

Critical Neglect of the Collectively Written Drama

Particular Types of Quotation

Complicating “Intertextuality”

Methodology and Evidence

Authorship, Authority, and Capitalism

Chapter Breakdown

2. THE LIVING THEATRE, THE DYING AUTHOR: QUOTATION AND IMPROVISATION IN *FRANKENSTEIN* 52

Poetry and Economics

The Artaud Problem

Building *Frankenstein*

Synopsis and Third Act Problems

Authority and Quotation in *Frankenstein*’s Endings

To Quote or Not To Quote

Reviving Dead Language

Collectivity and Leviathan

3. THE POLITICS OF CLOSENESS: QUOTATION AND CONTAMINATION IN SITI COMPANY’S *CULTURE OF DESIRE* 160

A Definition of “Pastiche”

Collective Writing and Its Place Within SITI Company’s Composition Work

Composition's Lineage in Other Art Forms

"Midway on Our Life's Journey, I Found Myself in Dark Woods…": Collective in Crisis

Warhol's Story as SITI Company Told It

A Is for Author, B Is for ?: How Warhol and SITI Company Challenged Author-ity

Sharing Words in *Culture of Desire* and Sharing Work With the Audience

Good Repetition, Bad Repetition

Contaminating "Desire"

"Cultural" Difference: A Valid Distinction Between SITI Company and Warhol

What Matter Who's Analyzing

4. MODELING COLLECTIVITY: QUOTATION AND COMMUNITY IN 21ST CENTURY LOS ANGELES THEATRE 273

Challenging Their Own Authority

Medea/Macbeth/Cinderella and Los Angeles Theatre

A Brief History of the Actors' Gang

DreamPlay Synopsis and Structure

Shaping Quotations for Clarification

The Style: Conflict as Creative Method

Letting the Audience Have the Last Word

Reconciling With Authority

Getting Closer to Falater

Bridge-Building Collectivity

Human-Relations Experientials as Intertexts

Problems With Authority

Longer-Lasting Collectivity

5. BEGIN AGAIN: QUOTATION AND AUTHORSHIP IN *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT* 383

"Father" and "Son": *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and O'Neill's Ascendance

The Provincetown Players and the Limits of Collaboration

O'Neill's Commitment to Collaboration

Missing "the Movement"

More Than a Family Plot

No Battle of the Bookcases

Quotation as Collaboration

WORKS CITED 464

Chapter 1:

Introduction

This dissertation makes an intervention in literary and theatre studies. Accordingly, my approach integrates methods from both fields. Each chapter combines textual analysis of a drama written collectively by such theatre companies as the Living Theatre, Saratoga International Theater Institute, BOTHarts, and Cornerstone Theater Company with analysis of the writing practices, staging practices, and organizations of these theatres. Each chapter is part textual analysis, part performance analysis, part theatre history, and part organizational study. This interdisciplinary approach offers a more complete picture of the cultural work performed by these theatre collectives than only attending to, for example, these collectives' drama texts as cultural products independent of their performances *or* the social ramifications of an individual performance by a certain collective *or* these organizations' creative legacy among other theatres and artists. This is of course not the first study to combine textual analysis with production history. Many critical readings of drama, for example, contain some description of the initial performances of a play and biographical information on the playwright. Unlike most drama or performance criticism, however, this dissertation pays equal attention in each chapter to the texts, rehearsals, and performances of the theatre companies in question. By modeling this type of interdisciplinary methodology, I hope to contribute to the improvement and refinement of practices in English and Theatre departments, particularly those of scholars committed to analyzing and teaching drama texts alongside performance and theatre history.

The more complete picture offered by my interdisciplinary approach reveals that the drama texts, the creative methods, and the shifting organizational structures of these diverse U.S. theatre collectives—collectives which in no previous study have been considered as members of

a coherent group—are all primarily focused on challenging author-ity in its many forms, inside and outside each collective.[1] Their commitment to challenging author-ity is particularly evident in these (seemingly very different) theatres companies' common use of collective composition, specifically their interest in collective writing, and in these theatre companies' use of quotation as a method that enables group creation. This is the central thesis of this dissertation. Considering drama texts alongside creative processes enables this dissertation's dual analysis of quotation and collective composition. While quotation is only one method that makes possible writing as a group, more often it is marked on the page in ways that other kinds of collective composition are not. To fully recognize its importance as a collective composition method, therefore, demands that drama texts be accepted as vital evidence of cultural work.

Recognizing the common goals within this proposed set of theatre collectives, their performances, and drama texts, this dissertation insists that those working in both theatre studies and literary studies reconsider some standard assumptions. As this chapter will argue, theatre criticism has rarely considered drama texts produced by collectives worthy of study. "Drama texts" in this case range from mere outlines of performances yet to be realized to detailed written descriptions of performances that have already occurred to more traditional-appearing scripts. While, in general, drama texts are commonly a part of study in Theatre classrooms, this is not the case when studying the work of theatre collectives. Nevertheless, though undervalued by drama and theatre scholars as well as quite often by the theatre collectives themselves, drama texts by theatre collectives are invaluable to establishing the ways in which these theatres challenge author-ity and model collectivity through quotation.

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[1] The term "author-ity" means both authorship and authority, representing the inseparability of these two concepts to the theatre collectives discussed. The term "authorship" will be defined in detail later in this chapter.

Like this intervention in theatre studies, this project's intervention in literary studies also requires expanding the disciplinary purview. It this case, although the field of literary studies has not failed to recognize the importance of collectively written drama texts, it has used certain theoretical terms more simplistically than they demand. As this chapter will argue, the theorization of "intertextuality" since the work of Julia Kristeva has failed to take into account the complications that drama and performance bring to this cluster of ideas. Theorists such as Roland Barthes and Mikhail Bakhtin ignored drama texts or dismissed them outright as distinct from the texts under their consideration. They defined "intertextuality" without considering drama and performance. It is not surprising, then, that problems have arisen when drama and theatre scholars have attempted to apply concepts of intertextuality to the study of drama and performance without considering how these concepts must be expanded and challenged by these different cultural products before they can be usefully employed. Identifying the collectively written drama and its performances as extreme examples of intertextual texts—as more intertextual than other texts—insists that those currently applying theories of intertextuality to non-dramatic texts reconsider how any text is conceived, compiled, distributed, and received; in other words, how its meaning is made before and after its reception. In other words, while the consideration of drama in general demands the rethinking of intertextuality, it is the obvious examples of the overtly intertextual collectively written dramas that reveal this need. Understanding the complexities of how meaning is made intertextually in the production and reception of a collectively written drama suggests ways of rethinking how meaning is made in the production and reception of an "individually authored" novel or poem as well.

Establishing Continuity Among Collectives

In terms of their cultural sphere in general, each of the theatre collectives featured in this dissertation has been and/or could be described as "countercultural." The Living Theatre and the Actors' Gang (the more widely recognized theatre company from which almost all of BOTHarts' members came and to which some of BOTHarts' members still belong) are the two companies in this dissertation that traditionally have been described as "countercultural," and that therefore seemingly have the most in common. In the type of politically minded theatre histories in which the work of the Living Theatre and the Actors' Gang almost exclusively is featured, these companies are considered "countercultural" in the broadest sense: They create theatre which aims to re-fashion culture at large.[2] However, while the Living Theatre and the Actors' Gang's productions and organizations are politically "countercultural" in overt ways—taking "alternative" positions on current social events or structuring themselves in ways that oppose hierarchies that these collectives consider synonymous with capitalist society—they are also particularly "counter" to the culture of the U.S. commercial theatre and its creative hierarchies. Both the Living Theatre and the Actors' Gang take issue with the U.S. capitalist system in general, but also specifically with the ways in which they believe this system has shaped commercial theatre in the U.S.

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[2] While this chapter offers a number of different possibilities of what a "countercultural" theatre practice might be, it does not define in detail the term "culture." To clarify, then, this dissertation uses the term "culture" in the broadest sense, in the same way that Stephen Greenblatt, quoting 19th century anthropologist Edward B. Tylor, defines it, "[Culture] is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." [Stephen Greenblatt, "Culture" in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, eds. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1995), 225.]

As Chapter Two details, the Living Theatre—and the fellow political theatres that influenced this group in the 1960s—considers the U.S. commercial theatre's creative process in the 20th century to be synonymous with a capitalist system in which workers are simply cogs in a machine run by a boss-producer. In the commercial theatre, they argue, a single producer, who makes far more money off the production than anyone else, employs writer, director, designers, and performers for individual productions with the goal of maintaining as long and lucrative a run as possible. Within industrial capitalism, workers cannot express their individuality; within commercial theatre, artists cannot express their talents. Therefore, while collectives such as Living Theatre and their theatrical descendents such as the Actors' Gang may generally oppose their national culture, they specifically oppose their national commercial theatre's culture. The ways in which these theatres operate as collective organizations, creating theatre democratically in contrast to the typical commercial theatre creative process, are detailed in subsequent chapters. As a general philosophical division, though, it might be said that while the average commercial theatre production, according to these collectives, is designed to educate, to entertain, and, above all, to sell tickets, the Living Theatre and Actors' Gang's productions are designed to politically mobilize their audiences first and foremost.

Like the Living Theatre or BOTHarts (née the Actors' Gang), the Saratoga International Theater Institute (or SITI Company), which is never described in the press or in its own publicity as a "political" collective, also could be considered "countercultural" because its aesthetics are, in a different way than the politics of these other collectives, in opposition to the status quo of the mainstream U.S. commercial theatre. As Chapter Three details, SITI Company's productions have much in common with certain aspects of literary modernism. They are anti-narrative, episodic, and defy easy consumption by a general audience. Due to this "difficult" aesthetic, the

SITI Company collective, while never situated by theatre historians and critics within the tradition of "political" collectives such as the Living Theatre and the Actors' Gang, is nevertheless almost always characterized by the press as an "alternative" theatre company or as an "art" theatre. These designations acknowledge that the company is "counter" to the cultural products of the mainstream commercial theatre. SITI Company offers an "alternative" to the commercial theatre production, offers "art" rather than mere entertainment.

In yet another way, Cornerstone Theater Company, which is never considered a theatre with aesthetics in common with SITI Company, much less a part of the same 1960s' political-theatre tradition as the Living Theatre or BOTHarts, is nevertheless also described as "countercultural" in some critical histories. Theatre historians most often place Cornerstone within the histories of community theatre in the U.S., because this theatre collective collaborates with communities of non-professional actors and includes these "amateurs" in its shows. Community theatre, like the "art" theatre of SITI Company, is countercultural, these studies sometimes argue, because it offers a cultural alternative to the "professional" commercial theatre, the dominant culture in U.S. theatre.[3] Again, unlike commercial theatre production, the primary goal of a Cornerstone show is not to sell tickets. Rather, a Cornerstone show is designed to cultivate new relationships within (or to fulfill the expressive needs of) a specific community through the co-creation of theatre.

Sharing a countercultural commitment by offering alternatives to the cultural products of 20th and 21st century U.S. commercial theatre, then, unites the four seemingly very different

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[3] See, for example, Sonja Kuftinec's *Staging America: Cornerstone and Community-Based Theater* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 2003) and Mark S. Weinberg's *Challenging the Hierarchy: Collective Theatre in the United States* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992).

20th and 21st century U.S. theatre collectives featured in this study—the Living Theatre, SITI Company, BOTHarts, and Cornerstone Theater Company—and situates them within a broad "alternative" theatre tradition.[4] This countercultural commitment alone, however, is not enough to insist upon this particular selection of companies as a coherent group, at least as a group with enough shared attributes to encourage a study such as this. However, as this dissertation illustrates, each of these groups acts on its distinct countercultural commitment with the common method of collective composition and specifically with the use of quotation to collectively compose performance texts as a group. These theatres' uses of collective composition and quotation are so similar they demand that these companies be acknowledged as a set. Consequently, much of this dissertation is dedicated to examining the similarities and differences between the use of collective composition and quotation within this proposed set.

By attending not only to the common collective-composition practices of these companies but also to the texts they create collectively through quotation reveals that the history of collective theatre-making in the U.S. is not merely a "countercultural" history of opposition to U.S. culture at large or even of opposition to the culture of U.S. commercial theatre in particular. Rather, the history of collective theatre-making in the U.S. is specifically a history of opposition to concepts of authorship within the theatre and, therefore, is a history of challenges to authority in the creative processes of writing a theatre piece. Attending to the drama texts of theatre

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[4] A number of performance histories have described the network of feminist theatre collectives in the U.S., most notably Charlotte Canning's *Feminist Theaters in the U.S.A.: Staging Women's Experience* (1996). The majority of case studies in this dissertation also could be considered feminist collectives. For example, politically active women serve as artistic directors or leaders of SITI Company, BOTHarts, and the Living Theatre. However, because none of these women self-identify themselves or identify their work first and foremost as feminist, I do not attempt to read them or their companies primarily in these terms.

companies such as the Living Theatre or BOTHarts, for example, reveals that, while challenging capitalist culture in general and commercial theatre specifically, such groups simultaneously and pointedly challenge how ideas of authorship have influenced methods and structures within the creative processes of making theatre. Concerned generally with the abuse of authority in U.S. society at large and more specifically with problematic assumptions about the necessity of certain authorities in the commercial theatre creative process, the Living Theatre, BOTHarts, SITI Company, and Cornerstone, to different degrees, are all likewise concerned with authority within their own organizations. This authority is inseparably linked with concepts of authorship—who "writes" the company's shows and therefore owns the company's shows—in the same way that concepts of authorship, it will be argued, are inseparable from capitalist culture and from the operations of the commercial theatre in the U.S.

This dissertation's twin emphases on analyzing the methods of quotation and collective composition within the creative processes of these theatre collectives are important not only because they reveal essential similarities between seemingly disparate U.S. theatres collectives in the 20th and 21st centuries, but also because they further suggest that the history of theatre in the U.S. in general is inseparable from these collective-composition practices. This dissertation ultimately argues that collective composition and quotation are central, as opposed to marginal, practices within 20th and 21st century U.S. theatre, and not only within the collectives profiled. The final chapter of this dissertation on Eugene O'Neill argues that at the "beginning" of 20th century theatre and drama in the U.S. were the dual practices of collective composition and quotation. Therefore, U.S. theatre and drama have been committed, since inception, to collective composition and specifically to collective composition through quotation, even when only one individual was serving as playwright.

Critical Neglect of the Collectively Written Drama

By turning its attention to the collectively written drama, this dissertation recognizes a virtually ignored group of texts. While plays by U.S. playwrights in general are underrepresented in the classroom, even less represented are plays by U.S. theatre collectives, groups that not only operate but also create in non-hierarchical ways.[5] The lack of collectively written drama texts in the university classroom can be blamed in part on specific "literary" reading methods (in Theatre and English classrooms), based on the concept of a single "author" and supporting drama canons that provide no apparent space for the collectively written drama. At the same time, it also must be acknowledged that most of the theatre companies discussed in this project have shown little interest in publishing their plays (or what may more accurately be called the written record of their performances, which sometimes bear little resemblance to plays as they traditionally appear in print).[6] Moreover, the collectively written dramas featured in this dissertation are problematic texts for publishers not only because of copyright and licensing-fee issues and these texts' different appearance from traditional plays, but also because these plays were written by a specific group of artists for a specific group of artists. It would not seem, therefore, that another theatre company would be interested in performing such texts. One of the

[5] Susan Harris Smith persuasively makes the case for the under-representation of American drama in the U.S. classroom in her book *American Drama: The Bastard Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997). The lack plays by theatre collectives being taught specifically is evidenced by a survey of recent drama anthologies, including *The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama* (2004); *The Longman Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Drama* (2004); *American Drama, 1900-1990* (2000); *Modern American Drama, 1945-2000* (2000); *Modern Drama: Selected Plays From 1879 to the Present* (1997). None of these anthologies contain a play written by a collective.

[6] For example, one unpublished version of the Living Theatre's *Frankenstein* is written on grid paper with a number of separate columns: one for the words spoken, one for sound effects, one for movement, one for what the movement symbolizes, etc.

main reasons dramas are published is in expectation that other theatre companies will produce them.

Yet another reason that collectively written U.S. dramas have so rarely been published is that this kind of drama cannot be as easily anthologized as other texts. Despite the repeated emergence of group-eclipsing playwrights in the 20th century U.S. theatre, such as Eugene O'Neill (from the Provincetown Players) or Clifford Odets (from the Group Theater), the history of 20th and 21st century U.S. drama cannot comfortably be drawn as a single filial line of major individual writers. It is rather a genealogy of interrelated theatre companies, and specifically companies in which members worked together, often creating and sometimes writing texts collectively. Like the discussion of any theatre production, which requires the acknowledgement of numerous co-creators and calls into question any individual's primary creative influence, so does the collectively written drama confound a "great writer and his works" approach. Moreover, the collectively written drama, this dissertation argues, is not an exception to the tradition of 20th and 21st century theatre making in the U.S., but the norm. As theatre production is always a process of collaboration, so (almost invariably) is the drama a product of collaboration, even if only one playwright is credited. The collectively written drama is merely the clearest example of this norm within 20th and 21st century U.S. drama, a norm that admittedly does not neatly fit the type of uni-linear progression commonly required of literary anthologies that serve as models for compiling drama texts for publication.[7]

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[7] Yet another reason for the dearth of collectively written plays in publication is that one of the few things that seems to guarantee that a U.S. play will be published is a successful Broadway run. As the collectives featured in this study can attest, few theatre companies writing as a group are interested in trying to get their plays produced on Broadway, the dream destination of the typical commercial theatre production.

Regardless of the reasons behind the collectively written drama's absence from the university classroom, it is important to note this type of drama's virtual exclusion from modern drama anthologies, collections (unlike individual play publication) that are primarily aimed at students, not at artists looking for texts to produce. In other words, the editors overseeing these anthologies cannot argue that the collectively written drama's exclusion from their books is due to the fact that these plays are not inviting to other groups looking for scripts to produce. Among the recently published modern drama anthologies (American or otherwise), there is not a single collectively written text included, with the possible exception of Caryl Churchill's *Cloud 9* (and when this play is included, the work on this text by members of the Joint Stock Company besides Churchill is rarely emphasized and often not even acknowledged).[8]

Nevertheless, while collectively written dramas are rarely published, anthologized, or taught, the importance of U.S. theatre collectives in general has been acknowledged in recent years by scholars faced with undeniable continuities in terms of a commitment to collectivity among many of the 20th and 21st century theatres that have shaped U.S. drama, from Provincetown Players in the 1920s to the Group Theater in the 1930s, and from the Living Theatre/Open Theatre/Performance Group in the 1960s to the numerous companies working collaboratively today. However, when the cultural work of U.S. theatre collectives has been acknowledged, it consistently has been in terms of the grassroots political work and organizational legacy of these groups.[9] For example, in the recent anthology *Restaging the*

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[8] The only exception to the exclusion of the collectively written drama in anthologies is *Ensemble Works*, ed. Ferdinand Lewis (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2005). This anthology contains collectively written plays by such U.S. theatre collectives as Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, Touchstone Theatre, and Goat Island.

[9] That a purely cultural studies approach to these collectives' work has been particularly prevalent in recent years is not surprising considering the view among certain scholars

Sixties: Radical Theaters and Their Legacies, edited by James H. Harding and Cindy Rosenthal, each theatre collective featured (including the Living Theatre) is described by a historical overview, a critical essay, and a "legacy" essay (which details the company's influence on subsequent theatres). In other words, the stories of these theatre companies are told without the inclusion of their performance texts. Baz Kershaw's popular *The Politics of Performance*, which admittedly only addresses British political theatres of the 1960s, similarly argues that the primary work of "countercultural" theatre collectives is to model oppositional action. Kershaw's interest in these companies is therefore on their structural organization and generally on the social impact of their performances as opposed to any performance texts these companies have left behind. Similarly, Mark Weinberg's *Challenging the Hierarchy: Collective Theatre in the United States*, which examines community theatres such as Cornerstone Theater Company, concentrates on community theatres' organizations as opposed to their cultural products. Countercultural theatre collectives, Weinberg argues, are primarily of interest for the ways in which they can serve as experimental microcosms for alternative societies. Therefore, what require the critic's attention most are these companies' organizational histories. Likewise, Arthur Sainer's *The New Radical Theatre Notebook*, which *does* contain a handful of performance texts, is as much a how-to book for emerging theatre collectives as it is a history. Interested in describing the nuts and bolts of these companies' operations as well as their

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that a successful future for theatre studies in the academy requires that theatre studies adhere to a broader discipline. As Erika Fischer-Lichte asks in "Quo Vadis? Theatre Studies at the Crossroads" *Modern Drama* 44, no. 1 (2001), "Will [theatre studies] merge into general culture studies, media studies, and art studies, or will it narrow itself down to a very limited number of theatrical genres?" She makes the case for all three as viable possibilities.

members' philosophies, Sainer fills his book mostly with interviews of these theatre collectives' members and descriptions of their productions and political actions.

Representative of the type of critical attention 20th and 21st century theatre collectives have received, all of these books concentrate on these collectives' on- and offstage practices "countering" culture only in the larger sense: U.S. capitalist culture and the U.S. commercial theatre culture. By neglecting the drama texts of these collectives, these books offer no account of these collectives' cultural work challenging the concept of authorship and this concept's influence within the creative process of theatre production. Most indicative of the way in which the history of theatre collectives has been privileged over the dramas created by these collectives is the fact that while not a single collectively written drama from the 1960s makes it into C.W. Bigsby's 2000 edition of *Modern American Drama*, his 1985 theatre history textbook *Critical Introduction to Twentieth-Century American Drama* dedicates one-third of its pages to a discussion of 1960s collaborative "performance theatres." In recent years, the significance of collectives has been acknowledged as central to the history of 20th and 21st century American theatre, simply not the dramatic texts they produced. This study, in some small way, attempts to rectify this critical imbalance.

Particular Types of Quotation

Before defining the types of quotation these theatre collectives practice in their collective composition, it is necessary to clarify the term "collective" as this study uses it. The Living Theatre, SITI Company, BOTHarts, and Cornerstone Theater Company are all considered "collectives" in this dissertation because at some time in their organizational lives each attempted to function non-hierarchically. In each case, this embrace of a democratic identity is

still considered as central to the self-identification of the company. As subsequent chapters detail, the commitment to making artistic and organizational decisions as a group, to receiving equal pay regardless of position in the company, and to revolving and sharing functions so that no member becomes differentiated from the other company members for long periods—all traditional "collective" practices—varies from group to group. It is significant, of course, that not one of these theatre companies has maintained this kind of non-hierarchical ideal throughout its entire history. Some companies operate more democratically in early years until certain individuals are recognized (or demand to be recognized) as leaders with special status. Other companies move back and forth between periods of more or less democratic involvement by the entire company. Nevertheless, while none of these companies may have maintained or even may have briefly achieved a purely democratic collectivity, each prides itself on company-wide decision-making and creation.

The four collectively written drama texts featured in this dissertation—the Living Theatre's *Frankenstein* (1966), SITI Company's *Culture of Desire* (1997), BOTHarts' *DreamPlay* (2000), and Cornerstone Theater Company's *Zones, or where does your soul live and is there sufficient parking?* (2001)—are all plays that quote. (While Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (1941), featured in the final chapter of this dissertation, is also a play that quotes, here and elsewhere it is treated as a case separate from, but similar to, these other four drama texts.) Plays that quote are not difficult to find in any historical period, of course, and certainly plays that quote are not always collectively written. Indeed, Marvin Carlson's *The Haunted Stage* argues that the defining characteristic of theatre throughout history is that it

recycles.[10] Whether it recycles plots, characters, or actual text, drama retells more often than it tells. Nevertheless, while this may be the general condition of drama, the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, as Carlson notes, often called the late modern or "postmodern" period, was a particularly prolific time for theatre companies who primarily, and often self-consciously, use quotation in their composition of new works. This is the time period and the type of quotation addressed in this dissertation.

However, the four collectively written plays featured in this dissertation are extreme forms of plays that primarily quote. These four plays approach what might be called the form of a "cento" play. "Cento" texts in the antique period were poems "constructed of individual verses by well-known poets such as Homer and Virgil" sometimes as parodic pieces and sometimes as serious homage.[11] These poems had their own stories and themes but used only lines cobbled together from their sources to express them. SITI Company's *Culture of Desire*, among these four plays, is closest to this cento form. It is composed solely of quotations from other texts that have not been altered by the composers, but merely cut and pasted together into a new form. Cornerstone's *Zones* is the least cento-like because it combines large sections of direct quotation from other texts, sometimes slightly adapted, with other sections that are not intentionally quoting other texts. The Living Theatre's *Frankenstein* and BOTHarts' *DreamPlay* fall somewhere in between these two, and contain mostly direct quotations from other texts with nonetheless many exceptions. Besides that these collectively written plays use quotation more extensively and more directly than other 20th and 21st century plays that quote, it is also important to note that, for the theatre collectives composing these plays, quotation is not simply a

[10] Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: Theatre as Memory-Machine* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan Press, 2003).
[11] Ingeborg Hoesterey's *Pastiche* (Bloomingtion, Ind.: Indiana UP, 2001), 80.

method for dramatic composition but also a way to concretize a communal philosophy into creative practice. This is not the case for all companies or playwrights who create primarily through quotation.

Extensive quotation in the arts, though not specifically in plays such as *Culture of Desire* or the other plays featured in this dissertation, has received some critical consideration since the 1980s. Quotation in performance has been situated among general trends of extensive quotation in the arts and music in the late 20th century and 21st century. In this context, this kind of extensive quotation is commonly called "post-modern pastiche." Discussing this kind of quotation in terms of pastiche, these critical studies rarely consider how a collective's use of quotation and collective composition is inseparable to challenging author-ity, whether in the local creative process or the larger culture. Moreover, critics discussing extensive quotation in the 20th and 21st century arts often use interchangeably the terms "quotation" and "pastiche," particularly when discussing "post-modern" performance.[12]

To clarify, then, this dissertation works from the following classification of terms. For those theatre companies writing dramas collectively, intertextuality is a *theory*, or more accurately, a cluster of related theories. Though the members of these collectives may never explicitly use the word "intertextuality" to describe fundamental concepts behind their compositions, nevertheless, their performance texts and ways of composing these texts are steeped in the challenges to textual author-ity found in intertextual theory. Quotation and collective composition are *methods* by which the theories of intertextuality are employed or revealed by those theatre companies writing collectively. And pastiche is a particular *technique* of quotation, the dominant type of quotation within collectively written 20th and 21st century

[12] The term "pastiche" is defined in detail at the beginning of Chapter Three.

dramas. Therefore, for example, when analyzing a cento (or primarily quotational drama) such as *Culture of Desire*, this dissertation demonstrates the value of using *theories* of intertextuality to compose a critical methodology, leading to analysis that helps define SITI Company's *methods* of quotation and collective composition and specifically its *technique* of pastiche. The following overview of theories of intertextuality explains the grounds for this dissertation's methodology. This theoretical overview also helps characterize the interests in collective composition and quotation on the part of the theatre collectives profiled in this dissertation, whether or not any of these companies considered their plays or creative processes "intertextual."

Complicating "Intertextuality"

Before she abandoned the term in favor of her concept of "transposition," Julia Kristeva in her 1969 article "The Bounded Text" argued that all texts are "intertextual."[13] Kristeva claimed that every text is a "bounded text," in that every text is made up of (and is therefore limited by) the various discourses, or institutionally sanctioned systems, in dialogue at any given moment during a text's composition. Therefore, in analysis, a text cannot and should not be separated from its "dialogue of discourses." Kristeva was countering the New Critical ideal of the autotelic text, based on the critical assertion that a reader requires no other text or information beyond the own words of the text on the page to understand and analyze that text. On the contrary, Kristeva argues, not only can a text not "stand alone" and apart from the other texts which constitute its meaning, in addition every text is "a permutation of texts," not an

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[13] Julia Kristeva, "The Bounded Text" in *Desire in Language*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia UP, 1969), 36.

original product of an author's mind but rather a compilation of pre-existent texts.[14] Textual analysis, then, should not involve the search for a fixed meaning, one that is somehow traceable to an author's intentions. Instead, "semianalysis," as Kristeva terms it, requires the acceptance that the meaning of a text is always in production, not a product to be consumed. The meaning of a text does not sit beneath its words waiting to be uncovered, rather multiple meanings exist in the words as they shift between, and are shared by, various voices in the text.

Mikhail Bakhtin's writing on "intertextuality" offers ideas related to Kristeva's theories regarding the dialogue of discourses within a piece of writing. This is hardly surprising, since much of Kristeva's work on intertextuality is based on Bakhtin's theories, which she introduced to the network of French post-structuralist theorists in the 1960s. As critics such as Simon Dentith have noted, however, Kristeva's concept of the multiplicity of meanings in any given text is different from the multiplicity of meanings imagined by Bakhtin, which inspired Kristeva's concept of semianalysis and the dialogic (multiple-meaning) word.[15] This difference, mainly, is that Bakhtin argued the multiplicity of possible meanings in a text sprang not from the text but from the multiplicity of possible occasions in which the text is read. For Bakhtin, the meaning of a word is dependent on what has previously been said—its dialogue of discourses, as Kristeva might put it—but also on how it will be received by others—its reception. Meaning is not just contained in the intersection of textual surfaces within the text, as Kristeva claims, but always depends upon the word's existence within specific social sites, specific social registers,

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[14] Ibid., 36.
[15] Simon Dentith, *Bakhtinian Thought: An Introductory Reader* (London: Routledge, 1995), 98.

and specific moments of utterance and reception. In other words, according to Bakhtin, meaning depends upon who is reading the text and when.[16]

It is important to note, of course, that Kristeva and Bakhtin give different emphasis to what they perceive as the loci of intertextuality. Unlike Kristeva (who, like theatre companies composing collectively, rejects the idea that a single author is responsible for a text's meaning), Bakhtin presents the author as the origin of a text's intertextuality. While concerned with the specific social sites of reception, Bakhtin's book *The Dialogic Imagination*, for example, is more interested in the dialogism that the author sets up in the text, the conversation that the author starts between characters and their culture. Despite this interest in the author's "style," Bakhtin does not suggest that the author enters into the text as the guiding authoritative voice.[17] He or she does not determine meaning, in the sense that the author cannot determine how the conversation will continue beyond the parameters of the text. Still, the author stands behind the text. Culture may speak through the author, for Bakhtin (as well as for Kristeva), but the author limits and shapes the text's discourse as far as creating the specific contested linguistic environment in which the characters exist. Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination* does not claim that these characters are purely products of an original authorial imagination, of course. Instead, many of the author's voices (whether the characters' or the narrative's) exist "as reiterations,

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[16] Critics such as Dentith and Graham Allen have argued that Kristeva's emphasis on the way the multiplicity of possible meanings for a text are contained in that text removes intertextuality from the specific historical encounters in which Bakhtin was so interested. In this sense, Kristeva's concept of intertextuality is fundamentally different from Bakhtin's. It is important to note, however, that Bakhtin never actually used the word "intertextuality," only the term "dialogism." It was Kristeva who defined Bakhtin's writing as concerned primarily with the intertextual. See Allen's *Intertextuality* (London: Routledge, 2000).

[17] Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. Caryl Holquist and Michael Emerson, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin, Tex.: U of Texas Press, 1981), 262.

parodies, transformations, and other kinds of appropriations of existing speech genres, utterances, and words."[18] The author's voices are intertextual and hybrid, not unique and contained. Nevertheless, Bakhtin privileges the author as central to textual analysis, as Kristeva privilege the text alone. According to Bakhtin, the author is the source, though not the container, of the multiplicity of a text's meanings. An author such as Fyodor Dostoevsky, one of Bakhtin's favorite examples, is the source of his texts' intertextuality. Authors therefore deserve close attention in terms of the specific ways they create intertextuality. Examining Dostoevsky's "style" (by which an author sets up meanings in the novel, the specifics of the contested linguistic environment) was of utmost importance to Bakhtin.

Subsequent to Kristeva's article "The Bounded Text," Kristeva's book *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984) argued that, while all texts are intertextual, certain texts are more plural in that their "genotext" is more emphasized than their "phenotext."[19] (Every text contains both, Kristeva contends.) This dissertation accepts the premise that certain texts are more intertextual than others. This concept justifies the privileging of the collectively written drama as a text that requires multiple methodologies and more even-handed interdisciplinary analysis than the reading of an individually written drama or writing in other genres. This dissertation asserts that a play such as *Culture of Desire* or *DreamPlay* is more intertextual than other plays because of its extensive use of quotation.

The idea that certain texts might be more intertextual than other texts—and that critics might be able to discern this difference—is developed by theorist Roland Barthes. Unlike Bakhtin's interest in the author as the source of a text's dialogism, Barthes' concern, in his article

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[18] Allen, 24.

[19] Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia UP), 1984, 86-87.

"The Death of the Author," is more with the reader's ability to process a text's intertextuality at any given moment.

> [A] text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, and contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author.[20]

According to this essay, a text is not plural in the sense that its words simply have multiple meanings, as Kristeva's theories claim. Instead, the multiple meanings of a text are a result of the play of signifiers, always leading on to other signifiers, and the "trace" of signifying chains that disrupt and infinitely defer the meaning of each signifier. Textual analysis, according to Barthes, then, is no longer concerned with where the text comes from (as in historical literary criticism), nor even how it is made (as in Bakhtin's structural criticism which privileges the style of the author), but "how it is unmade, how it explodes, disseminates—by what coded paths it goes off."[21] It is the reader who deconstructs the text in this way, who focuses the multiplicity but also shows how the text unmakes its meanings. Like Bakhtin and Kristeva, however, Barthes agrees that certain texts are more overtly intertextual than others. For Barthes, the radically "plural text," unlike other texts, does not allow one code (or series of meanings) to dominate over any other.[22] Such a text, therefore, liberates the disruptive force of the intertextual. The collectively written drama may be just such a radically plural text.

It should be noted that none of these aforementioned intertextual theorists consider the drama when discussing intertextuality. Therefore, to simply apply theories designed to analyze non-dramatic texts to the analysis of drama texts requires some qualification. From this broad

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[20] Barthes, "The Death of the Author" in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 148.
[21] Allen, 78.
[22] Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975).

overview of the concepts of intertextuality in the writings of Bakhtin, Kristeva, and Barthes, certain generalities can be offered which may help in transferring this general discussion of intertextuality in texts to consider intertextuality in drama specifically (and therefore intertextuality in the collectively written drama). All three of these writers agree that while all texts are intertextual, certain texts are more intertextual than others—for different reasons, but nonetheless. Moreover, while there is much overlap between these three theorists, an, albeit over-simplified, way to characterize a primary difference between them might be to note that each imagines the source of intertextuality in a different location. For Kristeva, intertextuality originates in the text; for Bakhtin, in the author; for Barthes, in the reader.

Taking each of these perceived intertextual origins in turn, it is possible to see why these three theorists explicitly or implicitly avoid discussing the drama text in terms of its intertextuality. At first glance, the drama might seem an ideal object of study for Kristeva's semianalysis. After all, the drama, more obviously than a poem or novel, is a text always in production, as opposed to a product to be consumed. The drama after all, as it has been noted, is traditionally considered more unfinished than other texts, calling for materialization on the stage to realize any one group of its possible meanings.[23] The unfinished form of the drama, however, challenges Kristeva's privileging of the text as the container of its multiplicity of possible meanings—the source of its intertextuality. On the contrary, in a Bakhtinian way, the meaning of a drama is overtly bound up in the specific social sites and specific moments of its utterance and reception.

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[23] While it is arguable that even the closet drama calls for enactment in the reader's mind, and is therefore not separate from the drama form in this "unfinished" sense, this study considers the closet drama as its own specific genre, not within its scope. When the term "drama" is used, it is assumed that the play is intended to be performed.

However, to apply intertextuality to the drama does not simply require a more Bakhtinian view of intertextuality, a privileging of reception that Kristeva moved away from in her adaptation of Bakhtin's ideas. After all, as Bakhtin notes, the drama form is also at odds with Bakhtin's perceived locus of intertextuality: the author. This is not simply because the drama is lacking what the book calls an "all-encompassing language."[24] More important, the drama text requires at least a doubling of the parameters of analysis when considering the author. This is the case, at any rate, when the object of study is the performance of a drama along with the text. (Again, this assumes that the textual analysis of the drama ideally should not be separated from its performances.) Unlike Dostoevsky the novelist (a typical source of intertextuality cited by Bakhtin), the playwright alone does not determine the specifics of a drama performance's intertextuality. This source of intertextuality is shared with the director and the other composers of the performance (actors, designers, etc.). Determining, in fact, who is more the "author" of a particular production, the director or the playwright, is a long-standing debate in theatre studies and a pertinent issue whenever performances are discussed.

The drama form, therefore, because it demands consideration of its production to accurately describe its intertextuality, challenges Kristeva's idea that intertextuality can be contained within a text as well as Bakhtin's privileging of the author as the primary source of the specifics of a text's intertextuality. The drama form complicates Barthes' concept of intertextuality as well. Drama in performance is shared by receivers (or meaning-makers) in a different way than a poem or novel is read and discussed. Drama production challenges Barthes' privileging of the individual reader as the site where the multiplicity of the text is focused. Drama production typically, though not always, requires the production of meaning not by one

[24] Bakhtin, 266.

reader at a time, but by the shared meaning-making in reception of an audience. An individual reader or audience member, following Barthes' lead, can deconstruct a drama text or performance, can realize "by what coded paths it goes off." However, the meaning or explosion of meaning is still inseparably part of a community involved in reception, as opposed to an individual process of understanding. Societal ratification is inherent to play reception in a way that it is not always in individual reading. In other words, what Stanley Fish has termed a text's "interpretative community" is in place before a play reaches the stage, in the form of the playwright and fellow theatre makers. This interpretative community is also built into the performance (the audiences that receive and contribute to the meaning-making) in ways that are different from the publication of a text.[25]

Therefore, the drama form, partly because it calls on its performances to be included in analysis, complicates the concepts of intertextuality as expressed in the writings of Kristeva, Bakhtin, and Barthes. The drama demands the consideration of multiple texts and contexts, multiple authors, and multiple readers. Despite the complications that drama and its performance bring to ideas of intertextuality, a few critics in recent years have attempted to address the drama in terms of the intertextual. They all argue that intertextuality is a concept applicable to theatre once this concept has been complicated in certain ways. Marvin Carlson's *The Haunted Stage* focuses on one aspect of intertextuality, the idea prevalent in Bakhtin that current meaning is always in conversation with and partly constructed by past meanings. Carlson begins his discussion of theatre with the drama text, arguing that the drama, more than other literary forms, is primarily devoted to the recycling of narratives and characters. For

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[25] Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).

Carlson, a drama's meaning is always "ghosted" by former meanings of the texts and characters it is recycling.[26] Carlson then transfers this idea of ghosting to a number of discussions of the way that a drama is materialized. The perception of performers, he argues, are ghosted by their past performances, as are props, costumes, and theatrical spaces.

Jacky Bratton's *New Readings in Theatre History* also brings the concept of intertextuality to a discussion of theatre. Rather than engage with the specific history of the term as it has been used in literary theory, Bratton defines intertextuality generally as the idea that "no writing or reading is isolated from the other writing or reading within its culture."[27] From this definition, Bratton determines, rightly so, that the discussion of performance complicates intertextuality, presumably in ways similar to those noted in the above complication of Kristeva, Bakhtin, and Barthes' work. Since intertextuality in the theatre is so different from others kinds of intertextuality, Bratton proposes that it should have its own name: "intertheatricality." Bratton's intertheaticality is primarily concerned, along the lines of Barthes' interests, with reception. She defines "intertheatricality" as:

> an awareness of the elements and interactions that make up the whole web of mutual understanding between potential audiences and their players, a sense of knowledge, or better of knowingness, about playing that spans a lifetime or more, and that is activated for all participants during the performance event.[28]

Bratton is not interested in examining how post-structuralist concepts of intertextuality relate to the drama form or how these kinds of intertextuality are enacted in performance. Instead, the concept of intertheatricality in this book is a way to move beyond the drama text to examine the meaning-making around a particular performance event. Intertheatricality allows Bratton's study

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[26] Carlson, 7.

[27] Jacky Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 37.

[28] Ibid., 37.

to look beyond the drama text to find the meaning of performances. Therefore, textual analysis of the dramas discussed in the book is not included. Bratton specifically is interested in playbills. An examination of the way in which playbills can reveal how meaning is made before and around a performance makes up the core of the discussion in *New Readings in Theatre History*.

Bratton and Carlson are very general in their use of the term "intertextuality." Bratton describes intertextuality as a spectator's "awareness" of other texts and the effect that this has on the text in question. Carlson similarly discusses the "ghosting" of a performance by other performances, of which the ghosting of texts by other texts (intertextuality) is one example. Michael Vanden Heuvel is one of the few theatre critics to attempt to define more specifically an "intertextualist" theatre practice drawing on post-structuralist theories of intertextuality. For Vanden Heuvel, "intertextualist" performance theatre, such as the Wooster Group's production of the collectively written *Route 1 & 9* avoids the re-inscription of power relations marked in both traditional theatre and in performance art. (Carlson also uses the Wooster Group as his primary contemporary case study in *The Haunted Stage*, which describes this company's performances along the same general lines of ghosting that are explored in the rest of his book.) Intertextuality, according to Vanden Heuvel's article "Waking the Text: Disorderly Order in the Wooster Group's *Route 1 & 9 (the Last Act)*," seeks to create ongoing dialogics between "order" and "disorder" and to complicate or elide the relationship between them.[29] In theatrical production, Vanden Heuvel argues, the written word (the drama) represents order. The drama is stabilized enough that it can perform cultural work. The rehearsal of a text represents disorder, a

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[29] Michael Vanden Heuvel, "Waking the Text: Disorderly Order in the Wooster Group's *Route 1 & 9 (the Last Act)*" in *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 10, no. 1 (1995), 59.

time when the stabilized meaning of a text is not yet converted into the stabilized meaning of a "blocked," repeatable performance. A group such as the Wooster Group, therefore, is concerned with "how to avoid constructing a rhetoric of dominance or presence and to maintain a dialogic between order and disorder once the improvised space of collaboration has been closed."[30] Wooster Group's intertextual performances bring together "orderly text and disorderly improvisation" in order "to investigate how the linear qualities of the global text interact with the potential randomness and turbulence of the local performance."[31]

Nevertheless, the process of creating intertextual theatre, argues Vanden Heuvel, does not cling to this easy binary of an orderly text and a disorderly performance.

> The method assumes that no text—whether an original source or the intertext created by the performance—is ever a closed or unified system of signification which excludes disorder or turbulence. Rather, texts are always disorderly and open systems which interact with the intertextual boundary environment, exchanging signs, traces and information with it.[32]

In other words, the Wooster Group's process reveals that all texts are intertextual. Therefore, while Vanden Heuvel initially aligns the drama with "order," he ultimately allows for its disorderly intertextuality. The following methodology expands upon and clarifies the work of Carlson, Bratton, and Vanden Heuvel in defining a working methodology for analyzing drama texts and their performances primarily based on the intertextual theories of Kristeva, Bakhtin, and Barthes.

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[30] Ibid., 62.
[31] Ibid., 62.
[32] Ibid., 63.

Methodology and Evidence

This dissertation considers a wide body of evidence in order to most accurately attend to the demands of analyzing the collectively written drama intertextually. The intertextual theories and the brief history of the drama (and specifically the collectively written drama) within the U.S. university outlined above point to some useful methodological guidelines in gathering this evidence, some of which have already been noted. First of all, considering the long tradition of drama's position in the academy, somewhere between text and performance, it would be imprudent to offer either: 1) only a close reading of these often unpublished scripts, or 2) only a performance genealogy of the physical materialization of these scripts in their various incarnations, or 3) only a historical reconstruction of a specific performance or run of a show, even one that takes into account reception, advertising, and venue, among the many other particulars. In other words, it seems incomplete to attend exclusively to the text or the performance. To attend only to the text validates the idea that the drama can be read like any other written text. To attend only to the performance accepts that the drama is merely the textual remains of performances and is therefore less worthy of attention than the performances themselves. The methodology for this dissertation lies somewhere between.

Considering the theories of intertextuality outlined earlier, it seems then that examining the meanings of a collectively written drama means examining: 1) the words on the page along with the process by which the words got on the page (the theatre collective's collaborative-writing process and sources), 2) the way the words on the page relate to various performances of the text by the theatre collective, and 3) the way the words on the page and the various performances relate to these performances' reception. Therefore, in addition to numerous secondary sources from scholars who have written about these theatre collectives in rehearsal

and in production, the following evidence will be considered in exploring as completely as possible the meanings of these dramas and their performances: the scripts of these plays; videotapes of productions; interviews with the text's and performance's composers, including directors, designers, performers, and stage managers; critical reviews of the shows; advertising for the show; production books, including director's notebooks and stage managers' daily rehearsal notes; the various quoted texts that make up these intertextual dramas; and, finally, personal experience (when possible) training and creating alongside these theatre collectives. In addition, in Chapter Three personal experience is added to this list of evidence as I recount my experiences as a "participant observer" in the making of two collectively composed productions.

Of these different types of evidence, it is the evidence of reception that is least dealt with in this project. While critical reception of these productions is considered in Chapters Two through Five, audience reception of these theatre productions is only considered at length in Chapter Four. Even in Chapter Four, the evidence of reception is based only on my conversations with audience members at a number of performances and not, for example, on a comprehensive survey of audience members. While a methodology based on the importance that Barthes' theories assign to reception would seem to demand primary consideration of the receivers of these collectively written dramas, "reception" in this study has been read more broadly as not only the reception of audiences, who create the meanings of these plays along with the performers in production, but also the reception of the collectives themselves. In other words, consideration in each chapter is given to the ways in which these collectives received their own productions, immediately after the run of these shows in the years down following. A description of reception in these cases often begins with whether these collectives consider the productions under discussion as successes or failures, but also addresses how these productions

helped these companies define themselves as collectives or challenged their definitions of collectivity.

Authorship, Authority, and Capitalism

The most important way in which Kristeva's and Barthes' intertextual theories correspond with the group writing practices and products of these theatre collectives is that both Kristeva's and Barthes's theories and the cultural work of these collectives are primarily challenges to concepts of authorship and the ways in which these concepts have determined contemporary society. In other words, of the many ways that intertextual theory relates to collective composition, the most important is that both are dedicated to challenging author-ity. Indeed, Kristeva first introduced the term "intertextuality" as a way to separate her ideas of the text from the traditional ideas of the text as determined by the concept of an author, ideas which had dominated textual studies since the 18th century. Kristeva's challenge to this tradition is the assertion that a text is not an original product of an author's mind but rather a compilation of pre-existent texts. Likewise, when, for example, SITI Company's members bring to rehearsal scraps of quotations to cobble together into a text, they are challenging the idea that a drama should (and can be) the product of a single author's mind and also are enacting their own creative work as composers as opposed to authors. No collectively written play, nor any "permutation of texts," can trace its origins or its meaning to a single author's mind. The result of group collaboration, the collectively written drama cannot simply be explained through tracing its origins to the minds of multiple authors either. The meaning is not simply the sum of the many

composers' separate intentions. As Jeffrey Masten's book *Textual Intercourse* notes, "Collaboration is the dispersal of author/ity, rather than a simple doubling of it."[33]

Not only has the concept of the author determined the course of literary studies since the 18th century, for these theatre collectives, more importantly, it has influenced the course of capitalist culture and therefore the course of 20th century commercial theatre in the U.S. The Living Theatre is its 1965 rehearsals for *Frankenstein*, as Chapter Two argues, had already come to the conclusion that Michel Foucault's essay "What Is an Author?" would assert a few years later: There is an essential connection between the concept of unique authorship and modern capitalist society. It is not coincidental, Foucault claims, that the idea of genius-author came into prominence during the same era in which copyright laws were first introduced (toward the end of the eighteenth century).[34] Establishing authorship only became important when writing was recognized as a way of making a living and texts were recognized as something to be owned and, therefore, something for which the State could hold their owners responsible. The concepts and rights of ownership of land and goods were extended to include writing, and ultimately, ideas. At the same time, ideas of "ownership" were bolstered in the theorization of authorship in the 18th century. Not only did capitalist concepts of property define the rights of the author, but also indeed the rights of the author helped clarify capitalist concepts of property.

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[33] Jeffrey Masten, *Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship, and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 19. Other texts that explore the challenge that multiple writers pose to traditional concepts of authorship include: Jack Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), M. Thomas Inge, "Collaboration and Concepts of Authorship." *PMLA* 116, no. 3 (2001), Laura Brady, "Collaboration as Conversation: Literary Cases." *Essays in Literature* 19 (1992), and Wayne Koestenbaum, *Double Talk: The Erotics of Male Literary Collaboration* (London: Routledge, 1989).

[34] Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell UP, 1986), 125.

In more specific terms, Martha Woodmansee's 1984 essay "The Genius and the Copyright" describes the simultaneous development of the concept of authorship and the laws of copyright, laws that are foundational to a capitalist market in which texts are a commodity. The idea of the author, Woodmansee argues, is the product of the rise in the 18th century of a new group of writers who sought to earn their livelihood from the sale of their writings to a new and rapidly expanding reading public.[35] Influential to this connection was Edward Young's 1759 essay, "Conjectures on Original Composition," which provided the concept for the economic possibility of "ownership" of words by characterizing writing as "intellectual property."[36] As Woodmansee notes, however, "to ground the author's claim to ownership of his work… [it was first] necessary to show that this work transcends its physical foundations."[37] In other words, the 18th century author had to prove that he or she had created more than the material book itself, which in most cases was clearly the product of many others' hands. The essays of Johann Gottfried von Herder provided some basis for this transcendence by claiming that "one ought to be able to regard each book as the imprint of a living human soul."[38] As such, the written work of any author was as unique and personal as his own soul, the most uncontested of human properties.

As Chapter Two, in particular, details, theatre companies often formed as themselves as collectives in order to challenge a U.S. political system based on a hierarchy of authority which

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[35] Martha Woodmansee, "The Genius and the Copyright: Economic and Legal Conditions of the Emergence of the 'Author,'" in *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 17 (1984), 426.

[36] Edward Young, "Conjectures on original composition" in a letter to the author of Sir Charles Grandison, 2nd edition (London: printed for A. Millar and R. and J. Dodsley, 1759). Eighteenth century collections online.

[37] Woodmansee, 443.

[38] Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Herders sämtliche Werke*, ed. Bernhard Suphan (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892), Vol. VIII, 175.

they felt unfairly represented the individual. However, once these collectives began to recognize the ways in which authority determined their creative processes as well, it became clear that somehow challenging authorship within the writing of the theatre production was the first and most important step to challenging authority within the collective. In this way, companies such as the Living Theatre discovered in their work the assertion that Barthes and other intertextual theorists would make a few years later: the author is the ultimate representation of authority and therefore of capitalism. Consequently, this dissertation pursues the ways in which theatre collectives simultaneously challenge authorship and authority (political, social, etc.).

Chapter Breakdown

The theatre histories in Chapters Two through Four offer similar narratives with important differences. Each chapter focuses on a theatre company or theatre companies struggling with issues of author-ity within and around an individual production. Each chapter examines the limitations of quotation as a means of challenging author-ity within the process of collective composition, within the collective, and within the world outside the collective. While each of these theatre companies contends with author-ity in general in its collective composition process, each also specifically contends with a single figure represented in its play that comes to represent author-ity for the company. These collectives then use their productions as imagined space in which to negotiate with author-ity and in some cases to tailor ideal outcomes to these negotiations, while at the same time actual negotiations with authority are occurring within the collectives.

Chapter Two argues that the history of the Living Theatre, from its inception in 1947 to its 1968 U.S. tour of *Frankenstein*, *Paradise Now*, *Antigone*, and *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*, is best told as the company recognizing and attempting to eliminate a series of authorities from its creative process: the producer, the playwright, the director. Specifically, this chapter describes the way in which this collective began using in rehearsal the sometimes-incompatible techniques of quotation and improvisation to write the text for and to stage *Frankenstein* in 1965. This was the second show that the Living Theatre tried to create as a collective without relying on a traditional theatre-making hierarchy. The chapter argues that the company's collective composition through quotation was only partially successful in eliminating authorship, and therefore a reliance on authority, from the Living Theatre's creative process. Improvisation proved likewise problematic for the Living Theatre because of what the collective perceived as improvised theatre's limitations as a form of communication. Eventually, Julian Beck and Judith Malina, the company's founders and recognized leaders, took over the writing and directing of *Frankenstein* when the collective composition process proved too slow. This compromise, the chapter argues, was not due simply to the fact that the Living Theatre had attempted to operate as a collective within a commercial theatre system that such operation impossible—in other words, that the collective was booked to present *Frankenstein* at various venues in Europe and depended on the money from these bookings—it was also due to the fact that the creative philosophy of the company was inconsistent from the beginning.

This inconsistency is traced in part to the company's embrace of Antonin Artaud's *The Theatre and Its Double* as its theatre-making manifesto. Artaud's book, like the creative process of *Frankenstein*, is torn between honoring authority and trying to eliminate it. Quotation as a method, this chapter argues, presents this same confusion. Quotation allows the opportunity to

create as a company as opposed to designating a single author-playwright. At the same time, quotation in some sense honors the authority of those being quoted even if the quotations are being used ironically or to opposite ends as they traditionally have been read. While initially allowing the company to challenge author-ity, quotation became a method that prevented the Living Theatre from eliminating entirely author-ity from the creative process in its production of *Frankenstein*. Appropriately, like the tragic doctor in Mary Shelley's novel, the Living Theatre in relying on the texts of others, paid a price for attempting to create something new from old parts.

The specific representation of authority with which the Living Theatre contended in *Frankenstein* was the Creature. The Creature, for the collective, represented capitalist society in general and particularly society's need to limit the freedoms of its citizens. As the chapter details, rather than eliminate this authority symbolically in the play, by destroying the Creature, the collective instead tried to pacify this representation of authority with mixed results.

Any number of theatre companies working collectively in the 1960s might have been chosen for this chapter, which details the "beginnings" of collective composition in 20th century U.S. theatre. The Open Theatre, for example, was working collectively well before the Living Theatre. Indeed, the Open Theatre's founder, Joseph Chaikin, a former member of the Living Theatre, inspired the Living Theatre's first experiment in collective creation, *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* in 1965. Nor was the Living Theatre the only 1960s' theatre collective to rely on extensive quotation in its creative process. The Performance Group, particularly in such productions as *Dionysus in '69*, operated similarly and encountered similar problems with quotation as a strictly non-hierarchical creative method. However, the Living Theatre is the best choice for this chapter because of the longevity of the group and the fact that its roots were in a

traditional commercial-theatre creative process. As Chapter Two explains, the Living Theatre formed much earlier than the other major 1960s theatre collectives (in 1947 in fact), and in its initial years, while the company was committed to challenging the system of the producer as sole authority in the theatre, Beck and Malina essentially served as producers for the group. They soon began to rethink the politics of their positions, of course. The Living Theatre, therefore, offers a clear progression over its long company life from a commercial theatre hierarchy to a collective power-sharing organization.

Chapter Three describes the collective composition practices of the Saratoga International Theater Institute's 1997. In this year, the company's *Culture of Desire*, a play based on the life and writings of Andy Warhol. SITI Company, which was founded in 1992, had already written two shows together as a group using a process the collective calls simply "Composition" and which consists in part of writing collectively through the direct quotation of texts. Unlike the Living Theatre then, the case study of SITI Company's *Culture of Desire* offers a creative process in maturity as opposed to the first explorations of the potential of quotation as a tool for collective composition. The most "political" of SITI Company's shows, *Culture of Desire* is an indictment of consumer culture and the effect consumer culture has on the artist. It is not coincidental, this chapter argues, that SITI Company was particularly interested in the difficulties of creating art in a capitalist system in 1997, when its finances were at their lowest and the company was in the position of having to consider closing its doors. In this production, SITI Company attempted to define itself in opposition to the authority figure of Warhol. The story told by *Culture of Desire* is that of an artist initially committed to a democratic creative process that ultimately falls in love with his own authority and becomes a boss of "the Factory."

However, SITI Company, in its use of quotation, encountered similar problems as did the Living Theatre with *Frankenstein*. SITI Company specifically uses a technique of quotation this dissertation defines as "pastiche." Pastiche is a technique that brings those quoting very close to the texts they quote, as opposed to distancing them from these texts, as in parody. This "closeness" allowed Warhol's texts to "contaminate" *Culture of Desire* and to muddy the distinction that SITI Company was attempting to draw between its company and the artist. Therefore, while SITI Company, unlike the Living Theatre, created *Culture of Desire* through a mature creative process and never reverted to relying on the authority of a couple of individuals, it nevertheless was unable to successfully offer an alternative to Warhol's progression from democrat to autocrat. It was unable to successfully challenge Warhol and, therefore, authority in this production; not only Warhol's authority but also its own. This inability is reflected in certain hidden hierarchies within the company itself. Again, this concession to hierarchy, the chapter argues, in inexorably linked to Warhol's and SITI Company's dependence on quotation as a creative method that both honors and challenges authority.

Alongside its central argument about the limitations of quotation as a creative method designed to challenge authority, Chapter Three also makes the point, noted earlier, that for theatre collectives such as SITI Company, quotation is not simply a method for dramatic composition but also a way to concretize a communal philosophy into creative practice. Chapter Four considers two other theatre collectives that, like SITI Company, are as interested in quotation as a creative method as they are in the communal philosophy that quotation can embody and explore. This chapter argues that the collaborative environments created in rehearsal and in the production of plays by BOTHarts and Cornerstone Theater Company parallel their companies' collective organizations and politics to such an extent that these plays

become exemplifications of specific types of collectivity. The two productions examined in Chapter Four are the first run of Cornerstone Theatre Company's *Zones, or where does your soul live and is there sufficient parking?* in 2001, written by Peter Howard, and the second version of BOTHarts' *DreamPlay* in 2002, written by Tracy Young and her ensemble and originally created with, and presented by, the Actors' Gang in 2000. These companies' ways of working as collectives are materialized in production and "tried on" by audience members who co-create the works as an extension of these collectives. Cornerstone and BOTHarts, this chapter argues, have reconciled themselves to acknowledging certain authorities in their creative processes on and offstage while at the same time presenting social alternatives to society at large. In other words, BOTHarts and Cornerstone willingly make compromises to their practices of collectivity that SITI Company and Living Theatre made unwillingly, but nevertheless demonstrate that quotation can still be an effective tool for undermining acknowledged authority inside and outside their collectives.

Unlike *Frankenstein* and *Culture of Desire*, BOTHarts' and Cornerstone's productions additionally challenge the authority of the company members themselves as creators, including the authority of their artistic leaders. In other words, while SITI Company and the Living Theatre were concerned first with authority in "consumer" or "capitalist" culture and second with authority in their own creative processes, these two Los Angeles theatre companies turn their attention first to themselves and then to society at large. The ways in which these companies challenge their own authority are represented by two similar figures in these plays that are dealt with in two very different ways. In *DreamPlay*, the figure of authority is Sigmund Freud. In the multiple versions of this production, BOTHarts' struggle with and ultimate reconciliation with this authority figure represents this collective's own acceptance of a certain

type of authority in its creative process. In *Zones*, the figure of authority is a pastor who questions the validity of faiths outside his own. Likewise, in the multiple versions of this play, Cornerstone also attempts to reconcile with this figure—one that stands it opposition to its mission of tolerance. Unlike BOTHarts with Freud, however, Cornerstone never successfully brings the character of the pastor into a harmonious relationship with the collective, revealing this company's ongoing distrust of authority inside and outside the collective, at least an authority founded on absolutes.

Chapter Five broadens the discussion of quotation as a creative method for composing drama beyond the work of theatre collectives by reversing the chronology of the study and looking back in time to offer an analysis of Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (1941). It would seem that *Long Day's Journey Into Night* has very little to do with the collectively written and/or collectively created plays featured in the preceding three chapters of this project. As biographies and theatre histories tell it, O'Neill could not have been less collaborative in his composition of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Indeed, O'Neill embraced and seemed to embody the image of the solitary author, alone at his empty desk. Likewise, the reception and criticism of this play could not better represent a type of literary analysis that starts and ends with the "author": his life, his intentions, his body of work. O'Neill, therefore, serves as an ideal starting point for the commonly anthologized history of U.S. drama as a progression of great individual authors, a single line of playwrights (unique talents) writing in (or challenging) the tradition of the mentors who preceded them. Nevertheless, as Chapter Five argues, O'Neill also could serve as the ideal starting point for a history of U.S. theatre imagined as a series of interrelated theatre companies, writing and creating collectively through quotation, a type of creation that reaches its peak in the proliferation of theatre collectives in the 1960s.

O'Neill could serve as a model for these collectives as easily as he now serves as a model for the playwright as author, because, in the final act of what is considered O'Neill's most personal, anti-theatrical play, the writer engages in a prolonged and radical collaboration with other writers in a manner unprecedented in his earlier plays.

In what should be his most individual statement, his final act of confession, O'Neill opens up the page to divergent, as well as sympathetic, voices through his extensive use of quotation. In this way, O'Neill, like the collectives profiled in this study, comes to terms with a figure of authority in his creative process. In this case, the authority figure is himself, as "author" of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. At the same time, O'Neill's sudden textual collaboration in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, while extraordinary among his plays, can be explained in terms of the playwright's formative experience as a writer within the collective of the Provincetown Players. Act IV of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* enacts on the page the type of creative relationship O'Neill experienced within the Provincetown Players' early rehearsals. In this most important of O'Neill's final plays, the playwright returns to his roots in the Provincetown Players and explores quotation as a collaborative method in a way that, as this project details, will later serve as the central compositional methodology for theatre collectives through the remainder of the 20th century and into the 21st century. Chapter Five returns to the "beginning" of 20th century U.S. theatre and drama in order to offer a way to begin again the story of the 20th and 21st century U.S. drama as one committed to collectivity and to the collective composition method of quotation.

Chapter 2:

The Living Theatre, The Dying Author: Quotation and Improvisation in *Frankenstein*

Julian Beck's 1965 manifesto "Storming the Barricades," written during the theatre maker's sixty-day incarceration in Danbury Prison, Connecticut, claims that Beck and his wife, Judith Malina, are no longer in charge of productions at their company, the Living Theatre. The manifesto details the breakthroughs in collaborative blocking that Malina, as director, and the Living Theatre company members had made during rehearsals of Kenneth Brown's *The Brig* earlier that year. Beck notes, "The careful directing books we had used [in earlier productions] were by now quite gone… The director was resigning from his authoritarian position. No more dictation."[1] In the following years, however, Beck and Malina found that their voluntary abdication was easier said than done. Time and again, during the long life of the Living Theatre prior to Beck's death in 1985, he and Malina reiterated their wish to "wither away" as leaders of this collective.[2] Nevertheless, the couple remained the recognized public representatives, financial planners, and artistic guides of the company.

At first glance, Beck and Malina's desire to abdicate their positions of authority, a desire initially described by Beck (in writing) in "Storming the Barricades," can be read in terms of Michel Foucault's 1969 essay "What Is an Author?" (translated into English from the original French in 1970). Foucault's essay claims that, historically, texts began to have authors when

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[1] Julian Beck, "Storming the Barricades" in Kenneth Brown's *The Brig* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965), 30.

[2] Pierre Biner, *The Living Theatre* (New York: Horizon Press, 1972), 163. Beck and Malina's phrasing here is meant to recall "The Communist Manifesto." In the same way that Marx and Engels claimed that the revolutionary State would eventually "wither away" after the spread of communism, so did the Living Theatre's directors imagine that their authority positions would eventually "wither away" to the point that all members of the company would enjoy equal power and responsibility.

writing became subject to observation and punishment.[3] After all, Beck and Malina were sitting in prison in 1965 because of riots that followed an illegal production of *The Brig* at their theatre, a space that had been closed by the I.R.S. as punishment for the producers' failure to pay back taxes. (The highly naturalistic production of the *The Brig*, which offered very little in terms of traditional plot or character development, presented a day in the life of a military prison, focusing on the abusive relationship between guards and inmates and how this relationship ultimately dehumanizes both groups.) In one sense, Beck and Malina were being punished as the "authors" of this production and, therefore, the instigators of the subsequent insurrection, while playwright Brown, on the other hand, remained free. It may have been particularly clear to Beck, composing in his jail cell in 1965, that, as Foucault later claimed, author-ity and liability go hand in hand. However, "Storming the Barricades" is not simply a case of Beck trying to dodge responsibility. On the contrary, Beck's sincere, though ultimately thwarted, desire to quit his central position within the Living Theatre corresponded with his company's still-developing collaborative creation methods, as well as with Beck's personal philosophy and practice as an anarcho-pacifist and the recent influence on the Living Theatre's work by Antonin Artaud's book *The Theatre and Its Double*.

All of the many histories of the Living Theatre, most written during or immediately following the company's 1968 repertory tour in the U.S. of *Frankenstein*, *Paradise Now*, *Antigone*, and *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*, note the "failure" (or at least ongoing struggle) of Beck and Malina to abdicate their positions as leaders of this collective. Recent work by critics Mike Sell and Cindy Rosenthal in particular have acknowledged the importance of this

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[3] Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 124.

unresolved tension within the Living Theatre, between the company's ongoing commitment to collectivity and the company's centralized and consistent leadership.[4] As Rosenthal argues, "[R]enowned internationally as spokespeople for communality, [Beck and Malina] continued to remain literally and figuratively center stage."[5] However, no critic or historian has considered how understanding the nuances of this tension between authority and collectivity is central to understanding not only the long, erratic history of the Living Theatre and its controversial performances, but also the ways in which this company epitomizes larger trends in American theatre history, evident from the organizational biographies of Provincetown Players in the 1920s through such contemporary theatres as Cornerstone Theatre Company and BOTHarts.

This chapter combines production analysis of the Living Theatre's collectively written play *Frankenstein*, the first play Beck and Malina created with their company after their release from prison, with an analysis of Beck's theatre manifesto "Storming the Barricades." It also examines the creative methods of quotation and improvisation as practiced by the Living Theatre in its communal writing. While a simplification, the long history of the Living Theatre can be summarized as Beck and Malina rejecting a series of traditional authorities in their theatre's production process. They initially rejected the producer, at least as this figure operated in the U.S. commercial theatre of the 1940s and '50s. Next, they rejected the playwright, a rejection typified by the creation of two productions: the company-written *Frankenstein* and the unscripted, largely improvised *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*. Finally, they rejected the director, in favor of a company of actors "directing" themselves. Each of these rejections was both a

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[4] Mike Sell, *Avant-Garde Performance & the Limits of Criticism: Approaching the Living Theatre, Happenings/Fluxus, and the Black Arts Movement* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005).

[5] Cindy Rosenthal, "Antigone's Example: A View of the Living Theatre's Production, Process, and Praxis" in *Theatre Survey* 41, no. 1 (2000), 68.

rejection of authority and authorship. However, just as Beck and Malina never managed to completely dissolve their authority within the company, quotation as a method of collaborative composition never allowed them to completely dissolve their authority in the Living Theatre's creative process.

A closer look at *Frankenstein* and the manifesto, "Storming the Barricades," that preceded this production, reveals specific ways in which quotation, while challenging authority, simultaneously honors and channels authority. Indeed, the communal writing method of quotation can be linked to larger trends in the anti-authoritarian politics, described in this manifesto, of the Living Theatre and other sympathetic political or communal companies of prominence in the 1960s' United States. At the same time, the Living Theatre's use of quotation reveals a philosophical schism within Beck and Malina's artistic vision; a vision steeped in Romantic notions of poetry, inspiration, and genius, but also in the anarchist commitment to ideals of action above words and the elimination of all hierarchies. This chapter will further argue that problems inherent in quotation as a theatre-making technique also parallel fundamental inconsistencies in the theories of Antonin Artaud, a writer influential to the Living Theatre and its fellow contemporary collectives. In general, this problem is Artaud's simultaneous commitment to "the new" and to mythic material. On a larger scale, theoretical tensions within the practice of quotation between challenging and upholding authority, it will be argued, are indicative of tensions inherent specifically in the case of *Frankenstein* between quotation and improvisation. One way to deal with this tension, for the Living Theatre as suggested by Artaud, was to attempt to "revive" the quoted word, to bring language to life, and therefore to reconcile improvisation with quotation. The Living Theatre tried numerous methods to achieve this revitalization of language in *Frankenstein*. This chapter describes the collective's

varying degrees of success. Finally, this chapter examines the specific figure of authority in the play—the Creature as colossus, a representative of capitalist society—and details the ways in which the Living Theatre used and misused this image in an attempt to challenge its authority in representation.

Poetry and Economics

Beck introduced his 1965 manifesto with a note to the reader that doesn't correspond philosophically with a theatre maker who within a year would be questioning the need for any written text in the theatre-production process. In his note, titled "Mister Beck Without Reefer," Beck acknowledges the absurdity of squabbling over trivial matters, but nevertheless offers the reader a warning that the manifesto which follows has been tampered with in little ways by the editor.

> Hardly a word has been changed tho [sic], must make that clear, a couple of cuts, o.k. except for one, but the revisions in typography and punctuation have taken from the voice the difference that distinguishes passion from affectation and me speaking to you from me writing an essay. Haven't succeeded in squelching my spite as I write this, nor in writing this beyond my vanity. That's part of the work. Literary fights always look funny five years later. So will this.[6]

By characterizing the argument with his editor as a "literary fight," Beck implies that the manifesto to follow is "literature" or is primarily concerned with literature—as opposed to a manifesto concerned with "theatre," for instance. Moreover, Beck suggests that what may have been a kind of poetic writing in the original has become an "essay" because of the editor's changes. While the subsequent manifesto, "Storming the Barricades," is a preface to Brown's play *The Brig*, Beck is setting himself up here as a writer above or at least on equal footing with

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[6] Beck, "Mister Beck Without Reefer" in *The Brig* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965).

Brown. In logocentric fashion, Beck also argues that the "voice" which once spoke through his written words has been silenced by the editor's tampering. Beck claims that "Storming the Barricades," in its original, unaltered form could have spoken directly to the reader: from the soul of a poet to the soul of the listener. This logocentric rhetoric is taken to the extreme in the deification of "the Word" at the beginning of the manifesto that follows this note to the reader. "Language is the key," it reads. "It opens the doors that keep us locked in confining chambers, the Holy of Holies, the instrument of unification, communication."[7] The editor, Beck claims, has prevented this kind of unification.

While in his note to the reader, Beck recognizes that such "literary" fights primarily reveal the vanity of the writer, Beck claims he cannot help but fight them: "That's part of the work."[8] This ambiguous statement simply might mean that, according to Beck, vanity or obsessive concern over details are simply traits of all good writers. On the other hand, the statement might instead suggest that part of the "work" that the Living Theatre was engaged in at that time, or that Beck was personally engaged in on his own spiritual journey, was to get "beyond" vanity—though the company and he hadn't managed to get there yet. This second interpretation of "That's part of the work" is useful because it sets up the manifesto that follows as similarly one which calls for a commitment to selflessness, to collectivity as opposed to authority, but also one which hasn't quite gotten there yet. This is indeed how "Storming the Barricades" often reads.

Beck's commitment to poetic writing—in which the true "voice" of the writer is heard—is emphasized early in this manifesto when he describes the written word as a potential

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[7] Beck, "Storming," 3.
[8] Beck, "Mister."

medium for the poetic voice: "The prolongation of this life depends on exaltation through exalted speech. Speech: the poet reading aloud, the actor speaking the word, not on the page, but in the ear."[9] As in the letter to the reader, the written word here takes a backseat to the spoken word, but only because it is one level further removed from the "truth" of "exalted speech" (from the poet who, it should be noted, comes before "the actor" in the manifesto's estimation). Not surprisingly, considering his high estimation of the poet, Beck then recounts that the Living Theatre's first mission statement (which Beck wrote) was concerned mainly with insisting that poetry would be heard on his company's stage. "Our first statement said something about encouraging the poets to write for the theatre by providing them with a stage where their plays could be produced," reads Beck's recollection.[10] That the Living Theatre's initial mission was to support the "poetry" of drama (and that this 1965 manifesto still echoes the philosophy behind this poetic mission) is not surprising considering the academic tradition of classifying drama as a form of poetry. This tradition is one that Beck encountered in his private-school education and also in his extensive self-education in literature and art after dropping out of college. In addition, however, Beck's primary interest in the dramatist as "poet" is part of a long tradition within alternative theatre companies in the U.S.

For example, while the Provincetown Players and the Group Theater challenged the commercial theatre's model of a profit-minded producer interpreting public taste and hiring playwrights, actors, and designers as temporary employees based on a single production, they in no way questioned the primacy of the script in their theatre-making activities. Textual authority was honored and cultivated by these companies. Indeed, Provincetown's mission, which

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[9] Beck, "Storming," 4.
[10] Ibid., 6.

rhetorically has much in common with the Living Theatre's initial mission statement, was "to establish a stage where playwrights of sincere, poetic, literary and dramatic purpose could see their plays in action and superintend their production."[11] It is no coincidence that Provincetown's space in Greenwich Village was named "The Playwright's Theatre" (anecdotally, upon the suggestion of company member Eugene O'Neill). Indeed, while Provincetown's members were expected to rotate in their functions as performers, designers, builders, painters, producers, and backstage help, all were additionally expected to write plays. Provincetown Players replaced the centralized authority of the producer with that of the playwright, thereby creating an organization whose roots in anarchism and the modern feminist movement were undercut by goals of cultivating the individual genius. As Chapter Five details, company director Jig Cook made this commitment to the poet-playwright-genius explicit when he went against the group's wishes and built a permanent and expensive dome as part of the set for O'Neill's *Emperor Jones* in the company's Macdougal Street location. This effectively eliminated the theatre's future use for all but this one production.

While the Living Theatre took a different path than the Provincetown Players after 1965 and did not become beholden to a single playwright, the parallels between these companies at the time Beck was writing "Storming the Barricades" are significant. The Living Theatre also had its roots in anarchism (albeit a pacifist, personal type of anarchism as opposed to the socialist, syndicalist anarchism of many members of Provincetown), and Beck also had gambled everything on a single playwright, in his case Brown. Indeed, while Beck was writing "Storming the Barricades," the Living Theatre was preparing to leave the U.S. in protest over its right to

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[11] Helen Deutsch and Stella Hanau, *The Provincetown: A Story of the Theatre* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1931), 17.

present Brown's anti-military (as perceived by some) play. Nor was Beck unaware of similarities between the Living Theatre and Provincetown Players. It was a comparison he encouraged. In Beck's 1959 letter to Actors Equity Association, complaining about the union's demand that the Living Theatre use only union members to replace actors exiting their long-running production of *The Connection*, he claimed, "The theatre we are planning had probably the highest ideals that any theatre group in America has had since the Provincetown Theatre. And Actors Equity Assoc. has set itself the job of trying to destroy such an organization."[12]

A more recent model for the Living Theatre's privileging of the playwright as part of an overall mission inspired by poetic ideals (as opposed to the capitalist ideals the company perceived in the commercial theatre) was the Group Theater. One of the Group Theater's three co-directors, Harold Clurman, noted after the company's demise: "There must be an idea behind every new theatre. Ours was the cultivation of native playwrights."[13] Indeed, the impetus behind the Group's ensemble training, the now-pervasive techniques of the American Method, was to develop a common aesthetic and, therefore, a theatre in which labor on and offstage would be shared evenly. "There would be no stars in our theatre," Clurman claimed.[14] However, the commercial success of member Clifford Odets' plays—including *Golden Boy* (1937), *Awake and Sing* (1935), and *Waiting for Lefty* (1935)—made this Group member a star in no uncertain terms. Artistic decisions soon came to revolve around planning productions of each of his scripts as soon as they were written.

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[12] Beck, Letter to Clarence Derwent, undated, in the Living Theatre Archive, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.
[13] Harold Clurman, *The Naked Image* (New York: Macmillan,1966),152.
[14] Clurman, *The Fervent Years* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1975), 35.

The friction that occurred within Provincetown and the Group, whose missions upheld the primary artistic authority of the playwright (or in the case of the Group, the two authorities of the playwright and a method) while contending with a company increasingly interested in collective creation, led to surprising post-mortem statements by formerly avowed socialist-anarchists Cook and Clurman. "Theatres are best run by a highly centralized leadership," wrote Clurman in *The Fervent Years*, still upset over the infighting between company members that had contributed to his company's dissolution.[15] While Cook, from his retirement in Greece, after having seen his company "highjacked" to some degree by O'Neill's popularity, noted, "If I am ever to play that game again there shall be absolute tyranny—and the tyrant unquestionably me."[16] Cook and Clurman spent their careers negotiating between the needs of their collectives and the success of a single company member. They ended their careers defending centralized (even tyrannical) authority, despite that both had suffered because of certain individuals' singular power within their groups. Perhaps because of these sobering examples, Beck and Malina, in theory if not always in practice, never turned their backs on the Living Theatre's ideals of collectivity, which had begun to take shape in "Storming the Barricades."

The Living Theatre was certainly not the last U.S. theatre collective to learn from the earlier examples of Provincetown Players and the Group Theater, nor the last to illustrate the struggle between the collective and the individual within its organizational lifespan. Some of these collectives will be addressed in detail in subsequent chapters. Significant to note in the case of the Living Theatre, however, is that, generally, from the 1970s on, theatre collectives in the U.S. tolerated limited auteurship by their directors in strictly defined roles. In other words,

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[15] Ibid., 124.
[16] Robert Karoly Sarlos, *Jig Cook and the Provincetown Players* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982),148.

theatre collectives, intentionally or not, generally followed in the Living Theatre's footsteps after the 1960s, in terms of operating under the authority of a single charismatic figure or a pair of charismatic figures. The collective Mabou Mines, for example, has no artistic director, though Lee Breuer and Ruth Maleczech are often thought to be the leaders of the company. Breuer typically assumes the fairly traditional roles of director and playwright within this collective: blocking scenes, handing out and supervising the scripts he has written. In addition, the group's productions of classics retain "respect—if not reverence for the literary tradition, the historical text," in a way that echoes the mission statements of the Living Theatre, Provincetown, and the Group.[17] Nevertheless, at every point in Mabou Mines' creative process, the entire company (or at least everyone in the room) is asked to weigh in on Breuer's artistic decisions. While Breuer's attested goal may be to "search for myths that will link our experience and understanding," a goal which connects him to Artaud's writings as we shall later see, his productions reveal no norm, but rather demonstrate that all understanding is partial and provisional.[18] Like Mabou Mines, the Wooster Group also accepts limited directorial leadership, merging the spirit of ensemble creation with "the singular creative vision and control of an artist-director (Elizabeth LeCompte)."[19] LeCompte's "eye" may be the final arbiter in rehearsal, but Wooster Group's ensemble is just as involved in the creation and selection of texts—and the physical work that accompanies, often contrapuntally, these texts.

More recently, while challenging authorship in the figures of the playwright and the director, Los Angeles theatre company the Actors' Gang, like the Group, has nevertheless upheld

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[17] S.E. Gontarski, "Lee Breuer and Mabou Mines" in *Contemporary American Theatre*, ed. Bruce King (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 137.
[18] Iris Smith, "Mabou Mines's *Lear*: A Narrative of Collective Authorship" in *Theatre Journal* 45 (1993), 290.
[19] Arnold Aronson, *American Avant-Garde Theatre: A History* (London: Routledge, 2000), 147.

the authority of a training method—in this case, "the Style," a commedia dell' arté-influenced improvisatory tool adapted from the work of the Theatre du Soleil. As Chapter Four will detail, using the Style, texts are newly created or "broken down and rebuilt" by the company.[20] The tension of whose interpretation of the Style will prevail (a battle over the "correct" method similar to that which tore the Group apart) was alleviated by a workshop process at the Gang in which anyone may sit "in the chair," supervising the training and creative process on any given night.[21] Again, however, limited leadership at the Actors' Gang was acknowledged in the leadership of four co-artistic directors who for many years proposed which projects the company would work on. As we shall see in Chapter Four, however, this kind of careful negotiation between individual and group power all changed when artistic director Tim Robbins returned to reclaim the company.

Also in recent years, as Chapter Three will detail, the prominent Saratoga International Theater Institute (or SITI Company) has offered a kind of amalgam of the Actors' Gang and the Wooster Group in terms of dealing with issues of authorship. Like the Gang, Suzuki/Viewpoints training (more than Anne Bogart as the artistic director or any individual playwright or producer) has defined this group—to such an extent that the trained ensemble can now create material with or without the presence of Bogart. Bogart's leadership is similar to LeCompte's, however, in that she makes final decisions on production elements and is the person to select which collectively improvised moments from the company's creative preparation best suit future repetition in production. This small sampling of theatre collectives before and after the Living Theatre's most productive period (the 1960s through the 1970s) hopefully places the Living

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[20] Scott Proudfit, "Gang Style" in *Back Stage West*, July 22, 1999, 7.
[21] Ibid., 8.

Theatre's struggles with collectivity in some sort of context within the longer history of such struggles among U.S. theatre companies in general.[22]

To return to "Storming the Barricades," Beck's specific discussion of the role of the poet and poetic language in the theatre in the first half of this manifesto echoes various concepts of authorship prevalent in the writings of 18th century Romantic poets and literary critics. The counterculture of the 1960s in the U.S. often has been linked with the late Romantic period, and Beck as a central figure in this counterculture is no exception to the analogy. The parallels that have been drawn between notions of free-love and political anarchy in 1960s' counterculture movements and among the late Romantic poets, in particular, apply to Beck and the Living Theatre, in reputation as well as in their stated beliefs. Considering these parallels, it is not surprising that Beck and Malina chose late Romantic novelist Mary Shelley's book *Frankenstein* as a text that they adapted for the stage in order to address their concerns about mankind's limitations within any societal structure. Moreover, an earlier production of *Frankenstein*—not the "final" version of the play discussed most often in this chapter—began with the opening speech from German Romantic Goethe's drama *Faust*. For the first of their "own" plays (created without a playwright), the Living Theatre's producers turned to literary standards of the Romantic tradition.

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[22] This brief survey, of course, only contextualizes the Living Theatre's work among theatre collectives working in the United States. Such a selection is perhaps unfair (if necessary to limiting this discussion), as it does not take into account the simultaneous turn to collective composition among theatres in Canada and Europe in the 1960s. The Living Theatre, which spent so much of its career touring outside the U.S., was influenced by and influential on these non-U.S. theatre collectives, from Theatre Passe Muraille in Canada, to the collaborative companies working under the direction of Peter Cheeseman and Peter Brook in England, to the Theatre du Soleil in France.

However, Beck's embrace of the Romantics does not end with his choice of material. In addition, Beck's appearance, demeanor, and early career as a painter on the periphery of the New York art scene of the 1940s and '50s were in many ways reflections of his perceptions of the late Romantic ideal of the poet-artist. Malina's diaries, which she began keeping as a teenager, contain rapturous reports of this longhaired, effete artist wooing the young actress from Brooklyn with his late-night sessions of poetry reading. Part of Beck's particular interest in poets such as Shelley and Byron was due to the reported comfort these poets had with their own "bisexuality." Beck himself, while Malina's husband and the father of her two children, throughout the lifespan of the Living Theatre had numerous romantic relationships with men outside his marriage (as did Malina) and sometimes even shared sexual partners with his wife.

Beyond his appearance, the literary air he cultivated (Beck was prone to quoting Keats and Shakespeare in casual conversation as often as Marx and Gandhi), and a certain desire for sexual freedom that Beck adopted in part justified by his image of the Romantics, more pertinent to this chapter are the Romantic assumptions about authorship that Beck reveals in "Storming the Barricades" and in his earlier work with the Living Theatre. First of all, Beck's manifesto describes great writing for the stage as "poetry" and "important" authors as "poets."[23] That Beck considered himself and the playwrights he chose to produce at the Living Theatre "poets" is significant because it lifts these writers above the level of craftsman, a designation that the word "playwright" suggests, and places them among the loftier realm of authors. Indeed, Beck uses the hybrid "poet-playwright" throughout "Storming the Barricades" to describe writers such as Brown and *The Connection*'s Jack Gelber.[24] (The Living Theatre produced Gelber's play, which

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[23] Beck, "Storming," 6.
[24] Ibid., 7.

combined live jazz onstage with a plot about a group of addicts waiting for their fix, in 1959 with great success.) These poet-playwrights, Beck claims, had the ability to reach through their writing to communicate with their audiences, one soul speaking to others. What these poets communicated was "truth," according to Beck. The manifesto describes the writing of Brown and Gelber as truthful in this way: "frail though it is, a blueprint on tissue paper, but nearer the truth, as poetry always is, than all oratory everywhere, off stage and on, of our time."[25] Moreover, Beck credits these poets' ability to embrace Nature (with a capital N), like the Romantics did, as the only pathway to reaching the truth.

A particularly telling example of the way Beck conflates the artistic interests of the 1960s with those of the Romantics is in his description of the influence composer John Cage's work with the company had on the Living Theatre's subsequent productions. Beck claims that Cage's experiments in chance and indeterminacy taught the company to "[g]et rid of all this misdirected conscious dominion. Let the wind blow through. See what can happen without the government of sweet reason."[26] In Beck's recollection, Cage sounds quite a bit like Coleridge. After all, it was Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem "The Aeolian Harp" that famously observed that the most profound music is made when the poet simply lets Nature speak through his work, lets the wind blow through.

Therefore, while the Living Theatre's productions may have been perceived as "avant-garde," Beck's description of his theatre's "poet-playwrights" as those whose writing speaks from the soul conveying the truth of Nature, contains many clichés of the Romantic literary tradition. In terms of their ability to speak the truth, Beck emphasizes how Gelber and Brown

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[25] Ibid., 7.
[26] Ibid., 27.

write from their actual experiences (whether among drug addicts in Lower Manhattan or in a military prison in Okinawa). By speaking from their individual experiences, these playwrights have created works that are therefore unique, new to the world, and "real," because, as Beck puts it, "by being life itself and not sham is some kind of poetry."[27] This description, in particular, echoes 18th century Romantic notions that "ideas come from writers themselves, not God or previous texts."[28] Any poet, in Romantic terms, is able to write poetry because of his "genius," the term for the introduction of "a new element into the intellectual universe."[29] It is not only the poet-playwrights' ability to let Nature speak through them, but their unique encounter with Nature that stands behind their plays. In terms of Beck's adoption the Romantic rhetoric of "genius," it is amusing to note that Beck and Malina first met in a club Malina frequented in the 1930s called "Genius Incorporated."[30]

While Beck's description of the "poet-playwright" may be based on assumptions about authorship that can be traced back to the 18th century, his argument in defense of the communicative possibilities of drama also is directly descended from T.S. Eliot's challenges to the realist dramatic tradition of Henrik Ibsen in essays such as "Poetry and Drama" (1951). Eliot argues that drama must communicate with the audience foremost, a necessity that distinguishes it from other kinds of poetry. This would imply that drama in verse is problematic, because the poetry might get in the way of comprehension. Eliot acknowledges this danger, but insists, in language very similar to Beck's manifesto, that verse drama still offers something unique. "[T]he unconscious effect of verse" upon the audience, Eliot claims, is what separates verse

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[27] Ibid., 7.
[28] Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford, *Singular Texts/Plural Authors: Perspectives on Collaborative Writing* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois Press, 1990), 85.
[29] Ibid., 85.
[30] John Tytell, *The Living Theatre: Art, Exile, and Outrage* (New York: Grove Press, 1995), 3.

drama from prose drama and enables it, at its moments of greatest intensity, to "touch the border of feelings which music only can express."[31] While, as next section's discussion of the connection between "Storming the Barricades" and Antonin Artaud's *The Theatre and Its Double* will demonstrate, Beck ultimately questioned the practicality of verse drama on the Living Theatre stage, nevertheless, Beck was appreciative of and conversant with Eliot's work. Indeed, the Living Theatre presented Eliot's verse drama *Sweeney Agonistes* in 1952 (along with numerous other verse dramas in its early years). However, even more than he sounds like Eliot, Beck sounds like W.B. Yeats, the other great modernist defender of the verse drama. Like Beck, Yeats, early in his career, encouraged his nation's playwrights to turn their attention to their own lives and country, a turn suggested by Ibsen's realist plays. Ultimately, though, Yeats rejected the limited scope of Ibsen's Realist "reporting" in favor of the more universal symbolism of myth. Beck also initially appreciated the gritty "realism" of playwrights such as Gelber and Brown. However, as we shall see in the next section, he found himself later in his career calling for a drama of myths and symbols that realist theatre could not offer. Therefore, when Beck's manifesto uses the term "poet-playwright," it is not merely invoking Romantic notions of authorship but also, specifically, more recent modernist challenges to a realist drama tradition that ignored the possibilities of poetry.

Regardless of who Beck specifically invokes in 1965 in his description of the poet-playwright, Beck's assumptions about such a figure, one whose unique soul speaks through his plays, do not make the potentially troubling connection that Foucault makes a few years later in his essay "What Is an Author?" between a concept of unique authorship and the modern capitalist society. It is not coincidental, Foucault claims, that the idea of the genius-author came

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[31] T.S. Eliot, *Poetry and Drama* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951), 21 and 42.

into prominence during the same era in which copyright laws were first introduced (starting in 1710). As mentioned in the introduction, in more specific terms, Martha Woodmansee's 1984 essay "The Genius and the Copyright" describes the simultaneous development of the concept of authorship and the laws of copyright. The idea of the author, Woodmansee argues, is the product of the rise in the 18th century of a new group of writers who sought to earn their livelihood from the sale of their writings to a new and rapidly expanding reading public.[32] Influential to this connection was Edward Young's 1759 essay, "Conjectures on Original Composition," which provided the concept for the economic possibility of "ownership" of words by characterizing writing as "intellectual property."[33] As Woodmansee's essay notes, however, "to ground the author's claim to ownership of his work… [it was first] necessary to show that this work transcends its physical foundations."[34] In other words, the 18th century author had to prove that he had created more than the material book itself, which in most cases was clearly the product of many others' hands. The essays of Johann Gottfried von Herder provided some basis for this transcendence by claiming that "one ought to be able to regard each book as the imprint of a living human soul."[35] As such, the written work of any author was as unique and personal as his own soul, the most uncontested of human properties.

It is this particular history of the simultaneous development of the concept of the author and the legal grounds for intellectual property that Beck fails to consider in "Storming the

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[32] Martha Woodmansee, "The Genius and the Copyright: Economic and Legal Conditions of the Emergence of the 'Author,'" in *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 17 (1984), 426.

[33] Edward Young, "Conjectures on original composition" in a letter to the author of Sir Charles Grandison, 2nd edition (London: printed for A. Millar and R. and J. Dodsley, 1759). Eighteenth century collections online.

[34] Woodmansee, 443.

[35] Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Herders sämtliche Werke*, ed. Bernhard Suphan (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892), Vol. VIII, 175.

Barricades." This manifesto upholds Romantic notions of the "genius-author" in the figure of the poet-playwright because this figure is satisfyingly anti-establishment in many ways. Beck asserted that the poet-playwright, like the members of the Living Theatre (or Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Shelley) tapped into nature, making real connections with others in an increasingly alienating and industrialized world. However, Beck does not connect this ideal author figure with the specific economics of intellectual property that demanded this figure's establishment and then benefited from it. If he did, Beck almost certainly would have reconsidered his exaltation of the "poet-playwright." After all, Beck and the Living Theatre in 1965 were committed foremost to countering the "crimes of abstract feelingless authoritarianism," as he puts it in "Storming the Barricades," which in Beck's opinion were based in the economic power structure of the capitalist system.[36] This system, post-structuralist theorists such as Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes later argued, was inseparable from the apparatus of authorship. Yet, unaware or unconcerned with this possibility, Beck, in the beginning of "Storming the Barricades," tries to position himself as both anti-authority and pro-author. His essay, however, will eventually reveal the tenuousness of this position, a tension which blossoms into Beck and Malina's subsequent challenges to the playwright as authority figure in the Living Theatre's productions of *Frankenstein* and *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*.

The Artaud Problem

Midway through "Storming the Barricades," Beck abruptly stops praising his poet-playwrights. In a passage which begins by criticizing the Living Theatre and all contemporary theatres for their inability to perform the great works of the writers of verse theatre, from

[36] Beck, "Storming," 5.

Sophocles to Ezra Pound, Beck oddly enough ends by questioning the abilities of contemporary playwrights to write poetry worthy of his company. In other words, Beck finally gets into a manifesto-mode midway through his manifesto. A manifesto, as Martin Puchner's book *Poetry of the Revolution* argues, is at once a kind of performance on the page of the writer's ideal theatre (or society, political system, etc.) as well as more plainly a blueprint for imagined future performances (or societies, political systems, etc.).[37] The theatre manifesto can either be viewed as an attempt on the writer's part to think into being a theatre that does not yet exist, or as the first performance (on the page) by a theatre that does not yet exist off the page. Likewise, Beck, in manifesto fashion, ends up calling for a theatre that does not yet exist. The Living Theatre's stage awaits, but the plays have not yet been written to fill it.

It is not surprising that Beck's essay (or poem, in his estimation) becomes more of a manifesto in this passage and less a history of the company that it at first seems, since in many ways Beck's criticism of contemporary playwrights and theatres paraphrases Antonin Artaud's manifesto *The Theatre and Its Double*. The problem with producing the works of the great verse playwrights today, Beck argues, is that:

> [W]e don't know how to do them right. The actors don't know how to speak the verse, make it come alive, nor the directors, nor do we know how to make glow the formal structures and theatrical devices of the theatre of verse, that is, a formal theatre, a theatre not of the realist style; how to make it into I don't know what.[38]

Artaud's *The Theatre and Its Double* notes many of the same problems in the contemporary theatre of 1930s' France: "[W]e are clearly so incapable today of giving an idea of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Shakespeare, that is worthy of them... probably because we have lost the sense of

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[37] Martin Puchner, *Poetry of the Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006).
[38] Beck, "Storming," 11.

their theatre's physics."[39] Theatre in Artaud's time, Artaud argues, has lost the physics of verbal language. Artaud's book goes farther than Beck's manifesto, however, by questioning the contemporary theatre's ability to perform any "verbal" play—not simply verse plays. Nevertheless, the influence on Beck's criticism is evident.

After questioning his company's abilities to perform verse drama, Beck goes on, curiously, not to encourage theatres to rise to the challenge of verse drama, but rather to question whether contemporary poet-playwrights are actually to blame for the lack of poetry on the contemporary stage. "I don't let the poet-playwrights completely off the hook," he insists. "I [am] not altogether satisfied with the theatre verse of our time," including apparently the "verse" of Brown and Gelber. "The poets need to find a way to make their language hit the mark, and the mark is you and me."[40] So who exactly is to blame for the lack of verse drama in the U.S. in the 1960s: the playwrights or the theatres? Beck's argument has become a confusing knot, but one which he avoids untangling by then blaming both groups, "We don't know what to do with the verse and the poets aren't giving us theatre verse suited to our powers. It goes back and forth."[41] The solution offered to this troubling situation is Artaud's: "Perhaps all that writing must be left behind, the printed word, the library forgotten. Artaud," Beck concludes.[42] (Throughout "Storming the Barricades" Beck credits other writers in this fashion, by citing their last name after he paraphrases them.) Here, Beck is rewriting Artaud's essay "No More Masterpieces," in which Artaud argues, "We must get rid of our superstitious valuation of texts

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[39] Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 108.
[40] Beck, "Storming," 11.
[41] Ibid., 12.
[42] Ibid., 16.

and *written* poetry. Written poetry is worth reading once, and then should be destroyed."[43] Elsewhere in *The Theatre and Its Double*, Artaud reiterates, "The library at Alexandria can be burnt down," in other words, the classics might not be worth keeping.[44] However, while the above passage in "Storming the Barricades" is the first time Beck acknowledges Artaud by name in his manifesto, it is not the first time that Artaud's influence on Beck's essay is evident.

Beck begins "Storming the Barricades" arguing that language is the "Holy of Holies, the instrument of unification."[45] Nevertheless, even in this opening paragraph, Artaud's doubts about the usefulness of verbal language in the theatre creep into Beck's argument. "[T]he spoken word must be the word we use when I speak to thee, not the language of deception, not the misuse of the word in order to dissemble, language that ultimately separates," Beck asserts. "The word must join us, else it is just another barricade."[46] Beck is valiantly trying to reconcile his faith in poetry with Artaud's skepticism of language here, by making a distinction between true language and false language. For Artaud, verbal language in the theatre is always false, always a barricade. "To break through language in order to touch life is to create or recreate the theater," he argues.[47] Beck, on the other hand, retains some faith that language (poetry in particular) can be "life itself."[48]

Numerous critics have noted the influence of Artaud on the work of the Living Theatre. More important, Beck and Malina themselves continually cited Artaud as a primary influence throughout most of their company's life. In "Storming the Barricades," Beck devotes an entire

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[43] Artaud, 78.
[44] Ibid., 10.
[45] Beck, "Storming," 3.
[46] Ibid., 4.
[47] Artaud, 13.
[48] Beck, "Storming," 7.

section to describing his first encounter with Artaud's book. Translator M.C. Richards had sent Beck a copy of *The Theater and Its Double* prior to its publication in English in the summer of 1958. "[W]e opened it and read one line and quickly read it from start to finish, and then again and again," Beck recalls. "The ghost of Artaud became our mentor."[49] Clearly, Artaud's mentorship, while not always fully embraced by the Living Theatre, is as evident in Beck's imagining of a future theatre in "Storming the Barricades" as it is in the Living Theatre's subsequent productions.

It would be a mistake, however, to argue that what is to blame for Beck wanting to have it both ways with language (to honor poetry and to get rid of words onstage) is due to his not having yet fully committed to some cohesive vision of a language-free Theatre of Cruelty that Artaud offers in *The Theatre and Its Double*. On the contrary, in the same way that *Frankenstein* (a play created very close to Artaud's specifications for a Theatre of Cruelty spectacle) reveals fundamental contradictions about the possibilities of language onstage, so does is also reveal that Artaud is just as confused as Beck in terms of what theatre should honor or destroy. Likewise, Beck's simultaneous faith in and rejection of language in "Storming the Barricades" echo major inconsistencies in Artaud's *The Theatre and Its Double*. For example, as the voice of the theatrical avant-garde, Artaud is concerned foremost with ushering in the "new."

> Let us leave textual criticism to graduate students, formal criticism to esthetes, and recognize that what has been said is not still to be said; that an expression does not have the same value twice, does not live two lives; that all words, once spoken, are dead and function only at the moment when they are uttered.[50]

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[49] Ibid., 24.
[50] Artaud, 75.

All expression has been "exhausted," argues Artaud. We are at the point where "things must break apart if they are to start anew and begin fresh."[51] However, later in the book, Artaud stops looking forward and starts looking back. "An idea of the theater has been lost," he laments, in his essay "The Theater and Cruelty."[52] What has been lost specifically, according to Artaud, is theatre's necessity. "If it wants to recover its necessity," adds Artaud, "the theater must give us everything that is in crime, love, war, or madness."[53] Oddly enough, for Artaud the source for all of these can be found in "[m]yths to which the great mass of men have assented."[54]

For all his talk of destroying masterpieces, then, Artaud, like Beck in "Storming the Barricades," ends up extolling "the poetic state, a transcendent experience of life," which his theatre will provide, a state that best can be created through recapturing the themes of the great myths.[55] Specifically, the themes of Artaud's imagined Theatre of Cruelty "will be cosmic, universal, and interpreted according to the most ancient texts drawn from old Mexican, Hindu, Judaic, and Iranian cosmogonies."[56] Regardless of the eccentricities of Artaud's selection of cultural sources (why Iran's mythology over other Arabic nations', for instance?), what is most significant here is Artaud's desire to tap into the mythic in order to create the new. It is clear by the end of *The Theatre and Its Double* that the central contradiction of Artaud's program is its simultaneous pursuit of novelty and nostalgia for the past.

If Beck is torn, like Artaud, between novelty and nostalgia, his essay, like Artaud's book, nevertheless ends with an emphasized commitment to the new. "Storming the Barricades"

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[51] Ibid., 74.
[52] Ibid., 84.
[53] Ibid., 85
[54] Ibid., 85.
[55] Ibid., 122.
[56] Ibid., 123.

concludes with a description of the Living Theatre's last production, *The Brig*, which is simultaneously a call from Beck for universal rebellion against the authority of the State. "To break down the walls," he writes. "How can you watch *The Brig* and not want to break down the walls of all the prisons? Free all prisoners. Destroy all white lines everywhere. All the barriers."[57] These last three phrases are at once a continuation of Beck's question as well as imperatives—an echo of the slogans shouted during the riots which landed Beck in jail: "Free all prisoners!" The fact that audience members, in defiance of the I.R.S., took over the theatre along with the company for a final performance of *The Brig*, signifies to Beck that the production got through to them, caused them "pain," produced "horror," like "blows to the stomach."[58] Therefore, Beck argues, "*The Brig* is the Theatre of Cruelty," a fulfillment of Artaud's manifesto, a new theatre that the writer imagined but never fully realized in his own life.[59]

However, what is "cruel" about *The Brig*, as Beck describes it, is not necessarily what Artaud imagines will be "cruel" in his theatre. Artaud describes Theater of Cruelty many times in his book, and in many different, often contradictory ways. Therefore, to narrowly define Theater of Cruelty would be a mistake. However, one consistent idea that surfaces time and again in Artaud's diverse reflections on cruelty in *The Theatre and Its Double* is that what makes his theatre "cruel" is the way it offers multiplicity and action to a fixed group, specifically an

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[57] Beck, "Storming," 34.
[58] Ibid., 34.
[59] Ibid., 34. While Artaud never realized on the stage a Theatre of Cruelty spectacle like *The Conquest of Mexico*, as described in *The Theatre and Its Double*, he did produce and direct other plays in his lifetime by playwrights such as August Strindberg and Paul Claudel. With playwright Roger Vitrac, indeed, Artaud ran the short-lived Alfred Jarry Theater in Paris from 1926-1928. However, Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty spectacle *Jet of Blood* was never presented at this theatre despite its wide advertisement, pre-production. After the closing of the Alfred Jarry Theater, Artaud did not direct or produce for many years. However, in 1935, he mounted his adaptation of Percy Shelley's *The Cenci*. It received a very short run and was the last play on which Artaud worked in his lifetime.

audience that has become motionless in its culture. "The theater… is *no thing*, but makes use of everything—gestures sounds, words, screams, light, darkness," writes Artaud, describing the form's inherent multiplicity and echoing Bertolt Brecht.[60] Moreover, "the true theater," according to Artaud, "moves and makes use of living instruments, continues to stir up shadows where life has never ceased to grope its way."[61] To suddenly cause movement in a group that has become so sedentary, while ultimately beneficial, is initially cruel, Artaud argues. "Effort is cruelty," he writes, "existence through effort is a cruelty. Rising from his repose and extending himself into being, Brahma suffers."[62] In the same way that Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty breaks the fixed forms of theatrical and dramatic conventions, it also breaks through to the fixed audience and moves it. "We must insist upon the idea of culture-in action," writes Artaud.[63] He imagines a theatre experience that breaks down barriers for the audience.

On the other hand, the Living Theatre's production of *The Brig*, with its oppressive rules, its rigid, repetitive behavior, and its intentional separation of audience from performer (the show was presented behind a chain-link fence) does not tear down the audience's barriers, but rather causes the audience to want to tear down its own barriers. The audience, not the performance, becomes the active element in the theatre experience of *The Brig*. If the show is cruel, it is because its fixity makes the fixity of life outside the theatre so vivid. *The Brig* emphasizes the stasis of life, until audience members recognize themselves onstage as prisoners and guards, a recognition that is unbearable, according to Beck.

Artaud was not unaware of the kind of contradictions that his writing offered, particularly

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[60] Artaud, 12.
[61] Ibid., 12.
[62] Ibid., 103.
[63] Ibid., 8.

the aforementioned demand for the "new" alongside a nostalgic embrace of the mythic. Commenting on his "Theatre of Cruelty" essay in a 1932 letter, Artaud confessed, "The dialectic of this Manifesto is admittedly weak. I leap without transition from one idea to another. No internal necessity justifies the arrangement."[64] However, Artaud attempts to reconcile some of his most glaring contradictions through a concept of "action" in the theatre. Through action, Artaud writes, the lost physics of the mythic, of Shakespeare and Aeschylus, can be recovered and made new. The masterpieces can be remade in a "pure theatre," which will utilize language without meaning except in the circumstances of the stage, in its own onstage reality.[65] Artaud claims early on in *The Theatre and Its Double* that there is nothing but confusion in his culture, and that "at the roots of this confusion is a rupture between things and words, between things and the ideas and signs that are their representations."[66] This is the "fixed" culture he reviles, one that has lost touch with movement and with "life." However, in Artaud's theatre, in which spoken words become just one of many languages in use on the stage (unprivileged), this rupture will be mended.

> [L]et there be the least return to the active, plastic, respiratory sources of language, let words be joined again to the physical motions that gave them birth, and let the discursive, logical aspect of speech disappear beneath its affective, physical side, i.e., let words be heard in their sonority rather than be exclusively what they mean grammatically…[67]

In this way, Artaud imagines a theatrical language that *is* action, in which sign and thing are again one.

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[64] Ibid., 114.
[65] Ibid., 53.
[66] Ibid., 7.
[67] Ibid., 119.

The Living Theatre in its collective composition of *Frankenstein* also became very interested in "action theatre."[68] However, as we shall see, the Living Theatre's concept of action differs from Artaud's. In *The Living Theatre in Europe* (1966), the first book primarily in English to contain descriptions of the Living Theatre's productions after it had left the United States, editor Saul Gottlieb, an activist who later was largely responsible for overseeing the theatre's tour of the U.S. in 1968, cobbled together essays, theatrical reviews in various languages, poems by Beck and Malina, and descriptions of the theatre's productions of *The Brig*, *Frankenstein*, and *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* as an overview of the Living Theatre's work. One essay in this book, by Lee Baxandall, attempts to connect Happenings, the Living Theatre's productions of *The Connection* and *The Brig*, and Peter Brook's production of Peter Weiss' *Marat/Sade* under the new term "Action Theatre."

For Baxandall, Action Theatre is largely a response by 1960s politically committed theatre companies to what they perceived as the limitations of Brecht's theatre techniques. Rather than Brecht's intermittent and interruptive techniques, which startle the audience into moments of objectivity, Action Theatre employs a "total aesthetic strategy."[69] No longer content with appealing to the audience's reason alone, Action Theatre engages the audience's senses, emotions, bodies.

> Action Theatre assumes that the mass means of persuasion have so badly distorted the normative function of reason, that the need is to go beyond barriers to reason (bad arguments, empathy, etc.) to create experiences which will force and entice reasoning into touch with specific daily reality—thus revitalizing and reorienting both perceptions and reason.[70]

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[68] Lee Baxandall, "Beyond Brecht: The Happenings" in *The Living Theatre in Europe*, ed. Saul Gottlieb (New York: Mickery Books, 1966), no pagination.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.

Gottlieb's inclusion of Baxandall's essay in *The Living Theatre in Europe* implies that the Living Theatre company approves of this categorization of its work in 1966. However, while Beck and Malina, in their writing (and in the Living Theatre's script of *Frankenstein*) reveal an interest in "action" during this time, it is not necessarily as Baxandall characterizes this term. Certainly, Beck and Malina do not begin to refer to the Living Theatre after 1966 as "Action Theatre." It is true that, due largely to Artaud's influence, the Living Theatre from *The Brig* on is committed to, as Baxandall characterizes this genre, theatre that not only engages the reason of its audiences but also first and foremost engages them viscerally, their perceptions and physical bodies. As Beck writes in his Directing Book in September, 1965, "When you feel the pain you can change, i.e., the intellectual comprehension insufficient. In Art to feel it, & only that then can precipitate the Revolution."[71]

Nevertheless, when the Living Theatre uses the word "action" to describe its work, on one level this action is primarily political. It is the counterculture action of the protest, the political action of the strike. Indeed, when Beck and Malina decided to split the company into four cells following the 1968 tour, they decided to call the cell under their management the "action" cell, based on the proposition that "art should lead to direct action."[72] This label was explained in "The Living Theatre Action Declaration" of 1970, which described the splitting of the company. In this declaration, Beck and Malina wrote, "Abandon the theatres. Create other circumstances for theatre for the man in the street. Create circumstances that will lead to Action, which is the highest form of the theatre we know. Create Action."[73] Clearly, the "action"

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[71] Beck, "Directing Book, 9/1965," in the Living Theatre Archive, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.
[72] Tytell, 274.
[73] Biner, 226.

described here is not limited to a theatre that engages the body as much as the mind, but includes action in the streets that creates real changes in the material conditions of the audiences.[74]

In 1965, at the inception of the collective creation of *Frankenstein*, it would be unfair to claim that the Living Theatre was thinking of the term "action" solely in this latter sense, of a political "real-world" action. However, the shades of this political meaning were already apparent in the company's plays when the term cropped up, as it often did. This shading of meaning separates Beck and Malina's concept of "action" from Baxandall's as well as from Artaud's. The "action" of Baxandall's Action Theater is contained in the theatre experience and the theatre space. It is the action of transforming an audience. Likewise, when Artaud writes of action in *The Theatre and Its Double*, he typically means something similar to Baxandall's concept. "We need true action," Artaud writes. "But without practical consequence. It is not on

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[74] The influence of anarchist rhetoric should not be underestimated when considering Beck and Malina's use of the term "action," as more a political act of social destabilization than a physicalization of language on the stage. Irving Horowitz's description of the common historical usage of the term "action" by anarchists suggests that the Living Theatre may have connected "action" not only with social change but also specifically with improvised action.

> The necessity for participation, for direct action, is a *modus operandi* for anarchism. Action may not guarantee the successful conclusion of the conflict, and long-range prediction is out of the question for most anarchists; what is guaranteed is personal redemption. Social equilibrium tends to be viewed with a certain suspicion and alarm not because of political factors so much as personal factors. Equilibrium resolves itself in terms of rationalized authority. The "rules" of society tend to become deified into the "rights" of society. The very perpetuation of formalistic rules thus comes to depend upon the willingness of men to become alienated with respect to work processes and anomic with respect to social interaction. The anarchist demand for action is at its source an insistence on the psychological values of spontaneity.

From: Irving Louis Horowitz, "Introduction" in *The Anarchists*, ed. Irving Louis Horowitz (New York: Dell Publishing, 1964), 56.

the social level that the action of theater unfolds. Still less on the moral and psychological levels."[75] Artaud is not interested in social, moral, or psychological themes in his theatre, nor is he interested in a theatre that is "active" in a political sense. Somewhere between Artaud and "The Living Theatre Action Declaration," *Frankenstein*, it turns out, is a particularly important production in the ways it reveals the Living Theatre struggling with what is "action" inside and outside of the theatre and what an "active" theatre might be.

Building *Frankenstein*

Beck wrote "Storming the Barricades" in July of 1964 as a preface to the Hill and Wang publication of Brown's *The Brig*. He then wrote the forward to this preface, "Mister Beck Without Reefer," in which he complains of the editor's changes to his text, in January of 1965 from his Danbury, Connecticut, prison cell. In between the composition of these two pieces, Beck traveled to London with the Living Theatre where they performed *The Brig*, and then to Paris and various other cities in Europe where the company collectively created and first presented *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*. It was in London, during the disappointing run of *The Brig* (a six-week engagement cut to three weeks despite good-sized audiences) that the company first discussed an adaptation of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. While Beck does not discuss this initial meeting or the run of *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* in either of these prefatory pieces to Brown's play, *Frankenstein*'s conception is mentioned in two prose poems from this same time period: Judith Malina's "calendar-poem" from 1966 and a prose poem in Beck's notebook from 1965. "At the full moon in September we gathered in a cellar in London and spoke for the first

[75] Artaud, 115.

time of Frankenstein," writes Malina.[76] Beck similarly describes "Dredging forth our bad dreams in a London cellar under the full moon."[77] Clearly, by the time Beck was composing "Mister Beck Without Reefer," the process of creating *Frankenstein* was underway.

The text I will use for the following analysis of the play *Frankenstein* is the unpublished script contained in the Living Theatre archives at the New York Library for the Performing Arts. Mostly typewritten with occasional notes added by hand, this is a script that Malina and Beck prepared for publication by Dial Press in 1971.[78] The script was never published, however, perhaps because of problems Beck had in obtaining photos of the production which the publisher insisted upon, or perhaps because the publisher at Dial who was particularly interested in the text moved to another publishing house in 1972.[79] In the description of the seating plan for *Frankenstein* at the beginning of this script, Malina and Beck write that *Frankenstein* went through "four stages of development."[80] (The script is titled "*Frankenstein*, the collective creation of The Living Theatre written down by Judith Malina & Julian Beck." Therefore I often will refer to Malina and Beck as its writers throughout this chapter, while keeping in mind their co-creator status as shared with the rest of the company.) *Frankenstein*'s first stage of development apparently began with discussions in a London cellar, as mentioned in Malina and Beck's poems, and certainly culminated in the show's first performance at the Venice Biennale

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[76] Judith Malina, "Calendar-poem" in Renfreu Neff's *The Living Theatre: USA* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1970), 17.

[77] Beck, "Notebook, 9/1965" in the Living Theatre Archive, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

[78] "*Frankenstein,* the collective creation of The Living Theatre written down by Judith Malina and Julian Beck" in the Living Theatre Archive, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

[79] "Correspondence & notes re: publication of *Frankenstein*, 1971-1973" in the Living Theatre Archive, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

[80] *Frankenstein*, 13.

in September of 1965. In many ways, between the company's initial discussions in London and this Venice performance, the group tried to transform the way it worked creatively.

With *The Brig*, as Beck describes in "Storming the Barricades," Malina as director had begun to let the actors block scenes themselves and bring in their own ideas about their characters and the play overall. At the same time, Brown's script remained largely unchanged throughout the rehearsal process. Moreover, the space for input in terms of blocking must have been extremely limited. After all, *The Brig* establishes a list of rules that the inmates and guards must adhere to throughout the play. White lines separate the various areas of the prison-cell set—bunks, showers, the outside compound, etc.—and "no prisoner may cross any white line without requesting permission to do so in the manner quoted, " as Brown writes, the manner being, "Sir, Prisoner Number ________ requests permission to cross the white line."[81] Therefore, Malina as director was giving up very little control in terms of blocking by allowing her actors' input on *The Brig*. Certainly no actor could move outside the strictures of the numerous rules of the brig, which guided and constrained their choices.

Nevertheless, in rehearsal and in performance, Brown's rule-laden script (which often just outlines the action of a scene, containing very little in terms of dialogue or individual blocking) provided room for constant improvisation by the actors (improvisation limited and defined by the rules, but improvisation nonetheless). Critics typically have focused on director Malina's strict regimen in the rehearsal process of *The Brig*, when arguing that (based on her Directing Notes) she ran rehearsals much like a boot camp. This oppressive atmosphere, it has been argued, by critics and by Malina herself, brought the company closer together through suffering. Writes Malina, "The free and easy spirit among us had to be transformed by sacrifice

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[81] Kenneth Brown, *The Brig* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965), 45.

of our intimacy (just for the time of rehearsal) to the cold, hard way of the world."[82] However, I would argue that *The Brig* also offered a new freedom to the Living Theatre's actors that fueled the company's move into the collective creation they would participate in with *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* and *Frankenstein*. The idea that the limitations of *The Brig* ironically freed the actors is indeed suggested by Beck in "Storming the Barricades," in a section in which he details the ways in which almost everything about the Living Theatre's history, prior to Brown's play, can be found in *The Brig*'s design:

> The search for exactness, pinnacle. The search for strict formalism in the very nature of the action, the elements of choreography and of music, of rhythm. In all the improvisations, the indeterminate scenes that could result from a missing button on a costume, an accidental slip of the foot, the search for a Theatre of Chance.[83]

Like actual prisoners in a brig, no actor in *The Brig* could completely live up to the rules of the prison, performance after performance. Mistakes were bound to be made. Therefore, little variances occurred in every performance and were consistently caught by the watchful eyes of the guards and acted upon. The result is a production that is different in little ways (imperceptible except to the actors), performance to performance.

The Living Theatre had of course experimented with improvisation before, primarily with Jackson MacLow's play *The Marrying Maiden*, presented in 1960, in which Malina as director provided the scenario for the performance and then rolled dice to select different cards on which were written "actions" for the actors to perform. The play was a financial failure. Nevertheless the Living Theatre kept it in repertory for almost a year, not out of "arrogance," claimed Beck in "Storming the Barricades," but out of "a stubborn belief that we needed the play, we the

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[82] Malina, "Directing *The Brig*" in Kenneth Brown's *The Brig* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965), 92.
[83] Beck, "Storming," 33.

company, that it had something to teach us if only we could stick to it."[84] Clearly, improvisation was considered key to this company's creative process—primarily because of the freedom it allowed the performers. However, the difference between *The Brig* and a show such as *The Marrying Maiden* is that the actors in the former did not have the hand of the director or the writer (MacLow wrote the actions on the cards) determining the performance, dice roll by dice roll. The rules and tasks of *The Brig* (for example, one scene simply consists of the prisoners cleaning the entire prison) were certainly numerous and constricting. Moment to moment, though, the freedom of the actors was palpable, as Beck notes, perhaps because the actors' choices were guaranteed to receive immediate and serious reactions from the other players. For example, if a prisoner stepped across a white line without asking, he was punished immediately, regardless of whether the script called for it at that moment. The level of concentration required of the actors as guards and prisoners in this charged atmosphere, while inarguably abusive, nevertheless created a kind of group awareness on a kinesthetic level that the company tried to re-capture in its subsequent productions.

The collaborative awareness that the performers of *The Brig* demonstrated within the constricting rules of the play's imagined prison is similar to the kind of exploration of freedom within a given structure in the Theatre of Chance compositions created by choreographer Merce Cunningham and composer John Cage throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Indeed, critics such as *The Village Voice*'s Michael Smith noted in his review of *The Brig* the similarity of the show to Cunningham's dance pieces, as well as to those of the Judson Dance Theatre and to Cage's music compositions.[85] *The Brig* was the first production in which the Living Theatre, according

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[84] Ibid., 29.
[85] Michael Smith, "Theatre: *The Brig*," *Village Voice* (May 23, 1963).

to Beck and Malina, really experienced the dramatic possibility of collective physical movement outside of the realization of a text and began to consider more democratic ways of collectively composing theatre pieces as a group. Acknowledging the clear similarities that Smith notes between *The Brig* and New York's post-modern dance and music scenes in the 1960s, Chapter Three details the lineage of one particular type of collective composition through modern and post-modern dance to its current use by the Saratoga International Theatre Institute. However, it is important here to at least mention the inseparability of the Living Theatre's move towards collective composition and the work of its fellow artists in Greenwich Village in the early 1960s.

In "Storming the Barricades," as referenced earlier, Beck acknowledged the profound influence of John Cage's work with chance in composition on the Living Theatre. Cage was a frequent collaborator with the company, as was his life partner, Cunningham. Cunningham's dance studio indeed was located over the Living Theatre's performance space in the early 1960s (at the corner of 6th Avenue and 14th street in New York's Greenwich Village), the space in which *The Brig* was performed and the space that was eventually shut down by the I.R.S. Beck felt more kinship with Cage, as a fellow political anarchist, than he did with Cunningham, which may be why he writes only of Cage in "Storming the Barricades," when detailing the history of the Living Theatre. However, Beck and Malina had collaborated with Cunningham and Cage separately and together a number of times since first making their acquaintance in 1950. Cunningham even choreographed dance pieces within Living Theatre shows, including both plays the theatre produced by playwright-anarchist-philosopher Paul Goodman.[86] The overlap in

[86] One connection between Cunningham's work and the Living Theatre's collective composition of *Frankenstein* is the use of quotation to create what Cunningham called "collage" in his

personnel between Cunningham's company, the Living Theatre, and other dance companies committed to collective composition, such as the Judson Dance Theatre, is such that when the Living Theatre committed to collectively composing *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* and *Frankenstein* its methods could be traced to the innovations of innumerable colleagues, former members, and neighbors in Greenwich Village, neighbors involved in various arts.[87] While tracing the myriad influences of the New York arts scene in the early 1960s on the Living Theatre's collective composition of *Frankenstein* is beyond the scope of this project, Chapter Three attempts in a smaller way to show how one particular strand of collective composition can be traced over the years in order to better explain and contextualize the practices of a contemporary theatre company such as SITI Company.

In addition to the new group dynamics of *The Brig*'s rehearsals and performances, two other influences must be noted to help explain *Frankenstein*'s "first stage of development": the creation of *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* and the company's time in Belgium during the winter of 1964-'65. In the month after the first discussions of *Frankenstein* in London (October 1964), the company created a show that Malina believed would fulfill Artaud's wish to bring the rituals of cult worship back to the theatre. *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*, which the company put together in a few weeks in Paris, had no script and consisted of "ritual games" on a bare stage, with actors "playing themselves" and wearing as costumes whatever they wore to the theatre that

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dance pieces, and what is more commonly called "pastiche" in the performances of the Living Theatre and those companies it influenced, such as SITI Company. Pastiche is discussed at length in Chapter Three.

[87] In terms of the overlap in personnel between these groups, one example is Lawrence Kornfeld, who from 1957 to 1961 served as general manager of the Living Theatre. Kornfeld became the resident director of the Judson Poets' Theater. For an historical description of the complex interconnectedness of dancers, actors, artists, and composers working in New York Downtown performance scene in the early 1960s, see Sally Banes' *Greenwich Village 1963* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993).

day.[88] The show "quotes" different material as rituals, from acting exercises to Indian ragas. In the first scene, a single actor stands facing the audience "at military attention" until he is confronted in some way by the audience.[89] Then the actors mime the elaborate prison clean-up sequence from *The Brig*. Another "ritual game" later in the play was an exercise that Joseph Chaikin introduced to the company in which two lines of actors, facing each other, repeat and transform a gesture and sound across the stage, until one facing couple spontaneously decides to move together with the same sound and gesture. They are then followed by the group, who repeat this sound and gesture. Chaikin used such improvisational exercises to build group awareness and to create scenes without a text or a director. Still another "ritual game" in *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* featured four actors at a time in four separate, connected frames, posing for brief intervals between blackouts, until everyone in the cast had made fifteen poses. The show culminated in a "ritual game" inspired by Artaud's description of the theatre as "a plague."[90] One by one, the Living Theatre actors died in loud, writhing pain around the stage and in the audience. After all were dead, some came back to life and, "zombie-like," stacked the bodies of the others centerstage.

The company created *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* very quickly when it was asked "to give an evening's entertainment in exchange for free rehearsal space at the American Center for Students and Artists in Paris."[91] Different actors in the company, as well as Malina and Beck, suggested the material for the nine scenes in company-wide brainstorming discussions. For example, actor Henry Howard came up with the first scene, the confrontation of the individual

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[88] Saul Gottlieb, "The Living Theatre in Exile" in *The Living Theatre in Europe*, ed. Saul Gottlieb (New York: Mickery Books, 1966), no pagination.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Artaud, 27.
[91] Gottlieb.

that transforms into the *Brig* clean-up. The show was successful from its first performance and became part of the company's repertory in Europe during the following few years, encouraging the company that input from all creators in the room could lead to exciting results.

Through its selection of vignettes, *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* argues for equality among: the Living Theatre's production of *The Brig*, the company's rehearsal techniques, even the yoga exercises that make up another scene. All are considered "ritual games." Theatre improvs, rehearsed shows, meditation, were placed on equal footing by *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* as repeatable and meaningful practices, practices which could tap into the metaphysical. Beyond mere rituals, indeed, there is the suggestion that these improvisations and set pieces are "mysteries" which the company is sharing with the audience—though, presumably, some (undesignated) rituals are merely "smaller pieces."

While attempting to fulfill Artaud's ideas of a theatre in which the spoken word is merely one of many languages, and also a theatre which confronts the "fixed" audience with Artaudian diversity, the show by its title alone also lays claims to the medieval tradition of plays enacting the life of Christ presented by the church and local guilds in England to their congregations. The Living Theatre's interest in "mysteries" in this historical sense is two-fold. On the one hand, the mystery plays were part of a folk tradition in the theatre, performances created by non-professional actors for fellow townspeople. In line with the goals of the Living Theatre, audiences for the medieval mystery plays would then participate in rituals in the church following and preceding these plays, shoulder-to-shoulder with the actors. This kind of communal experience with its audience no doubt appealed to a theatre company that, particularly after what it perceived as a chilly reception by "the elite" in England, was committed to creating

work "for the people."[92] In addition, the title of "mysteries" also suggests a certain spirituality in the rituals, a secret knowledge that the group has arrived at and which it wished to share with its audiences. This idea is in keeping with the Living Theatre's commitment to the "avant-garde," to leading the way for audiences culturally, whether modeling collectivity or leading them to new ways of seeing the world, as Artaud would put it. In the same way that the show re-used elements of *The Brig*, many of the scenes in *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* were re-enacted in different ways in *Frankenstein*, suggesting that the Living Theatre was entering a period in which the company was interested in re-processing its own material, in quoting itself as often as it did others.

In addition to the collective creation of *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*, the Living Theatre's time in Belgium immediately preceding the creation of *Frankenstein* was another influential element to this production's initial collaborative dynamics. In January of 1964, Malina and Beck returned to the U.S. to serve their respective thirty-day and sixty-day jail sentences for the events surrounding the Living Theatre's illegal production of *The Brig*. Meanwhile, the twenty-five members of the Living Theatre and three of the company members' children moved into a summer camp on the Belgian coast in which was located a farmhouse, whose owner, a baron with pacifist sympathies, had allowed the company the use of rent-free. There was no hot water and little food to be had in this damp farmhouse that faced the ocean, and the company was short on funds. However, drugs—including hashish, mescaline, and LSD—were in abundance. Without Beck and Malina, the company continued to rehearse *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* in seclusion. Many of Living Theatre's members refer to this time

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[92] Tytell, 268.

in Belgium as the period in which the company truly bonded, in which it became "a tribe."[93] Significantly, Malina and Beck were absent during this intense bonding, a situation which no doubt contributed to the confidence of the actors when its "leaders" had returned and the time had come to contribute to the creation of *Frankenstein*.

Malina returned to the company in February and oversaw a tour of *The Brig* and *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* throughout Europe. Beck met up with them in Rome in March, and immediately began devising *Frankenstein* with the group while it was still touring. The show really took shape in April, however, when the Living Theatre rented housing in the Alban hills south of Rome in order to develop the piece. In "Storming the Barricades," Beck claimed that he and Malina had abandoned their "directing books" during the first production of *The Brig*, and along with it, a creative process by which the director and designers would plan an entire production in detail (movement, sound, visuals) and then transmit this detailed plan to the cast.[94] However, in 1965 Beck was still taking notes (often in the form of prose poems, but also scene descriptions) in a notebook that was called his "directing book." Moreover, from all accounts of the communal creative process for *Frankenstein*, at least in this first stage of development, the concept of planning out the production on paper in advance and then rehearsing it had not changed much for the Living Theatre. The difference, and not an insignificant one, was that instead of only Beck and Malina planning out *Frankenstein* in advance, the entire company was involved.

Actor Gene Gordon described the collaborative process of creating *Frankenstein* as "sitting around first and talking about the material… working out every detail, i.e., planning the

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[93] Ibid., 204.
[94] Beck, "Storming," 30.

structure of this play… through communal discussion: verbal, silent, physical, psychic."[95] Gordon's four types of discussion are significant, because they imply that the company did not merely talk about what the show might be, but also improvised, or enacted on their feet possible ways that scenes might be performed. At least, this is one interpretation of what a "physical" discussion might be. Most likely, what these physical discussions developed were options for material that were devised to be improvised within the structure of *Frankenstein*, sections in which the actors were free to speak and act within certain guidelines for extended periods. These sections will be discussed at length later in the chapter. Such largely physical scenes were most likely developed through exercises similar to the one that the Living Theatre had presented as a performance in *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*, the sound-and-movement exercise the company had learned from Chaikin.

From most reports by company members, however, the collective creation of *Frankenstein* was not primarily an on-your-feet process, but rather mainly involved sitting and talking. As Beck described it, "we talk and we talk and we talk until the ideas evolve."[96] Peter Hartman concurred. A company member who also composed the music for *Frankenstein*, Hartman complained that the commitment to consensus on every detail of the show led to seemingly endless discussions. "There had to be general discussion about every given aspect of the production before it could go to the next step… the struggle to realize any basic point in the production was monumental," he said.[97] Beck and Malina found that the collective creation that had occurred "naturally, without effort" and quickly with *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* became

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[95] Gianfranco Mantegna, *We, The Living Theatre* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1970), 123.
[96] Renfreu Neff, *The Living Theatre: USA* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1970), 234.
[97] Tytell, 210.

"long, grinding efforts" with *Frankenstein*.[98] As Beck admitted in *The Life of the Theatre*, "the process is tedious, it is boring, it is hard work. You have to go thru boredom. The boredom, the difficulty, are the lever."[99] When they began work on *Frankenstein*, Beck and Malina had not developed a coherent process for the collective development of a play, perhaps because it had come so easily in their first experience. Therefore, hours and hours in Europe were spent discussing "sounds, movements, theories, fronds of poetry" that might go into the show, without a clear idea of how it was all going to come together.[100]

When Beck originally proposed *Frankenstein* to the Venice Biennale in March 1965, he imagined that the show would have no "set text," but rather would be "an elaborate spectacle with many visual, musical, and mechanical effects."[101] The letter to the director of the Biennale, in which Beck's describes his proposed production, also links *Frankenstein* explicitly to "Artaud's concept of a non-literary theatre which, through ritual, horror and spectacle might become an even more valid theatrical event than much of the wordy Theatre of Ideas."[102] Beck also describes the theme of the show in this letter as "the attempt to create life in order to create servants for man, the attempt to eliminate the strugglesome aspect of work in this world, and the tragic effects of this kind of thinking."[103] Struggle—as Beck would experience in the long, fraught collective creation of *Frankenstein*—was necessary and healthy, because work was noble and naturally human.

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[98] Ibid., 269.
[99] Beck, *The Life of the Theatre: The Relation of the Artist to the Struggle of the People* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1972), section 46.
[100] Ibid., section 46.
[101] Tytell, 208.
[102] Ibid., 208.
[103] Ibid., 208.

However, as Beck had found it difficult to stop praising the "poet-playwright" in "Storming the Barricades," so the Living Theatre could not completely turn its back on the idea of a written script as a necessary precursor to a theatre production in composing *Frankenstein*. During discussions of the show throughout the summer of 1965, the company began to argue that there was a need for a text, and, specifically, it was decided that Beck and Malina should be in charge of pulling this text together. Said Beck, "The problem was that during the last five or six weeks before Venice, it was no longer possible to have twenty-five directors on stage. The pieces of the puzzle had to be assembled. [In order to do this,] Judith and I were holed up in the hotel room."[104] Some company members thought that Malina and Beck did more than simply "assemble" the already built pieces that the company had agreed upon, but rather, through their shaping of the texts, unified the play under a single philosophy, and not necessarily for the worse. Said Henry Howard, "The whole company has thirty political ideologies. And there has to come out of it one front—not one mind because thirty of us are never going to agree."[105] Beck put it a little differently in a 1966 prose poem, "*Frankenstein* refused to cohere in the time allotted without the rigid schedule of the director."[106]

Apparently, as opening night approached Malina and Beck took back the creative reins of *Frankenstein* in terms of directing as well as writing. Indeed, Malina scheduled fairly traditional rehearsals for *Frankenstein* in the final weeks before opening, using a script of sorts (with sections left blank on the pages for actors' improvisations). The goals of these rehearsals, according to Malina's notebook, include "pre-block, block, script, script work," indicating that she and Beck continued to work on the performance text while she set down the choreography of

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[104] Biner, 160.
[105] Tytell, 269.
[106] Beck, *Life*, section 26.

the play with the actors.[107] As I will consider at length later in the chapter, Malina and Beck, like the cautionary figure of Dr. Frankenstein on which their play centers, assumed an authority midway through the creative process of *Frankenstein* that led to them sewing together parts in seclusion, assembling a unified but not seamless creature for display, for better or worse.

Until Beck, Malina, and company decided that there were too many directors in the room to complete *Frankenstein* in time for the Venice opening, the Living Theatre's process, while tedious, was also a significant step away from traditional theatre production hierarchies. Indeed, Beck called the early process "collective direction" as opposed to "collective writing."[108] It was "collective direction," in his mind, because the discussions in which it was decided how *Frankenstein* should look, which texts it should contain, what were the production's themes, etc., were the province of the director, at least as Beck and Malina had performed this role in past Living Theatre productions. Perhaps because Beck and Malina believed their method of quoting texts and improvising other sections of the play was not truly writing, they did not describe the process of putting together the spectacle of *Frankenstein* "collective writing," nor did they consider themselves the "playwrights" of the piece. As mentioned earlier, they did however credit themselves in the script intended for publication as having "written down" the text. Likewise, in the programs for *Frankenstein* throughout its various runs, no playwright was designated, though *Frankenstein* was listed as the "creation of" the Living Theatre Company "under the direction of Julian Beck and Judith Malina."[109] The implication of this designation is that Beck and Malina felt confident the Living Theatre had moved beyond its necessity for a

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[107] Judith Malina, "Notebook, 9/1965," in the Living Theatre Archive, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.
[108] Biner, 163.
[109] "Olympia Theatre Program, Dublin, *Frankenstein*" in the Living Theatre Archive, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

playwright as a central authority in theatre production, but had not yet been able or willing to dissolve its dependency upon the director in a similar manner. Ultimately, the Living Theatre had turned its back on "collective direction" due to time constraints, so Beck and Malina perhaps felt more comfortable crediting only themselves as the directors of the production.

This retention of the director as authority in the creative process of *Frankenstein* again may relate to the Living Theatre's sincere commitment at the time to Artaud's *The Theatre and Its Double*. After all, while Artaud renounced "the theatrical superstition of the text and the dictatorship of the writer," he retained the position of the director as essential. "In my view no one has the right to call himself author, that is to say creator, except the person who controls the direct handling of the stage," he argued.[110] This authority Artaud saw as necessary, and one he himself would assume in productions when his imagined Theatre of Cruelty came to fruition in admittedly limited ways. The Theatre of Cruelty director, Artaud argued, had even more responsibility and authority than the traditional director because he also designed the plot of the production. "[T]he old duality between author and director will be dissolved," Artaud writes, "replaced by a sort of unique Creator upon whom will devolve the double responsibility of the spectacle and the plot."[111] Despite the weeks of discussion in preparation for *Frankenstein* and the attempts at "collective direction," Malina and Beck assumed roles very much like those imagined by Artaud: "Creators" of *Frankenstein*.

The centralized authority of Malina and Beck over *Frankenstein* was emphasized during what Malina considered the "second stage of development" for the production, following the performances in Venice. In May of 1966, the company acquired housing in Reggio Emilia, a

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[110] Artaud, 117.
[111] Ibid., 94.

small town outside of Bologna, Italy, in order to work further on *Frankenstein*, which was scheduled for performances in Cassis, Provence, in July. New discussions—in other words attempts at "collective direction" whether they were termed that or not—were begun at that time. However, early on in the second discussion process in Italy, Beck and Malina made a surprising decision. As Beck recalls in a 1966 prose poem:

> In Reggio Emilia, working on *Frankenstein*, we cut all discussions. We needed to control a project whose needs we could not measure. It commanded its own destiny. The directors, J & J [Julian and Judith], however, were building the spectacle for the talents of a company of performers of whom they knew intimately. The performers directed themselves thru the medium of the director.[112]

Beck, Malina, and company had not considered the earlier performance of *Frankenstein* in Venice as a fully formed creation. They wanted the next performance in Cassis to be more focused and more complete. It is significant that Beck again does not describe his and Malina's work in preparation for Cassis primarily as "writing," but rather as "building the spectacle." Moreover, while he would later acknowledge that the ideal of "collective direction" had been abandoned for *Frankenstein*, in the above passage Beck still claims that a kind of collective direction occurred during this second stage of development, even though the company was not in on discussions anymore. Malina and Beck knew their performers so well that the performers "directed themselves" through their directors, he claims. In essence, Beck is asserting that he and Malina were so close to their company that they could anticipate how each member would want to move, what they would want to say, and how they would want to say it. This is a bold claim.

Two years later, in an interview for Pierre Biner's book *The Living Theatre*, Beck is not so confident that *Frankenstein* achieved its goal of collective direction in this second phase of

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[112] Beck, *Life*, section 26.

development or at any other time. However, he claims that the company members are more to blame for this failure than he and Malina.

> We believe that the actors could become much more creative than they are. But they must learn to speak, to communicate; for example, some of them have a habit of addressing other actors in a certain manner that's bound to evoke hostility. They must learn to change their tone. They must learn to eliminate all manifestations of authoritativeness… We wither away little by little, as we want the state to do. But there is a long road ahead yet.[113]

This passage implies that it is not only the actors' unwillingness to direct themselves that prevented *Frankenstein* from achieving the goal of a collectively directed production, but also the actors' inability to address one another equally, their tendency, in other words, to direct one another. This is a contradiction of sorts. The actors, it is implied, were willing to direct themselves, but directed each other too much, which led to conflicts within the company. Therefore, the problem was not an unwillingness in the group to assume authority, as Beck had claimed earlier, but rather "too many directors" and not directors who, like Malina and himself supposedly, could lead in non-authoritative ways.

The second stage of development culminated in a sprawling, five-hour performance of *Frankenstein* in Cassis in late July 1966, nine months after it had been presented in Venice. While Beck and Malina had taken control of the production, they apparently hadn't taken control of the spectacle, which resulted in this overly long, still very unfocused production. The third and fourth stages of development, which culminated in performances in Berlin in October 1966 and performances in Dublin in October 1967, respectively, saw sweeping changes in the production (mostly cuts), and the transformation of Act III. However, these changes were introduced solely by Malina and Beck as directors, with, they claimed, the consensus of the

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[113] Biner, 163.

company, who were allowed to disagree with any choices that the directors proposed. For better or worse, Malina and Beck's status as the Creators of the spectacle of *Frankenstein* remained unchallenged after Cassis.[114]

Synopsis and Third Act Problems

The "final" version of *Frankenstein*, as presented at the Olympia Theatre in Dublin in October, 1967, begins with the actors in their own clothes seated downstage, cross-legged, staring in the direction of the audience in an apparent state of meditation. Behind them is a three-story scaffold of metal pipes, wood floors, and ladders. The scaffold has fifteen compartments, which are approximately seven-foot by seven-foot by seven-foot cubes, open in the front, back, and sides. In most of these cubes are instruments of torture and death, including an electric chair, a garrote chair, a headman's block, a rack, a hangman's noose, and a guillotine. After the audience is seated, a voice says through the sound system, "The people who you see seated on the stage are engaged in a meditation the purpose of which is to lead to the levitation of

[114] The extent to which, after experimenting with "collective direction" with *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* and the earliest version of *Frankenstein*, Beck and Malina fell back into the traditional role of director is emphasized by Gwen Brown's 1968 documentary *Emergency*, which contains some of the only footage of performances of *Frankenstein*, as well as rehearsals of the production during its 1968 U.S. tour. While it is certainly unfair to generalize about an entire creative process from a single scene, in the filmed rehearsal of *Frankenstein*, Beck acts as the sole "director" of the spectacle. Beck gives specific direction to the two actors playing the Western and Eastern generals in exactly how they should bang their shields. While he couches it in language such as "I think it would be clearer to the audience if you…" and though he listens and responds to the actor's concerns about his adjustments, he ultimately asks them to try it his way, and presumably they do. Physically, Beck stands speaking to the company members from the auditorium while they sit on the stage, a traditional power dynamic embodied between the director who watches and shapes and performers who enact. Except for the fact that the actors seem to feel comfortable responding to Beck's notes, the direction of *Frankenstein* by 1968 does not seem particularly "collective" in any discernible way. See *Emergency*, dir. Gwen Brown (Mystic Fire Video, 1968), Projected visual media.

the person seated in the center."[115] In Dublin, the person in the center was actress Mary Krapf. After a few minutes, the voice says, "She has failed to levitate."[116] The company turns on Krapf (the Victim) in anger, as if the failure is her fault. They catch her in a net as she attempts to escape and nail her inside a coffin. The coffin is paraded down the side aisles and through the back aisle of the theatre as the Victim screams, pounds her fists on the coffin lid, and eventually expires. Meanwhile, one by one, actors say "no" and peel off from the procession, only to be hunted down by other members of the group communicating by walkie-talkie.[117] Those who have protested the murder are dragged into the structure and each put to death by one of the mechanisms contained within. Towards the end of this series of manhunts and murders, a man (who it is revealed is Doctor Frankenstein) sits on the coffin, now returned to center stage, and meditates.

Next, behind a shadow screen, Frankenstein exhumes "the Victim" from the coffin and removes her heart. He places the heart into the dead body of the man killed by hanging and paints the man's body with various symbols, including "the rune Man Lives," "a red eye with a white pupil," and "the biological symbols for masculine and feminine merged as one."[118] The dead in the various areas of the scaffold come back to life and perform a group mechanical movement, as if they were all parts of a machine. Meanwhile, an actor representing "the Worker" screams in pain and exhaustion, while four actors representing "the Marxists" march and shout slogans from the scaffold and an actor representing "the Capitalist" speaks through a microphone about economic power. The Capitalist, speaking English mechanically, is

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[115] *Frankenstein*, 19.
[116] Ibid., 27.
[117] Ibid., 29.
[118] Ibid., 57.

mistranslated back into English and into various other languages by the Control Booth, the voice from the opening of the play, who is revealed as a woman at a desk speaking in an impersonal tone into the microphone. Frankenstein calls out to the Worker, the Capitalist, and the Marxists, in turn, asking, "How can we end human suffering?"[119] They respond by continuing to scream, by lecturing on economics, or by shouting slogans, respectively. Frankenstein then asks the same question to the Old and the Poor, a tramp covered in snow and a woman carrying a branch above him, who have entered the stage. As an answer, they give him plaster representations of a foot, a brain, and an eye out of the tramp's bag, which the doctor places on the Hanged Man's body.[120]

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[119] Ibid., 65.

[120] "The Old and the Poor" is one of the more obscure references in *Frankenstein*. The script notes on page 59 that, "The image is from Anna Karenina, of the Old One striking the railroad spikes, bent down, mysterious, covered with snow." The image is not a clear reproduction of any specific image in the novel, however, and instead seems to refer to a number of disparate but related images. In Part One, Chapter 17, Vronsky sees a peasant with a sack over his shoulder at the train station before first meeting Anna (66). In Part One, Chapter 29, Anna hallucinates on the train of a peasant gnawing at something on the wall, shrieking and banging, and then someone covered in snow shouting in her ear (108). When getting off the train in the following chapter, Anna sees the bent shadow of a man and hears the sounds of a hammer upon iron (109). In Part Four, Chapter 2, Vronsky dreams of a short, filthy man with a disheveled beard stooping down doing something, and saying strange words in French (375). Similarly, in the following chapter Anna relates her dream of a peasant with a disheveled beard, small, and dreadful-looking, bent over a sack, and mumbling in French that the iron must be beaten, pounded, molded (381). At the end of the book, on the train Anna sees a deformed peasant covered with dirt, and, then, when she is struck by the train, glimpses a peasant muttering something above her and working on iron (799). These peasant images have been interpreted in many ways by literary critics. Beck and Malina interpret them as images of "the lumpen-proletariat." As the stage directions put it, the Old and the Poor "work below the social structure, but it is they who move it." It would be surprising, however, if anyone in the audience would connect these two figures to Tolstoy's novel without access to the note that Beck and Malina provide in the script. See Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: The Modern Library, 1965),

Meanwhile, Generals of the East and West appear on the scaffold, strike large shields with their fists, and extol the virtues of war through the quotation of poetry, while others revived dead construct a laboratory for Frankenstein on the second story of the structure, stage right. Frankenstein then implants various other hearts into the Hanged Man, attempting to revive him. Three experts enter, one by one, to advise the doctor on additional "grafts" that might make the heart function in its new body. "Paracelus"[sic], the Greek alchemist, suggests the graft of the Third Eye, but his graft does not successfully cause the heart to beat. Freud suggests the "sexual graft," but his graft also does not cause the heart to beat.[121] Finally, Norbert Weiner, the father of cybernetics, advises Frankenstein to use electrodes. He does and the heart starts to beat. The Creature is alive. The company forms a giant humanoid, Frankenstein's Creature, on the three-story scaffold, using only their bodies: one actor as each arm, an actor for the torso, two for the legs, one for the head, etc. This giant, with red glowing eyes, stirs and appears to move towards the audience, menacingly. Blackout.

For Act II, the scaffold structure has been transformed by the glowing outline of a giant head, like a three-story phrenological chart, with various labeled areas revealed on a backdrop: The Erotic, The Subconscious, Animal Instincts, Vision, Intuition, etc. Each actor in his or her compartment embodies one of these "functions of the head."[122] As the act begins, Frankenstein in his laboratory peels plastic skin off his Creature, layer by layer. This Creature is identical to a similarly wrapped actor playing "the Ego," who moves through the inside of the head (the Creature's head), having layers of his skin peeled off and learning from each of the functions in turn. At the end of this journey, the Ego confronts Death, the last function, which causes the

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[121] Ibid., 111.
[122] Ibid., 131.

Creature's body in the laboratory to attack Frankenstein. The body has to be sedated. The sleeping body then dreams of a ship that is wrecked by an iceberg. This disaster is enacted within the head.

When the Creature (the body) awakes, calmer, Frankenstein instructs him about the world. His instruction takes the form of the Control Booth reading items from current newspapers, while the functions of the head become mythological characters and enact the Icarus and Minotaur legends.[123] After Icarus crashes into the sea and the Minotaur is slain by Theseus, the Creature awakes and is instructed further by Frankenstein who randomly reads to him words from a pack of cards. While Frankenstein reads, the functions of the head enact the Buddhist "Legend of Enlightenment," in which Guatama descends to earth to be with "the people" and then re-ascends to heaven.[124] The suffering of the people left on earth, unenlightened, becomes an overwhelming wail as the functions inside the head attack the Ego and expel him into the world. The Ego is now the "Manifest Creature" and he speaks a long passage from Mary

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[123] The scene in which the Living Theatre enacts the myths of Icarus and the Minotaur is not analyzed in this chapter. Nevertheless, it is useful to briefly note reasons the company may have included these two legends. The Icarus legend, here, parallels Doctor Frankenstein's journey. Like Frankenstein, Icarus uses science (his father's science in this case) to extend himself beyond human capabilities. Like Shelley's Frankenstein, he pays for this ambition with his life. The tale of the Minotaur, on the other hand, parallels the trials of the Creature. Like the Creature, the Minotaur comes to hate and eventually destroy man because he is a monster and is despised for his appearance. The Minotaur is finally killed by Theseus. However, what might have been the celebratory triumph of man over beast is undercut by the staging. Icarus, who has been flying above the performers who are enacting the myth of the Minotaur, crashes to earth at the same moment the crowd exclaims, "The Minotaur is dead!" The simultaneity of these two events suggests that just as we should not place our faith in science to make us supernatural so must we never attempt to deny our animal origins, the "nature" part of "natural man" in the Living Theatre's interpretation. This idea is emphasized by the choice of having the actor who plays the function "Animal Instincts" also play the role of the Minotaur.

[124] Ibid., 181.

Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* in which the Creature describes discovering his own senses and learning about the world after being created.[125] Meanwhile, the body has escaped from the Frankenstein's laboratory. The police end up chasing the Manifest Creature, who kills one of them, and then becomes a policeman himself. At this point, the functions turn on each other violently and are expelled from the head, each becoming an authority figure like the Manifest Creature-turned-cop. These functions/police begin to arrest other expelled functions as the figure of Death leers down from the scaffolding, triumphant. Blackout.

Act III begins with a posse capturing suspects throughout the theatre. It is the answer "yes" this time rather than the earlier "no" that imperils the victims as they are asked questions about their conduct by the interrogators to which they must reply affirmatively, such as "You were hiding from the police?" and "Do you have your I.D. with you?"[126] One by one, the captured victims are fingerprinted, dressed in prison garb, and photographed, in the stage-right, ground-floor cube, before making their way to one of the cubes in the scaffold, which now have bars hanging in front of them. Inside their cells, the prisoners are free to make any sound or movement they wish (no words), but may not move or extend their limbs outside of the cube. The cells are occupied with each capture, including the arrest of Doctor Frankenstein and the Manifest Creature (who is no longer a policeman), until the scaffold is full. In jail, Doctor Frankenstein covertly passes messages to other prisoners, planning an insurrection. When the prisoners are supposed to be sleeping, a group organized by Frankenstein and opposed by the Manifest Creature murders a guard and takes his keys. A fire starts in the prison during the ensuing jailbreak. In the confusion, the Manifest Creature carries the injured Frankenstein to the

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[125] Ibid., 195.
[126] Ibid., 229 and 257.

top of the scaffold, saving his life, while the prisoners burn to death. The dead then rise and re-form the giant body of the Creature, as in the end of Act I. This time, the giant Creature holds the net used to capture the Victim at the beginning of the show and waves it menacingly at the audience through the smoke, as its other hand sweeps the audience with a flashlight. However, the Creature drops the net and the flashlight once the smoke clears. The giant breathes deeply and raises its arms to make the symbol "Man Lives."[127] Blackout.

The conclusion of *Frankenstein* changed significantly in each stage of development, and, reportedly, the Living Theatre was still unsure of whether this act said what the company wanted it to say even in its "final" version. Descriptions of the three versions of the ending help explain the Living Theatre's progression during the creation of *Frankenstein* towards a type of quotation in collective composition that does not rely on outside authority. In its first performance in Venice in September 1965, *Frankenstein* was presented as a two-act play. In the second act, after the Creature kills one of the men chasing him (as in the end of Act II in the final version), he becomes not an authority like the police but a "true monster." All of the functions in the head, in turn, become monsters and leave the scaffold, advancing on the audience. Before they can attack, however, the Control Booth announces that "monsters are at large, but are indistinguishable from ordinary citizens, except for a 'false smile.'"[128] The actors straighten up, smile at the audience, and the show ends.

In the five-hour performance in Cassis months later, a very long third act had been added. The act opens on the cast in costumes reminiscent of the nineteenth century; the women in dresses, the men in suits. The Creature sleeps in the middle of the structure, while what appear

[127] Ibid., 287.
[128] Gottlieb.

to be dramatic scenes occur in some of the other cubes in whispers. One scene becomes louder than the others. It is Nora's farewell scene from Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Fourteen scenes from Ibsen's plays are then enacted, as the Creature awakes and wanders through the structure participating as an actor in some of the performances. Eventually, the Creature starts killing characters in the scenes. The other actors don't notice. When he leaves each cube, the murdered character simply stands up and continues the scene. When he reaches the top of the structure, the Creature confronts Doctor Frankenstein, who has been playing Solness in the final scene of *The Master Builder*. As he is about to attack the doctor, the other actors throw nets over them both and hoist them above the scaffolding, preparing to kill them. The coffin is placed below the two suspended men. At the last minute, however, the Creature and Frankenstein reconcile and kiss. The company begins shouting "no" and lowers the men, freeing them. The two men lead the company in a speech from the end of Aeschylus' *The Eumenides*: "No more untimely violent deaths to make the people few… O furious hearts turn… Till joy becomes our fate, and happiness succeeds man's ancient need for hate."[129] The company members form groups of three or four and prepare to make love in various positions, until the voiceover stops them, saying, "The Law permits us to go no further."[130]

In Beck's directing book—in a passage dated May 29, 1966, two months before the Cassis performances—he lays out a very different Act III for *Frankenstein* than those presented at Venice or Cassis. It is here that Beck first records the idea for a prison setting for Act III. However, as early as April of 1966, Beck had been jotting down ideas for an Act III that would depict a complete breakdown of society into violence and chaos, similar to that of the "final"

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[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.

form of the show: “The social structure collapses. Men eat each other… Speech collapses.”[131] All that would be left on the stage by the end, according to this earlier description, is a pile of corpses, reminiscent of the “plague” scene in *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*. Out of this pile, Frankenstein creates another creature: “beautiful” and “non violent.”[132] Even from these early notes, one can recognize aspects that became the events of the third-act prison riot in the final version.

Authority and Quotation in *Frankenstein*’s Endings

The three versions of *Frankenstein*’s conclusion can be read as metaphors for the progressive stages in the Living Theatre’s ongoing struggle in the mid-1960s to challenge traditional theatre hierarchies through collective creation. The first is basically text-less; the second quotes Ibsen’s plays at length; and the third quotes primarily a past production of the company itself, *The Brig*. This progression reveals a company coming to terms with the possibilities and limitations of quotation as a method of collective composition.

Sound and movement, à la Artaud, are the chief modes of the first conclusion, as the “functions” become monsters and lurch toward the audience. The only spoken words in this first version are the voiceover warning of “smiling” monsters among us. This line is not a direct quotation of another work, though it may allude to Hamlet’s curse of Polonius: “That one may smile and smile and be a villain.”[133] The concept of smiling, anonymous monsters, however, primarily seems to be drawn from the science-fiction paranoia genre of the 1950s and ’60s, most

[131] Beck, “Directing Book.”
[132] Ibid.
[133] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* in *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt, et al. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), 1686.

notably the film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956). There is an ironic twist with this reference, of course. The film and its counterparts relied on the plot point that aliens undetectably might replace normal citizens, an idea which fueled fears about communist infiltration on the U.S. However, the Living Theatre, with its left-wing sympathies and "alien" appearance (to middle America at least) instead suggest non-normal appearance and behavior, combined with the willingness to protest atrocity, actually represents what was once human in all of us. This healthy non-normality is transformed into the monstrosity of conformity, or the monstrosity of acceptance and good behavior in a time in which screaming "no" is the most human of reactions. Reportedly, the company was unhappy with this first ending, however, because it concluded an otherwise serious play with a joke. The company's perception of the "seriousness" of the rest of the show is inseparable from the texts its quotes throughout this version. Should a play that contains passages from Goethe and Shelley end with a sci-fi allusion? The Living Theatre was not comfortable combining elements of high and low art, in what was later considered the "post-modern" fashion. In addition, the company members simply did not trust their own writing abilities in a show that otherwise made much use of "masterpieces."

The transformation of the finale from smiling pantomime to a collection of scenes by Henrik Ibsen, in version two of *Frankenstein*, indicates, as did "Storming the Barricades," that Beck and the Living Theatre, due in part to the influence of Artaud, were of two minds when it came to the dramatic canon. The company's original mission was to honor the poet-playwright, and much of the Living Theatre's early work was focused on bringing "poetry" back to the stage in contrast to the psychological realism of the commercial theatre. The Living Theatre staged Gertrude Stein and Ezra Pound, as opposed to George Bernard Shaw and Arthur Miller. This

tradition of presenting "poetic" plays—and assumptions about the authority of these texts that went along with their productions—was hard to leave behind once the company arrived in Europe. Nor was the Living Theatre necessarily totally opposed to the "Theatre of Ideas" that Artaud seemingly so reviled. In the first page of "Storming the Barricades," Beck lists some of those he considers "important" playwrights: "Ibsen, Marlowe, Strindberg, Cocteau," arguing that their words could still connect people, could still be "the Holy of Holies."[134] Moreover, Artaud himself did not completely rule out the possibility that the writers of the Theatre of Ideas could be staged in a way that again brought their words to life. If "the physics" could be recovered, his book argues, then, for example, Shakespeare could again be performed on the contemporary stage.[135] It was only until then that "masterpieces" were useless.

Echoing this position, as mentioned earlier, Beck in "Storming the Barricades" extolled the "verse" poet-playwrights of his generation and of the past, but was unsure that the Living Theatre was up to the challenges their writing presented. Contrarily, he also questioned the current poet-playwrights' abilities to "hit the mark," to say things that were important to the Living Theatre in ways that the Living Theatre would say them—in other words "directly."[136] To ensure this direct connection, the Living Theatre in London had decided during the run of *The Brig* to write its own plays, to become poets themselves rather than rely on contemporary poet-playwrights. The position of "poet" was exalted, certainly, but also one that Beck felt he had already earned. After all, he was apparently already willing to engage in "literary feuds" over his own writing.

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[134] Beck, "Storming," 3.
[135] Artaud, 108.
[136] Beck, "Storming," 32.

However, the other company members were not as eager to write and stage their own poem-plays. Therefore, *Frankenstein* was first imagined as a script-less spectacle, along the lines of Artaud's description of the spectacle *The Conquest of Mexico* in *The Theatre and Its Double*.[137] Artaud's description was studied by the company during its long stay in the Belgian farmhouse and dissected in the numerous *Frankenstein* discussions the following summer. In these tedious-but-necessary discussions, the Living Theatre went farther that Artaud was willing to go in imagining a creative process that rejected traditional hierarchies. Artaud was willing to throw the script on the fire, but he retained the concept of a single authority as necessary to the creative process in the theatre: the Creator of the spectacle, part director and part playwright. On the other hand, with the experience of collectively creating *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* under their belts, the members of the Living Theatre were inspired to experiment with "collective direction" once again in developing *Frankenstein*. Their goal was to allow everybody in the company the equal status of "Creator." This anti-authoritative stance can be credited as much to Beck and Malina's desire to "wither away" as to the company's newfound independence after its time away from its leaders in Belgium.

Frankenstein, however, proved more challenging than the company members had foreseen. *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* required no script, partly because its was only trying to represent one idea—an idea, moreover, that could be communicated to the audience primarily without language. The idea of this show was that the contemporary theatre needed to make an immediate emotional connection with its audience through ritual, a connection forged through suffering. With *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*, the members wanted to break down the barriers that *The Brig* had intentionally built between audience and performers in order to reveal the lack

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[137] Artaud, 126.

of any real community among individuals in modern society. In this sense, the company considered *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* a success. As the actors "died" in the final scene of this play, audience members reportedly often broke down in tears or assisted the performers, sometimes calling out for help or holding them.[138]

Frankenstein, on the other hand, had a more complex theme in Beck's initial descriptions, namely, "the attempt to create life in order to create servants for man, the attempt to eliminate the strugglesome aspect of work in this world, and the tragic effects of this kind of thinking."[139] Early on in *Frankenstein*'s creative process, it was decided that Shelley's own words might best capture this complex theme. Therefore, it was decided that a large section of the novel *Frankenstein*, part of the Creature's monologue describing his origins and development, would be spoken verbatim (while simultaneously "acted out" by the company) in Act II. This section remained largely unchanged throughout the various incarnations of the show.

While this choice reveals the company's belief that text alone can capture a certain complexity of thought, it would be unfair to say that the group had decidedly turned its back on the possibilities of text-less performance after *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*. Indeed, within Act I of the final version of *Frankenstein*, in the midst of Doctor Frankenstein trying to revive the Creature, the action freezes and a dumb show of the constructing of the Golem by 16th-century cabbalists is performed.[140] The brief scene, which depicts the forming of the Golem and the Golem turning on and killing its masters, was performed in strobe light, giving it the quality of a silent film. This show within, one of many that contrasts the large sections of quoted text that

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[138] Gottlieb.
[139] Tytell, 208.
[140] *Frankenstein*, 91.

dominate *Frankenstein*, reveal that the company was still interested in sound and movement without text. While the inclusion of such a large amount of quoted text from Shelley's *Frankenstein* early in the creative process might seem a rejection of Artaud's manifesto, which was being studied so intently by the group at the time, Artaud did not insist that spoken word be done away with altogether in his proposed Theatre of Cruelty. Artaud's two qualifications were that the spoken word must not dominate but share equal space with movement and sound, and that spoken word must be "revivified," that the spoken word lose its "discursive, logical aspect" and be performed merely for its "affective physical side."[141]

The Living Theatre, as it will be argued, was committed to not allowing the spoken word to dominate *Frankenstein*. However, it was less decided on Artaud's second recommendation, that language only should be performed for its sonority. While Beck admitted that "talking… is not enough," he also insisted that audiences could and should be reasoned with verbally about social injustice and social change, that the Living Theatre could "talk altogether straight to the audience about these things."[142] Indeed, the company's next collectively written play, *Paradise Now*, was primarily an outline for a series of debates with the audience: questions that would invoke responses so that arguments could occur directly, performer to audience member. While creating *Frankenstein*, Beck and the Living Theatre still had faith that language could unite as well as separate, as Beck had claimed in "Storming the Barricades." However, there were no company members, besides Beck perhaps, that considered themselves writers, and even Beck had never written a play nor shown any inclination to do so. If to be a "creator" of spectacle

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[141] Artaud, 119.
[142] Beck, "Storming," 34 and 32.

meant being half director and half playwright, how was the company to fulfill the second half of the creator's position?

Quotation offered a way to "write" without being a writer. Moreover, quotation was something with which Beck was already comfortable. "Storming the Barricades" is filled with quotations from other writers, which Beck mainly designates by concluding the passage with the quoted writer's name.

> To see the human face, to hear the spoken word, the two maxima of experience. Eric Gutkind…
> Washington Heights, legal trickery, spiritual debasement and the systematic indoctrination of the servile spirit, which process is known as education. Emma Goldman…
> The difference between mere conscious being and true existence is the nearness to God. Buber…
> Everything always seems to connect, everything in my life leading to the moment when *The Brig* arrived and enabled me to gasp and know that here it was, that if I were to avoid it, I would be rejecting my course, losing my splendor, if it is that, when it all coheres. Pound.[143]

Including the names of those he is quoting, indicates that Back was concerned with giving proper credit as well as invoking the authority of these writers, in the same way that *Frankenstein*, version two, invoked the authority of Ibsen. If *Frankenstein*'s original conclusion was similar to *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*, containing only a single line of text written by the company and no direct quotation, the quotation-heavy "Ibsen" ending of *Frankenstein*'s second incarnation fulfills the Living Theatre's desire for seriousness, as well as its newfound interest in creating primarily through quotation, and therefore, in the continued possibilities of language in spite of Artaud's protests.

It is authority (or seriousness) that Ibsen lends *Frankenstein*, his status as an "important" playwright. It is also this authority that attracted the Living Theatre to using Ibsen's plays to

[143] Ibid., 3, 4, 7, and 32.

create its spectacle. Through cutting and pasting together scenes from this writer's body of work, the company became playwrights by proxy. In effect, the company members, like so many Doctor Frankensteins, assembled this second version of *Frankenstein* from Ibsen's corpus. However, the Living Theatre, unlike the ill-fated doctor, did not do so blindly. While the conclusion of *Frankenstein* in version two does not parody Ibsen, a kind of quotation that would undermine the authority of the quoted text, it nevertheless continues to develop the production's concerns about deferring to authority—even Ibsen's. In effect, the Ibsen conclusion is much like Beck trying to have it both ways in "Storming the Barricades," at once upholding the great poet-playwrights and using their authority while at the same time demanding that they have become irrelevant. The ending of version two of *Frankenstein* suggests that the Creature's education in Act II, through myths and legends, is continued in the realist theatre in Act III. However, while the Creature takes part in these scenes, he does not learn forgiveness or become pacified, but is merely inspired to further violence. The Creature begins strangling the other characters. The Theatre of Ideas cannot bring about peace, *Frankenstein* asserts. Nora's slamming the door on the patriarchy is a noble gesture, but it does not inspire actual changes in material conditions off the stage. It does not really challenge authority. Moreover, Ibsen's scenes continue despite the Creature's violence. The performances are hermetically sealed in their cubes. They do not adapt to the real violence of contemporary struggles occurring around them. Ibsen is important, *Frankenstein* admits, but he is also a trap. He cannot offer the Creature a way out of the scaffold, the stifling structure of society, nor out of the violence and death upon which this structure is founded.

It is appropriate, therefore, that Ibsen's words cannot free the Creature and the Doctor from the nets that entangle them in the final moments of this second version of *Frankenstein*'s

finale. This version makes *Frankenstein* primarily about the limitations of the theatre to create real change, and about the Living Theatre and its struggles to imagine a new kind of theatre not based in the tradition of Ibsen but in Artaud. Ironically, however, for a show that challenges the authority of the Theatre of Ideas throughout Act III, the Doctor and the Creature are released in the end only to "lead the chorus" in a speech from *The Eumenides*.[144] They break out of one type of quotation only to be recaptured by another. On the one hand, this return to quotation is in line with Beck's assertion that not all language in the theatre is dead, that some plays and the performances of these plays can connect. At the same time, the Living Theatre, in version two, cannot imagine an ending to *Frankenstein* that does not quote from a "masterpiece" of the stage. The final statement of its anti-authority play defers to the authority of Aeschylus. The company depends on his words rather than its own.

Whether or not the company recognized the irony of this final moment of version two of *Frankenstein*, the Living Theatre (or specifically Beck and Malina, who by this time had taken over the "collective direction" of the piece) devised a much different Act III for its "final" version, but an Act III that nonetheless depended upon quotation. Rather than deferring to Aesychylus, however, the Living Theatre deferred only to the Living Theatre in this final version, recognizing only its own authority in the recycling of the setting and choreography of *The Brig*. While *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* mimed in its entirety the cleaning scene from this production, *Frankenstein*'s quotation of *The Brig* in Act III was not as unfiltered. The prison setting of the final version of *Frankenstein* is clearly reminiscent of *The Brig*, as are the repeated actions of inducting the new prisoners. However, there is more freedom allotted the prisoners within their individual cells in *Frankenstein* than in *The Brig* barracks under the constant

[144] Gottlieb.

supervision of the guards. This "freedom of the prisoner within the cell" was of interest to the Living Theatre, because it allowed *Frankenstein*'s prison to operate as a more accurate metaphor for the off-stage world than *The Brig*'s.[145] The prisoners in *Frankenstein*, like the average citizens in the modern world, enjoy a certain degree of choice and of movement as long as they do not cross those boundaries set up by the social structure. The prisoners may not even feel as if they are in prison, if they do not cross these lines. This, for the Living Theatre, was more accurate to the universal experience of life in modern society. They, therefore, called these sections of free but defined movement "World Action."[146]

Likewise, Brown's *The Brig* imagines only an individual rebellion that does nothing to change the prison. One prisoner "freaks out" towards the end of this show, refusing to be called his assigned number, crossing the line, and calling out his real name. He is immediately carted off in a straitjacket. By 1965, however, the Living Theatre was thinking in much larger terms when it came to protesting the State. In *Frankenstein*, a prison riot is enacted, a symbolic overthrow of society. Nevertheless, the riot ends only in the death of prisoners, consistent with the Living Theatre's anarcho-pacifist philosophy that violent resistance can only lead to more violence. The scaffold still stands at the end of *Frankenstein*, like the prison in *The Brig*. The possibility of successful rebellion is small in either production, the only difference is that the show being quoted was interested in individual rebellion, and the show that is quoting in collective rebellion. In this sense, *Frankenstein* depicts the inevitable failure of collectivity as an alternative to divided capitalist society, if those attempting to achieve this collective forge it through violence.

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[145] *Frankenstein*, 231.
[146] Ibid., 231.

In the final version of *Frankenstein*, the Living Theatre quotes both of its last two productions, shows that were being performed in repertory during the creation of *Frankenstein*. Both quotations make the point that collectivity often fails in the face of a seemingly unshakeable societal structure. The play begins like *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* with the company participating in a ritual, a failed attempt by the collective to levitate the person at the center. It ends like *The Brig*, in a prison in which rebellion cannot change the system. The acknowledgement of failed collective action was not particularly cynical of the group, but rather was in line with historically common notions among anarchists. As Horowitz describes in his book *The Anarchists*, a book that is quoted in *Frankenstein*: "The anarchist does not live in terms of criteria of success and neither should his views be judged in such terms. We inhabit a world of dismal success and heroic failure."[147] The failure of collectivity, represented in this prison riot, also anticipates the later discussion in this chapter of the strange and unsuccessful final image of this production.[148]

The final version of *Frankenstein* avoids the deferral to outside authority of the Ibsen version because the Living Theatre quotes its own work. While it is true that Kenneth Brown was the playwright of *The Brig*, none of his words are quoted in *Frankenstein*. Therefore, it is the company's performance of *The Brig* that they are quoting when they quote. This is a good solution to the Beck's dilemma of wanting the company to act as the playwright-director

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[147] Horowitz, 11.

[148] While the prison setting and militaristic choreography of much of Act III of *Frankenstein* clearly references the company's performance of *The Brig*, it should also be acknowledged that Beck and Malina's recent personal experiences in prison also probably played a large part in the choice to move the final act of *Frankenstein* from the theatre of Ibsen to the prison. Moreover, the company's recent confinement in the Belgian farmhouse during the long winter of 1964-'65 made it particularly adept at presenting the "World Action" of a prisoner in his cell.

"creators" of the spectacle of *Frankenstein* without having to become writers, as well as the dilemma of quoting without deferring to someone else's text or some past tradition. By quoting themselves and, specifically, their past performances, the Living Theatre creates through recycling, retaining authority as a collective while seemingly doing away with the playwright once and for all. This recycling can be seen as the Living Theatre's move from modernist art and towards post-modernist art, a move marked by increased self-reference. In the Living Theatre's quotation of *The Brig*, moreover, one can see the precursors to the kind of self-referentiality and recycling that SITI Company and the Wooster Group made common practice during the 1970s through the 1990s, as Chapter Three will detail. However, there is an irony in this recycling. After all, *Frankenstein* like *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*, is committed to forging a direct connection between the performers and the audience. It is committed to the company reaching out beyond itself into the audience. However, in quoting *The Brig*, the Living Theatre unavoidably turns its attention back on itself, a move indicative of the aestheticism that Beck so often criticized in his writing: Art for art's sake.

To Quote or Not to Quote

While in the final version of *Frankenstein* the Living Theatre chooses to quote itself rather than Ibsen, there are nevertheless numerous "masterpieces" quoted throughout the play. This is not to say that *Frankenstein* is entirely composed of quoted material. Rather, the company, or Beck and Malina, wrote some lines themselves, and certain sections of the typed script contain only examples of possible dialogue, explaining that this dialogue was improvised and therefore was different from performance to performance. For instance:

The Execution of the Gas Chamber Victim (Example of improvisation by HH):

> Hey, you guys, what is this?
> Some kind of joke?
> You guys think you're smart or something?
> I don't believe this. This isn't real.
> You must have the wrong guy.
> I'm not the one! There's some mistake!
> I'm on your side!
> You're making a mistake!
> I'm not one of them!
> You have the wrong guy![149]

These sections are the exception, however. The text of the script is mainly quoted material.

In the same way that the Living Theatre struggled in devising a conclusion for *Frankenstein* to find a type of quotation that supported the anti-authority stance of the collective, so does the diversity of texts quoted and the ways in which they are quoted throughout *Frankenstein* argue that this struggle occurred throughout the compiling of texts for this play as well. In addition to Mary Shelley's novel, a short list of texts directly quoted in *Frankenstein* include: William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, *The Poems of Mao Tse-Tung*, Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, Bertrand Russell's *Power*, Irving Horowitz's aforementioned history *The Anarchists*, Fosco Maraini's travelogue *Secret Tibet*, and Ernest Wood's manual *Yoga*. Thematic and visual references are also made in the production to the Bible and Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, and to a number of films, including Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*, the James Whale-directed *Frankenstein* and *Bride of Frankenstein*, and Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*.

The Living Theatre's use of poetry in this play is of particular interest in light of Beck's simultaneous defense of and attack on poet-playwrights in "Storming the Barricades." In Act I, while Doctor Frankenstein's lab is being constructed onstage, two generals appear on the scaffold. The Western General carries a large "African shield" with a picture of Walt Whitman

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[149] *Frankenstein*, 40.

and “the stars & stripes” on it.[150] The Eastern General carries a similar shield with a picture of Mao Tse-Tung and an image of the rising sun. The four actors playing the Marxists are also on the scaffold at this point, shouting slogans. The Worker is there, too, screaming in pain at intervals. The Capitalist, meanwhile, makes announcements over the onstage microphone and is then translated by the Control Booth. In rotation between the screams, slogans, and pronouncements, the generals thump their shields and speak verse “ignoring the rhythm intended by the poets,” as the stage directions put it, and instead pronouncing the poems in “a rhetorical martial rhythm which underscores the rhythm of the Automation Collage.”[151] The Automation Collage, which is basically the ritual from *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* in which the company forms a giant machine through repeated (distinct but complementary) sounds and movement, is also created during this section of the play by those performers not playing other roles. This collage is begun by the Worker.

The Western General quotes from a number of poems in *Leaves of Grass* in the order that they appear in Walt Whitman’s book, at least in the ninth edition of the book from which the company (or Beck and Malina alone) selected passages. The generals use the poems to rally support for a war. This at first seems to distort the poems’ meanings. The generals go against the rhythms that the poets “intended” in the way they read the poems, the stage directions state, and the suggested meanings of the poems in the context of rallying war cries also seem to be other than the poets “intended.” In this scene, the Living Theatre represents the way artistic expression can be put to use for the wrong purposes (specifically the purposes of the State). The Western General’s selectivity in his quotation of Whitman’s poems emphasizes this danger. For

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[150] Ibid., 79.
[151] Ibid., 78.

example, he begins his speeches with a selection from "As I Pondered in Silence," which reads, "There is but one theme/ And that is the theme of war,/ The fortune of battles,/ The making of perfect soldiers!"[152] To quote these lines as the thematic distillation of "As I Pondered in Silence" is problematic. In the poem, it is not Whitman who speaks these words, but a phantom—"the genius of poets of old lands"—who has come to accuse the writer of not being a true poet because he does not write primarily of war, the only true "theme."[153] In the poem, Whitman counters this accusation by insisting that he does primarily write of "war" in this poems, but he writes of the internal war for his eternal soul which he wages daily. The Western General, by erasing this context of the quotation, uses Whitman unfairly. The general's selections of "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" "Myself and Mine," and "Dirge for Two Veterans" are similarly problematic in the way they portray a poet seemingly calling for war in poems which are actually about other subjects or which counter the quoted pro-war position within the text.

This misquotation by the general, in the first play in which the Living Theatre is using quotation as its primary method of collective writing, reveals anxiety on the company's part over this new method and acknowledgement on their part that any quotation is bound to be transformed into something new by its new context, for better or worse. The Living Theatre is concerned that the authority it evokes through quotation not be abused by careless quotation. Yet quotation always assumes the authority of those quoted, and, according to the anarcho-pacifist beliefs of the Living Theatre, an authority position is always liable to be abused. Oddly though, the concern here is that the company honors the "intentions" of those they quote (unlike

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[152] Ibid., 79. From: Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (New York: Bantam Books, 1983), 1.
[153] Whitman, 1.

the Western General), a concern which puts this strange scene of quoting squarely on the side of a theatre company still honoring the authority of others' texts.

At the same time, other Whitman poems that the Western General quotes are not particularly distorted in their editing in order to conform to the speaker's message. For example, when the general quotes a passage from "City of Ships"—"In peace I chanted peace/ But now the drum of war is mine,/ War, red war, is my song,/ Through your streets, O city!"—the quotation fairly represents thematically the city-proud and pro-war stance of Whitman's poem as a whole.[154] The same can be said of the general's quotation of "First O Songs for a Prelude" and "The Artilleryman's Vision." The general's seemingly accurate quotation of these poems complicates the Living Theatre's message in this scene. In these accurate cases of quotation, the Living Theatre might be again backing Artaud's avant-garde opinions of the great poets: that their works are no longer viable. Specifically, the Living Theatre seems to claim that if "masterpieces" are pro-war, even if they are masterpieces, they are worthless. Poets who glorify war must share the blame for a society continually at war—and, therefore, perhaps their poems need to be tossed out. The Eastern General, who quotes mainly from Mao's nostalgic military poems "Shaoshan Revisited" and "Militia Women," makes the same point about the liability of poets.[155] A number of the Eastern General's lines are missing from the script, however, so it is possible that his quotation, like the Western General's, contained examples of fair and unfair quotation, and shows a Living Theatre of two minds: that poets are in danger of being abused in invocation and that most poets themselves are abusive and are therefore best not invoked.

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[154] *Frankenstein*, 93; Whitman, 237.

[155] Mao Tse-Tung, *Poems of Mao Tse-Tung*, trans. Wong Man (Hong Kong: Eastern Horizon Press, 1966).

The Capitalist in this same scene also communicates through quotation, in this case in passages from the "Economic Power" chapter of Bertrand Russell's *Power*. Like the generals, the Capitalist's appearance and delivery imply that the Living Theatre wants the audience to carefully consider whether the speaker is honoring the text or misusing it. The stage directions note, "[The Capitalist] speaks coldly, mechanically, unemotionally, inhumanly. He speaks thru a hand held microphone giving information without human content. He wears a black hood with holes for the eyes and mouth: his identity is masked."[156] As with *Leaves of Grass*, the passages spoken are in the order that they appear in Russell's text, implying that, through their selection, *Frankenstein*'s writers and/or the speakers onstage are attempting to follow the linearity of the quoted text, not deliberately presenting Russell's argument out of order. In the script, Malina and Beck type the Capitalist's lines on the page in a way that attempts to convey the speaker's "inhumanity" or mechanical intonation. For example, the script reads, "Cred.it.is.more.ab.stract. than.an.y.oth.er.kind.of.e.co.nom.ic.pow.er.but.it.is.not.es.sen.ti.al.ly.diff.er.ent."[157] It is clear that the physical appearance and the delivery of the Capitalist are sinister and chillingly anonymous here. However, does the Living Theatre conflate Russell with this figure? Is Russell the Capitalist? Or, like the Western General, is the character of the Capitalist merely quoting Russell and distorting Russell's text through his quotation?

Again, the answers are unclear. On the one hand, Russell was a sort of celebrity within the Vietnam anti-war movement in the mid-1960s because of his vocal condemnation of this conflict. Therefore, he was a figure that one would assume might be treated with some sympathy by the anti-war Living Theatre. Moreover, Russell's descriptions, in the quoted chapter from

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[156] *Frankenstein*, 62.

[157] Ibid., 63. From: Bertrand Russell, *Power: A New Social Analysis* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1938), 125.

Power, of the way in which economic power is always allied with and dependent upon military power and his idea that all property can be traced back to some original act of violence in obtaining it are ideas that the Living Theatre supported and even portrayed in other sections of *Frankenstein* itself. Indeed, the play implies that the construction of Frankenstein's lab and the war for which the generals are recruiting somehow support one another in their efforts and are mutually dependent upon the loss of human lives.

At the same time, Russell's depiction of anarchy in the "Economic Power" chapter of *Power* is that of a state of animalistic violence. This is directly opposed to the Living Theatre's stance that the State creates violence, and that "man" in his natural condition would peacefully co-exist with his "brothers." In addition, while Russell may accurately (according to the Living Theatre) describe the relationship between economic and military power in his book, he is *only* descriptive. He does not go on to suggest that such collusion is wrong, nor does he imagine the possibility of the modern capitalist society being changed in any significant way. Also on the side of the Living Theatre conflating Russell and the Capitalist, the passages from Russell's book, unlike, for instance, poems from Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* are not so well known that an audience member attending *Frankenstein* might recognize them and make the distinction between the ominous figure speaking and Russell, the innocent writer who wrote them. Therefore, while on one level Russell's text is one that the Living Theatre might want to honor and therefore condemn the misquotation of, on another level the play allows this text to be perceived as inhumanly "Capitalist" by not explicitly identifying it as Russell's. The Living Theatre's use of quotation here challenges the authority of Russell by turning him into a nightmare of capitalism while, at the same time, it honors his text and defers to its authority by

suggesting to the particularly adept audience member that Russell's words are being distorted in their delivery.

Another complication in analyzing the Living Theatre's quotation of Russell's text is worth mentioning briefly. All of the Capitalist's pronouncements are mistranslated by the Control Booth as he speaks them. This is tipped off to audiences, English-speaking and otherwise, by having at least one instance in the play of the Control Booth "translating" the Capitalist into the same language and changing his words, thereby revealing major differences between what was said and what the translator claims was said. For example, at one point, in English, the Capitalist states, "In.a.mod.ern.large.corp.or.a.tion.own.er.ship.and.man.age.ment. are.by.no.means.nec.es.sar.il.ly.com.bined.," which the Control Booth "translates" into English as "The Chairman of International Industries has just announced that if we use the slave services of automation intelligently and courageously, we have the chance of building a really high civilization."[158] While it is not certain how the Living Theatre feels about Russell, it is certain that the confidence expressed in automation by the Control Booth in all of its mistranslations of the Capitalist is in direct opposition to the theme of the play, namely, that automation cannot free modern society but will only serve to further enslave the worker. Therefore, not only the appearance and the delivery of the Capitalist, but the fact that his words are being distorted through the translation of the Control Booth, combine to show that the Living Theatre indeed may have had sympathies with Russell's text, and therefore may also have had anxiety about how the production's quotation of any text necessarily distorts it.

This concern over selection in quotation and what it may do to the original is nowhere more apparent than in the "instruction" of the Creature by Doctor Frankenstein in Act II. In this

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[158] *Frankenstein*, 68; Russell, 131.

scene, while in his mind the Creature witnesses the Buddhist "Legend of Enlightenment" enacted by the company on the scaffold, Doctor Frankenstein speaks words into a microphone that are transmitted into a helmet "the Body" wears over his head. As the stage directions explain,

> The Doctor reads from a pack of 100 cards, each of which has one word printed on it, and which he turns one by one as he speaks. The words which the Doctor broadcasts are all social-structure words composed of twelve letters, as in the name F-R-A-N-K-E-N-S-T-E-I-N. The words are taken from Louis [sic, Irving] L. Horowitz's Preface to "The Anarchists"… and they are the first one hundred words of twelve syllables [sic, writers mean twelve letters] to appear in that essay.[159]

This kind of Theatre of Chance composition built into the performance of *Frankenstein* is reminiscent of the company's work on *The Marrying Maiden* as well as the compositions of its occasional collaborator, John Cage.

At first, it would seem that this is exactly the kind of "instruction" for the Creature of which the Living Theatre would approve. Published in 1964, Horowitz's book was the first of its kind to challenge the image of the anarchist as a violent bomber and instead offer the philosophy of anarchism in its many different schools as "a radical alternative to the Marxist tradition in its orthodox forms."[160] The anarchist pacifism that Horowitz describes in his book as the most common contemporary practice of the philosophy has much in common with Beck and Malina's self-described "anarcho-pacifism" as well as with the argument for peaceful anarchy made by the production *Frankenstein*. Horowitz's description of anarchist pacifism contends that its followers believe that (as it is depicted in the Living Theatre's play):

> as long as sovereign Nation-States exist, the possibility of resolving the dilemma of egoism and altruism, force and harmony, war and peace, remains nil. The very existence of separate States implies the use of force to resolve every major issue. Just as

[159] *Frankenstein*, 179.
[160] Horowitz, 12.

> individuals must strive to go beyond the passions of the ego, Tolstoy and Gandhi implore men, as political beings, to move beyond the confines of the State and its by-products—force and aggression.[161]

Frankenstein's simultaneous presentation of the struggle of the Ego within the head of the Creature and the struggle of the Creature not to give in to violence in contemporary society make a very similar point. As long as the structure of society is in place, represented by the scaffold (an internal as well as external structure), the individual cannot realize his potential nor can the society become a peaceful one.

However, what the Creature gets in terms of instruction through the Doctor's quotation is not Horowitz's even-handed and thorough description of the different types of contemporary anarchist belief and practice but rather random twelve-letter words taken from the chapter, including "particularly, anthropology, introduction, disobedience, civilization, sociological, disfunctions," etc.[162] This is a kind of extremely selective quotation in which all original meanings have been erased. On the one hand, this destructive quotation of Horowitz by Doctor Frankenstein may simply suggest that whenever the State (represented by the Doctor) processes the work of an artist or philosopher it is bound to misunderstand and destroy it, even if it does not do so intentionally. After all, Doctor Frankenstein's words are literally unrecognizable as Horowitz's writing. There is not even an indication in the play's program as to where this random string of words is selected from, so the audience could not possibly identify the writing as Horowitz's. Like the Creature, the audience's chances of understanding Horowitz's message, of learning about the philosophy and practice of pacifist anarchism here, are nil. On the other hand, this erasure of meaning through quotation might not be a condemnation only of the State.

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[161] Ibid., 54.
[162] *Frankenstein*, 181.

Again the Living Theatre may be demonstrating that any quotation of Horowitz's book is destructive, that the company cannot do this book justice without presenting it whole any more than the State can.

The Doctor's selection of cards recalls the company's production of *The Marrying Maiden* in which director Malina selected cards with "actions" on them during the performance, which the performers then incorporated into the performance. Likewise, the Doctor is improvising here. He is letting "the wind blow through," a good, anti-authoritative practice. The company certainly felt empowered as performers through this kind of improvisation, not only with *The Marrying Maiden*, but also with *The Brig* and *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*. However, the improvisation in this case makes nonsense of Horowitz's text, a text that presumably has a useful message for an audience and a message that the Living Theatre is interested in communicating directly. Improvisation, this scene represents, while freeing for the performers, may also prevent communication with the audience.

This scene of "instruction," in which improvisation destroys Horowitz's quotations, reveals the central tension in the collective creation of *Frankenstein*—namely, the tension between improvisation and quotation. As the text moves between sections which are primarily chunks of quoted material and sections which offer one of many possible versions that were improvised during the production, it also embodies the collective process of the Living Theatre in the mid-'60s, torn between a democratic practice of "collective direction" and the authoritative need to make choices which do not represent all positions. The script is a compromise in power. Malina and Beck have shaped it, have presumably chosen many of the texts quoted and the actions to be performed. However, areas of the script remain unwritten or at least unfixed (one possibility among many). The performers may do what they like in these sections, writing their

own dialogue in the moment. The Living Theatre suggests through this compromise that while a totally improvised show might allow total freedom to its performers, it will not communicate. It will be like the Doctor's scrambling of Horowitz. To communicate on some level means to re-use agreed-upon language, to accept structure, to take up the burden of societal norms. This is confining, but also necessary.

In the same way that Beck and Malina are not happy with the fact that they are still in charge—"Judith and I still in governing position. Uncomfortable about it," writes Beck in 1966—so is the company uncomfortable with having to defer some freedom in order to communicate.[163] Nevertheless they do. In this sense, the prisoners in their cells in Act III are representatives of the Living Theatre's performers within a process of collective creation that allows them only limited space for improvisation in order that they may communicate with the audience. Like the Living Theatre's company members, the prisoners may do what they like, but only within the confines of their cells.[164]

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[163] Beck, *Life*, section 26.

[164] While this chapter contrasts the collective creation methods of quotation and improvisation, it would be a mistake to assume that these techniques are always diametrically opposed or that the Living Theatre considered them so. One scene in particular in *Frankenstein*, which is not analyzed in this chapter, features an experiment by the company of combining quotation and improvisation, or at least quotation and chance. As part of the Creature's "education" in Act II, the Control Booth "reads items chosen at random from the front page, of from the Foreign News page, of the London Times of the day of the performance." These readings are interspersed throughout the performance of the Icarus and Minotaur myths. On the one hand, the Living Theatre hopes that the audience, like the Creature, will hear in these news items themes and lessons that also appear in the myths, the message being that the "old stories" have just as much relevance to current events. At the same time, the random selection adds an element of quoted material to the performance that is not planned in advance and therefore not under the control of the "Creators," Beck and Malina. Like the improvisations of other scenes, this quotation allows at least one actor to enjoy freedom within the structure of the spectacle.

If the company, from Beck and Malina on down, were unhappy with the compromises that *Frankenstein* demanded by curbing improvisation, Artaud (their "ghost mentor" at the time) offered no sympathy. Indeed, the "Creators" of his spectacles, as Artaud described them, would not even have allowed the freedom of limited improvisation that Beck, Malina, and company had built into this show. Artaud made it very clear in *The Theatre and Its Double* that the authority of the Creator was not to be shared with the performers.

> My plays have nothing to do with… improvisations. However thoroughly they are immersed in the concrete and external, however rooted in free nature and not in the narrow chambers of the brain, they are not, for all that, left to the caprice of the wild and thoughtless inspiration of the actor, especially the modern actor who, once cut off from the text, plunges in without any idea of what he is doing. I would not care to leave the fate of my plays and of the theatre to that kind of chance. No.[165]

Artaud is no John Cage. His description of *The Conquest of Mexico* may have provided a map of *Frankenstein* early on in the Living Theatre's discussions, but soon the company was on its own to negotiate between the need for freedom within the company (expressed through the improvisation), the power of the production's main Creators, Beck and Malina (expressed through the structure of the spectacle and the selection of text), and the power of the quoted material, which to some degree still seemed, for the company, to retain the authority of its writers, an authority they were anxious about but also anxious about not honoring.

One particular use of quotation in Act II of *Frankenstein* exemplifies the difficulties of pinning down the Living Theatre's opinions about quoting "masterpieces" as a method of collective creation. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the Living Theatre's concerns about combining "high" and "low" art may have played a role in the company's decision to end *Frankenstein* with Ibsen as opposed to an allusion to a sci-fi film. If so, however, the choice in

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[165] Artaud, 109.

the final version to end the show with a extended reference to *The Brig* says as much about the company's growing distrust of masterpieces as it does about its faith in its own material as worthy (and therefore quotable) art. Even in the final version, however, *Frankenstein* contains a scene that simultaneously quotes not from the company's own work but from two of the most canonical artists in Western culture: Beethoven and Shakespeare. The confusing implications of this quotation emphasize the Living Theatre's struggles with authority on the stage and on the page throughout *Frankenstein*.

The scene in which the sedated Creature dreams of a shipwreck ends with the bodies of the drowned passengers littering the bottom level of the scaffold, as if it were the ocean floor. Death, who has participated in the shipwreck, pulls passengers out of the lifeboats, and watches over the following sequence in which four female actors "swim" into one of the lower-level cubes. "There in the deep blue green of light they are revealed as sea-nymphs," read the stage directions. "They hold onto the four poles with one arm as they undulate like mermaids. They are combing their hair."[166] These four mermaids, with Death watching on, sing Ariel's song from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to the tune of the last movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. (Try it. It works.)

> Full fathom five thy father lies,
> Of his bones is coral made.
> These are pearls that were his eyes;
> Nothing of his that doth fade.
> But doth suffer a sea change
> Into something rich and strange.
> Sea nymphs hourly ring his knell;
> Hark I hear them; Ding, dong, bell….[167]

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[166] *Frankenstein*, 155.

[167] Ibid., 155. From: William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* in *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt, et al. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), 3067.

As Beck and Malina often do in this script, they also offer a stage direction that gives the "meaning" of this image and scene. In this case, the script reads, "Shakespeare and Beethoven in their hymns to immortality and life are born out of this dream: out of the primal fear, art emerges."[168] The "primal fear" refers not merely to the dream of nautical mass death that the Creature has just experienced, it also more directly refers to the Ego confronting Death (attempting to pry open the coffin) in the scene immediately preceding the dream.

Beck and Malina's own interpretation here of their company's play relies on Sigmund Freud's ideas of "the uncanny": frightening images that lead us back to the familiar, the known and essential parts of out psychological makeup.[169] In the same way that the experience of "the uncanny" in art can reveal repressed and basic fears to the audience, so do the "primal fears" in *Frankenstein* produce the "art" of Beethoven and Shakespeare. That the Living Theatre was interested in Freud and conversant with his ideas is suggested by his role as a character in *Frankenstein*. (He is one of the "scientists" that advises Frankenstein on how to revive his creature.) Moreover, while Beck wrote "Storming the Barricades" before those initial group discussions in a London cellar in the fall of 1965 in which the company first imagined an adaptation of Shelley's novel, in this manifesto he briefly mentions "Frankenstein" in connection with "the uncanny" and its effect on audiences. This implies an early connection in Beck's writing between Freudian concepts and *Frankenstein*. Discussing the success of two early Living Theatre productions, August Strindberg's *Spook Sonata* and Jean Cocteau's *Orpheus*, Beck writes:

> The clue here was the magic mystery, indeed the surreal quality, weaving in and out of lunches and suppers, glaziers who fly and mummies who talk, the uncanny, like

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[168] *Frankenstein*, 155.
[169] Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock (London: Penguin Classics, 2003).

> Frankenstein, close to horror, and which chills the flesh. The clue: they made something disquieting happen to the spectator's body as he watched.[170]

Whether or not this represents the initial stirrings of the idea of a Frankenstein show in the writing of at least one of the production's creators is not certain. It is certain, however, that when Beck and Malina interpret the mermaid scene in *Frankenstein* in their stage directions, they are doing so, to some extent, in Freud's terms.

That the Living Theatre presents two of the most canonical works of art (Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony) as "art," with no apologies or apparent irony, again indicates the company's only-partial commitment to Artaud's edict: "No More Masterpieces." At the same time, the context of the scene implies that, even if Beethoven and Shakespeare are great artists, their "art" is not as vital as it first appears. While Beck and Malina describe the symphony and the song as "hymns to immortality and life," the mermaids are singing underwater, under the watchful eye of death, and to an audience of corpses. Beck and Malina's stage directions may not suggest it, but certainly the staging of this scene calls into question the usefulness of "masterpieces," their ability to connect with audiences. The song may be tempting in its beauty, but it is a song for the dead. Perhaps the Living Theatre is not so far from Artaud as it may at first appear in this "homage" to high art. The words of Ariel's song must not be ignored either. His song describes a father's body (the archetypal authority figure) rotting: being made into something new and beautiful. Along the lines of Artaud's allowance for the possibilities of revitalizing masterpieces, this scene suggests that the myths of Shakespeare and Beethoven are dead but can be reborn, that the physics can be recovered; that quotation does not just attempt to present the dead as living, but can bring the dead back to life.

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[170] Beck, "Storming," 21.

Reviving Dead Language

While rejecting the Theatre of Ideas, Artaud had faith in the "mythic." The Living Theatre did as well, at least during its collective creation of the various versions of *Frankenstein*, which relied heavily on the quotation of myths. However, by the end of their run of *Frankenstein* during the 1968 U.S. tour, Beck and the Living Theatre seemingly had lost this faith. The Living Theatre had suffered a similar estrangement from the ideas of an earlier "mentor": Bertolt Brecht. While the company had enjoyed success with productions of Brecht's *In the Jungle of Cities* (1960) and *Man Is Man* (1962), it became frustrated with all of the "effects" that Brecht's plays called for. For Beck, Brecht's "divertisements"—"the turntables, slides, multiple scenes, choruses, exotic geography, songs, painted faces," etc.—got in the way of the actors speaking directly to the audience.[171] They were "methods for coating the pill," the message of which the Living Theatre attested could be easily swallowed by contemporary audiences.[172] For similar reasons, Artaud's choice of myths as the raw material for spectacles, which had proven problematic for the logic of Artaud's manifesto—how to be completely new and retell the stories of the past?—also proved problematic in practice for the Living Theatre. In *Frankenstein*, it prevented the company from communicating as directly as it wished.

In *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* and in certain sections of *Frankenstein*, the performers got to "play themselves." Most often, these sections also happened to be those in which the actors were free to improvise. For example, actors were "themselves" when they were rounded up and killed at the beginning *Frankenstein*, or rounded up again and incarcerated at the end of

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[171] Ibid., 32.
[172] Ibid., 32.

the show. In these scenes, the performers were addressed by their names. Moreover, the questions they were asked by their interrogators related to their "real" biographies and were, therefore, honestly answered in the performers' own words. However, most of *Frankenstein* was still what the Living Theatre called "the Theatre of Character," actors playing others.[173] Looking back on this show in 1970, Beck, in his book *The Life of the Theatre*, wrote:

> It was clear in Act II when we played the legendary figures of the Greek Myths… that we were twisting ourselves into the dishonest world in which the mind and therefore the body accept the crushing myths of character. These myths, with all of their seductions, actually rob us of the universal experience because they stop us from being ourselves. We live in images.[174]

In this assertion, Beck is distinguishing his company from its "mentor" Artaud.

Artaud and the Living Theatre (when it first began working on *Frankenstein*) had been in agreement in their mutual rejection of the Theatre of Character. *The Theatre and Its Double*, like the production of *Frankenstein*, argued that psychological realism, the method synonymous on the modern stage with the Theatre of Character, was dead. For Artaud, the problem with psychology was that it was too individual. The theatre of psychological realism was based on idiosyncratic feelings. On the other hand, Artaud insisted, the mythic themes of Theatre of Cruelty would allow for a more visceral, but also universal, experience for the performer and the audience. The actor in the myth would perform allegorically, would play characters that were larger than the individual, to which all audiences would relate. Artaud admitted that these characters sometimes would have to be based on "famous personages," but even then they would represent more than simply the person.[175]

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[173] Beck, *Life*, section 35.
[174] Ibid., section 35.
[175] Ibid., 85.

With *Frankenstein*, the Living Theatre experimented with this kind of allegorical performance—an experiment that connected this show, like *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*, with the allegorical tradition of the medieval mystery plays. In *Frankenstein*, actors in Act II played Greek mythic characters such as Icarus and Theseus, and also allegorical roles such as "Ego, Animal Instincts, Vision, Death, The Worker, The Capitalist," etc. However, the experience (at least retrospectively for Beck writing in 1970) was unsatisfying for the company because the actors longed to play themselves. After the 1968 tour of *Frankenstein*, Beck began to claim that mythic or allegorical roles were no different from characters like Hamlet or Willy Loman. The irony, which Beck claimed to have realized during the production of *Frankenstein*, was that only through being themselves could performers be "universal" onstage.[176] Some company members clearly shared this assessment, and may even have arrived at it earlier than Beck. Indeed, while on tour in 1968, Living Theatre actor Henry Howard was already insisting, "Acting is not making believe, but living exquisitely in the moment."[177] As Howard claimed, only by playing himself and not a character (even if that character were Everyman), could an actor escape the world of images and return to his natural self. This natural self is a true universal, according to Beck, and the only "character" to which all audience members, once they tuned it to their own natural selves, could relate. Rejecting mythic material in favor of playing one's self, and thereby tapping into the universal by getting in touch with one's natural self, was inseparable from the company's anarcho-pacifism with its interest in uniting "universal man" beyond the false divisions of the nation-states.

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[176] Beck, *Life*, section 35.
[177] Neff, 74.

By rejecting the mythic, the Living Theatre was again rejecting authority conjured through quotation in favor of a freedom offered to performers through playing themselves. While the Living Theatre may have moved beyond the mythic by 1970, it was still struggling with issues of how language could connect rather than divide—even when spoken by the actor playing himself. In this sense the company was still not done with Artaud's mentorship. It was still trying to decipher Artaud's claims that an "active" language could join "things and the ideas and signs that are their representations."[178] In *The Theatre and Its Double*, Artaud demanded a "return to the active, plastic, respiratory sources of language," in which "the discursive, logical aspect of speech [would] disappear beneath its affective, physical side."[179] With *Frankenstein*, the Living Theatre began to experiment with how this might be achieved on the stage. This show attacked the type of language that acted as a barrier, while at the same time tried to present an onstage language that might "connect" (actor to audience and thing to sign).

Typical of the Living Theatre's philosophy and productions, it was easier for the company to show in *Frankenstein* what it didn't like than what it did, to present language that divides as opposed to presenting language that connects. On the one hand, *Frankenstein*, in line with the anarcho-pacifist condemnation of nation states, shows a world in which different languages separate universal man. It is hardly surprising that the Living Theatre would be interested in this aspect of language, since in 1966 it was playing to primarily non-English-speaking audiences in Europe while at the same time incorporating new European performers into its company to replace actors who had left. In particular, a number of actors left the company during its cold sojourn in Belgium in 1964.

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[178] Artaud, 7,
[179] Ibid., 119.

While the metaphorical post-Tower of Babel world in which people are separated by different ways of speaking is not what Artaud is talking about when he sees language as a barrier, it is nevertheless one of the Living Theatre's concerns in *Frankenstein*. Throughout the show, the Control Booth, the voice over the microphone that represents the State, translates lines in the production into various languages, starting with the first line, "The people you see on the stage are engaged in a meditation the purpose of which is to lead to the levitation of the person seated in the center."[180] On one level, this translation is merely practical for an English-speaking company interested in communicating its message to non-English-speaking audiences. (Indeed, it is not surprising to find that in Beck's "Directing Book" for *Frankenstein* are also written grammar exercises and translations of phrases demonstrating that Beck was learning the German language during this same period.) However, the entire show is not translated in production, only sections of it. Moreover, the translations are multiple (often into French, German, Italian, and Russian) not merely a single, useful translation into the language of the country wherever *Frankenstein* happened to be performing that evening. This suggests that the Living Theatre is not only interested in translating its show for the audience, but also in presenting a multilingual world.

However, the fact that the Control Booth makes the translations also suggests that translation is not necessarily a tool only for the anarchist who seeks a conversation with his brothers throughout the world. It is also a tool of globalizing capitalism that speaks the language of money and military regardless of the translation. While the Living Theatre, on the one hand, laments a world divided by different languages, it is also concerned that those who seek an end to the linguistic divisions of nation-states may also be working towards global control as opposed

[180] *Frankenstein*, 19.

to global freedom. As mentioned earlier, there is a long scene in Act I primarily concerned with translation in which the Control Booth mistranslates the Capitalist and the "poetry" of the Western and Eastern generals into various languages. The Control Booth's mistranslations all sing the praises of automation and the possibilities of an automated world in which the worker is freed. Clearly, in the Living Theatre's opinion, this kind of translation spreads lies.

At the same time, the Marxists marching onstage throughout this same scene also shout their slogan "From each according to his power! To each according to his need!" in various languages.[181] While they may not have the answer to end human suffering, as Doctor Frankenstein finds out in this scene, it seems that the Marxists nonetheless are able to speak to workers of all nation-states with a message of which the Living Theatre would in some sense approve. As anarcho-pacifists, the Living Theatre's company members were generally critical of Socialist states. As Horowitz put it in his book, anarchists often believed that "Socialism gives us one class, a class of slaves."[182] Nevertheless, Beck and Malina were sympathetic to Marx and Lenin's desire to unite the workers of the world. The ability of the Marxists to translate their message therefore seems useful in this scene. This scene demonstrates that translation, like language in general, can break down barriers (between the workers of different nation-states), but can also build barriers (by communicating a single message of lies, of which all State authorities would approve).

In depicting a language that divides, the Living Theatre displays a kind of logocentrism in the way it presents the lies of the State in *Frankenstein*, much like the logocentrism of Beck's manifesto "Storming the Barricades." Whenever the voice of authority is heard in *Frankenstein*,

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[181] Ibid., 64.
[182] Horowitz, 49.

it is somehow mediated through technology. For example, the Control Booth, like the Capitalist, speaks through a microphone. When the posses at the beginning and the end of the show begin rounding up victims or prisoners, they communicate over walkie-talkies. When Doctor Frankenstein instructs the Creature, he speaks into a transmitter that plays the words into the Creature's helmet. All of these examples maintain that the voice of authority is somehow one step removed from the body. The truer voice, it seems, is always free of technology, speaking directly from a living source.

The conceit of having the voice of authority mediated through technology was most likely inspired by Charlie Chaplin's 1936 film *Modern Times*, a film that Beck and Malina mentioned was very influential to the conception of *Frankenstein*.[183] Although the technology existed for synchronized sound in 1936, most of *Modern Times* is silent. For most of the film, the only voices heard are voices coming out of machines. For example, the Boss of the factory at the beginning of the movie is heard speaking through a film screen. Later, a mechanical salesman makes a pitch from a reel-to-reel recording. Still later, dialogue is heard coming from a radio. In the film, director Chaplin plays with the idea that only mediated voices should be heard through the medium of sound recording. The natural voice remains unrecorded, unmediated in *Modern Times*. *Frankenstein* takes this idea one step farther, suggesting that it is only the voice of authority that is always mediated, because it is always unnatural. Technology is thereby portrayed as fundamentally sympathetic with authority in *Frankenstein*.

In line with the Living Theatre's logocentric distrust of mediation is a scene late in the play in which Doctor Frankenstein incites rebellion by passing notes to fellow prisoners on paper

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[183] *Modern Times*, directed, produced & written by Charles Chaplin (Chatsworth, CA: CBS-Fox Video, 1992). Projected visual media.

that he stole from the induction office. This is the only example of the written word represented onstage in *Frankenstein*, which, logocentrically, would be considered one step farther removed from the spoken, natural word. While the written world in this scene at first appears to do some good, allowing the prisoners in their separate cells to communicate, ultimately Doctor Frankenstein's notes lead to a bloody overthrow of the prison and the fire which ends in the death of all the inmates. The written word may unite, but it unites the characters in violence. And violent action, the Living Theatre depicts in *Frankenstein*, can only end in more violence, never in freedom.

However, *Frankenstein* also demonstrates that not only the "unnatural" written word but also indeed all language can as easily lead to violence as it does to communication. Again, as Beck asserted in "Storming the Barricades," language is as likely to build barriers as it is to tear them down. In a way, the entire play is about learning language, and the wonderful potential and devastating results of this process for one individual: the Creature. *Frankenstein*'s "Creators," as Artaud might describe Beck and Molina, who quote Ariel's song from *The Tempest*, would perhaps also have had in mind Caliban's accusation of his master from the same play, "You taught me language and my profit on't is I know how to curse."[184] This line summarizes much of the plot of the Living Theatre's *Frankenstein*. Like Caliban, the Creature is humanized when he learns language in this play, but gaining humanity is not necessarily a positive. In a scene titled, "The word is born," the Creature is finally able to communicate.[185] Speaking directly to the audience, he performs the long monologue from Shelley's novel. That he is able to communicate through this quoted material seems to support the idea that language can be useful

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[184] Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 3066.
[185] *Frankenstein*, 195.

and even essential to communal existence. Indeed, the message of this section of Shelley's book is philosophically in line with much of the Living Theatre's professed anarcho-pacifist beliefs, and is therefore something the company might have thought the audience should hear. The Creature's ability to communicate, therefore, is at first seemingly a good thing.

It is surprising how closely Shelley—who is in some sense quoting her father in this long passage, anarchist philosopher William Godwin—sounds like a member of the Living Theatre in this passage. For example, the Creature, quoting Shelley's book, explains,

> I obtained a knowledge of the manners, governments, and religions of the different nations of the earth. Was man, at once so powerful, so virtuous, and magnificent, yet so vicious and base? I could not conceive how one man could go forth to murder his fellow or even why there were laws and governments; but when I heard details of vice and bloodshed, my wonder ceased, and I turned away in disgust and loathing.[186]

That Shelley's rhetoric is so like Beck's is less coincidence and more additional proof of how steeped Beck's concepts and expression are in Romantic conventions.

However, while the Creature's obtainment of speech is initially beneficial, the first action that the Creature takes after expressing himself is to kill one of the men who hunts him. His next words after Shelley's, appropriately spoken into the walkie-talkie of the man he killed, are those of inhuman authority: "This is Central Control. This is Central Control. Attention all units. Attention all units."[187] Language may connect, the scene argues, but language abused and mediated builds barriers, and creates violence because it creates separation.

If *Frankenstein* contends that unmediated language has a better chance of being humanly non-authoritative than mediated language, it further contends that improvised speech is somehow closer to the soul, more truly communicative than quoted material. For example, in the script the

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[186] Ibid., 207-209. From: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, eds. D.L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf (Ontario: Broadview Literary Texts, 1999), 144-145.
[187] *Frankenstein*, 215.

improvised sections in which the victims plead for their lives in Act I are called "poems." Giving only a single example of what these improvisations might have been for each character, the script notes that in every performance, "These pleas are improvised. Each actor writes his own execution poem."[188] Playing themselves, speaking their own words, the actors have become poet-playwrights. They are considered poet-playwrights in these instances because of how unmediated the Living Theatre believes their pleas to be. By speaking from the most individual yet universally human place, according to Beck, the victims are able to truly communicate their fears to the audience. Language connects in these improvised instances.

Likewise, there is an implication that the script and each production of *Frankenstein* could have been an entirely improvised, human, pure communication if it had taken a different path in the first moments of the show. In the stage directions that describe the company attempting to levitate through meditation the person in the center in the first scene, Beck and Malina write, "It was agreed in advance that if the subject should levitate the performance was to be considered successful and completed. The actors would join with the audience in celebration of the achievement and proceed to practical applications of the new principle."[189] In other words, if the subject had levitated, a spontaneous, unscripted event would have taken place. The script, this mass of quotations, and each performance of *Frankenstein* only exist, then, because of the company's failure to truly connect with one another as a collective, to succeed as a group without speech. Language becomes necessary, the play seems to say, when collectivity fails.

While *Frankenstein* veers away from Artaud's *The Theatre and Its Double* by presenting language as something that both divides and unites, the show more closely follows Artaud's

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[188] Ibid., 35.
[189] Ibid., 26.

manifesto in attempting to present the possibilities of the “affective, physical side of speech.”[190] There are numerous instances in the show in which the company attempts to minimize speech (making it only one of many “languages” onstage at any given moment), to replace the communicative work of speech with communication through sound and/or movement, or to turn speech back into sound. In the Creature’s dream sequence, for example, language becomes merely one element of the spectacle, not the dominant mode of communication. In the scene, the company on the scaffold moves in slow motion, swaying and making the noises of a sea in a storm. While there are occasional lines spoken in this scene, such as “Cyclone sighted Southwest by South Southwest!” the stage directions suggest that the words are integrated and secondary to the atmosphere.[191] “All dialogue is spoken in a doleful, ringing tone to complement the slow motion; the vowels extenuated,” write Beck and Malina.[192] The wreck of the ship is enacted using the bodies of the performers, their voices and movement, as opposed to verbal descriptions of the events or onstage machinery.

In many other scenes in *Frankenstein* there are no spoken words at all. Sound and movement replace spoken language entirely. For example, there are dumb shows and silent shadow plays. Early in the play, there is an extended silent sequence behind a shadow screen in which Doctor Frankenstein mimes an operation to remove the Victim’s heart. Likewise, the aforementioned “silent film” of the Golem legend is enacted behind this same screen soon after. The Legend of Enlightenment, which is performed in the Creature’s head in Act II, depicting Gautama’s descent to earth, is also presented without words. Other sequences, such as the Doctor painting the body he wants to revivify in Act I presents the audience with a visual ritual

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[190] Artaud, 119.
[191] *Frankenstein*, 148.
[192] Ibid., 148.

without words. Finally, there are images, such as the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse who appear on the scaffold twice in this play, which wordlessly appear and disappear without any commentary by the characters. The Horsemen appear immediately after Gautama leaves behind the people to re-ascend into heaven and immediately before the Ego is expelled from the head.[193] The Horsemen may symbolize the suffering of the unenlightened on earth, a suffering which never ends, or the Ego's confrontation with Death which was earlier delayed because the body was sedated.[194]

At the same time, there are many scenes in *Frankenstein* that are not mimed, but that use sound and movement exclusively. In Act II, two extended sequences in particular are without speech. Both involve the journey of the Ego through the head. The first, titled "Miracles and Wonders" depicts "the discovery by the Ego of his own possibilities."[195] The performer playing the Ego moves through the scaffold, encountering one function after another and learning from them. As the stage directions explain,

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[193] Ibid., 190.

[194] Regardless of the Horsemen's meaning, the image of death on her horse wielding a sickle accompanied by the other riders, though first and foremost a reference to Revelations in the Bible was very likely suggested to the Living Theatre by Fritz Lang's 1926 film *Metropolis*, a kind of Frankenstein story itself involving class warfare in a future society and the creation of an android by the powers-that-be for the purpose of inciting riots. The company saw a revival of this film in Europe while it was developing *Frankenstein* and parallels between their production and this movie are many. For example, the workers toiling at their machines underground in *Metropolis* are each contained in cell-like squares, much like the prisoners in the scaffold in *Frankenstein*'s Act III. Also, much of the plot of *Metropolis* revolves around plans for a rebellion found on a worker, like the plans that Doctor Frankenstein writes down and passes around the prison. In addition, the specific image of death with her scythe used in *Frankenstein*, is described in very similar terms to the image of Death that appears in a flash to the hero of *Metropolis* in a sequence which represents his brief descent into madness. [*Metropolis*, directed by Fritz Lang, written by Fritz Lang and Thea von Harbou. 1926. (St. Laurent, Que.: Madacy Entertainment Group, 1998). Projected visual media.]

[195] Ibid., 140.

> As he encounters each Function, the actor personifying that function conveys to him its fundamental nature. This is accomplished by demonstrating the sound and movement characteristic of the nature of that function and teaching it to the Ego so that the attributes of all the Functions become the attributes of the Ego.[196]

The second journey of the Ego through the head, titled "The Functions of the Head Slash the Ego Out into the World," similarly involves the Ego's confrontation with, one by one, each of the functions, who abuse him in different ways.[197] Likewise, in Act III, the World Action sequence, in which the jail is gradually filled with inmates and each individual prisoner improvises in his own cell, is filled with sound but no words.

A few other related scenes in *Frankenstein*, however, attempt to turn language back into sound rather than replace language with sound. For example, in a scene in Act I titled "The Oracle Prophesies," Doctor Frankenstein is given three objects from the bag of the Old and the Poor: a foot, a brain, and an eye.[198] As each item is handed over and grafted onto the Hanged Man's body, the Old and the Poor intone the name of the object, for example, "F . O . O . O . T" The Doctor repeats this, and then the entire company does as well, drawing out the word until it becomes virtually unrecognizable, elongated into a chant. This is written in the script as "F . O . O . O . O . O . O . O . O . O . O . O . O . T."[199] In this way, the word loses its "logical," symbolic aspect through incantation and is explored mainly for its "sonority," as Artaud puts it.

The best example, however, of *Frankenstein*'s attempt to make language "active" again, along the lines of what Artaud calls for in *The Theatre and Its Double*, occurs in Act II in the scene in which the Creature first learns to speak. The Ego has been "slashed" out of the head in the previous scene. Transformed into "the Manifest Creature," he stands on shaky legs

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[196] Ibid., 140.
[197] Ibid., 191.
[198] Ibid., 71.
[199] Ibid., 72.

centerstage in front of the scaffolding. On the scaffold, the functions of the head, along with the Creature, begin with much difficulty to speak the first word of the long passage from Shelley: "It." The sentence continues very slowly with the functions whispering or murmuring along with the Creature: "is… with… considerable… difficulty…," etc.[200] However, the functions do not merely speak along with the Creature. Rather, the stage directions state, "As the Functions of the Head seek the sound and create a vocalized symbol representation of a thought entity, the elements of the sound seem to course thru the Creature's body until his throat and voice utter the sound."[201]

Whether the company was successful or not in this scene, the attempt to present "a vocalized symbol representation of a thought entity" seems to be exactly the kind of active language that Artaud calls for in his book, for the production of words that would again combine sign and thing. As the Creature painfully gives birth to each new word, so does the company attempt to fulfill Artaud's proclamation: "let words be joined again to the physical motions that gave them birth and let the discursive, logical aspect of speech disappear beneath its affective, physical side, i.e., let words be heard in their sonority rather than be exclusively what they mean grammatically."[202] The attempt is short-lived, however. As the Creature continues his narrative with greater facility and speed, the functions begin to "enact" his words.[203] For example, when the Creature describes gazing up a the moon in wonder, the performer playing "the Erotic" climbs the scaffold, rising like the moon, while the other functions look on.[204] No longer making language "active" through physicalization and exploration of the sonority of words beyond their

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[200] Ibid., 196-198.
[201] Ibid., 196.
[202] Artaud, 119.
[203] *Frankenstein*, 198.
[204] Ibid., 202.

meaning, the company here enacts words connected to things, in a simplistic one-to-one relationship. The company members are the things; the Creature speaks the words that describe the things. In an Artaudian view, language dies as quickly as it is born. By the end of the scene, the Living Theatre merely acts out the Creature's script, the quoted words of Shelley. The new is abandoned, and old authorities are fallen back on.

A last note on language in *Frankenstein*: A written text in the program accompanied every performance of the play. In it, the "actions" of the play are listed act by act. These actions are short, descriptive sentences: some literal, others explaining symbolism that might otherwise be missed. An example from the program, describing part of Act I, reads:

> Dr. Frankenstein takes the heart of the Victim.
> The Dead shall be Raised.
> Burial by Church and State.
> They lower the Hanged Man.
> The Body is painted.
> The Workers scream.
> The Old and the Poor come with snow and hammer.
> How can we end human suffering?
> The Capitalist speaks. The Marxists march. The Oracle prophesies.[205]

Almost all of these sentences are "active" in the grammatical sense, as well as in the tradition of the psychological realist theatre. Grammatically, they contain a subject and verb. Moreover, they comply with the active language called for in the practices of the American Method, which encourage actors to always be playing an "action" in a scene, an action that could described with a verb: "I want to smash his face," "I want to hold her hand," "I want to pull my hair out," etc.

That the Living Theatre has distilled the play into these active sentences is first of all an indication that it is trying above all to communicate directly with its audiences. Ironically, the list works like Brecht's title cards, a "divertisement" that Beck claimed in "Storming the

[205] "Olympia Theatre Program."

Barricades" got in the way of direct communication. The list of actions eliminates suspense from the production. The audience knows what will happen in advance. While this list may not explain what the "Workers" symbolize or why their screams are essential to the meaning of the play, by including the list in the program the company ensures that the audience at least understands that it is watching "Workers." The performers in the medieval mystery plays had no doubt that the audience would be able to follow their Biblical stories, because the stories came from a text with which the audience was very familiar. The Living Theatre, however, is clearly concerned that it does not share any such text with its audiences, and has therefore attempted to provide a text of its own. While called "actions," this list is of course "writing." In the end, then, the Living Theatre falls back on writing, that supposedly most mediated, unnatural form of language, to convey its play's meaning. Like Artaud, who ultimately performed his Theatre of Cruelty more successfully and more completely on the page than he ever did in the theatre, the Living Theatre apparently cannot escape its dependency on the written word.

In some sense, the action list of *Frankenstein*'s program is an acknowledgement on the part of the Living Theatre that it is not yet able to communicate directly to the audience without language, without text, and only through ritual. This relates to a pertinent passage in Pierre Biner's book, *The Living Theatre*, which contains this writer's notes on *Frankenstein*. Biner, though not a company member, helped the Living Theatre create *Frankenstein*, participating in discussions, sitting in on rehearsals. (He is credited as such in Beck and Malina's script.) Of Doctor Frankenstein, Biner writes, "All his actions, which come from a sincere desire to do good, take a wrong turn. He is creating evil against his own wishes. He seeks solutions where

there are none. He should have started with what is—with the living, not the dead."[206] It seems that Biner could as easily be speaking of the Living Theatre here. The production of *Frankenstein*, like the Creature, is to some extent a failed experiment. It does not trust itself to communicate directly to the audience as a shared ritual, it does not depict the possibilities of breaking through language to touch life but mainly rather depends on language for communication. And the reason it fails to move beyond language is the company's inability to move beyond the mythic (for which Artaud is partly to blame) and the quoted, which in the company's practices, still retain an authority. Not coincidentally, it is also the mythic and the quoted that allows Beck and Malina to assume creative control at some point, limiting improvisation and building the spectacle on the page, without the group. In creating *Frankenstein*, the Living Theatre relied on dead myths, dead texts, instead of its own company members—living and Living. However, as Beck's book *The Life of the Theatre* quoted earlier attests, Beck (and other Living Theatre members) by 1970 had realized this mistake and were again committed to making "living" theatre: text-less, character-less, myth-less.

Collectivity and Leviathan

To discuss the success or failure of *Frankenstein* in making language active on the stage or in tapping into the mythic while still creating something entirely new ignores what the Living Theatre by 1966 considered the primary goal of every production: to model an ideal collective to the world. In a 1968 interview with Pierre Biner, Beck admits that "the community is in some way the most important aspect of our work."[207] In other words, the work of creating a "anarchist

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[206] Biner, 124.
[207] Ibid., 163.

society," albeit a nomadic, temporary society, was more important to the company than creating art. In one sense, the company, in working towards an anarchist ideal, was just practicing what it preached. A show such as *Frankenstein* asserted that a "society without authority" should be a universal goal. As Beck explained, "to talk about these things on the stage and not to practice them would be a mockery."[208] In another sense, though, the company was not merely trying to reflect the stage as much as it was using the stage to reflect the company. Any production was merely an opportunity to show the possibility of an anarchist collective to an audience, to "be" the Living Theatre onstage. This was another reason the Theatre of Character was no longer viable. The members of the Living Theatre had to be themselves onstage, not others, in order to demonstrate the way a society could function without authority. Recognizing the viability of such a society, members of the audience, the Living Theatre hoped, would then go on to create a similar community of their own.

> [W]hen we are told that an anarchist society is not viable, at least we can answer knowledgeably. It's difficult, certainly. It is our first goal to success in this effort, because if we do, then our experience can be reproduced anywhere, and another community like ours can be created is some other part of the world. Many of them…[209]

In this way, the nomadic Living Theatre imagined itself moving through the world, spreading the seeds of anarchist collectivity that would eventually sprout into small, viable societies within the larger States.

The irony, however, which Beck acknowledged, was that in order for the Living Theatre to become a truly anarchist society, the larger society would also have to become anarchist. Otherwise, the company would constantly need to compromise its ideals for its members to

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[208] Ibid., 163.
[209] Ibid., 165.

survive. Money would have to be made. Authority would have to be assumed to make practical decisions. "The Living Theatre can't ever be a community inside a capitalistic society," Beck wrote in 1971. "It is an illusion to imagine it can. As long as capitalism is around us, seeping into us, we have no choice. All we can do is work within the limitations until the walls fall."[210] Until then, the Living Theatre's company members were like the prisoners in Act III of *Frankenstein*, free but only within certain limits. The Living Theatre could not truly be a collective until the world was a collective. Therefore, the focus of *Frankenstein* in Act III was appropriately "world action," because the world had to change along with the Living Theatre.

There are a number of scenes or moments in *Frankenstein* which model collectivity. Most of this modeling is along the lines of group ritual. For example, in Act I before Doctor Frankenstein paints the body of the Hanged Man in preparation for bringing him back to life, the "dead" company on the scaffold makes "the mystical chord," which is "a collective incantation, an invocation of mysterious forces."[211] Like the ideal of the anarchist society, the chord at once allows the individual to express himself fully while at the same time acting in complete harmony with the group. As the stage directions explain, "Each actor has selected a phrase or a mantra or a word or a sound meaningful for his own spiritual concepts… The actor always speaks his own mantra, harmonizing it chorally with the others, the orchestration each night is improvised."[212] This moment of collectivity is without "discursive, logical" spoken language and is improvised. In the same way that Artaud is unable to imagine an "active" theatre within the confines spoken dialogue, so it seems the Living Theatre is unable to model a collectivity that is not more than harmonized sound and movement.

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[210] Beck, *Life*, section 54.
[211] *Frankenstein*, 57.
[212] Ibid., 57.

These moments, of course, were not designed to reasonably argue to the audience the benefits of anarchist society, nor were they lectures in the practical mechanics of how such a society might functions in all its parts. Instead, moments like "the mystical chord" were designed to affectively engage audience members in ways so profound that they would long for (and, post-performance, work towards) such connection and harmony themselves in their own mini-societies. Again, unlike Brecht, the Living Theatre with its affective, non-discursive moments like the mystical chord was not appealing to the reason of its audience members with *Frankenstein* but rather engaging their bodies.

The most profound images of the spectacle *Frankenstein*, for critics and for the Living Theatre itself, were arguably the moments at the end of Act I and at the end of the play in which the company came together on the three levels of the scaffold to create with their bodies a giant Creature with glowing red eyes (created with two flashlights). The way the company formed the giant by twisting and extending their bodies together is fascinating in itself. However, while even photos and film of this image seem to connect with the viewer on a visceral level, successfully engaging the body of the audience member, the way in which this giant models collectivity is nevertheless confusing.

The image of this colossus formed out of the bodies of the company is foremost a group materialization of Frankenstein's Creature, a monster appropriately enough assembled from other bodies. However, the image is more immediately reminiscent of Abraham Bosse's frontispiece for Thomas Hobbes' book *Leviathan*, the foundational text of Western political philosophy.[213] Bosse's drawing depicts an enormous crowned sovereign rising above mountains,

[213] *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's Leviathan*, ed. Patricia Springborg (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), 31.

wielding a sword, with a body composed of hundreds of people. The image represents Hobbes' idea that people must submit to the absolute sovereignty of the state, which would in turn ensure the peace and defense of society. According to Hobbes, this strong central government (ideally a single individual) was representative of its citizens because it contained their "will" through the social contract that existed between them. In other words, Hobbes' *Leviathan* made the case that centralized authority, the State, was not only necessary but also good.

That the Living Theatre may have been creating an image of Hobbes' Leviathan in these scenes is not surprising. Traditionally, anarchism defined itself in opposition to Hobbes and to the contemporary political philosophies that traced their origins to Hobbes' writing. Anarchists disagreed with the foundations of Hobbes' beliefs, that mankind in its natural state was savage, leading lives that were "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."[214] On the contrary, natural man, according to anarchism, was at peace and in harmony with his brothers and sisters. It was the State that turned man against man. The "Leviathan" became a common metaphor in the writings of the 18th- and 19th-century anarchists for the bureaucratic machinery of the State. As Horowitz put it in *The Anarchists*, in the chapter in fact that is quoted by Doctor Frankenstein to the Creature through flashcards in *Frankenstein*, the Leviathan represented to anarchists, "the political affiliate" to the "industrial capitalist system."[215] Paul Goodman, the anarchist lecturer and playwright who first introduced Beck and Malina to the concepts of anarcho-pacifism,

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[214] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1931), 65.
[215] Horowitz, 27.

frequently spoke on the fallacy of Hobbes' principle "that war and competition are the natural condition."[216]

However, unlike Bosse's drawing, the Leviathan of *Frankenstein* is formed, not through voluntary citizens, but through corpses. Both formations of the giant Creature in *Frankenstein* are preceded by mass death onstage: the murders by the State in Act I and the prison fire in Act III. The social structure that the Leviathan embodies is composed in this play not of the living but of the dead. Submitting to authority, the Living Theatre demonstrates, is unnatural, deadly. The participants in the Leviathan, like those who do not challenge the State, are zombies. The image confronts the audience, accusing and mimetic. As Beck puts it in *The Life of the Theatre*, "The Creature simultaneously menaces civilization and is civilization, it is civilization menacing itself."[217]

Nevertheless, there is hope. The play ends with the performers who have come together to form the Creature counting down to "zero." This "zero" has particular significance in the play. *Frankenstein* also begins with a countdown to zero, at which point the "person in the center" could have levitated. As the stage directions explain

Zero is the reversable [sic] point.

> What is meant by "Zero" is a point which is both primal and present. That is, it is prototypical, being a historical turning point or series of historical turning points as well as synthesis of the present moment.
> Again: The primal moment is always present and the problem is that we don't always feel it.[218]

In every moment, according to Beck and Malina, there exists the possibility for total change, transformation, for saying "no" to the state, for dissolving the Leviathan. At the end of the play,

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[216] Tytell, 55.
[217] Beck, *Life*, section 4.
[218] *Frankenstein*, 26.

Frankenstein is back at the beginning, back at "zero." However, this time a different path is suggested. The Creature has picked up a net and flashlight, now even more reminiscent of the Leviathan with its sword. The net is the same net that was used to capture the Victim at the beginning of the play. Yet, as the smoke from the prison fire clears, the Creature drops the net and flashlight. The action represents a society no longer "protecting' itself by hunting down those who would question it. Then the Creature breathes. The pacified Leviathan, unlike the dead State, is now a living creature. Only by transforming the State, this image suggests, can natural man (all the bodies that make up the Leviathan) live again. To drive the point home, two actors disengage from the Creature and on the top of the scaffold make the symbol "Man Lives," a symbol that earlier in the show had been painted on the body of the Hanged Man by Doctor Frankenstein. While the audience has no decoder to associate this image with the concept "Man Lives," the program lists this as the final "action" of the play.[219]

In Act I, the collectivity that is modeled in this image is monstrous. The way that the bodies come together to form one giant may be fascinating and inspiring in its harmonious effort, but the result is frightening. Perhaps the Living Theatre is suggesting that "the group" is not inherently good. The group can be a Leviathan. It can be a mob, like the posse which hunts down its victims throughout the show. Collective action is not always natural or beneficial. However, in Act III, the Leviathan is transformed into a pacified monster; the collectivity modeled is therefore supposed to be inspiring. Through simple actions—dropping the net and flashlight, breathing—the image of the collective is made beautiful and vital. In theory, the nightmare becomes a dream, and the audience can again marvel at the Living Theatre's ability to create together.

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[219] "Olympia Theatre Program."

The only problem with this Act I/Act III transformation is that the feeling of menace that the giant Creature-Leviathan inspired in Act I may linger for audience members even in the play's final moments. Even without its net and flashlight, the Creature appears terrifying, looming over the crowd. "Man Lives" may be the company's message, but what is communicated may still only be a colossus that inspires awe and fear.[220] The image of the Creature cannot so easily be remade into something inspirational. Moreover, the physical skill it took the company members to create this Creature separates them from the average audience member. The collectivity modeled is like the high-wire act of a circus troupe, an amazing feat to be marveled at but not necessarily one to be emulated.

Nevertheless, it is certainly unfair to say that the reason *Frankenstein* did not inspire its audiences to form a series of anarchist communities was due to the confusing affect of this final image, the way the company modeled collectivity.[221] After all, it is doubtful than any theatre

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[220] Similarly, in an earlier scene, Beck and Malina as the writers of the script seem to acknowledge that a collective physical presence onstage is as likely to be intimidating and oppressive to an audience as inspiring in its unity. Describing the changing of the set between Act I and Act II, they write: "The set is changed by the actors. In many theatres, and when played out-of-doors, the set was changed in view of the audience. The efficient activity of the actors represented for the spectator a reflection of the preceding Automation Collage. It also represented a constructive communal labor on the part of the actor beyond his acting role." In other words, Beck and Malina admit that the audience, rather than being impressed by the "constructive communal labor" of the company members, might simply see them as again functioning as parts of an inhuman machine as they did in the Automation Collage. Again, the collectivity modeled here is not guaranteed (or even likely) to inspire others to form a collective, a serious concern if the Living Theatre is hoping the plant the seeds of anarchism in the communities for which it performs.

[221] Certain audience members were of course predisposed to view this Creature as menacing, even when it had been pacified. On tour in the U.S. in 1968 especially, the collectivity modeled by *Frankenstein* was dismissed by a number of theatre critics and academics. Robert Brustein was particular vocal in his challenges to the "community" the Living Theatre's productions offered its audiences. As Brustein wrote in *Revolution as Theatre* (1971), which was in many ways a book that directly confronted the collective creative

production could have succeeded in planting the seeds for a worldwide anarchist revolution. However, it does seem clear that the Living Theatre in this production, like Doctor Frankenstein, overestimated its ability to transform the dead into the living. The Leviathan is not so easily pacified. Language is not so easily made active. And quotation as a creative method may always prove unwieldy.

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processes of the Living Theatre: "The heroic individualism affirmed by Nietzsche and Ibsen is swamped under a raging new conformity called 'community' while the strong intelligent politics of Marx and Trotsky are drowned in the mindless yippie yells of Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin." [Brustein, *Revolution as Theatre* (New York: Liveright, 1971), 5.]

Chapter 3:

The Politics of Closeness: Quotation and Contamination in SITI Company's *Culture of Desire*

The Saratoga International Theater Institute (SITI Company), under the artistic direction of Anne Bogart, creates theatre pieces in one of three ways. Sometimes the group chooses an existing play to remake, often in ways so radical that the source material is not immediately apparent as the foundational text for the performance. These remakes include "classic explosions" of plays by Noël Coward, Marivaux, Johannes von Saaz, Sophie Treadwell, and William Shakespeare.[1] Other times, SITI Company works closely with a playwright to develop a new play in collaboration, using what the group calls "Composition Work" to "write" the piece alongside the playwright in rehearsal. SITI Company has collaborated with Naomi Iizuka, Eduardo Machado, and Mac Wellman in this manner; though its most frequent playwright collaborator, who Bogart has dubbed the "Clifford Odets" of the company, is Charles Mee, with whom SITI Company has already created two parts of a planned five-part series of plays on artists influential to American culture (and to SITI Company): *bobrauschenbergamerica* (about, not surprisingly, Robert Rauschenberg) and *Hotel Cassiopeia* (about collage artist Joseph Cornell).[2]

Less often of late, SITI Company creates "devised works," original pieces composed solely of either the direct quotation of a number of texts by a single writer (such as August Strindberg, Anton Chekhov, and Virginia Woolf) or of the quotation of texts by, or simply

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[1] Scott T. Cummings, *Remaking American Theatre: Charles Mee, Anne Bogart, and the SITI Company* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 38.

[2] Ibid., 185

regarding, a single figure (such as Marshall McLuhan, Andy Warhol, and Robert Wilson).[3] For SITI Company's devised works in recent years, Irish critic Jocelyn Clarke has shaped the raw written material compiled by the company in rehearsals into a performance text, acting as a kind of filter midway through the process. Clarke is typically credited with "text arrangement." For earlier devised works, however, such as *The Medium*, *Small Lives/Big Dreams*, *Culture of Desire*, and *Cabin Pressure*, Bogart and the company alone handled the text arrangement of the quoted material as part of their rehearsal process.

This chapter examines one of SITI Company's earlier devised works, *Culture of Desire*, originally produced in 1997, a play in which the text is made up entirely of the direct quotation of writings by and about Andy Warhol, arranged by Bogart and the company in rehearsal. Though it is relatively early in SITI Company's production history (the group was founded in 1992), *Culture of Desire* nevertheless represents one type of SITI Company's collective composition processes in maturity. The company had already created *The Medium* (1993) and *Small Lives/Big Dreams* (1994) in the same manner, working together as a group using typically unedited, though rearranged and newly contextualized, quotation of other texts to create its scripts. Unlike the Living Theatre, which was first experimenting with collective composition while creating *Frankenstein*, SITI Company was secure in its collaborative process in 1997 when it created *Culture of Desire*. Also, unlike the script of *Frankenstein*, which combines quoted text with newly written text and "examples" of text which stand in for the actors' improvisations, the script *Culture of Desire* is composed exclusively of quoted texts, offering the opportunity to analyze a company working solely with direct quotation as its writing method.

[3] Anne Bogart, Interview with the writer, Saratoga Springs, NY, July 11, 2007.

Culture of Desire is also significant in that it is almost the last SITI Company play for which the company alone in rehearsal arranged the text. Only one other play since, *Cabin Pressure* in 1999, a play based on SITI Company's transcripts of interviews with its audience members, was not written in collaboration with a playwright or compiled by Clarke as the text arranger. As such, the production history and the script of *Culture of Desire* reveal a process in maturity, but also reveal an initial movement away from a radically democratized, collaborative way of writing. *Culture of Desire* marks a point when SITI Company for various reasons began to shift its authority, as a collective writing together, to other collaborators, for various reasons. Indeed, for almost a decade, SITI Company did not attempt another company-written play. In the summer of 2007, however, SITI Company began work on another devised work, *Who Do You Think You Are?* which will be written collectively. As SITI Company returns to its earlier and most democratic composition process, it is an appropriate time to reconsider *Culture of Desire*, created during the heyday of SITI Company's collective-writing period.

The production of *Culture of Desire* was designed as an indictment of consumer culture and an examination of consumer culture's detrimental effect on the artist. In this sense, it is perhaps the most "political" of SITI Company's shows. At the beginning of the production's creative process, the company members placed Warhol at the center of this indictment, because, for them, he epitomized the consumer-culture artist lured away from collaboration and connection with his fellow artists by an obsession with his own authority, resulting in self-reflexive stagnation. The story that *Culture of Desire* was designed to tell was how Warhol the artist became Warhol the authority, a brand, and how he embraced this dehumanizing, if profitable, degeneration. In other words, *Culture of Desire* was to be the story of how Warhol went from "Factory" artist to "Factory" boss. However, in the same way that the Living Theatre

came to resemble Doctor Frankenstein, the main character of its production *Frankenstein*, so did SITI Company come to resemble Warhol in surprising, and certainly unintended, ways. As this chapter explains, SITI Company was in financial straits in 1997 and was considering disbanding; hence, perhaps, its interest in exploring the detrimental effects of consumer culture on the artist. A piece on Warhol offered the opportunity for SITI Company to create a cautionary tale that would be as useful to the collective as it would be to its audiences, one which would offer a figure against which the group could define and rededicate itself. Just when the company had become obsessed with money (specifically with not having any), Warhol offered a reminder that artists, according to SITI Company, needed to operate outside of the demands of the capitalist system as best they can, and also that embracing authority, giving in to the temptation to brand yourself, or intentionally creating easily consumable products instead of "art," always leads to a loss of integrity.

Besides that the collective considered Warhol as an artist who embraced authority and turned his back on collaboration midway through his career, as this chapter will detail, SITI Company saw itself as separate from Warhol for a number of other reasons as well. When Warhol stopped collaborating with fellow artists, *Culture of Desire* argues, he also stopped collaborating with his audiences. SITI Company, on the other hand, was in 1997, and still is, committed to ongoing collaboration with its audiences, whom its considers co-creators of its theatre pieces. Also, Warhol, according to SITI Company, became devoted to a type of mechanical repetition in his creative process that SITI Company views as deadly and inhuman. In addition, Warhol ignored or transferred his sexual desires into other desires, specifically consumer desires. SITI Company, at least during the creation of *Culture of Desire*, did not consider that its members might be channeling their desires in similar ways. In all these ways.

SITI Company saw itself as distinct from Warhol. However, similar to the Living Theatre, as this chapter will argue, SITI Company was drawn closer to its subject as its creative process progressed, due in large part to the company's use of quotation in its collective composition of *Culture of Desire*. This chapter, then, reveals that all the ways in which the collective separated itself from Warhol are actually connections between SITI Company and the artist. Unlike the Living Theatre, though, the story of the creation and presentation of *Culture of Desire*, of SITI Company being drawn closer to its subject, is not one in which the commitment to collective composition was abandoned (or at least severely curtailed) midway through the creative process, as with *Frankenstein*. Rather, *Culture of Desire* demonstrates the ways in which, even in the most democratic of creative processes, the authority and influence of texts quoted is not easily controlled and, correspondingly, the ways in which intertexts' authority can subtly contaminate collective meaning making.

SITI Company used a specific technique of quotation to create *Culture of Desire* that this dissertation defines as "pastiche," a technique that brings those quoting closer to the texts they quote, as opposed to distancing them from these texts, as in parody. This "closeness," created through pastiche, allowed Warhol's texts as well as the text of Dante's *Inferno* (the other primary intertext of the play) to contaminate SITI Company's proposed meanings of *Culture of Desire* and to muddy the distinction SITI Company was attempting to draw (onstage and offstage) between its company and Warhol, between itself and the texts it was quoting. Moreover, this chapter argues, Warhol's own struggles with issues of the artist's authority in consumer culture, similarly, were tied to this artist's use of quotation in the manufacturing of Pop Art. In other words, building upon the connections SITI Company eventually revealed between itself and Warhol, this chapter attempts more fairly to assess Warhol as an artist who, like SITI Company,

navigated between the collaborative possibilities and authoritative pitfalls that quotation as a creative technique offered him throughout his career.

In order to better understand how SITI Company was drawn closer to the figure of Warhol through its use of quotation, however, it is first helpful to define the term "pastiche," a term often applied to SITI Company's work. As mentioned in the introduction, this dissertation operates on the following classification of terms: Intertextuality is a *theory*, or more accurately, a cluster of related theories. Quotation and collective composition are *methods* by which the theories of intertextuality are employed or revealed by those theatre companies writing collectively. And pastiche is a particular *technique* of quotation, the dominant type of quotation within collectively written 20th and 21st century dramas.

A Definition of "Pastiche"

Like "intertextuality," "pastiche" is a term with its own long history in literary studies and such a contested recent history in post-modern aesthetic theory that it requires some definition. To understand not only how *Culture of Desire* is a pastiche on the page but also how SITI Company relies on pastiche as a technique for collective composition, it is necessary to clarify the ongoing debate over the possibilities of pastiche as a critical practice, characterized by the writings of Frederic Jameson and Linda Hutcheon.

As critic John N. Duvall points out, the Jameson/Hutcheon debate over the definition of pastiche hinges on whether quotation in contemporary art and literature can be a critical practice. For Jameson, post-modern narrative and art, which thrive on quotation, are ahistorical (and hence

politically ineffectual).[4] For Hutcheon, post-modern narrative and art remain historical, precisely because they problematize history through a type of quotation that distances the contemporary text from the quoted, historical intertext, and thus retain their potential for cultural critique. Jameson perceives a cultural break in the 1960s between modernism and post-modernism, a break that Hutcheon reads more as a continuation. Modernism in the arts, for Jameson, was a period in which artists effectively responded to the material conditions created by modernization. However, from the 1960s onward, Jameson argues, artists ceased to be able to imagine or create change in their material conditions through their art, because aesthetic production had been so subsumed by commodity production. In this sense, Jameson sees post-modernism as a fulfillment of the Frankfurt School's fears about the total absorption of critical artistic practice by the culture industry. In this argument, Andy Warhol is Jameson's favorite example. Jameson portrays Warhol as a post-modern artist whose work has become pure commodity and therefore has lost any critical potential. It is not necessarily the artist's fault that he can no longer establish a critical position, Jameson argues, this is simply the inevitability of late capitalist society in which any artistic innovation is immediately co-opted and commodified.

In "The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," Jameson's description of post-modernism in the arts, which was created by the arrival of "late capitalism" in global culture, clearly connects with earlier discussions of "the culture industry" by members of the Frankfurt School.[5] However, while accepting for example Theodor Adorno's description of the "culture industry"

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[4] John N. Duvall, "Troping History: Modernist Residue in Jameson's Pastiche and Hutcheon's Parody" in *Productive Postmodernism: Consuming Histories and Cultural Studies*, ed. John N. Duvall (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002), 1.

[5] Compare Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 4, to Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 157.

(20th century industrial society's unavoidable interlock of big business, government, and cultural production), Jameson does not have Adorno's faith in the possibility of an "emancipatory aesthetics." For Adorno, even within a society in which artistic production has been commodified, emancipatory aesthetics could take shape based on "dismantlements that appropriate elements of reality by destroying them, thus freely shaping them into something else."[6] The avant-garde artist, according to Adorno, could steal back meaning-making from the culture industry, if only momentarily, by destroying and remaking commodified art. Unlike intertextuality as described by Kristeva, Bakhtin, or Barthes, Adorno's concept of artistic appropriation and remaking is a practice of intertextuality with a particular political purpose: to challenge the monopoly of meaning-making controlled by late-capitalist producers. However, while Jameson's depiction of a late-capitalist "culture industry" is indebted to Adorno, he does not allow methods of quotation as possible critical practices. The only emancipation from the culture industry Jameson imagines is what he calls "global cognitive mapping," in which the individual critic tries to locate himself socially and spatially in an increasingly complex environment of vertically integrated cultural producers.[7]

Jameson also parts ways with Adorno when it comes to Adorno's championing of an art that remakes reality by shaping it into something else. Adorno's "remaking," as described in his

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[6] Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, eds. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (London: Routledge, 1984), 362.

[7] Jameson, 54. If there is room for critical challenges to the culture industry in post-modern art, Jameson argues, it is only for the critic, not the artist. "The political form of post-modernism, if there ever is any, will have as its vocation the invention and projection of a global cognitive mapping, on a social as well as spatial scale," Jameson writes (54). Jameson privileges the receiver of the commodifed art over the artist, specifically the critical, politically minded receiver. This ideal critic would be able to chart the innumerable connections that make up the sort of web of power described by Michel Foucault. Jameson's post-modern political critic is a kind of conspiracy theorist amped up to the level of computational mastermind.

book *Aesthetic Theory*, sounds similar to the practice of pastiche, an artistic method Jameson acknowledges but describes dismissively in "The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." Jameson's oft-quoted definition of "pastiche" from this article centers on pastiche's ahistoricism and inability to critique ideas:

> Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language. But it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody's ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter and of any conviction that alongside the abnormal tongue you have momentarily borrowed, some healthy linguistic normality still exists…[8]

According to Jameson, pastiche, though it reuses elements of reality, cannot offer intellectual emancipation, inspire critical thinking, or operate as a tool to inspire political action.[9] Pastiche does not allow the artist to contrast his voice with past voices, and therefore to engage in critical thinking by challenging a past from which he sees himself as separate. Jameson argues that

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[8] Ibid., 17. In order to focus more specifically on pastiche in post-modern performance as opposed to pastiche in other arts, it is useful to clarify one particular trend among the theatre companies in this study: the Living Theatre, SITI Company, BOTHarts, and Cornerstone Theater Company. The main qualification a survey of these companies' practices offers to Jameson's definition of pastiche is that post-modern pastiche in performance is not as often "imitation," as Jameson would have it, as it is direct quotation. More often than not, post-modern artists in the theatre do not merely compose "in the style" of classical authors, they quote them directly.

[9] Nevertheless, elsewhere in "The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," Jameson, echoing Adorno, implies that all these goals might be met, oddly enough, by an artistic practice seemingly very similar to pastiche: that of "collage." Like the critic turned global cognitive cartographer, Jameson imagines an "evolutionary mutation" of the collage artist, one who is able to "rise somehow to the level at which the vivid perception of radical difference is in and of itself a new mode of grasping what used to be called relationship" (17). Combining radically different elements in order to imagine their relationship through difference as opposed to likeness is a way, it seems, that the post-modern artist can still critically engage with society at large. Despite the possibilities Jameson seems to allow for this kind of collage-making, he does not connect this practice with pastiche. Moreover, like pastiche, collage is dismissed in Jameson's essay after brief, though at least more positive, consideration. Jameson only gives serious consideration to global cognitive mapping as a way to critically engage the commodification of artistic production.

pastiche comes into being when it is assumed that all "tongues," or styles or ways of thinking/creating/expressing, are borrowed and "abnormal." After modernism, he contends, there is no longer any "natural" style or intrinsic way of expressing one's self that can be contrasted with the borrowed, irregular tongue. If there were, parody would still be satisfying. Jameson's choice of adjectives in his critique of pastiche—that pastiche denies the possibility of some "*healthy* linguistic normality" [italics are mine]—implies that while he may concede the uselessness of parody in a late-capitalist, post-modern culture, he also mourns parody's passing.

For Linda Hutcheon, on the other hand, the extensive quotation found so often in post-modern art *does* allow artists to comment critically on their contemporary moment.[10] Outside of architecture, Hutcheon mainly draws her examples from post-modern fiction that turns to history (rather than simply to the aesthetic past) as its intertext and therefore creates a site wherein critical thinking becomes a possibility.[11] The critical distance created in the quotation that interests Hutcheon in post-modern art she often rightly associates with the term "parody." However, pastiche is not parody. Marella Billi draws the distinction: "Parody may be distinguished from pastiche chiefly because it brings out the difference between the two texts… rather than the similarity… Whereas parody is transformative, pastiche is imitative."[12] Hutcheon, while she challenges Jameson's views on post-modern quotation in numerous articles, is therefore arguing for a critical practice of parody, not pastiche. What Hutcheon is actually making the case for is not the critical possibilities of pastiche, but rather the continuation of the practice of parody in post-modern art that was so prevalent in modern art.

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[10] Duvall, 2.

[11] For Hutcheon, then, critical thinking in post-modern art is based in the producer (the artist); for Jameson, it is only a possibility for the consumer (the critic). See Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody* (New York: Methuen, 1985).

[12] Mirella Billi, *Il testo rifleso: la parodia nel romanzo inglese* (Naples: Liguori, 1993), 36.

If there is a case, then, for a critical or even political practice of pastiche, Hutcheon does not make it. However, even accepting Jameson's dismissive description of pastiche as accurate in many ways, pastiche (quotation that assumes a closeness between the text and the intertext) *can* promote critical thinking. Pastiche offers a critical position that is not political in Jameson's sense—embracing metanarratives based on grand unifying principles—but is "political" nonetheless, because it offers the reader or audience member a perspective that is larger than the personal or local by revealing the larger as personal or local. Taking an example from the theatre, pastiche as a critical practice may be the opposite of the dialectal theatre imagined by Bertolt Brecht. Rather than presenting two opposing viewpoints to the audience member from which they are encouraged to choose one, pastiche presents a series of equally weighted voices, a catalog of viewpoints which the audience member recognizes as local and temporary. Along the lines of Jameson's suggestion that there is no longer a linguistic normality in post-modern art, there is likewise not a single solution or interpretative stance that explains everything: as the metanarrative of Marxism did for Brecht. For pastiche, the joke is not on one way of seeing, the joke is on all ways of seeing. This realization can be paralyzing or emancipating, depending on the point of view. As Jameson attests, the practice of pastiche suggests that all tongues are abnormal *at some level*—when they try to speak too loudly or speak for too many, when the local truth claims universal status. Nevertheless, pastiche encourages the receiver of the art to acknowledge a multiplicity of tongues, and to try each of them out as possible voices to be shared, if only in the local setting. In encouraging this local sharing of possible ways of seeing or ways of knowing, pastiche as a practice avoids collapsing into relativism. While pastiche may seem unlikely to inspire political action, it can promote a certain political (in other words, large-view) awareness of multiple positions, a subversion of political

thinking that divides the world into easy binaries, and a social commitment based not on ideology but on the needs of the moment and the immediate local situation. In this sense, it is a "critical" technique.

Challenging assumptions about the ineffectuality of pastiche, Ingeborg Hoesterey's book *Pastiche* opposes Jameson's definition of pastiche along similar lines. Hoesterey argues that post-modern pastiche, like Hutcheon's parody, is about "cultural memory and the merging of horizons past and present."[13] Offering as her primary examples the works of visual artists Cindy Sherman and Carlo Maria Mariani (works that are close to, not distanced from, what they are quoting), Hoesterey makes the point that by "foregrounding the structures of mediation of older art to viewers of a different mentality and cultural makeup," pastiche "lends itself to exposing and refiguring cultural codifications that for centuries marginalized unconventional identities."[14] In other words, by quoting with a purpose towards exposing ideology, pastiche can help contemporary readers see historical works through new eyes. This is not parody, in the sense that the older art is shown as abnormal or amusing compared to the "linguistic normality" of the contemporary artist's voice. Instead, what would have once been, and perhaps still is, generally considered a "marginalized" position is given even weight with the conventional or the historic, calling into question the concept of marginality itself. Matthew Causey makes a similar case for a type of critical thinking promoted by pastiche that challenges the distinction between narrative and history:

> A process of post-modern performance could be to blur the lines between narrative and history… and, by that blurring, to subvert the notion of history as a knowable object, and

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[13] Ingeborg Hoesterey, *Pastiche* (Bloomingtion, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), xi.
[14] Ibid., 29.

> by its very amplification, to allow the institutional strategies inherent in that writing to be revealed.[15]

Pastiche, in Causey's terms, does not criticize or champion the past. It does not support an idea of cultural progress or regress. Instead, it exposes the narrativity behind history and the ideology behind any of these positions with regard to history.

Unfortunately, in Hoesterey's ambition to account for every artistic practice that might be considered pastiche, she ends up muddying the water to such a degree that it becomes confusing what exactly pastiche is or, more accurately, what pastiche isn't. Hoesterey argues, invoking Marcel Proust, that pastiche is the way any writer or reader comes to grips "with the works of revered authors."[16] Pastiche constitutes "the intertextual play that is literature."[17] In this instance, Hoesterey is echoing Kristeva, Bakhtin, and Barthes by insisting that all texts are intertextual. She is arguing that no authors can avoid quoting, consciously or unconsciously, the voices of the writers that have constituted their formative reading.

How then to distinguish, and privilege, one pastiche over another? This is an important question if, as Kristeva, Bakhtin, and Barthes argue, some texts are more intertextual than others. One distinction may be granted without implying a hierarchy of aesthetically superior over inferior works of pastiche. There is a difference between the conscious and the unconscious use of pastiche. The writer or artist who is aware of the works he is quoting is more likely to structure his pastiche in a way that is conducive to inspiring critical thinking than the writer or artist who quotes without knowing it. The former is making his way through the heteroglossia of

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[15] Matthew D. Causey, "Schizophrenia, Pastiche, and the Myth of Repetition: Postmodern Performance Theory" in *Vanishing Point*, ed. Kerstin Behnke (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 36.
[16] Hoesterey, 9.
[17] Ibid., 9.

historical styles and ideas, exemplifying a path of choice that the reader may or may not choose to follow. The latter, however, is afloat in a sea of voices with no direction, no possibility of making even small-scale choices of one voice over another—simply mimicking without knowing, an artist in line with Jameson's concerns about post-modern pastiche. As Hoesterey concludes her book, "The authors and artists of our critical pastiches are sorters," uncovering meaning through patchwork constructions of quotation.[18] But the artist who is unaware that he is quoting is merely a gatherer. This is not to say that in conscious pastiche the path the artist chooses to follow through the forest of voices is upheld as *the* path. The critical path suggested by the artist's pastiche is rather one possibility, which the reader may or may not follow. If the reader does follow, of course, he or she "widens" this proposed path slightly through his or her ratification.[19]

While it is useful to summarize the Jameson/Hutcheon debate and also to acknowledge Hoesterey and Causey's contributions to challenging Jameson, the most important defining characteristic of pastiche, in terms of this chapter's analysis of *Culture of Desire* can be found in Richard Dyer's recent book *Pastiche* (2007). Dyer's book, picking up on Hutcheon's description of pastiche as an artistic form that unlike parody stresses similarity rather than difference, argues

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[18] Ibid., 118.

[19] Imagining the pastiche artist as exemplifying a path of choices through a contested linguistic environment, relates to Jürgen Habermas' call for an aesthetic experience that can "illuminate a life-historical situation and is related to life problems," as opposed to one which is "framed around the experts' critical judgments of taste." The pastiche artist is not necessarily an expert in the elements he is quoting and appropriating. He is merely playing with these objects in an attempt to make some sense of history and shed light on some aspect of reality in the local moment. The reader is not compelled to arrive at the same truth. In fact, pastiche often offers no clear enunciation of which voice the artist is choosing over the others in the end, or what distinct synthesized new voice has been created by the work of art. See Habermas, "Modernity—An Incomplete Project" in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), 13.

that pastiche operates on a "politics of closeness" rather than distance,[20] Dyer's book considers this aspect of pastiche as its defining characteristic as well as its basis for critical work. Dyer expands upon the qualification that critical pastiche occurs only when the artist is aware that she is quoting. Pastiche, the book argues, is "a kind of imitation that you are meant to know is an imitation"—"you" being the reader as well as the writer, the theater maker as well as the audience member.[21] Using the example of the way in which conventional romantic notions are parroted in *Madame Bovary* through the seduction of Emma Bovary, Dyer argues that the novel "has told us where romantic language and perception has come from and what to think of it, and yet sometimes, when pastiching, can't stop it carrying some of its lyrical charge."[22] This, according to Dyer, is pastiche's "politics of closeness." The quoted text or style in a pastiche is critiqued, but because of the closeness of the framing text to it, there is a risk of "contamination" by the quotation.

> *Madame Bovary* suggests not just that pastiche can be used to be critical, but that it is precisely by drawing close to what it critiques that it is able to convey most forcefully why that needs to be critiqued, namely, because it works.[23]

Pastiche is not an ahistorical practice for Dyer, as Jameson considers it, nor is it anti-historical in the sense that it subverts "the notion of history as a knowable object," as Causey argues. Rather, Dyer claims that pastiche makes us aware of history while remaining close to the history being quoted. Dyer is mostly interested in "works that are at once moving and inescapably

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[20] Richard Dyer, *Pastiche* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 167.
[21] Ibid., 1.
[22] Ibid., 162.
[23] Ibid., 163.

pastiching," that have the "ability to move us while allowing us to be conscious of where the means of our being moved come from, from historicity."[24]

In summation, coming up with a workable definition of pastiche means avoiding a universalizing move—all texts are equally intertextual, all texts are equally pastiche—as well as formulating a definition that is too narrow to account for the myriad different uses of pastiche in post-modern performance. A series of clarifying statements about pastiche, then, might serve as a series of measuring rods, useful in identifying and analyzing pastiche as a critical creative practice. In this spirit, pastiche can be defined (by no means exclusively) with the following observations. Pastiche is:

- Unlike parody, formally closer or more similar to that which it is quoting
- A work of art composed primarily of the conscious (as opposed to unconscious) quotation of styles, language, images, ideas
- A neutral practice that presents a series of potentially useful voices, as opposed to privileging a "healthy linguistic normality" against which abnormality can be measured (suggested by Jameson); OR a practice that makes us aware of history while still emotionally involving the audience (Dyer); OR a practice that challenges all history as based purely in narrative (Causey)
- A method that may or may not contain a satiric impulse, but which always emphasizes that the joke is on all ways of seeing as opposed to some one way of seeing
- A text that offers an artist's discovered local truth, often revealed in juxtaposition to "universal truths"
- An arrangement of elements that denies the possibilities of marginality

[24] Ibid., 138.

- A patchwork that makes no distinction between the cultural highness or lowness of its elements

Finally, there is always a sense of "play" in pastiche. This does not mean that its elements are necessarily presented lightly. Pastiche works can be deadly serious in tone. Rather, the "play" comes from the sense that the pastiche artist has been freed from the constraints of arriving at a solution which makes sense of all the elements he has brought into relation with one another. Since the artist is under no obligation to credit one voice or one path through the heteroglossia as normal or universally applicable, the result is often a sort of playfulness that may nevertheless be critically sophisticated, politically concerned, and even somber.[25]

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[25] Pastiche should be distinguished from related terms often used to describe the combination of distinct, quoted elements in a text or a work of art: collage and montage. Hoesterey defines collage as a patchwork of images, in which "the physical identity of the different motifs is preserved in the overall diversity, as the pasted pieces in the cubist model" (Hoesterey, 11). In other words, in collage, the lines between components are always visible. As Jameson stressed, a collage emphasizes the radical difference between its elements. Gregory Ulmer in "The Object of Post-Criticism" defines collage along similar lines. He notes the new creation formed from borrowed elements in a collage produces "an original totality manifesting ruptures of diverse sorts" (In *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, 84). It is the clash between elements that produces meaning in collage. Ulmer further notes that by "never entirely suppressing the alterity of these elements," collage puts into question "all the illusion of representation" (Ulmer, 188). On the other hand, Hoesterey defines "montage" as structurally similar to pastiche, except that, with montage, "the single image created from parts is a representational sign without trace of its composite nature" (Hoesterey, 12). In montage, the whole subsumes and erases the divisions between its component parts, to the point where it is no longer clear where the boundaries between elements lie. Film is of course the most apparent medium of montage. On film stock, thousands of images sit side by side. However, when they are run through the projector, a seamless whole is created in which no single image can be viewed in isolation.

While Hoesterey does not come to this conclusion, it seems that the practice of pastiche falls somewhere between collage and montage. As Hutcheon notes in *A Theory of Parody*, pastiche, similar to montage, is a "monotextual" form that stresses "similarity rather than difference," as opposed to the "bitextual synthesis that is parody" (Hutcheon, 33). Pastiche, unlike collage, creates a final artistic object with clearly defined borders, and does not necessarily emphasize the radical difference between its elements. At the

Collective Writing and Its Place Within SITI Company's Composition Work

While defining pastiche gives a better picture of the kind of quotation SITI Company uses when collectively composing devised works such as *Culture of Desire*, it is also helpful to offer an overview of the writing and staging of such devised works in order to see how this technique of quotation relates to SITI Company's total creative process. The first thing to note is that SITI Company's creative process is more democratic than most other collectives. In other words, SITI Company actually practices "collective writing" in a way that the Living Theatre never attempted. Because SITI Company's devised works are truly written, line-by-line, by the entire company—something the Living Theatre never achieved—they complicate notions of authorship assumed even by intertextual theorists such as Bakhtin.

While, as mentioned in the introduction, Bakhtin does not include the drama in his description of the various types of dialogism that can be utilized in narrative, much less a "cento" drama such as *Culture of Desire*, he does claim that texts with multiple authors nevertheless conform to certain dialogic rules.

> A given work can be the product of a collective effort, it can be created by the successive efforts of generations, and so forth—but in all cases we hear in it a unified creative will, a definite position, to which it is possible to react dialogically.[26]

Bakhtin's idea of a "collective effort" here is probably more along the lines of Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers* or the Bible than a collectively written drama such as *Culture of Desire*. In the composition of Dumas' novels in the 1840s, Dumas famously (or infamously)

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same time, works of pastiche leave small quotes around elements, sometimes only noticeable because of each element's juxtaposition with what precedes and follows. Unlike montage, the artistic whole of pastiche does not attempt to erase all differences between quoted elements so that a seamlessness is achieved.

[26] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson, Vol. 8, Theory and History of Literature (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 1984), 184.

utilized seventy-three assistants to maintain the enormous output of writing required for his serialized books. Nevertheless, it could be argued that *The Three Musketeers* is "authored" by Dumas alone. As Bakhtin might put it, the book is the product of Dumas' "unified creative will." Dumas is the author of this collectively written work because it has his signature—figuratively and literally: *The Three Musketeers* embodies Dumas—and his name is written at the bottom of it. This is indeed the argument that Dumas made in the Paris courts when he was later sued by one of his most significant collaborators, Auguste Maquet. Dumas claimed that the public recognized in his novels the outsized personality of Alexandre Dumas, a brand of sorts synonymous with *The Three Musketeers*, and that is why the books were purchased. The Paris courts bought this argument, and Bakhtin most likely would have concurred with their decision. Likewise, Bakhtin might argue that, while, for example, a text such as the Bible is not only a product of many writers but also of many writers over many generations, it nevertheless presents a singular "position." We hear it as the product of a unified creative will—perhaps God's will, in this case.

While *Culture of Desire* bears only the signature "The Saratoga International Theater Institute," it is noted—on the cover of the unpublished text and in the promotional material—as having been "conceived and directed by Anne Bogart."[27] If there is a unified creative will behind *Culture of Desire*, then, it would seem to be Bogart's. Therefore, the following history of the production of *Culture of Desire* starts with this director. However, it quickly turns to a description of the collective composition methods of Bogart and SITI Company and the lineage of these methods in the practices of modern and post-modern choreography, music, and the visual arts. This methodological history reveals how Bogart and her company have worked

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[27] The Saratoga International Theater Institute, *Culture of Desire*, unpublished script, 8/18/98.

throughout their organizational life to ensure that if there is a unified creative will behind their collectively written plays, it is the will of the group and not of the acknowledged leader. Indeed, this kind of lineage tracing is exactly the type of work to which SITI Company has dedicated itself in numerous productions.

Bogart has described her creative coming-of-age as a director as first a rejection and then an embrace of American culture. "When I was a young director, I thought that American culture was superficial," she has said.[28] Already making a living as a theatre director in New York, Bogart moved to Germany in 1980 and attempted to completely assimilate to German culture. However, the results of this experiment, in terms of the productions she directed, were, as Bogart herself has described them, "disastrous." This led the director to reconsider her native culture.

> Through the really painful experience of doing bad work, I suddenly had a revelation, really an epiphany, that I am American... I suddenly became grateful for people like Martha Graham, whose lineage goes back to Meredith Monk, or someone like Bob Wilson, who's ahead of me, or for the revolutions in the early part of the century in theatre in this country… If we could remember where we come from, it would give us endless possibilities for our work in the theatre.[29]

SITI Company has based the majority of its theatre productions on excavations of the past, specifically the performing-arts past of the United States. The company's productions list reads like a theatre maker's Works Cited bibliography. Like *Culture of Desire*, many SITI Company shows have examined past figures whose work has influenced the group or have centered on historic artistic movements or styles with which the company still carries on conversations. Clearly Bogart has made good on her resolve, since returning to the United States in 1982, of remembering from where she comes. Until recently, however, critics and theatre scholars alike have not always been as successful in noting where Bogart and company come

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[28] Scott Proudfit, "Patient Pioneer," *Back Stage West/Drama-Logue* (July 23, 1998), 7.
[29] Ibid., 7.

from. The reason SITI Company's influences are so seldom spelled out—except by the company itself—might be that what forms the core of SITI Company's method and aesthetic comes from disciplines adjacent to theatre and hence not always in the theatre critic's purview: namely, dance, music, and the visual arts. In addition, that the foundation of SITI Company's creative process in other art forms has been neglected is partly the fault of Bogart herself, professed excavator though she may be. After all, in theatricalizing her sources, this director has yet to get around to excavating and performing what are arguably her most nourishing roots—in modern and post-modern dance, and specifically in the collective performance-making activities of 1960s' dance companies such as the Judson Dance Theatre.

Before tracing the lineage of Composition, it is useful to describe how Composition has been understood and has been used by SITI Company since its formation in 1992. In *Anne Bogart: Viewpoints*, Tina Landau, Bogart's frequent collaborator, includes her description of "Composition" under the umbrella of SITI Company's "Source-Work," which she describes as "a series of activities done at the beginning of the rehearsal process to get in touch—both intellectually and emotionally, both individually and collectively—with 'the source' from which you are working."[30] Emphasizing the multiplicity of definitions of Composition inside and outside SITI Company, Landau offers a number of distinct definitions of Composition. For the sake of space, her definitions have been abbreviated and compressed. According to Landau, Composition can be:

> [T]he practice of selecting and arranging the separate components of theatrical language into a cohesive work of art for the stage…
> [A] method for generating, defining and developing the theatre vocabulary that will be used for any given piece…

[30] *Anne Bogart: Viewpoints*, eds. Michael Bigelow Dixon and Joel A. Smith (Lyme, NH: Smith and Kraus, 1995), 17.

> [A]n alternative method to writing. Rather than being alone in a room with a computer, Composition is writing with a group of people on their feet… [A]ssignments we give to the company to have them create short, specific theatre pieces addressing a particular aspect of the work… The assignment will usually include an overall intention or structure as well as a substantial list of ingredients which must be included in the piece… [W]e study and use principles from other disciplines as translated to the stage. For example, stealing from music, we might ask what the rhythm of a moment is, or how a coda functions and whether or not we should add one…[31]

In short, Composition, as described by Landau, is many things—or rather many activities. Composition is, in one sense, however, simply a series of quickly created performances based on a list of givens, the purpose of which is to explore certain ideas and subject matter and to generate with a group of performers a great amount of theatrical material around those ideas and subject.[32]

Indeed, the following example of a Composition assignment given by SITI Company shows how much information and concentration must be utilized in a short amount of time for even a brief composition. This particular composition was for groups of four performers and was to be built overnight for presentation in class on the following day (for shorter compositions, performers might only be given fifteen minutes of class time in which to create). The composition was to be six minutes long and site-specific (no more than three to four minutes walk from the theatre where training was taking place). The composition had to be divided into

[31] Ibid., 26.

[32] While this chapter focuses on SITI Company's collective creative method of Composition rather than Viewpoints, it is important to note Viewpoints training's influence on Composition. As previously noted, Viewpoints are (in Bogart's expanded form) nine points of awareness that a performer/creator has at her disposal while working in rehearsal. They are specifically: tempo, duration, kinesthetic response, repetition, shape, gesture, architecture, spatial relationship, and floor pattern. Sound is sometimes considered a tenth Viewpoint, and sometimes something altogether separate from Viewpoints. Combined with Suzuki training—a rigorous collection of physical tasks that a performer uses to engage her center and locate her true voice onstage—Viewpoints gives the performer a heightened awareness of space and time onstage. This awareness is not abandoned when working on compositions.

four parts: "an arrival, something happens, a party, and a departure." The following elements had to be included in the composition:

> music from an unexpected source; revelation of space; revelation of character; revelation of object; one instance of broken expectation; 15 seconds of simultaneous action; 20 seconds of stillness; 15 seconds of non-stop high-speed chatter; 15 seconds of laughter; as much text from *The Cherry Orchard* or local take-out menus as you want; a contrast of good taste/bad taste; a contrast of classic/mall style; a contrast of old money/nouveau riche; a gesture of loss; 10 seconds of ennui; a trick; an accident; something lost[33]

As should be apparent, compositions as taught by SITI Company are short performances stuffed with tasks. While the four-part structure was dictated and numerous elements required, the compositions that resulted were nonetheless distinct. Still, all of the compositions seemed to be within the same family. No composition was so distinct that it had not a single moment or image that wasn't an almost exact repetition or close parallel to another moment or image in some other composition. It is not only theme but also structure that guarantee that compositions on the same ideas will be of the same family. Compositions are often created by large groups of students who are in training with SITI Company, but they typically address whichever project SITI Company is currently working on. SITI Company uses these kinds of compositions, Joan Herrington notes, "as an inspiration in the creation of their work."[34] Some moments from these compositions may even make it into the final show, though by that time performed of course by SITI Company members. Compositions are again created by SITI Company members themselves in the rehearsal periods leading up to a production.

The most significant aspect of how SITI Company uses compositions is in this collaborative idea-exploring. Compositions call for collaboration in a couple of ways. They

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[33] Writer's notes from Composition Workshop with SITI, "SITI in L.A. 2000."

[34] Joan Herrington, "Breathing Common Air: The SITI Company Creates *Cabin Pressure*," *The Drama Review*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Summer 2002), 127.

require collective energy and negotiation among the performers creating them. In addition, by drawing on compositions created by hordes of performers outside the company—though presumably all with some similar basis in training—SITI Company opens its creative process to a larger community collaboration. Ideas are good no matter where they come from, seems to be a SITI Company motto. And while compositions in some ways are very controlled—requiring a laundry list of tasks—they are also ultimately in the hands of the performers, inside or outside the company. Thus, while Bogart typically is the SITI Company member who comes up with the question around which each company-created play will revolve, she is often more of an observer and a guide than a traditional director within this collaborative process.

While many different people are involved in the brainstorming, creating, and writing of a SITI Company production such as *Culture of Desire*, the ultimate production still might be understood as the selection out of this "culture" of a particular style of expression, based on Bogart's "unified creative will." There certainly seems to be an identifiable style consistent across SITI Company's devised works. However, if there is a creative will that shapes a SITI Company show, it is the company's creative will. Bogart is only the arbiter when disagreement threatens to stall the proceedings. As the description of the creation of *Culture of Desire* will show, the performers and designers—including Darron L. West, Bogart's sound designer who is typically involved from the beginning of the creative process and almost co-directs in terms of his input—are the true "composers" of this show. As much or more than Bogart, they decide which images, lines, sounds, music, go into the show. To what extent their creative will is "unified" of course is debatable, as later sections of this chapter reveal.

Composition's Lineage in Other Art Forms

SITI Company's practice of Composition can be traced back to different but related compositional practices in 1950s' and 1960s' music and visual arts. More directly, though, SITI Company's Composition can be seen as a descendent of modern-dance composition practices (especially those of Louis Horst, Martha Graham, and Doris Humphrey), as well as the development and transformation of these practices by the first wave of post-modernist choreographers of the 1950s (such as James Waring, Robert Dunn, and Aileen Passloff), and through the further appropriation and transformation of these practices by post-modern dancers and choreographers such as the members of the Judson Dance Theater, who not only rebelled against the modern-dance tradition but also against the post-modernists who immediately preceded them.[35] Critics who have traced SITI Company's lineage in dance have typically done

[35] While tracing how exactly the collective practice of Composition arrived at SITI, it is important to keep in mind Ferdinand de Saussure's description of the "effect of time on continuous territory," in which he argues that "evolution [of language, even in the case of a single definition] will not be uniform throughout the territory but will vary from zone to zone" [Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, eds. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), 199]. This concept is particularly useful when trying to describe the modern/post-modern dance world of New York in the 1950s and '60s. The series of avant-gardes, or rejections of the past, during this period—groups or individual dancer/choreographers who rebelled against definitions and limitations of what may be considered dance—is overwhelming. Yet it is important to note that each dancer, from Passloff to Waring, was evolving his or her own notions of composition (collective or otherwise) at different times during this period, as well as occasionally returning to what was useful in "older" notions.

In class or in performance, a dancer such as Passloff might at times have practiced "composition" as Horst, one of the primary modern-dance theorists she was rebelling against, practiced it. Next, or even simultaneously, she may have practiced "composition" as the post-modern dancers who rebelled against her own rebellion were practicing it. Then she might have returned to ideas of composition prior to Horst's or even come up with innovations "beyond" the work of the post-modern choreographers. The point is that any individual dancer training in New York in the 1960s might be coming at different ideas of composition at different times (and drawing on definitions from different times) and might not necessarily be following a traditional timeline of

so through Bogart's ongoing collaboration with choreographer and movement theorist Mary Overlie. Overlie was a latecomer to the Judson Dance Theater in the 1960s. She was at one time, in fact, the group's youngest member. Subsequently, while an instructor at the Experimental Theatre Wing in the 1980s, Overlie taught Bogart her formulation of "the Viewpoints," six spacio-temporal points of awareness that performer/creators may use when creating dance or theatre pieces.[36] The Viewpoints were later expanded (to nine) and clarified by Bogart. Along with the complementary "Suzuki method," which was developed by SITI Company's one-time co-artistic director Tadashi Suzuki, Viewpoints serves as the actor-training method in which SITI Company trains and also the training this company teaches to other performers in its workshops. Composition—like Viewpoints—also can be traced to Bogart's tutelage under a New York dancer/choreographer: in this case, Aileen Passloff, who taught composition classes at Bard College which Bogart attended from 1972-'74. Said Bogart in a 2007 interview, "I completely stole Composition from Aileen Passloff, every bit of that is from her."[37]

Therefore, while in the contemporary U.S. theatre scene Bogart's use of Composition may seem uncommon, it is merely the latest incarnation of the kind of collective composition that defined the progressively democratic practices of the modern and post-modern dance communities in New York throughout the 1950s and '60s (of which Passloff and Overlie were a

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development: Composition means this in 1955, then this in 1962, etc. Changes in language (and practice) occur in patches, as it were, in any given group of speakers (or practitioners). The amalgam of ideas that Passloff may have been working with in the composition classes that Bogart attended at Bard in the 1970s, as well as the amalgam of ideas in Bogart's work, may at times be seen as modern, at times as post-modern, and at times as something else entirely—perhaps a hybrid of the two.

[36] Anne Bogart, *A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 11.

[37] Bogart interview.

part), as well as the composition practices in music and visual arts of the same period. The four theatre collectives studied in this dissertation all practice types of collective composition that are dependent upon and intertwined with collective composition practices in the other arts. For example, the connection between the Living Theatre's initial interest in collective composition and this collective's prior history with composer John Cage and choreographer Merce Cunningham was described in Chapter Two. BOTHarts and Cornerstone Theater Company, meanwhile, trace their methods of collective composition in part to their members' training and work with SITI Company. BOTHarts' director, Tracy Young, for example, learned Composition from Bogart, as Chapter Four will describe. Therefore, it is not only SITI Company's methods of collective composition but rather all of these theatres' methods of collective composition that owe something to the simultaneous development of collective composition in various other art forms in the late 20th and early 21st century. Tracing Composition's lineage through practices in dance, music, and the visual arts, therefore, is useful for two reasons: 1) It suggests that the analysis of quotation might be essential to the study not only of 20th and 21st century theatre, but also of dance, art, and music; 2) It clarifies the goals and mechanics of collective composition as it is practiced in the contemporary theatre by revealing some of these practices unacknowledged inter-artistic roots.

The connection between SITI Company's Composition Work and the practices of post-modernist choreographer Aileen Passloff, as Bogart's former professor, is apparent, though rarely addressed in critical studies of SITI Company. However, Composition as Passloff practiced it, and therefore how it was passed down to Bogart, requires some context. The writings of Passloff's predecessors in modern dance, namely the compositional theories of Louis Horst, are a good place to start. In the 1950s, modern dance composer/choreographer Louis

Horst and choreographers Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey offered new freedom to dancers trained in a classical tradition in which the choreographer had been the only authority and the direct and single source of everything that occurred in any given performance. The subsequent generation of post-modern choreographers and dancers expanded upon modern dance's inclusion of the dancer in the creative process. This next generation seized the opportunity to make room for the input of the entire company of dancers until the staging of any given dance piece at certain companies was being determined by the collective. In addition, post-modern dance companies also challenged concepts of authority onstage in a different way, by offering the possibility that any piece might be changed moment-to-moment during the performance by all dancers or any one dancer. In other words, they allowed for improvisation or at least choice within performance, not unlike the Living Theatre's *Frankenstein*.

In the "First Rules of Composition" chapter of Horst's influential 1961 book *Modern Dance Forms*, he defines "composition" not as a group of practices, as it had come to be understood by Tina Landau when she described it in 1997, but rather as a fundamental combination of thought and action. "Composition is based on only two things," the chapter reads, "a conception of a theme and the manipulation of a theme."[38] Beyond this brief definition, the rest of the chapter merely sets down what Horst considers the "rules" of composition, framed by the warning that "some modern dancers have been guilty of neglecting these fundamental rules, and so have regretfully weakened their work."[39]

By 1961, modern dance as promoted by Horst, Martha Graham, and Doris Humphrey, among others, had become a tradition as monolithic and codified as the classical tradition of

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[38] Louis Horst and Carroll Russell, *Modern Dance Forms* (San Francisco: Impulse Publications, 1961), 23.

[39] Ibid., 23.

dance against which it had rebelled. This codification of method is something Bogart has expressed fear about in terms of her company's own theories, a reason she was for many years hesitant to publish a textbook on SITI Company's practice of Composition.[40] Despite its monolithic status by 1961, modern dance, nevertheless, had started out in the 1920s and 1930s as a series loosely defined, anti-academic, anti-programmatic challenges to the dominant conventions of the 20th century dance profession. Indeed, unlike Horst's book, Doris Humphrey's 1959 *The Art of Making Dances* insists that the modern-dance composition ideas she offers "are not intended to be a formula; they do not pretend to be a magic brew for success."[41] From the 1930s through the 1950s, modern dance choreographers questioned the "balletic, academic *danse de l'ecole*, with its strict canons of beauty, grace, harmony, and the equally potent, regal verticality of the body extending back to the Renaissance courts of Europe."[42] Modern dance, according to Horst, was a way of looking back to a time before the canons of academic dance (when what Horst termed "the oneness of body and spirit" must have been "the condition of the primitive") and forward to "a free art" which "refuses to live within any boundaries."[43] For the traditional ballet world, composition had been strictly the territory of the choreographer. Horst and modern dance opened up composition to the dancer as well. For example, when Humphrey was choreographing a piece, she "depended on the dancers' individual contributions to her dances, from the institution of fundamental rhythms derived from the

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[40] Bogart and Tina Landau finally published a practical guide to Viewpoints and Composition in 2005, laying out explicitly SITI Company's creative methods: *The Viewpoints Book* (New York: Theatre Communications Group).

[41] Doris Humphrey, *The Art of Making Dances*, ed. Barbara Pollack (New York: Grove Press, 1959), 19.

[42] Sally Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), xiii.

[43] Horst, 22.

group's breath and impulse, to the incorporation of the dancers' specific choreographic phrases."[44] Likewise, as dancer Glen Tetley recalled of working with Martha Graham, "Very often the dancers more or less put things together. She would then come in at the very end and put her finishing touches on it, like an editor."[45]

Not only did dance composition begin to include more than one contributor in the creative process, but also, as Sally Banes describes modern-dance composition in her introduction to *Terpsichore in Sneakers*, Horst's methods in particular opened up dance composition to the other arts as well and to the possibility of expressing contemporary issues as opposed to rehashing traditional narratives:

> [Horst's methods] used stylized movements and energy levels in legible structures (theme and variations, ABA, and so on) to convey feeling tones and social messages. The choreography was buttressed by expressive elements of theater such as music, props, special lighting, and costumes… Gravity, dissonance, and a potent horizontality of the body were means to describe the stridency of modern life.[46]

In this way, modern dance paralleled the interest of theatre collectives such as the Living Theatre in the late 1950s, which sought out plays that addressed contemporary issues, such as Gelber's *The Connection* or Brown's *The Brig*, as opposed to stories that had already been told time and again.

Nevertheless, while modern-dance theories may have empowered the dancer and opened up the creative process to multiple contributors, by the 1961 publication of *Modern Dance Forms*, the rules of modern dance as a "tradition" were of as much concern to Horst as the freedom his methods offered dancers. While in his book Horst allows that experienced dancers

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[44] Marcia B. Siegel, *Days on Earth: The Dance of Doris Humphrey* (New Haven: Yale UP), 142.

[45] Robert Tracy, *Goddess: Martha Graham's Dancers Remember* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1997), 261.

[46] Banes, xiii.

might take "poetic license" with the forms—forms that Horst primarily derives from music of the pre-Classic period—the beginner, Horst insists, "must have the laws… in his blood stream so that he is never without the feeling of the necessity of form."[47] Elaine Summers, describing one of Horst's composition classes in the 1950s, emphasized the combination of freedom offered and restraint demanded of those dancers who attended: "You made up a dance of your own, [but] using a pre-classic structure."[48] In making compositions, students were allowed a certain degree of independence, but always within Horst's parameters. Likewise, Graham's dancers were encouraged to contribute to the choreography of certain pieces, yet the vocabulary of moves available to them were defined by their training with Graham. As dancer Linda Hodes put it, "the dancers were choreographing within a certain prescribed scenario and syllabus that Martha herself had created. It's her movement."[49] Dancer Ethel Winter concurs, "People say, 'Oh, I choreographed my own role,' but Martha wrote the script and she molded it into shape. We were used the same way [sculptor] Noguchi would use a piece of wood."[50]

Horst's insistence on structure led to post-modern dancer David Gordon's ironic assessment of his classes:

> [Horst] said ABA: this many beats in the A, this many beats in the B, this many beats in the A. That seemed very sensible, and that seemed to be all the information I needed. And if I were to stand and pick my nose for eighteen beats and then go back to it at the end, that seemed to be perfectly fine, and you couldn't object to that, because I was following the form.[51]

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[47] Horst, 27.
[48] Sally Banes, *Democracy's Body: Judson Dance Theater 1962-1964* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1983), 23.
[49] Tracy, 177.
[50] Ibid., 117.
[51] Ibid., 29.

Regardless of the seeming arbitrariness of Horst's forms, what is important to note is that Horst, Humphrey, and Graham, like Bogart, opened up composition beyond a single authority in order to empower the performers in the creative process. "Each dancer must largely discover his means of communication for himself," Horst writes. "[T]he modern dancer who is a creative artist is also a choreographer."[52] However, while these modern-dance choreographers in class, like Bogart in workshops, might point out what was useful and not useful in a composition (in other words, act like "editors"), they did not use compositions created solely by their dancers as a way to generate large amounts of material collectively or specifically as a way to create a production based on a certain theme or question as SITI Company uses them.

Nevertheless, Composition, as practiced by SITI Company, has much in common with modern-dance theories and practices. For example, as referenced earlier in this chapter, like Horst and Graham, in particular, SITI Company considers structure of vital importance to Composition. The difference is that SITI Company's structures—for example, the four-part structure described in the aforementioned *Cherry Orchard* composition—are acknowledged as arbitrary unlike Horst's universal "laws." The *Cherry Orchard* composition described earlier just as easily could have been set to a three-part structure or to something completely different. Structure merely provides continuity among compositions, in other words, useful resemblance. It limits the arbitrariness of multiple compositions and makes them more conveniently applicable to the developing production. Moreover, the Suzuki/Viewpoints training that underlies Composition relates to the "deep responsiveness between body and mind" that Horst argues is essential to modern dance. In the same way that those who have trained in Suzuki/Viewpoints for many years have noted that their training is really about controlling the breath or learning to

[52] Horst, 21.

breathe onstage, so Horst connects the essence of modern dance with a Henri Bergson essay which claims that the true artist "grasps something that has nothing in common with the language, certain rhythms of life and breath that are closer to man than his inmost feelings."[53] Likewise, dancer Bertram Ross recalled that Graham's "whole technique was based on breath."[54]

What separates SITI Company's Composition Work most from modern-dance composition, however, is that SITI Company's Composition Work sits at the center of this company's democratic, collective theatre-making process. Composition is the way SITI Company creates together—with Bogart as sometimes-guide—and the way it reaches out to others, calling into question the authorship of any SITI Company devised work, as well as who ultimately defines Composition Work itself. Modern-dance composition classes, on the other hand, while challenging the dance "academy" and empowering the individual dancer to some degree, kept in place much of the master/student dynamic. Even if the dance master was no longer Horst in person, the dance student still had this authority figure looming over her in the form of modern-dance composition's "rules" or the vocabulary that the choreographer had established. Therefore, in order to better understand the anti-authority, democratic commitment of SITI Company's Composition Work, it is necessary to turn to the work of post-modernist choreographers and post-modern dance companies such as the Judson Dance Theater that followed them.

The Judson Dance Theater was created out of "composition classes" offered by Robert Dunn in 1960 at the Merce Cunningham studio, located in the same building that housed the Living Theatre. While Bogart learned Composition from Passloff in the early 1970s, she has

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[53] Horst, 14.
[54] Tracy, 171.

specifically identified Dunn, whose work she only saw but never participated in, as her most influential predecessor in terms of Composition. Unlike Horst or Graham, Dunn was not concerned with the structure of dance—or with dance at all for that matter. Dunn described his classes as a "clearinghouse for structures derived from various sources of contemporary action: dance, music, painting, sculpture, Happenings, literature."[55] This idea that structure is arbitrary and only good as long as it is useful, from wherever it may come, relates to SITI Company's collective-composition practices in which new structures are offered from assignment to assignment. In addition, in SITI Company's Composition exercises, as in Dunn's classes, ideas from painting and cinema often come into play. Compositions at SITI Company, for example, are often built on the concepts of "a closeup" or a "wide-angle" shot.[56] Moreover, the compression of time that characterizes much of SITI Company's Composition practice also can be traced to Dunn's classes, in which performers were often asked to "make a five-minute dance in half an hour."[57] Likewise, Dunn's dance compositions often centered around a single subject or question, as do all of Bogart's devised works. Most important, Dunn's characterization of the collaborative mentality required when creating compositions is very similar to SITI Company's. As one dancer described Dunn's classes, "autonomous personal control had to be relinquished within a 'semi-independent' working situation."[58]

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[55] Banes, *Democracy's*, 3.

[56] Daniel Mufson, "Cool Medium: Anne Bogart and the Choreography of Fear," *Theater Magazine*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (1994), 58.

[57] Banes, *Democracy's*, 4. Of course, dancer Yuriko recalls of working with Martha Graham, "Martha would start out [with] something and then kind of leave you alone. Martha would say, 'I will be back in 10 minutes. See what you come up with'" (Tracy, 109). In this sense, Graham's compression of time for her dancers, so similar to Dunn's, is an indication that any strict divide between modern and post-modern dance composition practices is unadvised.

[58] Ibid., 4.

In 1960, Dunn's composition workshop began articulating a more clarified challenge to the modern-dance establishment, a challenge that the work at Judson Dance Theater ultimately embodied. While choreographers such as Dunn and companies such as Judson traditionally have been termed "post-modern" to differentiate their interests from those of the earlier modern-dance community, these post-modern dancers' concerns and ideas more accurately correspond with what was termed "modernism" in the other arts and in literature. Some the elements that post-modern dance and modern art had in common, according to Banes, include "the acknowledgement of the medium's materials, the revealing of dance's essential qualities as an art form, the separation of formal elements, the abstraction of forms, and the elimination of external references as subjects."[59] This connection between "post-modern" choreography and modernism is significant because it helps explain the connection this chapter later draws between SITI Company's aesthetic and literary modernism.

At the same time, Banes acknowledges that other elements in post-modern dance were appropriately "post-modern," as the term is typically applied to other art forms. Specifically, during post-modern dance's breakaway years of 1960 to 1973, several major post-modern themes emerged: "references to history; new uses of time, space, and the body; problems of defining dance."[60] All three of these themes are consistently found in SITI Company's work as well. SITI Company's commitment to historical excavations was noted at the beginning of this chapter. Discovering new uses of time, space, and the body are the goals behind Viewpoints training in general, and indeed arise out of Overlie's influence on Bogart. Moreover, the "problems of defining dance" relates to SITI Company's interest in constantly challenging the

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[59] Banes, *Terpsichore*, xv.
[60] Ibid., xvii.

categorization of its work and the problem of critics have had in defining Bogart-directed productions in general. Critics, such as Banes, initially reviewed Bogart's productions as "dance pieces" and only later as theatre.[61]

The most important connection between Judson Dance Theatre and SITI Company, however, is the collaborative environment in which Judson's work was created and the extent to which outsiders contributed to the composition and performance. Banes describes Judson Dance Theater in her book *Democracy's Body* as the antithesis of the modern-dance monolith. The work on Judson's stages, writes Banes, was characterized only by its remarkable diversity.

> [A] commitment to democratic or collective process led on the one hand to methods that metaphorically seemed to stand for freedom (like improvisation, spontaneous determination, chance), and on the other hand to a refined consciousness of the process of choreographic choice.[62]

Moreover, in the same way that SITI Company draws on the larger performance community to generate much of the raw material used in their pieces, so did Judson act as a common home for other choreographers, modern and post-modern, to present their work. Aileen Passloff, for example, was one choreographer who frequently presented her work at Judson, resulting no doubt in a cross-pollination of ideas.

Passloff, like a number of choreographers working in New York in the early 1960s, serves as a bridge between the modern and post-modern dance worlds and at the same time is

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[61] Dance critics were often assigned to review Bogart's work in the late 1970s. However, by the time of her production of *South Pacific* in 1984, she was considered a "theatre director" by the press. It is significant, in fact, that Sally Banes' own reviewing of Bogart's work shifts from describing it as she would a dance piece to later dealing with it more in terms of the "ideas" of the piece than the physical embodiment of the ideas, as if it were theatre. This shift can be noted in Banes' reviews of Bogart's work in *Subversive Expectations: Performance Art and Paratheater in New York, 1976-85* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan Press, 2001).

[62] Banes, *Democracy's*, xvii.

utterly uninterested in being particularly associated with either. That is why, for this study at least, she, like Dunn, has been labeled "post-modernist" as opposed to "post-modern." Acknowledging this group of "post-modernists," Leslie Satin points out in his essay "James Waring and the Judson Dance Theater" that a decade before Judson formed, a small community of dancers in New York City were already challenging modern dance's structures and practices. The community even formed a short-lived cooperative called Dance Associated to present new work. Among its members were Passloff, Waring, Paul Taylor, David Vaughn, and Marian Sarach.[63] Passloff, according to Sally Banes, "began choreographing in the late 1950s, often to avant-garde music"—a clear rejection of Horst's insistence on pre-Classical music.[64] She initially appeared as a dancer in some of Waring's works and later shared a studio with him. As Banes describes them, some of Passloff's dances, like Waring's, were "nostalgic tributes to great memories of ballet, or folk dance. Others were resolutely modernist."[65] Like Dunn, Passloff was interested not only in dance but in having a dialogue with the plastic arts as well. Her sets and costumes were often designed by such artists as Remy Charlip and Claes Oldenburg.[66]

Like Waring, Passloff never actually became a member of the Judson Dance Theater, though she performed or choreographed occasionally for Judson concerts. In addition, many of Judson's students took classes with Passloff, as they did with Waring and Dunn.[67] To get an idea

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[63] Leslie Satin, "James Waring and the Judson Dance Theater: Influences, Intersections, and Divergences" in *Reinventing Dance in the 1960s*, ed. Sally Banes (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 59.

[64] Banes, *Terpsichore*, 8.

[65] Ibid., 8.

[66] Ibid., 8.

[67] Early in her career, teachers had discouraged Passloff because they said her body was too short and thick to be dancerly. However, Passloff later served as an inspiration to such dancers as Yvonne Rainer, who saw possibilities for her own "chunky construction" after seeing Passloff dance (Banes, *Terpsichore*, 8).

of what one of Passloff's dances might have been like, the following is an example of Passloff's work at Judson—presented as part of *Concert #11* in 1963—as described by Banes. The piece was called "Salute to the New York World's Fair."

> Toby Armour, Joan Baker, Aileen Passloff, and Joanna Vischer played turn-of-the-century prostitutes who never received customers. Armour, who was pregnant at the time, played the madam and wearing spectacles, counted the house and wound up a Victrola. The others did specialty dances. One did a Japanese 'number,' they all jumped rope, and Passloff did a 'little gym dance.'[68]

While some of Passloff's dance performances have been described in print, little exists describing her composition classes either in the 1960s or when she was teaching at Bard College in the 1970s, the years during which Bogart studied with her. Interestingly, in Bogart's book *A Director Prepares* she doesn't even mention Passloff in the preface that serves as a brief autobiography.[69] While devoting a whole paragraph to Mary Overlie, Bogart glosses over her two years at Bard. In interviews, however, Bogart consistently has acknowledged Passloff's contributions to SITI Company's collective composition methods, though Eelka Lampe's 1992 *TDR* essay titled "From the Battle to the Gift: The Directing of Anne Bogart" is the only place in print that Bogart discusses at any length her classes with Passloff. Class assignments recalled by Bogart in this article include making a piece about a dream "that doesn't tell the story of the dream but expressed the expression of desire"; a piece inspired by a photograph, and pieces that required the integration of a number of elements, for instance "2 percussive or vibrating moves, 1 sustained, 2 lyric, 1 gesture, 1 still."[70] Passloff's concerns in class, as described by Bogart, seem equal parts "modern" and "post-modern." "[She] was interested in not so much the way

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[68] Banes, *Democracy's*, 160.
[69] Bogart, 10.
[70] Eelka Lampe, "From the Battle to the Gift: The Directing of Anne Bogart," *The Drama Review*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Spring 1992), 19.

things looked but the quality of the performance in them, a kind of quivering inside or something, a kind of breath,"[71] recalled Bogart. The emphasis on breath relates to Horst's description of the ideal artist and to Suzuki/Viewpoints training, but the lack of concern for "the way things looked" could be considered a post-modern dance mentality.[72]

While there is little written about Passloff's composition classes, there is quite a bit about Waring's. Since critics such as Banes and Satin have recognized the similarity between Passloff and Waring's work and their mutual influence on one another, it is interesting to compare descriptions of Waring's style to see how—through Passloff—it might have had an effect on SITI Company's work. Satin describes Waring, like Passloff, as "strongly influenced by his feelings for the past; earlier styles of dance, vaudeville and variety performance, silent and musical films, and other arts."[73] This list of influences reads like an exact description of Bogart's production interests for the past twenty-five years. Waring in composition classes was also interested in using "collage and counterpoint," two words that critics have used time and again to describe SITI Company's work.[74] Waring's composition classes, it should be noted, happened before, during, and after Dunn's, which just points out how useless a simplified timeline of modern-dance influences in New York City would be and how problematic it is to categorize Waring—and Passloff for that matter—as simply modern or post-modern. That SITI Company's Composition Work is largely based on Passloff's instruction of Bogart is significant for this very

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[71] Ibid., 19.

[72] Bogart notes in this same interview that she "struggled" with Passloff's classes, and only really felt satisfied with her work in the final class, in which she and a fellow student came to class drunk and performed a piece about gender off the top of their heads. "[I]t was very profligate and all over the place," Bogart remembers. However, Passloff considered it her best work, explaining to Bogart, "It was something about releasing, being yourself" (Lampe, 19).

[73] Satin, 52.

[74] Ibid., 55.

reason. As a liminal figure, not quite of the modern or post-modern dance tradition, Passloff passed on a ideas about collective composition to Bogart that were likewise an amalgam of ideas from modern-dance choreographers such as Horst, Graham, and Humphrey as well as post-modernist choreographers such as Dunn and Waring. While the post-modern dance company Judson Dance Theatre has the most overtly in common with SITI Company, as this overview suggests, Composition Work as practiced by SITI Company traces its practices and ideas, therefore, to a number of figure before, in, and around Judson.

At the same time, while SITI Company has inherited its practice of "Composition" primarily from the dance world, and specifically from dancers associated with Judson, their collective composition practices also contain similarities to collective composition in the visual arts and music. This is not surprising since Judson's own use of composition was heavily influenced by composer John Cage's experimentation with chance in music composition as well as Robert Rauschenberg's dedication to creative collaboration in the visual arts. Indeed, tracing the influence of Rauschenberg's practices on SITI Company's Composition Work leads back to the case study at hand: SITI Company' 1997 production *Culture of Desire*.

Scott Cummings' book, *Remaking American Theater*, which describes SITI Company and playwright Charles Mee's development and production of *bobrauschenbergamerica* (2001), explores at length the similarity between Rauschenberg's artistic collaborations and SITI Company's Composition Work. As SITI Company's creative process has often been characterized, Cummings sees collaboration as the "hallmark of Rauschenberg's art and career,"[75] from the artist's early work with Cage and Cunningham to his later work with choreographer Trisha Brown. As with SITI Company, "composition," for Rauschenberg, meant

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[75] Cummings, 170.

creating with others. Moreover, aesthetic composition for Rauschenberg, as with SITI Company, always involved borrowing. As Mee has put it, "Before the French literary theorists knew what appropriation was, Rauschenberg was doing it."[76] SITI Company's composition method of direct quotation through the technique of pastiche in shows such as *Culture of Desire* is similarly based on embracing appropriation.

Cumming reads this dual compositional methodology of appropriation and collaboration for both Rauschenberg and SITI Company as an essentially "American" artistic interest in democratic work. Cummings upholds the description of Rauschenberg as "the artist of American democracy, yearningly faithful to its clamor, its contradictions, its hope and its enormous demotic freedom, all of which find shape in his work."[77] As such, he perceives Rauschenberg as the ideal artistic subject for SITI Company. In at least one interview, Bogart seems to concur with this opinion, and specifically at the expense of Andy Warhol as the earlier central subject of SITI Company's *Culture of Desire*. SITI Company's initial collaboration with Mee was supposed to be on a play along the lines of *bobrauschenbergamerica*, written by Mee but based on the life and art of Warhol. After initial discussions between Bogart and Mee, however, Mee dropped out of the project. When Mee later proposed a piece on Rauschenberg, Bogart said "that she suspected all along that Mee, in countering Warhol with Rauschenberg, was trying to teach her and her company a friendly lesson about 'what a real artist is.'"[78] This quote is a bit ambiguous, of course. Bogart does not say that SITI Company needed, or learned, this lesson, or that the company ultimately agreed with Mee. Yet the implication, considering the group's ongoing relationship with Mee and the critical success as well as the popularity of

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[76] Ibid., 3.
[77] Ibid., 163.
[78] Ibid., 2.

bobrauschenbergamerica within the company, is that Bogart and company did come to agree with Mee in preferring Rauschenberg to Warhol.

Nevertheless, Warhol, while not as obvious a kindred spirit to SITI Company as Rauschenberg, is one who should not be so readily dismissed by Bogart and SITI Company. After all, Rauschenberg and Warhol were by no means the antithesis of one another as artists. Pop Art as practiced by Warhol also has been considered a "democratic" aesthetic philosophy, in that Warhol contended that art could be made by anyone. In addition, as much as Rauschenberg, Warhol was committed to collaboration. Warhol's whole concept of building the Factory was to have a location where art could be mass-produced by a group. Moreover, Rauschenberg and Warhol were sympathetic friends and fellow artists throughout their careers. In fact, it was on Warhol's urging that Rauschenberg began his work in silkscreen painting and later lithography. While Warhol may not have provided a model of artistic methodology as ideally aligned with SITI Company's as Rauschenberg's, in *Culture of Desire* this artist did prove the ideal figure to allow SITI Company to confront its own problematic relationship with commercial production and consumer culture. Moreover, if the production of *Culture of Desire* generally does not call up fond memories for the group in the same way that *bobrauschenbergamerica* does, this may have less to do with a preference for Rauschenberg over Warhol than with the crises SITI Company faced during the creation of *Culture of Desire*, many of which would sooner be forgotten.

"Midway on Our Life's Journey, I Found Myself in Dark Woods…": Collective in Crisis

Two events in particular serve as apt starting points for the description of the creation of *Culture of Desire* by SITI Company and of the company's culture at that time. In May 1997,

SITI Company was in the middle of a three-week repertory run of three pieces at Columbia University's Miller Auditorium. Putting up *The Medium*, *Small Lives/Big Dreams*, and *Going, Going, Gone* one after another had stretched the company to the limit, creatively and financially. The large venue, for one thing, called for a more ambitious (and therefore more costly) design for these formerly intimate productions. As SITI Company managing director Megan Wanlass Szalla recalls:

> A big design team was added to the picture. *The Medium*, which had four chairs and a table that we built in Japan and a few boxes of costumes and props [in its earlier runs], all of a sudden had big production values. We had light rentals. We had bills to pay for the scene shops that built the sets. It was really not very well planned out.[79]

Midway through the Miller run, the management company that SITI Company was contracting to handle its finances came to the group and said that there was no money to pay the cast for the remainder of the three weeks. The company then met separately and agreed to finish the Miller run without pay. However, it would not be the last time before *Culture of Desire* played Off-Broadway at the New York Theatre Workshop that SITI Company members would be asked to work for free. For Szalla and the rest of the company, this news was their first significant hint that their company's money was being seriously mismanaged.

The other major event in terms of setting the stage for the development of *Culture of Desire* at SITI Company was the aforementioned meeting earlier that year between Bogart and playwright Charles Mee. Long appreciative of one another's work, Mee and SITI Company had previously collaborated on *Orestes 2.0*. As mentioned earlier, in the spring of 1997, Bogart asked Mee to work with SITI Company on another piece, based on the life of Andy Warhol. Mee was initially interested but ultimately passed. The playwright later proposed another artist

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[79] Megan Wanlass Szalla, Interview with the writer, New York, NY, December 19, 2006.

as the center for a SITI Company collaboration, Robert Rauschenberg, in *bobrauschenbergamerica*. Bogart said that Mee found Warhol to be "rather small and fascistic… and self-obsessed."[80] (These were views of Warhol that many in SITI Company would later adopt or at least later voice within the creative process of *Culture of Desire*.) Since Mee had passed, SITI Company decided it would create and write the Andy Warhol show as a collective, without the help of a playwright, as they had with *The Medium* and *Small Lives/Big Dreams*.

Typical of SITI Company's process, the company gathered together those students training in Suzuki/Viewpoints in the summer of 1997 in Saratoga to create compositions using the raw materials Bogart had compiled for SITI Company's next show, in this case, *Culture of Desire*. Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York, is where SITI Company holds its yearly summer intensive. These student compositions, like the individual research each company member does in preparation for rehearsals, offer an opportunity for the company to gather ideas and images around its subject. While it is rare, some student compositions actually make it into the production largely untouched—though with SITI Company members playing the roles, of course. Of the compositions at Saratoga, SITI Company member Ellen Lauren recalled one in particular, in which the student director got a child from Saratoga Springs to dress up as Warhol. "[She] had him painting a large sheet with a can of tomato soup and a big brush… then on this sheet she showed these Warhol films and one in particular of him playing with his dog in his backyard," she said. "It was just so moving."[81] As assigned to the students, compositions could go in one of three directions in exploring the terrain that the Warhol show planned to

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[80] Bogart interview.
[81] Ellen Lauren, Interview with the writer, New York, NY, December 28, 2006.

cover: They could address the life and work of the artist, they could address Dante's *Inferno* (which was a planned intertext for the production), or they could address the topic of consumerism. Even in these early student compositions, Warhol was emerging as the most popular topic of these three possibilities.

In the afternoons in Saratoga, the company did "table work" on the show. This consisted of presenting research projects and discussing possible material for the show. Research projects for *Culture of Desire* included descriptions of the shooting of Warhol by disgruntled playwright/activist Valerie Solana, biographies of different members of Warhol's Factory, and a summary of literary criticism on the *Inferno*. The company even read the entire *Inferno* out loud at one table-work meeting. In the evenings, when SITI Company members weren't teaching, they spent their time researching the "library" of Warhol material that Bogart and Szalla had assembled and housed in the company's living quarters. This library included books, movies, photos, and pictures. SITI Company's "table work," which is an inseparable part of its creative process, is like the long company discussions the Living Theatre held in preparation for *Frankenstein*. The difference is that SITI Company's table work is limited to a set period (overall and in each daily sessions) and is always done in conjunction with Composition Work in which the performers are on their feet exploring the material. This prevents the fatigue that the Living Theatre company members complained of during their collective creation of *Frankenstein*, and it allows the opportunity for exploring ideas almost immediately onstage to see how well they play.

Later that summer, SITI Company rented a "choreographers' retreat" in Sharon, Connecticut, for a two-week rehearsal period in which the actors, director, and designers built the show, moment by moment, in preparation for its September premiere at Pittsburgh's City

Theatre. However, the retreat was not the idyllic setting for which the company had hoped. "*Culture* always kind of had this cloud over it," said company member Stephen Webber in a 2006 interview, and Sharon was perhaps where this impression was first formed.[82] The living conditions were very cramped in the little house that SITI Company's members shared in Sharon. Married couples had it a bit better, as they were able to stay in the other, larger house on the property. In the small house, however, company members shared rooms and a single shower. They were "right on top of each other."[83] Others slept in tents outside. The kitchen was so small that Szalla's mother, who had volunteered to accompany the group to the retreat and to cook for the actors and production team, had ordered an oven from QVC, which was placed on the porch. Her "Betty Crocker" cooking proved ideal for some company members, but not for others. In addition to the tiny house, there was a studio on the premises—"basically an empty room with a sprung floor"—in which to rehearse.[84]

Early on, it became apparent that shopping carts were going to be the most necessary set element for this show—appropriately, since *Culture of Desire* was largely about consumerism. After SITI Company's interns failed to convince the local grocery store to sell them carts, they rented a station wagon and "borrowed" them, intending to return them at the end of the two weeks. This stressed out Szalla's mother to no end as she had to continue making daily trips to this same grocery where the butcher was kindly cutting her deals on her large orders. To add to the stress level of the group, Jefferson Mays, who (in drag) was playing Diana Vreeland in the production, arrived late from the West Coast to the retreat because an ear infection had forced him to drive instead of fly.

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[82] Stephen Webber, Interview with the writer, New York, NY, December 29, 2006.
[83] Szalla interview.
[84] Ibid.

While Sharon offered unique challenges, an intense, short rehearsal period in which a devised work is simultaneously written and staged by SITI Company is typical. Staging a devised work involves SITI Company members creating compositions that include text that someone "has a good feeling about" in terms of it being a fit for the story they want to tell. Texts include those that Bogart brought to the group at the beginning of the process as well as whatever books, art, or videos the company members have added to the library as a result of their own research. A short list of texts that served as sources for these compositions and the earlier table-work in Saratoga includes: Andy Warhol's *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B & Back Again)*, Warhol and Pat Hackett's *Andy Warhol's Party Book*, Michael F. Jacobson and Laurie Ann Mazur's *Marketing Madness: A Survival Guide for a Consumer Society*, James R. Twitchell's *Adcult USA*, Joseph Turow's *Breaking Up America: Advertisers and the New Media World*, and William R. Leach's *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture*. This list only scratches the surface, of course. More that forty texts are listed as sources in the production archive book for *Culture of Desire*, including numerous articles, films, and recordings. In addition, Bogart often begins the two-week rehearsal period by sharing with the actors a couple of pieces of paper on which she has written "Things I Know About the Show." For *Culture of Desire* these "things" included: "Our play asks: Who are we becoming in light of the pervasive consumerism that permeates our every move through life?"[85] It is typical that SITI Company starts a devised work with a question such as this.

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[85] Bogart, "Some Things I Know About *Culture of Desire*," loose paper in SITI's *Culture of Desire* production binder.

Though she no longer prefers the term, Bogart used to refer to collectively written SITI Company shows such as *Culture of Desire* as "Essay Theater."[86] Like *The Medium*, *Culture of Desire* (and every devised work Bogart has directed at SITI Company) started with three "givens" that Bogart had decided upon before table work or compositions in Saratoga. The first given is typically "a question (or theme) that motivates the entire process. This central driving force should be big enough, interesting enough, and relevant enough to be attractive to many people." The second given for any SITI Company Essay Theater/devised-work production is an "anchor, a person (or event) that can serve as a vehicle to get to the question." In *Culture*, that anchor was Warhol. The third given is a "structure, the skeleton upon which the event hangs. It is a way to organize time, information, text, and imagery."[87] The structure for *Culture* was "the 34-canto structure of *The Inferno*." However, Bogart notes, in her preparatory writing for rehearsals, that *Culture*'s structure was to be "reminiscent of Joseph Campbell's *Hero With a Thousand Faces*" as well.[88]

In terms of what gets into the final script from the many texts and compositions, throughout rehearsals, company members pause whenever they feel that a moment or a piece of text is meant to be in the piece. At the same time, Bogart leads frequent discussions to determine and refine the overall structure of the piece. Szalla, as stage manager, compiled the developing script for *Culture of Desire*, and described herself in this position as "a dictation machine." She explained, "I would just be typing everything that anybody was saying because you never knew when somebody would say, 'Oh my God, what you just said! Let's put that in the show.'"[89]

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[86] Mufson, 60.
[87] Bogart, *The Viewpoints Book*, 154.
[88] Bogart, "Some Things."
[89] Szalla interview.

Webber described the writing process as "an extension of the collaborative staging process."[90] Like Viewpoints, no one necessarily leads in the writing of the script. Any idea can be floated at any time, though sometimes Bogart will cut short exploration due to time constraints. Opposing ideas about the material are not discouraged, though a perfect balance of opinions, which is considered inherently undramatic, is rarely the goal. The "creative will" of the company, as Bakhtin might put it, remains disunified in this process, though company members are in pursuit of common goals.

Webber described sitting in a circle on the floor in Sharon talking about the story of the play and what exactly SITI Company wanted to tell with Warhol's life.

> You are sitting around a table and you're thinking about plot, you're thinking about structure. You have certain things that you want to get in, like pieces of text, or plot points, or you've done all this research on Andy Warhol's life and each of us has a different response to it… So you kind of bring your ideas to the table and Anne is the ultimate arbiter. But it kind of sifts down and we follow it like a scent and just start putting text together. And sometimes it doesn't work. It's trying to write a play by committee and sometimes it's very successful and sometimes it isn't.[91]

Webber's observation that "Anne is the ultimate arbiter" is significant, of course. While this kind of collective writing is very democratic, the company understands that Bogart oversees all the choices in the end. When the Living Theatre tried to collectively write *Frankenstein*, no doubt Beck and Malina were understood to hold a similar power in the company. The difference is that at SITI Company, Bogart's position as "director" is one with which the company, by report, is comfortable. Her power of selection is not behind the scenes, like Beck and Malina's holed up in their hotel room, but rather out in the open. By the end of the Sharon retreat, SITI Company had the first two-thirds of *Culture* mostly in place in terms of text and staging.

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[90] Webber interview.
[91] Ibid.

It should be noted that all SITI Company members attend all rehearsals, regardless of whether or not they get on their feet to rehearse something. Moreover, rehearsals always begin with a session of Suzuki/Viewpoints training so that everyone starts the creative process on the same page, in tune with their fellow collaborators. Recalling Barthes' and Stanley Fish's emphasis on the ultimate importance of reception in meaning-making, it seems in general that the "interpretative community" of theatre makers shapes the meanings for any given SITI Company play during the creative process, similar to the way in which the audience will along with the company shape the play's meaning in production. All drama in production is different from other kinds of writing in this sense. A book's meaning, according to a Barthes/Fish view, is determined foremost, not by the author, but rather by the interpretative community that receives it after publication. However, an interpretative community (designers, actors, director, playwright) collaborates on the meaning making of a drama *before* it is released to the public, much as the audience will after its performances. This situation simply is more apparent with SITI Company's devised works than with other theatre productions, because the company serves as audience, critic, and co-writer for one another's compositions throughout the development process.

After a break from the Warhol material, the company traveled to City Theatre in Pittsburgh on August 21 to rehearse the show before its early September opening. The first preview of *Culture* was scheduled for September 5, and the run of the show for September 10-28. The play was co-commissioned by City Theatre and Maine's Portland Stage, where it would tour in the spring. Both City Theatre and Portland Stage were venues in which SITI Company members felt artistically comfortable. Mark Masterson, the artistic director of City Theatre had a prior relationship with SITI Company; company members Kelly Maurer and Will Bond had

performed at City, while teaching at Carnegie-Mellon University, and SITI Company had brought *The Medium* to the theatre a few years earlier. Similarly, Chris Akerlind, co-artistic director at Portland Stage at the time, had designed lights for Bogart and SITI Company and knew the company well. Rehearsing at City Theatre also allowed the company to do further research on Warhol at the nearby Andy Warhol Museum, where the company went on tours and was even allowed to open one of Warhol's "time capsules," boxes in which the artist stuffed everything he could get his hands on at the end of each day.

When working on a devised work, the relationship to the text is very different for the company than when it is presenting someone else's script. With a Charles Mee play or even a text arranged by Jocelyn Clarke, SITI Company does not change a word in rehearsal. With a show such as *Culture of Desire*, however, the script is changing constantly up until opening and sometimes after. Webber, indeed, recalls Masterson peeking in on rehearsals at City Theatre and asking, "Do you have an ending yet?" They did not. Indeed, the full script for *Culture of Desire* was not ready until August 19, less than a week before opening. More script and staging changes occurred during previews and even more before *Culture of Desire* opened in Portland. After opening in Portland, however, *Culture of Desire* remained largely unchanged. The script of this "final" Portland version of *Culture of Desire*, however (the text referred to in this chapter), carries the date of 12/18/00 in print, the date at which Szalla decided to have all the SITI Company scripts bound for archival purposes and ran around printing them off of company members' computers or re-typing production scripts.

While *Culture of Desire* may have changed throughout its runs at various venues, it did not change night-by-night because of actors' choices. Bogart has noted the common misconception that in SITI Company's shows, particularly devised works, "we improvise and

keep it loose."[92] On the contrary, SITI Company shows are remarkably stable, choreographed down to the second in most cases. In this sense, the intertextual theatre of SITI Company is unlike that of the Wooster Group, which as Vanden Heuvel notes, brings together "orderly text and disorderly improvisation" or of the Living Theatre's *Frankenstein* which left certain areas of the performance open for improvisation. The drama text itself for SITI Company must contain this tension between disorder and order because the performance is pure order. As a devised work, certainly, the text of *Culture of Desire* is not the source of stability and order that Vanden Heuvel considers the drama text in a typical intertextual performance to be. The text of *Culture of Desire* was ever-changing throughout its year of productions. Said Szalla, "There are pieces like *Small Lives/Big Dreams* where every time we went to do it, it changed. It had morphed and had been rethought in new ways because it had always been problematic. *Culture of Desire* was one of these."[93] In this sense, in Kristeva's terms, the genotext, which may be apparent in the script of *Culture of Desire*, is kept in check by the careful choreography of the performance. SITI Company's precise style acts as a kind of meta-phenotext operating under the banners of reason, communication, and unity. Indeed, *Culture of Desire* has few "genotext" aspects to its performance, certainly nothing like the scatological improvised sections of the Wooster Group's *Route 1&9*, which Vanden Heuvel highlights, or the improvised "poems" of *Frankenstein*.

SITI Company's devised works are very different from single-playwright scripts in terms of the process involved in compiling and handling of the text. In addition, however, Bogart feels there is another difference between SITI Company's devised works and plays the company

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[92] Bogart interview.
[93] Szalla interview.

develops in collaboration with playwrights. She notes that the "story" in SITI Company's devised works (the narrative or the linear plot) is stronger than in, say, a play written for SITI Company by Mee.[94] However, this "story" is not something that is visible on the page, according to Bogart, one of the reasons that SITI Company has not published *Culture of Desire*. This explains why, when SITI Company performs devised works for the Humana Festival in Louisville, which typically publishes in a volume the scripts of the new shows performed there each year, Bogart prefers to write an essay describing the play rather than include the script. Says Bogart, "If you look at [the script] of *Going, Going, Gone*, you would be so bored reading it."[95] The script of *Going, Going, Gone* is largely quotations of debates over quantum- and astrophysics. However, the actions and emotions of the play parallel closely Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* In production, it is as if the actors are performing Albee's play but saying different words. Said Bogart:

> I think the same is true with *Culture of Desire*. It only makes sense in the context of the story we tell… [I]n a devised work, with a bunch of sample texts, you have to be rock-solid on story. What's happening in this moment—in a Stanislavsky sense. It's really severe and a lot of people would be surprised about that... It's really cause-and-effect. It's really motivational. It's really psychological in some ways.[96]

This is one difference, Bogart claims, between a play created primarily through quotation and one less overtly "intertextual." Yet, there are other differences as well.

While Bogart, as arbiter of the conflicting voices, may strive to make all the material conform to a strong, simple narrative, at the same time, SITI Company shows such as *Culture of Desire*, *The Medium*, or *Cabin Pressure* struggle between their commitment to stay on plot and their tendency to spin off on tangents. Perhaps because the material in a "cento" play is roughly

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[94] Bogart interview.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.

juxtaposed quotations (a mash-up of quotation against quotation without smoothing out the edges) or perhaps because the collaborative process of Composition means that the actors' voices, separate and often in opposition to one another, constantly vie for attention, these shows can seem jarring, conflicted, filled with diversions. No individual voice can dominate for long in the contested linguistic environment of these plays, in the same way that no individual in a Viewpoints exercise can hold the focus for more than a few moments. Any dominant voice is always interrupted. Therefore, not only is *Culture of Desire* more intertextual than other plays, something Kristeva, Barthes, and Bakhtin would allow, it may even be an example of a radically "plural text" in Barthes' terms, one which does not allow one code (or series of meanings) to dominate over any other and, therefore, liberates the disruptive force of the intertextual. If so, it is only a radically plural text in reading, and not in performance by SITI during which the strict and careful aesthetic of the company becomes the clearly dominant code.

During the run of the show at City Theatre, SITI Company received another disheartening phone call from its management company. The company said that the performers wouldn't be paid on the road because there was no money. Said Szalla,

> It's one thing to say that you are happy to work for free workshopping something because you know it's going to tour, but it's another thing to be on the road and find out you're not going to get per diem or not have salaries.[97]

Things had gone far enough. SITI Company fired the management company and recovered as many financial records from it as possible only to discover that SITI Company was almost $100,000 in debt and that the management company had not been paying Actors Equity, the performers' union, for the actors' pensions and health insurance. The company met to discuss this financial debacle and again decided to go on with the performances without remuneration.

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[97] Szalla interview.

The only other option would have been to declare bankruptcy. However, as Webber recalls it, "We never talked about ending the company. It was never a question. We were always looking forward to how we were going to solve these problems."[98]

The temporary solution the company came up with was to manage the group from within. During the run at City Theatre and afterward, company members Ellen Lauren and J. Ed Araiza started handling SITI Company's finances and the payroll, working out of Lauren's apartment. Said Lauren, "It was resented by a few people, and understandably, that another actor in the company would be handling their money. And I was very compassionate to that, but the issue was, If I don't do it, we're all going down, kids."[99] SITI Company met with Equity to set up a payment plan so that the performers could retain their health insurance. What ultimately pulled SITI Company out of its financial nosedive, in part, was its presentation of *Culture of Desire* at the Ibero America Theatre Festival in Bogota, Colombia, later that year. For this appearance, SITI Company was paid $40,000, the largest fee it had yet received for a run. However, that was after the run at Portland Stage in March, the specific production run under consideration here. Going into Portland, SITI Company had booked but had not yet fully arranged for its trip to Colombia. Financially, the company was still deeply in debt and was being managed by its actors. To make matters worse, Kelly Maurer who had been playing the role of Warhol decided to leave the show in order to understudy Patti Lupone on Broadway in Terrence McNally's *Master Class*. The decision was practical financially for Maurer, but also, as Bogart notes, Maurer was "miserable" in her role as Warhol.[100] Said Lauren, "[Maurer] did not like Andy

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[98] Webber interview.
[99] Lauren interview.
[100] Bogart interview.

Warhol, did not like his aesthetic, didn't like him."[101] Maurer was not alone in the company in her doubts about whether Warhol's work was interesting enough for an entire SITI Company production. Said Webber, "There was a lot of ambivalence in the company about his work… There was a lot of talk about, Was he a legitimate artist?"[102] Will Bond stepped in for Maurer as Warhol in Portland and at the festival in Colombia. Company member Akiko Aizawa took over Bond's roles.

The Dante quotation that begins *Culture of Desire* must have had particular resonance for the company as it stepped onto the stage in Portland on opening night: "Midway on our life's journey, I found myself / In dark woods, the right road lost." SITI Company had made its own Charon crossing into Hell—Sharon, Connecticut, in this case—and it was by no means out of the woods yet. Said Bogart, "One can certainly look back in retrospect at it and say that this was a dark moment in our middle age."[103] Also particularly resonant for the company must have been the many sections of the play that describe an American society in which culture had become pure consumption, a society in which art was simply money or nothing. After all, here was a theatre collective that, despite five years of critical acclaim as well as invitations to numerous festivals and regional theatres, was facing financial ruin.

Warhol's Story as SITI Company Told It

In terms of literal content, the events of *Culture of Desire*'s plot are few. The play begins with Andy Warhol being shot (based on the actual shooting of Warhol in 1968 by Valerie Solanas), follows the artist through the various circles of Hell (a Hell specific to Warhol and

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[101] Lauren interview.
[102] Webber interview.
[103] Bogart interview.

specific to consumerism), and ends with Warhol being shot again. In *Culture of Desire*'s version of the *Inferno*, the artist's guide through Hell, which was the poet Virgil for Dante, is Diana Vreeland (played in all SITI Company productions by actor Jefferson Mays in drag).[104] Vreeland was the fashion editor for *Harper's Bazaar* and then editor-in-chief of *Vogue* during the 1960s. She promoted Warhol's work and has been credited with "discovering" the artist. In other words, Vreeland was, to some degree, responsible for getting Warhol's work seen by a mass audience. A more detailed scene breakdown of the "story" of the play is only slightly more complicated than this brief synopsis. Scene 1: Warhol is shot and Vreeland bullies him into making the journey through Hell; Scene 2: Warhol and Vreeland discuss death; Scene 3: They arrive at the gates of Hell; Scene 4: Warhol relives his childhood obsession with comics; Scene 5: Warhol is interviewed, while Vreeland describes American consumer culture; Scene 6: Warhol talks about shopping and eating; Scene 7: A shopping cart ballet becomes a tour of Hell (in the guise of a grocery store); Scene 8: Warhol relives his classroom experiences as a shy boy; Scene 9: Warhol takes an elevator ride deeper into Hell (or merely down to emergency surgery in a New York City hospital); Scene 10: Warhol has a long interview with Vreeland, intercut with Warhol making films at the Factory; Scene 11: Warhol is shot again. After scenes 3, 7, and 10 are brief monologues by Vreeland in which she describes a particular work of art by Warhol as if she were an art historian or an auctioneer. These breaks are called "knee plays" in the text, a

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[104] While Bogart cross-gender cast Mays as Vreeland and actress Kelly Maurer as Warhol, she claims that she just selected the best actors for the roles, within SITI Company. The casting was "gender blind," and not an attempt to comment on the characters. Nevertheless, the production in Portland (analyzed in this study) with Will Bond in the role of Warhol obviously has a very different dynamic, particularly in the "romantic" moments than the production in New York with Maurer. In other words, there is a difference when Bond, a man, kisses another man onstage, while playing the gay artist, than when Maurer, a woman, kisses a man in the same role. The importance of Warhol's sexual orientation, and how it was played, is discussed later in this chapter.

phrase Bogart borrowed from director Robert Wilson to indicate joints between big scenes, pauses that allow the next major set piece to be placed on stage.

In her preliminary thoughts on the show, Bogart wrote that "the play happens in the time it takes for the bullet to reach Andy's chest," which would suggest that the shooting at the top of the show and the shooting at the end are the same shooting and therefore that the time of the play is an elongated split-second.[105] Similarly, in her show notes written after attending the compositions in Saratoga, Bogart describes the overall logic of the show as "Andy Warhol stages Dante's *Inferno* in the moment he is shot."[106] In terms of an internal "journey" that Warhol makes in this split-second between the shot fired and the bullet entering his body, a soul-searching that parallels the physical journey through Hell, Bogart writes in her rehearsal notes at City Theatre that "Andy discovers power, which substitutes for love. We know why he's getting shot the second time."[107] Later in her final pre-production notes to the initial run at City Theatre, Bogart adds, "For me, you will see a human being that loses his humanity."[108]

If *Culture of Desire* is SITI Company's take on Warhol's loss of "humanity," then the company reads a distinction in the artist's work and life before and after he was shot. Before the shooting Warhol is human, after the shooting less so. Nevertheless, post-shooting events, such as the sporadic auctioning of Warhol's work onstage, are depicted within this split-second. This suggests that in the temporary moment of death after the shooting (the artist was in fact declared dead for a few minutes on a New York City hospital operating table) Warhol has a vision of his

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[105] Bogart, "Some Things."

[106] Bogart, "Some More Things I've Learned From the Compositions," loose paper in SITI's *Culture of Desire* production binder.

[107] Bogart, "New Notes for Pittsburgh," 8/19/97, loose paper in SITI's *Culture of Desire* production binder.

[108] Bogart, "Things We Know About the Last Third!," 8/23/97, loose paper in SITI's *Culture of Desire* production binder.

actual demise in 1987 and even of the posthumous life of his work. In other words, time is fairly fluid in this play. While on one level, it is the expanded inner life of a split-second of Warhol's existence, time also moves forward and backward in *Culture of Desire*, providing snapshots from the artist's career and even allowing Warhol to relive theaticalized moments from his childhood.

While *Culture of Desire* is a one-act with a running time of around 90 minutes, it is also important to note that, in many ways, the show follows a traditional musical theatre two-act structure (without an actual intermission). A little more than half way through the show (though numerically between Scenes 9 and 10), there is a major shift in tone. Playful Warhol becomes dark Warhol. While it is not indicated in the script's stage directions, this shift is realized through Warhol's costume change and a grand, synchronized ensemble sequence. After explaining why he hates pennies (a quotation from Warhol's *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*), the artist opens a Brillo box (Warhol mass-produced these boxes at his "Factory" for a 1964 exhibit) and takes out sunglasses and a teased-up, punk-looking white wig, which he dons and wears for most of the rest of the show. The strumming bass line of the song "Heroin" by Velvet Underground, a group Warhol promoted and managed, accompanies this centerstage costume change as the song begins to play. The rest of the cast, except Vreeland, join Warhol onstage in this transformative sequence as the music builds in intensity. They each step into a box (not the Brillo boxes, but one of the file boxes that dominate the set). A rocket-ship countdown voiceover is heard above the music: "10, 9, 8," etc. At "lift off," the cast looks up in unison and the lights flash to white and then go dark as the song reaches a crescendo. This moment acts as a kind of intermission or act divider in *Culture of Desire*. Throughout the rest of the show, Warhol is more detached, more into his "power," less "human." SITI Company suggests this personality

change with a change in Warhol's dress (and specifically the donning of sunglasses), a change that Warhol did indeed manifest when he began wearing leather jackets, sunglasses, and spiky silver wigs almost exclusively midway through his career. However, Warhol's real-life change of image to a darker palette actually occurred earlier than 1968, the year of the shooting and, for SITI Company, the turning point in his life.

In *Culture of Desire*, the voiceover countdown in this sequence recalls the 1968 Apollo launch. Combined with the addiction ruminations of "Heroin," it suggests an escape from the planet earth, from reality. "When I put a spike into my vein/And I tell ya, things aren't quite the same/When I'm rushing on my run/And I feel just like Jesus' son" are some of the lyrics from "Heroin" heard in the performance. Like the change in dress, the song also suggests a darker period in the life of the Factory in the late 1960s and beyond, in which drug use was very common (though Warhol reportedly did not partake). This kind of layering of sound, music, and action, which offers a layer of references, is very common to SITI Company's shows. Warhol's donning the sunglasses next to the Apollo launch next to the Velvet Underground song next to the cast preparing to "shoot up" into the sky creates a pastiche of image, words, and music in which the general theme might be that of violent disconnection, a cutting of ties to the earth. This sequence splits the show in half. The "second act" of *Culture of Desire*, like the conventional American musical theatre second act, is darker in tone and filled with refrains of sequences from earlier in the play.

Culture of Desire is populated by subjects from Warhol's art and films, whether real-life Factory figures or pop-culture icons. Characters include Metropolitan Museum of Art curator and frequent Factory visitor Henry Geldzahler, Factory film stars Edie Sedgwick and Ultraviolet, poet and Factory filmmaker Gerard Malanga, Factory photographer Billy Name, as well as

Popeye, Dick Tracy, Shirley Temple, Marilyn Monroe, the Statue of Liberty, and Elvis Presley. In all of *Culture of Desire*'s productions, seven actors played the large cast of characters. However, one actor played solely Warhol and one solely Vreeland. The other five actors played primarily one of the Factory coterie, but also doubled as additional pop icons or characters from Dante's *Inferno*. For example, Stephen Webber, who played Geldzahler in all productions of *Culture of Desire* played as well Dick Tracy and "adman/grocery store manager." Each of these secondary characters was presented through the filter of Webber's Geldzahler. They retained some of the character Geldzahler's physicality and gestures to indicate this to the audience. In the script, this idea is conveyed through the speech designations, for example: "HENRY GELDZAHLER (as adman/grocery store manager)."[109] Even the voiceover that begins and ends the play is identified in the script as "VOICE OF DANTE (Billy Name's Voice)," Dante filtered through Billy Name in other words.[110] Each cast member onstage then, besides Mays as Vreeland, is first and foremost a member of the Factory. The result of what might be called these character "cores" is that the play often seems as if the members of the Factory are performing the story of Dante's *Inferno*. This would follow the logic of Bogart's description of *Culture of Desire* as "Andy Warhol stages Dante's *Inferno* in the moment he is shot." If Warhol were doing this, it would make sense that the artist might cast his friends or his favorite subjects in the various roles.

[109] *Culture*, 15.
[110] Ibid., 1.

A Is for Author, B Is for?: How Warhol and SITI Company Challenged Author-ity

In her pre-production notes and in the programs for *Culture of Desire*, Bogart divides the cast up differently than would be indicated by this idea that each performer has a "core." Following this logic, the cast list would read: Warhol—Will Bond, Vreeland—Jefferson Mays, Geldzahler—Stephen Webber, etc. Instead, Bogart writes in her rehearsal notes, "Actually, everybody is Andy Warhol. But then cast of characters in program [will read] 'A: Kelly Maurer, B: K.J. [Karenjune Sanchez], Bondo [Will Bond], Stephen [Webber], J.Ed [Araiza], Jeffrey [Frace], Ellen [Lauren].'"[111] Seemingly, in Bogart's opinion, "A" is Andy Warhol and "B" is everyone else. On one level, this A/B designation reflects celebrity culture, the star system (with which Warhol was obsessed), and the long tradition of a hierarchy of leads and chorus in the theatre. *Culture of Desire* is a show about Warhol, after all. He is the star. He is the lead. He is A. Everyone else is secondary: B. While Bogart may be invoking this star system ironically, this is certainly the first classification suggested by a show performed by one "A" and many "Bs." However, the designations "A" and "B" also recall Warhol's book *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, which contained sections written as dramatic dialogue or interviews in which the speakers were identified only with the letters A and B. These dialogues were based on recorded interviews between Warhol, who is always "A" in the book, and Factory star Brigid Berlin or *Interview* magazine editor Bob Colacello. (The "Factory" was the collective of artists that Warhol founded in the early 1960s, about which more will be said later.) While Berlin and Colacello have been identified as *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*'s Bs, A and B also can be (and have been) read in this book as designating two sides of Warhol himself.

[111] Bogart, "Some Things."

The idea that Warhol might be interviewing Warhol throughout his "philosophy" text is not that odd. Indeed, this kind of doubling of self was a common practice by the artist throughout his career. The most famous example of this was Warhol's 1969 prank in which he attempted to replace himself with Brigid Berlin by announcing that all of his paintings were actually the work of Berlin. At the root of this hoax was Warhol's ongoing curiosity about "authorship" and its relationship to art and value. As he suspected, this revelation led to an immediate decrease in his works' value. Both Berlin and Warhol subsequently retracted their claims—and the values rose again. Keeping in mind this intentional A/B switch (the phony claim that Berlin and Warhol were the same person), the "A" and "B" of the cast list also supports the idea that, as Bogart mentioned in her notes, all the characters in *Culture of Desire* are Warhol. All characters are either A or B and Warhol is both A and B. Therefore, his name contains others. And indeed, for example, Berlin and Colacello did not receive writing credit for *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*. Crediting Berlin and Colacello as the "authors" of these interviews, of course, is not an obvious thing to do. Who is the "author" of an interview—the interviewer or the subject? This question, for Warhol, was apparently settled by the market. Warhol's name sold the books. It is from his individual genius, his soul, that the art flows—and to which the cash flows back.

SITI Company's idea that everyone is Warhol connects with a major thread in this artist's work, one which he explored time and again: the relationship between authorship and art. It is not surprising that a theatre company which has made it common practice to create collaboratively using Composition Work might be interested in this aspect of Warhol's art. Warhol's stunt with Berlin was not the only time the artist used a double as a way to suggest his own reproducibility, his own lack of uniqueness, and therefore the impossibility of claiming the

status of an "author." Edie Sedgwick, played in *Culture of Desire* by Ellen Lauren, became the Factory's main "superstar" in 1965, starring in the Factory films *Poor Little Rich Girl* and *Beauty #2*. During her brief relationship with the Factory, the twenty-one-year-old socialite Sedgwick cut and bleached her hair silver to match Warhol's. Sedgwick and Warhol also dressed the same at numerous parties and public appearances, often in matching striped jerseys. This costume, which calls to mind Warhol's double-ness, is one that Warhol wears throughout *Culture of Desire*. During her time with the Factory, Sedgwick was another B who seemed to equal A.

A more notorious instance of Warhol doubling himself, and thereby calling into question his author-ity, happened midway through his career when the artist began sending actor Allen Midgette to speak at various university engagements under Warhol's name. Dressed and wigged as Warhol, Midgette was not uncovered as a fake until well after the appearances. Warhol eventually had to make good on the lectures, but the insistence on the part of the universities to honor his agreements perplexed him. He claimed that Midgette had given much more charismatic performances than he possibly could—and that he agreed with everything the actor had to say. So why did it matter if he was not actually there?

Warhol's most interesting "double" was his own mother who lived much of her life in the ground floor apartment below his. In an interview, Julia Warhola once cryptically claimed, "I am Andy Warhol."[112] On one level, this might have been Julia simply acknowledging the extent to which she supported her son in his artistic pursuits throughout his life, emotionally and financially. However, Julia, an artist herself, also did the lettering for the majority of Warhol's

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[112] Patrick S. Smith, *Warhol: Conversations About the Artist* (New York: Books on Demand, 1988), 127.

commercial art projects in the 1950s and made her own series of cat drawings alongside her son's, which she published in a book. In this sense, her work at different times shared the page with Warhol's. For a time, Julia was inseparable from Warhol's art in the same way that she was inseparable from his personal life—a B melded with A.

However, to privilege Warhol and Julia's A-B artistic collaboration is unfair, considering the number of artists that worked for and with Warhol throughout his career. Warhol's concept for the "Factory," for example, embodies a collaborative notion that is behind most of his work. The Factory was created to mass-produce Pop Art, and in order to accomplish this, Warhol spent much of his career getting his friends and family to work with him on projects—often for free. Projects like "the Brillo boxes" were created in a production line at the Factory, a process that Warhol oversaw. In addition, while in the press and in art-history books Gerard Malanga, for instance, was and is referred to as Warhol's "assistant," this simply conforms to an art-world assumption that a "master" artist often employs assistants to help him complete his works. But Malanga mass-producing, for example, silk-screens of Elizabeth Taylor side-by-side with Warhol would seem to earn him at least a collaborator and perhaps a co-creator status. After all, both men selected Taylor's image and labored to reproduce it.

From the beginning of his career, in his art and in the press, Warhol tried to encourage a rethinking of the individual artist as sole and unique author. As critic Rainer Crone noted early on of the Campbell Soup can series, "Warhol's paintings are potentially reproducible—they are designed to be reproduced. This casts doubt on the producer's sole authorship and strips it of its centuries old aura of uniqueness."[113] Warhol agreed with this assessment: "I think it would be so

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[113] Rainer Crone, *Andy Warhol*, trans. John William Gabriel, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1970), 10.

great if more people took up silk-screens so that no one would know whether my picture was mine or somebody else's."[114] Nor did this attitude apparently change much for Warhol throughout his career. In his last interview in 1987 with *Art + Text* editor Paul Taylor, Warhol continued to question the artist's status as author:

> PT: The whole appropriation epidemic comes down to who is responsible for art. If indeed anyone can manufacture the pictures of those flowers [referring to Warhol's 1971 series], the whole idea of the artist gets lost somewhere in the process.
>
> AW: Is that good or bad?[115]

Warhol as an "artist," traditionally thought to be the authority and sole creator of a work, demonstrated time and again his interest in actively getting lost in the process, in disappearing.

Along these same lines, Warhol was always reluctant to accept the mantle of the leader or "father" of the Pop Art movement. "They're five Pop artists who are all doing the same kind of work but in different directions," he told *The East Village Other*'s Gretchen Berg in 1966, "I don't regard myself as the leader of Pop Art or a better painter than the others."[116] Part of Warhol's hesitation was likely his discomfort with the power structure that patrilineage carries with it. Accepting author-ity means accepting paternity and therefore limited freedoms. Being in charge was simply not a fun way to live or create, according to Warhol. As Warhol lamented in a 1963 interview:

> Pop Art has more fathers than Shirley Temple had in her movies. I don't want to know who the father of this movement is. In those Shirley Temple movies, I was so disappointed whenever Shirley found her father. It ruined everything. She had been having such a good time, tap dancing with the local Kiwanis Club or the newspaper men in the city room.[117]

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[114] Ibid., 10.

[115] Kenneth Goldsmith, ed., *I'll Be Your Mirror: The Selected Andy Warhol Interviews, 1962-1987* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2004), 391.

[116] Ibid., 89.

[117] Ibid., 13.

To be an author, for Warhol, meant to be in charge, and that was as little rewarding for the person giving the orders as it was for the person taking the orders. Reluctant to be a leader, Warhol claimed that if he were given the choice he would actually prefer a subordinate position in the creative process. "When I think about what sort of person I would most like to have on a retainer, I think it would be a boss," Warhol wrote in *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*. "A boss who could tell me what to do, because that makes everything easy when you're working."[118]

While Warhol was interested in challenging notions of author-ity in artistic creation throughout his career, *Culture of Desire* does not present a Warhol who remains true to the spirit of collaboration. In the second half of the play, SITI Company's Warhol, hidden behind sunglasses, is depicted as aloof and authoritative, the puppet master of the Factory. With a spotlight in his hand the only light source onstage, Warhol "films" his Factory regulars spouting ad slogans, partially clothed and visibly distressed. The characters Sedgwick, Malanga, and Ultraviolet appear to be spiraling out of control in these sequences. Rather than help them, though, Warhol simply keeps filming, commenting in his deadpan voice, "You look so great!" or "Gee, that was fun. Oh wow."[119] Warhol represents the ultimate authority here, "God, the Creator," dividing light from darkness—and treating His creations very carelessly.

Culture of Desire is not alone in suggesting that Warhol became entranced with his own power during the period in which he dedicated himself to filmmaking—that he embraced himself as an A that was different and better than all the Bs. Said art critic Dave Hickey of the Factory, "It was a rough democracy. A lot of people had their hearts broken. Andy fueled his career on

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[118] Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (from A to B & Back Again)* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 96.

[119] *Culture*, 35-36.

the darker impulses of people."[120] Warhol was certainly considered a manipulator and Svengali by much of the press in the 1960s. Indeed, a number of articles covering the shooting in 1968 suggested that Warhol got what was coming to him for pushing his superstars towards their darker sides. The *Daily News* reported, "Long before Valerie Solanas got around to pouring her venom at Andy Warhol through the muzzle of a gun, the Maharishi of Modness was in trouble, deep trouble."[121] This is not unlike Bogart's claim that, "We know why he's getting shot the second time." The press's negative perception of Warhol in 1968 may have been the ongoing ripple effect of an incident at the Factory in 1964 when Billy Name's roommate Freddie Harko killed himself jumping from a window. When he was told what happened, Warhol reportedly responded, "Why didn't he tell me? We could have gone down there and filmed it." This news item led to Warhol's universal condemnation by the press. In *Culture of Desire*, this specific event is suggested by the staging of the scene in which Warhol films the Factory superstars. Ultraviolet in this scene is standing on top of one of the rolling shelves that make up the set. She balances precariously, dangerously, at the edge of the shelves during her monologue, recalling Harko's suicide.

Thematically, Bogart's idea that all characters are Warhol (all Bs are A) supports this perception that the Factory became a dark and perilous place—as much as it supports the idea that "Act One" Warhol was dedicated to collaborative, democratic art-making. After all, while "all characters are Andy" can be read as "all characters are equal," it can also be read as "all the other characters are subsumed by Warhol," that he stands in for the others, that he is the only

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[120] Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan, *Andy Warhol: Prince of Pop* (New York: Delacorte Press, 2004), 77.

[121] Ultra Violet, *Famous for Fifteen Minutes: My Years With Andy Warhol* (San Diego, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), 178.

character. One person standing in for the masses is, of course, one definition of totalitarianism. An A standing in for all Bs is also the logical conclusion of the certain assumptions about authorship. Like Dumas, Warhol's signature at the Factory, one could argue, erased the signatures of all those who created alongside him. The collective may have labored, but the product was Warhol's alone; "All for one and one for all" as Dumas (and perhaps his collaborators) once wrote. Certainly, according to the story SITI Company presented of Warhol's career, it is no coincidence that while Warhol had no involvement with the last films shot by the Factory, nevertheless these films were the first to bear his name in their titles: *Andy Warhol's Frankenstein* and *Andy Warhol's Dracula* in 1973. Like the Dumas brand, the Warhol brand (Warhol as Factory "author") is what mattered most at that point.

Sharing Words in *Culture of Desire* and Sharing Work With the Audience

Consistent with the idea that all characters in *Culture of Desire* are Warhol, many characters in the play speak text attributed in print to Warhol. For example, in one of the elevator sequences in Scene 9, Warhol speaks with Elvis Presley, who seems to have just come offstage before a big encore. Elvis tells Warhol about a strange offer he recently received. "Some company recently was interested in buying my aura," he says.[122] Elvis goes on to describe how he was willing to sell them his aura but couldn't figure out what it was. This monologue is actually a long quotation from Warhol's *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*. It is another of Warhol's ironic commentaries on the authorship effect. Elvis was one of Warhol's subjects, of course. He produced a series of Elvis silk-screens in 1964. Therefore, the scene is at once a Pygmalion-like conversation between artist and subject-come-to-life as well as a

[122] *Culture*, 24 and Warhol, 77.

conversation between Warhol and himself. It is tempting to say that Elvis is speaking Warhol's words, in this, one of many scenes in the play in which whole conversations occur with all characters quoting Warhol. However, *Culture of Desire*, reflective of Warhol's own doubts about originality, calls into question the idea that any words could be "Warhol's," that Warhol owns or can be said to be the originator of these quotations, the words in others' mouths.

There is a type of dialogism described by Bakhtin in his book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* that relates to these *Culture of Desire* scenes, in which words once attributed to a single person are shared by others, or as Bogart might put it, dialogue in which "All characters are Andy." This type of dialogism, indeed, is what Bakhtin identifies as the indispensable element of Dostoevsky's novels. In this kind of dialogue, one character speaks the interior voice of the other character:

> In their dialogue, therefore, the rejoinders of the one touch and even partially coincide with the rejoinders of the other's interior dialogue. [This suggests a] deep essential bond or partial coincidence between the borrowed words of one hero and the internal and secret discourse of another hero…[123]

The way in which words are shared in *Culture of Desire* similarly suggests a deep essential bond between those characters borrowing the words of Warhol (which he of course borrowed himself) and the internal discourse of the hero. This bond is not surprising considering that all characters are to some extent Warhol. Who does not have a deep essential bond with himself? Along these lines, all of *Culture of Desire* might be considered Warhol's internal discourse, all occurring in his mind at the moment of his shooting. Therefore, any dialogue in the play is part of what Bakhtin might call this "secret discourse."

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[123] Bakhtin, *Problems*, 255.

However, unlike the type of dialogism Bakhtin describes, the dialogism of *Culture of Desire* does not suggest a special bond merely between two characters, in this case Elvis and Warhol. Rather, many characters borrow words that have been attributed to Warhol. The bond is shared by all. Warhol's interiority, if such a thing can be said to exist in this play, is dispersed among many. This dispersal suggests that the journey of *Culture of Desire* might be the common journey that Kristeva calls the "subject on trial," in which a character realizes the plurality of his interior voices, or to put it another way, the protagonist discovers the multiplicity of self. "The polyphony of voices account[s] for what I have called a subject in process/on trial," Kristeva explains, "that unstable articulation of identity and loss leading to a new and plural identity."[124] However, *Culture of Desire* does not show Warhol coming to terms with a plurality of inner voices, but rather coming to terms with the fact that all the seemingly distinct voices in the play are actually the same voice: his. Since *Culture of Desire*'s "story" is Warhol's descent into darkness, it is more accurate to say that the play enacts the nightmare of seeming dialogue being revealed as actual monologue—of the lead's ultimate inability to differentiate himself from others.

The fact that the analysis of this Elvis/Warhol scene depends on recognizing that Elvis is quoting Warhol, however, raises a question common to all of SITI Company's devised works: How much of an expert on the devised work's subject does an audience member need to be in order to "get" these shows? In other words, with a play such as *Small Lives/Big Dreams*, in which all of the dialogue is lifted from four Chekhov plays, is it essential to know Chekhov's work to really appreciate it? Would the average audience member watching *Culture of Desire*

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[124] Kristeva, "'Nous Deux' or a (Hi)Story of Intertextuality" in *The Romantic Review* 93, no. 1-2 (2002), 9.

even realize that other characters are speaking words attributed to Warhol, that a seeming conversation between Warhol and Elvis is, in some sense, really just one voice? This concern over the accessibility of SITI Company's devised works is a valid one. In this case, however, SITI Company does indeed seem interested in tipping its hand, in giving the audience as much information as possible. In one of Warhol's early monologues in the play, he begins his speech with, "I think I'm missing some chemicals and that's why I have this tendency to be more of a mama's boy."[125] In the later elevator scene, then, Elvis repeats this line and others that Warhol has already spoken onstage. Assumedly, attentive audiences would pick up on this repetition and perhaps realize that Elvis and Warhol are sharing lines.

The audience member that recognizes that Elvis is repeating Warhol's phrases may experience one of those moments in *Culture of Desire* in which the quotation marks around the spoken text are apparent. Repeating phrases highlights the second iteration as quotation. As mentioned in the introduction, Kristeva notes of intertextual theatre that "putting the text in quotes" is its most common practice. More accurately, an intertextual theatre piece such as *Culture of Desire* moves back and forth between revealing and concealing the quotation marks of its cento script. This movement is similar to Brecht's alienation effect, in which the crowd goes from objectively viewing or feeling separated from the characters, when they simply seem to be quoting, to sympathizing with the characters and losing their objective distance when it is not apparent that the characters are quoting, when they instead seem to be speaking "their own words." However, this alienation effect does not necessarily depend on whether or not the text that is being spoken is recognized as quotation. Even a recognized quotation does not necessarily have quotation marks around it in performance. When Vreeland speaks Dante's

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[125] *Culture*, 8.

verse or the Factory members yell ad slogans in *Culture of Desire*, the audience may feel alienated, as it were, but when Billy Name recites Dante as a student in Warhol's boyhood classroom, seemingly feeling deeply the words he is speaking, the audience may get emotionally involved. This back-and-forth movement is of course an effective way to keep audiences thinking as well as feeling. In other words, this on-again, off-again alienation effect resembles the kind of Action Theatre that the Living Theatre was interested in the 1960s, in which the audience's bodies and emotions would be engaged along with their minds.

While the sharing of phrases, as in the Elvis/Warhol scene, implies a melding of Warhol with others, A equals B, and therefore a possible collectivity through shared vocabulary, one which a collective such as SITI Company would seemingly approve, *Culture of Desire* rarely depicts this type of sharing as a positive thing. For example, the one scene in the play in which two characters physically meld in a way that embodies the linguistic melding of Warhol and the other characters is the most overtly "infernal" in this Hell-set production. In Scene 7, Geldzahler as adman/grocery store manager extols consumerism to Warhol and his guide Vreeland, pushing them in a shopping cart on a tour of his afterlife store. The Dante quotations in this scene—among them "All the gold that is or ever was / Beneath the moon won't buy a moment's rest / For even one among these weary souls"—are from Canto VII of the *Inferno* in which Dante reaches the fourth circle of Hell, where the avaricious and the prodigal roll weights in semicircles under the eye of the demon Plutus.[126] The shopping cart ballet that begins this scene suggests the rolling, circular fate of these damned souls and Geldzahler (whose name means "money counter" in German) stands in for the gold-hoarding Plutus. At the beginning of the scene, Geldzahler

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[126] *Culture*, 16 and Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum, (New York: Bantam Classics, 1982), 61.

claims that consuming is really a process of healthy differentiation. "Choosing such and such an object in order to distinguish oneself from others is in itself a service to society," he says.[127] At the end of the scene, however, Warhol wraps his legs around Geldzahler's middle, and they become an undifferentiated creature with two heads, four arms, and two legs. Vreeland saves Warhol, and damns this abomination with another Dante Canto VII quotation: "Silence, cursed wolf of Hell: Bite back thy spleen!," driving Geldzahler from the stage.[128] This is the most judgmental moment in a show that depicts consumerism as deplorable but also seemingly inescapable throughout. Only the melded Geldzahler/Warhol, a creature made possible through the blurring effect that consumer culture has on individuals, is treated as demonic by Vreeland.

Earlier in the play, Warhol similarly confuses himself with others, verbally if not physically. This is particularly emphasized in Scene 3 of the play, which parallels Dante's arrival at the gates of Hell where he witnesses souls passing through. In *Culture of Desire*, Geldzahler as the gatekeeper speaks the quotation from the *Inferno* which famously ends with "Abandon all hope, you who enter here," after which, one-by-one at a slow pace, Ultraviolet, Sedgwick, and Malanga pass through the gates.[129] They speak a combination of ad slogans and matter-of-fact statements about desire (some of which can be attributed to Warhol). "Why resist temptation? Take a walk on the wild side. Happiness comes from having things. When there's no tomorrow, the sky's the limit. He who dies with the most toys wins," are examples.[130] Once

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[127] *Culture*, 15.
[128] *Culture*, 18 and Dante, 59.
[129] *Culture*, 4 and Dante, 21.
[130] *Culture*, 5. "Take a walk on the wild side" is particular resonant, for some audience members that is, because it was a lyric to a song by the Warhol-managed Velvet Underground's Lou Reed before it was used as a slogan to sell shampoo and other products.

these souls have passed through the gates, Warhol asks, "Were they talking about me?"[131] Again, this confusion of Warhol and others, A and B, is not portrayed as healthy or interesting in the way it challenges uniqueness as a basis for authorship. The fact that Warhol cannot differentiate himself from the other souls here is not a challenge to concepts of creative authority, but rather a criticism of consumerism as a great equalizer (not in the good sense).

This anti-consumerism theme of *Culture of Desire* is distilled by one of Vreeland's lines later in the show, "To be a citizen means no more than to be a consumer."[132] Warhol cannot tell the difference between himself and the other souls in this scene because they are all consumers. They buy the same products, repeat and believe the same slogans, desire the same things, until they become interchangeable. At times, Warhol saw something positive, democratic, in consumer society, particularly one in which the same products could be enjoyed by all. "A Coke is a Coke and no amount of money can get you a better Coke than the one the bum on the corner is drinking," he wrote in *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*.[133] *Culture of Desire*, on the other hand, focuses on the awful sameness of a society in which everyone wants a Coke, in which everyone seemingly desires the same thing and therefore is offered more of the same thing. It is odd that a theatre collective that works so hard to achieve group awareness in its collective creation should be so opposed to the idea of sharing words, desires, bodies. However, like the Living Theatre—and, as we shall see in Chapter Four, BOTHarts and Cornerstone Theater Company—SITI Company, like most theatre collectives, is still committed to the individual artist and to the importance of differentiation in achieving one's potential. These collectives

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[131] Ibid., 6.
[132] Ibid., 15.
[133] Warhol, 101.

simply attest, perhaps counter-intuitively, that the artist is most individual or most differentiated when he or she embraces a group creative process or collectivity.

Though Warhol's journey is not Kristeva's "subject on trial" embracing a new, plural identity (as mentioned earlier), neither is it really the conventional hero's journey as described by Joseph Campbell—though Bogart's notes suggests this is what SITI Company hoped for when it first starting working on the play. While *Culture of Desire* follows Campbell's description of the monomyth for part of the show—the call to adventure, the road of trials, the revelation of the hero's spiritual guide—Warhol does not achieve the requisite self-knowledge by the end of this play that makes a hero a hero; nor does Warhol return to the ordinary world after his adventure—two essentials for the hero's journey. At the end of the play, the voiceover which started the play, the text from the beginning of Dante's *Inferno*—"Midway on our life's journey, I found myself in dark woods…", etc.—is played again, while Warhol walks in a circle around the stage, the same circle he walked at the top of the show. The audience may have realized why Warhol is shot the second time around, as Bogart hopes, but certainly Warhol does not. The hero's journey stalls in *Culture of Desire*. Warhol is trapped in a loop at the end. As Bogart suggests in her pre-production notes, "Perhaps hell is repetition. Perhaps at the end you realize that he's going to go through the play again. And again. And again. And again."[134]

At the same time, the conclusion of *Culture of Desire* is not necessarily pessimistic about the possibilities of self-awareness in consumer culture simply because Warhol does not achieve self-awareness. Perhaps it is the audience's journey and not the hero's that matters in *Culture of Desire*. Certainly SITI Company has insisted time and again that the role of the audience in collaboration is its primary concern. As Bogart said in an interview in 1998, "I think the most

[134] Bogart, "New Notes."

important question to ask right now is, What is the creative goal of the audience? What is the audience's job? What are they doing?"[135] Warhol as an artist shares this goal in the play—or at least the pre-shooting Warhol, in SITI Company's interpretation. Towards the end of *Culture of Desire*, Billy Name quotes Warhol discussing the significance of the Campbell's soup cans:

> "[W]ho really cares what the soup or the can or the Campbell's means to me? The important thing is what each one of you thinks… Question yourselves. I don't have the answers. I've already made by statement—right there." He pointed to the painting on the wall.[136]

This quotation by Warhol could serve as a motto for SITI Company. Indeed, the idea that interpretation and self-examination in the audience are the most important things a play can stimulate is explicitly explored in SITI Company's later collectively written *Cabin Pressure* (1999), which made use of theatre-audience interviews for most of its source material. Despite SITI Company's insistence that Warhol eventually betrayed his commitment to stimulating his audiences to co-creation, the artist himself felt that even his later film work was still primarily concerned with making audiences ask questions and therefore with putting the burden not only of interpretation but of creation, at least the creation of meaning, on the audience. Of his movie *Sleep*, which was eight hours of Warhol's boyfriend John Giorno sleeping, the artist said, "When people go to a show today, they're never involved anymore. A movie like *Sleep* gets them involved again. They get involved with themselves and they create their own environment."[137]

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[135] Proudfit, 8.
[136] *Culture*, 37.
[137] Goldsmith, 168. This desired effect is not unlike that of some of Robert Wilson's theatre pieces. (Wilson is one of Bogart's professed mentors, and an artist about whom SITI Company created the show *Bob*.) For Wilson's early productions, such as the five-hour *Einstein on the Beach*, he encouraged audience members to come and go as they please or even to sleep if they wished.

That the audience must do the work completing the meaning of *Culture of Desire*, just as it must when viewing Warhol's Campbell soup-can paintings, is made explicit by another "layer" that gets added to the ending of this show, an ending that in every other way replays the beginning. Besides the replaying of the Dante voiceover and re-enacting the visual of Warhol walking in a circle again, Vreeland onstage in this final scene asks a extended series of questions, some of which have been asked to Warhol in "interviews" earlier in the play and some of which Billy Name recalled being asked by Warhol in the previous Campbell's soup quotation. The questions are addressed to Warhol, but they are directed toward the audience. Therefore, the audience members become the real subjects of the interview in *Culture of Desire*'s final moments. This layer of Vreeland's questions is a major difference from the beginning, something that makes the repetition of the opening not a true repetition. The questions Vreeland asks recall Peter Handke's play *Offending the Audience*, which SITI Company performed sections of in *Cabin Pressure*. "What is important in art and life? / What am I saying? / Do you really like them? / Which ones? / What are you looking at? / Are you deriving pleasure from it?" are examples of Vreeland's questions.[138] Vreeland, who has interviewed Warhol throughout the play, now presents one half of an interview—the questions—and leaves the answers to be filled in by the audience. The audience is explicitly asked to collaborate in order to complete the meaning *Culture of Desire*.

Ending a play about Andy Warhol with an interview is appropriate. As Kenneth Goldsmith notes in his book *I'll Be Your Mirror*, a collection of interviews with Warhol over the years, "The interview is a rhetorical form whose most essential quality is its collaborative

[138] *Culture*, 44.

origin."[139] It was also the form most suited to and most explored by Warhol throughout his career. In early interviews, Warhol became infamous for his silly or banal answers. However, in many cases, Warhol's responses were to questions that the artist had already been asked too many times: Who were his influences? What did one or another work mean? The function of Warhol's vague answers might have been not only to reveal the inanity of such questions, but more, as Goldsmith suggests, to construct a "space for the creativity of the interviewer." Warhol went on to found *Interview* magazine in 1970, in which he insisted on no editing of interview transcripts. By that point, Warhol had become obsessed with his own interviewing. Warhol taped himself and the members of the Factory as well as visitors, including those who were supposed to be interviewing him. After a certain point in his life, he was rarely without his tape recorder. As Warhol put it, "I didn't get married until 1964 when I got my first tape recorder. My wife. My tape recorder and I have been married for ten years now. When I say 'we,' I mean my tape recorder and me."[140] That Warhol became primarily the interviewer as opposed to the interviewee in his later career could be interpreted as a desire for power, for control over situations. On the other hand, like the questions that end *Culture of Desire*, Warhol's obsession with asking questions might be seen as his desire to get those around him involved in the creative process, in the form of collaborative meaning making.

In terms of reading the end of *Culture of Desire* as positive as opposed to negative, those who have trained with SITI Company also might see Warhol's running in circles at the end of *Culture of Desire* as not merely a repetition of the beginning or the suggestion that no progress has been made in the show. This circling recalls a Viewpoints exercise half-jokingly referred to

[139] Goldsmith, xvi.
[140] Warhol, 26.

as the “ring of fire.” For this exercise, a group of SITI Company trainees, eyes closed, runs in a circle until it has completed the following tasks simultaneously as a group, without any one individual initiating: twelve change of directions, six jumps, and four stops, in any order. The effort to accomplish this is typically exhausting, though rarely does one feel so connected to a group of people than midway through this ordeal. The suffering leads to some special connection. If something is achieved by Warhol’s torment, his circle of fire, it is for the group as well—though not necessarily for the character of Warhol as part of the group. By the time Vreeland asks such questions as “Does it matter if a work is anonymous or autographic?” the audience has been given enough food for thought about art and authorship that it might be prepared to give an answer, and one perhaps that it might not have given before sitting through *Culture of Desire*.[141]

The willingness to answer Vreeland’s questions at the end of the play, in other words to place one’s self in Warhol’s position, is the difference between those theatre critics who reviewed the play favorably and those who did not. William Steele’s rave review of the production in the only major daily in Portland, Maine, *Portland Press Herald*, claims that audiences will leave the theatre with “several important questions, possibly life-changing questions” ringing in their heads.[142] Moreover, in his opening paragraph, this reviewer interprets the story of *Culture of Desire* as not merely Warhol’s but everyone’s in a consumer society. “Bogart… brings Warhol back from the dead to lead us through the inferno of our own lives,” Steele writes. The production in New York was a different production, of course, primarily because Kelly Maurer had resumed the role of Warhol. However, while only the Portland

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[141] *Culture*, 44.
[142] William Steele, “‘Culture of Desire’ Powerful, Fun,” *Portland Press Herald*, 21 March 1998.

production of *Culture of Desire* is of concern to this study, it is significant that many of the New York reviews of *Culture of Desire*—for the most part pans—point out that *Culture of Desire* doesn't tell the audience much about Warhol that it didn't already know.[143] The play is thus judged on the answers it gives, not on the questions it raises. Further, it is understood as Warhol's story alone, not the story of every consumer. The way *Culture of Desire* attempts to engage audiences is simply not recognized or not considered interesting to these critics.

Warhol's engagement with his audiences throughout his career has significant similarities with SITI Company's engagement of its audiences in *Culture of Desire*. This is unsurprising perhaps considering Warhol's relationship to a New York art scene in the 1960s in which dance, music, and the visual arts were all exploring collective creation, the scene from which SITI Company's Composition Work traces its lineage. Coincidentally, Warhol designed sets for choreographer Merce Cunningham—a number of silver pillows for a participatory dance piece. With Viewpoints and Composition, SITI Company continues to explore a number of the questions that this New York arts scene was intent on examining in the 1960s, including the role of the audience in contemporary art. *Culture of Desire* presents a Warhol who falls short of his potential for such exploration or perhaps turns his back on these earlier interests. Yet because of the similarities between Warhol and SITI Company—their interest in collaboration, their challenges to traditional notions of authority in the creative process—*Culture of Desire* remains close to its subject. When Warhol is quoted (even acting inappropriately silly or distant) the

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[143] For example, Ben Brantley wrote, "This hectoring production says nothing about Warhol, or about the country he mirrored, that wasn't said by his earliest detractors." Similarly, Fintan O'Toole wrote, "Bogart and the performers evoke the nightmare of a culture dominated by mindless consumption. But they don't manage to say anything very original about it." Brantley, "Gee, It's Got Soup Cans, That Figures." *The New York Times*, 17 September 1998, sec. E; O'Toole, "'Culture' Shock Turns to Schlock in Warhol Story," *New York Daily News*, 17 September 1998.

result is not parody, but pastiche. *Culture of Desire* can be seen as a cautionary tale that SITI Company presented for its own benefit. Midway on its life's journey, SITI Company in 1998 was worried where it might be in another decade. Warhol's late career (as understood by the company) was a path that it did not want to go down. Therefore, the conversation in this play is not merely between Warhol and the audience or SITI Company and its audiences, but primarily between SITI Company, using pastiche, and Warhol, the subject being pastiched. In these terms, above all in the A-B dialogue of *Culture of Desire*, A is for Andy and B is for Bogart.[144]

As previously noted, this dialogue between theatre company and subject is primarily about authority and collaboration. However, it is also about the role of the artist in a late capitalist society. While the distance SITI Company attempts to create between its philosophy and methods and those of Warhol's do not necessarily hold up to close scrutiny, there are ways in which SITI Company is indeed very different than Warhol, particularly in terms of the ways these artists negotiate between assuming authority and embracing collaboration in their creative processes. For example, Bogart claims in her pre-production notes that, at least in *Culture of Desire*, "[H]ell is repetition." This seems diametrically opposed to Warhol's practices as an artist, as one who relied on and celebrated repetition. It suggests, as the next section details, that SITI Company and Warhol, despite a similar commitment to collaboration in art-making, fundamentally disagree on the relationship between authority and originality.

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[144] Another interesting wrinkle to the A-B designation in *Culture of Desire* is that in Bogart's notes after visiting Sarartoga in the summer of 1997, titled "Some More Things I've Learned From the Compositions," she writes that "B is for Beatrice." Since this angle is not apparently pursued in the productions of *Culture of Desire*, this seems to be one of those fascinating ideas raised in development that was not fully realized in performance.

Good Repetition, Bad Repetition

At the opening of *Culture of Desire*, two images are juxtaposed in the set that suggest a central tension in the play, and perhaps the central tension between the aesthetics of Warhol and the aesthetics of SITI Company. The backdrop for the show, which remains in view throughout the production, is a recreation of “plate one” from William Blake’s illuminated book “Visions of the Daughters of Albion”(1793). It depicts a man and a woman, nude, chained together, and another man, nude, above and behind them crouching and twisting his body with his head hidden in his arms. The chained man is looking out of the frame in horror, his hair standing up. The long, falling hair of the chained woman hides her face, though by the position of her body she appears to be unconscious. The three figures are under the base of a dark tree that resembles the opening to a cave. Waves lap at their feet and a red moon hangs ominously in the cloudy sky above them. These contorted, manacled bodies appropriately (for *Culture of Desire*) suggest a hellish setting. However, Blake’s book actually tells the story not of Hell, but rather of a woman who is raped by one man (depicted as the man chained to the woman here) and abandoned by her lover (the crouching figure in the backdrop). In front of this backdrop, spanning the length of the Portland stage are eight-foot-tall shelves containing identical file boxes, each with its own cubby. These shelves have no back and the Blake mural can be glimpsed through the spaces between the boxes. At the top of the show, one box is missing from the shelves near centerstage. Through the hole, the terrified face of the chained man, skull-like, from Blake’s painting can be glimpsed—the effect is as if a skull has been framed by the boxes, or occupies the same space as each of the boxes. At the top of the show, a single sustained note is played over the sound system as Warhol enters carrying a file box identical to the others. He crosses to the empty cubby (which is slightly above his shoulders), lifts the box, and inserts it, eliminating the view of

the terrified man's face. He adjusts the box so that it is centered, completing a uniform grid of boxes. Warhol then slowly turns as the Dante voiceover begins—"Midway on our life's journey…." At the end of the voiceover, three gunshots ring out as a spotlight illuminates Warhol in a bright square of light. It is as if he has been framed and shot by the light itself.

The file boxes, which are used throughout the show—all props and some costumes are removed from them at various points—suggest Warhol's description of his obsessive collecting in *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*. Warhol claimed to have a terrible memory, the main reason he always had his tape recorder on him. "Every day is a new day because I don't remember the day before," he writes.[145] In addition, he believed that empty space was essential to happiness. Therefore, at the end of each month, Warhol claimed in this book, he packed up everything he had recently obtained—magazines, newspapers, clothes—into a box, for safe-keeping (and to get it out of his space).

> I started off myself with trunks… but then I went around shopping for something better and now I just drop everything into the same-size brown cardboard boxes that have a color patch on the side for the month of the year. I really hate nostalgia, though, so deep down I hope they all get lost and I never have to look at them again.[146]

Later in his life, Warhol began making daily "time capsules" out of identical file boxes, based on the same principle.

SITI Company's idea to have the boxes as the central set pieces of *Culture of Desire* makes sense for a play in which Warhol spends much of his time re-enacting events from earlier in his life, albeit within the context of Dante's *Inferno*. The shelves might represent Warhol's mind, as he takes down box after box and opens them, revealing objects that call up memories and lead to nostalgic scenes. For example, after passing through the gates of Hell, Warhol, in

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[145] Warhol, 199.
[146] Ibid., 145.

Scene 4 of *Culture of Desire* opens a box, takes out a magazine, and coos over it: "Oooohhhhh, she's a beauty. Oooohhhhh, he's a beauty."[147] From his ecstatic exclamations, it would seem that Warhol is looking at pornography. However, it is immediately revealed that the magazine is actually a comic book. As if they have leapt from the comic's pages, Dick Tracy and Popeye then enter the stage lip-synching the song "You've Got To Eat Your Spinach, Baby" from *Poor Little Rich Girl* (the original 1936 film, not Warhol's 1965 film by the same name). Shirley Temple soon joins them and Warhol performs a tap number with them all. This scene at once recalls Warhol's childhood, in which he was obsessed with comic books and Shirley Temple, as well as his earliest non-advertising art work, his paintings of *Popeye* and *Dick Tracy* from 1961 and 1962.

If the file boxes represent Warhol's memories in storage, it is significant that at the top of the show the artist covers up a skull-like horrified face from Blake's painting with one of these boxes. This suggests that death or fear (both suggested by the event of Warhol's shooting) is not part of the artist's memory. This death's head is intentionally covered-up by what Warhol chooses to recall. Warhol rarely attended funerals and didn't want to address the topic of death in interviews—though some have claimed that most of Warhol's art, not just his 1962 death-and-destruction series or his 1963 electric-chair silk-screens, treats the subject of death. *Culture of Desire* explores this paradox. In Scene 2 of the play, Warhol says, "You can never be sure about death," a line which actor Will Bond delivered in a way that suggested the artist's nonchalant and perhaps careless attitude toward the topic. [148] Nevertheless, the final "knee play" of the show features the artist's disaster series, which clinically depicted scenes of death and indicated

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[147] *Culture*, 8.
[148] Ibid., 3.

Warhol's obsession with, and willingness to confront, dying.[149] Warhol's death obsession was in some sense inseparable from his consumer obsession. As Warhol was known for saying, "I don't think people die, they just go to department stores," a quotation that crops up in Scene 5 of *Culture of Desire*.[150] This well-known quip may have been the impetus for SITI Company combining the setting of Hell and the concept of consumerism in *Culture of Desire*.

Beyond recalling Warhol's obsession with death in his art and his denial of death in his daily conversation, another implication of the artist hiding the skull behind a file box at the top of the show is simply that throughout *Culture of Desire* Warhol is in denial that he is at death's door. While reluctant to follow Vreeland, Warhol is unimpressed by the visions of Hell he encounters on his journey in this play. Similarly, Warhol claimed to remember nothing about his actual shooting. In *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, he grills B early on in the book about the events of the day of his shooting, claiming he doesn't remember anything about it. "I wanted B to spell it out for me," he writes. "If someone else talks about it, I listen, I hear the words, and I think, maybe it's all true."[151]

Therefore, the file boxes are an appropriate way to represent Warhol skipping around in his memories in *Culture of Desire* and also to imply some suppression of the artist's shooting in his mind. However, the boxes also represent Warhol's interest in mechanical reproduction as art, particularly as juxtaposed with Blake's backdrop. Blake is an apt choice for *Culture of Desire* in part because this artist's final work was a series of illustrations of Dante's *Inferno*. In addition, Blake's illuminated books are considered an attempt to bring individuality back to the mass production of the print medium. Blake's illuminated books are written in his hand, and though

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[149] Ibid., 42.
[150] Ibid., 10.
[151] *Philosophy*, 12.

they were reproduced, each copy is different in terms of how it was hand-watercolored by Blake. If "hell is repetition," according to *Culture of Desire*, Blake's art challenges Warhol's interest, even faith, in this Hell. Warhol's faith in repetition is of course represented by the rows of boxes onstage. The identical boxes call to mind all of the serial silk-screens that Warhol was famous for: Marilyn Monroe, Elvis, Jackie Kennedy, as well as his flowers, shadows, etc. As mentioned earlier, part of Warhol's interest in art as reproduction had to do with the fact that it undermines concepts of authorship by calling into question whether any work of art is "original," the expression of the unique soul of the creator. "[W]hy should I be original?," asked Warhol in one interview. "Why can't I be non-original?"[152] Using Blake's art as a backdrop, an art that challenges mechanical reproduction, SITI Company counters Warhol's commitment to repetition.

It must be acknowledged, however, that the extent to which Warhol was being ironic with his statements about originality and art is debatable. Indeed, as often as Warhol insisted that he truly was interested in creating exact copies, for example, of a Campbell's soup can, he contradictorily claimed that the slight changes that occur when copying were also his goals in inviting collaborative and repetitive work. On the one hand, when an interviewer questioned him about how he had transformed the images that he used for his paint-by-numbers paintings (another fascinating series in terms of what it requires from its consumer), Warhol insisted, "But I haven't tried to change a thing! (The only reason I didn't finish them is that they bored me; I knew how they were going to come out.) Whoever buys them can fill in the rest themselves. I've copied the numbers exactly."[153] Similarly, in criticizing TV viewers who watched serials

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[152] Goldsmith, 7.
[153] Ibid., 8.

with the same basic plot but different details over and over, Warhol claimed, "If I'm going to sit and watch the same thing I saw the night before, I want it to be exactly the same."[154] Moreover, despite his striving for and reportedly enjoying identical mass reproduction, when Warhol became an icon, his "aura" clung to his work—something the artist joked about. As referenced earlier, "Some company recently was interested in buying my aura," Elvis says in *Culture of Desire* quoting Warhol. Perhaps the joke for Warhol was that his society was obsessed with originality, with the artist's signature above all things and therefore with untainted authorship, even after he as an artist had made his career out of challenging these notions.[155] Like his paint-by-numbers paintings, Warhol continually tried to, even if half-jokingly, inspire the creativity of his consumers only to find that they were more interested in simply possessing something with the artist's name securely attached.[156]

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[154] Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol Sixties* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), 50.

[155] If Warhol is "shopping" somewhere in his after-life, he must have been greatly amused with recent efforts to identify "legitimate" Warhol lithographs and have them authenticated by his estate.

[156] Warhol's name serves as the key to unlocking the meaning of his work for an audience that consumes in this way, a way that values the author's signature. The art work *means* something because it is Warhol's. This desire on the part of the audience to find the key to the meaning of the work within the artist is very similar to Kristeva's ideas about the motives behind examining intertextuality.

> Even if the reader does not yet have the competence to point it out, he knows that there must be something outside the text able to make it into a meaningful whole and he goes to find it by a certain method, or later on finds it by accident when reading the key, or "missing" text. (Kristeva, "Nous Deux, 12.)

This missing piece that would explain everything is the "intertext." The intertext is often looked for in the artist himself, what he has written or what is written about him—like the interviews that Warhol toyed with and his biography which he changed frequently. The desire to search for such an intertext may be all the more powerful with works such as Warhol's (or *Culture of Desire*) which seem unfinished—works that end with questions, literally. These may inspire the reader to search in earnest out of a need for completion.

On the other hand, Warhol may not have been as committed to mechanical reproduction as some of these statements suggest. In justifying his use of amateurs in his films, for example, Warhol wrote,

> Every professional performer I've ever seen always does exactly the same thing at exactly the same moment in every show they do… What I like are things that are different every time. That's why I like amateur performers and bad performers—you can never tell what they are going to do next.[157]

Similarly, in explaining why he preferred to work with others when making art, Warhol wrote

> Something that I look for in an associate is a certain amount of misunderstanding of what I'm trying to do. Not fundamental misunderstanding; just minor misunderstandings here and there… when you work with people who misunderstand you, instead of *transmissions* you get *transmutations*, and that's much more interesting in the long run.[158]

The desire for transmutation as opposed to transmission is completely counter to Warhol's claims that when he copied something, he tried to make an exact copy.

How to reconcile these statements? Perhaps the mechanical reproduction that Warhol supposedly strove for can be considered a facetious quest, the result of an artist ironically catering to a consumer society—everyone can have the same Campbell's soup-can painting if only Warhol can make enough, just like everyone can enjoy Coke. Another way to explain such seemingly contradictory statements is that they both adhere to a concept of art that is essentially democratic. If art is easily reproducible, then anyone should be able to do it—and it is still art. Exact copies just means that everybody, fairly, gets the same thing. Likewise, collaboration in art, which leads to inexact copies is not just for experts, but for everyone. Flaws and misunderstandings are the goal. Amateur performers, or those who don't "understand," are as important to involve in the creative process as professionals, insiders, or aesthetes. Warhol's

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[157] Warhol, *Philosophy*, 82.
[158] Ibid., 99.

interest in both exact and inexact reproductions, therefore, can be seen as related to his interest in a democratic creative process.

These "democratic" ideals of Warhol's may be one of the places where he diverges most from SITI Company, despite SITI Company's dedication to democratic company input within its own creative process.[159] Like Warhol's paint-by-numbers, a show such as *Culture of Desire* asks for the audience's creative work in order to complete it. However, it requires an audience willing to work a little harder than Warhol's—*Culture of Desire* is not a paint-by-numbers. Fragmented, fast-moving, and sometimes vague, *Culture of Desire* is not for all consumers. It is not "commercial" theatre—as even the most difficult or non-traditional of Warhol's work were nevertheless commercial. The Shirley Temple song performed in *Culture of Desire* could be an admonition to SITI Company's audiences: "You've Gotta Eat Your Spinach, Baby." This doesn't mean that SITI Company shows are intended to be boring but good for you. Rather, SITI Company shows are complex, demanding experiences, not for lazy consumers. SITI Company shows are not Shirley Temple musicals, though they may appreciate and quote such sources.

Moreover, though SITI Company may appreciate the changes that inevitably occur with repetition, it is not a company that looks for amateur input beyond the initial gathering of ideas from large-scale Composition Work at Saratoga, and even the non-SITI Company performers that participate at Saratoga are in the midst of training with the company. SITI Company prides itself on training hard—physically and mentally. SITI Company members take the idea of a

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[159] SITI Company's dedication to democratic operations is apparent not only in its creative process, but also in the way in which the organization is run. For example, the company believes in favored nations and in paying everybody the same amount for the work, whether they are playing a very small part or a principle role.

theatre performer as a professional very seriously, arguing that this defensive position is necessary within a society that largely misunderstands the hard work that goes into performance training. Not anyone can make SITI Company art, they insist; it requires training, dedication, talent. As Ellen Lauren noted of the main difference between the Factory members and SITI Company's members, "[W]e work too hard to actually live like those people."[160] Along these lines, Bogart notes that there is good repetition and bad repetition in art. While a fan of Gertrude Stein's concept of repetition that is endlessly changing, Bogart argues that, "Either digital repetition or reproduction in which each time a quality is lost, like a Xerox, those two kinds… of repetition are a hell, I think. And that I think is Warhol repetition."[161] SITI Company is committed to the individual artist, not the amateur, and the "unique" art work, not the easily repeated.

Ironically, however, it should be noted that the Blake backdrop, which seemingly offers a contrast to Warhol's mechanical reproduction, is actually composed of three repetitions of Blake's enlarged illustration. Again, whether it is was the idea of Bogart or her designer or someone else in the company, *Culture of Desire* makes a statement with this backdrop that faith in an "original," un-reproducible work of art may be foolhardy. Even if it were not composed of multiple copies of an image, this mural is, after all, a reproduction of Blake's work. In this way, SITI Company ends up close to its subject, Warhol, even when attempting to contrast his ideas. Or perhaps, as the next section suggests, Warhol's ideas had so contaminated *Culture of Desire* by the time the company had devised the show's setting, that SITI Company had to reconsider its faith in a unique, personal art.

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[160] Lauren interview.
[161] Bogart interview.

Contaminating "Desire"

Just as the phrase "Midway on our life's journey, I found myself in dark woods" may have had special significance for SITI Company members during their run in Portland, taking a look at how the meanings of specific words were shared between company members, their characters, the texts this show quotes, and the cultures out of which this show grew is another way to demonstrate the way SITI Company grew closer to the figure Warhol during the creation and presentation of *Culture of Desire*. Using the same words and desiring the same products can lead to interchangeability between people, *Culture of Desire* argues. Likewise, SITI Company sharing words (and as it will be argued, sharing desires) with Warhol created a closeness between these artists that is all too common when artists use the technique of pastiche.

Considering that the show is called *Culture of Desire*, the word "desire" is an appropriate place to continue tracing SITI Company's use of pastiche in this show. On one level, because one of the major intertexts of this play is Dante's *Inferno*, desire in this show is often associated with sinfulness, with an earthliness that is not properly spiritual. This harmful, mortal desire might be a desire for possessions (the consumerism that SITI Company and its production denounces) or sexual desire (about which SITI Company, not surprisingly, does not express a similar disgust). The way desire comes to be associated with sexual desire as much as with the desire for possessions in this play is evident, for example, in Scene 8 of *Culture of Desire*. This scene suggests the atmosphere of a classroom. At the beginning of the scene, the entire cast sets up the file boxes as desks in neat rows and each performer takes out a red book to study. "Billy Name (as student)" recites from a text he holds in the scene while the rest of the class listens. The text is from Canto V of the *Inferno* in which Francesca da Rimini describes how she and her brother-in-law came to fall in love with one another while reading stories of the fabled Lancelot.

For this sin, Francesca is confined to the second circle of Hell, where the lustful are buffeted forever by a violent storm. Francesca describes to Dante how one particular line in the Lancelot story—"the longed for smile… was kissed by that most noble lover"—led to her and her lover's first kiss.[162] While Billy Name reads this passage, Warhol gets up from his desk and approaches Billy as if drawn to him against his will, literally attracted to him. He gets closer and closer until it seems that he will kiss Billy. Then, suddenly, Warhol faints, leading directly into the next scene. In the *Inferno*, Dante similarly faints at the end of Francesca's tale, for "pity" of the woman.

However, rather that fainting in sympathy, Warhol's fainting seems more the case of his body physically preventing any intimacy between the artist and another person, his professed shyness controlling him utterly. This behavior is repeated a number of times in *Culture of Desire*, which often quotes Warhol's descriptions of how painfully shy he was throughout his life and repeatedly has him faint when threatened by human contact. Earlier in the play, Warhol says, "I just don't want anyone to get involved with me. And that's the truth. I play down my good features and play up my bad ones." When someone is interested in Warhol, regardless of his efforts, "I freak out," says the artist in the play.[163] This speech occurs before Warhol opens the box in Scene 4 to peruse his comics, cooing over Popeye and Dick Tracy: "Oooohhhh, he's a beauty." The comic-book scene also suggests that early in his life Warhol preferred images that he could desire in private to actual people. However, it is not insignificant to note that Warhol's behavior is not merely the result of his shyness. Warhol specifically desires physical contact with men in *Culture of Desire*. As a boy in 1940s' Pittsburgh, Warhol had few models for

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[162] *Culture*, 20 and Dante, 45.
[163] *Culture*, 8.

homosexual desire, and therefore was often paralyzed when confronted with his strong—and for his culture, strange—feelings.

Therefore, not only is the word "desire" in this play linked to sexual desire, it is specifically linked to homosexual desire on the part of Warhol. While it is clearly unhealthy for Warhol that he cannot fulfill his desires in these early scenes, *Culture of Desire* does not generally argue that desires, sexual or otherwise, *should* be fulfilled or that their fulfillment will lead to satisfaction. In Scene 3, at the gates of Hell, Henry Geldzahler as the gatekeeper says to Warhol at the end of the procession of souls: "There are two tragedies in life. One is to not get your heart's desire. The other is to get it."[164] This is a quotation from George Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman*.[165] Like SITI Company's simultaneous belief in and profound skepticism over creative originality, the collective embraces this paradox about desire in *Culture of Desire*. The show never presents a relationship in which desire between two partners is healthy and equal in terms of a power dynamic. In Scene 10, Warhol films Gerard Malanga in his underwear. Malanga screams into the light Warhol carries as a camera, "It's a Kodak moment. Mintyfresh. Where's the beef?" etc.[166] Warhol is still as much the voyeur as he was with his comics, but having a real man as his coveted image turns a scene of mere voyeurism into the depiction of an abuse of power. As a boy or a man, Warhol's desire is never depicted in the play as mutual and mutually satisfying.

At the same time, *Culture of Desire* shows Warhol in this scene filming Ultraviolet and Edie Sedgwick as well. Therefore, it cannot be said that Warhol's scene with Malanga is merely

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[164] Ibid., 6.

[165] It is also Shaw's paraphrase of a line from Oscar Wilde's play *Lady Windermere's Fan*, a quotation that is a quotation.

[166] Ibid., 36.

an argument by SITI Company that Warhol's same-sex desire, repressed by his society, is forced to come out in perverse ways later in his career. Warhol treats his female Factory subjects the same as he treats his male Factory subjects. The scene, then, is simply about Warhol's desire for power more than it is about his sexual desire for Malanga. The scene therefore corresponds with Bogart's wish that *Culture of Desire* show its audiences how "Andy discovers power which substitutes for love." In an interview, Webber confirmed that the scene in which Warhol films his Factory members is not about Warhol's repression of his homosexual desire and the way it surfaces in ugly ways later in his career. "I don't think we ever talked about Andy, at least Andy in our play, actively curbing his desires for men. He was just painfully shy."[167]

That said, Webber in the process of creating *Culture of Desire* was nevertheless interested specifically in Warhol as a homosexual artist, and acknowledged that the word "desire" in the play was inseparable from Warhol's sexual desires. Webber noted an incident, apocryphal or not, that SITI Company had uncovered in its research, in which Warhol had been snubbed by Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg ("butch gay artists") early in his career because he was too effeminate. "Even by the gay artists in New York, he was on the outside," said Webber.[168] Therefore, part of the show's interest in desire's relationship to culture is that some desires if made public can limit your access to culture. Warhol, who was outside of society because of his sexuality and more important because of the way he expressed this sexuality, entered society not by changing it, so that his sexuality was accepted, but rather by appropriating its culture. Said Webber, "Marilyn Monroe has a certain cultural status, and I think one of

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[167] Webber interview.
[168] Ibid.

Warhol's geniuses is that he just appropriated it and said, 'It's mine.' Therefore, he was instantly inside culture."[169]

At the same time, Warhol was able to remain an effeminate gay man and still enter culture because his art did not necessarily signal effeminacy or homosexuality. Interestingly, the SITI Company is similar to Warhol in this aspect. If "desire" in *Culture of Desire* is Warhol's desire, it is perhaps SITI Company's desire as well. While Bogart is openly lesbian and many of her company members, including Webber, are openly gay, SITI Company is never described in the mainstream media or analyzed by critics in terms of its members' sexual orientations. There has never been an academic paper examining the "gay sensibility" of SITI Company work, though in theory such a paper could be written. Part of the reason SITI Company is not stereotyped by the sexual orientation of its members is because the company has never done work that is autobiographical. Unlike, the Living Theatre, for example, SITI Company's members are not interested in "being themselves" onstage. Moreover, the company has "straight" members, too, and in the collaborative process of Composition, such as with *Culture of Desire*, the company works hard to ensure that no single point of view dominates. As Webber described the writing process, "I was particularly interested in [Warhol] as a gay artist in New York in the 1950s." However, "Other people, that could not have been less important to them."[170] Nevertheless, whether or not because of Webber's and others' influence, SITI Company, by addressing the topic of "desire" through the words of Dante (who conflates and condemns both carnality and consumerism) and the words of Warhol, whose "desire" in terms of relationships was decidedly for the same sex, created a show that was as much about the

[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid.

relationship between an artist's sexuality and his status in culture as it was about the relationship between an artist's acceptance of consumerism and his subsequent rise in cultural status (the proposed subject).

The first time the word "desire" is mentioned in *Culture of Desire* is a perfect example of the multiple meanings the word carries in the play, due, in part, to the multiple interests of SITI Company's members in their creation of the show as much as to the way *Culture of Desire*'s intertexts put into play multiple meanings of "desire" at any moment. At the gates of Hell, as the souls of the condemned pass through with their suitcases discussing all the things they wanted on earth—their consumer desire—Geldzahler (Webber) as the gatekeeper sings, "They Say It's Wonderful" (Irving Berlin's song featured in the Rodgers & Hammerstein-produced musical *Annie, Get Your Gun*). Lyrics such as "to hold your girl in your arms is wonderful, wonderful" suggest that "desire" here is romantic desire for another person.[171] However, it is specifically a heterosexual desire about which Geldzahler sings, one sanctioned by Warhol's culture, and one which does not acknowledge the artist's particular orientation. "Desire" then is simultaneously tied to a desire of objects as well as people, and to a culture that does not account for difference.

However, the word "desire" is actually first spoken in this scene by Vreeland, in a quotation from Dante describing the condemned: "[T]heir fear / Is transmuted to desire. / Take glory over them."[172] This quotation is from the end of Canto III, in which Virgil describes souls thronging the shores of the river Styx hoping to cross into Hell. The longer quotation from the *Inferno* reads: "[T]hey are eager for the river crossing / because celestial justice spurs them on, / so that their fear is transmuted to desire. / Take glory over them." The "desire" Vreeland speaks

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[171] *Culture*, 5.
[172] *Culture*, 5 and Dante, 27.

of, then, is the desire of the souls to cross the river, to receive their punishment. In this context, desire is masochistic but holy and appropriate. For those audience members who do not recognize the source of this quotation—the vast majority, one would imagine—this first mention of "desire" in *Culture of Desire* simply makes the point that desire (for others or for material things) is at its root actually fear. However, while Geldzahler sings "They Say It's Wonderful," the condemned, clutching their worldly possessions, also say things such as, "I love the money and the excitement and the satisfaction of winning again and again and again," and "My car is a Rolls-Royce, and its tank is always full of Super Shell."[173] Then, as noted earlier, the scene ends with Geldzahler telling Warhol, "There are two tragedies in life. One is to not get your heart's desire. The other is to get it." In this one scene, therefore, "desire" does not simply refer to the desire for goods or sexual desire. The meaning of "desire" is many things at once and sets up the kind of complex definition of the word that the rest of the play upholds.

Geldzahler's Broadway show tune suggests desire as romantic love (at its corniest or most theatrical). The Dante quotation suggests a masochistic need for punishment but also for relief from guilt. The ad-slogan-quoting speeches of the condemned suggest desire for money, for possessions, for power. At the same time, the fact that Geldzahler sings directly to Warhol, who then faints—foreshadowing the later scene in which Warhol faints after almost kissing Billy Name in the "classroom"—suggests specifically Warhol's hidden (at least in his art) desire for men. The truism that caps the scene, while admittedly in the context of Warhol yearning for Geldzahler, is more generally a universal reference to our "heart's desire," in other words whatever it is we want most. These quotations are all talking about different kinds of desire in different contexts. As in any pastiche, the play brings together these different contexts under the

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[173] *Culture*, 5-6.

umbrella of the story but does not smooth out their edges. Thematically, the scene is primarily Vreeland showing Warhol souls similar to his own passing through the gates of Hell. However, "desire" when she uses the word retains its suggestions from the earlier contexts and doesn't merely conform to the desire of souls to cross to the after-life as in Dante. Instead, her use of the word sets up "desire" as a term in this play that will mean many different things (often at the same time). A path through the multiplicity of meanings may be suggested, one meaning of "desire" emphasized as more interesting than another, but the multiplicity remains.[174]

While "desire" retains a multiplicity of meanings throughout its usage in *Culture of Desire*, the intertext of Dante's *Inferno* particularly shades the meanings that "desire" picks up in the course of the play. SITI Company certainly does not parallel this intertext, the *Inferno*, in its condemnation of all worldly desires. At the same time, because the play is a pastiche, *Culture of Desire* does not distance itself from Dante's text to the point at which it parodies Dante's attitudes. On the contrary, on one level SITI Company and Dante come very close together: the play is as critical as the *Inferno* of certain "desires," specifically the consumer's desire in capitalist culture. After all, in *Culture of Desire* condemned souls spout ad slogans and a grocery store manager is depicted as a demon. Moreover, it is the discussion of Warhol's French wallet that doesn't hold change, a discussion which suggests Warhol's own greedy desire for only large currency, that leads into the big transition in the play at the end of Scene 9, the transformation into the power-hungry dark Warhol. Warhol's innocuous and perhaps ironic assertion that he

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[174] For me, the path that was emphasized, or the specific meaning of "desire" that most often rose to the surface in *Culture of Desire*, was that of Warhol's desire for human contact. This may simply have been because moments of Bond's performance as Warhol were some of the few times that the production invited an empathetic connection between the audience and the people onstage. As Brecht feared, emotional involvement often trumps objective consideration of issues.

cannot be bothered with change is the springboard into a new Warhol who has lost touch with his humanity. In this sense, *Culture of Desire* supports the *Inferno*'s condemnation of the oblivious pursuit of wealth and worldly ties to goods. Giving in to his desires for money, the play suggests, is part of the reason Warhol loses his humanity—because in giving in to his desire, he loses his individuality and becomes just another consumer.

However, because of the multiple meanings at play in the word "desire" in *Culture of Desire*, the play simultaneously portrays Warhol's loss of "humanity" as the result of his rejection of specifically his romantic desire. In this way, the play suggests that denying desire is as dangerous as embracing it. It is, after all, Warhol's shyness, his rejection of his sexual desire, in early scenes—"I just don't want anyone to get involved with me"—that leads to his total isolation in the second half of the play.[175] Warhol's descent into isolation is particularly highlighted in Scene 9, immediately following Warhol's failure to kiss Billy Name in the classroom. Warhol steps into an elevator, which begins to descend while Geldzahler again sings a song—this time from *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*: "There's no earthly way of knowing which direction we are going… Not a speck of light is showing. All the fires of Hell are glowing."[176] While Warhol's transformation occurs immediately after his wallet anecdote, his initial descent into the realm of "dark Warhol" begins after this missed opportunity with Billy.

To emphasize the idea that Warhol's descent into Hell is predicated on his suppression of sexual desires, whether out of shyness or shame, Warhol plays out a very telling scene on the descending elevator. Marilyn Monroe steps on to the elevator and she and Warhol play a scene

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[175] *Culture*, 8.
[176] Ibid., 21

from *Some Like It Hot*, in which Tony Curtis' character on the yacht at the end of the film rejects the character Lorelei's advances. "You mean frigid? You poor, poor boy. You ever try American girls?," Monroe asks Warhol.[177] Monroe ends the scene first with a quotation from T.S. Eliot's poem "Burnt Norton"—"Descend lower. Deprivation and destitution of all property. Desiccation of the world of sense, inoperacy of the world of spirit"—and then with a final question from *Some Like It Hot*: "Have you ever been with a male band?"[178] The fact that Warhol has not "been with a male band," in other words has not permitted himself to explore his sexual desire, it is implied, is what propels him deeper into Hell. At the same time, Eliot's quotation captures the paradox of *Culture of Desire*'s use of the term "desire." This is a show that can see the positives, as Dante did, in the "destitution of all property," in the abandoning of worldly desires, and yet does not recommend "inoperacy of the world of spirit," if "spirit" can be said to correspond with desiring community, companionship, or love. We should desire and not desire, *Culture of Desire* insists. SITI Company should concentrate only on its art, yet the bills have to be paid. Torn between the intertexts of Dante and Warhol, and the different meanings of "desire" that the pastiche of these intertexts demands, this is a play that cannot make up its mind. No wonder Warhol ends *Culture of Desire* running in circles.

These paradoxes, however, are in part the result of a creative practice of pastiche that privileges no tongue, no single meaning, more than another for an extended period or absolutely. As suggested in the earlier definition of "pastiche," *Culture of Desire* offers its audiences a catalog of possible meanings, possible beliefs, and allows them to choose, while admittedly suggesting certain paths. In this case, then, of the three major types of pastiche: 1) A neutral

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[177] Ibid., 21
[178] Ibid., 22

practice that presents a series of potentially useful voices, as opposed to privileging a "healthy linguistic normality" against which abnormality can be measured, 2) a practice that makes us aware of history while still emotionally involving the audience, or 3) a practice that challenges all history as based purely in narrative, *Culture of Desire* is most like the first. However, in its simultaneous quotation of 1960s' fashion, icons, events, and its focus on the initially sympathetic Warhol, *Culture of Desire* in some sense is still very much a pastiche in Richard Dyer's terms. SITI Company tries to distance itself from the Factory in so many ways. As Lauren admits:

> [T]he craziness of the world of the Factory and Andy Warhol allowed us to embody another time and another sort of energy-level and lunacy that we didn't naturally have. We were all pretty straight people and pretty socially conservative people…[179]

Nevertheless, the numerous parallels between Warhol and SITI Company kept them close and emotionally involved with the artist as well. SITI Company wants to dismiss Warhol as merely ridiculous throughout this production and yet it cannot.

In the same way that the term "desire" in *Culture of Desire* is complicated by the intertexts of Dante, Warhol, and even of Broadway musical librettists, so is SITI Company's "lesson" of Warhol's shooting affected by or perhaps "infected by" the Dante text, in much the same way as the Dante text is infected by the Lancelot intertext in the *Inferno*'s Canto V, as quoted in Billy Name's school recital of Francesca da Rimini's speech. In the *Inferno*, while reading about Lancelot's affair, da Rimini and her brother-in-law are contaminated by Lancelot's story and enact a parallel scene of forbidden love. Likewise, Dante faints in the frame story around this recollection of da Rimini as a result of da Rimini's monologue. In pity, Dante feels too much for her, a forbidden emotion towards a fallen woman condemned to Hell. He is

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[179] Lauren interview.

contaminated by da Rimini's story as da Rimini was contaminated by Lancelot's story. The contamination of these layered intertexts is continued in the last of the "elevator" scenes in which Elvis Presley repeats a phrase from da Rimini (actually her quotation of the Lancelot story) in a slightly different context. "The crowd doesn't have to know but it must believe in 'the longed for smile,'" he says before kissing Warhol. It is the deepest intertext (Lancelot's tale) that emerges with Elvis' words before this monumental kiss—a kiss after so many earlier, failed attempts between Warhol and the men he idolizes.[180] As this intertext continues its contamination on a new level, Warhol and Elvis, then, kiss like Lancelot and Guinevere, like da Rimini and her brother-in-law, and perhaps like da Rimini and Dante (if only in the fantasy of Dante's sympathetic moment).

The irony of this moment of contaminating intertext, however, is that Elvis was just another of Warhol's images. This kiss can be viewed, then, as an act of self-love. After all, Elvis speaks mostly words attributed to Warhol in the scene. This kiss, which occurs in the last "elevator" scene, leads directly into the next scene in which Warhol transforms into his darker self. Is it, then, the wallet monologue, the failure to kiss Billy Name, or the success in kissing Elvis that leads to the transformation of Warhol into his darker self? Perhaps it is all three. If so, not only the da Rimini episode in the *Inferno* but also Dante's anti-sensual frame of this episode contaminates *Culture of Desire* in the moment of this kiss. In condemning this kiss as leading to a power-hungry Warhol, *Culture of Desire* upholds the intertextual suggestion from Dante that a kiss is wrong, even if we (like Dante) may sympathize with it, because it represents a connection to an impermanent world. In this way, the image of the kiss is like the word "desire" in *Culture*

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[180] Ibid., 24.

of Desire. It is a heteroglossic, a point at which different languages are clearly contesting and about which the reader must choose an interpretation.

If the scene between Elvis and Warhol is indeed a scene of self-love, this suggests some possible meanings for the latter part of Scene 10, near the end of *Culture of Desire*. In this scene, as Warhol sits reading a newspaper, the other cast members (besides Vreeland) deliver monologues that are simply long lists. Some of the lists are comprised of Warhol works: "Marilyn Monroe's Lips 1962, Marilyn Diptych 1962, Gold Marilyn Monroe 1962," etc. Others list major American art galleries, international art museums, ad campaigns that Warhol worked on, and celebrities he painted. The lists overlap and play off one another in a kind of vocal Viewpoints. It is not improvisation, however. The timing is precisely set at which point each list begins and ends. A recording of an aria sung by Maria Callas backs up these spoken lists. The last list names all of Warhol's self-portraits: "Self-Portrait, Double Self-Portrait, Self-Portrait 1942," etc.[181] The other lists end midway through this last list, so the single voice repeating "self-portrait" resonates alone. Combined with the image of Warhol reading, oblivious to those around him, this again suggests that Warhol's downfall, according to SITI Company, was his embracing isolation post-shooting, no longer involving himself in collaboration or desire for others or participating in the contested linguistic environment around him. The artist in *Culture of Desire* turns inward towards himself—"self-obsessed," as Bogart put it—interested only in his own power. His ability to kiss, and therefore to love, only himself is perhaps the first step in this direction.

However, nothing is simple in *Culture of Desire* and this scene is no exception. Indeed, at the beginning of these "list arias," there is a brief monologue excerpted mainly from Warhol's

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[181] Ibid., 39-41.

1963 interview with *ARTnews* that suggests another significance to the lists. Warhol says to the interviewer, "I think everybody should be like a machine," and claims that Pop Art is really just about liking things. "And liking things is like being a machine?" the interviewer asks. Warhol responds, "Yes, because you do the same thing every time. You do it over and over again."[182] The lists that overlap and follow this monologue, then, suggest a Warhol (or any consumer) whose desire is machine-like, doing the same thing over and over. "Desire," as Warhol describes it, is linked with mechanical repetition, something the artists at SITI Company see as "Hell." The final meaning of "desire" then offered in *Culture of Desire* is a mechanical return to the same objects again and again. Desire is repetition, according to Warhol. Desire, then, is Hell, according to SITI Company. This very "SITI Company" interpretation of "Hell" as repetition is simultaneously supportive of a very "Dante" interpretation of "desire" as Hell. This final suggested meaning of "desire" reflects an "*Inferno* way" of seeing the world—and the word. The intertext has again contaminated the text.

"Cultural" Difference: A Valid Distinction Between SITI Company and Warhol

"Culture," like "desire," is another word that picks up multiple meanings from the various conflicting intertexts as this play goes along. Like "desire," the first mention of "culture" is again by Vreeland, this time in Scene 5 immediately following Warhol's tap dance with Dick Tracy, Popeye, and Shirley Temple. Vreeland says, "Although advertising cannot create desire, it can channel it. And what is drawn down by the channel, what travels with the

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[182] *Culture*, 39 and Goldsmith, 16.

commercial, is our culture."[183] This is a quotation from James B. Twitchell's book *Adcult USA*. As Vreeland describes this specific concept of "culture," Warhol and Sedgwick simultaneously list products and procedures (often painful-sounding) that can keep you beautiful: "Brows plucked, lip enlargement, liposuction, teeth pulled, hair weave, hot wax, stomach stapling, face peel," etc. It is therefore suggested by this pastiche of quotations that consumer culture is responsible for literally shaping us, as well as shaping our ideas. We make our bodies conform to the ads as much as our minds. As these nauseating lists of self-abuse drone on, the point of view of these transformational practices is revealed as critical.

The consumer culture criticized here and throughout the play is specifically American. This is emphasized by the second of the three elevator visits in Scene 9, in which Warhol is descending into Hell. In this scene, a homeless woman with a shopping cart steps on and tries to sell things to an intimidated Warhol. She is the flipside to the earlier shopping-cart ballet, an orgy of consuming. Rather than abundance, she represents need. She begins by quoting "The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus, the poem inscribed on the base of the Statue of Liberty. However, before the part in the poem most commonly known—"Give us your tired," etc.—the woman breaks off and begins ranting in the ad-speak that has become familiar by this point in the show: "Introducing, new and improved, suddenly, announcing, now, it's here, just arrived, special offer," etc.[184] The suggestion of this juxtaposition of Lazarus's poem and advertising copy is that the promises of the American Dream are merely empty slogans designed to convince citizens to consume. Moreover, as the image of the homeless woman suggests, consumption always results in castoffs, objects as well as individuals.

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[183] *Culture*, 11 and James B. Twitchell, *Adcult USA* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997),

[184] *Culture*, 23.

Culture of Desire of course is generally critical of American consumer "culture" throughout the play. It was premised, after all, on the ominous question: "Who are we becoming in light of the pervasive consumerism that permeates our every move through life?"[185] Unlike the word "desire," culture is a more stable signifier as it is often synonymous with a consumerism that is uniformly derided. However, SITI Company's concerns over Andy Warhol's "legitimacy" as an artist suggests another meaning of "culture" in *Culture of Desire*, one which complicates an easy relationship between the play as critic and culture as critiqued. Returning to the Jameson/Hutcheon debate over post-modern art in contemporary society, and specifically the efficacy of pastiche, the word "culture" in *Culture of Desire* also suggests a culture industry as described by the Frankfurt School and specifically Adorno. Indeed, the socio-historical descriptions of culture in this show operate on the same general understanding of the culture industry as described by Adorno: the modern world's unavoidable interlock of big business, government, and cultural production. As it is for Jameson, Pop Art in *Culture of Desire* is in many ways the fulfillment of Adorno's nightmare of art in late-capitalist society. In a culture industry dedicated to commodifying art, Pop Art proudly takes its place as a good to be consumed like any other good. One of Warhol's silk-screens that literalizes this idea is displayed and described by Vreeland in the "auction" knee-play that precedes the "classroom" scene in *Culture of Desire*. Vreeland comments on Warhol's "One-Dollar Bills," a canvas filled with the images of just that, "As there can be few people on earth who do not share his adoration of money, he was certainly painting attractive subject-matter here."[186] However, Vreeland also acknowledges the irony of Warhol's piece in her description, its "implied comment about

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[185] Bogart, "Some Things."
[186] Ibid., 19.

idolatry." It is this irony, of course, the implied criticism of a culture that would buy a canvas filled with dollar bills, that makes Pop Art, and specifically Warhol's work, not complicit with but critical of the culture industry. This raises an ongoing debate over Warhol's art, one which SITI Company members took up during their creative process: whether Warhol's art is ironic, and therefore critical, or not.

Certainly in interviews and in his writings, Warhol never tipped his hand to reveal any irony over his embrace of consumerism, preferring to extol money and "business art."[187] If his position was ironic, Warhol never winked to let the world know this. As mentioned earlier, SITI Company is decidedly against business art, in other words art created to be easily consumed. *Culture of Desire* is a testament to that. In this way, the company members of SITI Company assume the role of Adorno and Jameson in their dismissal of Warhol's aesthetic in this play. The play is critical of Pop Art, or at least of where Pop Art can lead: to an un-ironic obsession with consumption and therefore to the fulfillment of selfish desires. In this sense, *Culture of Desire* is representative of the avant-garde art Adorno imagines in *Aesthetic Theory*. It is a play that destroys and remakes commodified art, in this case, Warhol's commodified art. Of course, it can only be imagined what Adorno's reaction to Pop Art or *Culture of Desire* would have been. However, Jameson's later criticism, with its Frankfurt School underpinnings, is explicitly anti-Pop Art in a way that might suggest how Adorno would have reacted to both. In "Postmodernism," Jameson specifically highlights Warhol's silk-screen of ballet slippers, "Diamond Dust Shoes," as the prime example of what is wrong with post-modern art. This silk-screen, for Jameson, is a reproduction drained of life, a "simulacrum."[188] Bogart expresses a

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[187] *Philosophy*, 92.
[188] Jameson, 9.

similar view of Warhol's art in her concerns over repetitions ("Xeroxes") in which "a quality is lost."[189] What confuses an easy division of Jameson, Adorno, and SITI Company (as critics of the culture industry) on one side and Warhol (as enthusiastic supporter of the culture industry) on the other is the fact that SITI Company's primary creative method, Composition, is so deeply involved in the technique Jameson specifically derides above all others in post-modern art: pastiche.

Jameson dismisses the critical possibilities of pastiche, the technique of quotation SITI Company uses to create its devised works, and specifically the technique used in *Culture of Desire* to make SITI Company's critique of a culture of consumerism. While *Culture of Desire* for the most part offers a catalog of equally weighted voices and allows its audience to choose, the story it tells with Warhol also makes a critical path through heteroglossia. In this sense, the play takes a stand against consumer culture by exemplifying Warhol as a cautionary tale, one which admittedly is continually undercut by SITI Company's unplanned closeness to its subject. At the same time, *Culture of Desire* reveals that a play that utilizes pastiche can still be high modernist. In other words, there are aspects of *Culture of Desire* Jameson would applaud. In many ways, *Culture of Desire* is a play that continues the work of modernism in art. In one sense, modernism is about negativity—eliminating representation, figuration, narration, harmony, unity, etc. Likewise, *Culture of Desire* challenges narration with its non-linear story. It challenges representation in the complex ways it imagines Warhol as "every character." It challenges unity through its conflict of voices and intertexts, juxtaposed raggedly. In this sense, it is the kind of high modernist work Jameson champions in "The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism."

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[189] Bogart interview.

However, the careful choreography and emphasis on story (even if it is a cobbled together story) makes *Culture of Desire* easily consumable on another level. Jim Nicola, for example, who brought the show to New York Theatre Workshop, described to Bogart how he sang all the way home after seeing *Culture of Desire* in Portland.[190] This reaction, similar to that which one expects from an audience member after it has seen a Broadway musical, that most consumable of theatre productions, is not uncommon for a SITI audience member post-show—nor is it a coincidence that *Culture of Desire* frequently features Broadway musical songs and even dance numbers in its pastiche, not to parody them, but because this company loves them. In this sense, SITI Company's devised work, exemplified by *Culture of Desire*, is eminently post-modern and true to pastiche. It combines elements of low art and high art in a way that Jameson dislikes.

In the end, perhaps this is really the source of conflict between Warhol and SITI Company. It is not, as the production and creative process of *Culture of Desire* suggests, that Composition Work leads to collective creation while Pop Art leads to self-interest, or that post-modern pastiche in SITI Company's hands exemplifies a contested linguistic environment that more effectively involves an audience than Warhol's unfinished but consumable paintings. Rather, SITI Company's devised works are always struggling between their identification as difficult and elite high modernist art (and the implications of this identification on the possibility of being a respected and financially secure artist in a late capitalist society) and their identification as commodified and commodifiable democratic, post-modern art. This is a struggle that Warhol avoided by seemingly buying in to the culture of desire.

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[190] Ibid.

Unlike the financially successful Warhol, midway on its life journey, during the production of *Culture of Desire*, SITI Company was struggling financially, but was also struggling aesthetically to define what its shows could do, how they might be constructed, and how they might involve their audiences. Through the counter-example of Warhol, seemingly content to buy into the culture industry (a culture of desire), SITI Company was able to devise a work midway between tap dance and ballet, between musical and opera, between love story and lecture. Its high-modernist triumph *bobrauschenbergamerica*, anti-narrative to its core, and SITI Company's financial stability were still to come. However, *Culture of Desire* is more compelling a case study than the company's later successes because it shows SITI Company struggling in the dark woods of creating a collective theatre piece that is at once difficult and still digestible to consumer America.

What Matter Who's Analyzing?

Remembering Bakhtin's insistence that meaning is always dependent upon, above all, on the specific social sites, specific social registers, and specific moments of utterance and reception—in other words, on who is reading the text and when—it would be negligent not to consider briefly at the end of this chapter the fact that this analysis of *Culture of Desire* is being made by me, an English graduate student at Northwestern University, in Chicago, IL, during 2007-2008. My history with SITI Company, after all, is a long one. As a reporter for *Back Stage West*, the actors' trade newspaper in Los Angeles, I was first introduced to SITI Company's work in the summer of 1998, immediately following its productions of *Culture of Desire*. As a practitioner, I trained with SITI Company that summer over a period of two weeks in Suzuki/Viewpoints, as part of "Framework: 98," the first of the company's training visits to

L.A. I also interviewed Bogart for a profile in *Back Stage West* that year. I continued training with SITI Company for the next five summers and trained with one of their L.A.-based associates, Kim Weild, during the year. I also continued covering SITI Company shows that toured in Los Angeles as managing editor for *Back Stage West*.

As a "receiver" of *Culture of Desire* through its production script and video, this raises a some questions: To what extent am I defensive of *Culture of Desire* as an important work, and one not to be forgotten by theatre historians or SITI Company, because my involvement with the company began in 1998? Scott Cummings' book *Remaking American Theater*, the most complete history of SITI Company in print, virtually ignores this production and this time period in the group's history, perhaps because of the company's own reticence to reminisce over such a difficult time. How is my reception affected by my desire to reconsider this production and this time in SITI Company's life as significant and not without its triumphs? In considering *Culture of Desire* as a period of crisis, "midway on [the company's] life journey," how much does my analysis depend on witnessing SITI Company's successes, financially and critically, after this period? Finally, as someone who first became interested in SITI Company while training in Composition Work and seeing what this method could create through the fascinating, collaboratively written *Cabin Pressure*, performed in 2000 in L.A., to what extent do I prefer SITI Company's collectively written productions to its more recent collaborations with various playwrights? Like the questions that end *Culture of Desire*, demanding the audience's consideration to complete at least one set of the meanings for this show, these questions must be considered by my audience as well in determining the shared significance of this interpretation *Culture of Desire*.

This moment of introspection is not simply offered as a disclaimer for the argument that precedes, it also provides a transition into Chapter Four, in which the methodology of this study shifts to incorporate my personal experience working with theatre collectives as the primary evidence for my arguments about collective composition and quotation. My investment in SITI Company is personal, though I played no part in the development and presentation of *Culture of Desire*. In the two shows analyzed in the next chapter, however, my investment is personal because my own creative input as a member of, or collaborator with, these collectives is inseparable from the resulting theatre productions discussed.

Chapter 4:

Modeling Collectivity: Quotation and Community in 21st Century Los Angeles Theatre

For theatre companies such as the Living Theatre and SITI Company, quotation is not simply a method for collective composition of a drama text but also a way to concretize their commitment to collectivity in creative practice and on the page. Quotation assists the process of collective composition (and specifically collective writing) because it does not require that each company member be adept at playwriting. Quotation eliminates the need for (and therefore the authority of) the playwright while simultaneously leveling the creative playing field among the members of a theatre collective. Moreover, extensive quotation, as in the technique of pastiche, offers an artistic model in which conflicting points of view are brought together without having been filtered through, and modified by, a "unified creative will." Through the technique of pastiche, each company member can have his or her say (through words, admittedly, borrowed from others), even if his or her opinions or interests do not "fit in" with the those of the rest of the company or the thematic core of the particular production. The resulting radically plural texts and radically plural creative processes, then, model types of collectivity, in other words, ways of functioning as a democratic group.

Not all theatre companies or playwrights who create primarily through quotation, of course, are interested in modeling collectivity for their audiences. However, this chapter considers two theatre collectives that, like the Living Theatre, are as interested in quotation as a creative method as they are in the commitment to collectivity that quotation can embody and explore on stage and in a text. Chapters Two and Three argued that the radically plural form of the Living Theatre's and SITI Company's drama texts is inseparable from the collective writing

methods by which they are composed. This chapter takes this argument a step farther, asserting that the collaborative environments created in rehearsal and in the production of plays by BOTHarts and Cornerstone Theater Company parallel their companies' collective organizations and politics to such an extent that these plays become exemplifications of specific types of collectivity. These companies' different collectivities are enacted in rehearsal, where they are "tried out" by company members, and enacted again in production, where they are "tried out" by audience members who co-create the productions as an extension of the theatre company.

As Mark Weinberg argues in *Challenging the Hierarchy: Collective Theatre in the United States*, theatre collectives and their productions, by modeling collectivity, serve as experimental microcosms for alternative societies. Most collectives, Weinberg notes, involve their audiences more directly than other kinds of theatre companies in pre- and post-performance participation. This involvement is in line with Terry Eagleton's assertion that collectively created art should not be "symmetrically complete... but like any product should be completed only in the act of being used."[1] Like Warhol and SITI Company, BOTHarts and Cornerstone are interested in allowing their audiences to complete their artistic works, to provide any answers to the questions that the works pose. As grounded as BOTHarts' and Cornerstone's productions may be in "real" events or issues (and therefore in the "real" hierarchical culture at large), these plays also create a space for performers and audiences to imagine new ways of living collectively. The creative processes behind BOTHarts and Cornertone's productions open up their work to a multiplicity of voices (from their members and their audiences), while at the same

[1] Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 70.

time offering imagined alternatives to hierarchical systems. The result of attending a BOTHarts or Cornerstone production, as Weinberg puts it, can be that:

> the lives of… audiences [are] examined outside the structure so that the oppressiveness and inadequacies of the current social system can be explored *with the understanding that the system can be changed.* The concept is, in many ways, what Bertolt Brecht meant by *alienation*, or making the familiar strange.[2]

Specifically of interest in this chapter are the ways in which BOTHarts and Cornerstone, unlike SITI Company or the Living Theatre, contend with a radical diversity of voices within their ensembles and the world without smoothing over disjunctions through a controlling aesthetic (as often occurs with SITI Company productions) or limiting the multiplicity through a centralized authority within the theatre company itself (the kind of authority Beck and Malina represented for the Living Theatre). Productions by BOTHarts and Cornerstone are more open, in very different ways, to an array of positions by their members and audiences. This commitment to diversity means that each company is constantly challenging the hierarchies that exist within their own organizations in ways that the Living Theatre, though interested in, could not, and ways that SITI Company does not even attempt. As part of their commitment to opening up their creative processes to the divergent voices of their members, BOTHarts and Cornerstone also open up their methods of quotation to include texts that the company members (or audience members) have written themselves. In other words, these theatre collectives show a renewed interest in Living Theatre's practice of allowing the performers "be themselves," to speak in their "own" words as well as through the words of others.

Chapter Four is structured as follows: After an explanation of the ways in which BOTHarts and Cornerstone challenge their internal authority as creators while simultaneously

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[2] Mark S. Weinberg, *Challenging the Hierarchy: Collective Theatre in the United States* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 19.

challenging external authority, a description of my first encounter with "intertextual" theatre, attending the co-production of Cornerstone's and the Actors' Gang's *Medea/Macbeth/Cinderella*, is offered. As there are no histories of the Actors' Gang in print, a brief history of this theatre company follows this account in order to better explain the type of collectivity that BOTHarts, an offshoot of this theatre, models. Then, after a synopsis of BOTHarts' *DreamPlay*, the chapter explains how BOTHarts' shaping of quotation in the collective composition process aimed for easier comprehension of its play by audiences, particularly in contrast to the quotation of the Living Theatre or SITI Company. While its plays may be easier to consume, the next section argues, BOTHarts' creative process is actually more conflicted and therefore more honestly democratic than other collectives'. Next, BOTHarts' commitment to audience involvement is further explored by examining the open questions *DreamPlay* poses and the post-production interaction the collective designed for its audience members. Wrapping up the discussion of *DreamPlay* are two sections which describe the ways in which the production and the organization reconcile with authority while at the same time opening up their work and the collective to a more democratic process. This commitment to a more democratic process is represented, in part, by the ways in which the collective is drawn closer to the central figure of *DreamPlay*, accused murderer Scott Falater, through its use of pastiche.

The analysis of Cornerstone's play *Zones*, which follows, is briefer. After describing the specific type of bridge-building collectivity that is modeled by Cornerstone and by this production, the chapter examines how the intertext of human-relations experientials in *Zones* created a unique hybrid of theatre and "dialogue." The chapter concludes with an examination of

how this hybrid, like all the other productions discussed in this dissertation, struggled with authority onstage and in its creative process.

Challenging Their Own Authority

As Chapter Three noted, on the one hand *Culture of Desire* is an example of a "radically plural text,"[3] in that no one voice or point of view seems to dominate the overall performance or the written artifact. In part, this radical plurality is due to the Composition Work that goes into making a play such as *Culture of Desire*. During SITI Company's writing and staging of devised works, all of the creators are given equal say in the piece in terms of what gets on the page and on the stage. Moreover, direct quotation for SITI Company, often through the technique of pastiche, ensures a text and a performance that are very "close" to their intertexts. In pastiche, these close intertexts often contaminate and challenge the main "story."[4] The driving narrative voice is contested by a cacophony of divergent voices, which results in a mentally-challenging juxtaposition of references, seeming tangents, all of which requires significant work on the part of an audience member interested in "making sense" of the performance. The "point" of a play such as *Culture of Desire* may be elusive, but the audience is undeniably empowered by being asked, as much as the creators, to take up the task of meaning-making. Appropriately, *Culture of Desire* ends with a series of questions. The play is one half of an interview for which the audience must supply the answers.

On the other hand, as noted in Chapter Three, despite its radical plurality, *Culture of Desire* in many ways continues the elitist work of high modernism. It is a play designed to

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[3] Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975).

[4] Anne Bogart, Interview with the writer, Saratoga Springs, NY, July 11, 2007.

reward primarily sophisticated and informed interpreters. Those familiar with the subject, the company's style, and above all the play's intertexts, have a definite interpretative advantage. Likewise, SITI Company does not embrace the "democratic" ideal that anyone can make or understand "art." *Culture of Desire* may ask questions, but perhaps not everyone is qualified to answer them. This creates a tension within a production such as *Culture of Desire*, which opens up its creative process to a plurality of voices and yet is hesitant to assert that all voices are equal. The tension is manifested in the company's ambivalence towards the figure of Andy Warhol throughout the show. As opposed to Pop Art, *Culture of Desire* and SITI Company itself, champion individualism and uniqueness, particularly in the face of a leveling, regularizing consumerism. Moreover, the carefully planned, virtuoso choreography of *Culture of Desire*, as well as the central and singular influence of artistic director Anne Bogart, results in a show in which the radical plurality of voices (or, to use Michael Vanden Heuvel's term, the "disorderliness") is kept firmly in check by authority, whether this authority is SITI Company's demanding and unifying style or Bogart herself, the dominant if generous creative personality at the center of the group.[5] SITI Company's creative process begins by utilizing a somewhat arbitrary mass of input, including multiple compositions by non-company members. However, within the development of a production such as *Culture of Desire*, arbitrariness is not just limited by the company, it is virtually eliminated. Like all of SITI Company's shows, *Culture of Desire* is a performance carefully designed, deliberately set in stone, repeatable, and intentionally (and within the group, proudly) complex: a "SITI Company-worthy" piece of art.

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[5] Michael Vanden Heuvel, "Waking the Text: Disorderly Order in the Wooster Group's *Route 1 & 9 (the Last Act)*" in *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 10, no. 1 (1995), 62.

The two case studies in this chapter, BOTHarts' *DreamPlay* (2000) and Cornerstone Theater Company's *Zones, or where does your soul live and is there sufficient parking?* (2001), on the other hand, as this chapter will detail, change radically from venue to venue, production to production. Therefore, they require more from their audiences in terms of co-creation. *Zones* is indeed merely the scaffolding of a performance event which must be constructed differently at each performance by its participants. Both productions of *DreamPlay* likewise were considered "versions" by their creators. These versions make similar arguments about collectivity and the individual but are completely distinct based on who was participating in the different creative processes. *Culture of Desire*, on the other hand, is not primarily interested in modeling collectivity through quotation, certainly not a collectivity in which the audience can participate during the production experience. Likewise, as Chapter Two argued, the collectivity modeled by the Living Theatre's *Frankenstein* in the form of the "leviathan" was uninviting to audience members because of its intimidating appearance as well as the physical skill it seemed to require from those who wished to take part in the creation. *Frankenstein* modeled a collectivity but did not invite its audience to participate in the model. In the same way that Beck and Malina eventually took over the collective composition process from their company and completed the work themselves, the production overall invited the audience to create along with the company but then revoked this invitation.

Similarly, the performance of *Culture of Desire* and the exemplary (for SITI Company) creative process behind this production challenge authorship and authority on many levels, but also retain certain authorial assumptions and practices and a central control over the final product. On the one hand, SITI Company is an "intertextual" theatre, as Vanden Heuvel would term it, and intertextuality cannot help but call into question authority in the creation of a text as

well as in textual interpretation.[6] As intertextuality challenges authority in general, likewise, the specific intertextual product *Culture of Desire* challenges Andy Warhol, an artistic icon, and therefore a historical authority figure of the New York artistic scene out of which SITI Company's process of collective composition was born. However, while *Culture of Desire* may challenge the authority of its predecessor Warhol in the same way that its intertextual form challenges the idea of the unified authorial text, the show does not necessarily challenge the authority of SITI Company's members or the authority of company director/leader Bogart. Also, like *Frankenstein*, *Culture of Desire* does not model an alternative collectivity in which the audience can participate.

This chapter looks at two different but related productions that, like *Culture of Desire* and *Frankenstein*, utilize intertextuality to challenge authorship and authority, but in ways that go beyond SITI Company or the Living Theatre in terms of the creators giving up control over their product. These two productions challenge the authority of the companies themselves as creators, including their artistic leaders. The productions examined in this chapter are the first run of Cornerstone Theatre Company's *Zones* in 2001, written by Peter Howard, and the second version of BOTHarts' *DreamPlay* in 2002, written by Tracy Young and her ensemble and originally created with, and presented by, the Actors' Gang in 2000. At first glance, these two productions seem more traditionally "authorial" than *Frankenstein* or *Culture of Desire*. For example, unlike SITI Company and the Living Theatre, who were credited, respectively as the writers of *Culture*

[6] As noted in the introduction, Kristeva's concept of intertextuality, for example, means that every text is "a permutation of texts," not an original product of an author's mind but rather a compilation of pre-existent texts. Analysis then is not the search for a fixed meaning somehow traceable to an author's intentions. Meaning does not sit beneath a text waiting to be uncovered, rather multiple meanings exist in the words as they shift between, and are shared by, various voices in the text. [Julia Kristeva, "The Bounded Text" in *Desire in Language*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia UP, 1969), 36.]

of Desire and *Frankenstein*, Young and Howard are billed as the only "playwrights" of their respective shows in press material. However, while the advertising of *DreamPlay* and *Zones* may more obviously resemble a commercial theatre process in its reflection of conventional theatre-making hierarchies, the resulting shows were in many ways less high modernist and more committed to a radical plurality of voices and to a truly democratic participation by their audiences than *Frankenstein* or *Culture of Desire*—though committed, it will be argued, in very different ways. Looking at two shows produced at least three years down the line from SITI Company's *Culture of Desire*, this chapter also depicts two contemporary theatre companies influenced by SITI Company that have taken the communal interests and commitments of SITI Company (with its roots in the creative processes of 1960s' collectives such as the Living Theatre) in very different directions.

While the primary goal of this chapter, like Chapters Two and Three, is the close analysis of a theatre production, the methodology is slightly different. Both *DreamPlay* and *Zones* were productions that I, the writer of this dissertation, was involved in to different degrees. I performed in the second version of *DreamPlay* and I covered the development and performances of the first version of *DreamPlay* and Cornerstone's *Zones* for separate articles in the newspaper *Back Stage West*. Therefore, to try to adopt a stance of critical distance from these two shows—to consistently write in the third person for example—seems disingenuous. Rather, I approached the research for and writing of this chapter as a "participant observer." In other words, while I analyze the organizations, cultures, and cultural products of these two theatre collectives, I acknowledge within this analysis that I was indeed also part of these organizations and cultures, a member of the groups in question. This difference in methodology in this chapter

is not radical by any means, but merely incorporates a shift in emphasis from exclusively archival interpretation to the inclusion of personal experiences.

Otherwise, the evidence for this chapter is similar to the evidence offered in the case studies of *Frankenstein* or *Culture of Desire*, with some additional material. For *DreamPlay*, the following evidence will be considered in exploring as completely as possible the meanings of this show when it was performed at a private residence in Studio City in June 2002 (in its second production, version 2.0): the unpublished scripts of versions 1.0 and 2.0 of the play made available by Tracy Young; videotapes of the productions, version 1.0 at the Actors' Gang Theatre in Hollywood in 2000, and version 2.0 at the private residence in Studio City; videotapes of various compositions filmed during rehearsals for version 2.0; a number of interviews with Tracy Young from 1999 to the present; interviews with various members of the Actors' Gang and BOTHarts; advertising for the show; articles about the Actors' Gang and BOTHarts published in *L.A. Weekly* and *Back Stage West* newspapers (some written by myself); the various quoted texts that make up *DreamPlay*; my journals of Composition Work recorded during the development process for version 2.0; and, finally, my personal experience training and performing with the Actors' Gang and BOTHarts over a five-year period.

Likewise, for *Zones*, the following evidence will be considered in exploring as completely as possible the meanings of this show when it was performed at various venues throughout the Los Angeles area, Oct. 5-Nov. 9, 2001 (its first production run): the unpublished scripts of multiple versions of the play, throughout its stages of development, made available by Peter Howard; a videotape of the production, from the Oct. 21, 2001, production at the Los Angeles Baha'i Center; a number of interviews with Bill Rauch, Peter Howard, and cast members of *Zones* from 2001 to the present; advertising for the show; articles and reviews of

Zones published in *L.A. Weekly* and *Back Stage West* newspapers (some written by me); the various quoted texts that make up *Zones*; my journals recorded during the development process of *Zones*; and, finally, my personal experience participating in the creative process of *Zones* with Cornerstone during the rehearsal period, as well as my experiences attending the show at a number of venues. As with *Frankenstein* and *Culture of Desire*, the other piece of the puzzle it would have been preferable to obtain in terms of evidence is a better record of audience reception of *DreamPlay* and *Zones*, though in these cases I did have the chance to speak to many audience members of both productions, post-show, sometimes as a performer and sometimes as a journalist.

***Medea/Macbeth/Cinderella* and Los Angeles Theatre**

Chapter Two argued that the Living Theatre, while it created *Frankenstein* primarily in Europe, had developed its composition methods as part of a group of theatre collectives and collective-committed artists, dancers, and musicians working in New York City in the 1950s and ’60s. Chapter Three described how SITI Company also traces its creative roots to this New York scene, particularly in its practice of Composition Work. This chapter makes a geographical leap from the tight-knit and well-documented New York Downtown arts scene of the second half of the 20th century to the sprawling, largely undefined Los Angeles live performance scene at the beginning of the 21st century. While Cornerstone and the Actors’ Gang (specifically Tracy Young) have significant connections to the history of New York theatre collectives, and to Anne Bogart in particular, the Los Angeles theatre scene that to a large extent defines Young and Cornerstone requires some introduction. As a critic for, and then managing editor of, *Back Stage West* newspaper, I covered this L.A. scene for seven years (1995-2002).

The Actors' Gang, founded in 1981 by a group of UCLA alumni including Tim Robbins, is a native Los Angeles theatre, perhaps the area's most important in terms of longevity and influence. Cornerstone Theater Company, on the other hand, was founded by Harvard University alums who traveled around the U.S. co-creating theatre with different communities before settling in L.A. in 1992. Nevertheless, both of these theatres are now defined by the Los Angeles arts scene. Cornerstone and the Actors' Gang also defined one another for many years, as the entwined companies shared actors, playwrights, and other creative personnel. The culmination of this symbiotic relationship was the Cornerstone/Actors' Gang co-production of *Medea*/*Macbeth*/*Cinderella* in 1998, co-directed by Tracy Young (director of BOTHarts' *DreamPlay*) and Bill Rauch (the former artistic director of Cornerstone who directed *Zones*). *Medea*/*Macbeth*/*Cinderella* was my introduction to these two directors' work as well as the first time I became interested in intertextuality in the contemporary theatre. Considering the profound affect this play had on me, it is not a coincidence that the two productions I chose to focus on in this chapter were helmed by Young and Rauch.

Despite the longevity of the Actors' Gang and Cornerstone, in many ways Los Angeles in the late 20th century and early 21st century seems a difficult place in which to build and maintain a theatre collective. Theatre in this fragmented metropolis has an unfair but long-standing reputation for unprofessional, ego-driven showcases packaged to sell actors and writers to big-screen producers—or at least win them agents. The majority of theatres operating in L.A. county produce under the Equity 99-Seat agreement. This agreement is essentially a salary waiver. Actors are paid for transportation to and from the theatre only, unless a production runs for longer than six weeks, at which point a slightly larger stipend above transportation costs is guaranteed. The vast majority of actors onstage in L.A. in any given week do not make a living

wage by their labor. Therefore, the assumption among theatre producers and theatre-goers in L.A. is that most theatre productions are either being done for the love of live performance or in the hopes that the theatre job will lead to more lucrative employment onscreen. Because of the latter assumption, the L.A. stage is often considered opportunistic and impoverished, a reflection of, and poor relation to, cutthroat Hollywood under whose sign storefront theatres toil in obscurity.

Nevertheless, eleven of the fifty-seven theatre collectives registered with the Network of Ensemble Theatres are currently based in L.A., far more than any other city including New York. Indeed, it is common for theatre makers in Los Angeles to argue that the very neglect they suffer under as an under-funded, under-attended, and largely dismissed artistic group, is also responsible for the high level of experimentation and non-commercial aesthetics within the 99-Seat scene. In the 1990s in particular, a loose network of theatre collectives and solo artists seemed to flourish in the shadows of the entertainment industry. This network spearheaded the Edge of the World Theatre Festival, first presented in 1999. With no equivalent of an Off-Broadway scene, these theatres, many of which were collectives in some sense, produced work with little or no expectation that their productions might move to a larger house or a longer, more lucrative, run. The term "Big Cheap Theatre" was coined to describe a certain aesthetic within this 99-Seat scene.[7] This term tried to convey the kind of ambitious stagings—big ideas, epic plots, highly theatrical presentations—on miniscule budgets that characterized L.A. groups such as the Theatre of NOTE, Evidence Room, Indecent Exposure Theater Company, Open Fist

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[7] The term "Big Cheap Theatre" was popularized by the Regional Alternative Theatre Conference (RAT), which first convened in Iowa City in 1994. This conference was a response to Erik Ehn's call for "art workers hostelry" in his article "A Proposal and an Alarum Towards Big Cheap Theatre" *Theater* 24, no. 2 (1993).

Theatre Company, and Bottom's Dream. Larger venues such as the Mark Taper Forum or the Geffen Playhouse, while committed in theory to the development of local work, rarely presented homegrown productions in the late 1990s and were often considered simply houses for touring shows.

In early April 1998, I was assigned to review *Medea*/*Macbeth*/*Cinderella* for *Back Stage West* newspaper. This show was a co-production of Cornerstone Theater Company and the Actors' Gang and was being presented at the Actors' Gang Theatre on Santa Monica Boulevard in Hollywood. I had worked as a reviewer for *Back Stage West* since moving to Los Angeles in 1996. Already a fan of Cornerstone and the Actors' Gang, I had previously reviewed Chay Yew's *A Beautiful Country* (Cornerstone's "Chinatown" production in its B.H. Cycle, which will be described later in the chapter) and a number of shows at the Gang, including Joe Grimm, Michael Neimand, and Mike Schlitt's noir-vaudeville *Little Man in a Box*, Shimizo Kunio's *The Dressing Room*, and director David Schweizer's hyperkinetic take on Oscar Wilde's *Salome*. None of these shows, however, had prepared me for *Medea*/*Macbeth*/*Cinderella* (*M*/*M*/*C*), which was the most exciting theatre production I had seen in Los Angeles and remains one of my most significant theatre experiences as an audience member.[8]

M/*M*/*C* combined the large ensembles of Cornerstone and the Actors' Gang to simultaneously stage three plays: Euripides' *Medea*, Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, and the Rodgers & Hammerstein musical *Cinderella*. The play was a staged "mash-up" (before the term was coined). The three plays shared stage space and time. If each play could be separated out from this collision, it would be found that the creators had retained almost its entire text. Indeed, if audience members could simply concentrate on one show for the duration of the evening, they

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[8] My review of *Medea*/*Macbeth*/*Cinderella* appeared in *Back Stage West* (April 10, 1998), 8.

would recognize the play largely unchanged. However, directors Rauch and Young's staging made such selection virtually impossible. *M/M/C* challenged and encouraged spectators to follow all three shows simultaneously. Sometimes the characters would perform their scenes unaware of the parallel universes right beside them. In other words, Cinderella might be singing "In My Own Little Corner," while Medea plotted her revenge against Jason by Cinderella's side, both directly addressing the audience. Oftentimes in these sections, dialogue overlapped. At other times, characters became aware of one another within the shared space. The device commonly used was that in moments when magic, spirits, or the gods were called upon in one reality, the character experiencing the supernatural became aware of the other shows sharing the stage. For example, when Macbeth, hallucinating, asks, "Is this a dagger I see before me?" Medea is actually onstage holding the dagger Macbeth sees and with which she later will kill her children. Indeed Medea, Macbeth, and Cinderella all "see" each other in this moment. At other points in the show, the stage operated like a three-ring circus. One play would take centerstage and command the audience's attention while the other two continued their scenes less in focus upstage. The "circus" effect was deliberate, emphasized by a device the production sometimes used in which the three shows revolved one after another to "center ring."

The level of concentration required of *M/M/C*'s audiences approached the level of concentration required of its performers. This created a charged atmosphere within the theatre space. Rarely have I found a live performance that demanded so much from a spectator just to keep up with the storytelling. The challenge paid off in a number of ways, however. On one level, *M/M/C* is an exploration of thematic intersections among three theatre "classics." The staging underlined a central interest in "ambition" in these three plays, exploring the idea that "wishes can come true," for better or worse. Choosing three shows from historical periods that

might be considered pinnacles of dramatic writing—the Ancient Greek, the Renaissance, and the mid-20th century (the heyday of the modern American musical)—was not arbitrary. In this way, *M/M/C* offered an examination of what theatre can do as an art form, ahistorically. To emphasize this exploration of the possibilities of theatre across time, the production suggested that Medea, Macbeth, and Cinderella were all "theatre makers" regardless of their individual realities. Each of these characters, after all, imagines and then stages his or her dreams or ambitions, with very different results. *M/M/C* exemplified the universal ability of theatre to make imagined future possibilities into material reality.

In addition to requiring a more significant audience commitment than the typical theatre production, *M/M/C* presented distinct and sometimes clashing points of view that nevertheless were part of a whole and worked towards a single purpose, the presentation of the these three narratives. In this way, *M/M/C* modeled a type of collectivity that channeled almost-unmanageable multiplicity into a kind of manageable diversity, a type of collectivity (this chapter will later explore) that BOTHarts and Cornerstone would continue to model in future productions in different ways.

Like *Culture of Desire*, *M/M/C* was a purely quotational or "cento" text. Only the words from these three plays were used in the production, and the words were not altered. Unlike *Culture of Desire*, however, *M/M/C* offered no indication of a distinction between text and intertexts. As Bogart explained, "story" comes first in SITI Company's devised works.[9] The story (and therefore the central "text" of *Culture of Desire*) is Warhol's journey into hell, literally and metaphorically. The intertexts, then, range from passages from Dante's *Inferno* to passages from consumerism textbooks to selections of T.S. Eliot's poems. With *M/M/C*, on the other

[9] Bogart interview.

hand, there is no central text, only three equal texts (or equal intertexts). Audience sympathies may tend towards the most contemporary production and the most popular genre: the musical *Cinderella*. However, *M/M/C* is not presented as the musical *Cinderella* intercut with stagings of *Medea* and *Macbeth*. A central imagined stage reality (the world of the character Cinderella or Macbeth or Medea) is declined in *M/M/C*. The offstage historical moment of the audience experiencing the show then comes to the forefront, as the audience is given full interpretative power over these intertexts. Very little commentary on these shows, in the way of parody or bold, alienating interpretation, was offered by the directors and companies. The staging was, therefore, often pure pastiche. *Cinderella*, for example, is not presented as a lesser art form than Greek tragedy. No "normal" tongue is privileged, so nothing is parodied. *M/M/C* is a collage that doesn't emphasize radical difference, or a montage that doesn't smooth over difference between elements to achieve a seamless new creation. It is an arrangement of elements that denies the possibilities of marginality.

At the same time, as *Culture of Desire* is a pastiche that still does political work, as it was argued in Chapter Three, *M/M/C* as pastiche also does political work, despite Fredric Jameson's assumptions about the technique. This can be seen in the way in which *M/M/C* dealt with issues of gender. *Medea* was performed by an all-female cast; *Macbeth* by an all-male cast, and *Cinderella* by a cast of mixed gender, including some drag performances: most notably Daniel Parker as the Fairy Godmother. The only exception to this three-show gender-specific concept was Steve Porter, who played the role of the Herald in all three onstage realities. On one level, an all-male Shakespeare cast and all-female Greek tragedy cast can be understood simply as these companies trying to faithfully recreate performance traditions of the shows (or the myth of performance traditions): in other words, Shakespeare wrote for an all-male company, and the

Greek drama rose out of all-female dance rituals. However, the gender-specific divisions in *M/M/C* were also specifically employed to challenge notions of appropriate or "natural" sexuality. The simultaneous or serial staging of love scenes between two male, two female, and a male and a female performer, for example, enacted these pairings as a series of options. Rather than highlighting gender, as contemporary all-male or all-female productions are apt to do, *M/M/C* seemed to dissolve gender as an important category. This is significant in that Cornerstone Theater Company was co-producing *M/M/C* at a moment in the Actors' Gang history when the Gang's gung-ho, testosterone-fueled image was being remade because of new company members and because of Young's influence as the company's most visible director. A better understanding of the Actors' Gang history as a company and Young's place in the group helps explain the ways in which quotation, in Young's hands, was used as a tool to challenge not only the authority of the texts she quoted as a director at the Actors' Gang, but also, as recognized by the director herself, the patriarchal authority historically embraced by the Gang.

One last note on *M/M/C* before this history: In the same way that gender is erased by the production, history is erased as well—in a way that would frustrate Jameson and confirm some of his concerns about pastiche as a creative technique. On the one hand, the pastiche of *M/M/C* is already ahistorical by the plain fact that, as noted, there is no identifiable central text or stage reality. The three historical periods suggested by costuming and performance style intermingle without insisting upon a dominant mode. Moreover, by the end of this show, the historical markers of costuming and period props were stripped away. All performers ended up in black, unisex garb, as if the historical periods had melted away into a single, uniform stage reality. This kind of de-historicization is exactly Jameson's problem with pastiche. However, more important for this project, this de-historicization points to ways in which both Cornerstone and BOTHarts

aim toward universals while recognizing a world of radical plurality. This seeming paradox will be examined later in the chapter.

A Brief History of the Actors' Gang

Unlike Cornerstone, whose life as a company has been well documented, particularly in Sonja Kuftinec's thorough *Staging America: Cornerstone and Community-Based Theater*, there are no histories in print of the Actors' Gang.[10] Even the company's website offers only a few cursory paragraphs about the over-twenty-year history of the group.[11] Therefore, a foundational and detailed history of the Gang is clearly needed. However, the brief sketch I offer here is not that project. Indeed, while there are many ways to tell the story of L.A.'s most prolific and critically acclaimed ensemble, this history will focus on just two angles: Tracy Young's evolution as a director within the Actors' Gang and the Gang's longtime struggles over what would ultimately define the group: a creative method or the dominant personality of company member and sometimes artistic director Tim Robbins.

As mentioned in the introduction, one way to generalize the history of U.S. theatre collectives is that, time and again, companies founded on a collective art-making philosophy are eventuality dominated by the creative vision of a single individual. While admittedly reductionist, it is arguable that most contemporary theatres in the U.S. still operate under the idea that all thematic and design elements of a theatre must bend to the vision of a single guiding artist, typically the director, or at least the handful of visions offered by some sort of traditional theatre hierarchy. This idea is today most often represented by the "artistic director" position,

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[10] Sonja Kuftinec, *Staging America: Cornerstone and Community-Based Theater* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 2003).

[11] "About us," www.theactorsgang.com (accessed 12/10/07).

still maintained by the vast majority of theatre companies operating in the U.S. While it is the interpreter of the text, therefore, rather than the composer of the text that is more often empowered in the contemporary commercial theatre, this mentality is still inseparable from the authorship apparatus as described by Michel Foucault, which assumes that art can only be the product of a unique, individual genius.[12] The transformation of most collectives into artistic dictatorships in the U.S. is due not just to the failure to challenge the concepts of authorship however, it is also the product of a 20th century celebrity culture in which the name of a star (be they playwright, director, or actor) often sells more tickets than that of a company. The company life of Provincetown Players can certainly be considered an early example of this common trajectory, in that the communally dedicated early work of this collective was eventually eclipsed by the plays and the name of Eugene O'Neill, as Chapter Five will detail. A similar trajectory can be read in Clifford Odets' eventual influence over the Group Theater, Julian Beck and Judith Malina's unchanging producer roles in the Living Theatre (described in Chapter Two), Joseph Chaikin's authority over the Open Theater, David Mamet's influence over the Atlantic Theatre Company, Anne Bogart's direction of SITI Company (described in Chapter Three), et cetera.

Nevertheless, in most of these cases, countering this common trajectory from collectively shared power to centralized power in a single individual is the democratizing influence of the company's acting methodology or style. It seems logical that companies that hope to survive beyond the lifespan or career-span of their leaders must base their group identity in an enduring and defining company style or methodology. For example, the American Method of psychological realism, in the way that it was shared among and debated by the Group Theater's

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[12] Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984).

Lee Strasberg, Stella Adler, and Sanford Meisner, prevented the power of this company from becoming totally consolidated under a single individual. A method within a theatre company is by nature shared. As Viola Spolin argues, a method is a set of rules that, once agreed upon, guarantees that no single artistic voice can dominate the group.[13] Commitment to a technique does not eliminate the possibility of leaders, but is does keep the leaders' authority in some sort of check. When the company members of a group such as SITI Company have all trained in Suzuki/Viewpoints, for example, all are qualified to speak up in rehearsal and offer direction or criticism. A common method means that all eyes in the room, not only those of the director's, can see when something is working and when it is not. Therefore, all can share in the creative process at every level.

The history of the Actors' Gang fits in with this common U.S. theatre-collective narrative described above. The Actors' Gang historically has been torn between being defined as "Tim Robbins' company" and being defined by "the Style," a technique unique to the Gang in which all of its members are trained. Both the Style and Robbins were part of the Actors' Gang almost from its inception. In the summer of 1981, a group of UCLA students including Robbins began meeting to develop its own type of theatre based on challenging what it perceived as conservative aesthetics within its university's curriculum. In many ways, these students could articulate better what they did not like in the theatre than what they liked, and what they did not like were the techniques and plays that were descendents of American psychological realism. While the Actors' Gang had no definable method yet, there was an identifiable group aesthetic based largely on punk rock. As company member Mike Schlitt recalled, "We were a very

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[13] Viola Spolin, *Improvisation for the Theater* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1963), 9.

testosterone-heavy group, very physical, *very* loud."[14] Soon the group, now UCLA alums, was presenting productions at a variety of venues in L.A. Their work was a mix of adaptations of plays such as Alfred Jarry's *Ubu the King* and original work. Like punk-rock concerts, the style of these pieces was in-your-face, abrasive, angry, fast, and ironic.

Despite the punk aesthetic, a traditional theatre hierarchy of a director and a playwright determining, to a large extent, the text and staging of each production was still in place at the Actors' Gang, until the company encountered the work of France's Theatre du Soleil theatre collective. In 1984, Georges Bigot, one of the leading actors in the Theatre du Soleil, came to Los Angeles for the U.S. Olympics Arts Festival and offered a workshop in his theatre's style, an acting method based in some of the traditions of commedia dell' arte. Robbins and other Actors' Gang company members attended this workshop and became convinced that "the Style," as they termed it, could be transferred to the Gang. Said Schlitt, "We needed a discipline, because we had no discipline… the Style was a way of containing that energy and channeling it through a set of rules."[15] Brent Hinkley, another founding company member, described the basics of the Style as derived from Bigot's workshop. The Style breaks down human feelings into four "states," said Hinkley, "As humans, we are either happy or we are sad or we are afraid or we are angry… So using stock commedia dell' arté characters, we do improvisational work based around always feeling one of these four states as your character."[16] Not only must the actor always be in one of the four states at all times in the Style, moreover he or she needs to be at the height of that state, "fully stated," every moment on the stage.

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[14] Scott Proudfit, "Gang Style" in *Back Stage West* (July 22, 1999), 6.
[15] Ibid., 6.
[16] Ibid., 7.

For Style improvisation, actors are typically in white face, often with some character makeup to exaggerate certain features. Sometimes masks are used and sometimes not. Actors are always in costume however. These costumes, pulled from the company's vast collection, can be a mix of contemporary and historical styles. Props and the set are pantomimed. The stage is empty except for the performers. Strict Style workshops ask actors to choose from a repertory of traditional commedia types: the old, miserly Pantalone; his tricky servants Arlecchino and Columbina; the ingénue Isabella and her male lovers; the blustery and militant Capitano (and his medical counterpart, the Doctore); and a few others. However, for many years, Actors' Gang Style workshops allowed actors to bring in characters from written shows on which they were workshopping or characters that company members were developing for new projects in addition to these commedia types.

There are numerous rules to the mechanics of the Style, many involving proper entrances and exits. The most important rule, however, is based on the concept of "passing the food." Explained Hinkley:

> When one character is speaking or doing an action, everybody else on that stage is focused on that action. If Actor A is talking, Actor B is not upstaging him by tying his shoelaces. Actor B is focused right on Actor A. And whoever has the focus is said to "have the food." When you *do* have the food, you give your emotions and your words directly to the audience. You speak to an audience member, right in their eyes as if they were the character onstage that you were speaking to. And then, when you are finished, you pass the food to another actor, who then has the focus and looks out to the audience and speaks to him or her or does an action.[17]

The result is highly presentational improvisation in which emotional states change rapidly, often comically. Another term that comes up often in Style workshops is "for us." This is Style shorthand for the idea that all actions and words must be presented directly to the audience. The

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[17] Ibid., 7.

concept of "for us" is in many ways a rejection of certain psychological realist or naturalist stagings that attempt to portray a world in which people move about and speak as if they were not on a stage. As Hinkley argues, "[In the Style] you can't be sitting at a kitchen table talking to your mother and have your head in your hand mumbling something. What good is that? Who is that for? You have to give it for *us*."[18]

Each Style improvisation at the Actors' Gang is overseen by one company member who is "in the chair," which means he or she sits in a chair at the front of the stage and directs traffic, creates the narrative, enforces the Style rules, and sometimes serves as the sole audience member. For example, the Chair may call for a specific character to enter: "I need a Pantalone!" If the actor who then enters is not fully stated, they "get a phone call," and are sent backstage to re-enter immediately or at a later time. If there is only one character onstage, the person in the chair may ask them questions. If there are multiple characters, the Chair may suggest certain situations or actions to involve the characters with one another: "She hates you, and you've just realized it" or "Steal his money."

In 1984, after Bigot's workshop, Robbins rented a raw space in downtown Los Angeles, dubbed it the "Actory," and began holding regular Style improv workshops there. The work was not show-based at the time, but was concerned only with improvisation. It was at this time that Tracy Young began attending workshops, having been invited by her friend Cynthia Ettinger, one of the only women who had consistently performed and workshopped with the Gang at that point. Young was born and raised in Studio City. Her background, like many raised in L.A. in the 1960s, was connected to Old Hollywood. Young's grandfather was Blaine Morris, the original *Kid Galahad*, who also made a series of "Brother Rat" movies in the 1940s with Ronald

[18] Ibid., 8.

Reagan. Moreover, her grandmother's sister was Peg Stuart, a child actress who later made a living doing B Westerns. Young performed in school theatre productions throughout her childhood. She graduated early from high school and attended San Francisco State, planning to be a film major. Returning to L.A. after college, she worked as a production coordinator on a number of music videos and low-budget films. Not surprisingly, like Bogart, Young in many ways considers her primary vocabulary to be film. Young, who was raised by her great grandaunt, didn't know her father, and was estranged from her mother at a young age, said that until she was nineteen, "The biggest influence on my whole trajectory is that I never had the structure of a family. So there was always just circuitous fumbling around."[19] Young immediately responded to the highly delineated Style workshops with their set and clear rules in curious but also rebellious ways.

Like the Gang itself, which progressed from the anarchy of early productions to rule-guided improvisations to scripted shows "in the Style," Young's artistic journey can be characterized as one which progressed from chaos to order. Young and the Gang, therefore, drew upon an opposite artistic history from the Living Theatre, when it began to collectively create theatre productions. The Living Theatre, with its collective creation of *Frankenstein*, used improvisation to challenge the authority of quotation in its creative process. Young and the Gang, on the other hand, began their collective composition work with pure improvisation and only later became interested in texts, and specifically in quotation. These contradictory journeys may account for the some of the differences between BOTHarts' modeled collectivity, described later, and that of the Living Theatre or SITI Company.

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[19] Tracy Young, Interview with the writer, Studio City, CA, Dec. 22, 2006.

In 1985, the Actors' Gang presented its first Style-based show, *Methusalem.* As former managing director Mark Seldis recalled, "In the early years, Tim was actually making some money on TV and film, so he could afford to pay for the plays. Nobody else could. That's one of the ways to become an artistic director: You're the only one with cash and a little more vision than the others."[20] At the same time, Robbins' film jobs meant that he was often away from the company, which led to few productions. From 1987 to 1991, the Actors' Gang presented only six shows, or about one a year. During that period, however, Robbins brought two very successful Los Angeles runs of original Gang material, Robbins' and Adam Simon's *Carnage* and Mike Schlitt's *Freaks*, to New York's Public Theater. Unfortunately for the Gang, these shows were savaged by *New York Times* critic Frank Rich and closed before the end of their scheduled runs.

Nevertheless, the Actors' Gang's productions in Los Angeles in the late '80s were never more popular. Therefore, in 1992, Robbins rented for one year the 2nd Stage Theatre in Hollywood for the Actors' Gang exclusive use. The company put up four shows that season, all of which had been workshopped in the Style. These shows included Tracy Young's *Hysteria*, an original musical that offered a multigenerational exploration of women's rights in the spirit of Caryl Churchill's *Cloud 9*. Workshopping a season in the Style meant that members could play any role from the four scripts or outlines under consideration for production by the Gang on any given night. Improvisations often brought together characters from different shows. Said Young, "Woyzeck would end up onstage during a scene with some Victorian woman from some then unknown play, or some Japanese person from a classical Noh play."[21] This experience

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[20] Proudfit, 6.
[21] Ibid., 8.

influenced Young as a writer and director, instilling in her a desire to juxtapose different time periods and perspectives within her plays without mediation. In other words, it made Young very receptive to the quotation technique of pastiche.

This Style workshop process simultaneously led to a shared aesthetic between productions and to conflict among company members, particularly involving the creation of new work. As Schlitt explains:

> Let's say I've been working on this character that's funny and great, but as the play develops over six months that character has less and less business being in the play. Well, I've been involved in the workshop process for six months, and you'd better believe I'm going to make sure I have a big part. When you're workshopping, everyone's the star, but when you get a script you realize, "Oh, he's the protagonist and I'm just a fucking spear carrier. Well, that won't do."[22]

Schlitt's humorous recollection of the workshop process at the Gang reveals the ways in which the democratic improvisational period of collective composition came into conflict, time and again, with the hierarchies implied in role size and plot when ideas become performance text. This conflict is reminiscent of the Living Theatre's ongoing struggle between text and improvisation. In 1992, Young had a similar realization to the one described by Schlitt, which led her to propose *Hysteria* for the Gang's 2nd Stage season. The other planned productions that year were Georg Buchner's *Woyzeck*, an evening of three Noh one-acts, and a new Schlitt show called *Klub*. When workshopping began, Young realized, "There are no women in the Japanese plays, there's one woman in *Woyzeck*, and we've got a great company of actresses."[23] Young's proposed musical, *Hysteria*, was her response.

Proposing a project mainly for the women in the company was simply practical on one level: Why ignore such a talented group? At the same time, *Hysteria*, which in addition to a

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[22] Ibid., 8.
[23] Ibid., 8.

number of standout performances by women featured openly gay actor Daniel Parker as the cross-dressing patriarch of the lead's dysfunctional family, was a direct challenge to the Gang's masculine image. While the group might have considered itself anti-establishment, with its punk aesthetic, the Gang was composed at that time almost exclusively of white, male heterosexual men, most of whom had come from middle-class backgrounds. The Gang may have been "punk," said Young, "but as we saw in *Reds* [the 1981 film], even in anti-establishment organizations it's all the boys running the thing. It's implicit… I wanted to upend that thing and that [proposed season] gave me a lot of fuel to do it."[24] Robbins was not around during the development of the 1992 season, so he had little artistic input on *Hysteria*. However, Young wanted the "old guard" to be in on the creation of *Hysteria* even if, or especially because, *Hysteria* was designed to expand the Actors' Gang community, to introduce divergent viewpoints to the group. Therefore, original Gang members such as Schlitt and Bob White were invited to rehearsals and were further invited to offer their critiques and suggestions. Thriving on the atmosphere of conflict that defined the Style and the Style workshopping process, Young actually courted disagreement within *Hysteria*'s ensemble as well as between her creative team and the company-member observers. "Anytime you have tension, the friction, this force coming up against this force, that is going to make the thing better," Young explained.[25]

Young had not yet incorporated Viewpoints or Composition into her creative process. Nevertheless, the shared method of Style improvisation allowed her ensemble to develop their characters and the plot alongside Young, a type of collective composition in which Young, however, was the only one "writing down" the script. One moment in particular led to Young's

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[24] Young Interview.
[25] Ibid.

realization that remnants of a hierarchical way of making theatre were hindering her work. Not unlike *M/M/C*, *Hysteria* has a number of plots running at once: in contemporary time, a young woman, Darby, must decide whether to keep her baby despite her partner's indifference; meanwhile, her sister struggles with committing to plastic surgery to further her nascent modeling career; and, in a separate time period, the mission of a 19th century suffragette and women's health advocate and her sometimes-advisee, a young woman also considering an abortion who happens to be Darby's grandmother, is jeopardized by the male medical establishment. Through much of its development process, *Hysteria* also contained the story of Chinese woman contemplating drowning her newborn daughter. A couple of weeks before opening night, Young was frustrated about the length of the piece and its lack of focus. Her stage manager spoke up and suggested Young cut the Chinese woman's story. Recalled Young, "I felt like she had been sitting on it for a little while, but that also, over time, the collaborative process gave her the platform to voice her opinion." Young took her suggestion, cut the drowning plot, and suddenly "there was the play."[26] *Hysteria*, which was also the first true musical presented at the Actors' Gang, was a hit. The success of the show confirmed Young's faith in collaboration at every level and her commitment to making theatre in as democratic an atmosphere as possible.

Not only *Hysteria* but also the entire Actors' Gang season at 2nd Stage was a financial and critical success. Robbins was so impressed that he put $300,000 into the renovation of a storefront on Santa Monica Boulevard, which would serve as the Actors' Gang home until 2005. Successful seasons in its new home in 1994 and 1995 followed. However, at the end of the 1995 season, Robbins, who was no longer directing at the Gang and was spending the majority of the

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[26] Ibid.

year in his Manhattan home, told the company he would pay the rent for the next season but no production budgets. The Gang met the financial challenge with another smash season that included Young's next collective creation, *Euphoria*.

Like *Hysteria*, *Euphoria* was workshopped as part of a season of plays including Molière's *The Imaginary Invalid* and Jason Reed's *Cool Cops!* However, this time Young also incorporated Viewpoints and Composition Work into the creative process. Young had first encountered Viewpoints and Composition through conversations with Daniel Bernstein, Daniel Parker's boyfriend, during *Hysteria* rehearsals. Bernstein had studied these techniques with Tina Landau at Yale Drama School. When Bogart's book, which described the Viewpoints, came out in 1995, Young "devoured" it. In addition, Beth Milles, who was guest directing *The Imaginary Invalid* at the Gang had trained in the Viewpoints as well and encouraged Young to incorporate this work into the season's development process. According to Young, the Gang as a whole was largely resistant to the Viewpoints work. However, they embraced Composition, partly because of the success of a company-wide Composition workshop designed to develop what Young at that time simply was calling "the drug show." Undaunted by her difficult experiments in Viewpoints at the Actors' Gang, Young later trained with SITI Company in its first visit to Los Angeles in 1998.

It makes sense that Viewpoints, more than Composition, is a difficult training method for actors committed to the Style. There is a healthy tension between SITI Company's Suzuki training and Viewpoints, but the Style and Viewpoints are almost diametrically opposed. Of course, this clash is exactly what appealed to Young. Suzuki training depends on group awareness, especially in such exercises as "stomping and shakahachi" in which the group, marching rigorously, must continuously take cues from non-predetermined individuals and vice

versa. Nevertheless, Suzuki training primarily focuses the performer on her individual struggle to accomplish a series of virtually impossible physical tasks, such as rising off the ground from total collapse, fluidly and at an even pace, without using one's arms. As noted in Chapter Three, Suzuki training, on one level, is about learning to control your breath and your physical center onstage. SITI Company's members describe the Suzuki training experience as "vertical," mainly concerned with the performer's channeling of the "ancestors" below and transmitting this energy to the gods above. Viewpoints, on the other hand, is "horizontal."[27] It is based on opening up a performer's awareness to the point at which she can kinesthetically respond to the entire company's movement onstage, moment-by-moment in the "flow." Like the two axes of a graph, a performer's energy and awareness reach out, horizontally, in every direction in Viewpoints, and upwards and downwards, vertically, in Suzuki training.

The Style, like Suzuki training, is also rooted in the individual more than the collective. One person at a time has the food and speaks directly to the audience. However, while Suzuki and Viewpoints are complementary, in that a performer utilizing both "horizontal" and "vertical" awareness is opening herself in all directions, the Style and Viewpoints are completely at odds with one another. In the Style, whoever has the food commands the full attention, the laser focus, of everyone else onstage. To reconcile this with Viewpoints' insistence on soft focus, on taking in everyone onstage at once, of no one leading or following, of looking "without desire," is not easy. Moreover, the Style is very verbal. A stream of words typically pours out of the mouth of any fully stated performer who has the food. Viewpoints, on the other hand, only introduces words late in training process, and then often in the form of memorized texts.

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[27] This distinction was made a number of times by members of SITI Company during my training with them over the years.

Young, in introducing Viewpoints to the Actors' Gang, was asking the company to completely rethink its methodology. Nevertheless, Young attests, Viewpoints does not simply deny the Style, it challenges it in potentially useful ways. The collective awareness Viewpoints demands can change a Style workshop from a situation in which everyone is trying to grab the food to one in which everyone is trying to share the food and/or in which everyone is completely focused on everyone else getting his or her say, his or her moment to speak. On one level, Viewpoints can transform the Style from a competition in "who can dominate the improvisation" to a fully stated and fully voiced (albeit serial) plurality of divergent voices onstage. In addition, for Young, the fully stated aspects of the Style are visceral and emotional, complementary to Viewpoints in a different way than Suzuki training. "[The Style] is blood, shit, and all that stuff," said Young, and it makes for a great hybrid with "the cerebral quality of some of the things that the Viewpoints offers and the coolness of it."[28]

Euphoria was the first Actors' Gang production in which the creative process combined the Style with Viewpoints. The resulting show is sprawling and choral, incorporating large musical production numbers, but also a show in which a number of outrageous and cartoon-ish characters directly address the audience in private, though explosive monologues. *Euphoria* soars through history and across continents, eventually focusing on a series of characters in different time periods whose only connection is their addiction to various consciousness-altering substances. The show also introduced Chris Wells to the Actors' Gang, the actor who was to become Young's primary co-creator in years to come. Now a cabaret star in New York, Wells, like Parker, was openly gay, articulate, and immediately a noticeable presence at the Gang, on and off the stage. *Euphoria* was also the first Actors' Gang production to offer something in the

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[28] Young Interview.

way of racial diversity, incorporating black and Asian performers. The show was epic in scale, featuring almost the entire Actors' Gang company in its complicated plot. Of all Young's productions, it is still the most "radically plural" to date—less filtered, more messy and hyperactive than later efforts.

Euphoria's critical and financial success led the way for another very successful season at the Gang. Confident in the success of the company, at the end of 1996, Robbins resigned as artistic director and stopped paying the theatre's rent. He did, however, arrange a salary for a production manager, Don Luce, a company member who was also a set designer and actor. Mark Seldis, a close friend of Young who had served as unit manager for Robbins' 1992 film *Bob Roberts* and associate producer for Robbins' 1995 film *Dead Man Walking*, was tapped as managing director of the Gang and agreed to work gratis until funding could be located. In addition, in place of an artistic director, the company decided to form "the Committee," four company members who would oversee the artistic decisions of the group. Recalled Schlitt, "When Tim left the group, we became much more of a cooperative."[29] While Schlitt recalls Robbins' exodus as "terrifying" for the company, he claims that the amount of time that many company members had already put in to the Actors' Gang meant that few were willing to leave. "A family had been built over time," said Schlitt, "But part of it was, whether we knew it or not, there is a common method that links us."[30] In this moment for the Gang, the Style proved a more important connection between members than Robbins.

For the next four years, the Actors' Gang put up an impressive number of shows, including the hit musical *Bat Boy*, which transferred to Off-Broadway. The seasons at the Gang

[29] Proudfit, 7.
[30] Ibid., 7.

were very eclectic, much like its early season at 2nd Stage. While all shows were done in the Style or at the very least suggested the Style, the pace, tone, and design of the work varied greatly depending on who was directing, who was "in the chair." Jason Reed, a young company member, took up the mantle of the early punk-rock roots of the Gang in loud, outrageous shows such as *Kick-Ass Militia* and *Tagteam Lovefest 2000*. Brent Hinkley, a purist when it comes to the Style, continued to explore the presentational, technical aspects of the Style in shows such as *The Dressing Room* and *Broadway*. Mike Schlitt emphasized the clowning, monologic aspects of the Style in *Little Man in the Box*. Young, meanwhile, further invedigated the fraught combination of Viewpoints and the Style in productions such as *Medea/Macbeth/Cinderella*, *A Fairy Tale* (her collaboration with Daniel Parker and Chris Wells, which combined a queering of the Brothers Grimm's stories with a scathing parody of contemporary gay theatre culture) and *Four Roses* (a "cento" play in version one, using the words of four of Tennessee Williams' heroines to explore thematic parallels between his works; and a performance-art-influenced confessional piece in version two, in which the four actresses combined Williams' words with stories from their own lives). Without the financial support of Robbins, the Gang managed to stay solvent by renting its larger space during the majority of the season and performing its own work in the smaller "El Centro" space adjacent to the mainstage. In 1999, for example, only *Broadway* and *Tagteam Lovefest 2000* were presented on the mainstage, the other four Actors' Gang shows were performed in El Centro.

It was during these four years that I became involved with the Gang, first as a journalist and reviewer, then, after training for a year in the Style, as a company member and actor as well, participating in Style development workshops throughout 1999 and 2000 and first appearing in the Mark Seldis-directed *XXX Love Act* in 2001. In 2000, Young and her ensemble created the

first version of *DreamPlay*. I covered the development process of the show, from its initial workshops to its opening, for a May 11, 2000, *Back Stage West* article. I had trained in Suzuki/Viewpoints since 1998 with SITI Company in the summers and with Kim Weild during the year, and had witnessed how Young combined Viewpoints and the Style in her production of *Four Roses* in 1999, another rehearsal process I had sat in on in preparation for an article in *Back Stage West*. This article dealt with the Style and its continuing development within the Gang. However, covering *DreamPlay* allowed me to observe more fully Young's process.

In February 2001, Robbins convened a meeting of the Actors' Gang board of directors (none of whom were members of the collective), along with his attorney and the Gang's artistic "Committee," and took back artistic and executive control of the company. By a six-to-three vote, the board approved Robbins' proposal to install him as company CEO and reinstall him as artistic director. In exchange, Robbins contributed $200,000 to the theatre.[31] In addition, Robbins dismissed Luce and Seldis from their positions and cancelled the 2001-2002 season, even though the season had already been voted on by the entire company. Instead, Robbins invited Georges Bigot to conduct summer workshops at the Gang in order to refresh and rethink the Style within the company. This "coup" was covered extensively by *LA Weekly* and *Back Stage West*. Explaining his actions in a 2001 interview with *Back Stage West*, Robbins said, "I've… been so frustrated that this theatre I built with my money, I've never been able to work in."[32] In addition to firing Luce and Seldis, Robbins noted his further frustration over the "clutter" in the space, "in more ways than just physical clutter," suggesting that looser

[31] Steven Leigh Morris, "Executive Action: Tim Robbins Takes Control at the Actors' Gang" *LA Weekly* (Aug. 1, 2001).
[32] Rob Kendt, "Gang Leader," *Back Stage West* (Sept. 20, 2001).

interpretations of the Style were muddying the aesthetic waters within the company.[33] Robbins also claimed that the proposed season, which again rented the mainstage for ten months in order to pay the bills, was ridiculous. "After four and a half years I just felt, that's crazy. The El Centro space had become our theatre."[34]

In interviews, Robbins insisted that the "overwhelming majority" of the company wanted him to come back. However, while many company members (including myself) stayed to participate in the Bigot workshops and the two productions that came out of those workshops (*Mephisto*, directed by Robbins, and *The Seagull*, directed by Bigot), the exodus from the company of long-time members increased in the following years. Young, along with Wells, Parker, and Evie Peck (Cinderella in *M/M/C*), had left almost immediately upon Robbins wresting back control. In the same 2001 interview in which he claimed the majority of the Gang called for his return, Robbins further claimed that what might seem to be a healthy diversity in the Actors' Gang seasons during his absence was really indicative of kind of unhealthy "factionalism."[35] Not surprisingly, Young described this diversity in much different terms in a 1999 interview before Robbins' return:

> The motivating force behind the group, when we got the space, was to allow anyone who claims membership the opportunity to express themselves in just about any artistic way they want, which is a big move away from the whole philosophy of [having] an artistic director, one person's guiding vision of the company.[36]

While Young had a definite stake in making sure her productions made it into the Gang season year after year, as a member of the Committee she also made a point of supporting those shows that she didn't share an aesthetic kinship with beyond the Style, such as Jason Reed's plays.

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[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Young, Interview with the writer, Hollywood, CA, July 11, 1999.

Like her shows, Young's theatre management philosophy was based on giving as many voices as possible their hearing, regardless of whether they conformed to her aesthetics.

Upon leaving the Actors' Gang in 2001, Young and Chris Wells formed BOTHarts, a company that first presented a Boston run of *A Fairy Tale* before turning to a new version of *DreamPlay*, a site-specific performance at a private residence in Studio City, an empty mansion on the side of a hill complete with a large pool and garden. For the first time in her career, Young was looking for a break from the "friction" inherent in collective theatre-making, at least on the level of management. In a May 23, 2002, article prior to the opening of "version 2.0" of *DreamPlay*, Young said, "One of the things that [Chris Wells and I] learned in the tenure at the Gang is that while there are a lot of great things about a group of 30 or 40 working in a democratic system, there's also a lot of difficulty and struggle in that."[37] The director said she felt a new "freedom" with BOTHarts, "We aren't beholden to a space, to a company, but only to each other."[38] Nevertheless, while the production management of version 2.0 of *DreamPlay* may have been the most limited in terms of personnel, creatively the production proved as pluralistic as any of Young's works to date.

***DreamPlay* Synopsis and Structure**

Young entered *DreamPlay*, version 2.0, pre-production with a number of related ideas for revision and a script from the previous incarnation of the work that she planned to overhaul with the help of the ensemble.[39] *DreamPlay* presents in the form of a "collective dream" the real-life

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[37] Kendt, "What Dreams May Come" in *Back Stage West* (May 25, 2002), 6.
[38] Ibid., 6.
[39] Though the title *DreamPlay* is primarily meant to evoke the twin ideas of playing with dreams and a play about dreaming, it also recalls a whole genre of modern drama and,

case of convicted murderer Scott Falater.[40] Falater is an Arizona Mormon man who stabbed his wife forty-four times and dumped her body in the backyard pool, later using the defense that he had been sleepwalking. At the same time, the play tells the story of Carl Jung's initial mentorship by Sigmund Freud and his eventual rejection of this father figure. Exploring Jungian concepts of a "shadow self," *DreamPlay* seriously considers the possibility that Falater could have had an independent second personality that was triggered only in his sleep. While Jung modified his definition of the "shadow" many times throughout his career, the concept of the shadow shared by the BOTHarts ensemble derived almost exclusively from Jung's book *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. In this book, the "shadow" is defined as the personal and collective psychic elements of a person's mind that contradict his or her chosen conscious attitude, are denied expression, and coalesce into a relatively autonomous second personality within the unconscious.[41] These elements are not necessarily only morally reprehensible (extreme anger, guilt, or fear) but can include normal instincts, appropriate reactions, and creative impulses. The psychic health of any individual, according to Jung, depended upon the integration of the shadow self into daily life. The less integrated the shadow, the more unstable the individual. As the character Jung says in *DreamPlay*, in a quotation from the philosopher's

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specifically, August Strindberg's play by the same name. While Young insists that Strindberg's play was not an inspiration for this BOTHarts' production, nor was this play discussed in rehearsals, there are interesting connections between the two dramas—though not explicitly on the level of plot. For example, Strindberg's prefatory note to his *A Dream Play*, describes a show that sounds quite similar to BOTHarts' in its interest in polyvocal identity and the concept of a collective unconscious : "The characters split, double, multiply, evaporate, condense, dissolve and merge. But one consciousness rules them all: the dreamer's." [Strindberg, *A Dream Play and Four Chamber Plays*, trans. Walter Johnson (Seattle: U of Washington Press, 1973), 19.]

[40] Young, *DreamPlay* (Unpublished, 2002), 1. (Pagination based on my printout of a Word file of the script sent to me through e-mail by Young.)

[41] Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 398.

1938 essay on the shadow self, "Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it becomes. At all counts it forms an unconscious snag, thwarting our most well meant intentions."[42]

Through a Jungian lens, Scott Falater appears to be the perfect example of a man in denial of his shadow. While Falater was ultimately convicted and sentenced to life in prison without parole, the prosecution was never able to provide a motive for his actions. A religious man, driven in his work as a Motorola manager and committed to his family, Falater, to all eyes including those of his two children, was completely in love with his wife Yarmila. There was no argument leading up to Yarmila's murder. However, Falater was under tremendous stress at work, and *DreamPlay* considers whether Falater and his family paid a price for Falater's struggle to maintain his part of the façade of the perfect happy family. On the evening of the murder, Yarmila had reportedly asked Falater to fix the pump for their backyard pool, which he tried and could not. Subsequently, marks the police found on the pool pump with the knife Falater used to stab Yarmila suggested that he had tried to fix the pump again at some point with this inappropriate tool (perhaps in his sleep). If Falater was indeed sleepwalking when he stabbed his wife to death, might it have been Falater's shadow self that was responsible? And could something as innocent as Yarmila's added pressure to maintain their home have triggered the shadow's emergence?

Young's inspiration for the piece came from a period after *Euphoria* during which she had a series of vivid, frightening nightmares, which led her to seek the counsel of a Jungian therapist. While *Euphoria* was a major success for the Actors' Gang, the good feelings it

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[42] Jung, *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung: Psychology and Religion* , eds. H. Read, et al. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1953).

engendered in Young masked anxieties about the company's always precarious financial position and internal company conflicts, particularly between Young and those company members still resistant to Viewpoints. While attempting her own journey of shadow integration in therapy, Young became interested in Falater's case.

The structure of *DreamPlay* consists of twenty-one scenes corresponding "in meaning and tone to the numbered Tarot cards of the Higher Arcana"[43]: Scene 0, The Fool; Scene 1, The Magician; Scene 2, The High Priestess, etc. Jung was very interested in the Tarot because of its relationship to archetypes: images or motifs that he believed are shared by myths, fairytales, and "the fantasies, dreams, deliria, and delusions of individuals living today."[44] Young and her ensemble's understanding of Jungian archetypes was based largely on Sallie Nichols' book, *Jung and Tarot*, which claims that recognizing and confronting archetypes in our daily lives promotes psychic health in the same way that integrating the shadow self can. According to Nichols, archetypes can crop up in the most banal situations. A homeless man asks you for change on the street and you are confronted with the archetype of the fool, a wandering nomad without shelter. Or a phone call from your mother creates a confrontation with the archetype of the Empress, the embodiment of all things maternal. Recognizing these archetypes is the first step towards integration. Integration, it should be noted, does not mean erasure. The archetypes will always be a part of daily life as the shadow will always be a part of the psyche. Writes Nichols, "[B]eing touched by an archetype will always evoke an emotional reaction of some kind. By

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[43] Young, *DreamPlay*, 1.
[44] Jung, *Memories*, 392.

exploring these unconscious reactions, we can uncover the archetype that is manipulating us and free ourselves, to some extent, from its compulsion."[45]

In both versions of *DreamPlay*, Young cast an ensemble of twelve performers who simultaneously played themselves (for example actor Daniel Parker played Daniel Parker though never by name), one of the first twelve Tarot cards in the High Arcana (and the archetype it suggests), and one of the twelve dreaming jury members who are hearing the case for and against Falater in their collective dream. Within the show, when the actors are not playing Jung, Freud, or a member of the Falater family or circle of friends, they are referred to only by number. The first thirteen scenes in the play introduce the Tarot card and the jury member who has the corresponding number while advancing the multiple plots. Scene 1, for example, is about the Magician and features Parker as Juror No. 1.

As Nichols' book asserts, Tarot cards 0-21 represent a journey. The hero of this journey is the Fool (Card 0), who becomes the Lover (Card 6). In Scene 0, the first scene of *DreamPlay*, the twelve jurors in their pajamas are discovered sleeping in the pool (inflatable pillows helped achieve this effect). No cast member played number 0, the Fool. All characters were considered the Fool because all make some sort of fool's journey in the play. Upon climbing out of the pool, the jurors wake into a dream in which they are asked to serve on the Falater case. In subsequent scenes, the jurors hear evidence against Falater and witness scenes from his life (as well as participating in and performing these scenes). At the same time, the jurors enact and observe Freud and Jung's correspondence, friendship, and eventual parting of ways, as these two analysts anachronistically comment on the Falater case. In the course of *DreamPlay*, Yarmila's

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[45] Sallie Nichols, *Jung and Tarot: An Archetypal Journey* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser Inc., 1980), 11.

murder is enacted a number of times, culminating in Scene 18 (The Moon), which stages Falater's poolside capture by police. The play ends with closing arguments on Falater's behalf by Jung, who also takes the opportunity to reconcile with Freud. This leads to a verdict by the jurors—a verdict that is actually deferred—and then a final collective wordless dance/swim to Fred Astaire singing "Isn't It a Lovely Day?"

The complexity of *DreamPlay* reflects Anne Bogart's three-part design for Essay Theatre as described in Chapter Three, which is made up of a question, an anchor, and a structure.[46] While Young did not conceive *DreamPlay* with this design in mind, certainly her work with SITI Company in Composition classes and her own work with Composition in her many shows, may have suggested this tripartite design. The "question" of *DreamPlay* is the question that begins the show (a quotation from a Phoenix *New Times* article covering the Falater case), and delivered in sections by the twelve jurors: "Why would a deeply religious, mild-mannered, teetotaling, financially stable, seemingly devoted husband and father stab his screaming wife 44 times by their lighted swimming pool?"[47] The "anchor" for the show is Falater, and the "structure" is the journey through the twenty-one cards of the Tarot's High Arcana.

However, *DreamPlay* does not quite fit Bogart's mold because Falater's story shares equal space in the play with Jung's. Therefore, Jung might also be considered the anchor. The journey through the Tarot is as much his as Falater's. If Jung is the "anchor" as much as Falater, then the question Jung as an anchor allows the play to address may be the question voiced at the end of the play: "How should a fool who calls himself I presume to comprehend the innumerable

[46] Bogart and Tina Landau, *The Viewpoints Book* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2005), 154.
[47] Paul Rubin, "A Killer Sleep Disorder" in *Phoenix New Times* (Nov. 19, 1998).

whom?" as opposed to any question of Falater's innocence or motive.[48] This "how should" quotation, which has been slightly altered, is from an e.e. cummings sonnet.[49] *DreamPlay* is also, perhaps most importantly, the jurors' journey—and, of course, the audience's. The audience members and the jurors are also the anchors. The way *DreamPlay* at least doubles the standard Essay Theatre design indicates a trend I will trace throughout the analysis of this production. *DreamPlay* is larger (in terms of cast and length), more complex (in terms of "story"), and therefore much messier than the "cento" plays of SITI Company. The extra room the play makes allows for more voices to be heard. In this way, the onstage world of *DreamPlay*, as well as the creative atmosphere of its development, are more truly contested environments than those offered at SITI Company.

Shaping Quotations for Clarification

DreamPlay exhibits a different kind of pastiche than the cento play *Culture of Desire*. Nevertheless, *DreamPlay* as much as *Culture of Desire* benefits from intertextual analysis, and similarly from specifically examining the ways in which intertexts contaminate the text. Unlike *M/M/C*, *DreamPlay* very clearly has a central "text," which is the dreaming jurors trying to decide whether Falater is guilty or innocent. All other material, whether it is Freud and Jung's correspondence, descriptions of the Tarot, or events from the Falater's' life and trial, can be considered "intertexts." *DreamPlay*, though it is almost entirely quoted material not of Young's creation, is not a cento play like *Culture of Desire* because, as examined later, it alters and

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[48] Young, *DreamPlay*, 54.

[49] E.E. Cummings, *Complete Poems, 1910-1962*, ed. George James Firmage (London: Granada, 1981). The line actually reads, "—how should a fool that calls him 'I' presume / to comprehend not numerable whom?"

invents text almost as often as it quotes. Large chunks of *DreamPlay* are direct quotation: from Freud and Jung's correspondence; interviews, articles, and trials records surrounding Falater's case; poems and popular song lyrics, and texts about the Tarot, primarily Nichols' book. However, some scenes incorporate autobiographical information about the actors (often written by the actors during Composition Work), or dialogue written by the actors or Young that mixes quotation of the above texts with newly written material that seems appropriate to the voices of the characters. Young's dialogue might have a direct quotation from an actor answer the text of a letter from Freud, which is in turn challenged by an altered quotation from the Falater trial transcript. The text then is not as "pure" a pastiche as *Culture of Desire* or *M/M/C*. The script more resembles the Living Theatre's script for *Frankenstein* with its mixture of quoted poems and actors' "personal" information.

The way Young and company adapt the material they quote, on the one hand indicates that BOTHarts, unlike SITI Company, is willing to smooth out the edges of its quotations—to make its quotation more of a montage (in which quoted elements flow imperceptibly into one another) and less of a collage (in which quoted elements remain distinct). Scenes "make sense" more in *DreamPlay* than in *Culture of Desire*, because the altered quotations help to form scenes that are more linear and to form characters that seem to remain consistent within these scenes. Moreover, unlike *Culture of Desire*, characters such as Falater or Freud typically speak words attributed to them in some other text or words that sound appropriate to their dramatic situation. Young is willing to shape the quoted material, changing the words to make the dialogue sound, if not more natural, then at least more appropriate to her actors.

In this sense, BOTHarts' use of quotation seems to create a text or production less radically plural than *Culture of Desire*. All the quotations in *DreamPlay* are filtered through

Young as the designated "writer," in the same way that the script of *Frankenstein* was filtered through Beck and Malina. *DreamPlay* seems to support the concept of the necessary creative input of a singular "author." However, another way to look at the different kinds of intertextuality found in *DreamPlay* and *Culture of Desire* is that BOTHarts is not as concerned with honoring and preserving the texts that it quotes. SITI Company commits to as direct and unmediated a type of quotation as possible, which upholds the selected, if myriad, authors of the quoted material as individuals whose words should be preserved. The Living Theatre does the same, going so far as to provide a citation for each quotation in the *Frankenstein* script. In creating *Culture of Desire*, SITI Company's members do not put themselves in a situation in which their own words can exist in conversation with Warhol's, Dante's, or Eliot's. SITI Company may combine perceived high art (*The Inferno*) with perceived low art (a Shirley Temple musical), but it retains a divide between those who are worthy of quotation (the writers quoted) and those who are not (the company).

A scene from *DreamPlay*, on the other hand, might combine lines written by Young with lines written by her actors with lines from any number of *DreamPlay*'s sources, in which the quoted material is not always presented in quotes, literally or figuratively—that is, within quotation marks or in a heightened or differentiated style. Any indication of low and high is truly hard to perceive in *DreamPlay*. Almost all of the show is conversational and linear, therefore "low" enough for the average audience member to follow. Much of *Culture of Desire*, on the other hand, signals its quotation. Audiences may therefore feel the need to recognize the sources in order to understand the performance. Scenes in *DreamPlay* adapt quotations so they "disappear" into the flow of the dialogue or explicitly state from where a quotation is coming (Jung will announce that he wrote Freud a letter in such-and-such a year and then speak the

content). Therefore, they do not require the audience to recognize the quoted texts. In this way, *DreamPlay*, while interested in building a connection with the audience, does not assume they already have a cultural connection of shared, valued texts.

The major changes between versions 1.0 and 2.0 of *DreamPlay* demonstrate the extent to which comprehension on the part of audience members is of utmost importance to Young and the company. The first change that Young asked the ensemble to address in workshops was to come up with clearer introductions at the beginning of each scene to help the audience get a sense of how each Tarot card informed the scene which had its number. For version 2.0, each scene, often at the beginning, featured the correspondingly numbered actor delivering what Young called a "mini-lecture" on his or her card. For example, Scene 4, the Emperor, began with me saying:

> The Emperor may be seen as the active masculine principle come to bring order to the world, which, if left to grow by itself, can become a jungle. He carves out room for man to stand erect. He creates paths for intercommunication. He will protect his empire from both the inroads of hostile nature and barbarians. He will create, inspire, and defend civilization.[50]

These sentences come from different sections of the chapter about the Emperor Tarot card in Nichols' book; some are slightly paraphrased. This mini-lecture was first part of an individual Composition that I made during rehearsals, based on Young's assignment. Young then edited what I originally compiled.

These introductions were not the only major element in version 2.0 of *DreamPlay* to be added for the sake of clarification. Young also told the company in early meetings that she wanted to expand upon and clarify the Freud/Jung story. In version 1.0, Jung and Freud have a brief meeting of the minds early in the play. However, Jung is already concerned about Freud's

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[50] Young, *DreamPlay*, 22.

obsession with his sexual theory and Freud's unwillingness to consider the role the unconscious may play in human life outside of libidinous urges. The two psychiatrists spend most of the rest of version 1.0 as commentators, offering different interpretations of scenes. In the end, Jung acts as a kind of defense attorney for Falater, giving closing remarks, while Freud, a kind of prosecutor, remains silent.

In version 2.0, a more traditional arc was given to their story—specifically a romance plot. Just as the Falater story is told in a series of different formats or genre (in one scene, Yarmila and Scott sing their legal arguments as though they were in a musical; in another, Scott enacts his courtship of Yarmila as if it were a game show) so are the Freud/Jung vignettes told through different modes. For example, in an added scene in version 2.0 in which Freud and Jung are in the prime of their intellectual agreement, the scene is played like a 1950s' teen-nostalgia-movie montage, completely with a musical refrain from *Grease*'s "Summer Lovin'" playing over the exchange. The text is largely from Jung's *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. In the scene, Freud was played by No. 6, the Lover (Daniel Passer), and Jung by No. 3, the Empress (Evie Peck).

> *A series of love montages, followed by blackouts. 1) F and J talk and laugh; 2) F points to his penis, J laughs; 3) They act like a scary monster and laugh; 4) They quietly stroll on the beach.*
>
> Jung: What Freud said about his—
>
> Freud: Sexual theory. *[Freud] tries to feel [Jung] up, but is rebuffed.*
>
> Jung: Impressed me. Nevertheless, his words could not remove my doubts. I tried to advance these reservations of mine on several occasions, but each time he would attribute them to my—
>
> Freud: Lack of experience.
>
> Jung: Freud was right. I had not enough experience to support my objections.

She gives in and they kiss passionately.[51]

As this segment suggests, overall, version 2.0 presented Freud and Jung's initial attraction and ultimate parting of ways as a romance that goes sour. Only in certain segments, however, was this take on the men's relationship presented so literally in its romance. The expansion of Freud and Jung's story served to make *DreamPlay* more linear and narrative-based.

Likewise, version 2.0 expanded Scott and Yarmila Falater's courtship, and explored in more depth Falater's relationship with his son. Scene 5: The Hierophant, in particular (which in version 1.0 explored gender roles and Yarmila's possible frustration within her Mormon marriage), became in version 2.0 a retelling of Scott and Yarmila's conversion to Mormonism as well as an enactment of the ways in which Yarmila may have contributed to Scott's repression of his shadow. The story of the Falaters' conversion is introduced by No. 5, the Hierophant (Chris Wells), the archetype who represents a direct link to God (or the unconscious). No. 5 reads from the "Book of Scott and Yarmila" as if reading from the holy Book of Mormon, while at his feet, standing in the pool, two couples (Nos. 1-4) enact different versions of the events in the Falaters' life.

5: While visiting a Mormon Temple in Utah, the Falaters first heard the concept of eternal marriage. Yarm looked at Scott, with tears in her eyes, and said—

2 & 3 (*one happy, one sad*): You want that?

5: From the Book of Scott and Yarmila. When confronted with the claim that he referred to his wife as—

1 & 4: Dumpy

5: —to his co-workers, Scott qualified—

[51] Ibid., 21.

4 (*mean*): She might be large—

1 (*sweetly*): but she was always beautiful to me.

5: The reading continues. When Scott confessed to his wife his guilt over the fact that he couldn't warn his fellow employees they would soon be laid off, she said—

2 (*bitchy*): Just lie,

3 (*sweet*): smile,

2 & 3: and play the game.[52]

Like the Freud/Jung storyline, the Falaters' story was expanded and made more linear, as well as patterned to genre conventions of a romance that goes sour, to make it more legible to the audience. At the same time, by offering multiple simultaneous takes on Scott and Yarmila in Scene 5, the creators of *DreamPlay* still suggested that their telling of the Falaters' story was only one way (or a couple of different ways) among many.

If *DreamPlay* was hard for audiences to consume, it was only because of its breadth and its diversity, much like *Medea*/*Macbeth*/*Cinderella*, not because of any kind of anti-narrative techniques of pastiche. Nevertheless, while BOTHarts' adjustments from version 1.0 to version 2.0 reveal a company committed to quotation that is nevertheless easily comprehended in terms of narrative, *DreamPlay* is certainly more complex in terms of its characterizations than *Culture of Desire*. The following exploration of the *DreamPlay*'s concepts of character emphasizes BOTHarts' commitment to democratic ideals of plurality and to a collectivity more democratic than those modeled by *Frankenstein* or *Culture of Desire*.

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[52] Ibid., 25.

The Style: Conflict as Creative Method

Because an essential stage element for Young was a swimming pool, for version 2.0 of *DreamPlay* she chose to present the piece site-specifically rather than incur the expense of constructing a pool onstage. A grant from the Flintridge Foundation allowed the company to rehearse in a rented home in Studio City for six weeks before presenting the play for a two-week run, and provided money for an additional four weeks of rehearsal at a warehouse in Culver City prior to this. Actors were paid a stipend at the end of the run, amounting to a little more than $300, which many decided to donate back to the company.

Much of *DreamPlay*'s ensemble had worked together for years as members of the Actor's Gang. Most, but not all, had left the group upon Robbins' return (or had been fired, in the case of Don Luce who played No. 9, the Hermit). Five of the actors had performed in *DreamPlay* version 1.0 and four of these were playing the same roles in version 2.0: Daniel Parker as No. 1, the Magician; Cynthia Ettinger as No. 8, Strength; Gary Kelley as No. 12, the Hanged Man; and Luce. This provided continuity between the two versions of *DreamPlay*. Because the first twelve scenes are constructed (written by Young and the ensemble) out of the individual actor's understanding and reaction to the archetype he or she has been asked to embody, most of the scenes that had the same actor in the role changed very little: Scenes 1, 8, and 12. Of the other seven actors, five (including myself) had worked with Young and at least some of the other cast members in past productions. Those two performers who were "new" to Young and the ensemble altogether nevertheless became deeply enmeshed in the group through the collaborative creative process as well as by the necessity of close quarters. The ensemble and the show's designers practically lived together in the Studio City home over a period of six weeks. Rehearsals occurred during the day for those actors who did not hold nine-to-five jobs

and every evening, including weekends. One evening a week was given "off" to the whole cast. Moreover, typical of collectives such as the Living Theatre, all technical work—set building, lights, costumes—were the responsibility of the performers, a responsibility which created its own camaraderie and conflicts. This work went on whenever it could, typically after rehearsals late at night or during rehearsals late in the process when Young required only a few actors to work a section of a scene.

While the creators of *Culture of Desire* may have distributed Warhol's words among different characters, exploring the ways in which all Bs were ultimately A, there was nevertheless a traditional hierarchy in this play in terms of roles. Warhol and Vreeland are clearly the "leads" of *Culture of Desire*. The other actors play multiple roles, a situation common for those in the "ensemble." This set-up helps focus the attention of *Culture of Desire* on Warhol and Vreeland as somehow more important. It also emphasizes one "story," as Bogart terms it. No matter how clashing or anti-narrative the pastiche in *Culture of Desire*, the main character is always distinct. It is all part of Warhol's "journey," a journey that stands in for all of our journeys as consumers. In this way, *Culture of Desire* supports the idea that it supposedly also challenges in its negative depiction of "Dark Warhol": that one can stand for the many. *Frankenstein*, as a production, more evenly distributes the plot around the entire ensemble, each of the functions of the head, for example, receive equal onstage time. Nevertheless, the play, like *Culture of Desire*, also follows the story of two characters in particular: Doctor Frankenstein and the Creature. The actors in these roles are in some sense, then, the "leads" of *Frankenstein*.

In *DreamPlay*, the leads (Scott and Yarmila, Freud and Jung) are played by all twelve jury members. Each actor plays Scott and Jung at some point in the play, and almost everyone plays Freud or Yarmila as well. This sharing of the leads among all the actors exemplifies the

characters' internal multiplicity—and the impossibility of any actor "capturing" his or her mimetic subject. (It is also a more democratic use of the ensemble, all sharing equal stage time.) Similarly, *DreamPlay* frequently features twelve dreaming jury members expressing twelve different opinions about the case. Each actor simultaneously plays his- or herself, a member of the Falater jury in "the collective dream" of an imagined trial, and an archetype of the Tarot.[53] This set-up assumes an internal multiplicity of character's "voices," as well as the impossibility of separating these voices from one another. The jurors, the play suggests, are more fragmented than their defendant, the possibly split-personality Falater. Voices in *DreamPlay*, and the subjects that express them, are never single-tracked or unique, but layered, ventriloquising, and borrowing. Words not only fail to capture individuals, they actually reveal ensembled individualities.[54] When Young, in writing *DreamPlay*, quotes her actors' words as dialogue, the assumption is that each actor herself is a mass of quotations without a single, stable essence.

DreamPlay therefore exemplifies a kind of collective of individuals based on acknowledging a seemingly irreducible multiplicity of self. It is not surprising that *DreamPlay* started at "a place of multiplicity"[55] for Young: the ten-week collaboration of twelve outspoken (and dialogue-writing) actors, all of whom had similar training and could therefore challenge one another on the aesthetic value of each moment of the show.[56] As a result, in the rehearsal process

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[53] Ibid., 1.

[54] For a discussion of "ensembled individualism," see Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford, *Singular Texts/Plural Authors: Perspectives on Collaborative Writing* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Press, 1990), 132.

[55] Kendt, "What Dreams May Come," 6.

[56] The process of creating *DreamPlay* is the kind of collaboration described by James Leonard and Christine Wharton: "the bargaining process by which a multiplicity becomes 'coherent.'" (Leonard, James S. and Wharton, Christine E. "Breaking the Silence: Collaboration and the Isolationist Paradigm." In *Author-ity and Textuality: Current Views*

and on the stage, one possible trajectory of *DreamPlay* is from radical multiplicity (a chaos of divided individuals with no faith in the possibility of interpenetration—"How should a fool who calls himself I presume to comprehend the innumerable whom?,"[57] asks No. 4) to collective coherence, even harmony. After all, the play, at least the spoken sections of the play, begins with individual interviews of the jurors by a faceless voice, questioning their suitability to serve on Falater's trial. All the jurors in this scene express, at some moment, opinions that conflict with those of their fellow jurors.

> 4: I can't think of anything more boring than hearing someone tell you about the dream they had. Anything can happen and if anything can happen, then who cares? Like, Ooh, look, my arm just pulled off. Oh, no, here, I'll just screw it back on, you know? I have no interest in it. Zero.
>
> VO [voiceover]: Thank you. Number 8.
>
> 8: I think dreams are fascinating. You can understand other people through their dreams. People who don't like dreams are assholes.
>
> VO: Thank you. Number 12.
>
> 12: I don't dream. Or at least I don't remember dreaming.[58]

However, the play ends with the jurors speaking the same text in unison. This chorus seems to be the opposite of the contested voices in Scene 0, suggesting a progression from radical plurality to unity.

Yet, if there is a "unity" to be dug out of the radical multiplicity of voices in *DreamPlay*, it is not that of a harmonious, unconflicted collective. The "unity" that the play suggests is merely a possible common journey among the different jurors towards individuation, a journey

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of Collaborative Writing. Leonard, James S., et al., ed. West Cornwall: Locust Hill Press, 1994, 33.)

[57] Young, *DreamPlay*, 54.

[58] Young, *DreamPlay*, 7.

that every individual, according to Jung, has the opportunity to make. Individuation, as defined in Jung's *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, means "becoming a single, homogenous being… coming to selfhood or self-realization. But the self comprises infinitely more that a mere ego… It is as much one's self, and all other selves, as the ego. Individuation does not shut one out from the world, but gathers the world to oneself."[59] Jung's qualification here is significant, because even the unity that comes with individuation is described as selfhood that contains multiplicity: "as much one's self, and all other selves, as the ego." That each juror makes such a journey in the play unifies the action of *DreamPlay* in some sense. However, each juror's journey is a different journey through the same Tarot landscape.

Corresponding to this idea that unity is only recognizable through the similarity of many individual journeys, an overview of the development of *DreamPlay*, version 2.0, emphasizes how the collectivity modeled by BOTHarts is one which, like the Living Theatre, cultivates individual expression. Development of *DreamPlay* began with a series of workshops in an empty warehouse in Culver City. For the first week, a group of about thirty performers created compositions and worked on some basic Viewpoints exercises. These compositions mostly dealt with a couple of Tarot cards that Young was interested in gathering more images and ideas about (and therefore scenes she hoped to remake in version 2.0). One was card 16, the Tower, which in most designs of the Tarot depicts two figures falling from a spire that is being destroyed by lightning. The card recalls the story of the Tower of Babel, but it does not necessarily bode disaster for the person who draws it. The card can also mean a violent but necessary sea change in a person's life, a breakthrough. The other card was 13, Death, again a seemingly very

[59] Jung, *Memories*, 395.

negative archetype but also one that can suggest revitalization and renewal in the wake of purging.

In addition to this Viewpoints/Composition Work, Young did a number of "cultural mapping" exercises with this early large ensemble. One exercise, for example, had everyone in the group moving to different parts of the room based on how he or she identified with a series of statements made by Young: "Anyone who has spent time in jail, go to this corner. Anyone who has not, go to this corner" or "If you were born in the U.S., go here; born in another country go there," etc. Young learned "cultural mapping" in her work with Cornerstone, who in turn borrowed it from Molly Smith, formerly of the Perseverance Theater. According to Smith, this exercise illustrates how community boundaries can be continuously redrawn. However, as Young conducted it, this exercise aimed at providing at least one moment for each performer in which he or she was alone in his or her "location." Therefore, while the exercise materializes connections the performers have with others in the ensemble, connections that may surprise them, it also shows the performers ways in which they are different from the group.

After this week of initial exploration, Young contacted the twelve actors she wanted to work with on version 2.0 and assigned them their Tarot cards. In the next few weeks in the Culver City warehouse, Young and the ensemble continued group Composition Work and Viewpoints. In addition, we took Myers-Briggs tests, a personality typing system developed largely out of Jung's ideas, and discussed the results. Everyone read the script from version 1.0 and debated which sections should be kept and which needed to be reconsidered. This was BOTHarts' version of SITI Company's "table work." At the time, my strongest opinion about version 1.0 was that the ending needed to be overhauled. Freud's silence in the face of Jung's closing statements seemed unfairly to steer the production toward one interpretation of the events

that had preceded. This didn't seem in keeping with *DreamPlay*'s overall interest in contested exchange. My complaint, combined with Young's concern over the undeveloped character of Freud, became the impetus for the overhaul of this section of the story in version 2.0.

The time in Culver City culminated in long individual compositions (often thirty minutes) created by each performer based on his or her relation to the Tarot card thus far in the process. Young has since claimed that she was so impressed by this work that she felt like saying to the cast at that time that *DreamPlay* would now be just these twelve individual long compositions. The ensemble would hone and present them as version 2.0. Young eventually reconsidered. However, while only sections of these compositions were retained in the rewritten *DreamPlay*, these individual compositions were important because they established twelve distinct points of view and mini-performances of the Falaters and Freud and Jung as starting points for the new version of the play. More than the reports that SITI Company members offer in "table work," these long compositions started our creative process from a place of radical multiplicity and separate and distinct aesthetics. For example, the long composition by Angela Kang, who played No. 2, The High Priestess, was a traditional psychological realist monologue in which Kang described her experiences with the faith she was raised in as she performed activities in preparation for bed. In contrast, the long composition by Gary Kelley, No. 12 (The Hanged Man), featured the actor dangling from the ceiling, his waist wrapped in a long sheath of cloth. After lowering himself, Kelley performed a Celtic-influenced dance and invited the ensemble to join him. Had Kang and Kelley been solely in charge of the creation of *DreamPlay*, version 2.0, they would have come up with two very different plays.

This emphasis on individual "takes" on the play was not lost when *DreamPlay* began its on-site rehearsals. While there is not space in this dissertation to detail the many weeks of on-site rehearsal, one important aspect of BOTHarts' development process to note is the way in which the Style feeds into the creative process, making for a much more confrontational atmosphere than at SITI Company or the Living Theatre, and also a process more conducive to individual expression. To begin with, because the majority of the ensemble has trained in the Style for some time, there is a tendency at BOTHarts to embrace emotional extremes onstage and there is also a facility with quick transitions from one "state" to another. Moreover, in creating compositions, there is often a jockeying of position in terms of who will get the "food": who will speak or who will be the lead in each short piece. Those with backgrounds in the Style typically feel comfortable speaking directly to the audience in long monologues, or improvising emotionally engaged dialogue on the spot. In this way, the Style supports the sense of a show composed of multiple individual perspectives, a sense that the long compositions had originally encouraged.

At the same time, the Style is a highly confrontational method. There is almost always a battle occurring between the characters onstage in a Style improvisation and between the characters and whoever is in the chair. As Schlitt described it, the Style "is great because you can be an ass to people. Sometimes I'm just very sadistic in the chair. It's therapeutic for me, because I'm a really nice guy in real life. So when you yell at someone, 'You suck!' that's going to get a reaction. It helps them be stated."[60] While Young in the chair is rarely as antagonistic as Schlitt, she concurs that this spirit of confrontation fuels her work. "You have to bleed a little bit to make the great thing. In collaboration, when you're working with really confident, talented

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[60] Mike Schlitt, Interview with the writer, Hollywood, CA, July 7, 1999.

individuals, there is going to be confrontation. And either you are going to use it as material or you are going to tamp it."[61] Group Composition Work in general, at SITI Company or at BOTHarts. is often slow-going (even with the enforced time restraints), because typically people are so tentative about leading. Performers more easily take to heart the first half of the SITI Company motto "Don't Lead, Don't Follow." The opposite, however, can be the case with BOTHarts. Depending on who is in the group, all performers are often trying to lead, steeped as they are in their Style training. The result is typically too many good ideas, too many voices, and, sometimes, real conflict between committed and confident co-creators.

While hurt feelings rarely went unaddressed during the show's development process, a confrontational atmosphere permeated *DreamPlay*'s rehearsals. Most actors knew one another's bag of tricks and would teasingly, even viciously, call them on it. We knew what the others did well, their shtick, and most were eager to prevent others from falling back on the tried and true. This mentality was supported by Young, who felt that her recent experience at the Actors' Gang had confirmed the dangers of working in your safety zone as a creator.

> At the Actors' Gang, it was the older guys saying, "I've earned the right to not have to self-confront anymore. You guys do that and I'm just going to be over here doing the thing that I did the last time that worked the last time. It's bullet-proof. You guys figure the rest of it out and then come see me when you've figured out your thing and then I'll plug my thing in." And that is absurd. It's absurd. It's death. It's "bullshit, bullshit, bullshit, my line." It's everything we hate. It's dead. It's horrible.[62]

The constant challenges leveled by fellow creators, combined with the physical strain of working in the pool—often rehearsals required long hours swimming or choreographing numbers in the water—proved exhausting for some performers. Yet the competitive atmosphere also kept many going beyond what they perceived as their physical limits. Young's request early on, regarding

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[61] Young Interview, Dec. 22, 2006.
[62] Ibid.

the stresses of working in the pool, that the actors "hunker down and get through it," became a half-sarcastic motto for rehearsals. In later rehearsals Young would often laugh at this statement in retrospect but just as often defend and reuse it as still-apt advice.

Nevertheless, the intensity of rehearsals occasionally proved too much even for veteran Actors' Gang members. When Gary Kelley, an actor who had nearly zero percent body fat, stood shivering in his underwear on one particularly cold May night and claimed he couldn't rehearse in the pool any longer, the subsequent ragging by his fellow actors and calls to "hunker down" made Kelley leave the Studio City home on foot in a rage and make his way down the dark road toward Ventura Boulevard. He was of course found and brought back to the group, and his protests were not only listened to with all seriousness, but also acted upon. Luce, who had been the technical director at the Actors' Gang, overhauled the pool's heater, a costly but necessary expense. Kelley's breakdown and the subsequent group effort to comply with his needs were not unique. Every rehearsal of *DreamPlay* began and ended with "check in," a group-therapy exercise practiced by Cornerstone as well as by Young in which the company sitting in a circle explains "where they are coming from" that day, any issues they are having of which the group should be aware, and any problems they feel must be addressed immediately. In this way, Young tempers the explosive, confrontational atmosphere of Composition Work, fed on Style experience, with calm listening and subsequent sensitive action. Nevertheless, while Young's process built in time to address insecurities and interpersonal issues, there was very little sense of reverence for the material or for one another as actors. Nothing about the process was handled with kid gloves. Everything was put to the test in the concentrated time and the antagonistic process. Not only Young but also every performer made sure that only the best

material survived for production. However, with twelve different opinions on what the "best" might be, reaching any consensus was often a long and painful process.

The antagonistic atmosphere of the Style carries over not only into BOTHarts' rehearsal process but also into the company's productions themselves. *DreamPlay*, for example, enacts a fraught collectivity of clashing voices unafraid to challenge one another or hurt one another's feelings. In Scene 3, for example, the jury discusses the Falater case while No. 3, the Empress, the maternal archetype, makes sandwiches for the jurors and scolds them as she would her own disobedient children. The jurors are supposed to be electing a foreman in the scene, but, in line with the *DreamPlay*'s distrust of authority, a foreman is never elected. No one is allowed to lead the jury in this play. As the scene progresses, No. 4, the Emperor, argues that Falater is clearly guilty and debates details of Falater's testimony with the others.

> 4: I don't think he was sleepwalking.
>
> 3: But you wouldn't put the body in the swimming pool for the children to find, would you?
>
> 4: I wouldn't murder my wife, either.
>
> 8: Are you sure about that?
>
> 4: You're crazy.
>
> 8: You don't think this could happen to you?
>
> 4: No, I don't.
>
> 8: How well do you know yourself if you think this couldn't happen to you?
>
> 9 (to 8): How well do you know yourself?
>
> 8: Fuck off!
>
> All: Ooooo!

3: Number 8 and Number 4, stop it right now!

Pause.

5: Are we going to elect a foreman or what?[63]

The jury, much like the BOTHarts ensemble (and many theatre collectives, for that matter), is always one step from dissolving. At the same time, the bickering in the scene actually develops the play's argument that self-awareness—coming to terms with one's shadow—is essential. No. 4 is denying any part of himself that could kill someone else, a potential shadow. However, No. 8 is also mistaken if she thinks that her ability to see others' neuroses necessarily means that she is fully self-aware. No. 9, the Hermit, an archetype that represents deep introspection in isolation, is appropriately the one to challenge her assumptions.

Like a jury that refuses to appoint a foreman, *DreamPlay*'s creative process, the interpersonal dynamics of which carry over into the production, is based, more than anything else, on consistently challenging authority. In the same way that there are no designated leads in the play—each actor gets equal time, all play the main characters—so are there no "leads" in the creative process. One way that this is encouraged is in Young's assignment of Composition Work during rehearsals. Young mixes groups and changes their sizes continuously to make sure that performers cannot fall into familiar relationships and comfortable power dynamics. It is another way to keep actors out of their comfort zones. She also makes sure that performers new to the company act as the "directors" of some compositions, preventing them from sitting back and allowing actors more comfortable with Composition to lead. Having spent years negotiating through the creative processes at the Actors' Gang, Young is very concerned about the "hidden hierarchies" of theatre collectives, even those collectives that write as a group. In such

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[63] Young, *DreamPlay*, 19.

companies, Young asserts, while everyone in theory may be allowed to critique any performer or any moment in a show, nevertheless, there are certain actors (or often the director) who are off-limits to such criticism except by a few chosen longtime company members. "If you are the ASM [assistant stage manager], you don't get to say to the [lead], 'I think her character should do this right here,'" Young notes.[64]

This is one of the reasons that, with *DreamPlay*, and with all of her productions with BOTHarts since *DreamPlay*, Young has been interested primarily in temporary ensembles, mixing actors she has worked with for years with new performers without necessarily committing to a long-term relationship with either group. BOTHarts as an organization is in essence only Young, Wells, and producer Elizabeth Tobias. Says Young:

> I don't know what I think of SITI Company or Wooster Group or these groups that have been together forever. I always have questions about the compromises and the entrenched things that are sometimes, over time, calcified and problematic. I don't know if that comes with the territory, if that is a natural component or if there is some way to continue to re-invigorate.[65]

Young's concern about hidden hierarchies is well known within the company and often comes out in jokes during rehearsals. During Compositions, when asked why he would want to perform a certain text centerstage, for example, Daniel Parker might answer facetiously, "Because I'm the lead of *DreamPlay*, sweetie, and I must be seen." Such attitudes in the temporary ensemble not only defused tension in the moment but often led the actor making the joke to then turn to his collaborators and ask if they had a different, better idea for the staging.

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[64] Young Interview, Dec. 22, 2006.
[65] Ibid.

Letting the Audience Have the Last Word

One way in which BOTHarts (and Cornerstone, as it will be argued later) challenges its own authority in the creative process is by insisting that its shows are never finished or definitive. Unlike such collectives as SITI Company, BOTHarts rejects the commercial theatre convention of "rehearse the show until it is perfect and then repeat it for an audience." While Young acknowledges the importance of audiences contributing to the creative process—so much so indeed that even the earliest compositions of *DreamPlay* had observers in addition to Young, whether designers or friends or the press—she maintains that each performance and each production run is merely a version of a show, not the realization of it. Many theatre collectives put process before product of course. However, Young really struggles with setting things down for repetition, in writing or in rehearsal. She has admitted that while she wants larger audiences involved at a certain point, she would prefer if all her shows were considered "workshops." This is one of the reasons that the production of *DreamPlay* in question was advertised as a "work-in-progress" and was called "*DreamPlay*, version 2.0."[66] Quoting the convention of software coding, the suggestion of "version 2.0" is that other versions are to come. This was the case with the multiple versions of *Four Roses* and *M/M/C* that Young (and Rauch) directed as well. Because Young almost always works with texts that she quotes at length—whether the plays of Tennessee Williams in *Four Roses* or the letters of Freud and Jung—there is a sense that her company is not involved in a creative process so much as a re-creative process. The company is combining given elements for one possible version among many. The authority of any individual production therefore, much like the authority of the creators in the rehearsal process, is intentionally challenged by BOTHarts' positioning of the production in its advertising. This

[66] Postcard ad for *DreamPlay*, 2002.

encourages audiences to consume the shows in ways in which they are not perhaps comfortable. Their contribution is needed to "progress" the work in progress.

Adding to the sense that *DreamPlay* is unfinished, and requires input from the audience, there is no closure to one of the play's central issues—Falater's guilt or innocence—by the end of play, except in dialogue with the audience. In the penultimate scene—Scene 20: Judgment—each juror, standing in a line at the far side of the pool from the audience, makes a final statement:

> Male VO: Please approach the witness stand and give your testimony.
>
> *One by one, they testify. They raise their right hands, up and down, it morphs into a stabbing motion, and back and forth.*
>
> 4: How should a fool who calls himself I presume to comprehend the innumerable whom?
>
> 1: As the winter wind blows chilly and cold, so never is the most lonely man alone.
>
> 7: How can anyone see beauty in a man that has killed his wife?
>
> 2: So deep is the mind of the flesh, so awake what waking calls sleep.
>
> 8: Jesus said, Will none of you stay awake with me?
>
> 9: James Joyce said Finnegans Wake.
>
> 5: Carl Jung said, Summoned or not the god will be there.
>
> 11: Every cop is a criminal.
>
> 12: And all the sinners saints.
>
> 3: Surrender.
>
> 10: Surrender.
>
> 6: But don't give your Self away.[67]

[67] Young, *DreamPlay*, 54.

The swearing-in motion that becomes an act of violence implies that any judgment on the ensemble's part about Falater by the end of this show would limit the co-creation of the production by the audience. In addition, the testimony offered by each juror here either undercuts or supports his or her archetype's position throughout the show with regards to a commitment to collectivity and a discomfort with judgment. For example, No. 4, the Emperor, who passionately argued that Falater was obviously guilty in Scene 3, now questions anyone's ability to fully understand a world of others. No. 1, the Magician, the archetype most interested in self-realization, or in one-ness, now denies the possibility of isolation. Most of this testimony is quotation, of course. "Every cop is a criminal and all the sinners saints," are lyrics from the Rolling Stones' song, "Sympathy for the Devil," appropriately enough for a scene that asks the audience to consider whether a murderer can be beautiful. "Surrender, surrender, but don't give yourself away," meanwhile, is from the Cheap Trick song "Surrender," and offers complex advice. In the same way that Jung claims that only with total individuation can someone truly become involved in society, so does the Cheap Trick lyric claim that only with complete surrender to the collective can you find and retain selfhood. This quoted lyric could as easily be *DreamPlay*'s or BOTHarts' motto.[68]

The scene continues beyond this passage, however. All the jurors repeat the individual testimonies chorally, suggesting that, for the moment, the separate archetypes and jurors become

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[68] This motto also sounds very much like the "fusion theory" of collaboration described by Lorraine York in *Rethinking Women's Collaborative Writing*. When writing collaboratively, York claims, "Your thoughts transform mine and vice versa, but we don't lose ourselves in the negotiations." [York, *Rethinking Women's Collaborative Writing: Power, Difference, Property* (Toronto: U of Toronto Press, 2002), 21.]

one. Then the voiceover asks, "Scott Falater, do you have any final testimony?"[69] All twelve jurors put on glasses, "becoming" Falater, and in unison, repeat the words he has said earlier in the play, "Some people refer to their spouses like, This is my right arm. She was, like, both my arms and my legs and all my heart. I'm not the monster they're trying to paint me to be. I know who I am on the inside. That will never change. I hope." After questioning the possibility of collectivity without individuation, the jurors now question the possibility of any "unified" self, using Falater's own words. Yarmila was part of Scott, Falater claims. He was a divided creature before her death, and remains divided, unable to acknowledge his shadow, unable to see what more he may contain "on the inside." However, Falater's condition—having a shadow self—is universal, according to Jung. All subjectivities are therefore on some level divided. No one should be foolish enough to call himself "I," to assume that his or her individuation is complete.

Next, the jurors remove their glasses, sit, and the voiceover asks for their verdict. No. 10 (The Wheel of Fortune) pulls a fortune cookie from her mouth, passes it down the line to No. 1 (The Magician), who performs a bit of magic making the fortune cookie disappear from his hand and reappear in the mouth of No. 12 (The Hanged Man), who passes it to No. 11 (Justice). The object of the fortune cookie "lazzi" pokes fun at the possibility of an easy, pithy answer to the case, one that might magically appear at the end of such a detailed exploration of Falater's psyche. No. 11 says, "In the case of the people vs. Scott Falater, we find the defendant—" Suddenly, a barrage of alarm clocks, trumpets, church bells, and buzzers sound, and the stage goes to black. As the dreaming jury is about to present its verdict, it is awakened, and the audience members are left to make up their own minds about Falater. Making up their minds, completing in some sense the production of *DreamPlay*, is precisely what happened in the post-

[69] Ibid., 54.

show events after every performance, where the main topic of discussion was Falater's guilt or innocence.

Since BOTHarts' creative process is so dependent upon the co-creation of its audiences, some description of the audiences for *DreamPlay*, version 2.0, is necessary. The audience for *DreamPlay* was primarily invited. The show's location was kept a secret from patrons. A van picked up audience members from a nearby parking lot a half-hour before curtain and drove them to the site. The *DreamPlay* audience was small and generally familiar with the performers' work—even intimate with them as people in some cases—and therefore able to recognize the gaps between character, actor, and archetype more easily. Many audience members, in addition, had seen the earlier incarnation of the piece in 1999. This intimacy allowed them to better recognize not only a hybridity of character but an internal multiplicity to each contributing voice of the character as well. *DreamPlay*'s audiences were often in the know in terms of when an actor was being "biographical." This knowledge helped to highlight the moments when the characters were speaking in many voices at once: juror, actor, archetype, famous psychiatrist. This is not the simple hybridity of performer combined with individual performed, but of polyvocal subject combined with polyvocal performer.

Even those audience members who were not in the know, however, could meet the expectations of this production's post-show dialogue. Post-show, *DreamPlay*'s audience members were merely asked to mingle and discuss. The issue of Falater's innocence was always a topic, but debates were informal and in small groups.[70] Because the van could only take a few

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[70] Regardless of the content of the post-show dialogues, *DreamPlay*'s final scene makes a strong statement about the possibilities of collaboration in a town where individualism reigns. This scene is an *improvised* ensemble dance in which the performers repeat and pick up

audience members at a time away after the show, the audience was compelled to remain on-site for some time. Food and wine were served and a party atmosphere was encouraged. In this shared space, the layers of the show, often too complex to keep track of in the viewing, were clarified to audience members by performers and sometime vice versa. In this sense, the "completion" of *DreamPlay* by its audience was particularly useful in addressing this play's central questions, as well as in including the audience in an event of modeled collectivity, a temporary collective of polyvocal individuals struggling with complex questions.

Reconciling With Authority

While I am primarily interested in this chapter in showing the ways in which BOTHarts and Cornerstone offer alternative communities—in other words model collectivity—through their companies' creative processes and their companies' productions, the best way to understand how these modeled collectivities define themselves in contrast to large-scale hierarchies is by examining the ways in which authority is challenged through quotation within BOTHarts' dramas and productions. In terms of *DreamPlay*, the challenge to authority is most evident in the intertext of Freud and Jung's story which helps define BOTHarts as a collective, a collective which ultimately welcomes a certain kind of authority into its alternative community.

On the surface, Scott Falater's story does not immediately suggest that it is primarily about a confrontation with authority. However, BOTHarts' take on Freud and Jung not only contaminates Falater's story—as the *Inferno* contaminated Warhol's story in *Culture of Desire*—but all of *DreamPlay*, until this play becomes primarily an examination of authority and

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others' gestures without falling into extended patterns—a ballet without boundaries or prior authorship.

its relationship to collectivity. In version 1.0, as mentioned earlier, Jung essentially proves Freud's views of Falater wrong in his closing statement. Jung's interpretation of Falater, as a man unable to integrate his shadow self, triumphs. Jung argues that the unconscious is not just a site for sexual repression, and that the search for meaning (not simply for sex) is at the root of human experience. Freud remains silent through this lecture in Scene 19, until he bids farewell to his former mentee. "Goodbye, my son," says Freud. "Goodbye, Father," replies Jung.[71] Freud, as the authority figure, must be dismissed at the end of *DreamPlay*, version 1.0, for the collective of jurors to flourish, which they indeed seem to do in the dance that ends the play. Freud cannot be part of this dance, a physical expression of collectivity, because he stands in the way of individuation. Individuation, according to Jung and BOTHarts, is necessary for collectivity. In Scene 3, for example, Freud dismisses Jung's ideas, chalking them up to "lack of experience," stifling Jung's independence.[72] In Scene 8, Freud then implores Jung to never question him or his ideas. "Promise me never to abandon the sexual theory. We must make a dogma of it, an unshakable bulwark," says Freud.[73] This scene is played behind the shadow screen, implying that Freud's shadow is in full view in this moment, as a mass of insecurities. Moreover, it is significant that No. 1, the Magician (the archetype that is always striving for unity, for one-ness), played Freud in this scene and also that Jung was played by myself, No. 4 (the Emperor), because this is the first instance in the play in which Jung recognizes the dark side of Freud, pulling away from him and starting to become his own man.

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[71] Young, *DreamPlay*, *version 1.0* (Unpublished, 2000), 86.
[72] Young, *DreamPlay*, 21.
[73] Ibid., 33.

Freud's incompatibility with collectivity is cemented in Scene 13: Death, in an episode taken directly from Jung's *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*.[74] In this scene, in version 2.0, Jung walks the perimeter of the pool (at first in complete darkness) lighting smudge pots that cast huge shadows of the performers, draped in and around the pool, onto the wall of the home. Freud stands at one end of pool on a patio and watches Jung.

> Jung: Then something happened which foreshadowed the death of my relationship with Freud. Freud had a dream. I interpreted it as best I could but added that a great deal more could be said about it if he would supply me with some additional details from his private life. Freud's response to these words was a look of the utmost suspicion. Then he said—
>
> Freud: I cannot risk my authority.
>
> Jung: I felt as if, in that moment, the floor gave way beneath me. Everything dropped out. That sentence—
>
> Freud: I cannot risk my authority.
>
> Jung: —burned itself in to my memory. Freud was placing personal authority above truth.[75]

In BOTHarts' model of collectivity, this is the worst thing Freud could say, because he refuses to submit himself or his ideas to the analysis and criticism of the group. Freud sets himself up as one of the untouchables, the Actors' Gang "old guard," like an actor who thinks his bag of tricks always works. It is significant that in this scene Freud was played by me, No. 4 (the Emperor, the archetype of paternal authority) and Jung was played by No. 12 (the Hanged Man, the archetype of profound and sudden change). Immediately following this exchange, Jung, unlike Freud, willing to trust the collective, performs a ritual which seems the antithesis of Freud's retreat to the safety of separation and assumed authority. Jung is wrapped in a shroud and

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[74] Jung, *Memories*, 158.
[75] Young, *DreamPlay*, 41.

carried by the jurors into the deep end of the pool. As an ensemble, they all sink to the bottom together. It is an image of death but also a representation of Jung's willingness to plunge into the unknown, the deep waters of the unconscious, with his fellow "fools." Jung abandons control and places himself in the hands of the collective.

Despite Freud's rejection of the collective in this scene, during the process of reimagining the structure of version 2.0 of *DreamPlay*, Young, with the insistence of some cast members, began to question how fair she was being to Freud and how her personal journey might be affecting his narrative within the play. After all, Young was a professed believer in much of Jung's philosophy and had faith in the possibilities of Jungian therapy. Moreover, she was very honest about her own desires to challenge authority and her issues with any paternal authority figure. Young was also self-aware enough to admit to the group that much of her issue with paternal authority was a product of her upbringing, never having known her father, and her recent professional experience dealing with Tim Robbins' reclamation of the Actors' Gang. In some sense, Young seemed to be casting herself as Jung in the play. This was particularly the case in version 1.0. And if Young was Jung, Robbins—who suggested that other ways of approaching the Style were "clutter," who petulantly demanded that those he once had helped financially both honor and not question him—would seem to be Freud. More accurately, of course, Young was not unique within BOTHarts in wanting to challenge certain aspects of authority as antithetical to and destructive to collectivity. In a cast of former Actors' Gang members, Freud/Robbins understandably was, in early rehearsals at least, getting the short end of the stick in the writing and performance of his relationship with the collectively committed Jung/Young.

To be fair to the earlier production of *DreamPlay*, however, even in version 1.0 one scene in particular undercut Jung's apotheosis and Freud's demonization. In a creative process that thrives on disagreement, it was inevitable that even Jung should be challenged by the ensemble on some level. Scene 10 (the Wheel of Fortune), *DreamPlay*'s Act I finale, which remained largely the same in version 2.0, presented a Broadway musical version of the Falater case. Taking (what the group imagined would be) Jung's assertion that Falater was not responsible for his crimes to its logical, nightmarish, end, the scene casts Falater as an ingénue (No. 10, played by actress Evie Peck in version 1.0) and Yarmila as a frightening hag (No. 1, Daniel Parker, in drag), reminiscent of Fruma Sarah in *Fiddler on the Roof*. In a sugar-sweet song dripping with irony and quoting the melody of Stephen Sondheim's "Broadway Baby," Falater, following Jung's lead, takes no responsibility for his actions.

> Scott (sings): I'm just a naughty baby / With my naughty baby charm / I didn't want to hurt you / I'd never willingly harm—someone. / From 9 to 5, I'm my own man / But sleep brings out God's master plan / I'm just a naughty baby / Who's naughty 'bout you / My dark side's nasty, always waitin' to jump / Dyin' to stab you when you say, "Fix that pump" / I have no free will, it's destiny / I'm just a naughty baby, so please don't blame me.[76]

Yarmila answers this questionable assertion by warning the jury what will happen if they buy into this exaggerated depiction of a Jungian defense of Falater's crime.

> Yarmila (sings): Stupid Jury! / Idiots! (stupid jerks) / Think about it! / If you take a closer look (you'll see) / I'm the one he hated / Every action that he took / Was premeditated (of course) / Let's be very clear on this / If you say, Not guilty (you are) / Just as guilty as he is (you) / Might as well have killed me (yourself).

While humorous, this scene also had some gravity in version 2.0, coming as it did right after the most graphic re-enactment of Yarmila's murder, which occurs just before this song in a reimagined Scene 9: the Hermit. In version 2.0, Yarmila is stabbed by Scott behind the shadow

[76] Ibid., 36.

screen right before this musical number, her screams echoing through the Studio City hillsides. Parker's Yarmila was harder to laugh at after this graphic shadow depiction of her slaughter.

Therefore, even in version 1.0, Jung's authority did not go unchallenged. However, in version 2.0, Young wanted to even the playing field even more between Jung and Freud. Early on in rehearsals for version 2.0, Young said that in reimagining the Freud/Jung story she wanted to emphasize the positive aspects of No. 4, the Emperor, the paternal authority archetype; aspects that were largely absent from version 1.0. In addition to fleshing out their story to show Jung's own complicity in this relationship, as well as depicting the more appealing sides of Freud's mentorship early on in the play, the ensemble also rewrote Scene 19, Jung's closing argument, to include an epitaph for Freud that described his persecution by the Nazis.

> Jung: Shortly before he was allowed to leave his beloved country, he had a final meeting with the Gestapo, who insisted Freud sign a statement saying he was not mistreated. He obliged, and jokingly asked if he could add a further testimonial—
>
> Freud: I can most heartily recommend the Gestapo to everyone.
>
> Jung: Freud's four sisters remained in Vienna and, unable to secure visas, perished in the camps. Freud died within a year of leaving Vienna.[77]

This brief reminder of Freud's final years humanized this often-distant authority figure.

Furthermore, Young added to version 2.0 a final letter from Freud to Jung, the text taken from an actual 1911 letter from Freud to Jung as well as from Freud's 1927 essay, "The Future of an Illusion."[78] This passage placed Freud more in line with Jung in his concerns about the welfare of the world as well as claimed a less authoritative position for him as one who questions more than one who insists he has the answers.

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[77] Ibid., 53.
[78] McGuire, William, ed. *The Freud/Jung Letters* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1974), 428.

> Freud: Dear Dr. Jung. I cannot like you report interesting work and startling findings. I am tired and count the days… In my youth I felt an overpowering need to understand something of the riddles of the world in which we live and perhaps even contribute to their solution. We have seen in the modern world violent conflicts of unheard of dimension. These conflicts originate in the human psyche. People at war with themselves. In my old age, I can offer no solution for humankind to escape the violence. I can only ponder the question.[79]

Finally, the moment in which Freud says goodbye to Jung was also altered in version 2.0 so that after the "Goodbye, my son" "Goodbye, father" exchange, Freud added, "Goodbye, my friend," placing himself on an equal level with Jung, risking his authority, and willingly joining the collective. This new commitment to the collective was then emphasized by Freud and Jung joining hands and leaping into the pool together. At various times in *DreamPlay*, the pool symbolized the unconscious, the depths of our hidden shadow selves. Therefore, by the end of version 2.0, Freud, symbolically, willingly takes the plunge into this unknown territory.

Young and her ensemble spent much of the creative process of version 2.0 coming to terms with Freud, recognizing his humanity, his similarity to Falater, and coming to see him as someone like Falater, simply afraid to confront his shadow self. Authority became humanized in the figure of Freud. In Nichols' terms, the group had confronted the archetype of the Emperor and was healthier because of it. While the collective still insisted that Freud give up his power in order to be embraced by the ensemble, the character transformed from a distant, infuriating father figure in version 1.0, to a pitiable, recognizable fellow "fool" in version 2.0. The transformed intertexts of Freud and Jung's relationship contaminated the text of the jurors' deciding the case by requiring some softening of No. 4, the Emperor, the juror who most often throws his authority around the jury room in the play.

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[79] Ibid., 53.

Version 2.0 also tried to see things from Falater's point-of-view as the authority in his own household. This was revealed by the rewrite of Scene 7 (The Chariot), which in version 1.0 had been a silly send up of improv groups (the "Dream Players" visit Motorola, after Falater's conviction, to warn employees about work stress). In version 2.0, the scene became Falater at work trying to encourage his team. "I'm just trying to warn you how serious the situation is," says No. 4 as Falater. "We need to hunker down. And if that means extra hours, it means extra hours."[80] By allowing her own phrase, "hunker down," to be put into the mouth of the show's authority figure, the Emperor, Young as director acknowledged her own closeness to the Emperor, and, tangentially, to Freud. It was a moment that for the ensemble, if not for the audience, recognized the tension in a process that purported to be collective, but still looked to a leader in Young.

Getting Closer to Falater

A description of the ways in which version 2.0 of *DreamPlay* both challenged and came to terms with authority in modeling a certain type of collectivity for its company and audiences would not be complete without some discussion of the use of pastiche in creating this production. In Chapter Three, three different types of pastiche were identified. A pastiche might be: 1) a neutral practice that presents a series of potentially useful voices, as opposed to privileging a "healthy linguistic normality" against which abnormality can be measured (Jameson); or 2) a practice that makes us aware of history while still emotionally involving the audience (Dyer); or 3) a practice that challenges all history as based purely in narrative (Causey). From among these options, *DreamPlay*, when it utilizes the technique of pastiche, is most like number three.

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[80] Ibid., 31.

As mentioned earlier, in *DreamPlay*, many different modes are incorporated to tell the stories of Scott and Yarmila or Freud and Jung. Again, this makes sense considering the twelve individual solo performances Young had to work with at the beginning of BOTHarts' re-creative process. The result in production was that there was not a single definable aesthetic that dominated the piece. In line with this, the "histories" of Freud/Jung and the Falaters are told through a number of different historical styles and theatrical genre. For example, *DreamPlay* contains a magic act, dramatic scenes in the vein of psychological realism (à la *12 Angry Men*), cinematic montage sequences, podium lectures, a game show, a musical theatre number, shadow puppetry, a radio talk show, a vaudeville routine, and two silent dances (actually two sessions of "open" Viewpoints). As in *Culture of Desire*, this series of different genre does not privilege one over another. There is no distinction made between legitimate (high) art and illegitimate (low) art. Whichever mode best expresses the story is a legitimate mode.

However, there is a way in which this diversity of genre in *DreamPlay* is different from the diversity of genre found in *Culture of Desire*. While *Culture of Desire* includes such distinct and seemingly incompatible modes as an art lecture, a shopping-cart ballet, and a tap-dance number, all of these elements are unified by SITI Company's rigorous, careful choreography and slightly ironic attitude, which some critics have linked to a "cool" emotional quality found in many of the group's productions. These segments of *Culture of Desire*, though different, feel of a piece, all identifiable as "SITI Company work." With *DreamPlay*, however, each mode is more distinct. Admittedly, this may have been due to the intentional lack of an overall dominating design to the piece. Presented in and around the home's pool, *DreamPlay* was devoid of sets and contained little in the way of props and costumes. This was in keeping with the "Big Cheap" philosophy of the 99-Seat theatre scene.

Moreover, there is a sense of mastery in SITI Company projects, whether its performers are delivering a lecture or dancing a ballet, that is absent from BOTHarts. That is not to say that BOTHarts' productions are under-rehearsed or that the performers are not virtuosi in the way that SITI Company's performers are. Indeed, Parker and Wells perform with SITI Company as well as BOTHarts, and fit in with these different companies' attitudes equally well. Rather, it seems that SITI Company raises each genre it quotes to the level of high art through the company's careful and exquisite presentation. *DreamPlay*, on the other hand, is content with letting the low stay low. *DreamPlay* lets the magic act in Scene 1 be shoddy, lets the vaudeville act be full of tired shtick, lets the musical number be histrionic and indulgent. This gives the sense of larger-than-life performers struggling to express themselves in tired genre that cannot accurately contain their emotions. The result is hopefully that audience members will not feel a great separation between the performers and themselves, and will not feel divided then from the collectivity that the group models, as they might at the end of seeing the Living Theatre's *Frankenstein*.

In the book *Theatrical Presentation*, Bernard Beckerman claims that performers operate on a spectrum, from the ordinary to the extraordinary.[81] A magician, for example, starts with ho-hum card tricks and builds to amazing feats, such as cutting his assistant in half. SITI Company's actors consistently perform on the extraordinary end of the spectrum. Watching a SITI Company show, like watching the physical distortions of the final moments of *Frankenstein*, there is the sense of, "Wow, I could never do that," the feeling one similarly experiences, for example, while attending any of the numerous "Cirque" shows. BOTHarts, on

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[81] Bernard Beckerman, *Theatrical Presentation: Performer, Audience, and Act*, eds. Gloria Brim Beckerman and William Coco (New York: Routledge, 1990), 14.

the other hand, moves from one end of the performance spectrum to the other and back again. While there are extraordinary moments in *DreamPlay*, just as often the show works to deflate the extraordinary into the ordinary. For example, in Scene 1, the magician wants the jury to appear, so he stage whispers to his assistants, "Get the Jury!"[82] His assistants round up the other actors in full view of the audience, seat them in the jury box, and cover them with a cloth. The magician then pulls the cloth away, "magically" revealing them.

As this scene depicts, unlike a consistent pastiche such as *Culture of Desire*, *DreamPlay* occasionally distances itself from what it is quoting, becoming parody. It quotes the hackneyed theatrics of the traditional magic act for humor's sake, revealing the sad reality beneath. On one hand, this is because BOTHarts is committed, in a Brechtian way, to "showing the strings," not trying to trick the audience by pretending to create a magical world separate from the offstage reality. This style suggests that the ensemble is "being real" with the audience, not pulling a fast one. It also emphasizes that the collectivity demonstrated by the ensemble is not imagined but actual, and therefore one in which the audience could actually participate.

At the same time, *DreamPlay* mocks the cheap theatrics of the magic act for the same reason it mocks the cheesiness of love montages in romantic films or the hyper-cheeriness of game shows. The ensemble finds these conventions laughable, because they are about presenting an obviously plastic façade to cover a darker reality beneath, in the same way that our social face hides the shadow self. The frozen smile on the nervous magician's face as the sweat rolls down his forehead is also the face of family man Scott Falater harboring anger and fear.

A good example of *DreamPlay*'s use of parody is Scene 5, in which Scott chooses Yarmila over Lilith (a shadow embodiment of Scott's dark sexual urges as well as the mythical

[82] Young, *DreamPlay*, 9.

first woman in the Garden of Eden). This choice of Yarmila over another potential mate recalls *The Dating Game*. In this case, the host of "*Snooze, Choose, or Lose*," as the game show is called in *DreamPlay*, congratulates Yarmila on her win. "How's it feel, Yarm?" he asks. Yarmila smiles and shouts enthusiastically, "I feel trapped, but it's wonderful!"[83] The Host then announces their prize, "Scott and Yarmila, you've won an exciting trip to Salt Lake City, where you'll visit the Mormon Temple and be sealed in an eternal marriage." This is send-up of game shows (and of Scott and Yarmila's marriage) is clearly more parody than pastiche. However, like Jameson's definition of pastiche, this parody does not serve to privilege some "normal" tongue in opposition. All genre in *DreamPlay* are shown as laughable, cheap on some level. At the same time, these genre are modes to express ideas and emotions that are not laughable or cheap, but genuine and important. All modes are up for parody in *DreamPlay* but the message is sincere. If any mode escapes parody, it is the mode of the show itself, the collectively composed primarily quotational play.

Similarly, when *DreamPlay* uses pastiche, it is not interested in making us aware of history in order to make a political statement. Rather, the show is interested in showing that all history, as Causey puts it, is based purely in narrative. The Jung and Freud letters, like the Falater trial, are viewed as stories which can be told in any number of different ways but which, when told in the form of *DreamPlay*, help make specific points about the importance of integrating the shadow self and the need to examine the individual's place within the collectivity. In *Culture of Desire*, Warhol becomes a lesson that SITI Company and the audience can learn from, a cautionary tale. At the same time, SITI Company's critique of Warhol struggles to retain appropriate critical distance. At times, the company seems too similar to the artist to parody

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[83] Ibid., 28.

him. Likewise, the Living Theatre, which initially holds Doctor Frankenstein at a distance, ultimately makes the same hubristic mistakes as its subject. In *DreamPlay*, however, which is a critique of Falater as an individual who denies his shadow side with disastrous results, BOTHarts in no way attempts to maintain critical distance from its subject. All the jurors become Falater at some point in the production and all put on his glasses at the end, seeing the world through Falater's eyes. From the start, the effect is more emotionally involving, less "cold" than SITI Company's critique. Pastiche-like, the BOTHarts company gets close to the stories it quotes.

BOTHarts' willingness to get close to Falater raises the issue of exactly what kind of alternative community BOTHarts offers its audiences through the production of *DreamPlay*. *Frankenstein* offers the possibility of breaking free from the prison of societal norms but models a collective as intimidating as a prison or a monster. *Culture of Desire* offers a critique of consumerism, but offers no way out of consumer society. Like Warhol, SITI Company's audience is left running in circles at the end of the play, recognizing the dangers of consumerism but seeing no alternative to a consumer society. *DreamPlay* confronts not consumer society or capitalist society but every society in the modern world in which humanity's shadows are kept in check, resulting in violence on an individual level and war on a global level. Jung clarifies this position at the end of Scene 19 (the Sun) when he summarizes the philosophical stance of *DreamPlay* using the words of Jungian commentator Anthony Stevens.

> We are challenged with a task. The task of confronting the brutal destructive elements of the shadow. This has become the inescapable destiny of our species. With good cause, this has become our universal anxiety… If we are not to annihilate ourselves then we must seek to find a way to integrate the shadow… the destiny of the planet and our entire solar system is in our hands.[84]

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[84] Idid., 53; Anthony Stevens, "The Shadow in History and Literature" in *Meeting the Shadow: The Hidden Power of the Dark Side of Human Nature*, eds. Connie Zweig and Jeremiah Abrams (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1991), 28.

On the one hand, this task seems as insurmountable as imagining a society that is not focused on consumption or a society after the socialist revolution. Yet *DreamPlay* has also enacted a collective within the preceding show, and within its company (for those who have participated at that level), that offers ways to confront and integrate the shadow on a personal and a group level. Because self-confrontation is so difficult, BOTHarts offers an alternative community that constantly forces the individual to confront his- or herself. *DreamPlay* imagines and performs a democratic community in which all voices are given equal weight, a temporary, playful community in which, through laughter or pain, members of the collective are forced to recognize their shadows, their insecurities, and are encouraged to abandon their bag of tricks.

DreamPlay ended with an open Viewpoints session, in which only a few elements were set by Young. These elements were certain things she asked the ensemble to include at some point during this "dance": for example she wanted all the men to open umbrellas simultaneously at some point. Otherwise, the performers were free to kinesthetically interact with one another in a movement piece that brought them in and out of the pool, up and over their jury chairs, all to the sound of Fred Astaire singing "Isn't It a Lovely Day?" Like the dance, the lyrics suggest that individuation can only be achieved through community, that personal fulfillment depends on "Others" that confront. "Let the rain pitter patter but it really doesn't matter if the skies are gray. As long as I can be with you it's a lovely day." This silent dance could be interpreted as simply buying into the traditional avant-garde distrust of language, à la Artaud. Words prevent connection, so the only better society imaginable at the end of *DreamPlay* is a fantasy world devoid of logos—devoid of the Emperor. However, in version 2.0, this scene also occurs immediately after Jung's reconciliation with Freud, which is, on another level, the son's

reconciliation with the father, and, on another level, the subject's reconciliation with authority, and, on yet another level, the Lover's reconciliation with the Emperor. It seems therefore that the collectivity embodied by the company's final dance is a collectivity that can still exist without banishing language, and therefore without dissolving authority all together. In other words, BOTHarts' can still be "Tracy Young's company," and yet also be a collective committed to sharing creative power.

Bridge-Building Collectivity

I close this chapter with a shorter analysis of Cornerstone Theater Company's *Zones*, which was presented in 2001 in the months between the productions of the two versions of *DreamPlay*. *Zones* is a significant case study because of the very different way this play utilizes quotation and the very different collectivity it models in production and in which it encourages its audience to participate—different, that is, from BOTHarts' collectivity, but also from the Living Theatre's and SITI Company's. As referenced earlier, Young and Cornerstone (particularly former artistic director Bill Rauch) have a long history. However, Young's ideal community, one that is perpetually challenging the individual in confrontational ways, is the polar opposite of the community Cornerstone strives for within its company and within its performances. Cornerstone models a collectivity founded on bridge-building, tolerance, and non-confrontational dialogue. This adaptable alternative community, which the theatre company has in many ways achieved, is responsible for the longevity and consistency of Cornerstone over its twenty-plus years, a longevity that nevertheless also depends on temporary communities (the kind of temporary communities that Young embraced with the creation of BOTHarts). Cornerstone has met its long-term goals of "build[ing] bridges between and within diverse

communities in our home city of Los Angeles and nationwide" with local productions whose time within each individual community are limited.[85] With each community collaboration, therefore, Cornerstone enjoys the benefit of fresh eyes on its methods and mission, but also retains a stability that BOTHarts does not enjoy. At the end of each BOTHarts production, Young considers the possibility of dissolving the collective—and indeed her company has not produced a show since 2006.

As noted earlier, theatre in L.A. at the turn of the 21st century was either very large or very small, based largely on the fact that there were few mid-sized venues available for theatre productions. For those working in the small, 99-Seat scene, the question often was: Where is the audience going to come from? Showcases can run for a single weekend, in which the creators' friends, family, and potential representation pack the house. For a month-long run, however, without a subscriber base such as the larger Colony Theatre or Mark Taper Forum might guarantee, the struggle for 99-Seat theatres was often simply to keep the house filled.

Cornerstone dealt with the challenge of finding audiences in Los Angeles in the same way it had dealt with the issue for years as a touring company. As former Cornerstone artistic director Bill Rauch has attested, his company began with the question: To whom were Cornerstone's members going to play to throughout their careers as stage performers? In 1986, Rauch was among a group of recent Harvard grads considering what kind of theatre company they should form:

> We could imagine doing work that excited us for the same folks who already went to the theatre—a relatively narrow segment of the population—and then waking up 30 or 40 years later, even having been blessed with success, and saying, "Wait a minute. We didn't do any work for and with the vast majority of our fellow citizens."[86]

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[85] "About Us," www.cornerstonetheater.org (accessed 12/10/07).
[86] Proudfit, "In Your Faith" in *Back Stage West* (Oct. 4, 2001), 8.

This group, which became Cornerstone, thrives on encounters and artistic collaborations with communities that don't traditionally identify themselves as theatre-going.

On some level, this is different from the other theatre collectives discussed in this project. Those invited to *DreamPlay* performances were already part of the BOTHarts' community. Almost every audience member had some connection to someone within the ensemble. BOTHarts' move to include the audience in an alternative temporary collective, which the show and post-show modeled, seemed on one level a minor adjustment for its audiences. Similarly, while SITI Company presented *Culture of Desire* in Pittsburgh, Portland, New York, and Colombia, the theatre-goers they encountered in these different locations were largely those interested in what I have called the "university/festival circuit," audiences similar in taste and sympathies to those audiences that were curious about "avant-garde" or political theatre in the 1960s. Even the Living Theatre's *Frankenstein*, which in Europe and the U.S. often attracted a contingent of middle-class voyeurs who did not self-identify as countercultural, mainly played to academics and younger audiences, in other words groups that were more likely sympathetic to its anarcho-pacifist goals. *Zones*, like all of Cornerstone's plays, on the other hand, was committed to finding audiences that would not be the most obvious and similar creative partners. The degree to which *Zones* achieved this goal will be addressed subsequently.

Cornerstone's commitment to seek out non-traditional theatre audiences was forged during the company's trek through the nation in the late 1980s, in which Cornerstone traveled from small town to large city and back again, remaking classic plays with local communities. Written almost exclusively by company member Alison Carey, these plays ranged from productions in which a great deal of text from the quoted play was transferred intact to

community-specific remakes of plays in which the quoted text was only recognizable through certain plot similarities. These shows combined professional company members with non-actors and often depended upon an entire town or neighborhood pitching in and helping put up the production. By traveling to areas where there was very little or no theatre, Cornerstone not only had to find or create theatre audiences, but also specifically theatre audiences interested in co-creating a show along with the group. The company became experienced in identifying, not only consumers, but also willing onstage and backstage co-creators.

While the decision to settle in Los Angeles after years on the road was controversial within the group, it made sense in terms of Cornerstone's interest in finding new audiences and energizing communities towards co-creation. On a practical level, Los Angeles offered Cornerstone members the opportunity to earn money outside of the group through onscreen acting work. (Ensemble members are currently paid on a one- to three-year Equity contract basis. However, exceptions are always made for actors who land a film or TV job and need to take time off their contract.) L.A. also provided Cornerstone with a huge and diverse pool of actors, the largest in the country, from which to draw future company members. Indeed, the size and ethnic diversity of the small, mostly "White" theatre company increased immediately upon moving to L.A. Two of the most important additions to the company were Shishir Kurup and Page Leong (Macbeth and Medea of *M/M/C*), who along with a handful of other actors formed the core of Cornerstone's performing company for many years. More important that all of these advantages, however, was that Los Angeles seemed to be the only city in the United States that represented a microcosm of the country as Cornerstone had experienced it.

Los Angeles can be seen as a conglomeration of small, insular communities that have very little cultural exchange. Unlike New York, which is always building up to accommodate its

numbers, L.A. is constantly spreading out. With the sprawl that L.A. provides, neighborhoods are divided geographically as well as ethnically, linguistically, racially, economically, and in almost every other imaginable way. While touring in its formative years, Cornerstone developed a model of working one-by-one with a series of diverse and often geographically distant communities and then creating a "bridge show" that brought these towns and theatre makers together for a single, joint production. From the beginning, then, Cornerstone was committed not only to local encounters with non-traditional theatre communities but also in finding the commonality between these communities, bringing them together in dialogue and co-creation in the same way that the theatre and each community had come together in each initial production. L.A. provided a single base from which Cornerstone could develop this model of bridge building.

For example, during the "B.H. project," which lasted from 1997-1999, Cornerstone collaborated with four L.A. communities with the initials B.H.: the primarily African-American South Los Angeles community of Baldwin Hills; Boyle Heights in East L.A., a primarily Mexican-American community; Broadway/Hill, which is considered L.A.'s "Chinatown," and the affluent, primarily "White" Beverly Hills. Performers from these four community shows were then brought together in 1999 for a "bridge show" written by Lisa Loomer. In many ways, these four Los Angeles communities have as little in common as the twelve communities brought together for Cornerstone's earlier national tour of *The Winter's Tale*. This production was the culmination of the company's "on-the-road" period, and brought together communities ranging from Marmath, North Dakota, to Miami Beach, Florida.

With its community collaborations, as Sonja Kuftinec points out in *Staging America*, Cornerstone plays out "the American nation-building dilemma contrasting democratic inclusion

and representational expertise."[87] While communities co-create the shows, Cornerstone nevertheless places "professionals" in authority positions as directors, writers, and actors. For Cornerstone, this traditional theatre hierarchy is challenged only in ensemble shows, such as *Zones*, in which all participants are "professionals." In ensemble-only shows, the democratic process of theatre-making is explored with more urgency by the group because it is able to co-create on a more level playing field than when it is collaborating with non-professionals.

Unlike "bridge shows" which typically end a cycle of community productions, *Zones, or where does your soul live and is there sufficient parking?* was created to kick off a cycle of plays for Cornerstone. However, *Zones* similarly was conceived as a show that would bridge communities in its production. Written by ensemble member Peter Howard and directed by Rauch, *Zones* was a unique hybrid of a fairly conventional stage drama and participative human-relations dialogue.[88] Produced site-specifically in meeting rooms of various houses of worship throughout the Los Angeles area, the show alternated between traditional theatre, in which audience members were invited to sit and watch actors perform, and more active periods in which they were asked to take part in dialogue exercises. These exercises required audience members get on their feet and interact with one another and with the cast, with the goal of sharing their thoughts and feelings on religious plurality and tolerance in the U.S. The timing of the initial run of the show, October 5-November 9, 2001, guaranteed a particularly charged atmosphere. The events of September 11, which had interrupted *Zones*' rehearsal process,

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[87] Kuftinec, 189.

[88] Human-relations dialogue is designed to address deep-rooted, long-standing conflicts through the efforts of a facilitator who, in a series of face-to-face meetings helps the two sides of a conflict express their feelings and develop an understanding for the needs and fears of the other side.

intensified the show's facilitated discussions about spiritual belief, particularly when the topic of fundamentalism was raised.

I had only caught the second half of productions in Cornerstone's B.H. Cycle, some of which I had reviewed for *Back Stage West*. Based on what I saw, however, I wanted to make sure my newspaper's coverage of Cornerstone's new Faith cycle was more complete. I had become friends with Peter Howard while performing with him in a Tracy Young-directed production for A.S.K. Theater Projects, an adaptation of Mikhail Bulgakov's novel *The Master and Margarita*. During that production, we discussed the upcoming Faith-Based Project at Cornerstone, and I asked him if I could cover the development process of *Zones* for the newspaper. Peter consulted Bill Rauch, and, as he often does, Rauch welcomed me to not only observe but also to contribute to the production from my very first rehearsal visit. He included me in discussion circles after or preceding each rehearsal and solicited my opinion. I also interviewed him and Howard a number of times during the development of *Zones* and both spent as much time asking me questions about what I thought about particular moments or issues in the show. I must admit there was no place I found more comforting in the days following 9/11 than Cornerstone rehearsals. As Howard noted, in an interview after *Zones* opened, while so many thing seemed to completely transform post-9/11, *Zones* remained very much the same. Cornerstone's commitment to bridge-building between faiths was more necessary than ever but the basic work was the same.

Produced in (among other places) a Jewish temple, a Catholic church, and a Muslim elementary school, *Zones* proved challenging for Cornerstone, logistically and emotionally. The subject matter and the shared power dynamic of the hybrid piece led to, even encouraged, disagreement over faith issues between cast members during the creative process and among

audience members in performance. Again, there was a sense that all were professionals in the circle, most were full members of Cornerstone, and therefore all opinions must be given full consideration.[89] Because Cornerstone typically creates theatre pieces that combine members of a particular community with professional actors from its company, ensemble-only shows also allow Cornerstone—sensitive to the notion that it generally puts community building before aesthetic considerations—the chance to create more polished work of a consistent professional-theatre level. Ensemble productions at Cornerstone can provide relief to the company, because everyone is "speaking the same language" on some level. However, *Zones* was a unique case in that, though created with all "professionals," the show was also co-created in each performance with the participating non-professional audiences.

In extreme cases, *Zones* revealed significant divisions between Cornerstone and some of its fans and collaborating artists. While it succeeded in bridge-building in general, the production also occasionally revealed seemingly insurmountable differences between individuals and communities. For instance, one performance of *Zones* ended with Bill Kane, a Jesuit priest and playwright who had been commissioned to write the next Faith-Based Theater Cycle play, parting ways with the company. More important to the company, however, *Zones* fulfilled the specific goal of serving as the kickoff to Cornerstone's Festival of Faith. The festival was a series of weekend performances at the various houses of worship partnering to present *Zones*.[90]

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[89] Cornerstone's rehearsals, like BOTHarts', have been affected by SITI Company, though to a lesser extent. Many company members such as Howard and Kurup have trained with SITI Company and incorporate Viewpoints into their work, particularly in the desire to "block" scenes out of kinesthetic response. However, neither Composition Work nor Viewpoints were specifically used to develop *Zones* in rehearsal.

[90] Venues at which *Zones* was presented in 2001: Westwood United Methodist, Westwood, Oct. 5-7; University of Judaism, Bel Air, Oct. 11; The Vedanta Society, Hollywood, Oct. 12; Hsi Lai Temple, Hacienda Heights, Oct. 13; St. Philomena Church, Carson, Oct. 14; Los

Each individual festival series was performed a week after *Zones* visited. These festival performances were short plays, curated but not produced by Cornerstone. They dealt with a range of faith topics, with at least one play per weekend based on the faith of the host venue. *Zones*, as a calling card to these short plays, introduced and uncovered issues of faith that would be of interest to the ensemble and its audiences during the following month of the festival and during the next three years.

Director Rauch and playwright Howard credit the particular wording of a Ford Foundation call for grant proposals as the inspiration for the odd format of *Zones*. Cornerstone in 2000 had already committed to a faith-based cycle as its next project. However, the wording of Ford Foundation's Animating Democracy Initiative (ADI) specifically suggested to company members a piece exploring "the capacity of the arts and humanities to stimulate public dialogue about contemporary civic issues."[91] Howard at the time was on staff at the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ), an organization which designs creative approaches to interfaith dialogue. He read this as an opportunity to combine some of the human-relations exercises he had participated in and facilitated at NCCJ with a conventional play. NCCJ ended up partnering with Cornerstone on the Festival of Faith as well as on *Zones*, and the entire project was funded in part by ADI. Working together, an artistic coordinator from Cornerstone and a dialogue coordinator from NCCJ oversaw each Festival of Faith weekend of site-specific

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Angeles Baha'i Center, Baldwin Hills, Oct. 21; Faith United Methodist Church, South Central, Oct. 28; Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, L.A., Nov. 1; Temple Emanuel, Beverly Hills, Nov. 3, and New Horizon School, Pasadena, Nov. 9.

[91] Melissa Palarea, "The Animating Democracy Initiative Calls for Arts-Based Civic Dialogue Project Proposals," Americans for the Arts, http://www.artsusa.org/information_resources/press/2001/2001_05_03.asp (accessed September 21, 2007).

performances, post-*Zones*. However, no individual piece in the Festival of Faith attempted to combine dialogue and theatre in a single performance the way *Zones* did.

Human-Relations Experientials as Intertexts

The conceit of *Zones* was that audiences were attending a zoning administration public hearing, in which the case was being made for and against allowing a relatively obscure faith to build a residence and place of worship nearby. Even in its ensemble-only productions, Cornerstone has historically remade classics or at least staples of the modern drama canon. *Zones* was unique, therefore, in that it quoted or remade not another play but the format and language of an administrative hearing. The congregations of the hosting venues were invited to the *Zones* performances, sometimes presented in the evening and sometimes in the afternoon immediately following worship. To add to the "reality" of the site-specific conceit, a "cameo" is built into the beginning of *Zones* in which someone who represents the venue in some official capacity greets the audience and explains why it is important for his or her congregation to participate in these kind of civic meetings. Audiences were not limited to members of the host congregations, though these members often made up the majority of those in attendance. The show was also advertised and open to the public. Audiences were of course "in on the joke" that this was not a real public hearing, but a performance by Cornerstone. All publicity material and announcements at the venue promoting the show made this explicit. Moreover, audiences had been well prepared to expect to participate in the show as well as to watch. Rauch, an admitted phobic about audience participation, was adamant that no audience member would feel surprised by the dialogue exercises or would be asked to participate beyond his or her desires. In designing the show, Howard likewise wanted the piece to be enjoyable first and provocative

second. As he explained, "I do value entertainment and, ultimately, I want going to a play to be something that you'd want to do again, regardless of the specifics of the experience."[92]

The proceedings ran more like a zoning hearing than a theatre piece for the first half of the ninety-minute performance. Audiences put on nametags, identifying themselves, and received a survey and meeting agenda upon their arrival at the meeting room. The performance spaces had no theatrical lighting or sets, just a podium with a microphone facing rows of movable chairs. (A traditional theatre program, listing the cast, was handed out at the end of the piece.) During the course of the show, the survey is collected, compiled, and statistics based on the survey are announced. The survey asked for the audience members' sex, zip code, whether he or she was born in the U.S., owned a home, spoke more than one language, and what was his or her religious affiliation. The effusive zoning administrator, Judith Tetley-Stone (played by Amy Hill), is more touchy-feely and enthusiastic than one might imagine such a bureaucrat to be, but the meeting begins much like one would expect a real zoning hearing to begin. Tetley-Stone describes the proposed structure (the proposed site is individualized to a nearby location at each *Zones* venue). Then the applicant's representative, a hired lawyer named Byron Bannerstam (Armando Molina), arrives (late) and briefly describes the faith that is applying for the zoning permit. Called the Center of Exquisite Balance, the faith (an invention of Howard's) shares some commonality with Manichaeism, specifically the belief in two opposing and equal gods.

The performance then becomes more like a conventional realist drama and more like a human-relations dialogue session at about the same time. A pastor of a Christian church, Rev. Mahesh Thomas (Shishir Kurup) as well as one of his parishioners, Monica Lark (Barbara

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[92] Peter Howard, Phone interview with the writer, Los Angeles, California, August 27, 2007.

Roberts), challenges Bannerstam on the legitimacy of the faith he is representing. It is ultimately revealed that Lark's daughter Renee (Diana Elizabeth Jordan) has left their church to join the Center for Exquisite Balance and is also in attendance at this zoning meeting. Renee stands up, identifies herself, and confronts her mother. A fairly conventional dysfunctional family drama is then played out in front of the meeting as Lark argues with her daughter, while Bannerstam and the pastor fuel their conflict.

Meanwhile, the zoning administrator, in an attempt to keep the meeting civilized, ends up facilitating the first of three human-relations dialogue exercises (or "experientials"). Called "Stand Up/Sit Down" (though not by Tetley-Stone in the play) this experiential has the facilitator making a number of statements that the audience agrees with (and identifies with) by standing up or disagrees with by remaining seated. Statements in the show range from "I am right-handed" to "I could drive to a Hindu temple in L.A. County without using a map."[93] (This exercise is not unlike the "cultural mapping" that BOTHarts' members participated in at the beginning of the *DreamPlay*, version 2.0, creative process.) As the pastor and lawyer battle for the audience's sympathy, they, too, end up facilitating their own experientials with the audience. First, the pastor sets up what NCCJ calls the Wagon Wheel. The audience forms two circles of equal numbers, an inner circle facing an outer. Based on the pastor's questions, each individual shares something about his or her beliefs with the person opposite them. Then the inner wheel rotates, and each audience member speaks to someone else, and so on. Questions include: "What religious tradition were you raised in, if any?" and "What is one thing you need to know or

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[93] Peter Howard, *Zones, or where does your soul live and is there sufficient parking?*, unpublished script, 12.

understand about a faith or religious tradition in order to feel comfortable with it?"[94] Soon after, Tetley-Stone facilitates another experiential in which the audience breaks into smaller groups and brainstorms feelings and opinions about certain key words relating to faith issues. Example are: "Believers are…," "When I hear the word 'fundamentalist,' I feel…," and "Prayer is…"[95] Finally, after some further conflict in the Lark family, *Zones* ends with a sharing circle, facilitated by Bannerstam the lawyer (initially skeptical of dialogue exercises but now converted). Audience and cast sit in a circle and one by one tell the group "one question" that he or she will leave the event with.

The progression of dialogue experientials, from Stand Up/Sit Down to Wagon Wheel to group brainstorming to the sharing circle, calls for more participation from the audience with each incarnation. The audience goes from not speaking (but nevertheless identifying with or against certain statements) to speaking to one other audience member at a time to speaking to a small group to speaking to the entire audience. The increasingly public commitment asked of the participants parallels the emotional build of the family conflict in the performance. Lark and her daughter's argument over faith builds to tears, screaming accusations, and ultimately reconciliation before the final sharing circle. The inclusion of these dialogue experientials ensured a production that, like the multiple versions of *DreamPlay*, was unfinished, required the co-creation of the audience, and changed significantly from performance to performance. However, the co-creation of *Zones*' by its audiences is more concrete and occurs while the performance is running.

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[94] Ibid., 18.
[95] Ibid., 28.

The script of *Zones*, not surprisingly, is often a series of guidelines for performers rather than a record of what the actors should or did say. For example, when Tetley-Stone first asks the audience if anyone wants to support the Center for Exquisite Balance's proposal, the stage directions note,

> If someone in the audience is actually brave enough to speak up for the proposal, Judith invites them to the microphone and tells them they have 60 seconds. She times them. After they're finished, or if no one volunteers to speak at all, Byron makes his way toward Renee's seat during the awkward silence.[96]

Moreover, certain lines in the script are preceded with such qualifications, as "if it feels appropriate, the pastor might say here…"[97] This room for adjustment and improvisation indicates not only the shared creation of the production of *Zones* with the audience, but also the way in which the script is co-created with the actors in performance. These instances undercut assumptions of authorship that accompany the designation of Howard as the "playwright" of *Zones*. Like *Frankenstein*, space for improvisation and change is created in *Zones*. The difference is that *Zones* allows for the improvisation of its audiences as well as its performers.

As a pastiche, *Zones* therefore juxtaposes the emotional style of the psychological realist drama in the Larks' story with the bureaucratic style of the zoning hearing and the sensitive style of dialogue experientials. The latter two quote directly, either from actual hearings or from Howard's work with NCCJ. The former does not directly quote text from any particular realist drama but rather quotes the conventions of the genre. The following exchange between Monica and Renee captures some of this psychological-realist style quotation. Like *Death of a Salesman*, *The Glass Menagerie*, or (as Chapter Five will describe) *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, arguments over the interpretation of past events reveal ongoing conflict in the present:

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[96] Ibid., 13.
[97] Ibid., 17.

> Renee: I spent two years trying to explain to you what I had found. And every day I'd come home to find the Bible open on my bed.
>
> Monica: That's because the Bible is the truth.
>
> Renee: The Bible is an approach to the truth. Maybe even *a* truth. Not necessarily *the* truth. (*Monica puts her hands to her ears*.) And you wonder why I don't want to come home. You don't even listen. (*They're silent for a moment*.)
>
> Monica: You never made friends easily. I was so happy when you told me about your friends. People at the church used to ask me where you were. They don't ask so much any more.[98]

Like *M/M/C*, none of these three intertexts—the hearing, the Larks' story, or the dialogue experientials—are held at a distance by the company and parodied.

The care that Cornerstone put into crafting this piece and facilitating the dialogue throughout the performances created a smooth transition for audiences through a series of more public and participative interactions. However, as *Zones* demonstrated in rehearsal and performance, human-relations dialogue and conventional theatre are not necessarily compatible experiences. For one thing, as Rauch noted, "There was a constant tension, because theatre is about creating danger and human-relations dialogue is about safety."[99] However, as Howard explained, "'Safety' is kind of a dirty word to artists."[100] So much of *Zones* was aimed at making audiences comfortable that the creators worried the piece would not be compelling. In human-relations dialogue, there should be no surprises in terms of the proceedings. Everything is laid out upfront. Participants are told what will be expected of them and what generally will be discussed in the course of the event. Drama traditionally relies on suspense, an unfolding of plot and character in time—even if the events and characters are familiar to the audience in advance.

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[98] Ibid., 25.
[99] Rauch interview.
[100] Howard interview.

For BOTHarts, the influence of the Style created an atmosphere within the company in which conflict was embraced as useful to the realization of the production. For Cornerstone, the influence of the model of human-relations dialogue produced the opposite, a concern among the ensemble that any conflict that was not resolved within the time of the performance could prove detrimental to the production. In other words the intertext of the dialogue experientials contaminated the intertext of the Larks' drama, insisting that its suspenseful elements be curtailed, its conflicts neatly resolved.

A different kind of tension between theatre and dialogue in *Zones* was apparent when the shift was required between the Larks' theatricalized "make-believe" argument and the truthful, personal sharing of the experientials. In these instances, the intertext of the Larks' drama threatened to contaminate the intertext of the dialogue experientials. In its experientials, *Zones* was asking honesty from its audience members in a dishonest (theatrical) setting. As mentioned in Chapter Three, most theatre experiences, it seems, involve a fluctuation between disbelief and the suspension of disbelief, between alienation and involvement, between willingly giving over to a staged world and suddenly realizing that you are merely watching a play. However, *Zones* required audiences to participate in real-world conversation within the context of a make-believe setting. The kind of deep soul-searching and confession that human-relations dialogue facilitates is not always possible in a space where others (cast members), including the facilitator, are pretending.[101]

While this was a concern for *Zones*' creators, the recent events of September 11 seemed to guarantee audiences that were hungry to discuss the issues *Zones* raised and were willing to forgo a completely safe and "real" setting typically required for dialogue. The theatre world of

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[101] Howard interview.

the Larks' drama *did* contaminate the dialogue experientials (in the same way that the dialogue experientials had contaminated the Larks' drama), but the audience members, in most cases, remained committed to talking honestly in the experientials. However, this high level of participation was lacking when the show was remounted a year later. The initial production, in Rauch's words, "was a forum for people to express things that there were not other places for them to express publicly." A year later, "the emotional climate was different" and the show lacked the kind of impact it had in 2001.[102]

For some audience members, the intertext of the Larks' drama also contaminated the text of the zoning hearing, simplifying it in frustrating ways. Much of Tetley-Stone's dialogue is quoted by Howard from actual hearings.

> The Center for Exquisite Balance has filed an application for a Conditional Use Permit pursuant to section 12.24 of the City Municipal Code to construct approximately 23,400 square feet of new construction on the project site, occupying lots 1,2,4,5, and 6 of City tract 4322 and abutting alley.[103]

Most of the Larks' dialogue is written by Howard based on a series of improvisations the company held early on in the development process. Audience members such as reviewer Rob Kendt, a longtime supporter of Cornerstone who had even appeared as himself in the Cornerstone production *For Here or To Go*?, felt the intertext of the Larks' drama in this case contaminated the text detrimentally, simplifying what might have been the more complex issues of the hearing, namely, whether this church should be allowed to build in this neighborhood. In his Oct. 18, 2001, review, Kendt wrote:

> Unfortunately Howard's play, which wants us to consider… how well or poorly our civic culture handles these often submerged divisions [between different faiths], failed to

[102] Rauch interview.
[103] Howard, *Zones*, 4.

> resonate or harmonize in a challenging way with the concerns raised in dialogue by the mostly liberal, live-and-let-live audience.[104]

For Kendt, the Larks' drama and the zoning meeting ended too neatly when contrasted with the real issues raised in the experientials. It was never a true consideration for any audience member, Kendt argued, that in the struggle between her daughter and the pastor, Monica would choose the pastor. Because this intertext of the Larks' drama symbolically represents the larger debate at hand (the zoning hearing's question of religious tolerance versus restriction), the larger debate was being presented by Cornerstone as similarly one-sided. Obviously the fictional Center for Exquisite Balance should be allowed to build, the show seemed to argue, just as obviously Monica should love her daughter more than her pastor.

Kendt's issue with *Zones* points out two problems with the alternative community that Cornerstone's show embodies. One, Cornerstone and *Zones* are communities that celebrate diversity and cooperation. However, both have a tendency to cover up significant disagreement in the face of important bridge-building. The result, for some, can be a uniformity that buries important differences. Two, the fact that the Center for Exquisite Balance is fictional is problematic in a production that asks participants to be themselves. However loose Cornerstone and Howard have made the structure of this hybrid piece, the text of *Zones* cannot truly address and deal with the myriad different issues raised in its intertexts. The result was that the dialogue experientials often brought up important diversity that was not reflected in the simplicity of the Larks' drama or in the administration of the zoning hearing. The Larks' solution of reconciliation was therefore read by some audience members as a fantasy contrasted with the "reality" of deeply contrasting positions on faith offered in the dialogue sessions.

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[104] Kendt, "Zones" Review in *Back Stage West* (Oct. 18, 2001).

Problems With Authority

Another difference between traditional theatre and human-relations dialogue that led to much debate among the creators of *Zones* was the idea that in dialogue there are no villains. Indeed, the process of dialogue is based on breaking down negative stereotypes and getting people to relate to those on another side of an issue. Dialogue contributes to conflict resolution, whereas drama *is* conflict. Problematically, the pastor in *Zones* was clearly the "villain" of the play, particularly in its initial production. The pastor argues most blatantly against accepting religious plurality. His faith is *the* truth, not a truth. As Howard admits, "I was interested in a piece that asked a version of the Christian tradition to take responsibility for the fact that every, in my opinion, other faith tradition in our country's life is seen as alternative at some level."[105] In early workshops of *Zones*, the pastor left the meeting when he couldn't convince Lark to reject her daughter. However, members of the creative team and early preview audiences convinced Howard and Rauch to consider whether excluding the voice of the pastor wasn't antithetical to promoting dialogue. In rewrites, Howard had the pastor return to the meeting to take part in the final circle of questions. However, the character was still problematic to many audience members, including the aforementioned Bill Kane, who left the company largely due to his issues with this depiction of mainstream Christianity.

Cornerstone's struggles with the role of the pastor in *Zones* parallel Young's rethinking of the role of Freud in the two versions of *DreamPlay*. Both Freud and the pastor are the recognizable authority figures in their plays—not only authority figures, but indeed paternal authority figures. Freud is called "father" by Jung, and became the stand-in for BOTHarts' and

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[105] Howard interview.

Young's confrontation with the Emperor archetype. Similarly, in Howard's initial narrative outline for *Zones*, he wrote, "Renee feels that in such blind commitment to the Pastor and his Fellowship, Monica has simply traded one oppressive paternal figure for another."[106] While Renee does not specifically voice this sentiment in any subsequent versions of the script, she does confront the pastor with her father's autocratic behavior towards Monica, implying that the pastor acts similarly. "I grew up in a Christian household, and I saw how he treated her," says Renee to the pastor, "Because of her faith, she gave part of herself away."[107] Both Freud and the pastor also exhibit some degree of unhealthy control over their followers (Monica and Jung). They permit no dissention from their views. Freud wants to make the sexual theory a dogma, from which deviation cannot be tolerated. Likewise, the pastor quotes, "Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes unto the Father but by me.' There is no alternate path to salvation. That's what we believe."[108]

While the similarities between Freud and the pastor are many, the ways in which the two companies dealt with these authority figures in the course of their multiple productions were very different. As noted earlier, Young's interest in expanding the Freud/Jung plot inspired certain company members, including myself, to write pieces which painted a much more sympathetic picture of Freud. It was logical that, cast as the Emperor archetype, I should sympathize with Freud. Young sometimes directly incorporated the scenes that others and I proposed in Composition Work into the play. These scenes also inspired Young's own writing of the new closing argument, in which Jung and Freud come to a very different conclusion with one another than in version 1.0 of *DreamPlay*. BOTHarts' commitment to collective writing and Young's

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[106] Howard, *Zones* narrative outline (Unpublished, 8/22/01), 6.
[107] Howard, *Zones*, 33.
[108] Ibid., 34.

encouragement of others to challenge her own position of authority created a community in which change (in the form of a remade text and production) could occur very rapidly and in significant ways.

With Cornerstone, despite that *Zones* was an ensemble show (in other words, despite the fact that all involved were "professionals" and could challenge Howard and Rauch on equal footing if they disagreed with something) and despite the fact that Howard and Rauch continually sought feedback from the cast and designers (and preview audiences) the process of remaking the pastor in the show's development process was slower and, in the end, less radical than BOTHarts' revision of Freud. This was partly due to the way in which the authorial positions of the playwright and the director are honored at Cornerstone. As mentioned earlier, communities historically collaborate with Cornerstone, but playwright Alison Carey (the only playwright in the company for many years) and Bill Rauch as director (the only director for many years) were the professionals in charge of devising and writing these plays. Howard, a longtime member, assumed a similar position as the playwright of *Zones*. While he and Rauch based some of the script on company improvisations early in the process, the outline that Howard presented the ensemble on August 22, 2001, is very similar to the script used in the two productions of *Zones*. The script went through over seven versions in rehearsal, but the changes were slight.

Rauch and Howard did address the negative connotation of the fact that the pastor left the meeting near the end of the play, particularly after some cast members and much of one particular preview audience (including a number of former collaborators, all church-going Baptists from Watts) expressed concerns over this choice. Howard's compromise was to have the pastor leave the hearing when it became clear that Renee wouldn't be coming back to his

church, but to return to the hearing for the final circle. Howard also gave the pastor the line in the sharing circle that ends the play: "I just came back to listen,"[109] similar to Freud's anti-authoritarian pronouncement at the end of *DreamPlay*, "I can offer no solution… I can only ponder the question."[110]

In the multiple rewrites of the script that Howard made during rehearsals, the pastor also subtly changed in his tone and in his increasing acknowledgement of other viable viewpoints outside Christianity. In an early version of the script, after the pastor quotes the Bible, saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes unto the Father but by me," Monica responds with, "Jesus also said, 'In my Father's house there are many rooms.'" The pastor then says, "The choice is yours," presumably to both Monica and Renee, and sits.[111] In other words, Renee, like anyone, you can choose to leave the Christian church and, Monica, you can choose to support this decision. In a rewrite, the pastor's last line changed from "The choice is yours" to "You're free to choose."[112] It is a small difference, but one that emphasizes the freedom available to everyone involved in this conflict to choose his or her faith or his or her relationship to others, acknowledging that the pastor does not want to control Monica. In still a later version (the script used for the first production), the pastor responds to Monica's quotation of the Bible with, "There is wisdom in many traditions. There is salvation in one. Ours is a very patient God. You will always have a home with us, Renee."[113] This longer clarification of the pastor's position acknowledges his belief in the importance of interfaith dialogue but also draws a line at suggesting that all faiths are equal. In this last revision, it is clear that Howard tried to make the

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[109] Ibid., 37.
[110] Young, *DreamPlay*, 53.
[111] Howard, *Zones* (version 4), 27.
[112] Howard, *Zones* (version 6), 30.
[113] Howard, *Zones*, 34.

pastor less of a "villain" while not permitting him to take a relativist position in terms of spiritual practice. Howard tried to be as fair to the pastor, in this scene, but it seems he still wanted him to take "responsibility."

Considering the above revisions to the role of the pastor, it is important to consider the way the Bible, the pastor's text, one that he carries with him in the show, is used as an intertext within *Zones*. The Bible is quoted in only two moments in the play, but they are significant moments. Early on, the pastor, describing his commitment to ecumenical dialogue to those gathered at the zoning meeting, notes, "Psalms 133: 'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!' *Unity* is God's will. But—I am speaking out for caution, and for a very careful decision here, because I don't believe the Center for Exquisite Balance has been entirely forthcoming."[114] Bannerstam interprets this as the pastor questioning the validity of all non-mainstream faiths, and says sarcastically, "Maybe diversity's a *bad* thing."[115] What the pastor suggests through his quotation is actually more complicated than Bannerstam gives him credit for. The pastor acknowledges multiplicity in this statement but calls for unity through dialogue. In a sense, his position is that of Cornerstone. Human-relations dialogue (or a Cornerstone show, for that matter) is aimed at bringing together different communities (multiple points of view) resulting in a united purpose and/or united action. Human-relations dialogue and Cornerstone build bridges.

At the same time, Bannerstam's obviously facetious remark suggests a sincere self-critical undercurrent within Cornerstone that community should not be formed at the expense of denying difference. There is a joke within the company that every Cornerstone show ends with

[114] Ibid., 15.
[115] Ibid., 15.

the ensemble joining hands and singing together. Indeed, most of the early Cornerstone shows and even the majority of shows I attended throughout the 1990s did end this way. However, the group is very aware that the harmony and democratic anonymity represented by an all-ensemble musical number can hide "off-key voices," as it were, dissenting opinions that nevertheless choose to be part of the collective rather than not be heard at all.

In *Zones*, it is not only the pastor but also the Bible itself that represents authority. This patriarchal intertext is challenged within the production not only by Renee but also by the dialogue experientials that require acknowledgement of faiths outside of Christianity, calling to attention how Christianity is often mistakenly assumed as the norm. As the intertext of authority, it is not surprising that the Bible passage quoted above calls for "unity." Unity implies centralized authority, the erasure of dissent, or, textually, the unified literary work of unique authorial genius. However, as noted in Chapter Three, the Bible is also the product of many authors over many years. Perhaps this is one reason that the second time the Bible is quoted by the pastor, Monica is able to answer with the opposing quotation referenced earlier, a quotation that celebrates diversity even within a patriarchy. "In my Father's house there are many rooms," she quotes.[116] In one sense, Monica is matching authority with authority, taking control of the intertext. At the same time, her quotation is performative in that it enacts what it celebrates, creating room for Renee's faith in her own belief system.

By speaking this alternative quotation, Monica also shows that the Bible has many passages and says many opposing things. Like the Father's house, the Bible has many rooms—and many authors. Therefore, while the pastor may be demonized to some extent, particularly in early versions of *Zones*, it seems that authority in general (the religion that gives

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[116] Ibid., 34.

the pastor his power) as represented by the intertext of the Bible is not necessarily good or bad according to *Zones*. It simply depends upon who is wielding the authority and how open that authority is to opposing viewpoints. This is very much in line with Cornerstone's commitment to overseeing the democracy of co-creation in its theatre-making through a "representative" hierarchy of professionals who "know best" and encourage dialogue.

Despite the revisions to the character of the pastor, many audience members continued to express concern throughout the first run of *Zones* about the scapegoating of the pastor as the only participant in the meeting who seems intolerant. This was not completely true. Bannerstam, the lawyer, is at least equally intolerant. A proud atheist, Bannerstam claims at one point that believers drive him "crazy."[117] However, the reactions of the concerned audience members were based on their perceptions of the show, not on what Howard and the cast intended. In addition to wanting to address these concerns, Rauch and Howard took Kendt's critical review and Bill Kane's exodus to heart after the first run of *Zones* and made more changes to the script before the remounting in 2002. As Howard notes of this final rewrite, "What was added was more language around giving the pastor some more specific and informed and really quite rational reasons for being critical of this fictional faith tradition—besides the fact that it wasn't Christianity."[118]

Therefore, the role of the pastor in *Zones* changed in small but significant ways over a long period. Such a revision process is compatible with a company that still upholds much of the traditional theatre-making hierarchy of the playwright and director while at the same time is committed to collective composition with a group. While honoring authority in the creative

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[117] Ibid., 27.
[118] Howard interview.

process may slow change and deflect the kind of confrontation that could produce immediate and sweeping results, this mentality also has provided a consistency for the company. While reductionist, Rauch can be seen as the benevolent version of Tim Robbins as the figurehead for his theatre. Open and encouraging of disagreement but cautious to act, he has stood at the forefront of Cornerstone's alternative community, a collective that is stable, democratic (to a large degree), and tolerant. It is also significant that in 2005, when Rauch left Cornerstone to become artistic director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Cornerstone did not fold or go into crisis. While a performance methodology such as the Style may not hold this company together, certainly its well-developed system of collaboration has succeeded in doing so.

Longer-lasting Collectivity

The question was raised earlier regarding to what extent *Zones* succeeded in identifying and utilizing new audiences as co-creators, seemingly one of Cornerstone's goals with any production. Human-relations dialogue typically facilitates a better understanding between individuals or groups on two opposing sides of a conflict. In *Zones*, the issues of the dialogue were religious diversity and tolerance. Generally, the two sides of this conflict might be considered the tolerant and the intolerant. However, *Zones* was only produced at venues that were similarly, as Howard put it, "open and embracing of other points of view."[119] A major goal of *Zones* was to produce the show in a variety of venues highlighting the spectrum of religious diversity in Los Angeles. Though of different faiths, these venues had much in common, more in common perhaps than if *Zones* had targeted venues representing the conservative through liberal spectrum of a single faith. These open-minded congregations, combined with

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[119] Ibid.

Cornerstone's typical audiences, could safely be described then, as the tolerant—representative of only one side of the supposed issues at hand. Therefore, the conflict addressed by *Zones* really was not between those who defended religious pluralism and those who opposed it. Rather, the conflicts that *Zones* so emotionally confronted turned out to be largely internal ones for individual audience members.

Internal conflicts are of course rarely if ever the explicit concern of conflict resolution. Nevertheless, while *Zones* encouraged public expression of views on the issues at hand within the framework of the show, it in many ways was geared mainly toward private self-exploration. Those most apparently moved by the proceedings or most vocal in their expression in the "sharing circle" often fell into one of two groups: those who had always considered themselves tolerant but felt themselves becoming less tolerant in a post-9/11 atmosphere, and those of various faiths who felt particularly tested in their beliefs in a higher power by recent events. In both cases, the most commonly professed result of participating in *Zones* was a renewed faith in tolerance, in community, and, in some cases, in a higher power. This was, of sorts, a facilitated resolution of conflict on the part of Cornerstone, if not a conflict between two opposing groups.

While *Zones* and Cornerstone, in general, is committed to an alternative community that is more permanent that the one exemplified by *DreamPlay*, there is still often the sense that the collective of audience and ensemble ends when the performance ends. This raises the issue commonly discussed within organizations that attempt to transform society through art, including all of the theatre collectives featured in this study. As the members of Cornerstone Theater Company have expressed time and again, theatre may lack a vocabulary to evaluate or discuss how and to what extent a political performance actually contributes to material changes in the

larger status quo. In addition, the temporary modeled collectivity that Cornerstone offers communities seems to dissolve when the theatre company moves on to the next project.

On one level, the concern that *Zones*, as activist theatre, does not model a collectivity that is long-lasting or even measurable is the same concern many have with human-relations dialogue as a tool for social change. Because it depends on willing participants, human-relations dialogue is by necessity a bottom-up (as opposed to top-down) tool for change. Political leaders are typically not the participants. Therefore a direct intervention for changes in economic conditions or international policy is not a feasible goal for most dialogue experientials or for theatre productions such as *Zones*. Nevertheless, there are ways in which theatre, when hybridized with dialogue, might be put to more practical use. First, however, a piece that combines theatre with dialogue must consider which kind of dialogue is most conducive to its goals. As conflict theorist Jay Rothman has described, there are four main types of dialogue: adversarial, human-relations, activist, and problem-solving.[120] Activist dialogue not only explores feelings about a conflict but also provides a foundation for action. The purpose of this kind of dialogue moves beyond talk and understanding to mutual assistance. Resources are identified, commitments are made, and organizations are founded within the activist dialogue process. For example, in activist dialogue, the participants from opposite sides of a conflict might work together to rebuild a war-torn city. Cornerstone, as a theatre company, is not necessarily equipped to oversee a project of such magnitude. However, it could serve as a conduit to connect theatre audiences with larger organizations, such as NCCJ, who could better assist with such long-term goals.

The question this raises, of course, is, Why not do away with the theatre aspects of a production like *Zones* altogether then? If activist dialogue is what is needed for significant social

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[120] Jay Rothman, *From Confrontation to Cooperation* (London: Sage Publications, 1992).

change, then why water it down with theatre? In other words, why not make the move that the Living Theatre made from *Frankenstein* to *Paradise Now*? If the goal of modeling collectivity requires the audience's co-creation, why not simply address them and invite them onstage for dialogue, and do away with narrative altogether?

The reason not to dismiss the potential of theatre as a tool for social change is that theatre, more than dialogue, has the ability to create imagined worlds, often idealized possibilities. As the productions profiled in this study demonstrate, theatre creates a space of make-believe that dialogue does not fully materialize. In *Zones*, for instance, the Lark family, though fantasy, becomes a way for audience members to imagine their own reconciliation in relationships that may have been torn apart by faith issues. The power of this imagining should not be underestimated. Combined with a dialogue process that empowers and mobilizes an audience, the potential of this kind of performance is significant. *Zones* was a fascinating experiment in a hybrid art form. Like *DreamPlay* or *Culture of Desire*, *Zones* was a production interested in inviting its audience to co-create. However, *Zones* invited this co-creation much more directly, and also throughout the performance of the show itself, not simply in post-show meaning-making. While Cornerstone retains much of a theatrical hierarchy in its creative process, this move seems particularly radical. A production constructed like *Zones* but focused on less internalized issues, bringing together audiences from two sides of a conflict and making use of activist dialogue through quotation, would be a significant next step. Such a hybrid might serve as a gateway to ongoing human-relations dialogue overseen by human-relations organizations. It might be a way for activist theatre makers to provide the first step for opposing groups to move towards change, in ways perhaps more concrete than those imagined by the Living Theatre in 1965 when it first took up the challenge of changing the world through theatre.

Chapter 5:

Begin Again: Quotation and Authorship in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*

In Kenneth Macgowan's 1920 review of Eugene O'Neill's first Broadway success, *Beyond the Horizon*, he was already touting O'Neill as the first great American dramatist.[1] In doing so, Macgowan was merely reporting a story that members of the Provincetown Players had been disseminating within the New York theatre scene for the past four years. Reportedly, since their initial reading of O'Neill's play *Bound East for Cardiff* in the summer of 1916, the Provincetown Players had recognized the revolutionary potential of O'Neill's plays for American theatre. As the "little theatre" that had produced all of O'Neill's plays prior to *Beyond the Horizon*, the Players had a stake in this playwright's reputation. George Cram ("Jig") Cook, considered by many the driving force and "*spiritus rector*" behind the Provincetown Players, and his wife, playwright Susan Glaspell, in particular, had, since their first encounter with O'Neill's writing, made claims for his eminent status.[2] Cook reportedly told one subsequent chronicler of the Provincetown Players, Edna Kenton, upon her joining the company at the end of the summer of 1916:

> You don't know Gene [O'Neill] yet. You don't know his plays. But you will. All the world will know Gene's plays some day… [O]n the night he first came to Provincetown and read us *Bound East for Cardiff*, we knew we had something to go on with. Some day this little theatre will be famous; some day the little theatre in New York will be famous.[3]

According to Cook, then, on O'Neill's shoulders rested not only the success of the Provincetown Players but also the success of the native Little Theatre movement in general.

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[1] Kenneth Macgowan, "Review of *Beyond the Horizon*" in *New York Globe* (Feb. 7, 1920).

[2] Robert Sarlós, *Jig Cook and the Provincetown Players* (Boston: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1982), 14.

[3] Edna Kenton, "The Provincetown Players and the Playwright's Theater, 1915-1922," unpublished manuscript in Provincetown Players collection, Fales Library, New York University.

Echoing this impression in her memoir *The Road to the Temple*, Glaspell in 1927 wrote that during that first reading of O'Neill's *Bound East for Cardiff*, "[The Provincetown Players] knew what we were for. We began in faith, and perhaps it is true when you do that 'all these things shall be added unto you.'"[4] Likewise, in many subsequent histories of the Players, starting with Helen Deutsch and Stella Hanau's 1931 book *The Provincetown: The Story of the Theatre*, a central argument is that the theatre collective was formed with the express purpose of nurturing a playwright such as O'Neill.[5] Or, as Provincetown Players historian Robert Sarlós put it a little differently, the collective could not have existed without the "discovery" of such an individual genius. Writes Sarlós:

> The decision to establish a theatre in Greenwich Village [Provincetown Players' moved there from its ocean-side town in the fall of 1916] was largely prompted by the discovery of a young playwright, Eugene O'Neill, who seemed to grow out of, and thrive in, the fertile soil of collective creativity imbued with a Dionysian spirit.[6]

Anticipating this chapter's central argument, Sarlós claims that O'Neill's genius is as dependent upon the "fertile soil" of the collective as the collective's success was dependent on O'Neill.

Not only the press and O'Neill's fellow Players in 1920, but also the Pulitzer Prize committee at Columbia University saw something new and unique in O'Neill's Broadway debut, awarding *Beyond the Horizon* its prize for drama, and subsequently awarding O'Neill three additional prizes (one posthumously)—still the most awarded to any playwright to date. That the Pulitzer Prize for Drama virtually began with O'Neill's Broadway debut—the only previous recipient was Jesse Lynch Williams' forgettable comedy *Why Marry?* in 1918—implied that American drama began with O'Neill, though theatres had been producing U.S. playwrights for

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[4] Susan Glaspell, *The Road to the Temple* (New York: Stokes, 1927), 254.
[5] Helen Deutsch and Stella Hanau, *The Provincetown: A Story of the Theatre* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1931), 12.
[6] Sarlós, 123.

years. Indeed, this was the very claim made in O'Neill's 1953 *Time Magazine* obituary, which put it bluntly, "Before O'Neill, the U.S. had theater, after O'Neill, it had drama."[7]

This chapter accepts O'Neill as a possible "starting point" for the historicizing of American drama, but imagines what that history might look like if, instead of O'Neill's individual "genius," his problematic but significant experiences with collaborative composition were emphasized. By 1953, O'Neill's celebrity had eclipsed the work of his fellow playwrights at Provincetown Players, at least in such publications as *Time Magazine*. However, this chapter reveals the inaccuracy of O'Neill's lone status as the progenitor of serious American drama, as well as how this inaccurate status was specifically consolidated with the success of his posthumously produced play *Long Day's Journey Into Night* in 1957. To establish instead the profound influence of the Provincetown Players' collective theatre-making on O'Neill's work, and specifically on *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, this chapter describes how "collaborative" the Provincetown Players actually were and how collaborative was O'Neill as a member of this collective. Next, this chapter argues the ways in which, while writing *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, O'Neill was particularly nostalgic for his early creative years with this collective. This nostalgia becomes apparent through a reading of the play that shows how *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is as much about theatre as it is about O'Neill's family. Then, after considering the standard autobiographical reading of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, this chapter offers an alternate reading of the play, particularly of the play's fourth and final act, that reads it as primarily about the theatre and specifically as an attempt on O'Neill's part to enact a kind of collective composition process. Though he was writing by himself, O'Neill creates a radical collaboration through his extensive use of quotation on the page. Indeed, Act IV of *Long Day's*

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[7] "Trouble With Brown" in *Time Magazine* (Dec. 7, 1953).

Journey Into Night contains fifteen direct quotations and three paraphrases, primarily of poems and prose poems, some of which are quoted in their entirety. This kind of pastiche of quoted material is unprecedented in O'Neill's plays and unique to Act IV of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*.

"Father" and "Son": *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and O'Neill's Ascendance

O'Neill's progenitor status in American drama may have been touted early in his career and secured in retrospect (well after the short-lived Provincetown Players disbanded in 1922), but this status was conferred only with a degree of amnesia. For example, the bombshell of O'Neill's initial reading at the Players' meeting by the New England shore in the summer of 1916 was not as explosive as it was later portrayed. It is likely that the Provincetown Players actually first heard a play titled *The Movie Man* submitted by the aspiring playwright O'Neill, not *Bound East for Cardiff*. None of the members were apparently impressed, and the play was not slated for production. Similarly, while by 1957—the year *Long Day's Journey Into Night* opened to rave reviews on Broadway—O'Neill was widely accepted as the "father" of American drama, in the 1920s he was still sharing his special "parental" status with the "mother of American drama," Susan Glaspell. For example, in the Provincetown Players' 1923 circular, which was sent to its subscribers announcing the demise of the company, Cook wrote that the collective's foremost accomplishment to date was that, "We have given two playwrights to America, Eugene O'Neill and Susan Glaspell."[8] Critic Cheryl Black has also noted that throughout the 1920s, among the Players and in the press, Glaspell and O'Neill's work received

[8] "Provincetown Players, Playwrights' Theatre," club circular in Provincetown Players collection, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Library for the Performing Arts.

equal attention and praise, but attention and praise that were specifically phrased in gendered terms. For critics, Black claims, "American drama could only be born by a mating of O'Neill's 'masculine vigor' and Glaspell's 'feminine intuition.'"[9] Early in his career, at least, it was understood that O'Neill could not and did not give birth to American drama all by himself; his child was at least a two-part invention.

Nevertheless, while O'Neill's status as the first true American dramatist was for the most part only claimed and recognized well after the debut of *Beyond the Horizon*, it is a status that has dominated the study of American drama until quite recently. Even in the past five years, the vast majority of American drama anthologies in print begin with plays by Eugene O'Neill—often *The Emperor Jones*, which moved from the Provincetown Players' Macdougal Street theatre to Broadway in 1921. As O'Neill biographer Louis Sheaffer has pointed out, part of the reason for the playwright's foremost position within the study of American drama—the difference between O'Neill and those who wrote before him—is that he wrote tragedies. "[F]ew Americans had ever tried writing tragedy for the theatre," Sheaffer notes, and before O'Neill, he claims, "no one had yet achieved it."[10] Tragedy, of course, always has been accorded special status—as literature and as "legitimate" theatre—at least since Aristotle's *Poetics*. Therefore, tragedy traditionally has been considered the genre most worthy of academic study. Likewise, the general consensus among critics and theatre makers after the 1920s has been that O'Neill's tragedies "legitimized" the American stage, which, albeit unfairly, has been characterized as primarily offering home-grown vaudeville, comedy, or foreign drama before O'Neill.

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[9] Cheryl Black, *The Women of Provincetown, 1915-1922* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 2002), 63.

[10] Louis Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Playwright* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), 315.

Inseparable from his status as the father of American drama is O'Neill's widely publicized creative process and his wary attitude toward production. O'Neill wrote plays meant to be read as much (or more) than they were meant to be seen. As Sheaffer notes in *O'Neill: Son and Artist*:

> He took great care with the publication of his plays; no matter how many drafts he might have written or how much revising he had done during rehearsals, he always went over his plays again before allowing them to appear in print... [H]e looked to future generations of readers, rather than to the public of his day, for the important verdict on his writings.[11]

Part of this bias was practical on O'Neill's part. After the success of *The Emperor Jones*, even his plays that enjoyed short runs on Broadway were widely read in print, and often made more money for the playwright in print than in their initial productions. In considering publication first, O'Neill—as critic Egil Törnqvist has pointed out—often included material in his plays intended only for the reader, details which the playgoer would never experience.[12] This material ranged from character descriptions that clarified the characters' philosophical and symbolic meanings to descriptions of set elements that would have been lost to the audience's eyes. In *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, for example, O'Neill gives in print the title of every volume contained in the pair of bookshelves onstage, titles which the spectator never would have been able to see except in the most intimate of stagings.[13]

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[11] Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Artist* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), 155.

[12] Egil Törnqvist, "O'Neill's Philosophical and Literary Paragons" in *The Cambridge Companion to Eugene O'Neill*, ed. Michael Manheim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 18.

[13] In his privileging of print over production, O'Neill was in some sense no different from his predecessors and models in modern drama, such as Henrik Ibsen and George Bernard Shaw. These playwrights also wrote plays as if they were meant to be read more than performed for many of the same reasons as O'Neill.

However, O'Neill's preference for print over production was not simply a matter of money or of his opinion that print allowed him to more fully express himself to the public. Rather, it was largely due to O'Neill's general anti-theatricalism, a tendency that has been well documented. In O'Neill's opinion, productions inevitably corrupted his scripts rather than completed them. "My motto is… 'Write 'em & leave 'em!' and my morose intuition is that it is better not to do things at all—especially beautiful things—that to run the slightest risks of doing them badly," O'Neill wrote in a letter to Eleanor Fitzgerald, the former administrator of the Provincetown Players.[14] In 1928, he reiterated this position to Fitzgerald. O'Neill wrote that he was considering demanding that his plays "be published with 'No Productions Allowed' in red letters on the front page."[15]

As a dramatist hostile towards production, O'Neill was understandably considered (and even promoted himself as) an "author" in the traditional, Romantic sense that this dissertation has described in earlier chapters. He considered himself an author as opposed to a theatre maker. As an author, he wished for his plays to be received as examples of one artist's individual genius and craft transferred onto the page. In this sense, his plays did not require collaboration with those materializing the writing into a production to complete their meanings. Like the work of any traditional author, in the Romantic view, O'Neill's writing was marketed, by the playwright and his publishers, as new, unique, and based in his personal experiences (as filtered through his

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[14] Eugene O'Neill, Letter to Eleanor Fitzgerald (undated, circa September 1925) in the Eugene O'Neill collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

This, oddly enough, was O'Neill's answer to Fitzgerald's request for an article to include in the program for an upcoming production at the Provincetown Playhouse in 1925 (the venue which kept the Players' name after 1923, though few of the company's original members besides O'Neill were involved).

[15] O'Neill, Letter to Eleanor Fitzgerald (May 13, 1929) in the Eugene O'Neill collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

particularly acute sensitivity to the world around him). Indeed, O'Neill was continually praised for his ability to transfer the "truth" of his life onto the written page. For example, as a biographer might be expected to claim, Louis Sheaffer begins his exhaustive two-volume story of O'Neill's life, noting: "O'Neill was one of the most autobiographical playwrights who ever lived, and knowledge of his life cannot but contribute to our understanding of his plays."[16] While Sheaffer cautions critics from reading O'Neill's plays exclusively as reflections of the playwright's life, he nevertheless emphasizes that autobiography is "the bed-root [sic] throughout his writings."[17]

Recent critics, while acknowledging the problems with reading any play as purely biographical, nevertheless still often approach O'Neill's plays primarily through knowledge of the playwright's life. For example, Matthew Wikander in his article in the 1998 *Cambridge Companion to Eugene O'Neill* claims that the playwright's choice to set both *The Iceman Cometh* and *Long Day's Journey Into Night* in 1912 had nothing to do with the world events of that year. "The date has only autobiographical significance," writes Wikander.[18] Considering the emphasis given to O'Neill's biography in such criticism, it is not surprising that contemporary O'Neill scholarship is also largely subject to the assumptions that accompany the idea of the "author" within literary studies in general. It is often claimed, for instance, that the meaning of O'Neill's plays is located in the writer's "soul"—or, more often in recent criticism, in his mind. Therefore, O'Neill's intentions or his subconscious desires are still the primary considerations in analyzing his work. Accordingly, the playwright's life is often referred to in

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[16] Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Playwright*, ix.
[17] Ibid., 79.
[18] Matthew H. Wikander, "O'Neill and the Cult of Sincerity" in *The Cambridge Companion to Eugene O'Neill*, ed. Michael Manheim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 230.

O'Neill criticism, as it is the best place for critics to start tracking down such intentions and desires.

Long Day's Journey Into Night, produced in 1957, four years after the playwright's death, supported the bid among U.S. theatre critics and scholars for O'Neill's status as the progenitor of American drama. It also bolstered O'Neill's designation and self-designation as an "author" as opposed to a playwright, and the related argument for the particularly autobiographical nature of his work. In the play's creation and O'Neill's subsequent handling of the script, *Long Day's Journey Into Night* was treated as pure drama as opposed to theatre. With *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, O'Neill fulfilled his anti-theatrical desire to stamp "No Productions Allowed" on his plays. This is not to say that O'Neill wished for the play to be considered a closet drama, despite the instances of anti-theatricalism in the script mentioned earlier. Rather, while O'Neill wrote *Long Day's Journey Into Night* to be performed, he also forbade its performance.

O'Neill wrote the play in 1940, and finished revising it in the spring of 1941. In 1945, he sent copies to his longtime friend and Random House editor Saxe Commins (who had read it at O'Neill's home a few years earlier) and also to director Bennett Cerf (who was asked not to read it), along with signed agreements that the envelopes containing the plays were not to be opened until twenty-five years after the playwright's death. The subsequent history of the play's initial production is well known. Carlotta Monterey O'Neill, O'Neill's third wife, requested to have the play published by Random House in 1955, only two years after O'Neill's death. When Commins refused, she brought the script to Yale University Press, which published it in 1956. Following its publication, *Long Day's Journey Into Night* was first performed in Sweden in 1956

and then in the U.S. in 1957 at Circle in the Square, directed by José Quintero, where it was a critical and financial sensation and garnered a fourth and final Pulitzer Prize for O'Neill.

In subsequent years, O'Neill scholars have taken a slightly hypocritical view of Carlotta's decision to go against the playwright's wishes. She is often depicted as morally bankrupt. Typical of this attitude, Doris Alexander in her book *Eugene O'Neill's Last Plays: Separating Art From Autobiography* titles the chapter describing Carlotta's decision to publish the text "The Black Widow."[19] Nevertheless, the publication and production of this particular play undoubtedly has shaped O'Neill scholarship for the last fifty years—all previous O'Neill works are now typically read through the filter of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, the playwright's "crowning achievement."

In addition, the success of the play at Circle in the Square regained O'Neill's critical status as the "father" of American drama in a time when his star was fading. In 1957, while O'Neill was still touted as one of the great American playwrights, his plays were also considered un-producible on the contemporary stage.[20] However, with Quintero's production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, O'Neill was critically embraced as a playwright who fulfilled and even surpassed the realist expectations of the 1950s Broadway drama. *Long Day's Journey Into Night* was a play written expressly toward the strength of performers trained in the American Method, as popularized by the former members of the Group Theater. In other words, the play was read and performed as pure psychological realism. Unlike O'Neill's previous plays, except for a

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[19] Doris Alexander, *Eugene O'Neill's Last Plays: Separating Art from Autobiography* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 2005), 149.

[20] The expressionist "experiments" of *The Emperor Jones* and *The Hairy Ape* were considered too dated. *Strange Interlude* was too long, and with its staged "stream-of-consciousness" soliloquys, also dated. It was not until Quintero's successful revival of *The Iceman Cometh* in 1956, also a play previously considered too long for commercial revival in the 1950s, that O'Neill was even considered a playwright with contemporary significance.

handful of early one-acts, *Long Day's Journey Into Night* contains no "theatrical" stage elements, no heightened language (that is not quotation), no pointedly symbolic movement or images. In addition, the play takes place in a single day in a single setting, and rewards performers who are able to play often-contrasting "actions behind words." Ideal for the Method approach, each scene in *Long Day's Journey Into Night* can be broken down into "beats," negotiations between characters in which each attempts to get something from the other. Moreover, each little conflict within a beat, each momentary desire in the play, indicates a larger, play-sized conflict and desire. In "Methodese," each character's objective can be contained in an overall super-objective: what that character wants most of all. (As it will be explored later in this chapter, O'Neill intentionally outlined the play as a series of "battles" between the characters in line with this type of acting approach.)[21] That *Long Day's Journey Into Night* arrived on Broadway at precisely the time at which the training in psychological realism had reached its zenith was largely responsible for its successful production and its immediate reputation as the greatest of the playwright's works.

Long Day's Journey Into Night not only solidified O'Neill status as America's first great dramatist, but also as its most autobiographical, authorial playwright, particularly in the way the script was framed in its publication. In print, *Long Day's Journey Into Night* begins with a dedication by O'Neill to Carlotta on the occasion of their twelfth anniversary: July 22, 1941. This (originally handwritten) dedication was not part of any of the typed script copies the playwright had asked to keep under wraps. It only appeared on the copy O'Neill gave as a gift to Carlotta. By including the dedication in the mass printing, Carlotta was most likely attempting

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[21] O'Neill, "Notes on *Long Day's Journey Into Night*" in the Eugene O'Neill collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

to deflect any criticism she might have received over publishing the play against the playwright's wishes. For instance, O'Neill's dedication puts his and Carlotta's often vitriolic and violent relationship in a happier light. "These twelve years, Beloved One, have been a Journey into Light—into love," it reads. "You know my gratitude. And my love!"[22] Besides testifying to the playwright's love for Carlotta and, in a sense, justifying her co-ownership of the play ("your love and tenderness… gave me the faith in love that enabled me to… write it"), the dedication also uses common Romantic metaphors related to authorship and sets up the reading of the play in biographical terms. "I give you the original script of this play of old sorrow, written in tears and blood" it begins. Metaphorically, this dedication avows that the mass-produced, typed script the reader holds in his or her hands is an illusion; the play is actually written in the author's blood and tears not in ink. In this sense, the dedication claims, the text is a part of O'Neill's body, literally his corpus. On the other hand, the text is also a transcription, and therefore an extension, of the author's soul. Moreover, the purpose of the play, claims the dedication, is for O'Neill to "face my dead at last." As he owns the text as part of his body and soul, so O'Neill claims ownership of the characters in the play as members of his deceased family. The Tyrones *are* the O'Neills: his father James, brother Jamie, and mother Ella. The father and older son characters in the play even have the same first names as their counterparts in O'Neill's family, lest the connection be lost on the reader. This is O'Neill's story, as well as O'Neill's body, claims the dedication.

The reception of this play, from the very first time it was read, has honored the frame proposed by this dedication. The play's reception as a text begins with Carlotta, the first person

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[22] O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, 11th ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 7.

to read *Long Day's Journey Into Night* as she typed it from O'Neill's handwritten manuscript in 1940. In her diary, Carlotta records her reaction to the play in terms that reiterate assumptions that accompany the concept of O'Neill as the text's "author." On Nov. 24, 1940, she writes, "What insight into the very soul of Gene! Now I can understand so many things!"[23] Along the same lines, when the play opened in 1957, critics praised it for what they considered its frank honesty about O'Neill's personal life. Brooks Atkinson's review of the printed play, for example, praised the fact that, "Essentially, *Long* is not so much a tale as O'Neill's remorseless attempt to tell the blunt truth about his family as a master of artistic conscience."[24] Atkinson's review further claimed that the play was so powerful because it was "personal and as literal as a drama could be." It is not invention, but confession that is O'Neill's gift, according to Atkinson.

O'Neill's major biographers, Arthur & Barbara Gelb and Louis Sheaffer, years after *Long Day's Journey Into Night*'s initial production, continued to read this play as biographical fact, in accordance with the most critics, while of course acknowledging small changes that O'Neill made from the facts of his life out of "artistic license."[25] Even recent critics, sometimes

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[23] Carlotta Monterey O'Neill, "1940 Diary," in the Eugene O'Neill collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

[24] Brooks Atkinson, "Tragedy Behind a Tragic Masque" in *The New York Times* (February 19, 1956).

[25] Arthur Gelb and Barbara Gelb, *O'Neill* (New York: Harper, 1962).

For example, describing a major episode that led to O'Neill's disillusionment with his mother, Sheaffer relates in *O'Neill: Son and Playwright* an incident in 1903 when Ella, desperate for heroin, fled the O'Neill home in New London, Connecticut, and tried to throw herself into the river. It turns out that Sheaffer's main source for this event is the play *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Indeed, the family's reaction to the event is lifted directly from the play, as if *Long Day's Journey Into Night* merely reports facts. Quotes Sheaffer, in describing the aftermath of this incident, "'It was right after that,' O'Neill says through Edmund in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, 'Papa and Jamie decided they couldn't hide [Ella's condition] from me any more'"(89). O'Neill speaks *through* Edmund, Sheaffer claims, conflating the character and the playwright without a qualm.

ironically within articles or books whose overall purpose is to caution readers against assuming that *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is purely factual, nevertheless accept this play as a kind of signed confession and use it to "read" its "author" in the same way that the play has been read solely in terms of the author. Describing the affect of writing "O'Neill's family play" on the playwright's psychological state later in his life, Doris Alexander, for example, claims, "by way of re-creating that struggle [among his family members], O'Neill was able to face and resolve the pain of his own life."[26] Judith Barlow in *Final Acts: The Creation of Three Late O'Neill Plays* concurs: "The act of composition [of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*] was, for the playwright, a lesson in compassion."[27] Along these lines, Emil Roy in "The Archetypal Unity of Eugene O'Neill's Drama" claims that the playwright's ability to write so personally is evidence that he more rightly should be considered a poet. "Like most poets," Roy's article claims, "[O'Neill] appears to conceive of his fictional universe as an emanation of his own rich and dynamic psyche."[28] If Roy were describing this playwright's own opinion of his true calling, he is not far off the mark. Indeed, O'Neill aspired to the designation of "poet" as much as to that of "author." It is not coincidental that O'Neill's earliest writings, as a teenager, are poems and his final compositions (that have survived) are also poems.[29] In this sense, O'Neill considered

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[26] Alexander, 68.

[27] Judith E. Barlow, *Final Acts: The Creation of Three Late O'Neill Plays* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1985), 83.

[28] Emil Roy, "The Archetypal Unity of Eugene O'Neill's Drama" in *Critical Approaches to O'Neill*, ed. John H. Stroupe (New York: AMS Press, 1988), 2.

[29] In addition, as Roy reads O'Neill's plays as emanating directly from his "psyche," likewise throughout his career, O'Neill denied in print and among colleagues almost all literary influences on his plays. For instance, O'Neill publicly and vehemently denied that he was familiar with the German Expressionists after the success of his expressionist play *The Hairy Ape*. Likewise, despite the very Freudian language of *Strange Interlude*, O'Neill insisted that he had only read a few of Freud's books and none during his time composing the play. Like one of his few acknowledged influences, Friedrich Nietszche,

himself a "poet-playwright" like those figures revered by Julian Beck (as described in Chapter Two).

Taking all this into consideration, it would seem that *Long Day's Journey Into Night* has very little to do with the collectively written and/or collectively created plays featured in the preceding three chapters: The Living Theatre's *Frankenstein*, SITI Company's *Culture of Desire*, Tracy Young' *DreamPlay*, and Peter Howard's *Zones*. It appears that O'Neill could not have been less collaborative in his composition of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Indeed, O'Neill embraced and seemed to embody the image of the solitary author, alone at his empty desk.[30] Likewise, the reception and criticism of this play could not better represent a type of literary analysis that starts and ends with the "author": his life, his intentions, his body of work. O'Neill, therefore, serves as an ideal starting point for the commonly anthologized history of American drama as a progression of great individual authors, a single line of playwrights (unique talents) writing in (or challenging) the tradition of the mentors who preceded them.

Nevertheless, as this chapter will argue, O'Neill also could serve as the ideal starting point for a history of American theatre imagined as a series of interrelated theatre companies, writing and creating collectively, a type of creation that reaches its peak in the proliferation of theatre collectives in the 1960s. O'Neill could serve as a model of collectivity as easily as he

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O'Neill preferred to describe his work as solely the product of his individual will and his unique, personal craft.

[30] O'Neill is sometimes actually portrayed as even more "authorial" than the Romantics poets around whom many of the contemporary metaphors regarding authorship were formed. Depictions of O'Neill's creative process in recent years have emphasized that not even Nature was needed to fuel his genius. As Leona Rust Egan describes O'Neill's office in Peaked Hill Bars Station in *Provincetown as a Stage* (Orleans, Mass.: Pasnassus Imprints, 1994), "While the sea was his inspiration, he turned his back to it when he wrote; his flotsam desk faced a windowless south wall… [E]ven the small casement windows hid the sea because they had been made opaque by the blasting sand" (231).

now serves as a model for the playwright as author, because, in the final act of what is considered O'Neill's most personal, anti-theatrical play, the writer engages in a prolonged and radical collaboration with other writers in a manner unprecedented in his earlier plays. In what should be his most individual statement, his final act of confession, O'Neill opens up the page to divergent, as well as sympathetic, voices through his extensive of quotation. At the same time, O'Neill's sudden textual collaboration in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, while extraordinary among his plays, can be explained in terms of the playwright's formative experience as a writer within the collective of the Provincetown Players. Act IV of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* enacts on the page the type of creative relationship O'Neill experienced within the Provincetown Players' rehearsals. In this most important of O'Neill's final plays, the playwright returns to his roots in the Provincetown Players and explores quotation as a collaborative method in a way that, as earlier chapters have detailed, will later serve as the central compositional methodology for theatre collectives through the remainder of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century.

Using the biographical evidence compiled and mobilized by the majority of O'Neill scholars, this chapter in part participates in the type of textual reading described earlier, analysis based in imagining the "psyche" of the writer during the time of the play's composition. This is not a total digression from the evidence considered in past case studies. In the same way that previous chapters considered the possibility that part of the meaning of *DreamPlay* might be found in director Tracy Young's combative relationship with Tim Robbins or that part of the meaning of *Culture of Desire* might be found in the sympathies between the gay and lesbian theatre makers of SITI Company and their gay subject Andy Warhol, so does this chapter argue that part of the meaning within the extensive quotation in the final act of *Long Day's Journey*

Into Night might be found in O'Neill's reassessment of (and nostalgia for) his years with the Provincetown Players.

Primarily, however, this chapter, like previous ones, also analyzes the writers' (or in this case, the writer's) use of quotation as a means to assume and challenge authority, to offer an array of world-views or political/intellectual paths for readers or audience members, and to model a type of collectivity. While the use of quotation in Act IV of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is not anti-narrative to the extent that it approaches the kind of radical plurality of *Culture of Desire*—nor is it used as a method to dissolve hierarchies among a group of collaborators as in *Frankenstein*—it does call into question the concept of the playwright as "author" and ultimately this concept's usefulness in imagining a history of American drama. The primary difference between this chapter and the previous three—as might be apparent already—is that a particular production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is not analyzed along with the text. Rather, the shared meaning of the script is considered only as it is created among the readers, critics, and biographers who have written about O'Neill and about this play.

The Provincetown Players and the Limits of Collaboration

In making the argument that in 1940 O'Neill, through his composition of the final act of *Long Day's Journey Into Night,* was somehow satisfying a longing for the collective spirit he had experienced in his early years within the theatre collective Provincetown Players, it is important to consider how "collaborative" this group actually was and how involved and committed O'Neill, as a member, was to this collaboration. The common narrative of the production life of the Provincetown Players, from 1915 to 1922, is that the company slowly betrayed its ideals by chasing after Broadway once O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* successfully transferred "uptown" in

1921. More recently, critic Linda Ben-Zvi, following the lead of Provincetown Players historian Robert Sarlós, has offered a slight adjustment to this historiography. Rather than imagining the theatre company as, first, a collective committed to democratic ideals and, then, a production company that succumbed to the siren-song of commercial Broadway, Ben-Zvi argues that the desire for popular success and an incompatible commitment to a group ethos were part of the company's make-up from its inception.[31] As these contrary goals were irreconcilable, the Provincetown Players' self-destruction was inevitable.

The following history, building on Ben-Zvi's idea that the Provincetown Players was philosophically divided from the start between its group ethos and its individual members' desire for fame, argues that this division is actually traceable to the organization's simultaneous empowering of certain figures in the creative process—the playwright and the producer—along with its contrary demand that all creative decisions be made under the jurisdiction of the collective. This initial confusion led to a process that was for a few years, but only at certain times, more collaborative than many historians credit. At the same time, this chapter shows that this undefined period of collective creative practice was all but finished by the beginning of the Provincetown Players' second season in New York, well before O'Neill's *Emperor Jones* transferred to Broadway. In other words, this chapter argues that the Provincetown Players' period of collective creation was shorter, more intense, and less defined that other histories have portrayed it.

The manuscript of "The Minute Book of the Provincetown Players, Inc. (from September 4, 1916, to November 8, 1923)" is the most referred to document in the company's early history

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[31] Linda Ben-Zvi, "The Provincetown Players: The Success That Failed" in *Eugene O'Neill Review* 27 (2005), 12.

and the most persuasive evidence of a trajectory within the organizational life of the Provincetown Players from collective to hierarchy.[32] The minutes, however, do not detail the initial meetings and performances of what would become the Provincetown Players. For two summers, 1915 and 1916, a loose coalition of artists, anarchists, poets, journalists, and playwrights presented short plays, first for themselves and then for the public, in the small seaside town of Provincetown, Massachusetts. The success of the group's second summer "season," during which plays were presented in a theatre converted from the Lewis Wharf fishhouse, led certain members to believe that their plays could find further success back in Greenwich Village, where many of them lived during the year. On September 4, 1916, therefore, those who had put on the shows over the past two summers held their first official meeting and organized themselves under the name "Provincetown Players."

Contained in the minute book is the "Constitution of the Provincetown Players," adopted by the company on September 5, 1916, the group's second official meeting.[33] This constitution combines the democratic philosophy of Jig Cook, the individual who pushed the group hardest to commit to bringing its plays back to the city, with the socialist organizational know-how of journalist John Reed. Organizing the theatre company as a collective, with the idea that all members should share duties equally, was not unheard of at the time. A number of the original company members, including Reed, had experience with two other collectives which served as models for the Provincetown Players as it is imagined in this document: the socialist periodical *The Masses* and the then-recently-formed theatre company, the Washington Square Players.

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[32] "The Minute Book of the Provincetown Players, Inc. (from September 4, 1916, to November 8, 1923)" in the Provincetown Players Collection, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Library for the Performing Arts.

[33] Ibid.

Indeed, Max Eastman, the editor of *The Masses*, helped Cook and Reed compose this "constitution" in Provincetown along with actor Frederic Burt. The Washington Square Players, on the other hand, were influential on this document in more ways than one. In truth, the formation of the Provincetown Players was due in part to a number of its members having been rejected by this other theatre collective. These playwrights subsequently took issue with the Washington Square Players' interests in presenting almost exclusively plays by foreign writers and in courting Broadway productions. Hence, the first resolution of the Provincetown Constitution, which reads, "That it is the primary objective of the Provincetown Players to encourage the writing of American plays of real artistic, literary and dramatic—as opposed to Broadway—merit."[34]

Unlike the Washington Square Players, the constitution insists, the defining goal of this company will be to produce "American" playwrights and particularly those playwrights whose work was in opposition to the commercial aesthetics of Broadway. The two other important constitutional resolutions to note are that, "No play shall be considered unless the author will personally superintend the production at the theatre," and that there must always be "essential democratic control of the Active Members upon the material submitted."[35] In other words, the constitution insisted that the plays to be produced by Provincetown Players would be chosen by the entire group and shaped by the entire group, while at the same time that the "author" should "superintend" the production.

In line with Ben-Zvi's argument that the Provincetown Players was divided from the start, these resolutions reveal that conflicting power structures were inevitable within the

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.

company in its design. As further resolutions in the constitution clarify, the Provincetown Players insisted that "the author, with the assistance of the President, must select his own cast, see to it that they are rehearsed, and generally direct his production."[36] Most of the company members were writers; therefore, not surprisingly, they were interested in challenging the hierarchy of Broadway theatre, in which the producer was in charge of the show and the playwright was simply another hired hand, no different from the director, the designers, or actors. The Provincetown Players' proposed solution to this problematic system was to retain a hierarchy of sorts within the creative process but to replace the producer with the playwright at the top of the pyramid. (Thirty years later, as Chapter Two described, the early production life of the Living Theatre would attempt to follow a similar path.) Counter to this proposed playwright-centered organization is the constitution's insistence that play selection (and even supervision) were nonetheless the right of all "active members." The members retained "control" over all material submitted. At odds, then, within the Provincetown proposal, are the authority of the playwright and the authority of the group. In a foreshadowing of which authority the Provincetown Players would eventually honor, the company had already agreed, however, in its first meeting to call its theatre space in Greenwich Village, should the members find one, "the Playwright's Theatre."[37] This name was, appropriately enough, suggested by company member Eugene O'Neill.

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[36] Ibid.

[37] There is some disagreement among scholars as to whether O'Neill proposed the name "Playwright's Theatre" or "Playwrights' Theatre." In terms of this project, this distinction is a significant one. In Helen Deutsch's and Stella Hanau's first history of the company, the Players' venue is referred to as "The Playwright's Theatre" throughout. The singular version of this name, claims Edna Kenton in her unpublished history of the company, was also used as part of the official title of the company. However, the early circulars published by the Provincetown Players are titled: "The Provincetown Players:

In the minutes' record of meetings held by the Provincetown Players during the following year, the company's first in New York City, there is a perceptible progression away from democratic decision-making and towards limiting the artistic vision of the group to a few members, in other words, of honoring one half of the company's constitution. Earlier, in its second meeting in Provincetown on September 5, the company already had formed an executive committee, composed of Jig Cook as president (Cook had been appointed president in the first meeting, before the rest of the committee was selected), Margaret Nordfeldt as secretary/treasurer, and John Reed, Louise Bryant, and Floyd Dell as committee members. The purpose of the executive committee was "to conduct the business of the club," in essence concentrating the decision-making power within Provincetown Players among a handful of people.[38] After locating a performance space in New York, the company met every few days in October, primarily to read plays together and to vote on whether these plays should be produced. Meetings were held on October 5, 7, 11, 14, 17, and 22. This time commitment proved too much for the members, however, and on Oct. 22, they agreed to meet only weekly, beginning November 1. Even these weekly meetings proved too frequent, however, particularly during production weeks (the company began producing bills of plays on November 3). Provincetown Players attempted in its first season to put up a new bill of three one-acts every two weeks. Consequently, it became unmanageable for all members to read all the plays being considered for production. While the constitution originally stated that "the Active Members as a body" were to decide "what plays are to be produced," at the second company meeting on September 5,

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The Playwrights' Theatre." Some scholars (Robert Sarlós, Cheryl Black) use the singular, and some (Louis Sheaffer, Linda Ben-Zvi) use the plural. To my knowledge, the question has not yet been settled, or perhaps even debated.

[38] "The Minute Book."

this already had been amended to read that only the "majority of a quorum" was required for play selection.[39] The "quorum" at that time was defined as one-third of the active members. By March of 1917, however, near the end of its first season, the Provincetown Players had re-defined a "quorum" as "12 active members," of which only the majority—that is, seven members—was required to agree on play selection.[40] The following year, the quorum was reduced to seven members; meaning only four active members were required to approve the selection of any individual play. Decisions that had originally been in the hands of twenty-nine members were now in the hands of four.

It is ironic that this apparent consolidation of power within the Provincetown Players among a small number of members was due largely to the influence of Jig Cook, who at the same time espoused a "Greek" ideal for the theatre collective, an ideal that served as the group's central philosophy. Like the classical Greek theatre, Cook argued that the contemporary theatre in the U.S. could perform "the sacred work of ritual within a democratic community, by bringing it together through shared creative experience."[41] As quoted by Glaspell in *The Road to the Temple*, Cook inspired the group creative process within the Provincetown Players with his premise that, "One man cannot create drama. True drama is born only of one feeling animating all members of a clan—a spirit shared by all and expressed by the few for the all."[42] To lead a democracy in ritual, Cook argued, the ritual-makers truly had to function as a democracy themselves. Like BOTHarts or Cornerstone Theater Company years later, the Provincetown Players, in Cook's vision, had the potential to model a collectivity that might influence society at

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[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Sarlós, 5.
[42] Glaspell, 252.

large to operate more democratically. As historian Sarlós notes, Cook argued that "under optimum conditions a work might enable its creators to engender in the audience the duplicate of the very healing process that benefited them."[43]

Nevertheless, members such as Brör Nordfeldt, who originally had been in charge of the theatre's design committee, quickly came to believe that Jig Cook was "running things."[44] Nordfeldt, and a number of other original members, left the company during its first year, many after the March 21, 1917, meeting, later termed the "massacre" by Provincetown director Nina Moise.[45] At this meeting the motion was passed that twelve active members were now to be considered a quorum. In this same meeting, a motion requesting more time for discussion, in order that more members might be able to read the plays being selected, was defeated. The minutes of March 21 note that Cook urged at the meeting, "Speed is necessary in order to get through with politics and get to work on the coming bill."[46] Such a statement indicates that Cook was, by the end of the first season in New York, less concerned with encouraging a process by which the company might achieve an ideal democratic consensus and more concerned with the company's product.

Excluding the majority of company members from play selection was only the first step the Provincetown Players took towards conforming to a more traditional model of a Broadway production company. It is worth noting here, however, the two other major decisions after "the massacre" that are often referred to in arguing this trajectory. In 1918, the Provincetown Players

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[43] Sarlós, 55.
[44] Margaret Nordfeldt, Letter to Robert K. Sarlós (December 8, 1963) in Sarlós Papers, Special Collections, Shields Library, University of California, Davis.
[45] Nina Moise, "Correspondence to Edna Kenton," undated, in Provincetown Players collection, Fales Library, New York University.
[46] "The Minute Book."

began providing free tickets to members of the press. Before this, the press had to join the Provincetown Players as "associate members" in order to see the "club's" shows. This decision indicated that the Provincetown Players were no longer merely interested in developing a relationship with a small group of dedicated playgoers who would "collaborate" with the group through their long-term, committed patronage. This ideal relationship was described in the first meeting of the Players in September 1916, in which the membership of the club was divided between "active members," those putting on the shows, and "associate members," those attending the shows. This original description of membership suggested that audiences and performers were all part of the same creative project.

The other "betrayal" of the Provincetown's group ethos has been placed solely on the shoulders of Jig Cook: his decision to produce O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* in the fall of 1920 against the wishes of the rest of the executive committee and, further, his push to move the show to Broadway that spring after its overwhelming success. Specifically, Cook felt that O'Neill's play required that a plaster dome be constructed in Provincetown's Macdougal Street theatre. The dome would allow subtle lighting effects and a convincing gradual transition from day to night, both of which were called for by O'Neill's expressionist play. When the executive committee rejected this construction plan (none had yet even read the play), arguing that the dome would eat up the entire year's budget for the collective, Cook went ahead anyway and started building the dome in the space all on his own. Even Glaspell, whose *The Road to the Temple* is a paean to Cook, admits that in ignoring the wishes of the collective in this episode Cook embraced an autocratic stance that, she allows, was inarguably part of Cook's character from the beginning despite his "Greek" rhetoric.

However, Cook's decision to build the dome is not necessarily inconsistent with a democratic ethos or with the constitution of the Provincetown Players. Only within a collective, Cook argued, could the individual artist truly develop. Indeed, any creative group often required and nurtured strong leaders who then inspired the collective to greater work. For Cook, O'Neill was just such an individual. This might help explain the apparent inconsistencies in the organizational structure of the Provincetown Players as laid out in its constitution. As Cook wrote in an article for *The Little Theatre Review* in 1920, titled "The Way of the Group":

> [O'Neill wrote *The Emperor Jones*] with the deliberate intention of forcing the Provincetown Players to a high level of production, compelling the most perfect co-operation of the whole group, calling upon actor, scenic artist, illuminator, costumer and director for the best they had… Hence it behooves us to make ourselves equal to this great responsibility. The individual talents of the group must be left, so far as it is possible, free to create from within, and not brought into the straight-jacket [sic] of preconceived ideas.[47]

In addition, while generally committed to group decision-making, the constitution of the Provincetown Players also stated that the President (Cook) was in charge of deciding what resources were appropriate for each production, and that "the author shall produce the play without hindrance according to his own ideas." Therefore, depending upon how this was read, Cook was well within his defined power. *The Emperor Jones* required a dome, the President felt, and the Provincetown Players could provide one. The members who stood in the way of its construction, in Cook's mind, were a hindrance. They were betraying the ideals of the company, not he, by preventing the emergence of O'Neill's individual talent.

While the relationship between the Provincetown Players' perhaps-contradictory philosophy and the organizational tensions within the company which in part led to the group's

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[47] George Cram Cook, "The Way of the Group" in *The Little Theatre Review* 1, no. 3 (Nov. 8, 1920).

demise is easy to trace, reconstructing just how collaborative the company's creative process was on a day-to-day basis in its early years is more difficult. During the company's first two years producing in Provincetown, first at private homes and then at the theatre on the wharf, no members took the time to describe in writing how rehearsals were run. An anecdote about these rehearsals by Nilla Cook, Jig Cook's daughter, who was only eight years old when she performed with the Players, and descriptions of performances by the company members and other audience members are all that remain. Once the company moved to New York, members wrote more descriptions of rehearsals, but they are typically anecdotal and not particularly concerned with describing the ins and out of the "group process" if such a thing was indeed being practiced.

One thing is clear about the rehearsal process at the Provincetown Players, in Provincetown and in the first year or so in New York, it involved a great deal of talking, not unlike the early creative process of the Living Theatre's *Frankenstein*. All active members of the Provincetown Players were allowed to attend rehearsals, whether they were involved with the productions or not. They were also encouraged—particularly in the first season in New York—to offer their opinions and suggestions to the performers and the playwright. (Until Nina Moise showed up midway through the first season there was no director other than the playwright, in accordance with the Provincetown constitution.) This atmosphere of casual discussion is what Cook was attempting to curtail during the "massacre" of March 1917. Nevertheless, talk was at the center of the Provincetown Players' process from the beginning.

Indeed one possible starting point of the conception of the Players is the conversation Cook and Glaspell had in 1915 with Jack Reed upon Reed's return from researching an article in Mexico. As Edna Kenton describes it in her unpublished history of the Provincetown Players:

> Jack agreed with Jig and Susan that drama—the native drama of a people—began in "talk"—not that of a single playwright with his own inner consciousness, since his inner consciousness was too colored with his outer consciousness—but of a group, talking till an idea evolved, and then a symbol to express the idea, and then a scene, until, under the central point of the idea, and the expanding canopy of the symbol, and within the scene, the actors would begin to speak spontaneously, and, as they spoke, some inner memory would arise, to hold the true and "forget" the trivial.[48]

Discussion was not merely a byproduct of a democratic system in which every member had to have his or her say, rather discussion was a methodology by which the company was attempting to collectively create "native" American drama. That the Provincetown Players did not write collectively, but instead solicited scripts was clearly a compromise of this ideal. However, in the first two seasons in Provincetown, pairs of writers occasionally collaborated on scripts, indicating an interest in collective writing. These co-written plays were Cook and Glaspell's *Suppressed Desires* and Neith Boyce and Hutchins Hapgood's *Enemies*.

With no designated director besides the playwright (or playwrights), who often had no prior experience directing in the theatre, the performers often directed themselves and one another. Nina Moise, who became the first trained director to work with the Provincetown Players recalled to Edna Kenton her initial experience with the company after she had been invited by Cook to attend a rehearsal in early 1917.

> I found them rehearsing [the play] without a director… and it was quite evident that the actors didn't have much idea what to do or how to do it. I think at that time they had a very definite idea that anything one did in life could be done on the stage. If people stood in front of each other and bumped each other in a room, why not do it on the stage—which was exactly what they were doing.[49]

Moise, who it must be remembered was used to working within a traditional theatre hierarchy, describes the collective direction at the Players as chaos. If her description is at all accurate, it

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[48] Kenton.
[49] Moise.

might explain why, before the first season in New York began, at the October 22, 1916, meeting, the executive committee had attempted to limit this chaos by agreeing to hold a "preliminary dress rehearsal" for each production "to which all Active Members may come and after which they may make suggestions to the producers if they wish."[50] This dress rehearsal was designed to allow a designated time (one night) for the active members to have their say.

However, though the motion passed, it was apparently not taken seriously by the membership. Kenton, in the most extensive description on record of how Provincetown Players' rehearsals typically ran during the company's first season in New York describes an atmosphere in which the active members were still attending whichever rehearsals they chose and offering their two cents. Even after "directors" were made part of the creative process that first year, Kenton notes:

> We had at rehearsals a director of sorts, to "advise," not to issue ukases. Beside him sat the author, refusing to cut his lines, insisting on his "rhythms" however obscure, even to our alert ears. On the stage were the actors, scorning a suggested gesture as "unnatural," and arguing "crosses" until they were stepped on or pushed aside to get them out of the way. All about sat interested active members with a multitude of ideas to try out, the majority of them only half-baked, if indeed, they had ever been placed over the fire of consideration. There was no head; the group was the head; but it was hydra-headed, and we lacked above all things that first year, leisure in which the synthetic process might work out.[51]

It must be remembered that Kenton's unpublished history makes the case that Jig Cook was justified in pushing through the production of *The Emperor Jones* in 1920; that it was the right (though not the collective) decision. Therefore, her cynical tone in this passage describing the group collaboration that occurred at Provincetown Players' rehearsals is not without bias.

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[50] "The Minute Book."
[51] Kenton.

Nevertheless, if Kenton's description is at least in part accurate, it is arguable that the type of "discussion" that was considered "group process" at the theatre was unorganized, emotional, and full of unresolved conflicts, but also that it continued through the first season in New York. Regardless of the messiness of collective composition at the Provincetown Players, by the second season in New York, according to Kenton, things had changed for "the better." Rehearsals were open only to those active members directly involved in the particular production. As democratically collaborative as the Provincetown Players' early open rehearsal/discussions may have been, they were finished by 1918. Based on this sketch of the Provincetown Players creative process prior to 1918, the following section assesses O'Neill's specific involvement in the periodic collaborative environment of this collective in its early years.

O'Neill's Commitment to Collaboration

While Provincetown's inconsistent (and short-lived) commitment to group discussion was one aspect of the company that may have struck new members as unprofessional, certainly the other was that, particularly in the company's first two seasons by the shore, the Provincetown Players were uninterested in adhering to stage conventions—or even in learning those conventions. As Nina Moise pointed out, "they had a very definite idea that anything one did in life could be done on the stage." As with the aesthetics of the Living Theatre and BOTHarts years later, the members of the Provincetown Players were primarily concerned with "being themselves" onstage, to varying degrees, and less concerned with "playing characters." The impetus behind this aesthetic was partly Cook and the others' belief that, in order to remake society at large, the group first had to remake itself into a true democracy. The earliest plays

presented by the group were therefore send-ups of fellow members, often of the "free love" attitudes being extolled in Provincetown at the time, particularly by the men. The first play presented by the group was Neith Boyce's *Constancy* in 1915, which portrayed the on-again/off-again open relationship of Jack Reed and Mabel Dodge. Other plays in these first two summers poked fun at trends that had been embraced by the group, such as psychoanalysis. The most popular was the comedy *Suppressed Desire*, co-written by Glaspell and Cook, which the company later brought to New York.

The result of this self-reflection was that a kind of realism or naturalism became the common aesthetic on Provincetown's stages in its earliest years, as members were committed to playing themselves (or one another) as accurately as possible. However, as critic Brenda Murphy has pointed out, the "realism" of these early Provincetown shows is not realism in the traditional sense in the theatre. It is similar to the realism of community theatre in which "the recognition of real people as real people prevents true mimesis."[52] Regardless, being natural may have been more important to most Provincetown Players members during these first two summers than collaborating in a creative process. As Nilla Cook, Jig's daughter, recalls, in one of the only descriptions of a Players' rehearsal during the company's first two summers in Provincetown:

> Rehearsals were held in the living rooms of one or another of the four houses, and... [o]nly those taking part in a given section of a play were present. This not only saved the others time, but allowed the amateurs to feel at home, relax, to enjoy it, to live it as really their own. This system of putting sections together at the very end was carried to such extremes that… I had never seen the others rehearse...[53]

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[52] Brenda Murphy, *The Provincetown Players and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 56.

[53] Sarlós, 61.

While Cook and others may have insisted that too much input was muddying the creative process once the company moved to New York, in these first two summers the performers' comfort was tantamount, even if that meant they never saw their fellow collaborators until the performance. Getting the input of their peers, apparently, was less important than feeling uninhibited and behaving naturally.

Bound East for Cardiff, the first O'Neill play produced by the Provincetown Players, in 1916, was a good fit with the company's "realist" aesthetics. The one-act, which is set in the crew's quarters of a ship bound for Europe, takes place in real time and depicts the death of a sailor who has injured himself while on duty. The dialogue is primarily the other sailors discussing the injured seaman's inevitable passing and a sailor's life in general. Of course, O'Neill had written *Bound East for Cardiff* before meeting the Provincetown Players. He wrote it for George Pierce Baker at Harvard University a few years earlier, before dropping out of the playwriting program. However, the company selected the play because it made sense as an extension of their commitment to realism. Not only did the plays that O'Neill had already written fit well with the Provincetown Players' interests. In addition, the playwright soon got caught up in the spirit of the company members poking fun at themselves. In this spirit of "community theatre realism," O'Neill wrote *Now I Ask You* in 1916, one of his only comedies. The play made fun of bohemian posing and specifically ridiculed, through transparent theatricalized stand-ins, the romantic situation between himself, Jack Reed, and Louise Bryant. Bryant carried on sexual relations with both men during the summer of 1916, probably to the knowledge of both men, and certainly to O'Neill. While O'Neill did not continue to write this kind of self-conscious comedy of manners in his subsequent work, a play such as *Long Day's*

Journey Night, in the traditional reading, can be seen as an expansion of this earlier experimentation by the playwright, writing about his own life and his own problems.

In addition to encouraging O'Neill's interest in "realist" drama—plays more concerned with atmosphere than plot—and specifically in confessional plays based on the playwright's own foibles or sorrows, the Provincetown Players may also have encouraged the playwright's move toward expressionism with *The Emperor Jones* (1920) and *The Hairy Ape* (1922). Indeed, numerous critics have credited the influence of a "Provincetown intertext" for the anti-realist aesthetic in the majority of O'Neill's plays in the 1920s.[54] Brenda Murphy's book *The Provincetown Players and the Culture of Modernity* argues that the Players were always torn between realism (as in Glaspell's *Trifles* or O'Neill's *Bound East for Cardiff*) and an anti-realist, modernist aesthetic (as in Louise Bryant's *The Game* or Arthur Kreymborg's *Lima Beans*). Murphy contends that the influence of the "Others," as the modernists within the company later called themselves during their brief split from the company in 1917, encouraged O'Neill's expressionist experiments as well as Glaspell's plays such as *The Verge*. Some critics have also specifically argued for Glaspell's influence on the younger playwright O'Neill, particularly the precedent that Glaspell's *The Verge* set for O'Neill's similar study of a Nietzschean self-awareness and quest for freedom in *The Hairy Ape*. As an example of the exchange of ideas that went on between these two playwrights: During the summer of 1918 back in Provincetown, when O'Neill was working on *The Dreamy Kid* and *Where the Cross Is Made*, he visited

[54] See Barlow, "Influence, Echo, and Coincidence: O'Neill and the Provincetown's Women Writers" in *Eugene O'Neill Review* 27 (2005) and Nicholas Radel, "Provincetown Plays: Women Writers and O'Neill's American Intertext" in *Essays in Theatre* 9, no. 1 (Nov. 1990).

Glaspell each day "after both had finished their morning's work" for long conversations about writing and also to read one another's drafts.[55]

In the end, as Helen Deutsch and Stella Hanau note in *The Provincetown*, the first history of the company, "No one will ever be able to tell how far O'Neill was influenced by Cook, or Cook by Reed, or Reed by Glaspell, or Glaspell by O'Neill (or it may well have been the other way around)." However, for the purpose of this project, it is more important to consider how interested and excited was O'Neill by the collaborative process at the Provincetown Players.[56] That his writing among his fellow playwrights at the theatre collective inevitably influenced O'Neill's plays is certain. The extent to which he welcomed or acknowledged this influence is less easy to discern. Admittedly, within the writings of the members of the Provincetown Players, Eugene O'Neill is most often portrayed as absolutely the least interested in the "group process," the least committed to collaboration in rehearsal, and the most dismissive of Cook's democratic rhetoric. Indeed, Deutsch and Hanau's history, the first description of O'Neill while he was with the Players, sums up the general depiction of the playwright in the many studies to follow. In the endless discussions that took place among the active members during rehearsals at the Macdougal Street theatre, claim Deutsch and Hanau, "O'Neill, true to his nature, was seldom seen."[57]

Among the various histories of the Provincetown Players and biographies of O'Neill are numerous testimonies and anecdotes depicting O'Neill's independent and solitary nature. Certainly the representation of O'Neill as a lone, troubled genius is a persona he himself cultivated, and one that the press embraced early in his career because of its romantic appeal.

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[55] Ben-Zvi, *Susan Glaspell: Her Life and Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 205.
[56] Deutsch, 59.
[57] Ibid., 50.

Nevertheless, it is also an image that is inseparable from the idea of the author, a title which O'Neill and those covering the American theatre scene in the 1920s were only too happy to award the playwright. As America's great hope for its first legitimate playwright, O'Neill was depicted as revolutionary and independent. After all, what author needs to collaborate? Certainly, the great American short story writers and novelists, of whom the U.S. had many to brag about by the 1920s, did not. The great American dramatist should be no different. To require the help of others in creating a work of art implied a lack of inspiration or an unwillingness to work hard.

O'Neill embraced this prejudice as much as the press. It is a mentality that may have been implanted in O'Neill in part during his time at Harvard University under Baker's tutelage. As another student in O'Neill's cohort recalled, "[Baker] would tell us what was wrong with our work, but he would not tell us specifically how to fix it. That, he called collaboration, and he would not collaborate."[58] A similar distrust of collaboration is revealed in a profile of O'Neill written for *The Saturday Review* soon after the success of *The Emperor Jones*.

> Here is one playwright who has spent so much time on the preparation of his script, has built his structure so carefully from its foundation, that he knows the right position of every brick from every angle. Never a doubt as to what any one of his characters is thinking or feeling at any moment; never an ambiguity about a motive or a reading. To the director's suggestions he answers quickly "yes" or "no." To suggestions of changes he usually answers "no."[59]

O'Neill's plays, the writer contends, require no assistance from a director's vision or from the actors' interpretations because he has spent the time to carefully construct them. Apparently, only by rejecting collaboration could a playwright truly be considered an author.

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[58] Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Playwright*, 296.
[59] Theresa Helburn, "O'Neill: An Impression" in *The Saturday Review*.

To simply dismiss this common representation of O'Neill as solitary genius because it was so actively promoted not only by the playwright but also by the press would be too hasty. From many accounts within the theatre company, O'Neill did indeed frequently take issue with actors or directors changing his text and was less willing than many of the other Provincetown Players to "collaborate" on his writing, even through the input of group discussion—at least this was the case during the playwright's rehearsals in Greenwich Village. Representative of these accounts of O'Neill rejecting help from anyone is an argument that Sheaffer reports between landscape artist Peggy Baird and O'Neill which occurred as a result of the playwright claiming he wrote only for himself, not for critics or the audience. "Peggy countered that while such an attitude might be true of poets, real poets worthy of the name, playwrights, of all writers, were dependent upon others—actors, director, audience—to bring their work to life." O'Neill, Sheaffer reports, did not concede, insisting "the only important thing to him was the writing."[60] More famous and better documented is O'Neill's argument with Provincetown director and actress Ida Rauh over his show *Where the Cross Is Made* in 1918. At the end of the show, O'Neill wanted the actors to portray ghosts onstage. Rauh and the cast felt the effect would be comical. Pressing his argument, O'Neill invoked the Provincetown constitutional resolution: "The author shall produce the play without hindrance according to his ideas." He got his way; but Rauh was correct. The moment caused awkward tittering among the audience members.

The irony of O'Neill using this resolution to win his argument with Rauh is that, supposedly, he was least interested among the playwrights presented by the Provincetown Players in actively overseeing his productions. As Sarlós notes, "O'Neill disliked being his own regisseur, and although never shy to express his views on staging (in written directions, and,

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[60] Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Playwright*, 395.

later, orally) shunned rehearsals whenever possible."[61] Sarlós also claims, "[H]e was the one author who never actively supervised productions of his plays."[62] Moreover, when the Provincetown Players began to dissolve in 1922, with Glaspell and Cook moving to Greece and O'Neill organizing the remainder of the group under a triumvirate of artistic directors—himself, Kenneth Macgowan, and Robert Edmund Jones—the playwright wrote a number of disparaging letters to friends and colleagues regarding the democratic operations at his former theatre. In one of these letters, to Macgowan, he characterized the group process at the Players as "the old bickering democracy" and one he wished to leave behind.[63] Given this evidence, it is not surprising that recent critics such as Ben-Zvi have characterized O'Neill as desiring only to write and produce on his own and not to join "too much in the group ethos."[64]

As to why he was so resistant, some critics have attempted to explain O'Neill's supposed antipathy for group discussion and artistic collaboration. Sheaffer argues that the writer was simply too painfully shy to interact with others. Moise's accounts of working with the writer support this opinion. "He was a little inarticulate in getting his ideas over to the actors but he was an enormous help to the directors," she writes.[65] According to Moise, O'Neill could express himself when speaking to individuals but was uncomfortable addressing a group. In further support of this view, O'Neill did indeed shun speaking engagements his entire life, even when they involved receiving awards. Moreover, unlike many other playwrights at Provincetown, O'Neill was no performer. He only appeared in two of the plays he wrote during the first year

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[61] Sarlós, 70.
[62] Ibid., 49.
[63] O'Neill, Letter to Harry Weinberger (Sept. 1923) in *The Theatre We Worked For*, ed. Jackson R. Bryer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 48.
[64] Ben-Zvi, "The Provincetown Players,"18.
[65] Moise.

with Provincetown, and the only role he wrote for himself was that of a man who remains offstage throughout the entire show, only reaching his hand onstage for a moment. This was in the 1916 play *Before Breakfast*.

At the same time, O'Neill's rejection of the collaborative process at the Provincetown Players has been exaggerated. First, it should be noted that at the point when O'Neill was most virulent in expressing his distrust of the group ethos—immediately following the disintegration of the Provincetown Players in 1923—he was merely echoing the feeling of most of those who had been involved in the early years of the collective. Even the great defender of communalism, Cook, from his self-imposed exile in Greece, expressed his frustration with collective theatre-making after the Provincetown Players had broken up, as was mentioned in Chapter Two. In a letter to Edna Kenton in 1922, Cook wrote, "If I am ever to play that game again there shall be absolute tyranny—and the tyrant unquestionably me."[66] Therefore, part of O'Neill's attitude must be understood as a reaction to the squabbling that occurred among the Players after the success of *The Emperor Jones*, as actors began to insist on better pay and playwrights fought for their own plays to be moved "uptown." Second, it is simply untrue to say that O'Neill never oversaw any of his productions at the Provincetown Players. Indeed, in a letter to Beatrice Ashe in 1916 from Provincetown, O'Neill wrote that he was busy directing rehearsals of *Bound East for Cardiff*.[67] In addition, there are photographs of O'Neill building the set for this production alongside other Players.

To bolster claims that O'Neill was not typically one to join groups, some critics have pointed out that in the first membership list for the theatre company, O'Neill is listed as an

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[66] Sarlós, 148.
[67] Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Playwright*, 348.

"honorary member," meaning he had not paid any dues.[68] Whether this is due to O'Neill's poverty at the time or his uncertainty about the company, by the time of the production of *Bound East for Cardiff* O'Neill was clearly fully committed to the Players as the photos attest. Nor can his commitment be dismissed as O'Neill merely willingly collaborating on his first show and then rejecting the collaborative process once he had truly experienced it. On the contrary, during his first Broadway rehearsal process, for *Beyond the Horizon* in 1920, letters to his wife Agnes Boulton reveal O'Neill's delight at being invited by the director, Bennett Cerf, to give comments to the actors after each scene.[69] In another letter, O'Neill admits he has learned from the director and cast as well. Writes O'Neill: "[Cerf] has brains and he uses them every second and, outside of some misconceptions, he has really been a great help to the play. And even from his mistakes, I have learned a hell of a lot. I'm a better playwright already, I feel it."[70] In one of these letters to Agnes, O'Neill even offers his own reason why he was so reticent to participate more in the Players' group process before 1920. After describing his joy at *Beyond the Horizon* with the cast and director, he writes: "Can you imagine! No, you can't—or any one of the P.P. either. For at every one of their rehearsals I was 'pickled' and not myself."[71] Whether or not O'Neill's alcoholism was actually responsible for his reported absences from the Players' rehearsals, it is clear that portraying O'Neill as uniformly opposed to creative collaboration is unfair.

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[68] "First Subscription List—Provincetown Players" in the Provincetown Players collection, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Library for the Performing Arts.
[69] O'Neill, Letter to Agnes Boulton (January 28, 1920).
[70] O'Neill, Letter to Agnes Boulton (January 31, 1920).
[71] O'Neill, Letter to Agnes Boulton (January 28, 1920).

Missing "the Movement"

Regardless of whether O'Neill's fondest memories of the Provincetown Players were necessarily of the collaborative process in which he participated there, evidence suggests that in the years immediately leading up to the writing of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* in 1940, O'Neill had become nostalgic for his time in the collective. Moreover, this nostalgia seems linked to the fact that O'Neill perceived, at least temporarily, his completion of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* as the end of his career. It was at this perceived end point that the playwright, not surprisingly, became reflective of the beginning of his career.

Few critics have considered the influence world events may have had on O'Neill's writing, least of all on his most "autobiographical" plays. Nevertheless, to ignore that O'Neill wrote and revised *Long Day's Journey Into Night* from the spring of 1940 through the spring of 1941, the time period in which Europe entered World War II, is an oversight. This oversight could be justified in part if O'Neill had been unconcerned or unaware of the international mobilization for war. On the contrary, however, the playwright in his secluded California home was obsessed with listening to the war news on the radio with his wife Carlotta. Indeed, the possibility and then reality of war so depressed him that O'Neill's writing and revision of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* was often put on hold.

In March 1940, O'Neill, after making extensive preparatory notes and outlines, began writing the dialogue for Act I of the *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. His work on the play, however, stalled as soon as it began. Throughout April and May of that year, in O'Neill's cryptic work diary, which typically contains daily entries of only a few words, there are

numerous days in which all O'Neill has written is "war news" or "war obsession."[72] On these days, the playwright did no other work. O'Neill was also very sick during this period, from colds but also from the neurological disorder which would in the next three years lead to such trembling in his hands that he could no longer write. (O'Neill's health during the 1930s and '40s was always poor, in part due to the after effects of his excessive drinking. He reformed in 1926. However, during the spring of 1940, he seemed in particularly bad health.) Once O'Neill began the dialogue for Act II in July, however, his work on the first draft of the play progressed quickly and he finished the draft on September 20. Second-draft revisions also went quickly, starting on September 21 and ending October 16, the playwright's fifty-second birthday. Carlotta began typing this second draft of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, written in O'Neill's miniscule handwriting, on October 24, 1940.[73] She finished it at the end of November. However, again, the revision of the typescript was postponed for much of the spring, during which time there are many entries in O'Neill's work diary noting his "war obsession." Carlotta did not begin the rewrite of the typescript with O'Neill's notes until April 1941.[74]

Apparently, the war upset and "obsessed" O'Neill so much that it delayed him in writing and revising this play. Indeed, the main activity of O'Neill's life during this year, besides working on *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, was listening to the war news. That the war then might have had some affect on this play is certainly arguable. Those few writers who have considered the specific time period in which O'Neill wrote *Long Day's Journey Into Night* have discussed the war's possible affect on the play in general terms, claiming that either the global

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[72] O'Neill, "Work Diary, 1939-1943" in the Eugene O'Neill collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University.
[73] Carlotta Monterey O'Neill.
[74] Carlotta Monterey O'Neill, "1941 Diary," in the Eugene O'Neill collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

conflict is reflected in the familial conflict of the play or that O'Neill's disgust over world events caused him to turn inward to "face his own demons." If the latter is the case, it is not the first time that O'Neill has been accused of turning inward when the world became most heated politically. In Hutchins Hapgood's book *A Victorian in the Modern World*, the anarchist journalist who was among the original members of the Provincetown Players voiced his disappointment in himself and his fellow members for not writing more political plays at the advent of World War I. "We were the Cause of the war: the violence and inconsistency of our emotions, the impotence of our ideas," he writes.[75] Hapgood argues that the self-reflexive plays of the Players' early years were the result of turning inward and away from the horror of the war. Similar to the period in which O'Neill was writing *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, the formation of the Provincetown Players and its first seasons in New York occurred during the escalation and entry of the United States into a world war, from the summer of 1916 through 1918. As O'Neill sat down to write *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and the U.S. contemplated another world war, it would seem likely that the playwright's thoughts might have turned as much to this earlier period in his career, his beginnings as a playwright, as they did to his family.

If the war specifically turned O'Neill's thoughts to his days with the Provincetown Players during a similar period in history, the collective was also on his mind well before these world events. When the theatre broke up in 1923, O'Neill's disgust with the way things had been run, as it has been noted, was profound. However, as the years went on, O'Neill became increasingly nostalgic for his time with the company. His nostalgia was most likely mixed with a sense of guilt. Besides feeling guilty that he was "pickled" during most of the rehearsals at Provincetown, O'Neill also may have felt guilty for any number of his actions connected to the

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[75] Ben-Zvi, *Susan Glaspell*, 149.

Provincetown Players' break-up. For example, by not allowing Jig Cook to direct *The Hairy Ape* and not giving Cook the proper credit for directing *The Emperor Jones*, as well as credit for shepherding this production through the company and on to Broadway, some felt O'Neill was largely responsible for Cook and Glaspell leaving the country in 1923, the event that led to the dissolution of the Provincetown Players. Cook died in Greece the following year, still bitter over his experiences with Provincetown. Moreover, once O'Neill, along with Macgowan and Jones, had remade the remnants of the Players into the Experimental Theatre (which performed in the renamed Provincetown Playhouse), O'Neill never asked Glaspell to submit plays to the company upon her return to the U.S., despite the strength of their former relationship as fellow writers and confidantes. Whether or not Glaspell perceived this as a snub, it effectively ended her relationship with any remnant of the Provincetown name.

In addition to the guilt O'Neill may have felt over these actions, in the years leading up to writing *Long Days Journey Into Night*, the playwright had, in part unwillingly, lost touch with a number of former Provincetown members. Carlotta, who held a grudge against theatre in general because of her own disappointing career on the stage, associated the Provincetown Players not simply with the theatre but particularly with O'Neill's alcoholic days and, worse for her, with his second wife Agnes Boulton. In charge of O'Neill's correspondence, Carlotta often destroyed letters from former members of the Provincetown Players. By 1940, O'Neill had learned of this "editing" of his correspondence, though it is unclear whether he had confronted Carlotta about it.[76] Any or all of these things may have turned O'Neill's nostalgia to regret as he contemplated the Players in the spring of 1940, a turn that may have made the playwright more appreciative of, and desirous for, what he had lost. Collaboration at the Playhouse might have been unorganized,

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[76] Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Artist*, 333.

emotional, and full of unresolved conflicts, as accounts describe, but the work there offered O'Neill a community nonetheless.

Indeed, by as early as 1927, a mere four years after the break-up of the company, O'Neill was already sentimental about his early years with the Provincetown Players. At an event to raise money for the Provincetown Playhouse, the venue for the Experimental Theatre, O'Neill was asked to say a few words to the crowd, something that always made the playwright uncomfortable. Reportedly, "[l]ooking startled, he slowly rose to his feet and, after swallowing nervously, said: 'The Provincetown did its best work when it didn't have a dime,' then he added under his breath to himself, 'Sit down, you son of a bitch, sit down!'"[77] The company's longtime administrator Eleanor Fitzgerald reportedly saved the moment by jumping up and exclaiming, "For the sake of Jig Cook's memory, let's not drop tears—let's drop dollars!" Not only was O'Neill clearly emotional about the Players by 1927, but also his under-the-breath admonition suggests a certain self-disgust or guilt wrapped up in these feelings.

It also appears that Carlotta, in keeping the former Players away from O'Neill, merely fueled this mixture of sentiments. For example, in 1929, Madeleine Boyd, who was visiting Carlotta and O'Neill, reports that when she spoke to O'Neill about a friend of hers who had been involved with the Provincetown Players:

> Gene suddenly came to life. His face glowed as he began talking about the Provincetown Players, Jig Cook, Fitzi and others… He really poured his heart out, he was so happy remembering. It sounded as though he longed for the Village and the old days. Finally, Carlotta called down, "Gene, it's time to go to bed," and his face instantly fell. He looked as though he'd been spanked.[78]

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[77] Ibid., 253.
[78] Ibid., 345.

Apparently, O'Neill was already missing the companionship of the Provincetown Players less than a decade after the company's demise, and Carlotta's isolating control over the playwright had only made his nostalgia all the more acute.

If O'Neill was already nostalgic for the Provincetown Players by the late 1920s, by the late 1930s he had so romanticized his time with the collective that he expressed dreams of recreating the company in some fashion. In the mid-1930s, O'Neill had begun the "Cycle" of plays that he would never finish. This was a series of plays (eventually twelve planned in total) focusing on a single family over many generations in the U.S. At the time, the Theatre Guild was exclusively presenting O'Neill's plays in New York. Therefore, O'Neill proposed to the Guild's producers that they present all twelve plays by forming a repertory company that would be exclusively dedicated to his Cycle. "No stars, of course, but show the young and ambitious their chance to become stars through this Cycle," O'Neill wrote the producers. "No featured names, unless we ran into some with the right spirit of cooperation. Do this Cycle very much as if we were starting a new Guild or Provincetown Players, that's my idea."[79] O'Neill's dreams of a "new" Provincetown had stalled by the late 1930s, however, when his writing of the Cycle, which had become too ambitious in its scope, stalled. Nevertheless, he hadn't stopped thinking about the Players. While working on the Cycle, O'Neill had requested "books on anarchist utopias" from his editor friend Saxe Commins.[80] These books, in part, may have been research for *The Iceman Cometh*, the play which preceded *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and a play which suggests more longing and regret on O'Neill's part for his time with Provincetown.

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[79] O'Neill, Letter to Theresa Helburn (February 13, 1938) in the Eugene O'Neill collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

[80] Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Artist*, 469.

There is of course a danger in conflating O'Neill with the characters in *The Iceman Cometh*, in the same way that most critics unquestioningly conflate him with Edmund Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. That said, it is possible that some of the contradictions in the character of Larry Slade in *The Iceman Cometh* reflect contradictions in O'Neill's own expressed opinions about the Provincetown Players over the years. O'Neill was dismissive of the Provincetown Players' politics after the company broke up, often for what he perceived as a disconnect between words and actions on the part of the group's leaders, a disagreement between democratic ideals and autocratic behavior. As he wrote to Eleanor Fitzgerald regarding Cook, soon after Cook and Glaspell had left for Greece, "As I look back on it now, I see where he drove all our best talent, that we had developed, away from the theater for daring to disagree with him—this is supposed to be democracy."[81] The former anarchist, now simply alcoholic Slade, in *The Iceman Cometh*, expresses similar opinions of the anarchist "Movement": "I'm through with the Movement long since. I saw men didn't want to be saved from themselves, for that would mean they'd have to give up greed, and they'll never pay that price for liberty."[82]

At the same time, by the end of this play, Slade is accused of (and perhaps enacts) some deep-seated allegiance to the Movement, or at least an allegiance to the people who were involved in it. As the young turncoat Don Parritt says to Slade at the end of the play, regarding Parritt's anarchist mother who was sent to jail because Parritt informed on her: "It's really Mother you still love—isn't it?—in spite of the dirty deal she gave you."[83] Like Slade's actions in the play, O'Neill in the late 1930s, was increasingly open in expressing his love for the

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[81] O'Neill, Letter to Eleanor Fitzgerald (May 28, 1922) in Louis Sheaffer collection, Shain Library, Connecticut College.
[82] O'Neill, *The Iceman Cometh* in *Complete Plays, 1932-1943* (New York: The Library of America, 1988), 570.
[83] Ibid., 666.

Provincetown Players despite the failings he may have perceived in the company's fulfillment of its ideals. It is also important to note that Parritt's line as easily sums up the play that O'Neill would write immediately after *The Iceman Cometh*, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, as it does Slade's motives: "It's really Mother you still love—isn't it?—in spite of the dirty deal she gave you." This suggests that these two plays—so different in their settings—are both attempts by the playwright to re-forge links with his past and also to prove some sort of dedication on O'Neill's part for those he may have dismissed or betrayed.

In addition to the war and writing *The Iceman Cometh*, there is another event in O'Neill's life late in 1940 worth mentioning as it also may suggest that the period of writing and revising *Long Day's Journey Into Night* was a time when the playwright particularly had the Provincetown Players on his mind. In November of 1940, Carlotta and O'Neill's Dalmatian, Blemie, getting older, fell down the stairs of their home and became bedridden. The couple eventually had to put the dog to sleep in December. Carlotta and O'Neill's obsessive love for this dog has been well documented. O'Neill wrote a poem as an obituary for Blemie that was later published. Carlotta referred to the animal as "the only one of our children that never disappointed us."[84] O'Neill's grief over the passing of Blemie is significant. More than the war, indeed, in December of 1940 sadness over Blemie's passing prevented O'Neill from working on the final revisions of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. In the days following Blemie's death, the only entries in O'Neill's work diaries are the single word "sad."[85] O'Neill had always been a dog lover. However, there is a specific connection between his love for dogs and the Provincetown Players worth noting. Glaspell and Cook also kept dogs, and—like Carlotta and

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[84] Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Artist*, 349.
[85] O'Neill, "Work Diary, 1939-1943."

O'Neill, it could be argued—often treated them better than their own children. During his time with the Players, O'Neill came to love Glaspell and Cook's dogs as well, and he even performed the funeral services for two of their dogs on separate occasions. It is certainly possible, then, that during this time when Blemie was at the front of O'Neill's mind even more than the war, his thoughts of the dog's passing led him to memories of Cook and Glaspell.

For O'Neill, memories of the Provincetown Players in 1940 inevitably involved memories of those who had passed away, including most prominently Cook and Jack Reed (who had died in Russia in 1920). Add to this the fact that O'Neill was theatricalizing his mother, father, and brother in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*—all dead—and that another war was beginning in Europe, and it is not hard to imagine why O'Neill was feeling particularly fatalistic during his composition of this play. Moreover, while he was writing the play, the condition that made O'Neill's hands tremble worsened. Indeed, the trembling of Mary Tyrone's hands in the play, while true of Ella O'Neill, is one of the many examples in *Long Day's Journey Into Night* in which the playwright's own fears became those of his characters. All these factors may have contributed to what critics have termed the playwright's "death obsession," and, more particularly in 1940, to O'Neill's sense that his career was coming to an end despite that he was only fifty-two years old.[86]

Though O'Neill went on to write *Hughie* and *A Moon for the Misbegotten* before giving up playwriting—because, the playwright claimed, he could no longer physically write—*Long Day's Journey Into Night* is often considered his "final word." Much like Shakespeare's *The*

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[86] Stephen Watt discusses the history of O'Neill criticism that has focused on the playwright's supposed "death obsession," and instead proposes that O'Neill actually had "life fear." See Watt, "O'Neill and Otto Rank: Doubles, 'Death Instincts,' and the Trauma of Birth" in *Critical Approaches to O'Neill*, ed. John H. Stroupe (New York: AMS Press, 1988).

Tempest, *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is for many critics a more proper farewell for the playwright than the plays that followed. For one thing, *Long Day's Journey Into Night* was acclaimed posthumously in production and in print—unlike the short play *Hughie*, essentially a monologue that was not produced for many years, or *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, which, though similarly autobiographical in the eyes of many critics, returns to the problematic symbolic territory of O'Neill's earlier plays with the character of the giantess Josie. Indeed, critic Travis Bogard's opinion of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is representative of this play's status among O'Neill scholars. Describing O'Neill putting down his pen after 1943, Bogard argues:

> His illness and the war were real reasons for silence, but equally important was an underlying cause: having written the two plays about his family, O'Neill had no further place to go. *Long* was the play he had been trying to write from the outset of his career; its achievement was his raison d'etre as an artist. *A Moon* was an essential coda, an act of love, of charity and contrition.[87]

Bogard's assertion that *Long Day's Journey Into Night* was the play that O'Neill was born to write, or the one that he had failed to write time and again before finally succeeding, implies that even if it wasn't actually the playwright's last play, it should have been.

There is evidence, of course, that O'Neill felt about *Long Day's Journey Into Night* much as these critics' did, that it was his last word, a meaningful ending to his career. Indeed, in Carlotta's diary, there is a brief passage that suggests that after writing *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, O'Neill himself had, at least temporarily, the sense that he had said all he could say. In the summer of 1941, O'Neill was struggling to decide what to work on after *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Carlotta's July 23 entry cryptically notes O'Neill's sudden doubts about the future. Describing their work together that evening, she writes: "We make 'notes' & talk of his many

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[87] Travis Bogard, *Contour in Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 422.

ideas for plays to write! Then he becomes sad & says, 'You know I'm finished!' He comes over to me and weeps."[88] *Hughie* and *A Moon for the Misbegotten* prove that the playwright was not finished. Nevertheless, there is the possibility that in writing *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, O'Neill imagined that he was composing his last or simply his most important play, and that nothing else needed to be written.

In imagining this play as his crowning achievement or last word, O'Neill, like his subsequent critics, may have turned his thoughts then to his beginnings as a playwright in the attempt to give his collection of plays a shape, to read into them a meaningful progression or to find some natural wholeness among them as a body of work. One indication that O'Neill was looking back not only on his life but also on his plays while working on *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is that one of O'Neill's quotations in Act IV of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* references his first play, *A Wife for Life*, giving the impression (perhaps intentional) that his writing had somehow come full circle. The quotation is really a paraphrase of a passage from the King James version of the Bible (John 15:13), which reads, "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friend."[89] In *A Wife for Life*, the old prospector, who in the course of the short play has learned that his protégé is in love with his wife and has decided he won't stand in their way, delivers this final line in the play: "Greater love hath no man than this that he giveth his wife for his friend."[90] In *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, Jamie, after warning Edmund that he secretly has wished him ill because of his jealousy, says, "Greater love hath no

[88] Carlotta Monterey O'Neill, "1941 Diary."
[89] *King James Bible*, John 15:13.
[90] O'Neill, *A Wife for Life* in *Complete Plays, 1913-1920* (New York: The Library of America, 1988), 11.

man than this, that he saveth his brother from himself."[91] This echo of the earlier paraphrase suggests that, as the critics would after the success of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, O'Neill viewed this play as an ending that would recall his beginnings. In doing so, O'Neill may have been revealing his nostalgia for the beginning of his career at Provincetown Players as well, a time when all the world was still ahead of him.

It is not coincidental then that on November 29, 1940, days after Carlotta typed the script for *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and during the time that the couple was discussing the play and O'Neill's life nightly (along with the war news and Blemie's failing health), O'Neill wrote Kenneth Macgowan a letter in which he was both his most nostalgic for the Provincetown Players and his most fatalistic about his future. Referring to a description of the Players in an earlier letter by Macgowan, O'Neill writes, "The memory of the old P.P. days moved me to a sad nostalgia. There was a theatre then in which I knew I belonged, one of guts and idealism. Now I feel out of the theatre."[92] That a writer who for so many years had supposedly fought to stay "out of the theatre" and comfortably alone at his desk, such a statement is significant. It is a statement that helps explain, when, in 1946, having been asked by a reporter how one becomes a playwright, O'Neill answered, "Take some wood and canvas and nails and things. Build yourself a theater, a stage; light it, learn about it. When you've done that you will probably know how to write a play... if you can."[93] This is not only the depiction of the ideal playwright as a craftsman, steeped in the practice of the theatre—as dissimilar to the author-dramatist ideal of a playwright as possible—it is also a depiction which specifically recalls O'Neill's early days

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[91] O'Neill, *Long*, 167.
[92] O'Neill, Letter to Kenneth Macgowan (Nov. 29, 1940) in *The Theatre We Worked For*.
[93] Alexander, *The Tempering of Eugene O'Neill* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962), 65.

at the Players on the docks by the sea building a theatre with his own hands alongside his fellow collaborators.

More Than a Family Plot

Most critics have considered O'Neill's biography and the play *Long Day's Journey Into Night* as conjoined twins, too risky to separate. Because O'Neill's father, James, lived his life in the spotlight, literally and figuratively, as one of the most popular American stage actors of the previous generation, much was known of O'Neill's life by the public well before this "confessional" play and the subsequent biographies by the Gelbs and Sheaffer. Moreover, the location of the play (the Tyrone's summer home was much like the O'Neill's home in New London), the characters in the play (a father, a mother, an older brother, and a younger brother as in O'Neill's family), and even the names shared by the characters in the play and O'Neill's family (father James and son James Jr. or Jamie), all attest that O'Neill was writing about his own life. In addition, readers at the time of publication were well aware that the play had been released posthumously, assumedly because the material was so personal. However, as if this wasn't enough to tie the play securely to the playwright's life, O'Neill's inscription to Carlotta, which she chose to include in publication as if it were part of the play, made it plain that this was O'Neill's own story "written in tears and blood." However, while *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is undeniably based on O'Neill's life, it is not *only* about his life or about the "universal truths" that may be found in any individual's life. It is also a play about the theatre and, as revealed through O'Neill's extensive use of quotation in the final act, about O'Neill's longing for the collaboration that one specific theatre, the Provincetown Players, once offered him.

In terms of the play's inscription, it is important to keep in mind that "written in tears and blood" is a metaphor that O'Neill used repeatedly to describe his plays. While the process of writing *Long Day's Journey Into Night* may have been unique to O'Neill in terms of the psychological pain it caused him (and Carlotta's diary certainly suggests this), this phrase was not unique for O'Neill in describing his process. For example, during rehearsals for *Marco Millions*, a play about Marco Polo with little explicit autobiographical material, O'Neill similarly complained to the producers that in order to shorten the running time he had to cut a scene that was "written in my blood."[94] In the same way that O'Neill considered almost each play he wrote, upon finishing it, his best to date, likewise almost every one of his plays was written in his blood, according to the playwright.

Nevertheless, few critics have attempted to read *Long Day's Journey Into Night* as more than O'Neill's biography, and as other than unique among O'Neill's plays. Indeed, even a book such as Doris Alexander's *Eugene O'Neill's Last Plays: Separating Art From Autobiography*, which by its title would suggest that it offers other approaches to the play beyond the biographical, merely clarifies the number of instances in the play in which O'Neill took liberty with the facts about his family (facts established by O'Neill scholars after the play's publication).[95] While not challenging the special status of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* as O'Neill's true confession, some critics have argued that O'Neill's preparatory notes for the play reveal that the playwright was as interested in the allegorical meanings of the play as in its

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[94] Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Artist*, 273.

[95] While she does not specifically address O'Neill's uses of quotations, Jean Chothia is one of the few critics to suggest that when the playwright is supposedly writing about his most personal topics he often uses the stories of other writers as opposed to simply his own biography. See Chothia, "Trying to Write the Family Play: Autobiography and the Dramatic Imagination" in *The Cambridge Companion to Eugene O'Neill*, ed. Michael Manheim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 196.

personal meanings. This is suggested by the fact that, in an early scenario for the play, O'Neill refers to the characters simply as Mother, Father, Elder Son, and Younger Son. In doing so, O'Neill connects this play with some of his earliest, such as *Thirst* and *Fog*, in which characters do not have individual names and are types more than fleshed-out human beings. At the same time, the counter-argument has been made that O'Neill's use of archetypal descriptions as opposed to actual names in his scenario for *Long Day's Journey Into Night* merely reveals a reticence on the playwright's part early in the writing process to acknowledge that the story was his own. Once he had committed to confess all, O'Neill was able to rightfully name the characters after his family members. This counter-argument is problematic, however, for, as Judith Barlow cautions in her book *Final Acts: The Creation of Three Late O'Neill Plays*, besides that the mother and younger son are named Mary and Edmund in the play rather than Ella and Eugene, the fact remains than in his notes O'Neill considered naming the older son and the father "Edmund" at different times in his process.[96] (Edmund was the name of O'Neill's middle brother who died in infancy.) Therefore, a one-to-one correspondence between the O'Neill family and the family Tyrone (James Tyrone *is* James O'Neill, Jamie Tyrone *is* Jamie O'Neill, etc.) must be questioned.

In the same "scenario" in which O'Neill names his characters only by their role within the family, the playwright maps out the play as a series of "shifting alliances in battle": "Father, his sons versus Mother," "Mother, his sons versus Father," "Brother vs. brother," etc.[97] Such an outline suggests that the war news that O'Neill was listening to daily on the radio did have some direct influence on this "personal" story, and perhaps also suggests that the inner conflicts of the

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[96] Barlow, *Final Acts*, 69.
[97] O'Neill, "Notes on *Long Day's Journey Into Night*."

Tyrone family reflect the outer conflicts of the world more specifically than critics have considered. *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, like the international events leading up to World War II, can be seen as a series of alliances made and broken in preparation for a darkness that is descending.

In arguing that *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is not merely O'Neill's family life made into art, a few critics such as Egil Törnqvist have pointed out that the play owes as much to other plays as it does to O'Neill's biography. Törnqvist highlights in particular the similarities between O'Neill's play and Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts*. Both plays center on "a struggle against blinding forces, symbolized by fog," feature intimate mother-son relationships, take place in about sixteen hours, contain numerous references to alcohol and morphine, etc.[98] Other critics have noted that the biographical aspects of the play are more complicated than they first appear because certain character traits of the family members in *Long Day's Journey Into Night* are actually traceable to other O'Neill family members or other people in O'Neill's life.[99] For example, the relationship between James and Jamie in the play might be more accurate to O'Neill's own relationship with his son Shane at the time of the play's composition than it is to James and Jamie O'Neill in 1912 (the year in which the play is set). Likewise, the character of Mary in the play has many similarities to Carlotta, including her continual disappointment with her servants and her distain for the theatre.

These types of analyses, however, while not moving far away from O'Neill's biography, can open the door to other readings of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* as a play that is not simply a reflection O'Neill's family. Along these lines, then, without denying that *Long Day's Journey*

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[98] Törnqvist, 25.
[99] Alexander, *Eugene O'Neill's Last Plays*, 83.

Into Night is in part a reflection by the playwright on his own life, it is arguable that the real subject of this play is the theatre. After all, for O'Neill, whether he liked it or not, his was a life in the theatre. O'Neill was raised in and around the stage and spent his entire life drawn to and repelled by it.

Theatre is revealed as the central subject of this play through the way in which the play continually calls attention to itself as a piece of theatre. Critics have rarely noted the metatheatricality of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Some have, however, acknowledged that part of the conflict in the play is between the different generational acting styles of Tyrone and his sons. Throughout the play, Jamie and Edmund mock Tyrone's romantic posturing and empty oratory, demanding instead "honesty," a word connected with the psychological realism of O'Neill's later plays. Tyrone is therefore a character out of time—a romantic actor in a realist play. Beyond Tyrone's alienation from his sons, however, the play as a whole can be read as a prolonged metatheatrical meditation on acting. Despite that the characters in *Long Day's Journey Into Night* never break the fourth wall to call attention to the play that they are in, there are many moments in this play that demand to be experienced or read as metatheatrical. The characters of Jamie and James are actors by trade, so it is logical that the conversation in this play often turns to the theatre and that the characters use the stage as a common metaphor. More than this, however, discussing "playing" so often in a play calls attention to the theatricality of the performance or the text.

Who is a good actor and who is a bad actor, for instance, is an ongoing debate in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, a debate that continually calls attention to the play as a play. Mary is the worst actor in the Tyrone family. While she is often centerstage in the play, and is indeed the only character that must hold the stage on her own (besides Tyrone, briefly, at the top of Act IV),

Mary resists the gaze of the spectator. She constantly complains that the others onstage are examining her. “You really must not watch me all the time, James,” she scolds in Act I, an accusation that of course implicates the spectator as well.[100] Besides her resistance to being seen, another problem with Mary’s performance is that, even before the drugs start taking effect, she often delivers her lines without feeling. The family draws attention time and again to the fact that each family member repeats his or her standard patter within their daily conversations. These pat phrases are typically ignored by the others. However, Mary’s patter, as O’Neill’s stage directions note, is delivered without emotion, as if she doesn’t even care if the others are listening. For example, in Act I, Mary rebukes Edmund for being rude to his father, “*Mechanically speaking*. Don’t call your father the Old Man.”[101] Once she again starts using heroin Mary’s delivery becomes even more mechanical; her words less connected to her emotions. As O’Neill prompts in his stage directions in Act II, Scene 1: “MARY: *With a resentment that has a quality of being automatic and on the surface while inwardly she is indifferent*. ...But you’ve heard me say this a thousand times.”[102] As Marvin Carlson argues in *The Haunted Stage*, theatre is a realm of repetition in which, nightly, the same performances are repeated with slight but significant differences.[103] Not only is Mary admitting to this kind of theatrical repetition here in her dialogue, she is not even trying to make her words new or her dialogue believable. Once Tyrone starts drinking in Act IV, he similarly loses his ability to

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[100] O’Neill, *Long*, 17.
[101] Ibid., 44.
[102] Ibid., 61.
[103] Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: Theatre as Memory-Machine*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003).

perform convincingly. O'Neill's stage directions again prompt the actor playing Tyrone to perform "*mechanically*."[104]

Like any actress simply marking her role, Mary owes more to her fellow players. The family, like any theatre audience, does not expect Mary to necessarily *be* better, when it comes to her heroin addiction, but simply to *appear* better. As Tyrone says in Act III, "I'm glad I came, Mary, when you act like your real self."[105] Mary does not have to *be* her real self, but she should at least give a convincing performance *of* her real self.

Mary is not a good actress because, like O'Neill, she is uncomfortable onstage. As Mary tells her servant Cathleen in Act III, "I've never felt at home in the theater," echoing O'Neill's sentiments in his 1940 letter to Macgowan.[106] This is one of those jarring metatheatrical moments in the play because, of course, Mary's "home" *is* the theatre, a stage set, so it is not surprising that she recognizes it as not real. Her constant complaining that Tyrone has not provided her with a real home is justified in the eyes of the spectator or the imagination of the reader who can indeed see or imagine that Mary's home is a simply a set.

Regardless of her own acting ability, Mary, also like O'Neill, considers herself a discerning critic. While O'Neill was petrified of appearing onstage, he was always eager to give his actors notes on their performances. In *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, after witnessing Edmund's gloomy attitude towards his illness, Mary accuses him of posturing: "It's just a pose you get out of books!"[107] But her harshest criticism she saves for Tyrone. When he insists that

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[104] O'Neill, *Long*, 130.
[105] Ibid., 112.
[106] Ibid., 102.
[107] Ibid., 90.

Edmund will be fine, Mary exclaims: "You don't believe that! I can tell you're acting!"[108] Despite her own sub-par performance, Mary expects more from the others.

Older brother Jamie, like his mother in an odd way—but as much like the character Hamlet—is an actor who resists playing his role. (Jamie's connection to Hamlet is probably not coincidental as both are heirs whose strong feelings for their mothers prove unhealthy for them.) In the first two acts of the play, Tyrone prompts Jamie not to upset Mary or to intimate to Edmund that his condition may be worse than he thinks. In a way, Jamie is given lines to perform by Tyrone, but he instead keeps blurting out "the truth." It is not coincidental then that, in the course of the scene in which Jamie refuses to play the role Tyrone is directing him in, he metatheatrically demands: "I never wanted to be an actor. You forced me on the stage."[109] Like his mother, however, regardless of his own commitment to his role, Jamie recognizes the bad acting of his fellow players. For example, when Edmund tries to hide the fact that he has taken a drink from his father's whiskey, Jamie laughs, "You're a rottener actor than I am."[110]

While Mary may not put in the proper effort towards a convincing performance and Jamie may undercut the efficacy of his role because he doesn't wish to play it, Tyrone, on the other hand, makes all the right gestures but without the emotional truth underneath to make them convincing. As Mary says to him, "I can tell you're acting!" Like Mary within the plot of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, Tyrone in the fictional world of the play has lost his ability to perform convincingly because he has played the same role over and over. In Act IV, he explains to Edmund why he could never escape from the part that made him famous. "[The audiences] had identified me with that one part, and didn't want me in anything else. They were right, too. I'd

[108] Ibid., 122.
[109] Ibid., 32.
[110] Ibid., 53.

lost the great talent I once had through years of easy repetition, never learning a new part, never really working hard."[111] Tyrone could as easily be describing his family's desire as the audiences' here. His sons and his wife expect Tyrone to play the miser throughout *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and he fulfills their expectations. They expect him to say things like "keep your dirty tongue off Ireland!" whenever someone slights his native land, and Tyrone does so on cue, time and again.[112] As Tyrone attests, it is easier to repeat than to remake yourself. Or metatheatrically, in the reality of the production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, for the actor playing Tyrone it is not merely easier but vital that he repeat himself rather than remake himself. Faithful repetition, performance after performance, is what the audiences and his fellow actors expect.

Like the playwright O'Neill, who, as Bogard has argued, wrote the same play over and over again until he got it right, or any actor in the run of a show, the characters of the Tyrone family are destined to repeat themselves over and over again. In *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, the only way out of this repetition is to cut yourself off from the others, to embrace "the fog" as Mary does through heroin, as the men do through alcohol, and as Edmund has done through his journeys and his immersion in the identity-erasing experience of the sea. To be in the fog means to be alone, offstage, away from the expectations of others, free from the role you are forced to repeat and free from the same cues for which you must deliver the same lines. Isolation is the only escape from repetition in the play. Edmund, the least theatrical of the Tyrone family and the least connected to the others, embodies this escape. He, like O'Neill, may live on, alone, when the others are gone. He can escape the role-playing through his isolation. In other words,

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[111] Ibid., 149.
[112] Ibid., 80.

Edmund's only hope is to abandon the community of role players onstage and to embrace the freedom of seclusion away from the theatre. However, it is a terrible choice to make, and one to which even Mary in the play cannot fully commit. Indeed, even in the final moments of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* in which Mary seems to have escaped into her past, into her own mind, she is pulled back to the present and views her experiences as memory. Her final lines, after the long recollection of her school-girl days during which Mary seems to be living in the past, represent this shift back to the present: "Then in the spring something happened to me. Yes, I remember. I fell in love with James Tyrone and was so happy for a time."[113]

Though on the surface it deals only with the Tyrone family as if they were the O'Neills, another reading of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* that may be understood as presenting the play as primarily about the theatre is the argument by critics such as Joseph Moleski that the central conflict of the play is between Edmund and Tyrone.[114] Reading the play biographically, this relationship represents the conflict between O'Neill the playwright and James O'Neill the actor. Bogard, Sheaffer, and many other critics have argued that O'Neill chose a career as a playwright because it was the only way for him to become more famous in the theatre than his father. With his stage fright, he certainly was never going to become a more famous actor. As a numerous accounts attest, O'Neill was indeed obsessed with eclipsing his father's fame. Even as a teenager, his girlfriend Maibelle Scott later claimed, "He really felt that he would be famous some day, more famous than his father, and that all the people who'd talked against him would finally recognize that he was different."[115]

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[113] Ibid., 176.

[114] Joseph J. Moleski, "Eugene O'Neill and the Cruelty of Theater" in *Critical Approaches to O'Neill*, ed. John H. Stroupe (New York: AMS Press, 1988), 50.

[115] Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Playwright*, 234.

If the central conflict of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is between Tyrone and Edmund, then, reading the play as a metatheatrical meditation on role-playing, the conflict is between the freedom and loneliness of isolation and the community and stasis of being stuck in one role—in other words, between freedom alone or stagnation in a group. It is the conflict between desiring the solitary life of the author-playwright, alone but unrestricted at one's desk, and desiring the companionship of the collective creative process of theatre-making with all its drawbacks: stereotyping, limited roles and limited power. Mary voices this back-and-forth pull, quite specifically, when she claims that she is torn between her desire to give in to the fog and her desire to return to her family. In Act III, she tells Cathleen, "I really love the fog… No one can find or touch you any more," but also tells Tyrone, "It's very dreary and sad to be alone in the fog with night falling."[116]

That *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is essentially a conflict between Edmund and Tyrone, regardless of whom or what these two characters represent, is evidenced by a series of metatheatrical lines in Act IV. Father and son play cards as they wait for Jamie to return home. The game leads to each asking the other the same question over and over, "Whose play is it?" and sometimes claiming, "My play, isn't it?"[117] These lines may not just refer to cards but also may be taken literally as a sincere debate over whose play *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is: Edmund's or Tyrone's? This possibility is further evidenced by the competing monologues that are delivered between these questions. Within this card-playing scene, Tyrone confesses his failure as an actor in clinging to his star vehicle and Edmund describes his feeling of euphoria while sailing on the open sea. Tyrone and Edmund each gets his moment in the spotlight in this

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[116] O'Neill, *Long*, 99 and 112.
[117] Ibid., 139, 143, 148, and 149

scene, his bid to prove the play is his alone, so, metatheatrically, the question is sincerely asked of the reader: Whose play is it?

The answer, however, is that *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is not Tyrone's play, nor is it Edmund's play. It is the family's play. Not only the family's, but also, because of the extensive quotation in Act IV, *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is many peoples' play: Baudelaire's, Dowson's, Wilde's, Shakespeare's, etc. The central conflict in Act IV, symbolized by the card game between father and son to determine ownership of the play, is in the end what it most plainly appears to be: the star actor (Tyrone) versus the future author-playwright (Edmund). These are the two traditional theatre roles fighting for control of the play. O'Neill does not fix the game, however, so that he wins. Instead, in Act IV, O'Neill surprisingly makes the play not the father's and not the son's—not the vehicle for a star actor (a system he fought against his whole life) and not the vehicle under the author-playwright's careful control (a system he fought as long to establish among the Provincetown Players and in his subsequent career). Rather he offers a new kind of play, one in which no single authority is in control—playwright, star, or director. Appropriately enough, this new kind of play and therefore new kind of theatre is to be found, for O'Neill at least, in the past—in his memories of the Provincetown Players, which once offered him the frustrating but freeing experience of collaboration. As Mary claims in the play, so perhaps did O'Neill realize in his sitting down to write the final act of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, "The past is the present, isn't it? It's the future, too."[118] This new theatre (which is also the old theatre of Provincetown) O'Neill imagines on the page through the method of quotation. *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is not simply about the theatre—what makes a good actor, what are the frustrations and comforts of role-playing, who should have power in the

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[118] Ibid., 87.

creation of the play—it is specifically a way for O'Neill to recreate the collaborative experiences he once experienced at one theatre in particular, the Provincetown Players.

No Battle of the Bookcases

O'Neill's description of the set for *Long Day's Journey Into Night* reads as a metaphor for the function of quotation in this play. At the back of the stage are two doors: one leads to the front parlor (bright, formal, but "rarely occupied"); the other to the "dark, windowless back parlor, never used."

> Against the wall between the doorways is a small bookcase, with a picture of Shakespeare above it, containing novels by Balzac, Zola, Stendhal, philosophical and sociological works by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Marx, Engels, Kropotkin, Max Stirner, plays by Ibsen, Shaw, Strindberg, poetry by Swinburne, Rossetti, Wilde, Ernest Dowson, Kipling, etc.[119]

This bookcase is clearly the sons', and more Edmund's than Jamie's. As some critics have noted, Jamie may have started Edmund reading poetry and philosophy—as Jamie insists in Act IV, "[W]ho steered you on to reading poetry first? Swinburne, for example? I did!"—but by 1912, the year of the play, Edmund has moved beyond his brother in the scope of his reading.[120] When, early in the play, Jamie derides Nietzsche, for example, Edmund replies, "You don't know what you're talking about. You haven't read him."[121] Contained in the bookcase are all the writers that the sons will quote from in the final act of the play, except Baudelaire—perhaps he was too controversial a writer to have sitting out on display, or perhaps this was simply an omission on O'Neill's part. With the bright front parlor and the unused windowless parlor,

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[119] Ibid., 11.
[120] Laurin Porter, "Musical and Literary Allusions in O'Neill's Final Plays" in *Eugene O'Neill Review* 28 (2006), 6; and O'Neill, *Long*, 164.
[121] O'Neill, *Long*, 77.

O'Neill's set represents light on one side and darkness on the other. Between them stands the sons' bookcase. Likewise, the play progresses from light to darkness. As the title says, it is a *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Between the light of community and the darkness of isolation stand the words of these writers. The sons in Act IV use these words to stave of the encroaching darkness of isolation. As T.S. Eliot—one of O'Neill's favorite poets—might put it, this bookcase, with its stash of quotations, are "fragments" the Tyrones "have shored against [their] ruins."[122] By 1940, the darkness for O'Neill had become his isolation, and perhaps only the memories of his collaboration with the Players could hold it off.

Some critics have contrasted this small bookcase with the other bookcase in the room, clearly Tyrone's, which contains:

> sets of Dumas, Victor Hugo, Charles Lever, three sets of Shakespeare, The World's Best Literature in fifty large volumes, Hume's History of England, Thiers' History of the Consulate and Empire, Smollett's History of England, Gibbon's Roman Empire and miscellaneous volumes of old plays, poetry, and several histories of Ireland.[123]

Act IV is then read as not only a battle between Edmund and Tyrone, but also specifically a battle between their books.[124] However, the use of quotation is not merely another weapon that Tyrone and his sons use against one another in the final act. On the contrary, it is a way of communicating with one another, of sharing "truth" and feelings, if not always successfully. The recitation of the quotations builds community, staves off isolation, because the quotations are language that can be shared among the men with no question of ownership.

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[122] T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971).

[123] O'Neill, *Long*, 11.

[124] As Lawrence Dugan argues, it is a battle that Tyrone loses. The sons may only have "an analytic, fragmented modern romanticism" in the writers they bolster against their father, but Tyrone "has no philosophy that he can frame into words in any authoritative sense," and merely quotes truisms or the occasional Shakespeare. See Dugan, "The Tyrone Anthology: Authority in the Last Act of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*" in *Comparative Drama* 37, no. 3/4 (2003/2004), 384-385.

There are many examples of the way quotation makes peace between father and sons in this play. For instance, while Tyrone may insist that Baudelaire is "morbid nonsense" compared to Shakespeare, he nevertheless compliments Edmund after his rendition of "Be Drunken," saying "[Y]ou recited it well, lad. Who wrote it?"[125] Similarly conciliatory in tone, Edmund later recalls to Tyrone when as a young man he memorized the role of Macbeth, "You can't accuse me of not knowing Shakespeare," he says. "Didn't I win five dollars from you once when you bet me I couldn't learn a leading part of his in a week, as you used to in stock in the old days." Tyrone responds "*Approvingly*. That's true. So you did."[126] Even Jamie, in reciting Swinburne's "A Leave-Taking" in the final moments of the play is trying to commiserate with his father, not to gall him. He begins this long recitation addressing Tyrone, and lamenting their inability to reach Mary through her drug haze. "It's no good, Papa," he says, and then delivers the poem with feeling.[127] While Tyrone may call it "damned morbid poetry" when Jamie is through, he is clearly moved and shares a drink with his sons, at once an act of camaraderie and ironically an escape for each into his own private oblivion.

To claim that the extensive quotation in the final act of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is a kind of battle of the books is also unfair in that Tyrone barely quotes at all in this act, making it hardly much of a fight. The sons' quotations dominate the act with their long recitations. Such a one-sided battle is hardly dramatic. In addition, to read Tyrone's quotation of Shakespeare as somehow in conflict with the sons' writers is incorrect. As the passage above reminds, Edmund knows his Shakespeare, and Jamie quotes extensively from Shakespeare throughout the play. While many of Jamie's occasions quoting Shakespeare may be read as the son using his father's

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[125] O'Neill, *Long*, 133.
[126] Ibid., 136.
[127] Ibid., 173.

words against him, it must be remembered that, significantly, the "picture of Shakespeare" hangs above the sons' bookcase. Shakespeare is valued as much by the sons as they value their other writers. Edmund does not disparage Shakespeare, for instance, when Tyrone quotes to him, "We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep." Rather he simply suggests to his father that Shakespeare has not said it all. "Fine! That's beautiful. But I wasn't trying to say that," Edmund replies.[128]

It is no coincidence that O'Neill, throughout his life, much like his father, loved to quote Shakespeare—particularly during his youth. Indeed, in a letter to a girl in 1914, O'Neill quoted the exact passage Tyrone offers Edmund in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Arguing that the concept of sin is relative, O'Neill writes the girl, "And, after all, what's the difference? 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on and our little life is rounded with a sleep.'"[129] In *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, quotation is not primarily a way for Tyrone and his sons to settle their disputes but rather, in many instances, a way for them to commiserate.

Quotation as Collaboration

If O'Neill's extensive use of quotation is not a weapon in the central battle between sons and father in *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and if all the writers quoted are welcome on Edmund and Jamie's bookcase, then there must be another reason why the final act of this play is filled with recitations. That the quotations create community between the men in this act is only part of the answer. As this section will argue, the act of quotation on O'Neill's part also creates a type of community—between the playwright and those he quotes.

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[128] Ibid., 131.
[129] Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Playwright*, 275.

Prior to Act IV, there are five instances of direct quotation in the play, none more than a sentence long. These five instances represent the very different uses to which O'Neill puts quotation in this play. In Act I, Jamie, poking fun at his father's snoring, quotes Iago from *Othello*: "The Moor, I know his trumpet."[130] Later in the act, Tyrone upbraiding Jamie quotes, "Ingratitude, the vilest weed that grows"; then, in Act II, he quotes from *Lear* along the same lines, and is one-upped by Edmund. "'How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is—'" he starts. "'To have a thankless child.' I know," finishes Edmund—another instance in which Edmund demonstrates his knowledge of Shakespeare.[131] It is certainly not a coincidence that Jamie quotes Iago, not once, but twice, in this play and that Tyrone quotes Lear. Both of these Shakespearean characters represent the unwholesome sides of these two O'Neill characters. Jamie, at his worst, like Iago manipulating Roderigo, has led Edmund into a sordid lifestyle in order to destroy him. Tyrone, on the other hand, like Lear, is a man who often misjudges his children because he does not take the time to truly listen to them.

In Act II, Edmund, upon hearing that his father has prayed in vain for years for his mother's recovery, quotes Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, "God is dead: of His pity for man hath God died."[132] Later, Mary in Act III recites the first line from the Hail Mary prayer: "Hail Mary, full of grace! The Lord is with Thee: blessed art Thou among women."[133] Critics have argued that O'Neill "changed Ella's name to Mary" in the play to highlight not only the character's religious past—Mary was studying to be a nun before meeting Tyrone—but also the virginal state Mary returns to in her drug haze in the final scene, recalling her time in the

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[130] O'Neill, *Long*, 21.
[131] Ibid., 32 and 89.
[132] Ibid., 78.
[133] Ibid., 107.

convent. More important, in terms of Mary's specific use of quotation in Act III, having the character pray to herself (or at least to a figure with the same name) implies an isolation that O'Neill associates with all religion (and also, as it has been previously noted, with the tasks of individual authorship by 1940), as well as fulfilling Edmund's claim that God is dead. No one is listening to Mary, after all, except Mary.

In these earlier acts, then, O'Neill uses quotation to emphasize character traits as well as to make a philosophical point. However, the quotation in Act IV is different from these earlier instances. For one thing, it is extensive. There are fifteen direct quotations in this act, not counting the two times that Edmund paraphrases his mother's earlier accusations of Tyrone, for which he is accused by his father of "quoting." There is also in Act IV the paraphrase of John 15:13 mentioned before, one which recalls a similar paraphrase in *A Wife for Life*. Many of the quotations in this act are long. On the page, they often take up as much room on their pages as the rest of the dialogue and stage directions. This sharing of the page between quoted and "original" material reaches its high point in the final pages of the script, in which Jamie quotes three out of six stanzas of Swinburne's poem, "A Leave-Taking" interspersed with each son, in turn, making one last attempt to reach his mother before resigning himself to the fact that she has been lost to her heroin-induced memories. On the page, unlike the quotations in the earlier acts, the quotations in Act IV are typically indented and in quotation marks, and O'Neill identifies the passages he is quoting within the stage directions. As critic Laurin Porter has pointed out, unlike, for example, the ending of *The Iceman Cometh*, in which the characters sing different songs over one another and the lyrics to only one song are printed in the text, here O'Neill

"places the lines of poetry front and center."[134] That O'Neill was very careful to quote these writers correctly is also evident from his preparatory notes for the play, which contain pages in which the playwright has methodically or precisely copied out each of the quotations he plans to use, and also his work diary which notes a day set aside, after finishing his second draft of the play, in which O'Neill did nothing but check his quotations for accuracy.[135]

It is significant that O'Neill did not plan from the beginning to include so many quotations in Act IV. The quotations by Baudelaire and Dowson are not mentioned in his preparatory scenario. Perhaps the experience of writing the first three acts, the isolation the playwright may have felt surrounded only by his memories, led him to desire the communal experience of theatre-making alongside the Provincetown Players more and more as he wrote. This might explain why in his revisions of the play after the first manuscript, O'Neill went back and toned down his characters' attacks on the theatre, actors, and actresses. After writing Act IV of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, perhaps O'Neill's anti-theatricalism was curbed, if not extinguished.

It should be mentioned that there are two writers from whom O'Neill borrows in *Long Day's Journey Into Night* that are not distinguished from the surrounding text through quotation marks, indentation, and identification: himself and Carlotta. O'Neill does not directly quote lines from any of his earlier plays. However, for example, the imagery of fog, and particularly the liberating feeling of being lost in the fog, appears in numerous O'Neill plays, most notably *Anna Christie*.[136] Likewise, Mary's trembling hands recall the trembling hands of the suicidal husband

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[134] Porter, 7.
[135] O'Neill, "Notes on *Long Day's Journey Into Night*" and "Work Diary, 1939-1943."
[136] O'Neill, *"Anna Christie"* in *Complete Plays, 1913-1920*, 979.

in *Before Breakfast*, a character considered a kind of stand-in for O'Neill.[137] Also, Yank's dismissive description of Paddy's nostalgic talk in *The Hairy Ape* could as easily describe Mary's condition in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. "Hittin' de pipe of de past, dat's what he's doin'," says Yank.[138] These are just a few of the examples of the ways in which *Long Day's Journey Into Night* echoes images and phrases from earlier plays.[139]

Also without quotation marks is Carlotta's contribution to this play. Among the notes for the play in the Beinecke Library collection is a monologue written in Carlotta's hand about a wedding dress. Much of the language from this monologue appears in Mary's description of her wedding dress in Act III. Some of the phrases are almost verbatim: "duchesse lace on my little white satin slippers - & lace with the orange blossoms on my veil."[140] Critics have speculated that O'Neill, knowing little about how wedding dresses are designed, asked Carlotta to write this description for him. If this is so, Carlotta did more than she was asked and tried her hand at a bit of playwriting as well. Her description ends with a question, which didn't make O'Neill's cut, "I wonder did you even notice any of this?" In this sense, there are even more people being quoted in Act IV of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* than are apparent from the indications of the printed text.

Given the amount of quotation in Act IV, it is not surprising that O'Neill's hobby of quoting began long before his profession as a playwright. In high school and college, students

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[137] O'Neill, *Before Breakfast* in *Complete Plays, 1913-1920*, 395.

[138] O'Neill, *The Hairy Ape* in *Complete Plays, 1920-1931* (New York: The Library of America, 1988), 128.

[139] A number of critics, most notably Doris Falk, have also pointed to similarities between Mary, as submissive mother, and Tyrone, as heartless father, and other parents in earlier O'Neill plays, such as *Beyond the Horizon*. See Falk, *Eugene O'Neill and the Tragic Tension* (New York: Gordian Press, 1982), 185.

[140] Carlotta Monterey O'Neill, "Notes on Tao House stationary" in the Eugene O'Neill collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

recall that O'Neill "was forever quoting Swinburne, Shakespeare, and Byron, and was particularly fond of a passage from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*."[141] Moreover, O'Neill tried to position himself as a poet among poets: "besides quoting constantly from the poets, he often threw off humorous doggerel of his own invention."[142] In addition to his attempts to impress his peers as a young man, among O'Neill's papers in the Beinecke Library are pages and pages of quotations from Nietzsche's writings, written in O'Neill's miniscule script. Clearly, when another writer inspired O'Neill, he became committed to capturing his or her words precisely as they had appeared in their source.

While the extensive quotation in Act IV of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is unlike anything in earlier O'Neill plays—though, at the same time, consistent with O'Neill's practices since he was a young man—only a few critics have considered why the playwright suddenly employed and, indeed, fully embraced this technique in this, his supposedly most personal play. Porter, like most critics who have explicitly addressed the quotations in Act IV, reads the numerous recitations by the sons in *Long Day's Journey Into Night* simply as a technique by which O'Neill supports the emotional life of the play's individual moments. For example, O'Neill uses quotation in Act IV, she claims, to indicate "the depth of the Tyrones' despair."[143] For Porter, the quotations are merely a way to create more empathy for the characters, by the script pausing and expressing at length the despair or longing the characters are feeling.[144] Unlike Porter, however, not all critics have praised O'Neill's use of quotation in this final act of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. For example, Matthew Wikander claims the playwright uses

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[141] Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Playwright*, 120.
[142] Ibid., 124.
[143] Porter, 7.
[144] In this way—although Porter does not make this connection—the quotations serve rather like O'Neill's direct-address "stream-of-consciousness" sections in *Strange Interlude*.

quotations as a cover, to hide the playwright's "failings in poetic language and his difficulty with elevated rhetoric."[145] George Steiner is even more critical of O'Neill. He argues that: "The energy and glitter of Swinburne's language burn a hole in the surrounding fabric. They elevate the action above its paltry level and instead of showing up the characters show up the playwright. Modern authors rarely quote their betters with impunity."[146]

All three of these critics have got it partly correct. As Porter notes, some of the quotations in Act IV *do* parallel the emotions of the characters, pausing to add depth to certain moments. The best example of this is Jamie's recitation of "A Leave-Taking" at the end of the play. The woman who will not "hear," "see," or "know" those that Swinburne addresses if they should they leave her is clearly a parallel figure to Mary, who likewise can no longer hear, see, or know her own family, lost as she is in the past.[147] Despite this poet's advice, both Edmund and Jamie try to reach their mother one more time while Jamie recites this poem; Edmund going so far as to confront Mary for the first time with the fact that he has consumption. This makes the final stanza that Jamie recites all the more poignant, because the reader has witnessed the young men's efforts to reach their mother in vain. Swinburne's poem heightens the pain of the scene by calling up parallel emotions expressed by a distinct narrative. Swinburne is not writing about his mother but a lover. Though again, while the subject of Swinburne's poem is not a mother, Jamie's choice of poems—he sings of his mother as if she were his beloved—(and O'Neill's choice for him) reveals his unhealthy attachment to Mary, and therefore makes as much sense for the character as it does for the play.

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[145] Wikander, 222.

[146] Steiner quoted by Richard F. Moorton, Introduction to *Eugene O'Neill's Century: Centennial Views on America's Foremost Tragic Dramatist* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1991), xviii-xix.

[147] O'Neill, *Long*, 173-174.

However, other quotations in Act IV do the exact opposite of what Porter claims; they serve to counteract the emotions of the moment, undercutting them. For example, when Jamie begins to tell Edmund of his exploits at Mamie Burns' brothel, in anticipation of which Edmund is already chuckling, Jamie's quotation of the end of Wilde's "The Harlot's House" interrupts the tale and injects it with genuine sorrow. Indeed, the lines "The dead are dancing with the dead, The dust is whirling with the dust" is a poetic description of the Tyrone household, as if, even in telling of his sexual conquest, Jamie still cannot get his mind off his mother and the situation at home.[148] As Steiner would have it, Wilde's poem seems to "burn a hole in the surrounding fabric." It stops the narrative cold, rather than advancing it. It reverses the polarity of the emotional moment, and yet it still relates to the plot in a significant way.

Likewise, at the end of his tale, Jamie scolds his brother for not accompanying him and choosing instead to return home and be depressed over things he cannot change. Jamie then suddenly quotes a stanza from Kipling's "Mother O'Mine": "If I were hanged on the highest hill./ Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!/ I know whose love would follow me still."[149] While savoring the irony of the poem's sentimental depiction of mothers as opposed to his own "dope fiend" mother, Jamie of course truly loves Mary in the same sentimental terms as the poem and perhaps believes that she likewise will love him no matter what. Like Wilde's poem, Kipling's interrupts the narrative and turns the emotional quality of the moment on its head. From bragging that he has avoided being affected by his mother's fall from grace, Jamie suddenly lashes out at her with irony and at the same time calls out to her in genuine pain. It is this

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[148] Ibid., 159.
[149] Ibid., 161.

genuine cry that Edmund recognizes and for which he silences his brother. "Shut up!" he yells, worrying that Mary will answer the call and come downstairs to haunt her sons in person.

From these last two examples, it could be argued that O'Neill is simply using quotation to reveal the hidden desires or concerns of his characters, the real faces behind the masks. This would be consistent with their similarity to the asides in *Strange Interlude*, or indeed to Shakespeare's use of the soliloquy. After all, in both instances cited above, Jamie's comical tale of sexual conquest is detoured by thoughts of his mother. However, other quotations by Jamie do nothing of the sort. He quotes a stanza from Kipling's poem "Ford O' Kabul River" earlier in the scene as he drunkenly attempts to cross from the foyer to the living room table.[150] The image of crossing the "river in the dark" adds humor to his pathetic condition. Those very familiar with the poem might note that, in the stanzas not quoted by Jamie, the poem's narrator goes on to describe the "mate" he had to leave behind as he fought ahead on his mission, a mate for which the narrator claims he would now give it all up. Perhaps for Jamie, Edmund represents the fellow soldier he had to leave behind this evening, and he is subtly declaring his love for him. However, even if this very subtle suggestion is being made by this particular quotation, the poem still does not serve to reveal hidden desires on the part of the character. Jamie is very open in his love for Edmund, particularly when he is in this drunken state.

Likewise, when Tyrone, trying to convince Edmund that he is making life miserable through his own morbidity, quotes Cassius from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in the stars, but in ourselves that we are underlings," the particularly knowledgeable reader might see a connection between this quotation and Tyrone's description of

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[150] Ibid., 155.

his days acting with Edwin Booth, in the middle of which this quotation is inserted.[151] After all, Cassius' speech from which the quotation is taken ends with Cassius asking Brutus, in regards to Caesar: "Why should that name be sounded more than yours?"[152] This is a question Tyrone may have asked himself about Booth. Nevertheless, this is another case in which the quotation merely has subtler revelations to offer those very familiar with the source. It again does not reveal hidden feelings or desires.

To further complicate things, in the first long recitation of Act IV, Edmund uses a quotation not as way to emphasize some character trait, not to make a philosophical point, not to attack his father, not to highlight his despair or to reveal hidden desires, but rather simply as an attempt to explain his thoughts. (Though seemingly different from the other examples discussed thus far, this is of course a use of quotation that relates to a usage mentioned first in this chapter, quotation as a way to create community. In expressing himself as well as possible, Edmund is trying to communicate with his father.) Edmund, straight in from the cold night, tries to explain to Tyrone why he was out walking in the fog. Tyrone, who is only concerned for his son's health refuses to hear any explanations and appeals to Edmund's "sense." Edmund says, "To hell with sense!" and recites Ernest Dowson's poem, "Vitae summa brevis."[153] This poem describes the shortness of life in all its pains and pleasures, and expresses the opinion that these pains and pleasures will not carry on into the next life.

> They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,
> Love and desire and hate:
> I think they have no portion in us after

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[151] Ibid., 152.

[152] William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* in *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt, et al. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1997), 1538.

[153] O'Neill, *Long*, 130 and Ernest Dowson, "Vitae summa brevis" in *The Poetical Works of Ernest Dowson*, ed. Desmond Flower (London: Cassell & Co., 1967), 32.

We pass the gate.

While appropriate to a young man worried about dying, Dowson's poem still does not satisfactorily explain Edmund's actions to his father. Therefore, in plainer terms (or at least in prose), Edmund says, "The fog is where I wanted to be… to be alone with myself in another world where truth is untrue and life can hide from itself… It felt damned peaceful to be nothing more than a ghost within a ghost."[154] In this case, Dowson's quotation is revealed as beautiful and appropriate but not as true to Edmund as the character's own words (or, rather, O'Neill's words).

The shortcomings of the quotation in expressing Edmund's thoughts are emphasized when Tyrone then attempts to summarize Edmund's explanation and Dowson's poem. Says Tyrone:

> Why can't you remember your Shakespeare and forget the third-raters. You'll find what you're trying to say in him—as you'll find everything else worth saying… "We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep."[155]

"That's beautiful," replies Edmund. "But I wasn't trying to say that." Edmund here could as easily be speaking of his own quoting of Dowson as his father's of Shakespeare.

Contrary to Wikander's opinion, O'Neill is not trying to "solve this problem" of "his difficulty with elevated rhetoric" in Act IV.[156] Instead, O'Neill, like Edmund, acknowledges that while it may not be as beautiful as the quotations around it, his words are sometimes more true and therefore deserve equal attention. The playwright's confidence that his words have earned a rightful place beside these poets is confirmed later in the act when Edmund, comparing the sound of the fog dripping from the eaves to "the dreary tears of a trollop splattering in a puddle of stale

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[154] O'Neill, *Long*, 131.
[155] Ibid., 131.
[156] Wikander, 222.

beer on a honky-tonk table top," says to his father: "Not so bad, that last, eh? Original, not Baudelaire. Give me credit!"[157] It is not coincidental that Edmund's simile also recalls images from a number of O'Neill's plays: *Anna Christie*, *The Long Voyage Home*, and *The Iceman Cometh* among them. As Edmund is arguing a rightful place beside Baudelaire, so is O'Neill arguing his plays' rightful place besides the poems quoted throughout Act IV. It is also not coincidental that Edmund continues, after this demand for some "credit," to deliver his most philosophical and lengthy monologue in the play, in which he describes those occasions in his life when he lost himself to the sea. It is as if O'Neill, like Edmund's request to his father, asks his reader to give him credit for his own attempt at poetic truth.

Earlier in the scene, however, Edmund quotes Baudelaire in a way that acknowledges that sometimes a poet *does* say what the character wants to say better than he could have said it. Tyrone says to Edmund, regarding Mary's backsliding, that all they can be at this point is resigned to her addiction. Edmund, however, suggests that they could also "be so drunk you forget."[158] He then recites Baudelaire's prose poem "Be Drunken," which clarifies what he believes is behind the Tyrone men's alcoholism, and his mother's addiction as well. "Be drunken, if you would not be martyred slaves of Time; be drunken continually!" The Tyrones want to forget the past, if only for brief periods, because it causes them too much pain. If this is impossible, as Mary finds it to be, she then uses heroin to escape into the past (if only temporarily), forgetting the present. Both are attempts, as Baudelaire puts it, to throw off "the horrible burden of Time." Unlike when he quotes Dowson, Edmund this time does not continue on in the scene to paraphrase the poem or explain that he actually meant something else. In this

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[157] O'Neill, *Long*, 152.
[158] Ibid., 132.

instance, the quotation simply makes Edmund's (and O'Neill's) point better than their own words would have.

O'Neill's use of quotation in Act IV of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, then, does not serve one purpose, as critics have tried to argue, but many. In addition, the playwright does not take a particular stance as to the importance of the writing he is quoting in contrast to his own words. Sometimes the quotations in this play parallel the emotions of the characters in the moment; at other times they contradict them. Sometimes the quotations are simply jokes; at other times they are jokes that reveal deeper truths. Sometimes O'Neill uses quotations to say something better than he could have said it himself; at other times the quotations do not quite express the character's thoughts and he offers a clarification—often in the form of the character's own "prose poem." Moreover, O'Neill does not merely rest on the authority of the writers he quotes in Act IV, as Wikander has accused, nor does he merely reject the quoted writers' authority, claiming that only what is new and original is true.

Nevertheless, while O'Neill's quotations perform many different functions in Act IV of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, they represent only one thing: the playwright's commitment to opening up this text to the texts of others, in other words, to creating community in a way that quotations sometimes do in the play. O'Neill does not expect the quotations he uses to replace his text in Act IV, nor does he expect his play to replace the texts from which he quotes. What Act IV creates is instead a collaborative relationship between the words of other writers and O'Neill's script. The quotations and the script inform, challenge, support, undercut, elevate, and clarify one another with the kind of complexity that truly collaborative relationships between artists often exemplify. The writers are not simply O'Neill's "yes-men"; nor are they there to perpetually disagree with his text. Instead, the result of all this diverse quotation is a challenging

of authority—not of the writers O'Neill quotes—but rather of the authority of the author-playwright himself.[159]

Alone at his desk in California in 1940, O'Neill could not recreate a theatre like the Provincetown Players, a place where he had been forced to explain himself, had been pushed into debates over his plays which made him uncomfortable but also a better playwright, and had been coerced into dialogue with challenging if sympathetic fellow artists that undoubtedly influenced his own work. He could not "build" his own theatre in order to truly *be* a playwright again, as he later advised those wishing to become playwrights to do. However, quotation allowed him to do the next best thing. O'Neill shares the page of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* with other writers—and lets these texts have their say, in agreement or disagreement with the text that surrounds them. He does not attempt to submerge the quotations into the play, to smooth over the differences between what they say and what the characters are trying to say in a given moment. O'Neill is not trying to challenge authority by replacing the authority of those quoted with his own authority. As the anarchists he later both loved and hated had attested, so O'Neill acknowledges: authority cannot be disposed of by replacing it with a new authority. Only through his collaboration on the page with many other writers, extensive quotation that reveals itself as quotation, could O'Neill, writing by himself, challenge his playwright's

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[159] In Act II of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, Mary laments the death of her baby "Eugene." The baby Ella O'Neill lost was actually named Edmund. Numerous critics have read O'Neill's choice to switch names with his deceased brother as a death wish or at least as a death obsession on the part of the playwright. For this project, however, O'Neill's decision symbolizes the true beginning of the history of American theatre and drama, a history defined by this study as wholly dependent upon collective composition. Like O'Neill's supposed personal "confession" of Act IV that is actually group collaboration, O'Neill, by naming himself as Mary's dead baby, symbolically performs within his play "the death of the author," releasing his authority over the play, and leading the way for U.S. theatre collectives in the future to imagine their productions out from under the shadow of a single controlling figure.

authority, an authority that ironically he spent most of his career trying to establish. At the end of his “most personal” play, in the moment when O’Neill is supposed to be speaking from his soul and writing in his own blood, he invites into this play the words of others. In doing so, he demonstrates that the author as unique, isolated genius is an idea that has no place in the craft of playwriting or in the practice of theatre. He resumes his place as one among a number of “players,” albeit as the leader of the group. He retains control, something he always tried to do in rehearsals with the Provincetown Playhouse, but he also opens up his theatre on the page to extended discussion with all of the “active members” on his bookshelf. More than anything, in this, his “final” word as a dramatist, O’Neill recalls his beginnings as a theatre maker, perhaps truly appreciating for the first time his work with the Provincetown Players.

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