Affective Encounters:
A Study of Immersive Performance and Digital Culture

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Declaration

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Summary

This thesis presents a study of immersive performance and digital culture. As a whole, the thesis considers the aesthetic experience offered by a certain strand of contemporary immersive theatre which I have identified and termed "sensory spectacle performance" and investigates it within the present context of digital culture. Sensory spectacle performance establishes an affective encounter between the performance and the spectator as its primary immersive force. Accordingly, it is a performance mode which is felt by the body in excess of being understood conceptually or having meaning assigned to it.

The thesis relates sensory spectacle performance and affective encounter to digital culture by emphasising the binding and dynamic relationship that exists between our bodies and our surroundings; each must continually adapt to the other in order to thrive. Drawing upon Erika Fischer-Lichte's triadic relation as a cultural framework (Perception—Body—Language), a case is made that as digital culture continues to engage the population, so too will it affect perception, bodies, and language requiring society to adapt to the affective rhythm of a mediatised, technology-driven environment. It is therefore the argument of the thesis that sensory spectacle performance engages with digital culture by employing primarily extra-discursive, asignifying communication channels to impact the spectating body affectively rather than conceptually through a highly structured narrative, at the same time imitating and challenging the immersive strategies used by new communication technologies.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter One defines the key characteristics of sensory spectacle performance and also introduces the concepts of "affective encounter" and "digital culture." Then, I set out a performance model which I have devised to demonstrate the processes of sensory spectacle performance which lead to an affect-based immersive experience. I have developed this model using Elizabeth Grosz's interpretation and expansion of Gilles Deleuze

and Félix Guattari's concepts of sensation, affect, territory, and becoming, while retaining an embodied approach to the analysis. During the course of the thesis, I refer to the performance model and use it to examine the objects of study, which are various productions that I judge to be examples of sensory spectacle performances: Pan Pan Theatre's *All That Fall*, Corn Exchange's *Man of Valour*, and Nigel Barrett and Louise Mari's *The Body*.

Chapter Two examines Pan Pan Theatre's production of Samuel Beckett's radio play *All That Fall*, which seeks to challenge the very form of the radio play by translating the piece into sensually immersive experience. I consider the elements of sound, light, and sculpture formed by audience members that are employed in the production, focusing particularly on the immersive instances established by Pan Pan using these elements that intend to deliver an affective experience of this radio play adaptation.

Chapter Three explores Corn Exchange's production *Man of Valour*. It considers the performance's use of the destructive and constructive power of Deleuze's notion of difference and repetition, particularly repetition's ability to appeal to habit and connect with learned behaviour, in order to deepen the immersive potential of the performance for the spectator. In this chapter I also introduce the term "phenomenal identification"—the appointment by the spectator of the actor as an affective "body double." In *Man of Valour*, the spectator appoints the sole performer as a body double who performs an action and, through an embodied reciprocity, the spectator experiences the affect. By means of an affective language, the performance encourages the spectator to relinquish the binaries that separate herself from the performance and, through phenomenal identification with the performer, the spectator is invited to merge or absorb herself in the performance, thus subjecting herself to the forces within it.

Chapter Four analyses Nigel Barrett and Louise Mari's production *The Body*, which employs an affective language in order to displace the various conceptual boundaries that persist within society between human and nonhuman bodies through sensory immersion. This chapter

considers a mode of sensory immersion that aims to further dismantle the boundaries between subject and object, internal and external, human and nonhuman.

Finally, Chapter Five reviews the findings of the performance analyses and suggests further applications for the sensory spectacle performance model as it relates to affective encounter and certain immersive modes. In this conclusive chapter, I will suggest future directions for research on affective encounter, aesthetic experience, and sensory spectacle performance, while also pondering the implications as we move from digital culture toward postdigital culture and aesthetic.

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Chapter 1| Introduction

Art is not the activation of the perceptions and sensations of the lived body...but about transforming the lived body into an unlivable power, an unleashed force that transforms the body along with the world.[1]

—Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*

On the plane of presence, nothing is known. Or, if you will, here I know things in the same way they know me, that is, without explicitly recognizing them [...] The object as seen says something, just as a certain heaviness in the air indicates a tempest to the sailor, or a strident intonation expresses anger [...] the object says them to my body without eliciting, through some act of representation, an act of intelligence other than that of the body [...] Thus the aesthetic object manifests itself to the body, immediately inviting the body to join forces with it.[2]

—Mikel Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*

Cyberspace and the space of virtuality require us to rethink matter and corporeality to accommodate their strange meanderings.[3]

—Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside*

In 1981, Gilles Deleuze published a full-length study on the work of the artist Francis Bacon, subtitled "The Logic of Sensation."[4] From the outset, Deleuze is clear that this is not a book *about* art. Rather, it is a book about what certain types of art, specifically Bacon's unique brand of art, can *do*. Deleuze uses Bacon as a reference point to develop ideas such as sensation, affect, forces, body without organs, deterritorialisation, and becoming, to name but a few. In Bacon, Deleuze finds an artist and artworks that speak thoughtfully to his concepts which are notoriously difficult to both define and apply in concrete terms. Bacon's paintings exemplify, to a large extent, the "invisible yet vital forces"[5] that persist throughout Deleuze's philosophical oeuvre. Indeed, invisible forces are

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[1] Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2008), 22.

[2] Mikel Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, trans. Edward S. Casey, et al. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 338, 339.

[3] Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*, Writing Architecture Series (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001), 85.

[4] Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London, New York: Continuum, 2003).

[5] This is a phrase I have borrowed from the "Electricity: The spark of life exhibition" which ran at Wellcome Collection, London from 23 February 2017 - 25 June 2017. It was used to describe the invisible nature, complexities, and power of electricity but is equally as interesting when applied to Deleuze's idea of forces, sensations, and affect.

associated with Deleuze's overarching philosophy of "transcendental empiricism"—a term employed by Deleuze to describe the type of cosmic forces, affects, and sensations that are at work in the world and affect all matter and bodies (human and nonhuman, living and nonliving). The idea of transcendental empiricism permeates nearly all of Deleuze's concepts. As a result, understanding Deleuze's proposals and, even more so, attempting to locate material examples in the world where these forces are at work, can be a challenge. And yet, there is something in Bacon's work that Deleuze appears to be able to hang his ideas on, something in Bacon's various creations and creative outlooks that offer insight into Deleuze's complex philosophy.

Partly inspired by Deleuze's study of Bacon, the aim of this thesis is to develop new ways of thinking about aesthetic experience, particularly the experience of a mode of immersive performance I have identified and chosen to call "sensory spectacle performance." Sensory spectacle performance relies on affective encounter as its primary force and engages directly with the operational structures, influences, and impact of digital culture on society. As society becomes increasingly "information-intensive"—saturated with media, images, technology, digital interactions, and new communication technologies—theatre comes under pressure to adapt its form to reflect this experience. This adaptation is reflected in the artistic articulation of a more experiential, affective mode of immersive theatre which I have called sensory spectacle performance (SSP hereafter). It is a mode that reflects what it is and above all what it *feels* like to live in an information-intensive society and to be a consumer and product of digital culture.

In order to carry out this research, I have developed a performance model that demonstrates the processes of SSP through which the cumulative desired effect of the performance is the establishment of an affective encounter between the spectator and the performance. This encounter initiates the potential for an immersive experience through a "becoming" to occur between the spectator and the performance. Becoming is a Deleuzian notion which describes a transformative encounter and exchange between two or more parts. For the purposes of this study the two parts are

the performance and the spectator, but the list of possible becomings in Deleuzian philosophy is extensive and includes becoming-animal, becoming-woman, becoming-minor, becoming-imperceptible, and so on. Becoming involves an exchange between two sides, a series of loss and gains, an affective osmosis, through which both parts emerge altered. Through a phenomenologically guided analysis of three SSPs, primarily following Mikel Dufrenne's phenomenological framework, I apply the model to each work, exposing the various engagements with digital culture that aim to deepen the immersive potential of each piece.

Later in this chapter I will describe the model's process in detail; for now, it can be summarised as follows. The model begins with some level of an adjustment to the traditional theatrical frame. Due to this adjustment, the anticipated conventions and established roles associated with the traditional theatrical frame are removed, and a process of deterritorialisation, a disruption of the social space, is set in motion. Deterritorialisation leads the spectator to actively connect with the performance in an embodied and imaginative manner, offering and combining their own material with the production in a space of virtuality. Virtuality is a notional space of potentiality wherein the inside thoughts of the spectator meet with the exterior actualities of the performance and the physical surroundings. By weaving the virtuality of ideas with the actuality of the performance, a becoming takes place. By this, I mean that a transformative experience and a qualitative exchange occurs during becoming. Once each of the processes in the performance model has taken place and through repeated exposure to the alternative theatrical frame, the spectator learns the new rules and conventions associated with it and becomes reterritorialised, situated in an organised social space governed by known rules and conventions.

Deleuze's study of Francis Bacon and his paintings intimates an appealing philosophical approach to affectively potent works of art. Deleuze's approach, concepts, and insights into the way art, philosophy, and life function differed greatly from other studies on aesthetics and experience that I had encountered up to this point. The ideas that Deleuze introduces and the way in which he

applies them to Bacon's artworks provides a language to begin speaking about the type of immersive theatre that I have identified. This particular study of Bacon presented a suitable philosophical framework and appropriate terms to describe the processes of SSP in detail.

While I use many of Deleuze's theories, and his collaborative projects with psychoanalyst Félix Guattari, to assist in the development of my performative model, I have elected to focus mainly upon Elizabeth Grosz's expansion of their writings, referring in the thesis to Deleuze and Guattari's source texts where applicable and necessary. The reason I have chosen to employ Grosz's position is because Deleuze believes that art is autonomous and does not require a spectator for it to *be* a work of art. In other words, art has forces and affective power that are its own and does not require a spectator to ignite them, although once this occurs, the encounter has the potential to transform both. As a result of this attitude concerning art objects, Deleuze's theories rarely reference the perception or the experience of the work of art in question from the spectator's point of view; he generally chooses to speak of art either in isolation or of the artist's process of creation.[6] Grosz is noticeably more considerate of the bodily effects of art, and develops many of Deleuze and Guattari's theories where there seems an obvious "observer gap." Therefore, as the research for this thesis progressed, I explored the writings of Grosz, and found a philosophical ally from whose work I could begin formulating ideas, terms, and a performative model. One such outcome was my own identification and characterisation of a certain strand of immersive theatre which I have chosen to call "sensory spectacle performance."

Equally, the work of French phenomenologist Mikel Dufrenne also made an indelible impression on my research from the beginning. In 1953, he published *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience.* In this seminal work, Dufrenne presents a study of art which focuses on the aesthetic experience of the spectator. While many studies of aesthetics focus on the work of art

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[6] Deleuze focuses his attention on theatre specifically in "One Less Manifesto." Although he makes subtle reference to reception, it is not to a degree that could support a study of aesthetic experience.

itself or concentrate on the artist's processes and techniques, Dufrenne directs his attention to the relationship between the aesthetic object and the perception of the spectator. *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience* presents a complex framework from which one can begin to analyse aesthetic objects, particularly visceral, affective, immersive modes of art.

Dufrenne's use and description of phenomenology is far from conventional, if there can be such a thing in phenomenology, as I will explore further in the next section regarding methodologies. As Edward Casey is quick to point out in the foreword to Dufrenne's book, phenomenology is "not so much a common method of research and analysis (in fact, there was no such common method) as a common conviction that the primary task of philosophy is to describe various regions of human experience in the most nuanced manner possible.''[7] Reading Deleuze's theories alongside Mikel Dufrenne's *Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, particularly with Grosz as an intermediary, I found areas of dialogue, opportunities for challenge on both sides and, most importantly, room for exciting development into the area of aesthetic experience.

Methodology

The method I have adopted for this study involves an analysis of live performance using a primarily phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is a qualitative, embodied approach that is guided by a conviction to describe perception in the most articulate manner possible. I have found phenomenology to be the most compatible approach to my particular research as it allows for meaning to be accessed and explored through the felt, lived experience. As this study is an examination of a performance mode which aims to be felt in the body in excess of having meaning assigned to it, an embodied approach such as phenomenology is well-matched. I will apply phenomenology in my research as "less a systematic set of methodological aims than a

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[7] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, xvi.

particularizing mode of attention,"[8] as proposed by Stanton B. Garner, Jr. Phenomenology as an

embodied approach and reflective practice act upon the primary understanding that we meet the

world first and foremost through our body,[9] and by accessing and reflecting upon these embodied

experiences we can develop a more detailed knowledge of the world. Therefore, the means for

applying this approach to my study involve attending live SSPs, reflecting upon their bodied impact

and affective potential, and channelling this experience through the structured theoretical

frameworks that I have elected, specifically Dufrenne's phenomenological framework and a

poststructuralist Deleuzian approach. My research will comprise of performance analyses in

Chapters Two, Three, and Four, which will reflect upon the aesthetic experience of the spectator

within the discursive framework of phenomenology and Deleuzian theory.

As each phenomenological approach is different, I will briefly outline Dufrenne's specific

framework which is set out in *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*. While many other

phenomenologies of aesthetic experience insist on a subject and a distinct object that is the point of

the observer's focus, Dufrenne sees the process of aesthetic experience as a relational, process-

oriented, vital encounter between an aesthetic object and the spectator's aesthetic perception.

Although Dufrenne chooses to outline these aspects separately in the text—Parts I and II are

dedicated to the work of art and the aesthetic object, Part III focuses on aesthetic perception, and

Part IV considers aesthetic experience—the precise notion of aesthetic experience according to

Dufrenne is an encounter between the aesthetic object and the spectator whereby, at the apex of the

aesthetic experience, binaries of subject and object are no longer valuable concepts and are

temporarily dissolved.

Dufrenne makes several allusions to invisible forces at work within every aesthetic

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[8] Stanton B. Garner, Jr. *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama* (London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 5.
[9] Proposed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes (London: Routledge, 2012).

experience which also marks a departure from more "traditional" accounts of phenomenology. At certain instances, Dufrenne goes beyond the realms of direct human experience in his discussions, touching on cosmic forces, the unseen, and the invisible that still have an effect, sometimes a profound effect, on the spectating body. The encounter between spectator and aesthetic object leads to a dissolution of binaries, according to Dufrenne, and incites a becoming of sorts.[10] Admittedly, at various stages in the thesis I push Dufrenne's notions further than perhaps he would intend. However, this thesis is not designed to be a direct translation of Dufrenne's writing. Rather, it should be understood as an acknowledgment of a valuable framework for which to look at aesthetic experience which I develop and expand upon through a weaving of Deleuzian philosophy as interpreted by Grosz.

While this particular study may not have room to engage extensively with the arguments for and against using both phenomenology and Deleuzian theory, it is beneficial to offer a pretext for using both theories on which to progress with the main focus of the thesis. Silvia Stoller sets out a cogent argument which outlines the ways in which phenomenology and poststructuralism intersect in her 2009 article, "Phenomenology and the Poststructural Critique of Experience."[11] Stoller's argument maintains that phenomenology is not only "able to withstand the poststructuralist critique of experience"[12]; she also concisely identifies the significant commonalities that exist between poststructuralism and phenomenology, relating them to the notion of experience. Stoller explores the common misconceptions about phenomenology's notion of experience under the six headings of: Epistemological Foundationalism, The Ahistoricity of

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[10] Examples of this type of inference can be found in the following passages in *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*: "The spectator discovers himself by discovering a world which is his own world. He learns that the existential (which he *is*) and the cosmological are one,"; "[T]he aesthetic object first manifests itself to the body, immediately inviting the body to join forces with it."; "To what does [atmosphere] refer in the aesthetic object? It is not a quality of the real world but of the object itself. The world of the aesthetic object is a world interior to the object...We become engaged in its world only by being diverted from *the* world, even if we do not leave it altogether and if the environment is always *mitgemeint* [cointended]...the aesthetic object must be real in order to thrust itself open to us and to draw us into the world which it opens to us and which is its highest signification." Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 555, 339, 169.
[11] Silvia Stoller, "Phenomenology and the Poststructural Critique of Experience," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 17, no. 5 (2009).
[12] Ibid., 707.

Experience, The Immediacy of Experience, Uninterpreted Experience, The Reproduction of Ideological Systems, Authentic Female Experience, and Prediscursive Experience. Stoller offers clear examples throughout that successfully challenge the poststructuralist critique of phenomenology's approach to experience. She concludes her paper with the following summation:

> [Poststructuralism and phenomenology] share a common interest in a critical concept of experience. Both warn against a naïve, uncritical understanding of experience. They thus both represent, in their own way, a critical counterweight to empiricist concepts of experience. While poststructuralism primarily emphasizes the discursive conditions of experience, phenomenology focuses on an analysis of experience within a discourse of concrete subjects. The different perspectives on experience offered by these two inquiries do not simply represent oppositional positions; instead, they are both expressions of a critical understanding of experience. In this sense, both phenomenology and poststructuralism contribute to the critical re-examination of experience.[13]

Stoller's argument is persuasive and I believe meets, at the very least, the initial concerns that may exist in relation to using these approaches together for my specific purposes[14]; however, in order to be fully understood, I will now move on to the intentions behind choosing to use specifically Dufrenne and Deleuze as theorists.

This research is grounded in the similarities between Dufrenne and Deleuze, the supplementary potential of each approach, and the overlap that I identify in their respective theories, especially relying on Grosz's developments of Deleuzian theory, rather than the differences. In this regard, philosopher Rosi Braidotti puts forth the following case for exploring new types of methodology for contemporary analysis:

> If it is indeed the case that all technologies have a strong 'biopower' effect, in that they affect bodies and immerse them in social and legal relations of power, then a higher degree

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[13] Ibid., 729.
[14] I am not arguing that all poststructuralist critiques of phenomenology can be successfully challenged, rather it is my contention that there remains some valuable overlap between the two schools of thought. I am suggesting that Stoller's argument meets any initial concerns that may arise about using these two theories for my particular study followed by the argument I set forth here.

of interdisciplinary effort is needed in social and political thought to come to terms with our historical predicament. This challenge requires a methodology that focuses on process and interconnections.[15]

Elsewhere, Braidotti expresses this type of experimentation between texts, and the knowledge that is consequently promoted, as follows:

> A text, theoretical and scientific as well as literary, is a relay point between moments in space and time, as well as different degrees, forms and configurations of the thinking process [...] Thinking and writing, like breathing, are not held into the mould of linearity or the confines of the printed page, but move outwards out of bounds, in webs of encounters with other ideas, other texts.[16]

By taking two seemingly distinct approaches and locating points of intersection and room for expansion, a number of relay points are created, a gap wherein new observations, applications, and ideas may flourish. In fact, with regards to a notion that there even exists a fixed Deleuzian methodology, Deleuzian scholar Claire Colebrook asserts that,

> There is a problem with talking about 'method' in Deleuze, simply because his whole approach to life and thinking set itself against any idea that we should approach problems with ready-made schemas, questions or systems. We need to allow thought to open itself up to possibilities that lie outside thinking. Philosophy, especially, ought to be creative and responsive, forming its questions through what it encounters…If Deleuze has a method it is that we should never have *a* method, but should allow ourselves to *become* in relation to what we are seeking to understand.[17]

This is a critical point to keep in mind—the inherent flexibility and potential of Deleuzian philosophy which can be further revealed through pairing it with diverse perspectives.

Deleuze and Dufrenne never met, as far as I can tell, but I have located a reference to

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[15] Rosi Braidotti, "The Politics of 'Life Itself' and New Ways of Dying," in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, ed. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010), 206.
[16] Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 166.
[17] Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (Psychology Press, 2002), 46. [Emphasis in original.]

Dufrenne's concept of the "affective *a priori*" in *Cinema 1: Movement-Image*.[18] This is a somewhat tenuous connection to make, but it offers a sort of acknowledgment of Dufrenne's work which should not be ignored and from which to proceed. Nonetheless, approaching research with phenomenology and combining it with poststructuralist Deleuzian philosophy may seem contradictory when one considers Deleuze's apparent disregard for phenomenology.[19] Although the use of Dufrenne's concepts, relayed in *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, may seem like an obvious choice to refer to in a study that speaks about aesthetic experience, the use of Deleuzian concepts for my purposes is perhaps less so. Deleuze's theories concerning art are a useful framework upon which to explore SSP due to his insistence on the qualitative nature of sensation and other valuable theories such as territory, affect, and becoming, which are particularly applicable to immersive performance contexts. Grosz offers the following account of Deleuze's theory of sensation and affect which I employ as a base for my research to a large degree:

> Sensations, affects, and intensities, while not readily identifiable, are clearly closely connected with forces, and particularly bodily forces, and their qualitative transformations. What differentiates them from experience, or from any phenomenological framework, is the fact that they link the lived or phenomenological body with cosmological forces, forces of the outside, that the body itself can never experience directly. Affects and intensities attest to the body's immersion and participation in nature, chaos, materiality.[20]

In this account, one can see that Grosz is speaking about Deleuzian concepts from a more embodied point of view than Deleuzian texts.[21] This statement, I believe, is where Dufrenne's interpretation of phenomenology and a Deleuzian proposal of experience meet and offer fertile ground to explore

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[18] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), n16, 231.

[19] In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze asserts, "Phenomenology wanted to renew our concepts by giving us perceptions and affections that would make us give birth to the world, not as babies or hominids but as beings, by right, whose proto-opinions would be the foundations of this world. But we do not fight against perceptual and affective clichés if we do not fight against the machine that produces them. By invoking primordial lived-experience, by turning immanence into an immanence to a subject, phenomenology could not prevent the subject from forming no more than opinions that would already draw the cliché from new perceptions and promised affections." Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (London: Verso, 1994), 149-50.

[20] Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2008), 3.

[21] I should underline that Grosz does not claim to be, and I do not regard her writing to be, phenomenological in terms of approach or expression.

immersive performances in the most nuanced manner. There are forces, intensities, and sensations at the core of any work of art, and indeed in the world that we experience. And while they are not always readily identifiable conceptually in the moment, they possess the potential for qualitative change and can reverberate in the human body and have an effect on it on a deep level.

What connects Deleuze and Dufrenne, and why I am interested in pursuing research using their theories alongside one another, is their consistent focus on the relation of bodies with their surroundings—nature, space, and the connection to other bodies. The significant difference is that for Dufrenne, and for a phenomenological approach in general, the body is conceived as a human body. For Deleuze, body is a term that can refer to the biological, social, political, human bodies, animal bodies or even artwork; it is not just confined to the human body.[22] Hereafter, I will use bodies in this Deleuzian sense.

Connected to the idea that bodies, particularly bodies outside of the human form, have a generative impact and force, my approach to this study is related more widely to the concept of vital materialism—acknowledging the significance and importance of all materiality in addition to aligning the human with other vital forms and processes. Addressing the methodological value of vital materialisms, Jane Bennett asks the question, "What would happen to our thinking about politics if we took more seriously the idea that technological and natural materialities were themselves actors alongside and within us—were vitalities, trajectories and powers irreducible to their meanings, intentions, or symbolic values humans invest in them?"[23] In answer to this, my particular methodology forges a path, inspired by Dufrenne's phenomenology and Deleuzian

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[22] When I use "bodies" to cover both the body of the performance and the body of the spectator during the process of becoming, I am using body in the Deleuzian sense. Lee Spinks clarifies the classification of the body with regards this process in the following: "Within this economy of becoming, every force is related to other forces and is defined in its character by whether it obeys or commands. What we call a body (whether understood as political, social, chemical or biological) is determined by this relation between dominating and dominated forces. Meanwhile Deleuze maintains that any two forces constitute a body as soon as they enter into relationship. Within this body the superior or dominant forces are described as 'active'; the inferior or dominated forces are described as 'reactive'. These qualities of active and reactive force are the *original* qualities that define the relationship of force with force." Lee Spinks, "Active and Reactive," in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 7.

[23] Jane Bennett, "A Vitalist Stopover on the Way to a New Materialism," in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics,* ed. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010), 47.

theory, which considers experience as no longer confined by a solely human body and what it visibly encounters. Rather, each encounter between bodies, and again I mean bodies in the Deleuzian sense, constitutes a process of difference and multiplicity. In other words, each encounter with another body is the potential for transformation, whether visible or invisible in kind. Therefore, combining Deleuze and Dufrenne, the approach that this thesis takes considers humans not as human *beings* but as human *becomings* which are affected by both forces and materialities, both the visible and the invisible.[24] Indeed, Dufrenne endorses this to a certain point in the following description of aesthetic experience: "There is something in the object that can be known only by a sort of sympathy in which the subject opens himself to it. Indeed, at the limit, the affectively qualified object is itself a subject and no longer a pure object or the simple correlate of an impersonal consciousness."[25] In other words, in order to understand what constitutes an aesthetic experience, one must be aware of the significant role that invisible forces, the "something" to which Dufrenne refers, have on the observer's overall experience and understanding of the artwork.

Notably, both Deleuze and Dufrenne principally apply their concepts regarding aesthetics to visual art rather than performance. While the work of art to which they both refer exists as an "object" to be perceived for as long as is pleasurable, a performance, conversely, is bound by a particular spatiotemporal border. Consequently, each performance is different; each encounter is different. The possibilities for each encounter are inexhaustible due to the "hereness" of the performance event. Therefore, while Deleuze maintains art is autonomous and does not require a spectator to produce qualities, forces, and sensations, performance is an anomaly in this respect; for a performance to be defined as a performance, it requires an audience, whatever form that may take. To quote Richard Schechner, "To treat any object, work or product 'as' performance…means to

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[24] Braidotti discusses this in relation to the power of affect on encountering bodies in the essay, "The Politics of 'Life Itself' and New Ways of Dying": "Affectivity in fact is what activates an embodied subject, empowering him or her to interact with others. This acceleration of one's existential speed, or increase in one's affective temperature, is the dynamic process of becoming. It follows that a subject can think/understand/do/become no more than what he or she can take or sustain within his or her coordinates." Rosi Braidotti, "The Politics of 'Life Itself' and New Ways of Dying," in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, 210. Here, Braidotti makes a case for the inextricability of invisible forces and affect from a body's actions and materiality.
[25] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 442.

investigate what the object does, how it interacts with other objects or beings, and how it relates to other objects or beings. Performances exist only as actions, interactions and relationships."[26] Thus, while a visual work of art may not require an observer for it to be considered a work of art according to Deleuze, *performance*, I suggest, requires a spectator. Therefore, one can speak with a certain degree of confidence about the aesthetic experience and apply Deleuze's theories of territory, affect, and sensation to it while avoiding possible conflicts in theoretical foundations.

Finally, I wish to underline that in this research I am also building upon and expanding Dufrenne's phenomenological proposals to leave room for forces that are not always identifiable but nonetheless have a qualitative, transformative effect; once again these invisible yet vital forces. As I have mentioned above, Grosz interprets Deleuze's theories with much more regard for experience, bodies, and embodied knowledge. In one such interpretation, she connects the later work of Merleau-Ponty to Deleuzian theory, recommending the following course of action:

> A 'return' to or reconstitution of such prediscursive experience, a 'wild being,' an uncultivated or raw sensibility, is necessary to produce a nondualist, nonbinarized ontology. In returning to a prereflective sensible, however, [Merleau-Ponty] is not seeking pure datum influenced by the social; instead his goal is to find the precondition within sensibility itself, within the subject that makes the subject open to and completed by the world. Neither subject nor object can be conceived as cores, atoms, or nuggets of being, pure presence not bounded entities, they 'interpenetrate,' mingle.[27]

In this passage Grosz is clear on what can be gained by connecting aspects of the phenomenological approach with a Deleuzian sensibility, and vice versa. As we continue, the use of this combined approach, many times through the lens of Grosz, will become clearer, as these things ought to when put into practice. Next, I will introduce the terms "sensory spectacle performance" and "affective

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[26] Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (Routledge, 2006), 30.
[27] Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994), 96.

encounter" and consider how they relate to immersive theatre as a category of performance.

Sensory Spectacle Performance and Affective Encounter

In the past decade,[28] there has been a perceptible movement within Europe towards various forms of immersive theatre practices; it is a form that has engaged theatre makers, audiences, academics, and critics alike. Notably, most theatre scholarship on the subject of immersive theatre rests upon the same point—the description of a certain performance as "immersive" is, at best, elusive. Use of the term as a "concrete categorisation" of any performance, by virtue of its broad application to a variety of forms, is problematic. In other words, the term "immersive covers" too much work while also remaining relatively ambiguous. Instead of searching for a definitive characterisation that states what specific elements qualify and also preclude a work from being considered immersive, it seems a more open definition is required. Allowing for this more pluralist approach, Josephine Machon entitled her 2013 book on the subject "Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Performance." The pluralisation of "theatres" indicates the breadth of performance the term covers and leaves room so it may cover more in the future. In this section, I make the point that the mode I will refer to as SSP can be understood as a strand of immersive theatre. As I will attempt to demonstrate in the following four sections, there are a number of distinct strands of performance that are coupled under "immersive theatre" which need to be classified and explored separately to a greater degree to allow for the intricacies of each type to be understood, as I have elected to do with SSP.

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[28] I use this timeframe influenced by the comprehensive study on the subject of immersive theatre carried out by Josephine Machon. According to Machon, "'Immersive theatre', to describe a particular movement in live performance practice, appears to have entered common parlance within academic and artistic circles from around 2004 and archive research of reviews suggest it entered the lexicon of theatre criticism *circa* 2007 [...] From 2005 to 2010, the use of the term begins to fix practice as a 'genre', for want of a better word." Josephine Machon, *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Performance* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 65-6.

1. *Immersive Theatres*

Machon begins her study by acknowledging the varied nature and diverse use of the term but suggests what connects immersive theatre performances is an integration of a "variety of art forms," and an effort to "exploit all that is experiential in performance, placing the audience at the heart of the work."[29] She further indicates, "immersive theatre establishes a special kind of presence—visceral in every respect, being both embodied and noetic."[30] In these descriptions, Machon leaves the door open for additional strands of immersive theatre to be identified under these terms. But before proceeding further into what defines immersion, I will first consider the lineage from which the contemporary form of immersive theatre has come. This will further support the understanding of the term "immersive," while also providing valuable insight into its many precedent forms in theatre and art.

In the essay "Against Interpretation," Susan Sontag advocates for more experiential works of art and a more embodied, experiential mode of spectatorship: "What is important now is to recover our senses. We must learn to *see* more, to *hear* more, to *feel* more. Our task is not to find the maximum amount of content in a work of art…Our task is to cut back content so that we can see the thing at all."[31] Published in 1964, Sontag wrote this essay during a period of immense change in theatre and art. Frequently referred to as the "performative turn," several experimental theatre makers of the time wished to produce theatre and art events that radically challenged the barriers between audience and performer and pushed the boundaries between theatre and non-theatre spaces, fiction and real life. The types of immersive theatres and the immersive practices that are being produced and used now are undoubtedly indebted to the experimental theatre and live art that was being produced in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Here, I have in mind movements such as Happenings, Environmental Theatre, and installation art; artists and theatre makers like Allan

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[29] Ibid., 22.
[30] Ibid., 61.
[31] Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation: And Other Essays* (London: Penguin, 2009), 14. [Emphasis in original.]

Kaprow, Jerzy Grotowski, Richard Schechner and The Performance Group, The Living Theatre, Fluxus, and Marina Abramović.

The foundations of immersive practices may even be traced back further to Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*, Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty, and the modernist performances of the Dadaists, Futurists, and Expressionists. Gareth White suggests, "The rise of immersive theatre might be read as the return of techniques of audience involvement that last captured the imagination of the theatre- makers and audiences to such a degree in the 1960s and 1970s, but this time shorn of political imperatives and allegiances."[32] Indeed, seduced by the experience but frustrated by the prevalence of immersive practices, *The Guardian* journalist Myf Warhurst poses the following provocations:

> What is it about humans, at this particular time in history, that makes us think we're special enough to be part of art without having done any of the work to develop the emotional, intellectual or craft level that artists have strived to achieve?[33]

Here, Warhurst poses a valid question concerning immersive practices and their relation to our current context: what is distinctive about this particular moment in history? What is the link between immersive theatre and the current social, political, and cultural condition? I return to these questions throughout the thesis and maintain that the primary distinctive contextual factor is SSP's inextricable and dynamic relationship to digital culture. For now, Warhurst's provocation leads us into a definition of SSP wherein I will place it as a subcategory of immersive theatre.

2. Sensory Spectacle Performance

The focus of this study is on a particular strand of immersive theatre which I have identified that foregrounds the spectator's embodied, affective experience and communicates primarily on an

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[32] Gareth White, "On Immersive Theatre," *Theatre Research International* 37, no. 3 (2012), 222.
[33] Myf Warhurst, "Immersive art: have audiences earned their place in the show?" *The Guardian*, 30 July, 2014.

intensive scale. I call this mode of theatre "sensory spectacle performance" or SSP. SSP is a mode that is felt in excess of being understood; it is a performance which seeks to prioritise the transmission of the affective above the cognitive. SSP bends the rules and conventions of traditional storytelling, disrupts spatiotemporal equilibrium, and inhibits the communication of meaning in a conventional sense. Instead, meaning is primarily accessed subsequent to the event through the resonances in the body built up during the performance.

The emphasis of SSP is on presence, process, and the relational aspects of performance. Unlike many other forms of immersive theatre which lay a great deal of emphasis on narrative or fictional detail, SSP uses exclusively multi-form techniques to directly impact the spectator's body and establish an encounter that elicits a felt response. SSP also seeks to appeal to the more embodied modes of counter-attention such as hyper-attention, daydream, and trance which can be linked with repeated interactions with digital platforms and computers. SSP is a mode that is deeply in tune with the strategies of digital culture and its effects. Therefore, SSP is bound and representative of a specific contemporary time period, because as a mode it is characterised by a unique interaction with information-intensive environments, the use of technology and its effects, to deepen the immersive encounter.

In his study of Bacon's paintings in *The Logic of Sensation*, Deleuze sets out presence regarding the impact of Bacon's paintings as follows:

> Interminable presence. The insistence of the smile beyond the face and beneath the face. The insistence of a scream that survives the mouth, the insistence of a body that survives the organism, the insistence of transitory organs that survive the qualified organs. And in this excessive presence, the identity of an already-there and an always-delayed. Everywhere there is a presence acting directly on the nervous system, which makes representation, whether in place or at a distance, impossible.[34]

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[34] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, 36.

Presence can be understood as both a relation and also a bodily state. Furthermore, it suggests a definite temporal aspect of experience which can be explored further through what Deleuze describes as the contraction of the past and future in a presence whereby the affective encounter takes place. Presence in SSP leads to a qualitative transformation in the performance and the spectator. Consequently, presence specifically relates to the Deleuzian notion of becoming. Just like becoming, presence is always in the middle. In fact, the process of becoming relies on presence as its force—the molecular, the qualitative, the transformative–occupying the position of "always in the middle."[35]

Presence, like the becoming that it informs, is based on relations between bodies. Presence enables the conditions for becoming to take place in SSPs. Where there is presence there is an encounter. Where there is an encounter, there is difference. Where there is difference, there is becoming and transformation. These are the rhizomatic processes that occur repeatedly, constantly. For Deleuze, "any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be."[36]

SSP seeks to explore how to effectively and more efficiently deliver immersive performances based on interactions with online platforms and technology. In this type of performance, there is a clear attempt to mimic and appeal to modes of counter-attention that have been cultivated through extensive interaction with information-intensive environments. One example of this mimicry can be seen in SSP's engagement with technology in performance to create multi-form environments similar to those that are omnipresent in daily life. SSP relies on embodied experiences and foregrounds the felt aspects of performance whereby the emphasis is always on the stimulation of the spectator's senses and the communication of sensation. It is a performance mode that can be primarily characterised by a presentation of visceral, multi-sensory,

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[35] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 7.
[36] Ibid., 6.

and multi-form experience. In order to promote phenomenal immersion, SSP places a large amount of emphasis on lighting, music, sound, scale, perspective, and digital effects, rendering each component equal, or sometimes more important, than the human performers onstage. Essentially, SSP stimulates affect through intensive, immersive encounter and processes of becoming.

Let us return briefly to Francis Bacon's art for reference. Bacon's style of painting offers an insightful example into the mode of creation whereby a bodied response is foregrounded. This can be compared to dominant mode of affective communication at play in SSP. Bacon remarks of his work entitled *Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X* (1953), "I wanted to paint the scream more than the horror."[37]

Fig. 1. Francis Bacon, *Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X* , 1953.

A scream is generally recognised as a violent bodily response to a stimulus. *Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X* is a presentation of the experience of horror rather than a representation

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[37] Francis Bacon in interview with David Sylvester cited in Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, 60.

of the horror, according to Deleuze. Bacon's painting intends a visceral, affective response from the person viewing the work. Deleuze notes that meaning may, and probably will, be assigned at some point in the process but the bodied response of the Figure in the painting and the bodied response of the onlooker is accentuated and prioritised in this work. The work, similar to SSP, exceeds representation by eliciting a bodily apprehension from the viewer.[38] In a similar way, creators of SSP do not lay the greatest significance on the narrative of the show—the background of a character, the setting, the context, the relationship between characters and their environment. Instead, they attempt to offer an experiential event whereby the bodied response to curated stimuli is the most important aspect.

One of the reasons for choosing to use this form of affective communication that speaks directly to the body, as we will see in the section that looks at digital culture, is SSP's attempt to engage with the systems and structures of digital culture. The creators of the SSP are imitating what it looks, sounds, and, most of all, what it *feels* like to live, sleep, interact, create, and think in a digital environment. What SSP aims to build upon is the corresponding forms of affective communication and experiential techniques that digital culture deploys. Before we look at this connection in detail, we will now explore the intricacies and impact of affect.

3. *Affective Encounter*

The title of this thesis is "Affective Encounters: A Study of Immersive Performance and Digital Culture." Affect is a force that is characterised by the impact it can have on another body; it is the measure of what a body can do to another. *The Affect Theory Reader* describes affect as "the name we give to those forces—visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion—that can serve to drive us toward movement,

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[38] Elsewhere, Deleuze makes a similar point concerning certain affectively-engaged works of art, "The work of art leaves the domain of representation to become 'experience.'" Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 56.

toward thought and extension."[39] In a similar vein, Simon O'Sullivan notes that affects are,

> not to do with signification or 'meaning' as such. Indeed, they occur on a different, asignifying register…Affects are [...] the molecular 'beneath' the molar, the molecular understood here as life and art's intensive quality, the stuff that goes on 'beneath,' in fact that always parallels signification.[40]

Due to the fact that affect occurs on an asignifying register, there is always a challenge in speaking about these invisible, "unlivable forces."[41] Brian Massumi suggests that we can only examine *affect* by focusing on the *effect*. The reason for this is that affect occurs in the present moment and is only accessible through resonances which materialise as effects or emotions, "[Affect] is not entirely containable in knowledge but is analyzable in effect, as effect."[42] Therefore, we can understand affective encounter to occur on an intensive, asignifying plane only available in present experience. When I mention that affective encounter in performance occurs in "the present moment," I intend to indicate its temporal, relational, and bodily state (conceiving bodies as people, movement, ideas, events, entities, as discussed above).

According to Josephine Machon, presence, and the consequent immersion it delivers, involves "A very real exchange of energy between humans exists within the immediacy of the live and ongoing present of performance."[43] The concept of presence as an exchange of energy is essential because it not only highlights the deeply affective nature of encounters that occur within the present experience but also the non-discursive, experiential space that it inhabits. As O'Sullivan remarks in reference to the theories of Paul de Man and Jacques Derrida, "present experience—the moment, the event—is inaccessible to consciousness. All we have is its trace."[44] To develop these

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[39] Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010), 1.
[40] Simon O'Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 43.
[41] A phrase used by Deleuze in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, 44.
[42] Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), n3, 260.
[43] Josephine Machon, "Watching, Attending, Sense-Making: Spectatorship in Immersive Theatres," *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English* 4, no. 2 (2016), 39.
[44] O'Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari,* 44.

definitions further with regards to SSP's relationship to presence and immersion, the exchange that occurs is not limited to an exchange between humans; rather it is an exchange between human and nonhuman forces through the channels of intensities, affects, and sensations.

The figures in Bacon's paintings, for instance, communicate on a plane of sensation in an intensive, affective language that can only be digested and replied to by the observer in the same mode. The observer receives the pope's scream in their body and responds on the same affective register. The traces of this moment persists in the body after the event in the form of resonances and reverberations. Massumi explains that the "the primacy of the affective is marked by a gap between content and effect."[45] Affect is located between the signifying potential of the image (the content) and the emotion (the effect) that this signifying image may instil. Thus, affective encounter is felt prior to being known or identified. We recognise the affect and seek out conceptual significance or meaning from the resonance left by the affective encounter subsequent to the event.

At this point, having discussed the encounter and affect, we can now turn our attention to the impact of affective encounter, "the effect" as Massumi refers to it, in other words, the resonance left by the encounter. Affective encounter, a formulation I have developed from Deleuze's notes on affect, is a relational force that exists in most aspects of performance and life; this may be felt to a great degree whereby affect has a profound, qualitative, and transformative effect on the encountering bodies, and other times it may be felt to a minimal degree whereby it passes unnoticed, adding to the bank of resonances that each body absorbs and expels habitually. Deleuze categorises encounter as:

> perhaps the same thing as becoming...You encounter people (and sometimes without knowing them or seeing them) but also movement, ideas, events, entities...It is not one term which becomes the other, but each encounters the other, a single becoming which is not common for the two, since they have nothing to do with one another, but which between

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[45] "The Autonomy of Affect," *Cultural Critique*, no. 31, The Politics of Systems and Environments, Part II (1995), 84.

the two, which has its own direction, a bloc of becoming, an a-parallel evolution.[46]

While I will introduce Deleuze's idea of becoming in more detail in the coming sections, this description of encounter is optimal for the present discussion as it focuses on the relational, process driven, embodied, and affective nature of encounter. With this in mind, we can define affective encounter in performance as a primarily felt, bodily encounter between two or more bodies. For the present purposes, these bodies are the body of the performance and the body of the spectator. During this encounter, a change and an exchange of forces—affects and sensations—take place. In other words, the bodies have an effect on one another through a transmission of affect.

In *The Poetics of Space,* Gaston Bachelard argues that space and poetry can evoke images that produce echoes, reverberations, and resonances that are felt in the body. He speaks of the phenomenological effect as follows: "through the brilliance of an image, the distant past resounds with echoes, and it is hard to know at what depth these echoes will reverberate and die away. Because of its novelty and its action, the poetic image has an entity and a dynamism of its own; it is referable to a direct ontology."[47] Although the term affect is not mentioned here, Bachelard appears to be referring to the affective potential of objects and literary images. Bachelard's rich phenomenological description is comparable to the resonance felt in the body as a result of an affective encounter set up by SSP. As previously mentioned, SSP is felt in the body above being understood, and this will be explored further in Chapter Two using Dufrenne's theories of the phenomenology of perception. However, it is important that we note that meaning can be accessed through the digestion of the affect; the conversion of affect into effect, the resonance left by the encounter. As Bachelard states,

> After the original reverberation, we are able to experience resonances, sentimental repercussions, reminders of our past. But the image has touched the depths before it stirs

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[46] Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 2nd ed. (London: Continuum, 2006), 6-7.
[47] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1969), xvi-xvii.

the surface. And this is also true of a simple experience of reading. The image offered us by reading the poem now becomes really our own. It takes root in us. It has been given us by another, but we begin to have the impression that we could have created it, that we should have created it. It becomes a new being in our language, expressing us by making us what it expresses; in other words, it is at once a becoming of expression, and a becoming of our being. Here expression creates being.[48]

In this passage, Bachelard is not invoking "becoming" in the Deleuzian sense, although it should perhaps be highlighted that in the original French version of this text, *La poétique de l'espace*, and in each of Deleuze's texts, the same word "devenir" is used to refer to becoming. On some level, it seems that Bachelard's intention is similar to a Deleuzian becoming, even if Bachelard does not go into detail about his specific designation of the term. Nevertheless, what Bachelard is explicitly referring to here is the affective nature of poetry. It occupies the reader's body, has a physical impact on the body, takes on a new life, and remains there as a resonance. If we are to develop this in a Deleuzian manner, some of the affect is converted into effect, into emotion, feeling, and understanding, and the remainder lives on in the body as a trace, a resonance that reverberates and applies itself to future situations. Despite the fact that Bachelard is alluding to literary images rather than directly referencing performance, his proposal of past echoes and bodily resonance as a way to access meaning details an identical process which occurs in the search for meaning in SSP, where comprehension occurs first and foremost through the body and its resonances.

As affect occurs within the present moment, meaning is accessed through the resonances in the body. Affective encounter establishes an embodied experience and foregrounds the felt aspects of performance. In doing so, the performance will always prioritise the stimulation of the spectator's senses and the communication of sensation. Affective encounter is a notion I will return

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[48] Ibid., xix.

to throughout this thesis in reference to the mode of communication and aesthetic experience the performances referenced construct for the spectator.

4. *Sensory Spectacle Performance: A Strand of Immersive Theatre*

There are several reasons why I have chosen to formulate a new term for this mode of performance. Firstly, although there is a wealth of rigorous research on immersive theatre, most notably work carried out by Josephine Machon, Gareth White, and Adam Alston, the discourse almost exclusively focuses on narrative-based or fictionally immersive theatre, whether in the form of participatory theatre, installation, intimate one-on-one performances, virtual realities, or site-specific and site-responsive work. Conversely, SSP attempts to deliver its immersive aims through the transmission of sensation and the establishment of an affective encounter between the spectator and the performance. It is less concerned with placing an immersant at the centre of a fictional environment; instead SSP concentrates on the bodily, felt impact of the performance and the opening of a transformative qualitative aesthetic experience for each audience member.

Immersive theatre seeks to immerse a spectator to a point where the boundaries of reality and unreality are blurred, even for a brief moment. As it is generally conceived and pursued academically, immersive theatre seeks to "absorb" a spectator, usually in a fictional world or in some aspect of a fictional representation. This can range from a constructed "authentic encounter" through site-responsive immersion, as explored in the *Monto Cycle* (2012-2014) by ANU Productions; intimate, relational, and voyeuristic immersion, as explored in the *Personal* trilogy (2003-2010) by Belgian theatre company Ontroerend Goed; or through a fictional, participatory immersion in which the audience are cast as actor-participants, as with Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More* (2011) and *Tunnel 228* (2008). In each of these examples, we can see a distinct aim to deliver a type of participant-centred, fictional world or "other-world." These performances exemplify the type of immersive theatre in which the act of spectatorship is foregrounded through participation

and active, physical co-production and agency. In other words, as generally characterised, immersive theatre places the immersant at the centre of the *fictional environment* and aims for *dramaturgical integration.*

Adam Alston, a leading voice in the study of immersive theatre, suggests that most immersive theatre performances (he mentions Punchdrunk and De La Guarda specifically in this regard) lie somewhere between an "experience machine," a term coined by philosopher Robert Nozick to describe a kind of experience-inducing flotation tank that involves a "plugged-in subject as an indolent and inert dreamer"[49] and "artwork that audiences co-produce by doing more than watching."[50] Alston proposes that immersive theatre audiences "co-produce by doing more than watching" and invest "energy—for instance by walking, interacting, dancing, and even running—in excess of that involved in sedentary, end-on theatre experiences."[51] This suggests that immersive theatre must be in some way physically engaging. It does not leave room for sensory-driven or affectively engaging immersion. With that being said, it is clear throughout Alston's writing that immersive theatre always eludes definition and allows room for new negotiations of characteristics.

In this study, I suggest that there is a type of immersive theatre that can occur in a sedentary, end-on theatre experience, if that's the form the creators choose. In fact, the way the stage is set up does not define or preclude a performance from being identified as SSP, but of course is important in the consideration of its overall aesthetic experience. The type of affective encounter that SSPs establish connects with the spectator's body and sensation through invisible yet vital forces. SSP seek to engage the spectator in a process of becoming. If this becoming is entered into by both sides, the side of the performance and the side of the spectator, a series of exchanges and transformations take place. Both sides are changed through the experience—the spectator takes

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[49] Adam Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre: Aesthetic Politics and Productive Participation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), chap. 1, Kindle.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.

on sensation and forces offered by the performance, and the performance has been altered and changed by the sensation and forces received from the spectator's affective engagement in the piece.

The affective encounter and the becoming that the SSP seeks to prepare for each audience member to engage with amounts to the immersive aspect of this mode of theatre. It is not an immersion in a fictional space or an other-worldly environment in which the spectator is an agent and a participant in the action. Rather, it is an immersion in an affective encounter with the performance through extra-discursive, asignifying means. It is a dynamic communication through invisible yet vital forces that, if engaged with, alters and transforms both the spectator and the performance.

ANU Productions, Ontroerend Goed, and Punchdrunk are frequently presented as characteristic examples of immersive theatre, and each of these companies produce various forms of fictional representation constructed for a participant to experience and interact with. Each of these examples proposes a distinct lean toward fictionally immersive theatre, leading most academic definitions to infer that all immersive theatres include participation, a constructed agency for the audience member, and a fiction that the participant is immersed in, thereby leaving out other types of immersion that can occur outside of this. For this reason, I sought to develop a term for a mode of immersive theatre that instead aims to establish an affective encounter between the spectator and the performance as its primary immersive force. There may be a narrative or fiction surrounding this affective encounter, but it is never the most integral element of the immersive experience.

Participation in SSP is less action-based or task oriented than the other types of immersive theatre I have mentioned. It requires less submission to a narrative and does not require the spectator to take on a fictional role for the purposes of the story. Rather it places a great deal of

emphasis on immediate sensory contact, embodied experience, felt engagement, and affective encounter. An SSP audience is at "the heart of the work,"[52] as per Machon's definition of immersive theatre, but they are generally not "central to the action." The action occurs on an individual, affective, transformative, and relational basis. For example, the experiences curated in Pan Pan's *All That Fall*, Corn Exchange's *Man of Valour,* and Nigel Barrett and Louise Mari's *The Body* do not ask the audience to participate physically in an elaborate narrative, nor do they instill a sense of agency in the spectator in regard to the outcome of the piece. Instead, SSP sets up an immersive affective encounter between the performance and the spectator that leads to an individual transformative becoming. The spectator need not leave their seat, or engage in any action in the performance physically. This type of immersive theatre instead communicates on a plane of sensation in the present moment and invites the spectator to enter into the affective encounter, into a becoming, and in that sense, they are immersed in the performance.

The SSP case studies that are examined in this thesis might not be readily categorised, or indeed necessarily identify themselves, as "immersive theatre." Although each production explicitly engages with immersive theatre practices to some extent—here I am thinking of the central features that Machon sets out: "the involvement of the audience," "a prioritisation of the sensual world," and the "significance of space and place"—they do not neatly fit the definitions put forward by most theatre scholars in the field of immersive theatre. And yet, SSP appears to fill a lacuna that exists in the strands of immersive theatre that have been identified across the board. It should be considered a subset or strand of immersive theatre, with some notable characteristics. This section will address SSP in its differences and similarities to its comparative performance modes in order to arrive at a detailed description of its features and why it warrants its own identification.

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[52] Machon, *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Performance*, 22.

According to Machon, there are three types of immersion at work in immersive theatre—(1) Immersion as absorption; (2) Immersion as transportation; (3) Total Immersion. "Immersion as absorption" refers to a performance that fully arrests the spectator's "concentration, imagination, action, and interest."[53] For a performance to achieve this outcome, the spectator must be engaged "in an activity that engrosses (and may equally entertain) the participant within its very form."[54] "Immersion as transportation" involves participating and navigating another world that has been constructed for the performance, whether on an imaginative level or physical space or both. "Total Immersion" involves the other two types of immersion "leading to an uncanny recognition of the audience-participant's own *praesence* within the experience."[55] All degrees of immersion are usually at play, to different degrees and at various stages, in the immersive event.

So far, Machon's classification of immersive theatre and the types of immersion it can deliver are in line with what I have identified in SSP. In addition to this, a distinct lineage can be seen from the experimental theatre and art events to the SSP form, as is the case for other immersive theatre strands. In fact, the characteristic and qualitative intentions of SSP hold close similarities to Machon's concept of "(syn)aesthetics." She defines the mode as follows:

> Characteristic of the (syn)aesthetic performance style is its consolidation of a variety of artistic principles, forms and techniques, manipulated in such a way so as to fuse the somatic and the semantic in order to produce a visceral response in the audience. The (syn)aesthetic style allows the explicit recreation of sensation through visual, physical, verbal, aural, tactile, haptic and olfactory means.[56]

Machon asserts that (syn)aesthetics is the broad parental form of immersive theatre.

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[53] Ibid., 62.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid., 63.
[56] Josephine Machon, *(Syn)Aesthetics: Redefining Visceral Performance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 14.

What Machon does not do, intentionally it seems, is list any subcategories of what she terms immersive theatres, although it is distinctly suggested in the second part of her book in which she interviews various theatre companies and artists who are producing immersive theatre in her view. However, a name for the subcategories that Machon references and alludes to can be found in a book entitled *Creating Worlds: How to Make Immersive Theatre* in which director Jason Warren breaks immersive theatre into four distinct strands: Exploration Theatre, Guided Experiences, Interactive Worlds, and Game Theatre.[57] So, combining Machon's insights into the terms immersive theatres and (syn)aesthetics with the sub-categorisations put forth by Warren, we might map out the antecedent and subsequent strands relating to immersive theatre as follows: Happenings, Environmental Theatre, and Installation Art are the closest predecessors of immersive theatre. Under the umbrella of "immersive theatres", we can locate Warren's four distinct strands alongside SSP, with room for other strands of immersive theatre to be identified in the future. Each of these performance modes, from Happenings to SSP, can be characterised by Machon's (syn)aesthetics. From the argument I have made thus far, we can see that the definition of immersive theatre, certainly Machon's understanding of it, leaves room for identification of further modes. I have included SSP alongside Warren's categories, and I also wish to suggest there are many more modes to be identified and explored under the heading of immersive theatre, particularly as postdigital culture and aesthetics begin to exert more influence.

In brief, SSP sets up an immersive affective encounter rather than attempting to immerse participants in a fictional world. In other words, SSP is *phenomenally* immersive rather than *fictionally* immersive, although fictional representation can be an element of the production. SSP does not aim to *absorb* the audience by inviting them to walk around and interact with a narrative environment and curated scenarios. The participation requested in SSP is less action-based, physically or even conceptually taxing than fictionally immersive performances. Instead, SSP

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[57] Jason Warren, *Creating Worlds: How to Make Immersive Theatre* (Nick Hern Books, 2017).

focuses on the felt engagement of the spectator, connecting with embodied knowledge, and establishing an affective encounter.

A discernible difference between fictionally immersive performance and SSP lies in the distinction between the intermittently representational style offered by fictionally immersive theatre and the experience of presence foregrounded by SSP. Further distinction can be found in the type of boundaries that are dissolved to encourage immersion. As demonstrated in the rich lineage of the theatrical and artistic experimentation of the early 1960s to the present-day concept of immersive theatre, at its core lies a dissolution of the boundary that previously existed between audience and the performer and performance. While this is true of most strands of immersive theatres—a physical and also play/player/playing area boundary is removed in order to introduce an absorption into the fiction and encourage immersion—this action occurs differently in SSP, again differentiating it from the other strands. The boundary between the spectator, the performer, and the performance in SSP is dissolved through affective encounter where, as I have already quoted, Deleuze notes, "each encounters the other, a single becoming which is not common for the two, since they have nothing to do with one another, but which between the two, which has its own direction, a bloc of becoming, an a-parallel evolution."[58] The boundary that is dissolved then is a *relational* rather than a *physical* one, and the immersion that is on offer is one that transforms the bodies through a becoming with the performance.

Sensory Spectacle Performance and Digital Culture

I arrived at the term sensory spectacle performance by reflecting upon the aspects that make it a unique mode of performance. I chose to include "sensory" because, at its core, the sensory, and sensation, understood by Deleuze as "those moments prior to when a subject discovers the meaning of something or enters into a process of reasoned cognition...what is felt and experienced before the

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[58] Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 6-7.

name is understood in a common way,"[59] are what SSP employs both to communicate and to impact the spectating body. In reference to Bacon's paintings, Deleuze states, "What matters is the confrontation of sensations and the resonance that is derived from it."[60] Deleuze is referring to an artwork that communicates primarily on the asignifying plane of affect and sensation, relying on the molecular that runs beneath or at least parallel with signification.[61] With Bacon's paintings, as with SSP, a spectator engages in an affective encounter; they engage with the performance through a language of sensation and affect and through the sensation and affect received, and resonances are accumulated in the body which can be mined for meaning subsequent to the encounter, outside of the present experience. Therefore, "sensory" needed to be included in the name as it suggests the appeal to the embodied, felt experience that SSPs seek to offer. It also emphasizes the plane of sensation that both the spectator and the performance communicate on in order to achieve the desired immersive effect which includes a process of becoming. As Deleuze claims, "I become in the sensation, one through the other, one in the other. And at the limit, it is the same body which, being both subject and object, gives and receives the sensation."[62]

I have elected to use the term "performance" over "theatre" for the primary reason that performance as a (often problematic) catch-all term covers more than just theatre—it includes music, visual art, dance, everyday life. Performance is representative of many art forms across a broad range and it is not confined to the structures of "traditional" theatre such as time structures, seated audience, a formal theatre space, and a set narrative. In addition to SSP being influenced and employing these various artforms, the processes that are outlined in the SSP model can be applied to many art forms outside of theatre.

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[59] Tom Conley, "Sensation," in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 247.
[60] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, 68-9.
[61] A description used by O'Sullivan which I quoted earlier in this chapter, O'Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari,* 43.
[62] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, 34-5.

The inclusion of "spectacle" in the name is slightly more complex. In common parlance, spectacle is most commonly associated with something that is visually striking. However, for the most part, a spectacle will seek to impact the spectator's whole body. It will attempt to engage most if not all of the senses in an innovative and visceral manner by employing multi-form means such as images, film, sound, movement, rhythm, lighting, special effects, and illusions to impact a spectating body. Jonathan Crary, who has written extensively on the history of the spectacle, suggests, "spectacular power cannot be reduced to an optical model but is inseparable from a larger organization of perceptual consumption."[63] Crary continues his point with reference to the arrival of cinema, noting the way in which the idea of the spectacle changed and consequently how it affected perception: "[T]he full coincidence of sound with image, of voice with figure, not only was a crucial new way of organizing space, time, and narratives but it instituted a more commanding authority over the observer, enforcing a new kind of attention."[64]

Unlike other forms of immersive theatre which concentrate on the dramaturgical integration of an immersant in a fictional environment, SSP uses exclusively affective modes of communication to deliver its immersive power. In order to set up this affective encounter, SSP employs multi-form channels—sound, images, lighting, film, movement, and rhythm—which attempt to establish an affective encounter. Affective encounter elicits a felt response and also appeals to the more embodied modes of counter-attention, such as hyper-attention, daydream, and trance, which are generally associated with repeated digital interactions. SSP is a mode of performance that engages with the various operational strategies of digital culture and, in doing so, reflects on their effect on society. SSP is bound and representative of digital culture, because it is characterised by a unique interaction with information-intensive environments, the use of technology and its effects, to deepen the immersive encounter. Through an engagement with

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[63] Jonathan Crary, "Spectacle, Attention, Counter-Memory," in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*, ed. Tom McDonagh (London: MIT Press, 1989), 458.
[64] Ibid.

technology in performance to create multi-form environments and a clear attempt to mimic and appeal to differing attention modes as a result of interaction with information-intensive environments, SSPs are delving deeper into how effectively and more efficiently to deliver immersive performances based on interactions with new communication technologies.

Another understanding of the term "spectacle" comes from Guy Debord's much-cited proposition in *The Society of the Spectacle*, written in 1967,[65] followed by *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle* in 1988.[66] In these respective books Debord argues that as a result of the spectacle—which he defines as the influence of mass media—society has moved away from direct experience in favour of mediated representations. He contends that the spectacle causes, "degradation of *being* into *having...* [and] from *having* into *appearing*"[67] and, above all, the spectacle seeks to isolate individuals. *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle* reinforces the points proffered in Debord's earlier book but also further proposes that the spectacle is so ingrained in contemporary society that a person will only stand out if they do not participate in it. Debord provides various examples of how the integrated spectacle operates, picking out five main characteristics which he lists as "incessant technological renewal; integration of state and economy; generalized secrecy; unanswerable lies; an eternal present."[68]

Because the word "spectacle" is synonymous in academic discussion with Debord's writing, I feel I must set out the manner in which I use it. Many of Debord's conceptualisations on the effect of mass media, the spectacle, and, later, the integrated spectacle, are relevant and relatable to my research; however, Debord's proposal employs a notably socio-political approach. My focus remains on the aesthetic experience of SSP and its relationship to the context of digital culture, thus exploring different but related ground to Debord. As will become clearer in this

[65] Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Will Self (London: Notting Hill Editions: Antenne Books, 2013).
[66] Guy Debord, *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Malcolm Imrie (London: Verso, 1990).
[67] Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, 8, 9. [Emphasis in original.]
[68] Debord, *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, 11-12.

section, Debord's theory shares several ideas with my research, namely regarding the consumption of media and society's changing modes of attention, perception, and experience. However, this thesis firmly situates itself, with a suggestion of Debord's spectacle, in the context of performance and digital culture. Debord's classification of "spectacle" identifies capitalism's association with social relations and consumption. Conversely, I am focusing on the aesthetic and bodily effect that SSP incurs. Nonetheless, Debord's concepts are directly applicable to my research in the wider discussion and in the consideration of the implications concerning the manner in which we perceive and experience as a society, for as Debord insightfully identifies, "the spectacle's domination has succeeded in raising a whole generation moulded to its laws."[69] In other words, mass media, and I would add, more widely, digital culture, as the two are inextricable at this point, has had such a deep and lasting effect, that we cannot separate society from it. This echoes the claims made by Erika Fischer-Lichte, Katherine Hayles, Jonathan Crary, and Matthew Causey which I will look at in this next section and return to throughout the thesis.

Debord's proposal concerning the spectacle's domination leads us to the exploration of digital culture and its relationship to SSP. SSP mimics the operational structures of mediatised environments and the systems of digital culture in order to capitalise on their affective, immersive potential. SSP also engages with digital culture to expose the bodily resonance and qualitative effect that its platforms have on the body every day. This study places itself in the context of digital culture. "Digital culture" is a term that describes the way in which technology, the internet, new communication methods (text, email, Whatsapp, Viber, Snapchat, Tinder, Grindr), and social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) have significantly changed the way society thinks, interacts, and behaves. As remarked in the opening lines of *The Performing Subject in the Space of Technology*, "Now that the shock of the virtual and the rise of our avatars and digital doubles has subsided toward a new normal of computational interference in all areas of life, it is an advantageous

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[69] Ibid, 7.

moment to reflect on the passage through the virtual back to the real."[70] Therefore, this study

situates itself in the so-called "after event" of the digital.[71]

This research very nearly included the term "postdigital culture" in its title in favour of

"digital culture" to reference the context and influencing factors under which this study is situated.

However, I chose to stay with the term digital culture for a number of reasons. The term postdigital

is characterised chiefly by a growing indistinction between the virtual and the real and for its

introduction of a difficulty in extricating mankind from machine due to embedded technologies,

applications, and reliant behaviours on computers. It refers not to a time after the digital, but rather

to a cultural shift in which we were able to separate and acknowledge the effects of the digital to the

present context of being so deeply embedded in an information-intensive world in which we "think

digitally,"[72] "create digitally," and "relate digitally." It informs so much of daily life that the virtual

has been subsumed into the real to create "a new normal."[73]

I am reluctant to fully and exclusively invoke the term and theory surrounding postdigital

because, although the scholarship I have encountered on the subject is compelling and appears

pertinent and applicable to the central thesis, it is a relatively new term and some of the concepts

are at a foundational stage. Arguably, this is due to the fact that we are experiencing the shift from

digital culture toward postdigital culture at the present moment; we are on the cusp of change. Or,

more precisely, the two culture models are co-present and relate to each other so deeply that one

cannot be separated from the other, or indeed thought of as chronological developments, one

following on from the other. Therefore, while this thesis speaks to many of the concepts contained

within postdigital scholarship and its relation to performance, and indeed contributes to this

scholarship, it is perhaps too early to include the term explicitly in this full-length thesis as the

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[70] Matthew Causey, Emma Meehan, and Néill O'Dwyer, *The Performing Subject in the Space of Technology: Through the Virtual, Towards the Real* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 1.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Matthew Causey, "Postdigital Performance," *Theatre Journal* 68, no. 3 (September 2016), 432.
[73] Causey, Meehan, and O'Dwyer, *The Performing Subject in the Space of Technology: Through the Virtual, Towards the Real*, 1.

leading contextual factor. It will however be clear from the final conclusions of this thesis, and hopefully throughout, that the postdigital is an overlapping avenue of study in relation to digital culture, SSP, aesthetic experience, immersive performance, and affective encounter.

With this terminology and co-present models in mind, we can move into thinking about SSP's relationship to digital culture. SSP presents a clear attempt to imitate the multi-media, multi-form platforms within digital culture: computers, applications, smartphones, new communication tools, online media, and social media. Digital culture aims to engage society on an individual and experiential level in order to protract user interactions with media and technology. This individual experience is delivered predominantly through the use of affective communication, as we will see in this section. In other words, rather than appealing to a form of attention that requires deep thought, contemplation, and reflection, contemporary technology and social media (the main tools of digital culture) appeal to forms of *counter*-attention. SSP is a performance that is affective rather than cognitive; it aims to be felt above the need to be comprehended or mined for meaning. Accordingly, SSP aims to appeal to the consequent form of embodied counter-attention that digital culture encourages such as hyper-attention, trance, and daydream.

Counter-attention, a term I have drawn from both Katherine Hayles and Crary's writing on the subjects of attention and perception, refers to alternative modes of attention—such as daydream and a sensation-driven attention known as hyper-attention—than that of the more widely-accepted attention mode of deep-attention. Following their various findings, I propose that counter-attention is characterised by: (1) a preference for many streams of information, (2) a preference for sensation-driven, bodied experiences, (3) a rejection of boredom, and (4) an emphasis on continuous stimulation. People who employ counter-attention prefer multi-form streams of information, for example, music, video, text, images. According to Crary, "counter-forms of attention are neither exclusively nor essentially visual but rather constituted as other temporalities

and cognitive states, such as those in trance or reverie."[74] Consequently, counter-attention is a far more bodied, sensation-driven mode of spectatorship compared to the expressly cognition-led "deep-attention" that is required for plays which foreground the narrative, for instance. Counter-attention constitutes a new type of consciousness that, although on first enquiry may seem automated, is in fact deeply embodied.

Hayles identifies these two contemporary modes of attention: deep-attention—the type of perception that is required to read a book or sit an exam, for instance—and hyper-attention—a form of counter-attention that is required when a person switches between different tabs and tasks on a computer. While the mode of attention one uses is largely unconscious—a person is generally not aware that they are using deep-attention or a mode of counter-attention like hyper-attention while performing a task—the general environment that a person inhabits, the tasks they perform on a repeated basis, and the people and behaviours they encounter daily dictate, inform, and cultivate the routine and instinctive mode of attention they will favour. Hayles notes the difference in the two attention types as follows: "[Deep attention involves] concentrating on a single object for long periods… having a high tolerance for focus times,[75] while hyper-attention involves "switching rapidly among different tasks, preferring multiple information streams, seeking high levels of stimulation, and having low tolerance for boredom."[76]

Counter-attention is developed through repetition and habit formed as a result of interaction with mediatised environments and is a direct consequence of the pervasive impact of digital culture. But, as Grosz proposes,

> habit does not arrest or mechanize, or reduce consciousness to unconsciousness or automatism; rather, it brings about a new kind of consciousness, one not aware of itself but prone to act, that is activated by the possibility of acting, that knows but cannot know it

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[74] Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*, 3.
[75] N. Katherine Hayes, "Hyper and Deep Attention: The Generational Divide in Cognitive Modes," *Profession*, no. 13 (2007), 187.
[76] Ibid.

knows. It is an anti-Cartesian intelligence, one that doesn't know but acts, that has effects, produces actions and sensations. It is as close to instinct as possible, yet with the possibility of invention, newness, transformation and learning, an intuition acted rather than known.[77]

Repeated actions, interactions, and systems, and the habits formed as a result of this, contribute to the cultivation of counter-attention. But, rather than understand the habitual behaviours that occur in counter-attention as a negative or dormant mode of perception, it is actually a more embodied mode of experiencing the world, as outlined above by Grosz. It is a type of consciousness that is "prone to act." For that reason, contemporary theatre is seeking to offer a more affective aesthetic experience through multi-form means in order to tap into digital culture in its various manifestations and the type of counter-attention it elicits.

Establishing an affective encounter in SSP is used as a way to connect to modes of counter-attention. This is achieved by foregrounding the immersive bodily impact of the performance and focusing on the embodied response of the spectator, rather than focusing on the conceptual connection of the spectator to an elaborate narrative. It is therefore the argument of the thesis that SSP engages with digital culture by employing primarily multi-form means to impact the spectating body affectively, rather than conceptually through a highly structured narrative, in order to appeal to forms of counter-attention by simultaneously imitating and challenging the immersive strategies used by new communication technologies. For instance, in Chapter Five I will explore Nigel Barrett and Louise Mari's performance *The Body*. In this performance there is very little dialogue used and no discernible narrative. The communication used is primarily affective in form. The tools used to emit this affective transmission range from the use of images, tableaus, film, movement sequences, sound, audience props, and lights. Each of these elements is employed to impact the spectating body in the present moment; for example, at one stage the spectator is hooked up to a heart monitor, and the sound of their heart and accompanying rhythmic lighting fill the space along with all of the

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[77] Elizabeth Grosz, "Habit Today: Ravaisson, Bergson, Deleuze and Us," *Body & Society* 19, no. 2 & 3 (2013), 223.

other heartbeat sounds. In this way, *The Body* demonstrates a strong appeal to modes of counter-attention by employing multi-form means, multiple channels of information, and a distinct attempt to deliver high levels of bodily stimulation.

In setting out the characteristics of postdramatic theatre, Hans-Thies Lehmann charts the following developments that move text-based theatre towards a more experiential, affective mode of performance: "more presence than representation, more shared than communicated experience, more process than product, more manifestation than signification, more energetic impulse than information."[78] Lehmann connects these developments to the pervasiveness of technology, media, and the emergence of new communication technologies. These characteristics place a considerable emphasis on the experiential aspects of performance influenced by digital culture and promote the establishment of affective encounter within performance. Similarly, speaking about postdigital performance, Matthew Causey remarks that,

> It is important to recognise not only the new conceptual models of postdigital performance, but also the changes to spectatorship and audience formation observed in the binge-watching phenomenon of streaming media programming. *The Sopranos* (HBO, 1999-2007), *The Wire* (HBO, 2002-2008), *Breaking Bad* (AMC, 2008-2013) are representative of the multi-season programs often watched in extended viewing sessions in a techno-performative immersion.[79]

Here, Causey connects the new modes of performance developed in response to postdigital culture and the type of spectatorship involved in the act of binge-watching television programmes.

A recent study which explored the motivations for binge-watching, conducted by human behaviour scientists Hongjin Shim and Ki Joon Kim, found that there are two main psychological traits which are exclusively associated with intensive TV viewing. They are: (1) Sensation

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[78] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (London: Routledge, 2006), 85.
[79] Causey, "Postdigital Performance," 438.

seeking—a "desire for captivating stimuli in order to reach optimal arousal levels"[80], and (2) A strong desire for cognitive stimulation—a "tendency to engage in elaborated thinking."[81] Although Shim and Joon Kim do not make this connection in the article, these two psychological traits appear to directly correlate with Hayles' attention mode theory of deep-attention (the need for cognition) and hyper-attention (sensation seeking). According to Shim and Joon Kim:

> High sensation seekers tend to select media contents that are exciting and stimulating rather than ones that are dull and placid in order to elevate the arousal level (Edwards, 1991; Zuckerman, 1994). Such individuals are also more prone to excessive TV viewing because they continuously seek out arousing stimuli/contents on shows while simultaneously engaging in other activities (e.g., changing channels and talking to friends), thereby gratifying their sensation-seeking desires. These studies suggest that binge-watching can also serve as an arousing stimulus, especially for high sensation seekers. Thus, the motivations for binge-watching are more likely to induce stronger additive effects on binge-watching behavior in combination with sensation seeking.[82]

Shim and Joon Kim's study explains that there is positive correlation between the psychological trait of sensation seeking and binge-watching. Moreover, the effects of binge-watching were more pronounced in people with this psychological trait. What I am attempting unpack here in the work of Lehmann, Causey, and the Shim and Joon Kim study, is the link between the type of counter-attention that online platforms demand and also seek to precipitate in their users and binge-watching. The way users engage in both activities is symptomatic of the larger digital culture model. In simple terms, the internet, social media, smartphones, new communication methods, applications, and certain TV programmes frequently invite a type of usership that focuses on sensation-driven experiences and affective engagement in order to prolong the amount of time spent interacting with that platform. Lastly, I am making the claim that SSP mimics these counter-

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[80] Hongjin Shim and Ki Joon Kim, "An Exploration of the Motivations for Binge-watching and the Role of Individual Differences," *Computers in Human Behavior*, Volume 82 (May 2018), 95.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.

attention inducing methods that TV streaming, social media, and personal media devices use to engage their users for extended periods of time. SSP appeals to the spectator in the same manner—using multiple channels of information and offering high levels of stimulation, particularly directed towards the body—in order to deliver its immersive effect.

In a historiographic study detailing various developments within European theatre and culture, Erika Fischer-Lichte suggests that a shift occurred in European societies' perceptions, bodies, and languages as a consequence of substantial developments in art, industry, and culture at the turn of the twentieth century. Amongst other factors, she cites the impact of Impressionism, Cubism, railways, automobiles, the industrial innovations of Frederick Taylor, the adoption of conveyor belts in industry, and reform of housing, nutrition, and hygiene. Fischer-Lichte concludes that these developments "required the human body to adapt its movements to the given rhythm of a machine."[83] In order to illustrate these changes, she states that, "Cultural change can be described as a change in the triadic relation formed by perception, body, and language."[84] With this, Fischer-Lichte advances the idea that a binding and dynamic relationship exists between our bodies and our surroundings; each must continually adapt to the other in order to thrive. Therefore, as digital culture continues to engage the population, so too will it affect perception, bodies, and language, requiring society to adapt to the given rhythm of a mediatised, technology-driven environment.

One of the ways this rhythm is illustrated is in emergent forms of counter-attention. The prevalence of new communication technologies, such as the internet, email, and social media, places additional demands on our cognition and thus introduces a significant challenge to the ways in which we delegate and direct our attention. Consequently, counter forms of attention have emerged, such as "hyper-attention" and modes of low-level attention similar to trance, which are maintained and precipitated by long periods of time interacting with technology. Accordingly,

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[83] Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre: A European Perspective* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997), 5.
[84] Ibid., 9.

performances must respond in unique and experimental ways to recognise this shift.

Fischer-Lichte's proposal of the triadic relation is fundamental to this study. Throughout the thesis, I will make the case that SSP is a response to the current cultural context of digital culture and the transition towards postdigital culture. By engaging with the operational structures of digital culture and focusing on the impact on the triadic relation of perception, body, and language, SSP communicates to its audience in a largely affective language on a plane of sensation as that is the primary language of the digital. Speaking on the subject of societies of control and capitalism in spring 1990 (this is, of course, prior to the full impact of digital culture on Western societies), Deleuze foresaw the following:

> Maybe speech and communication have become corrupted. They're thoroughly permeated by money—and not by accident, by their very nature. Creating has always been something very different from communicating. The key thing might be to create vacuoles of non-communication, circuit breakers so we can elude control.[85]

In a similar vein, Matthew Causey applies conversant ideas relating to "thinking digitally" and the postdigital context:

> Within a postdigital context, artists conversant with the language and conceptual frameworks of the digital are thinking digitally in order to respond, engage, and critique the systems of control inherent in the omnipresent networks. If the notions of an unconstrained technologized subject as theorized in early cyber theory gave rise to ontological and aesthetic questions regarding the nature of performance and performativity, then there is a contemporary postdigital subjectivity that draws on performance as an apparatus to resist the systems of control.[86]

Therefore, in addition to engaging and mimicking the operational structures of information-intensive environments, there is an aspect of SSP that thinks digitally, employs performance as a

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[85] Gilles Deleuze, "Control and Becoming," in *Negotiations 1972 - 1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (Columbia University Press, 1995), 175.
[86] Causey, "Postdigital Performance," 431.

tool to expose and resist control, and resists the language of capitalism in favour of asignifying, affective communication. Each case study in the thesis explores a different aspect of this.

In sum, the establishment of affective encounter in SSP is used as a way to connect to modes of counter-attention by foregrounding the bodily impact of the performance and the embodied response of the spectator, rather than focusing on the conceptual connection of the spectator to a detailed narrative. It is the argument of this thesis that SSP aims to engage with the systems of digital culture, in particular the use of affective communication, to extend the amount of time a person stays online. To carry out this intention, SSP uses multi-form, multi-media means to impact the spectating body affectively, rather than conceptually through a highly structured narrative, in order to appeal to forms of counter-attention by simultaneously imitating and challenging the strategies used by new communication technologies.

The reason I have chosen to analyse *All That Fall*, *Man of Valour*, and *The Body* in this respect is that each of these productions engages and responds to digital culture in a different way and to a different degree. Each of the case studies in Chapters Two through Four displays an increased degree of engagement from its previous chapter, with Chapter Four's analysis of *The Body* marking a stark and unmistakable engagement with digital and postdigital culture. Chapter Two explores *All That Fall*, a radio drama adaptation which reflects on the occasions of mass consumption alongside isolated, intimate experiences within contemporary contexts. Chapter Three considers a performance, *Man of Valour*, which is heavily influenced by the aesthetic and structure of action films and video games, and plays on the habitual and repetitive user behaviours that are pervasive within the online platforms of digital culture. And finally, Chapter Four examines the performance of posthumanism and the use of immersion to enact affirmative politics relating to nonhuman bodies in Nigel Barrett and Louise Mari's *The Body*. It invites the audience to examine and reevaluate their human identity alongside the nonhuman through affective communication so that the message is felt before a direct reflection of the information can occur. These three chapters

demonstrate a growing influence of digital culture and postdigital culture as well as a growing appropriation and application of its operational structures in order to deepen the immersive potential of the performance.

The Sensory Spectacle Performance Model

Here, I will provide an introductory outline of the SSP model I have developed and proceed to define and detail the processes involved in it. The SSP model demonstrates how the affective encounter between the performance and the spectator is set up. Once this encounter is established, the potential for a becoming and a transformative, immersive experience is opened. The first point of the model is an adjustment to the traditional theatrical frame. Once this adjustment takes place, the anticipated conventions and established roles associated with the traditional theatrical frame are removed, and a process of deterritorialisation is set in motion. Deterritorialisation can be understood as a disruption to the processes that attempt to regulate and organise social space; prime among these processes is the use of framing to organise experience in everyday life. As a result of the change of frames and deterritorialisation, SSP situates a spectator in a space of virtuality—a space of potentiality, a space for each spectator to actively connect with the performance in an embodied and imaginative manner, offering and combining their own material with the production.

The cumulative effect of the model results in the spectator being invited to enter into a becoming with the performance. In other words, both sides enter into a process of change and exchange. Grosz observes that becoming occurs "because life is contingent on harnessing materiality...it is forced to encounter what opposes it and is capable of undoing what it has been and is in order to become more and other."[87] So, through the processes demonstrated in the model, SSPs seek to compel the spectator into a process of transformation through becoming. As a result, each part—the performance and the spectator—has become more and other, affective and affected.

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[87] Elizabeth Grosz, "Bergson, Deleuze and the Becoming of Unbecoming," *Parallax* 11, no. 2 (2005), 11.

Although becoming never reaches an "end goal" per se—becoming is always a process, or rather a number of processes that are continuous, transitory, and rhizomatic in nature—it does enact a qualitative change on the encountering bodies as a consequence of the becoming process. Following these processes, the spectator learns new rules and conventions of the adjusted frame and becomes reterritorialised. In other words, the processes that "systemise and organise" one's social space are resumed, and the act of framing, understood as the organisation of experience, can proceed without interruption.

In the sections that follow I will break down the model into its constituent parts: Frame and Deterritorialisation, Virtuality, Reterritorialisation, and Becoming. For each part, I will define the processes involved and suggest examples that illustrate the way in which they operate. As the thesis advances, I will unpack each performance case study under these headings to further explore the ways in which my chosen SSPs operate.

1. *Frame and Deterritorialisation*

To begin to explore the model in a more detailed manner, I will first address the notion of the frame as it pertains to the theatrical transaction. A change in the traditional theatrical frame is the initial force that propels the SSP model. According to sociologist Erving Goffman, a frame can be conceived as the organisation of experience. In his essay "The Theatrical Frame," Goffman outlines eight ways that directors, actors, designers, and audiences tend to follow certain unspoken rules so that the theatrical transaction may occur without interruption or instruction.[88] According to Goffman, a theatrical frame creates anticipation of unspoken theatrical conventions that a theatregoer associates with that frame which might include collecting your ticket from the box office, remaining silent for the duration of the show, laughing at parts that are intentionally comical, applauding when the performance has finished, and so on. In other words, depending on the frame

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[88] Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, 124-155.

that is presented to the theatregoer, they know, most often unconsciously, how to respond and behave. In sum, Goffman proposes that we are able to decipher a frame through previous experience or learned information, acknowledge the rules and conventions that are associated with the frame, and respond accordingly.

Deleuze proposes a similar concept to the frame which he calls "territory" or "territorialisation." In reference to this, Christa Albrecht-Crane describes territory as functioning "through processes that organize and systemize social space."[89] For Deleuze, the frame is "the first gesture of art,"[90] as Grosz puts it, and this is underlined by Deleuze and Guattari when they state, "Art takes a bit of chaos in a frame in order to form a composed chaos that becomes sensory, or from which it extracts a chaoid sensation as variety."[91,92] Again, one can notice the prevailing idea that within every territory, within every frame, there are rules and conventions that are expected to be followed so that one may receive and respond to the qualities being communicated within the frame. Grosz develops her own concept of the frame by relating it to Deleuzian notions of virtuality, architecture, and art by stating,

> The emergence of the 'frame' is the condition of all the arts and is the particular contribution of architecture to the taming of the virtual, the territorialization of the uncontrollable forces of the earth. It is the frame that constitutes painting and cinema just as readily as architecture; it is the architectural force of framing that liberates the qualities of objects or events that come to constitute the substance, the matter, of the art-work.[93]

So, from this, we may understand "frame" as a way to order the artwork, a way to release and liberate its qualities so that it becomes recognisable to an observer. Due to the fact that, as we will see in the following section, virtuality offers a multitude of potentials; the frame brackets the chaos

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[89] Christa Albrecht-Crane, "Style, Stutter," in *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, ed. Charles J. Stivale (Chesham: Acumen, 2005), 122.
[90] Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, 8.
[91] Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 206.
[92] To clarify the use of "chaoid" here, Deleuze and Guattari explain, "chaos has three daughters, depending on the plane that cuts through it: these are the *Chaoids-art,* science, and philosophy-as forms of thought or creation. We call *Chaoids* the realities produced on the planes that cut through the chaos in different ways." *What is Philosophy?*, 208.
[93] Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, 11.

so that it is accessible to an observer, so that the virtuality can become an actuality. But before that occurs, there is a period of vulnerability. With a change of frames, particularly from a recognisable frame to an unknown frame, comes a process of *de*territorialisation.

In setting out the operations of the frame, Goffman highlights the vulnerabilities of perception with regard to framing and outlines the conditions which may incite delusion and deception: "there are weaknesses inherent in this very framing process. It follows, then, that whatever the vulnerabilities of framing, so too will our sense of what is going on to be found vulnerable."[94] If we interpret the vulnerability of the frame through Deleuze we can say, within every territory, within every organised social space, the opposing processes of *de*territorialisation and *re*territorialisation are at work. In a theatre setting, by changing the traditional frame, a performance is enacting deterritorialisation thereby disorganising and de-systemising the space. In other words, deterritorialisation in a theatrical space is caused by a disruption of the traditional theatrical frame, which marks a change of rules concerning the manner in which information and qualities are communicated and received. Chapter Four will examine *The Body* by Nigel Barrett and Louise Mari. At the beginning of the performance, each spectator is asked to hook themselves up to a heart monitor and is then presented with a reborn doll—a lifelike doll that is the same weight as a baby and, for the this particular show, has been fitted with a beating heart. The reborn doll stays with the spectator for the duration of the performance. This disrupts the traditional theatrical frame in a number of ways. The heart monitor exposes the spectator's biological, physical response to the performance. The spectator is physically connected to the performance. Moreover, *The Body* asks the audience to look after a doll that looks, weighs, and feels like a real baby. These two details of the performance interrupt the organisation of experience; there are no set conventions in the theatre for how to respond to these particular situations other than to "play along." But, by

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[94] Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience,* 439.

playing along, the spectator engages with an alternative frame of organisation where they do not yet know the rules that govern the social space.

SSP adapts the traditional theatrical frame so that there can be little anticipation of how the performance, particularly the spectator-performance relationship, will proceed. For instance, an SSP may remove or adapt the knowable structures that Goffman refers to whereby the audience apprehends the performance by drawing on the various points of information—voice, costume, design, lighting, props, gesture, and movement—as outlined above. In doing so, the audience cannot anticipate the rules and conventions that operate within the given frame and thereby enter a process of deterritorialisation.

There are many forms that the alternative theatrical frame can take and there are many ways in which each of these adjustments impel the process of deterritorialisation to take place. These processes will be analysed in a more detailed manner in Chapter Two, Three, and Four, but for now, we will move towards the next process of virtuality.

2. *Virtuality*

The material things that we encounter each day can be understood as an actual. Virtuality is a force of potential that surrounds every actual. It is part of the process an actual went through to become so—before something comes into material being, it exists as a virtuality, and this virtuality continues on as a sort of cloud that surrounds the actual. If we conceive the material things that we encounter in real-life as "actualities," then we can relate these actualities to their respective "virtualities" that made them possible. Virtuality is the potentiality, "the unsaid of the statement, the unthought of the thought."[95] Deleuze describes the virtual in the following terms:

Every actual surrounds itself with a cloud of virtual images. The cloud is composed of a

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[95] Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (London & New York: Routledge, 1995), 239, n14.

series of more or less extensive or coextensive circuits, along which the virtual images are distributed, and around which they run. These virtuals vary in kind as in their degree of proximity from the actual particles by which they both emitted and absorbed.[96]

For this reason, the virtuality of something can never be excised from its actuality; both are "real" in the sense that they are two parts of the same thing. There is a difference to be noted in the notions of realisation and actualisation, virtual and actual. Virtuality itself does not occupy a material space in the real. It is a "momentary indeterminate force" that is in the process of becoming an actuality.[97] Virtuality is a space (I am using space here to infer a notional space like the non-space of the internet or the storage cloud, and so on), where the possibilities and likelihood for potentialities are promoted. This leads to a distillation into an actuality. Once this difference in notions is understood, it is more important to concentrate on the inextricable and symbiotic relationship they share and to identify the force that each part exacts.

Virtuality is a compelling notion that can be applied to all modes of theatre and performance in some form. In nearly every theatre show, there is room left, if not an explicit reliance upon virtuality. By this, I mean theatre explicitly relies upon the process of potentialities and imaginative engagement that each spectator will engage with before arriving at the actuality of thought. Comparatively, the material stage is composed of actualities surrounded by the virtualities that that made them possible. The performer's movements and actions are informed by the virtualities that brought them into being. Virtuality contributes to the SSP model by promoting the spectator's individual engagement with the performance. For instance, *Man of Valour* deterritorialises the spectator by amputating structure in three main areas of the piece—logical language, specific setting, and facial expression. Following this, the spectator is encouraged to fill the void with their own potentialities in order to create an actuality of a thought, an idea. This step, this creative participation in the performance, brings them closer into the affective encounter.

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[96] Gilles Deleuze, "The Actual and the Virtual," in *Dialogues II*, ed. Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet (London: Continuum, 2006), 148.
[97] Grosz, "Habit Today: Ravaisson, Bergson, Deleuze and Us," 230.

Because they are now in direct dialogue with the performance, a becoming can take place.

As we have noted, there is a process that changes a virtuality into an actuality. This process is becoming. Therefore, following on from virtuality, we reach the process of becoming in the SSP model. Becoming is the immersive arc in the aesthetic experience, the point of connection between the aesthetic object of performance and the spectator, the pinnacle of the affective encounter. Both sides, the performance and the spectator, engage in a process of transformation, of becoming. As Grosz observes, "Becoming is an encounter between bodies which releases something from each and, in the process, makes real a virtuality, a series of enabling and transforming possibilities."[98]

3. *Becoming*

In direct contrast to the prevailing notion of fixed identities and static beings and objects, all of Deleuze's theories are based on notions of *becoming* and a plane of immanence. A prime example can be found in the common use of the term "human being" to refer to a stable, invariable, and equable subject. Contrast this with Deleuze's understanding of the human as a continually changing, transformative multiplicity, or what might instead be termed a "human becoming." Becoming is a concept that highlights the variation, difference, and relations that occur between all things in the world, be they human or nonhuman, material or immaterial, subject or object. In fact, it is this concept that challenges these dualisms, because each "side" (as some other philosophies regard them) is in communication with the other and thereby engaging in a becoming, exchanging, diversifying, modifying, differentiating.

Becoming is defined as "that which is changing, what is contingent, in constant process and flux."[99] Thus, becoming should be considered a rhizomatic process. Deleuze and Guattari develop the concept of rhizomatic processes by saying, "A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in

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[98] Grosz, *Space, Time and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies*, 134-5.

[99] Dan Smith, "Becoming," in *A Dictionary of Continental Philosophy*, ed. John Protevi (Yale University Press, 2006), 60.

the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo.* The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the verb 'to be' but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, 'and ... and ...and…'"[100] Becoming should thereby be regarded as a rhizomatic *process* rather than an end result or goal. Although becoming may cause a qualitative change in the bodies that engage in the process, the process of becoming continues beyond that particular encounter due to its rhizomatic nature, the "and ... and ...and...". Patty Sotirin suggests in *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts* that,

> Becoming explodes the ideas about what we are and what we can be beyond the categories that seem to contain us: beyond the boundaries separating human beings from animal, man from woman, child from adult, micro from macro, and even perceptible and understandable from imperceptible and incomprehensible…So becoming offers a radical conception of what life does.[101]

Becoming should not, however, be understood as a form of mimicry. The outcome of a becoming process is not to become "like." Rather, it is a process of change on both sides, as Deleuze and Parnet seek to underline in the following:

> To become is never to imitate, to 'do like,' nor to conform to a model, whether it's of justice or truth. There is no terminus from which you set out, none which you arrive at or which you ought to arrive at. Nor are there two terms which are exchanged. The question, 'What are you becoming?' is particularly stupid. For as someone becomes, what he becomes changes as much as himself.[102]

Deleuze and Parnet's note of "What are you becoming?" is of particular interest. In mentioning becoming as part of my SSP model, a question will arise, however unhelpful, as Deleuze and Parnet clearly outline, regarding what exactly is the spectator when they participate in an SSP. Are the

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[100] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 25. [Emphasis in original.]

[101] Patty Sotirin, "Becoming-Woman," in *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, ed. Charles J. Stivale (Chesham: Acumen, 2005), 99.

[102] Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 2.

performance and the spectator becoming-animal? Becoming-woman? Becoming-equal? Becoming-imperceptible? Becoming-capable? Becoming-minor?[103]...and so on. The immersive point of the aesthetic experience, the apex of the becoming between the performance and the spectator, is felt as a result of deep encounter with the sensation of the performance. The spectator is exposed to the sensation of the performance and begins to communicate with it through the means of affective communication. In other words, the performance emits sensation through extra-textual, asignifying channels and the spectator is primed to receive and reply through the same means. This amounts to a becoming-sensation. Both sides, the performance and the spectator, have undergone an exchange and qualitative transformation. Both sides emerge "more and other."[104]

To further illustrate this moment, we can look once again to *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. Deleuze describes the process of becoming in the sensation in reference to observing certain types of paintings as follows:

> I become in the sensation, one through the other, one in the other. And at the limit, it is the same body which, being both subject and object, gives and receives the sensation. As a spectator, I experience the sensation only by entering the painting, by reaching the unity of the sensing and the sensed...it is in the body, even the body of an apple. Color is in the body, sensation is in the body, and not in the air. Sensation is what is painted. What is painted on the canvas is the body, not insofar as it is represented as an object, but insofar as it is experienced as sustaining *this* sensation.[105]

While this passage distinctly refers to affectively-potent artworks, one may notice the similarities with the form of immersive experience and affective encounter that I have been describing in this chapter and will expand upon in the subsequent chapters of performance analysis. Becoming in SSP is a form of unity of "the sensing and sensed." The immersive point of the aesthetic experience is felt as a result of deep encounter with the sensation of the performance and experiencing it as

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[103] These are all references to various becoming in Deleuze's, Deleuze and Guattari's, and Deleuze-inspired texts.
[104] Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, 23.
[105] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, 34-5.

"sustaining this sensation." Therefore, while it is undesirable to label what the spectator and the performance "are becoming" in an SSP as per Deleuze and Parnet's instruction, the *overall process* of becoming resembles most closely a form of "becoming-sensation."

The driving force of the SSP model is its reliance on frames and the resulting process of deterritorialisation. The cumulative effect of the model engages the spectator in an affective encounter in the performance and enters the spectator into a becoming. Therefore, the SSP model seeks to compel the spectator in a process of becoming through various strategies. As a result of the encounter between the SSP and the spectator, each part has been affective and affected, each part is changed.

4. *Reterritorialisation*

As I have touched upon, territorialisation is defined by the process that order and systemise social space and the world we live in. Framing, the organisation of experience, is one of these ordering and systemising processes. Deterritorialisation occurs when a disruption occurs in the social space, thereby disordering a person's view of the world and challenging their ability to use framing to understand and know how to respond and behave. A change of frames challenges a person's social proficiency. They cannot draw on previous experience and instead must expose themselves to the social space before they can build up a new set of rules and conventions they can associate with this new frame. The process by which a person learns the rules that govern the social space, is called reterritorialisation. Reterritorialisation takes place within the SSP model when the spectator learns the rules, intensities, and sensations contained within the newly adjusted frame. Deleuze maintains that territory is in a constant process of entering deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation.

Reterritorialisation is a return to an ability to organise experience using learned and relatable structures as a guide. I have already detailed above the processes which disrupt this organisation of territory, namely a change of frames resulting in a process of deterritorialisation.

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After deterritorialisation, and the virtual potentialities that emerge from that course of disorganisation, a process of reterritorialisation will begin whereby the new rules that organise space are learned and chaos is contained once more. In the following passage, Grosz comments on experience and organization. The passage can be reprocessed to apply an overview of the processes at work in the SSP model that sets up an immersive affective encounter, the potential for becoming, and return to order through reterritorialisation, only to change frames once again and continue the cycle:

> Any experience, any organs, any desire is capable of categorization and organization, but only at the expense of its continuity with the rest of the body and experience, and only at the cost of separating oneself from immersion in its complexity and intensity. To submit one's pleasure and desires to enumeration and definitive articulation is to submit to the processes and becomings, to entities, locations, and boundaries, to become welded to an organizing nucleus of fantasy and desire whose goal is not simply pleasure and expansion, but control, and tying of the new models of what is already known, the production of endless repetition, endless variation of the same.[106]

While Grosz is referring particularly to desire and queer subjectivity in this essay, she is more widely describing a move from the liberating absence of organisation and categorisation through which affective encounter can be engaged with, toward the search for meaning, categorisation, and organisation. In doing so, a spectator submits herself to containment and control, which is representative of a reterritorialisation.

By proposing this model I do not mean to imply that each SSP is the same, or indeed to provide a fixed, prescriptive confinement for the potential encounter. On the contrary, I wish to explore the conditions that set up the potential for an extremely subjective and singular immersive experience, just as the process of becoming is defined by these qualities. Deleuze observes this

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[106] Elizabeth Grosz, "Experimental Desire: Rethinking Queer Subjectivity," in *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader*, ed. Donald E. Hall and Annamarie Jagose (London Routledge, 2012), 205.

particular detail in relation to encounter which, as already discussed, is what introduces the potential for the immersive becoming in SSP to occur. He explains that there are no methods, rules, or recipes a person can put in place to set up an encounter. To some extent, it occurs in its own time, organically. However, Deleuze does suggest that an encounter requires a great deal of preparation:

> To encounter is to find, to capture, to steal...it is that which creates not something mutual, but an asymmetrical block, an a-parallel evolution, nuptials, always 'outside' and 'between' [...] There is no method for finding other than long preparation...a very lengthy preparation, yet no method , nor rules, nor recipes.[107]

What I am seeking to establish by developing the SSP model is the types of preparations, the modes of performative strategy that aim to set up an affective encounter and set up the potential for a becoming with the performance and a consequent immersive experience. In simple terms, change of frame, deterritorialisation, and virtuality are preparations put into place by the creators of SSP in various ways—alterative communication systems, change to the defined roles of spectator/performer, seat configuration, use of interactive props and devices, and so on. Affective encounter and becoming are intended outcomes of the performance. They are visceral, affective, transformative, and immersive forces that the spectator is invited to engage with in order to feel the full impact of the performance; the intended sensory immersive aesthetic experience. The cognitive or narrative meaning of the performance, if sought, is derived largely by sieving through the resonances that are built as a result of the affective encounter and the becoming.

The SSP model that I propose in this thesis is cyclical in action. Although I have developed a model to demonstrate the various processes involved in an SSP, I acknowledge that there are infinite processes that are ignited by the action that occur outside the cycle of the model; thus is the nature of rhizomatic processes. Ultimately, the model attempts to capture the conditions and forces

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[107] Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 7, 8.

that are present for an immersive SSP to be successful. It does not rule out the processes that precede and proceed from the model, but limits the focus for the confines of this study to explore the aesthetic experience within the boundaries of SSP.

The process of becoming is not the conclusion of the model, because becoming is constantly in flux in a continuous process. However, I contend that the process of becoming is the defining arc of the experience and leaves the bodies, that is, the body of the performance and the body of the spectator, affected. In his consideration of Deleuzian philosophy and its applications in art, Daniel Smith examines the molecular, transformative potential of art. When one moves away from considering art as representation, then the proposals of art as a catalyst for change and as a site of affective activation can be unpacked: "To say that the aim of art is not to represent the world, but to present a sensation (which is itself a composition of forces, an intensive synthesis of differential intensities) is to say that every sensation, every work of art, is *singular,* and that the conditions of sensation are at the same time the conditions of the production of the new."[108] I wish to connect Smith's point to the affective potential and transformative becoming that each SSP seeks to offer the spectator. SSP is a mode of performance that deviates from the representational model of traditional theatre. It aims to elicit a primarily bodily apprehension from the audience. To return to Deleuze's description of affectively-engaged art, "The work of art leaves the domain of representation to become "experience."[109]

In summary, the SSP model should be understood as follows: There is a change made to the traditional theatrical frame which requires a different organisation of experience from the conventional theatrical frame; this causes deterritorialisation to take place. This change can be marked by a significant alteration to the stage/auditorium/performance space arrangement, an amputation of logical language, a disruption to the expected audience etiquette, a challenge made to

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[108] Daniel Smith, *Essays on Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 99.
[109] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 56.

the defined roles of performer and spectator, or a combination of all of these aspects. Deterritorialisation is a disruption; it marks a change in how the spectator perceives and experiences the performance by indicating a change of rules that govern it. Deterritorialisation promotes a space for virtuality. Virtuality is an intermediate force of potentiality caught between deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. It is a place where the creative input and engagement of the spectator connects with the performance and aids the onset of the affective encounter. Reterritorialisation occurs when the spectator learns the new rules and the sensation contained within the new frame. The defining arc of the SSP's immersive experience is the process of becoming through which the body of the spectator and the body of the performance are affected and qualitatively altered through an affective encounter. This transformation is accessed and meaning is distilled from it through the resonances and reverberations that live on in the body of the spectator.

Within these processes of framing, deterritorialisation, and virtuality, an affective encounter is established and a process known as "becoming" begins. According to Deleuze, becoming refers to two or more bodies, which in the case of this research is the body of the performance and the body of the spectator, losing an old quality of itself through the encounter and consequently gaining a new quality. Becoming is a dynamic relationship of loss and gain, change and potential. Becoming has a qualitative and transformative effect on the spectator. Once the organisation and rules of the new frame and territory have been established and learned, reterritorialisation takes place, which is a return to order, a bracketing of chaos. The SSP model begins with a change of frame. Or rather, it is a constant cyclical process that is propelled into action by a change of frames and also acts as a catalyst for many other processes to occur outside of the processes identified in this model.

Conclusion

Performance scholars, particularly those within the field of digital/postdigital culture, posthumanism, and performance and technology research, have begun to explore certain styles

which aim to capitalise on bodily experience and are turning their attention towards the technologies that may assist in enhancing the felt aspects of performance. Braidotti contends that:

> Contemporary information and communication technologies exteriorize and duplicate electronically the nervous system. This has prompted a shift in our perception; the visual modes of representation have been replaced by sensorial- neuronal modes of stimulation. As Patricia Clough puts it, we have become 'biomediated' bodies.[110]

Braidotti's statement raises many questions not only about an audience's experience and perception of performance but also about the way in which bodies interact with the mediatised world. Her proposal is certainly reflected in the considerable similarities that contemporary communication technologies and SSP share.

In this chapter, I have introduced a performance model which demonstrates the processes of SSP. In the coming chapters of performance analysis, I will refer to this model and relate it to each case study, considering each performance's immersive potential. What I argue in this thesis is that the performance model I have developed for SSP operates in similar ways to the techniques and strategies of digital culture. Indeed, drawing on Fischer-Lichte's triadic relation, it is a reflection of digital culture's impact on perceptions, bodies, and languages. Many comparisons between SSP and digital interactions and their effects will be illustrated in the coming chapters. The responsibility of performance to react and comment on the mediatised world that we inhabit is apparent.

The principal focus of this thesis is on the aesthetic experience of the spectator. I will use Dufrenne's phenomenology as a mode of philosophical attention to examine the lived and felt experience of SSP which aims to create sensory immersion through performance by engaging with, and also challenging the strategies and modalities of digital culture. This thesis will examine the

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[110] Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 90.

manner in which various SSPs consider changing modes of perception, which I will propose in this study is linked to our digital interactions and mediatised environments. This introductory chapter is intended to provide an introduction to the concept of SSP and contextualise it with reference to past practitioners' influence and contributions to the current form. Chapters Two, Three, and Four will conduct an analysis of three different SSPs.

Chapter 2| Sounding Affect in Pan Pan Theatre's *All That Fall*

> Vibrations, waves, oscillations, resonances affect living bodies, not for any higher purpose but for pleasure alone. Living beings are vibratory beings: vibration is their mode of differentiation, the way they enhance and enjoy the forces of the earth itself.[1]
>
> —Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*

> Sound is intrinsically and unignorably relational: it emanates, propagates, communicates, vibrates, and agitates; it leaves a body and enters others; it binds and unhinges, harmonizes and traumatizes; it sends the body moving, the mind dreaming, the air oscillating. It seemingly eludes definition, while having profound effect.[2]
>
> —Brandon LaBelle, *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art*

In the introductory chapter, I touched upon the subjects of digital culture, postdigital aesthetics, and Erika Fischer-Lichte's triadic relation. I rehearsed the proposition that, with every significant change that occurs within a society and culture, a consequent significant change also occurs in the perceptions, bodies, and languages of that population. With this is in mind, we can view one of the most notable aesthetic gestures of postdigital culture to be that of "copy and paste," as proposed by Matthew Causey:[3] a reaction to information-intensive environments that represents a move toward thinking, relating, creating in a digital manner, as per the triadic relation. In this chapter, I will consider my first case study—Pan Pan Theatre's production *All That Fall,* which premiered in 2011 at the Project Arts Centre in Dublin. In line with this "copy and paste" aesthetic, *All That Fall* is an adaptation of Samuel Beckett's 1957 radio play by the same name. However, instead of adapting the radio recording into a performable stage script, Pan Pan curate the conditions in which the radio play is heard, or more aptly in this case, the way in which the play is *experienced*.

In an interview with Fintan Walsh for Irish Theatre Magazine in 2011, co-director of Pan Pan Gavin Quinn noted that Pan Pan's adaptation of Samuel Beckett's radio play *All That Fall* was

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[1] Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, 33.
[2] Brandon LaBelle, *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art* (New York, London: Continuum, 2008), ix.
[3] Causey, "Postdigital Performance."

not concerned exclusively with meaning but rather with placing a strong emphasis on the performance's overall affective potential. According to Quinn, Pan Pan wished to open a space in *All That Fall* in which "You don't have to understand everything. You can feel things."[4] *All That Fall* presents the audience with a multi-form performance space in which programmed sound, diegetic lighting design, and a sculpture formed by audience members are the main points of information, as opposed to a set stage with physically present actor bodies. In this way, the regular conventions for communication with, and comprehension of, the performance space are altered to encourage affective encounter, a largely "felt" comprehension of the play.

Samuel Beckett wrote *All That Fall* in 1956 under commission by the BBC. Following its broadcast in 1957, Beckett indicated that it should remain in the medium of radio and should not be adapted for stage. In his opinion, a stage adaptation would remove the unique characteristics of radio which he had adeptly honed in his radio plays. Beckett maintained that the play was written "for voices, not bodies."[5] Beckett was opposed to "any form of stage adaptation with a view to its conversion into 'theatre' [...] Even the reduced visual dimension from the simplest and most static of readings [...] will be destructive of whatever quality it may have and which depends on the whole thing's *coming out of the dark*."[6] With regards to this point, the Pan Pan production remains largely faithful to Beckett's stipulations. Although the company transfer the play to a theatre space, it is not a stage adaptation in the traditional sense. The company do not replace the absent bodies of the radio play with moving actors on a stage, and equally, they do not substitute the imagined setting evoked by the play's sounds with an elaborate stage representation. Instead, Pan Pan create a multi-form, immersive listening environment from which the voices still come "out of the dark." In fact, in many ways they recreate an image of the past when families gathered around the radio to listen

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[4] Gavin Quinn, "Pan Pan: A Theatre of Ideas," *Irish Theatre Magazine*, last modified August 20, 2011, http://itmarchive.ie/web/Features/Current/Pan-Pan---A-theatre-of-ideas.aspx.html.
[5] Taken from a 1957 letter Samuel Beckett wrote to his American publisher, Barney Rosset. Quoted in Thomas F. van Laan, "*All That Fall* As 'A Play for Radio'," *Modern Drama* 28, no. 1 (1985), 38.
[6] Ibid.

to various programmes and dramas. It is nevertheless an adaptation. The image of the past that is evoked is then transposed and adapted into an immersive sensory experience which aims to accentuate the affective impact on the spectating bodies above the narrative understanding of the play.

In this chapter I wish to explore the elements of sound, light, and sculpture used in this production of *All That Fall*, focusing particularly on the immersive instances which deliver an affective experience of this radio play adaptation. This chapter is divided into five sections beginning with an introduction to *All That Fall*, noting specifically the ways in which this production engages with digital culture in a distinct way. Then, by applying Dufrenne's theory of aesthetic perception, I will begin to determine the mode of aesthetic experience that SSP seeks to offer the spectator. Once this mode of aesthetic experience has been characterised in relation to SSP, I hope it will further elucidate the definition I have put forward. Following this, I will turn my attention to the specific processes at work with regards to the SSP model. These processes come under the thematic headings of Rhythm and Deterritorialisation, Virtuality and the Outside, and Reterritorialisation and Becoming. *All That Fall* is a fitting example of what I have identified as an SSP in Chapter One. It bends the rules and conventions of traditional storytelling; it seeks to establish an affective encounter between the performance and the spectator and regularly opposes representation and meaning in a conventional sense. While there is a definite narrative to be followed in the performance, it is the felt experience rather than meaning that is foregrounded in this production. The company's gravitation toward the creation of a sensory and affective experience is evident in the design choices for *All That Fall*—the lighting, the composition of the space, the interaction of the audience with each other and with the space, and the individual sound experience curated for each spectator. Overall, this chapter will examine Pan Pan's *All That Fall* as an SSP, identifying particular techniques that contribute to an immersive becoming between the spectator and the performance and an affective experience of the play.

Pan Pan Theatre

Gavin Quinn and Aedín Cosgrove met as drama students at Trinity College Dublin, and formed Pan Pan Theatre in 1991. During their studies, their interest in the European avant-garde and experimental art practices developed, having a lasting effect on the theatre they make. Quinn and Cosgrove, inspired by the energetic impulses of the Italian Futurists, French directors like Jacques Copeau, Lugné-Poë, and Alfred Jarry,[7] as well as Artaud's radical concepts,[8] wanted to create a theatre company with an international, outward-looking attitude. In the early 90s, Ireland was still very much defined by its literary tradition. The theatre being produced positioned the text, and often by extension the playwright, as of primary importance. The general approach of many companies was to create the most powerful rendition and faithful interpretation of the text. According to Quinn,

> When we started off with the company, there were only 4 or 5 companies in Ireland at the time, and they all existed pretty much in the literary tradition, so from the work that we saw, and we're not criticising it, we thought it was good, but we didn't want to work for anybody else. We didn't want to work for the neck-down theatre, so we decided that we wanted to start our own company and make work that we wanted to see ourselves, and that develops into your own personality, your own company personality, or work personality.[9]

Importantly, Pan Pan are not against using established play texts from the literary tradition. In fact, much of their work from the past 28 years has been based on works written by canonical writers: Albee, Beckett, Chekhov, Ibsen, Seneca, Shakespeare, Sophocles, Strindberg, Wilde, and many others. However, Pan Pan treat these plays as sources, springboards for aesthetic and practice-based

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[7] Quinn, "Pan Pan: A Theatre of Ideas."

[8] Siobhán O'Gorman and Charlotte McIvor, eds., *Devised Performance in Irish Theatre: Histories and Contemporary Practice* (Carysfort Press, 2015), 161.

[9] Ibid.

conversations and experimentation, often turning them inside out through their delivery or by pairing them with a number of idiosyncratic reference materials.[10]

From the beginning, Pan Pan wanted to eschew this perceived fixation in Irish theatre with the text. Instead, Quinn and Cosgrove's focus was on exploring the interdisciplinary, collaborative opportunities within theatre and performance. They wanted to create experimental, often visually- and aurally-striking work that contributed to an atmosphere and experience rather than a direct and linear interpretation of one writer's work. Consequently, Pan Pan's approach and substantial theatrical oeuvre is indelibly marked by their collaborations with a diverse set of practitioners— designer Andrew Clancy, sound designer Jimmy Eadie, photographer and videographer Ros Kavanagh, as well as an array of collaborators that have worked with the company in different capacities such as Lian Bell, Simon Doyle, Nicholas Johnson, Gina Moxley, Maeve Stone, Rob Usher, and Dick Walsh, to name a few. The company's commitment to collaboration can also be seen in their establishment of the Dublin International Theatre Symposium (1997-2003), which Irish Theatre Institute describes as "a unique and dynamic celebration of live performance, comprising talks, workshops, demonstration performances and full performances, presenting the extraordinary variety of styles, approaches and viewpoints in contemporary world theatre,"[11] and also Pan Pan's International Mentorship and Bursary award "for artists to buy time to work on an idea for performance in its early development stages, outside of the pressures of production."[12]

Another significant marker of Pan Pan's approach and practice within the context of Irish theatre is their commitment to international touring. According to Quinn,

> By taking our work to all sorts of different places, we get the strength to deal with different
> audience and reactions, and develop a stamina and an energy level and an experienced

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[10] Indeed, Quinn favours the description of their work as a whole as "idiosyncratic"—"I would describe our work as mostly 'idiosyncratic' and that's the crux of it. It's definitely theatre, it's idiosyncratic, and it's contemporary dramaturgy, it's contemporary work as seen as contemporary work." Ibid.

[11] "Pan Pan International Theatre Symposium," Irish Theatre Institute, http://irishtheatre.ie/festival-page.aspx?festivalid=30012.

[12] "Pan Pan's International Mentorship & Bursary," Irish Theatre Institute, http://www.irishtheatre.ie/resources/professional_development_programmes/40953/pan_pans_international_mentorship__bursary.

coolness and toughness onstage—all those instincts. It also takes you outside your own narrow culture, of playing to people that you know, or a limited audience, it brings you into the hardcore fact of performing a show to a bunch of total strangers. It's all about diversification, getting out into Europe, exposing yourself to other work and getting your own work seen. It's certainly better than, say, just applying to the Arts Council, putting all your eggs in one basket, and then getting disappointed and maybe doing nothing.[13]

One of Pan Pan's first productions, *Negative Act*, written and directed by Quinn and designed by Cosgrove, toured to the Lyon International Student Festival in 1991 after a short run at Lombard Street Studio Theatre. In the years that followed, their work continued to tour internationally. On numerous occasions, Quinn has responded to questions about whether Pan Pan classifies its work as "Irish theatre" to which the response is a variation of, "yes, but it is outward-looking." To underline this point, a number of Pan Pan's productions have premiered outside of Ireland, touring to a number of countries before opening in Ireland. While this may not be unusual for international companies, it was unusual, and still is to a certain degree, in the Irish theatre scene. Pan Pan's commitment to touring and international collaborations set the company apart from more traditional, text-based theatre.[14]

For many years, Pan Pan's work was associated with a visually-striking aesthetic with a distinct emphasis on scenography, the actor's delivery and movement, and the atmosphere created in the plays. As Brian Singleton suggests, "the company's European influences have fused its work with the notion of visual imagery as a theatrical language and challenged the notion of visual imagery as a theatrical language and challenged the notion of theatre performance as dramatic."[15] Before 2011, this trademark visual imagery garnered comments from theatre critics such as "the words remain Shakespeare's [...] What Pan Pan brings to the feast is a new architecture, a novel

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[13] Mic Moroney, "Theatre Without Fear," *The Irish Times*, 6 January 1998, https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/theatre-without-fear-1.121469.

[14] Quinn echoes this point in interview, stating, "By and large, Irish theatre is a playwright's theatre. I would agree with that." O'Gorman and McIvor, *Devised Performance in Irish Theatre*, 162.

[15] Brian Singleton, "Irish Theatre Devised," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Theatre*, eds. Nicholas Grene and Chris Morash (Oxford University Press, 2016), 565.

arrangement of the bricks in a structure that beguiles the eye and intrigues the intellect,"[16] and " astonishing design sense, and incisive eye for raw theatricality."[17] From this, it may seem like a curious step then, that Pan Pan came to be interested in producing radio plays, Beckett's *All That Fall* (2011), *Embers* (2013), and *Cascando* (2016), adapting them for a theatre experience by curating a space for "intense listen[ing]."[18] While a small handful of Pan Pan's previous productions played with elements of installation art–most notably *ONE: Healing With Theatre* (2005)–none exhibited the dedication to the sensory experience and particularly the aural aspects of theatre until *All That Fall* opened in 2011. Quinn reflects that he was drawn to working with the radio plays because

> [T]hey are very much about creating a world, and specifically with *All That Fall* it was the idea of making a social sculpture where we come and listen to a radio-play. So the first thing was to create an environment, a chamber, whereby people would come and watch each other listening, having a communal effect and that in a sense is like an event…So the idea was trying to connect with sound, with voice, with words, becoming partly musical, partly supernatural almost. They are very particular investigations and we were looking at presenting Beckett's radio work for a live audience and to create a space for these elements to come out.[19]

Although this period of experimentation with radio plays could be considered a turning point, the move sits comfortably in the interdisciplinary approach and collaboration that has been a central part of the company's mission. *All That Fall* and *Embers* toured internationally and received many distinguished accolades such as the Best Sound Design and Best Lighting Design awards at the Irish Times Theatre Awards in 2011 and the Herald Angel Award at the Edinburgh International Festival in 2013. While *All That Fall*, *Embers*, and *Cascando* lay a distinct emphasis on the spectator's experience through primarily aural means, the approach and execution of the plays are

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[16] Peter Crawley, "Reviews," *The Irish Times*, 17 April 2004, https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/reviews-1.1308500.
[17] Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, "The Latest in Avant-Garde," *The New Yorker*, 15 January, 2009, https://www.newyorker.com/culture/goings-on/the-latest-in-avant-garde.
[18] Quinn, 'Pan Pan: A Theatre of Ideas.'
[19] O'Gorman and McIvor, *Devised Performance in Irish Theatre*, 165.

quite different. In this chapter, I will focus on *All That Fall*. The reason for this choice is that Pan Pan's production not only displays the key characteristics of a SSP; it also provides a physical demonstration of the everyday experience of digital culture. From 1991 to the present, Pan Pan have attempted to tap into the zeitgeist and reflect it in an abstract and often obscure manner. The emergence of digital culture and the move toward the postdigital is reflected in a number of their works, but none so potently and surprisingly as their adaptation of Beckett's *All That Fall*.

<div align="center">

All That Fall

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Pan Pan's *All That Fall* is a radio play transferred to a curated environment for communal listening. It retains many of the features of the radio play in that characters, environment, and atmosphere are all signified to a large extent through the sounds emanating from the speakers. However, the production differs from a traditional radio play experience in that the space in which the audience are listening to the sounds is curated, complete with rocking chairs for the audience to sit on to form an integral part of the design, diegetic lighting, and specific design based on the space in which the play is performed. The spectator is also listening with other people; it is not the essentially solitary experience of a traditional radio play.

All That Fall recounts the journey of the long-suffering Mrs Rooney as she leaves her home to meet her husband, Mr Rooney, at the train station. On the way she meets various locals. On arrival at the station, she discovers that Mr Rooney's train is delayed, although the reason for the delay is not certain. Once the train arrives, Mr Rooney and Mrs Rooney begin to walk home, and the reason for the delay is revealed—that is, a child had fallen onto the tracks and died under suspicious circumstances. When audience members enter the performance space of *All That Fall*, they find themselves under a dim light provided by countless bulbs suspended from the ceiling. The seating is rocking chairs, which fill the room. Each chair has a cushion with an image of a skull on it. The floor is decorated with carpet that is covered with simple drawings of roads and junctions.

After the audience members take their seats, sound begins to fill the space, and it quickly becomes

apparent that they may be the only physically present performers in the piece.

The play's sounds, which come through the speakers, blend with the human sounds of

gentle rocking and the odd whisper or cough. Similar to the proposal of the listener of a radio play

being cast as a collaborator to complete the overall production through visualisation, in this

production of *All That Fall* the physical presence of the audience make up a human sculpture

rocking back and forth. Since audience members themselves become part of the performance as

individual rocking sculptures, they are collaborators, as listeners had been to the radio version, and

their presence completes both the physical landscape and the soundscape of the performance. In

this way, during *All That Fall*, the audience are located in the epicentre of the experience,

surrounded by sound, light, and sculpture. *All That Fall* resembles an art installation. Gavin Quinn

notes,

> I see the audience experiencing the text in a corporeal way because they are actually part of
> the installation, part of the performance. By everyone entering this specially designed

space, they are listening together as a group: that's the cultural part, the fact that it's society listening together. In a way we are making everyone into very intense listeners.[20]

The word, installation, implies a contract between creator and audience, namely, that something, usually a piece of art, has been set up for a period of time for an audience to enter and experience. In the case of *All That Fall*, however, this contract is turned on its head; the audience is part of the installation and integral to the performance.

Choosing to adapt a radio play is a compelling starting point from which to create an immersive SSP, not least because sound has an inherently distinctive immersive potential. Sound has the ability to trigger an instant bodily reaction. For instance, a loud noise can make a person jump, or certain beats can make someone tap their foot. Sound also requires a period of time or a sequence of repetition before a listener can assign meaning to it. In the meantime, it occupies an affective territory in the body, building up echoes and resonance. Returning to Massumi's definition of affect referenced in Chapter One, affect is located between content and its effect. Sound content enters the body affectively until it is digested conceptually and has an effect. In the interim, the affect qualitatively impacts the body, leaving behind resonances and reverberations as its trace. Pan Pan's aim as a company is to produce theatre that is focused on feeling. As Quinn articulates, "That sense of realness in a production—reality in terms of something happening on stage, that it's alive, rather than in terms of holding a mirror up to nature or creating faux realism. We feel that the audience can feel that in a production, and that's what we're looking for. Something that has meaning, actually, but not being obsessed with meaning."[21]

A further immersive quality of sound is that, contrary to the restrictions in what can be in a person's field of vision at any one time, sound, as Don Ihde identifies in *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound,* surrounds us. Ihde contends:

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[20] Quinn, "Pan Pan: A Theatre of Ideas."
[21] Ibid.

I am immersed in the auditory field that displays no definite boundaries such as those of vision. The sound field, unlike the visual field which remains in front of me, displays an indefinite space in all directions from me. Note in passing that I may speak of myself at the *center* of auditory space. And note also that the indefiniteness of auditory space proceeds in both directions—it extends indefinitely from me but it also "invades" my being.[22]

Thus, the uniquely invasive, intimate, and analeptic qualities of sound make it an enticing performative medium for Pan Pan to explore for the purposes of sensory immersion. In the sections that follow, I will focus on these various qualities of sound that impact the spectator's body and generate felt experience, in addition to the use of light and sculpture. I will explore how these elements work together to establish an immersive, affective encounter in the course of this chapter.

Traditionally, the principle of radio plays is that the audience will visualise the information being communicated through sound to varying degrees, depending on the particular production and the individual listener. Therefore, the listener is commonly cast as a collaborator to creatively complete the production through visualisation and imagination. A further defining feature of the radio play concerns the minimal control that the director, producer, and writer can exercise over what the listener is seeing or the environment they are inhabiting for the duration of the play. For example, a radio play may be set in a rural Dorset landscape while the listener is physically located on a busy train in central London. Pan Pan's adaptation of *All That Fall* alters these defining features of the radio play by creating a curated, sensually immersive environment, thus moving the intimate, "heard" form of the radio play into a shared physical space that provides not only a powerful individual experience, but a collective experience as well.

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[22] Don Ihde, *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound*, 2nd ed. (Bristol: University Presses Marketing, 2007), 207.

Fig.3. *All That Fall*. Photo credit: Ros Kavanagh. Accessed through Stage and Screen Design Ireland.

Placing the audience at the centre of the performance disrupts the expectations that are associated with the traditional "theatregoer" and "onlooker" roles. While considering the theatrical frame, Erving Goffman identifies these two positions, describing how each role contributes to the expected interaction in the theatre and allows the theatrical experience to run smoothly. The theatregoer performs that actions that surround and support the theatre experience such as arriving on time and paying for the ticket while the onlooker "collaborates in the unreality onstage."[23] When a performance such as *All That Fall* casts the audience as performers, this distinction is dissolved, as the spectator no longer has the ability to be either theatregoer or onlooker. They now occupy the added position of performer, an unprepared one at that. The impact of this is a change in the frame of organisation (the first of many) which leads to a disruption, a deterritorialisation. The spectator of *All That Fall* is no longer situated in a theatre space in the capacity of a theatregoer and onlooker but is additionally, or rather alternatively, present as a performer. Their presence completes the curated installation space. This not only introduces a pressure and a vulnerability in how to act, but

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[23] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Harmondstown, Middlesex: Penguin, 1975), 130.

also allows a certain degree of freedom in the sense that the audience may dictate their own experience of the piece, a freedom not usually afforded to the listener of a radio play.

SSP engages with the same systems and strategies used by digital culture's online platforms in order to present to its audience what it feels like to live in an information- intensive world. One of digital culture's principal strategies is to engage modes of counter-attention in its users. Counter-attention is a more embodied, relational, affective, and immersive mode of engagement and interaction. Instead of appealing to a user's cognitive faculties, which have a limited timeline before a person will require a break, online platforms aim to absorb or immerse the user in a visceral, affective experience. In doing so, the user will generally remain online for longer periods of time, as several recent studies have demonstrated. Furthermore, if this mode of embodied counter-attention is engaged, the user is freer to interact simultaneously with multiple tabs, applications, and multiple streams of information, thus avoiding a "processing bottleneck." In other words, by engaging a more embodied, affective mode of interaction over a cognitive-led mode of interaction, online platforms avoid the problems that occur when a user is encouraged to read, listen, and watch at the same time. When using a cognitive-led engagement, a user will perform each task sequentially and tire of the material quickly. Conversely, if a user is encouraged to employ a mode of counter-attention, this material may be covered simultaneously; the meaning of the content becomes less important and the feeling and impact it leaves are of greatest concern. In this section, I will discuss the strategies of simulation and stimulation that are used in both online platforms and SSPs to appeal to modes of counter-attention. In order to illustrate the use of simulation and stimulation in SSPs, I will explore Pan Pan's use of sound and light as manifestations of information-intensive environments and examine how the adaptation taken as a whole can be understood as a postdigital exercise of copy and paste.

In her 2012 book *How We Think,* N. Katherine Hayles suggests that in contrast to developing countries where scarce resources are identifiably food, water, and shelter, the scarce

resource in developed countries is human attention. She contends that "the sheer onslaught of information has created a situation in which the limiting factor is human attention. There is simply too much to attend to and too little time to do it."[24] Therefore, when the environment continues to make multiple demands and people are nearly always contactable to be asked to carry out these demands, it is reasonable to assume that cognitive patterns and approaches as well as attention types will adjust and continue to adjust to the changing environment. Human learning patterns, attention, perceptions, and experiences of the world will continue to be affected by the mediatised environments that most people inhabit and interact with on a daily basis.

As outlined in the introduction, Hayles has identified two contemporary modes of attention: deep-attention and hyper-attention. She notes the difference in the two attention types as follows: "[Deep-attention involves] concentrating on a single object for long periods[…]having a high tolerance for focus times, while hyper-attention involves "switching rapidly among different tasks, preferring multiple information streams, seeking high levels of stimulation, and having low tolerance for boredom."[25] I wish to propose that *All That Fall* is a performative manifestation of this shift in attention styles, designed for audience members who are products and promoters of digital culture and live in and interact daily with information-intensive environments. Hayles argues that because the world is saturated with technology, human modes of cognition, nervous systems, and bodies are affected and altered as a result.

Jonathan Crary covers similar ground in his 2013 book entitled *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*. Crary identifies sleep as the only part of our day when there is not a demand placed on our attention. Thus, he surmises, sleep is a stark counterpoint to our "always on" information-intensive world, or what Crary calls the connectionist paradigm. The connectionist paradigm is defined as follows: "the highest premium is placed on activity for its own sake[…]This

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[24] N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 12.
[25] Ibid.

model of activity is not some transformation of an earlier work-ethic paradigm, but is an altogether new model of normativity, and one that requires temporalities for its realization."[26] Drawing upon Hayles and Crary's insights into the effects of digital culture on the body and life as we know it, I am suggesting that SSPs, performances such as *All That Fall*, which present immersive environments created with multi-form media and communicate through largely affective channels, reflect this social, corporeal, and cognitive alteration. Indeed, while it could be argued that this production of *All That Fall* harks back to an older tradition of gathering families and friends to listen to "the wireless," it also connects to the primarily independent and subjective experiences of new communication technologies.

The first aspect of digital culture that *All That Fall* engages with is sound. In 1999, Theo van Leeuwen published *Speech, Music, Sound* in which he identified a noticeable change in how sound was being produced and consumed to reflect the sensory experiences of daily life:

> The trend in communication is now towards immersion rather than detachment, towards the interactive and the participatory rather than towards the solitary enjoyments, towards the ever-changing dynamic experiences rather than the fixing of meanings as objects to be collected. Even though sound is at present still very much undervalued and underused in new media, and often treated as little more than a kind of optional extra, there is every chance that it will have a much increased role to play in the very near future.[27]

The popularity of podcasts in recent times, such as *This American Life* (2006-), *Adam and Joe* (2007-2011), *The Moth* (2009-), *Serial* (2014-), *Radiolab* (2008-), and *Criminal* (2014-), as well as the use of personalised music streaming applications such as Spotify, demonstrate that van Leeuwen was quite accurate in his prediction of the increased role of sound in our daily lives.[28] The ubiquitous use of aural distractions like podcasts in recent times points to an appeal towards forms of counter-attention, such as hyper-attention. Podcasts and music streaming services occupy the

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[26] Jonathan Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (London: Verso, 2013), 15.
[27] Theo Van Leeuwen, *Speech, Music, Sound* (Palgrave, 1999), 197.
[28] For instance, in a report published on the 26th October 2017, The Joint National Listenership Research in Ireland reported that 83% of Irish adults listen to the radio daily: https://www.ipsos.com/en-ie/ipsos-mrbijnlr-oct-2017.

aural faculties, providing constant stimulation, leaving a person free to also move, read, watch videos and images, type, or play games, each providing an additional layer of stimulation. Engaging with sound experiences, alongside a number of other activities, contributes to the many streams of information favoured by counter-attention. Moreover, as these sound experiences to which I refer are generally listened to through headphones, podcasts and music streaming have arguably altered the way we interact, behave, and relate on a daily basis, whether we are the ones listening to the broadcast or not. For that reason, listening on headphones can be regarded as both a solitary activity—generally you are listening alone—and a communal experience, as you remain in the world, moving and interacting with other bodies and material.

By experimenting with sound and exploiting it for its immersive qualities, as Pan Pan has done in *All That Fall*, SSPs are tapping into digital culture by drawing on the ubiquity of immersive sound experiences in everyday life. Pan Pan has adapted the generally solitary experience into a collective one while still offering an individual experience to each audience member of the play, based on their location in the space. The sense of isolation the audience may experience during the performance alongside feelings of intimacy and shared community can also be regarded as a further comment on our interactions with communication technologies. Indeed, there is a scenographic indication of this point in the use of the skull image on the cushion that lies behind each audience member on their rocking chair—the solitary skull for the solitary listener but a collective haunting of voices and rocking movement to provide a collective experience. Sound designer for *All That Fall* Jimmy Eadie describes the process as follows:

> There are eight speakers surrounding the audience and also 4 subwoofers within the room. Each speaker is focused on a certain part of the audience. A lot of time is spent tuning the PA system to the room to get the optimum performance from each speaker, so that the audience can really get a sense of depth within the recording. I started off with a complex octophonic mix with a lot of elements panning around the space – this ultimately did not work and was just distracting to the drama itself, very similar to the effect of using the

surround speakers in a cinema, so I chose to keep the audio close to each member of the

audience so they would look into just one speaker.[29]

Not only does this strategy deliver sound to each individual's "inner ear," as portable devices

connected with headphones do, it also speaks to the overall intention of the company to deliver an

intimate, subjective experience to each spectator.

The second aspect of digital culture that *All That Fall* engages with is light. According to

Arnold Aronson, "The way in which we light the stage is indicative of how we see light in our daily

lives."[30] A large part of *All That Fall*'s immersive force is conducted through the affective channels

of light. This ranges from the wall of lights that bathe the audience in an extremely bright and

physically warm luminescence to the multitude of overhead bulbs, the ominous blue light that

shines from ground level, to the diegetic, programmed lighting cues on the wall that embody

various objects and characters in the play. The moments of complete darkness are also just as

noteworthy, as they often stand in stark physically-felt contrast to the heat of the lights that precede

this instance. Therefore, if one considers Aronson's remark concerning the lighting design of a

performance as a scenographic reflection of how we experience light on a daily basis, the wall of

lights present in the performance space of *All That Fall*, and indeed the blue white hue cast over the

audience at intervals, may be seen as indicative of the overall experience of light and darkness in

digital culture and information-intensive environments. The lights in *All That Fall* speak of

computer code, technological representations, staring at a screen of lights for information, and the

ominous blue light emitted by computers during times of darkness. In simple terms, the imitation of

artificial computer light presented in *All That Fall* displays a significant interrogation of the

demands placed on our attention from day to day and also presents an examination of information-

intensive, multi-form environments.

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[29] "Interview with Jimmy Eadie – All That Fall – Pan Pan – Abbey Theatre." No More Workhorse. Last modified February 9, 2016.
https://nomoreworkhorse.com/2016/02/09/interview-with-jimmy-eadie-all-that-fall-pan-pan-abbey-theatre/.
[30] Arnold Aronson, *Looking Into the Abyss: Essays on Scenography* (University of Michigan Press, 2005), 30.

It is noteworthy that *All That Fall* allows the audience large pockets of imaginative encounter intersected with several strategies of simulation and stimulation, almost imitating society's need to control our attention even when we are at rest. We might say that a defining feature of Pan Pan's *All That Fall* is its oscillation between simulation and stimulation. By *simulation*, I am speaking of fabrication of landscapes, characters, narratives, and feelings through sound, lighting, and the audience's bodies that congregate beside one another. One such instance is the sound of Mrs Rooney's dragging footsteps that simulates her struggle to walk up the road. Pan Pan simulate this scene through light moving from one bulb to another, paired with the sound from the speakers and human movement in the rocking of the chairs. The result is a representation of action through abstract, multi-form means. By comparison, *stimulation* signifies a direct appeal to the senses and nervous system—that is, a palpable attempt to encourage bodily reaction. One such example in *All That Fall* occurs during the final seconds of the performance, when a storm erupts, causing the lights above to flicker and sound to roar from the speakers. After a short period, the simulated storm ends abruptly with the wall of lights the audience faces glowing in unison so brightly that audience members must shield their eyes causing a stark bodied response. Frequently, *All That Fall* employs the strategies of simulation and stimulation concurrently. Thus, simulation and stimulation affect the virtual potentialities of the play, expanding the real and imagined environments and blurring the lines between the two.

Fig. 4. *All That Fall*. Photo credit: Ros Kavanagh. Accessed through Stage and Screen Design Ireland.

While Pan Pan's adaptation of *All That Fall* remains largely faithful to Beckett's intentions

for the play, it also distinctly engages with several aspects of digital culture. In the first instance, as

touched upon in the opening of the chapter, the transposition of Beckett's radio play to a

performance space can be seen as a mode of "copy and paste," one of the characteristic features of

postdigital aesthetics identified by Causey. He points out that

> Closely related to the processes of replication and simulation, copy and paste is the most
> mundane, banal, prevalent, and influential of the strategies of the digital. The capacity (or is
> it a compulsion?) to point, click, drag, copy, and paste are the keystroke patterns that
> constitute the signature aesthetic and cerebral organization of the postdigital. Again, we can
> see the precedence that was set in modernist aesthetics, in this case, by Andy Warhol and
> his many appropriated and duplicated images.[31]

Pan Pan simulate the technique of copy and paste by adapting the "old medium" of radio to

comment on the effects of new media and technology. They keep the radio form intact but transfer

it to a curated, multi-form listening chamber. Pan Pan adapt the one-to-one experience of the radio

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[31] Causey, "Postdigital Performance," 434.

play into a communal listening event. The performance emphasises the differences between old media and new media through an alternating appeal to deep-attention and hyper-attention. Pan Pan capture the postdigital aesthetic of copy and paste through the very act of adapting a radio play and transferring it to a largely affective experience occurring in a sensory space.

As approaches to socialising, education, work, and healthcare have become increasingly mediatised and technology-driven, people have adapted their cognitive skills to meet the demands of a multimedia, information-intensive environment. Crary, who has also written extensively on the history of the spectacle and modes of attention, suggests that, "In the late twentieth century [and certainly the twenty-first century]…the management of attention depends on the capacity of the observer to adjust to continual repatternings of the ways in which the sensory world can be consumed."[32] The last decade has provided a significant challenge to the management of attention of humans and has accordingly encouraged considerable adaptation in the ways in which we delegate and direct attention due to the prevalence of communication technologies, internet, email, and social media which place additional demands on our cognition.

I wish to propose that *All That Fall* is a performative manifestation of digital culture and, related to this, in the various ways I have outlined in this section, it attempts to appeal to modes of counter-attention. Counter-attention is both engaged and heavily precipitated in many online platforms for the reason that it should result in a longer period of user interaction—the primary goal of most business models. If a user spends a longer time with a product, the more profitable that product will be. While *All That Fall* appeals to a large range of spectators due to its innovative design choices and because it is an adaptation of a well-known playwright's work, I am making the point that *All That Fall*, and SSPs in general, are designed to appeal to audience members who are products and promoters of digital culture and live in and interact daily with information-intensive

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[32] Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: MIT Press, 1999), 33.

environments. Hayles argues that because the world is saturated with technology, human modes of cognition, nervous systems, and bodies are as a result affected and altered. Accordingly, performances such as *All That Fall*, which presents an immersive environment created with multi-form media, reflect this alteration. Indeed, while it could be argued that this production of *All That Fall* harks back to an older tradition of gathering families and friends to listen to the radio as I have mentioned, it also connects to the primarily independent and subjective experiences of new communication technologies. Drawing upon this enquiry concerning perception, attention, and digital culture, the following section will consider the mode of aesthetic perception precipitated by SSP such as *All That Fall* using Mikel Dufrenne's phenomenology of aesthetic experience framework.

All three performances examined in this thesis push beyond a simple classification of "digital performance." Each production employs decidedly theatrical tools from a long-established history of theatre to demonstrate the ways in which digital media and postdigital culture has transformed the classical theatre and performance reception. To situate *All That Fall* within a wider theatre history, I will briefly consider its relationship with its theatrical predecessors and how this might further illustrate the transformational potential of digital media in theatre and society. I would like to explore a link I see between the radio play form, and particularly Pan Pan's adaptation of *All That Fall*, with the lyrical dramatic text of the Romantic period in England.

While many varied forms prevailed during the Romantic period including pantomime, melodrama, burlettas, and spectacles involving live animals such as dogs and horses onstage, many of the Romantic poets and critics of the time preferred to read dramatic texts, taking pleasure in the evocations produced by the written word and completed by the imagination, rather than seeing these plays performed. Byron referred to this form as "mental theatre," although it also often disparagingly referred to as "closet drama." There are numerous reasons for the shift from stage to text in this period. The first was the restrictions brought about by The Licensing Act of 1737, and

the consequent election of the Lord Chamberlain, meaning that only two theatres in London, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, had permission to stage "legitimate drama." As a result, the plays presented were censored, driving crowds to fringe establishments that got around the law by performing satirical material based on established texts together with dance, music, and a multitude of visual spectacles. The fringe playhouses were seen by many of the Romantic poets and critics—Byron, Shelley, Keats, Lamb, and Hazlitt—as clamorous, uncivilised, and coarse places devoid of art. While these restrictions dictated and shaped the theatre being created and shown, a band of writers and readers developed a heightened interest in character, subjectivity, and psychology. This is reflected firstly in the renewed interest during this time in reading Shakespeare's tragedies to uncover the "inner structure and workings of mind in the character."[33] Secondly, Byron and Shelley in particular committed themselves to the renewal of serious drama in England, viewing the period since the closure of the theatre by the Puritans in the 1640s as the beginning of a steep decline in artistic standards. Their solution was a dramatic text that combined action with subjective, poetic, and lyrical exposition demonstrating the psychology of the character. Alan Richardson, author of *A Mental Theatre: Poetic Drama and Consciousness in the Romantic Age*, remarks the following:

> Whether condemned for his elitist pose and disdain for the public, or defended as a well-meaning but anachronistic reformer, the Romantic poet as dramatist is judged against his alleged "retreat" from the theatre, rather than for the invention of a fundamentally new form.[34]

The Romantics recognised the unique experience and possibility of a dramatic text produced for the purposes of reading and, by association, the value of "listening to theatre" removed from any representative visual accompaniment. For Richardson, it is important that we view the Romantic

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[33] Charles Lamb, "On the Tragedies of Shakespere," in *English Essays: From Sir Philip Sidney to Macaulay* (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1910), 316.
[34] Alan Richardson, *A Mental Theater: Poetic Drama and Consciousness in the Romantic Age* (Penn State University Press, 1988), 3.

dramas of this nature, "not as a retreat into the closet but as a foray into the minds of both dramatic character and reader."[35]

Notwithstanding a long history of oral traditions and storytelling in many cultures throughout the world, this notion of taking established dramatic texts written specifically for the stage and making the choice to read them and, furthermore, creating dramatic texts for the purpose of being read and not performed, is not only a significant deviation from classical theatre (a marriage of drama and theatre), but also an unlikely harbinger for the transformational possibilities of technology in theatre in general and radio plays specifically. I propose that we can see drama written in the Romantic period, particularly mental theatre, as one of the precursors to radio plays, sharing in kind the delight of words and sounds to evoke a theatre of the mind—the mind of the dramatic character and listener, to modify Richardson's idea. The ambitions of the Romantic dramatic text are aligned in many ways to the ambitions of the radio play. Both separate drama from the theatre. And while mental theatre was a response to an unsuitable and insupportable contemporary theatre, radio plays were a response to a new technology that had the ability to reach a wide-reaching audience in their own homes. Pan Pan's transfer of *All That Fall* to a curated and communal listening space is the company's personal response to an isolated public living in the media-saturated world of postdigital culture.

Aesthetic Perception and Sensory Spectacle Performance

Chapter One defined SSP as a mode that aims to communicate that which exceeds representation. It is a performance mode that is directed toward the embodied experience of the spectator above the need for narrative clarity and the transmission of direct meaning. According to Dufrenne, aesthetic experience is situated at the point of engagement between the "aesthetic object" and "aesthetic perception." Dufrenne proposes that a work of art is transformed and perceived as an aesthetic

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[35] Ibid.

object when due attention is paid to it, when the object is recognised not for its use but for its qualities. Aesthetic perception is the form of enquiry the spectator employs to experience the work of art. When a spectator engages in an encounter with an aesthetic object, certain forces and intensities are released. According to Dufrenne, aesthetic experience can be reduced to the following principle: "between the thing and the one who perceives it, there is an understanding anterior to any logos."[36] This statement is reminiscent of Massumi's definition of affect in which he claims that affect occurs in the gap between content and effect. For that reason, one can correlate aesthetic experience with an experience of the affective encounter. The experience is located in the gap between the signifying work of art and the emotions and meanings that can be assigned to it.

Dufrenne breaks down aesthetic perception into three successive moments of perception—presence, representation, and reflection. While he refers to the three moments as "successive," he also makes clear the following point:

[W]e must not forget that, beyond the plurality of aspects which analysis distinguishes within it, the aesthetic object is one. It is unitary as perceived, and perception itself is unified insofar as it is unifying. The moments which we are going to distinguish within perception do not really divide it. Instead of a chronological genesis, these moments spell out the deepening which perception can undergo and through which it becomes aesthetic perception.[37]

Therefore, the use of the word "successive," whether through a translation choice for the text or otherwise, does not seem to grasp the nature of Dufrenne's proposal fully. Rather, the moments are often coterminous and concurrent. They ebb and flow back and forth; they are intensive and extensive, elaborating upon and containing the aesthetic perception of the work of art. In this idea of moments of aesthetic perception, Dufrenne is not suggesting a Cartesian split between mind and body. He is instead suggesting that aesthetic perception begins in the body and that this should be

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[36] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, xlviii.
[37] Ibid., 333-4.

considered a type of knowledge; this is not a process cut off from the mind. More accurately, mind and body cannot be considered separately, as the lived body is the point of contact for all phenomenological investigations. For this reason, while I will refer to the moments, as Dufrenne does, with the differentiations of first, second, and third, it should be understood in a much more free-flowing process, as outlined above.

The first moment that Dufrenne identifies as "presence" can be defined as a *bodily knowledge* of the aesthetic object. The artwork speaks to the body of the perceiver, "without eliciting, through some representation, an act of intelligence other than that of the body."[38] In other words, it invites a bodily encounter before a cognitive apprehension is made. The creators of an SSP will seek to prolong this stage to achieve their desired effect of affective encounter and immersive becoming. The second stage of aesthetic perception is the stage of "representation." Dufrenne characterises this stage as a move from the felt understanding of presence toward a cognitive understanding, using imagination as the "liaison between mind and body."[39] In this sense, representation is the intellectual digestion of what the body has experienced in a playful, imaginative manner. The final stage of aesthetic perception is the practice of contemplation on the expressed world known as "reflection." It involves a process of understanding through a limitation of the associations that were possible during the representation stage and arriving at cognitive understanding of the aesthetic object. As Dufrenne suggests, "the represented object becomes an object for the 'I think',"[40] in this final stage.

As the presence stage relates to a bodily knowledge of an artwork, this mode of aesthetic perception is encouraged through various techniques at work in SSP—prime among them is the establishment of affective encounter and the communication of sensation. To achieve this, performances will employ largely extra-discursive, intensive means that promote qualitative change

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[38] Ibid., 339.
[39] Ibid., 345.
[40] Ibid., 372.

in the spectator's body through immersion prior to the meaning or resonance from the encounter being acknowledged or reviewed. Dufrenne's presence stage of aesthetic experience bares a strong association with Deleuze's notion of becoming which I have outlined in the introductory chapter as the transformative and transitory process of the SSP in action. According to Grosz, becomings are:

> bodily thought, the ways in which thought, force, or change, invests and invents new series, metamorphosing new bodies from the old through their encounter. Becoming is what enables a trait, a line, an orientation, an event to be released from the system, series, organism, or object that may have the effect of transforming the whole, making it no longer function singularly: it is an encounter between bodies that releases something from each and, in the process, releases or makes real a virtuality, a series of enabling and transforming possibilities.[41]

In *All That Fall*, Pan Pan use light, sound, and sculpture, with varying effects, to engage and prolong the presence stage of the aesthetic perception, that is, the state which invites a process of becoming. This is established in a number of ways. Firstly, the theatre space is constructed to form a sensory spectacle incubator: a non-actored performance space in which audience members must rely on affective communication and their senses, alongside the narrative, to experience the play. The voices in *All That Fall* are pre-recorded and disembodied. The audience cannot see the setting from which the characters are supposedly speaking. Instead, the audience sit in a curated listening chamber comprised of light, sound, and sculpture.

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[41] Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*, 69.
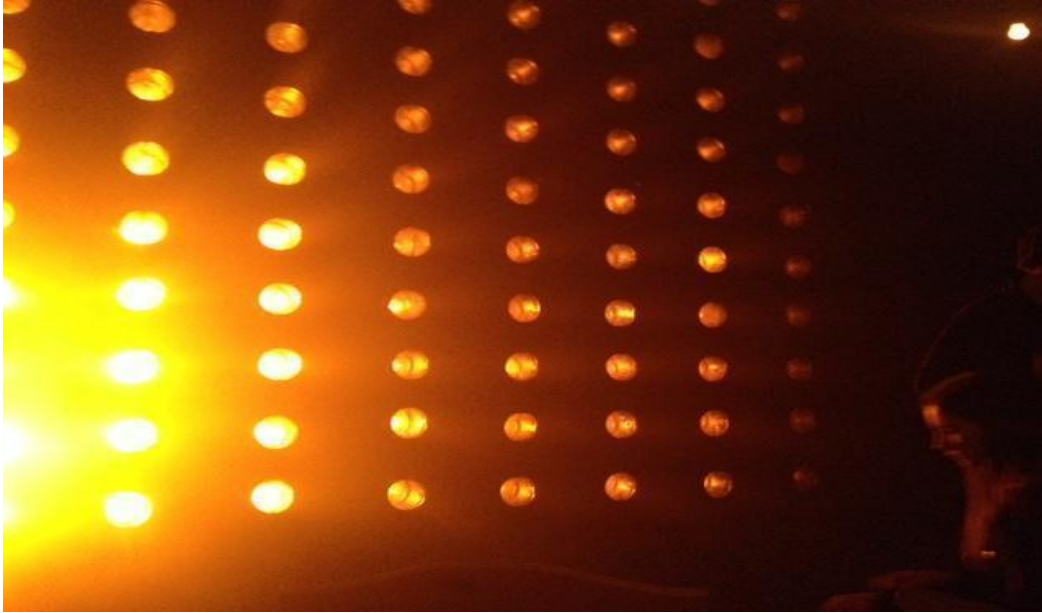
Lighting and darkness are dominant features of Pan Pan's production, performing several significant roles. A wall of rigged theatre lamps occupy an entire wall in the performance space. There is also a line of low-level lights on the floor opposite which occasionally casts a blue/white hue over the floor and chairs, creating shadowy outlines in the otherwise blacked-out space. In this production, lights play the roles of human characters: Christy, Mr Tyler, the Connollys who speed by in a van, Tommy, and Mr Barrell. They take on elemental roles of the wind and a storm. The lighting also inhabits the form of the train. Lastly, the lighting is employed in *All That Fall* for atmospheric purposes. For instance, the blue hue giving the impression of gloom, dreariness, and being caught in an everlasting period of dusk.

The lights do not solely inhabit the traditional role of providing visibility and creating atmosphere. Rather, they inhabit a diegetic, actorly role. The wall of lights portray a storm through wave-like flashes and pulsating overhead bulbs. The placing of characters and the quality of their movement is also communicated in a similar manner through a passage of light sequences. For example, one lit bulb moving to the next to represent Mrs Rooney's footsteps on her journey to the station. In one circular section of the wall of lights, the intensity of the glare increases as the noise

of the train approaches, animating the impending danger. In this way, the traditional theatrical frame is challenged and a process of deterritorialisation begins.

Significantly, the lighting design in this production often escapes direct meaning. Lighting seems at times to be employed to distort spatial perception whereby, against the blacked-out surroundings, and working jointly with the unsteady balance of a rocking chair, an audience member's sense of structure, scale, and perspective is distorted. The lighting in *All That Fall* furthermore serves to amplify Aronson's contention that "in our culture [we] have obliterated any true sense of darkness and our ability to comprehend it, while simultaneously eliminating logical and knowable motivation from lighting…light has drifted from its moorings, as it were. It is no longer tied to motivational sources but has taken on a physical force."[42] While the blue-white lights evoke an eternal dusk, they also recall the light of the ever-present computer screen in our daily lives. Light is no longer tied to nature but a reflection of a world that never sleeps, lit by artificial sources. In a similar manner to the spectator being placed at the centre of the production as a performer, the lighting design contributes to the sense that the performance space is an insular sensory installation which is closed off from the outside world. It is a space that is subject to its own rules concerning structure, scale, and perspective; consequently, it requires the bodies within it to adapt to this unconventional theatrical environment.

In sum, the performance space in *All That Fall* can be understood as a "poetic space," a term proposed by phenomenologist Gaston Bachelard to refer to the felt and lived experience of a space that is charged with reverberations, echoes, and vibrations. A poetic space is a seemingly oneiric place that demonstrates the inextricability of the self, imagination, and memory, from our surroundings, such as entering the attic of one's childhood house. For instance, "The house we were born in is more than an embodiment of home, it is also an embodiment of dreams. Each one of its

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[42] Aronson, *Looking Into the Abyss: Essays on Scenography*, 34-5.

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nooks and corners was a resting place for daydreaming."[43] While Bachelard focuses largely on domestic spaces, his notion of a poetic space, "to give [an object] more space than it has objectivity; or, better still, it is following the expansion of its intimate space,"[44] is an interesting one for theatre and has been used by many theatre scholars since *The Poetics of Space* was published in 1958.

Through its constituent parts— sound, light, and the sculpture formed by the spectator's bodies—Pan Pan seeks to create a poetic space. The poetic space that the performance creates not only seeks to prolong the presence stage of aesthetic perception, it also affects the second and third stage, representation and reflection, through processes of imagination and finally, understanding. In this way, Pan Pan has created an immersive experience for the audience, built upon the strategies identified in the SSP model. Dufrenne's three stages of aesthetic perception will be a concept that will be considered throughout this thesis alongside other theories of Dufrenne's that are involved in aesthetic experience. In what follows, rhythm and its relation to frame and deterritorialisation will be examined in *All That Fall*. Framing and deterritorialisation are the first stages of the SSP model. In this next section, I will show how these processes are central to the establishment of an immersive becoming between the spectator and the performance.

Rhythm and Deterritorialisation

As previously outlined, framing is the organisation of experience. *All That Fall* presents the audience with an alternative theatrical frame that stands in contrast to more conventional theatrical performances whereby live dialogue, a set stage, and actor's movement and gesture, is replaced with pre-programmed sound, a performance space which resembles an art installation, and the only physically present, moving bodies are the audience themselves. As I established in Chapter One,

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[43] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1969), 15.
[44] Ibid., 202.

when Goffman wrote about the theatrical frame, he was referring to a traditional theatrical arrangement consisting of a stage with live performers with seated spectators observing the action, willing to suspend their disbelief. Based upon this standard theatrical arrangement, Goffman speaks about set roles and conventions that the theatrical frame requires such as the spectator occupying the roles of both theatregoer and onlooker.

The way that Pan Pan adapt the traditional theatrical frame in *All That Fall* means that there can be very little expectation of what will come and how to react based on past theatrical experience. *All That Fall* removes the knowable structures that Goffman refers to whereby the audience apprehend the performance by drawing on various learned "points of information" such as voice, costume, design, lighting, props, gesture, and movement.[45] Under her entry for deterritorialisation in the *Deleuze Dictionary*, Adrian Parr indicates that to deterritorialise, "is to free up the fixed relations that contain a body all the while exposing it to new organisations."[46] Thus, the exposure to a new frame of experience—one where the usual points of information are removed or adapted, one where there can be no anticipation of what's to come as with the traditional theatre to which Goffman refers in his essay—the subject, which in this instance is the audience member, is exposed to the new organisation of the frame, and consequently she engages in a process of deterritorialisation. By changing the frame of reference and removing the expected structures that are generally followed for a theatrical experience, Pan Pan introduce the spectator to a process of deterritorialisation. In what follows, I will explore the different techniques of deterritorialisation and disruption that *All That Fall* uses focussing specifically on sound, rhythm, amputation, and movement.

Sound is perhaps the most prominent deterritorialising force in *All That Fall*. The central focus of Pan Pan's production is on the quality and impact of different sounds in excess of the

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[45] Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, 138-44.
[46] Adrian Parr, "Deterritorialisation/Reterritorialisation," in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 71.

meaning of the language used and moments of dialogue. This is a distinct feature of the production but is also arguably a result of working with Beckett's unique interpretation of the musicality of speech and movement, a feature which comes across to a greater degree in his radio works. Through this focus on sounds above language and meaning, both Beckett and Pan Pan enact a disorganisation and de-systemisation of the performance space. By relegating portions of the language to sounds, Beckett and Pan Pan relieve the pressure of words and language to produce significance and instead foreground the sound, rhythm, and melody of words. Accordingly, audience members are not only left without their primary form of communication and organisation, they are also deprived of what is familiar, namely, that sound supports image. Instead, the production changes the frame so that, now, image supports sound. Deleuze and Guattari claim that "Music seems to have a much stronger deterritorializing force [than painting], at once more intense and much more collective, and the voice seems to have a much greater power of deterritorialization... [Musicians] wield a collective force infinitely greater than painting."[47] While they are referring particularly to music, the powerful qualities they describe can equally be applied to sound in general. Sound, as a strong disruptive force, is used to promote deterritorialisation in *All That Fall*. Without language as the central focus and with various media assuming unconventional communicative roles, *All That Fall* enacts deterritorialisation by disorganising and de-systemising the performance space.

Connected to the use of sounds as a deterritorialising force, the manipulation of rhythm in *All That Fall* is an equally disruptive technique. French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre wrote one of the most influential studies on rhythm called *Rhythmanalysis,* which was published after his death in 1992. Rhythm in all of its manifestations is of central concern in Lefebvre's influential study. While introducing the subject, he attempts to differentiate between internal and external rhythms, qualitative and quantitative rhythms, and organic and mechanical rhythms.

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[47] Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 302.

Lefebvre suggests that all perception of rhythm begins with the body and is intrinsically tied to the breath. In order to tune into external rhythms we must first tune into our own body and use it as a "metronome" to apply to external rhythms.[48] In this way, a focus on breath is often used in meditation, yoga, dance, ensemble work, and so on, in order to tune into the exterior rhythms that surround us. Rhythm is the way in which the body connects with its surroundings. A body at any one time can be tuned into a number of rhythms—the rhythm of the city, the rhythm of music, the rhythm of thought, of speech, of silence. Performing the rhythm of the body publicly through a harmonisation of breath is therefore an example of a way to draw bodies together, to align them in the same rhythm. Thought of from a different angle however, rhythm in the same sense can be understood as a deterritorialising force that encourages a body to tune into external forces; rhythms that do not begin organically in the body. Lefebvre notes, "to grasp a rhythm it is necessary to have been **grasped** by it; one must *let oneself go*, give oneself over, abandon oneself to its duration."[49]

Fig.6. *All That Fall*. Photo credit: Ros Kavanagh. Accessed through Stage and Screen Design Ireland.

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[48] Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time, and Everyday Life* (London; New York: Continuum, 2004), 19.
[49] Ibid., 27. [Emphasis in original.]

In the first chapter, I outlined Fischer-Lichte's proposal of the triadic relation of perception, body, and language. She suggests that each component of the triadic relation is affected by changes in the environment and culture. Each aspect adapts to the rhythm of the external environment to ensure survival and growth. Rhythm is always a central concern in radio plays, more so than in a staged play. Since sound and voice are the main source of information for the listener of a radio play, the pace, speed, quality of every sound comes into focus—Is the character out of breath? How busy are their surroundings? What can I pick up in the delivery of their lines that tells me about their relationship with another person? Commenting on the effect of speed in art, Deleuze observes the following: "It seems to me that two essential aims of the arts should be the subordination of the form to speed, to the variation of speed, and subordination of the subject to the intensity or to affect, to the variation of affects."[50] A considerable amount of emphasis is placed on speed and rhythm in *All That Fall*, both in Beckett's text and in Pan Pan's production, and the effect of this is manifold. Indeed, Pan Pan further lead Beckett's text into the realm of "minor literature"[51] by subordinating the form of the radio play to the speed and rhythm of the rocking chairs and the internal rhythms that guide them.

The intentional use and manipulation of breath is one of the most conspicuous aspects of rhythm and deterritorialisation in *All That Fall*. Mrs Rooney struggles to catch her breath as she makes her way to the station. The strained breath is further exacerbated as a result of her interactions with other characters, such as Mr Slocum and Miss Fitt which, at times, leave her confounded. Mrs Rooney also seems to walk with difficulty and this, coupled with her strained breath, provides the central rhythm for the overall piece. The rhythmic style of Mrs Rooney's speech, the dragging of her feet and the tapping of her husband Dan Rooney's stick, are notably paired with mostly dim lighting from the bulbs overhead and mimicked physically by the rhythmic,

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[50] Gilles Deleuze, "One Less Manifesto," in *Mimesis, Masochism, & Mime: The Politics of Theatricality in Contemporary French Thought*, ed. Timothy Murray (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 249.
[51] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "What Is a Minor Literature?" *Mississippi Review* 11, no. 3 (1983): 13-33.

back and forth rocking of the audience in their rocking chairs. Donald McWhinnie, who produced the first broadcast of *All That Fall* on the BBC Third Programme in 1957, describes the play with reference to its rhythmic structures as follows:

> It also demands a strict rhythmic composition; a mere miscellany of animal sounds will not achieve the effect. The author specifies four animals; this corresponds exactly to the four-in-a-bar metre of Mrs. Rooney's walk to the station and back, which is the percussive accompaniment to the play.[52]

As a result of the strictly timed rhythm that Beckett indicates in every direction, line, and character source in the script, in the brief instances of frenzied sound and lighting in Pan Pan's production, such as the train's arrival or the farm animal sounds voiced by actors, the audience members are removed from their frame of experience—one of comfortable rhythm—and thus deterritorialisation takes place. Pan Pan's production is a more visceral experience of these constructed rhythms which appear in the text. The sound is experienced through strategically placed speakers, in darkness, or alongside various lighting cues. When the noise of the train screeches, the blinding lights are also seen and felt on the skin. Beckett's text sets up various rhythms that serve to deterritorialise the listener to a degree; Pan Pan's production builds upon this and exacerbates the visceral, sensory impact in every way. According to Grosz, rhythm is the connecting force between bodies and the universe. The genesis of rhythm should not be sourced to just the human body but also as a powerful, nonhuman force which has the potential to connect all materiality:

> Rhythm is what connects the most elementary and primitive bodily structures of even the most simple organisms to the implacable movements of the universe itself: art, as music, sculpture, painting, architecture, dance, resonates or transmits force through every structure. This force must be considered not as the product of mankind, an invention that distinguishes the human from the animal, but rather a nonhuman "unlivable Power" that

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[52] Donald McWhinnie, *The Art of Radio* (Faber & Faber, 1959), 133.

runs through all of life and connects the living in its various forms to the nonorganic forces and qualities of materiality itself.[53]

With that being said, while sound is a powerful deterritorialisation technique with vast disruptive and disorienting potential, it is equally a medium people rely on to orient themselves. Following such instances of deterritorialisation, the audience relies mainly on the sound to reterritorialise, that is, to establish a new frame and to learn the new conventions and rules that systemise this new frame. The spectator is invited to tune into the rhythm of her movement and breath while they are physically moving back and forth in the rocking chair. These comfortable moments of tuning into one's own, internal rhythms intentionally intensify the moments in which this act is disrupted or in the many cases where they are encouraged to enter a character's internal rhythm, as I will now address.

The movement of the audience rocking back and forth while listening to the sounds of the piece affects their interpretation of the rhythm of language and in turn, encourages a physical mimicking of the pace. They tip back and forth alongside Mrs Rooney's breath and traipsing dialogue. In certain exchanges, such as the following example, the sentence construction linguistically mimics a rocking chair movement thereby inviting the audience to do so. Mrs Rooney's rhythmic speech is presented in the structure of the first spoken line of *All That Fall*, "Poor woman, all alone in that ruinous old house."[54] Moreover, Mrs Rooney reflects on the way she speaks during a conversation with Mr Rooney:

> **MRS ROONEY:** No, no, I am agog, tell me all, then we shall press on and never pause, never pause, till we come safe to haven. [*Pause*.]
>
> **MR ROONEY:** Never pause…safe to haven…Do you know, Maddy, sometime one would think that you are struggling with a dead language.

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[53] Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, 19.
[54] Samuel Beckett, *Samuel Beckett: The Complete Dramatic Works*, Revised ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), 172.

MRS ROONEY: Yes indeed, Dan, I know full well what you mean, I often have the

                   feeling, it is unspeakably excruciating.

MR ROONEY: I confess I have it sometimes myself, when I happen to overhear

                   what I am saying.

MRS ROONEY: Well, you know, it will be dead in time, just like our own poor

                   Gaelic, there is that to be said. [*Urgent baa.*][55]

Although she is not referring to her delivery of lines per se, I would suggest, like many others who have written about this particular radio play, that her lines are inherently musical and designed to "consolidate the underlying rhythm…merg[ing] imperceptibly musical and realistic elements of the play,"[56] as suggested by McWhinnie. This is epitomised by the rhythmic suggestion of the following speech alongside the stylised sound effects included in the directions which highlight the musical nature of the overall soundscape.

MRS ROONEY: All is still. No living soul in sight. There is no one to ask. The

                   world is feeding. The wind— [*Brief wind.*]—scarcely stirs the

                   leaves and the birds—[*Brief chirp.*]—are tired singing. The cows—

                   [*Brief moo.*]—and sheep—[*Brief baa.*]—ruminate in silence. The

                   dogs—[*Brief bark.*]—are hushed and the hens—[*Brief cackle.*]—

                   sprawl torpid in the dust. We are alone. There is no one to ask.

                   [*Silence.*][57]

Mrs Rooney's movement and breath alongside the choice to seat the audience in rocking chairs introduces a challenge to the internal rhythms of the spectator and an invitation to recalibrate to the performances various rhythms.

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[55] Ibid., 194.
[56] McWhinnie, *The Art of Radio*, 134.
[57] Beckett, *Samuel Beckett: The Complete Dramatic Works*, 192.

In addition to the imitation of breathing and rocking movements, the very act of rocking back and forth affects how sound is received. Several neurological and psychological studies have shown that there is a deep interplay between a person's vestibular system, that is the sensory system that controls balance and space orientation, and the reception of rhythm and sound. A study into this connection carried out by neuroscientists Neil Todd and Christopher Lee found that the manner in which we perceive rhythm is a form of balance perception.[58] This connection, for example, informs the human tendency to tap a foot or dance to rhythmic music. As a rocking chair is designed to perform an unstable balance, this might again be a concerted effort by Pan Pan to introduce a dialogue between internal and external rhythms: the audience are seated in rocking chairs which tip balance back and forth while listening to sounds throughout the performance, making use of this neurological connection.

A further observation can be made by returning to Bachelard's poetic space. At one stage, Bachelard refers to a train journey as the best exercise to reveal the power and seductions of the poetic space. He goes on to outline the type of ideal setting required for daydreaming and imagination to flourish:

> Immensity is within ourselves. It is attached to a sort of expansion of being that life curbs and caution arrests, but which starts again when we are alone. As soon as we become motionless, we are elsewhere; we are dreaming in a world that is immense. Indeed, immensity is the movement of motionless man. It is one of the dynamic characteristics of quiet daydreaming.[59]

Thus, seated in a rocking chair in dim light for the most part, gentle rocking providing a sense of momentum but also this motionlessness, *All That Fall* appears to put into place the ideal setting for daydreaming, for engaging with the virtual potentialities of the piece. A journey of reflection whereby you mix the surroundings with the virtual potentials that unfurl in the poetic space of the

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[58] Christopher Lee and Neill Todd, "The Sensory-Motor Theory of Rhythm and Beat Induction 20 Years On: A New Synthesis and Future Perspectives," *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 9, no. 444 (2015).
[59] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space,* 184.

theatre. While the image of the audience rocking may be reminiscent of a scene from the past of an elderly man or woman sitting in a rocking chair beside the wireless, it also serves a much more dramaturgical and kinaesthetic purpose. Individually, each element—the light, sound, and human sculpture—performs a significant and independent role. However, when they are considered together, their collective immersive and affective potential is powerful.

In this section, I have attempted to examine the powerful deterritorialising devices of sound and rhythm in *All That Fall*. Deleuze and Guattari, Lefebvre, Fischer-Lichte, and indeed Beckett acknowledge various aspects of its force and impact on bodies and space. Both Lefebvre and Fischer-Lichte suggest a continual tuning in to the surrounding environment and its rhythms through their respective writing on the relationship between bodies and surrounding environment. While this act of tuning in mostly attempts to maintain equilibrium, there are times when, by the very act of tuning in to a diverse rhythm, the body is deterritorialised, as noted by Deleuze and Guattari, and taken out of its usual frame of organisation. Deterritorialisation occurs on three levels in *All That Fall*: (1) The disembodied voices of Beckett's characters are deterritorialised to the point of "becoming-imperceptible," as Deleuzian scholar Audroné Žukauskaite writes: "Beckettian characters are striving [...] to become imperceptible...to disorganize the body, to dismantle the system of signification, and to erase subjectivity,"[60] (2) Pan Pan attempt to deterritorialise the audience by erasing the anticipated roles of theatregoer and onlooker and replacing it with the role of spectator-performer or human sculpture, (3) The spectator engages in deterritorialisation by tuning into the various rhythms of the piece dictated through the sounds, the lights, and the rocking.

In the next section, I will connect deterritorialisation in *All That Fall* with virtuality and Grosz's notion of the outside. Once the frame of organisation has been adjusted and a process of deterritorialisation has been deployed, a space of potential is opened. This is a point whereby

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[60] S. E. Wilmer and Audroné Žukauskaite, *Deleuze and Beckett* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 67.

individual imaginative engagement which supplements the individual experience becomes crucial to the affective encounter and eventual becoming with the performance.

Virtuality and The Outside

The physical surroundings from which the spectator experiences the play can influence the connections they make with the content. The surroundings affect not only the visualisation but also the embodied experience of the play and the relations made both actual and virtual. They affect the relations one can make with the narrative and introduce potentialities that can be both actualised in visualisation and created as a potential in virtuality. In *Architecture from the Outside*, Grosz proposes an idea of "the outside" as a position that can challenge the conventional and accepted lines of thought. The outside, she suggests, is the location of

> the unthought, the exterior, the surface, the simulacrum, the fold, lines of flight, what resists assimilation, what remains foreign even within a presumed identity, whether this is the intrusion of a minor language into a majoritarian one or the pack submerged within an individual. The outside or exterior is what both enables and resists the movements of territorialization and deterritorialization.[61]

The outside, in this sense, has the ability to confront "the inside", which is the normalised and the accepted, the majoritarian standpoint. The outside has the capacity to create a stutter that allows new thought, new intensities, and lines of flight. Due to its position outside of thought, or rather thought can be understood as a potential site of "encounter with an outside,"[62] the notion of the outside is very much connected to the idea of the virtual. The virtual is a space of potential that is inextricably linked to the actual just like the outside is inextricably linked to the inside or thought.

Grosz's proposal of the outside is pertinent to all radio plays to some extent. Here, I am thinking of the physical environment that the listener inhabits as a form of the outside insofar that

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[61] Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*, 63-4.
[62] Ibid., 65.

surroundings may elicit both actual and virtual connections with the performance. This idea of both a physical outside and a philosophical concept of the outside in the form of virtuality and the spectator's imaginative engagement with the production will be the focus of this section. In other words, how does the physical surroundings and scenographic choices of *All That Fall*, affect the spectator's experience on the plane of virtual engagement?

In Pan Pan's *All That Fall,* the audience are sitting in a sensory chamber in which light, design, and other audience members surround them. Contrary to conventional radio drama, it is not only the audience member who fills the gap that is left through absence of the visual. The performance space in *All That Fall* instead offers a curated listening space in order to stimulate the embodied response, felt experience, and affective encounter with the piece. In an article examining the affective and tactile properties of sound, Steven Connor proposes, "hearing provides intensity without specificity, which is why it has so often been thought to be aligned more closely with feeling than understanding…think of it as an orientation towards the future in sound rather than the past: hearing, we might say, is usually more provocative than evocative."[63] The outside presented in *All That Fall* can thus be understood both philosophically in the sense of Grosz's proposal and also as a physical environment that is curated by Pan Pan to accentuate the affective experience of the play; the words are recorded and play in the space, but the experience of the production is achieved through the spectator's body encountering the curated environment from which it is broadcast.

By its nature, radio plays leave a space for the listener to complete the performance through visualisation; this production of *All That Fall* curates the listening space from which the sound is heard. In so doing, Pan Pan curate the physical environment from which individual imaginative evocations take place. Returning to Grosz's consideration of the outside and its potential force, she emphasises that "the outside is active in the production of the inside."[64] In other words, thought, including embodied knowledge, is produced from encounters with the outside, understood as both

[63] Steven Connor, "Edison's Teeth: Touching Hearing," accessed February 14, 2016, *http://stevenconnor.com/edsteeth.html*.
[64] Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*, 69.

space and the virtual potential of the piece. Thus, we shall now consider the role of the outside in *All That Fall* to gain a better understanding of both the physical outside (the performance space) and the philosophical outside (the virtual, imaginative encounter with the piece).

All That Fall, as a text, presents the listener with a linear narrative. As is the case with most radio plays, there are moments that distinctly direct the listener's visualisation, such as Mrs Rooney being boosted into the car by Mr Slocum:

    MR SLOCUM: [*In a position behind her.*] Now, Mrs Rooney, how shall we do this?

    MR ROONEY: As if I were a bale, Mr Slocum, don't be afraid. [*Pause. Sounds of effort.*] That's the way! [*Effort.*] Lower! [*Effort.*] Wait! [*Pause.*] No, don't let go! [*Pause*] Suppose I do get up, will I ever get down?

    MR SLOCUM: [*Breathing hard.*] You'll get down, Mrs Rooney, you'll get down. We may never get you up, but I warrant you we'll get you down. [*Resumes his efforts. Sound of these.*]

    MRS ROONEY: Oh!...Lower!...Don't be afraid...We're past the age when….There!...Now!...Get your shoulder under it….Oh!...[*Giggles.*] Oh glory!...Up! Up!...Ah!...I'm in! [*Panting of MR SLOCUM. He slams the door. In a scream.*] My frock! You've nipped my frock! [*MR SLOCUM opens the door. MRS ROONEY frees her frock. MR SLOCUM slams the door. His violent unintelligible muttering as he walks round to the other door. Tearfully.*] My nice frock! Look at what you've done to my nice frock! [*MR SLOCUM gets into his seat, slams driver's door,*

presses starter. The engine does not start. He releases starter.]

What will Dan say when he sees me?[65]

In this scene, the action is heavily directed through the dialogue and stage directions so that the listener can clearly visualise the comic scene which involves an exasperated Mr Slocum and an unapologetic Mrs Rooney.

There are several instances within the text of *All That Fall* that are extremely effective in communicating the complexities of the action to the audience, particularly intricate comic details such as the above example. Pan Pan embrace these instances in order to allow the full comic effect to be realised. On the other hand, in an almost contradictory motion, Pan Pan encourage the spectators to repeatedly suspend this type of visualised listening engagement with the play—the listening environment that Pan Pan curate in *All That Fall* promotes high levels of felt engagement and pockets of independent intervals for imaginative input and affective encounter with the space. This differs from the kind of distinct direction that the above scene between Mrs Rooney and Mr Slocum delivers.

Rather than encouraging the listener to visualise the action of the play in a straightforward manner throughout the performance, Pan Pan encourage their listeners to dip in and out of the play's narrative. In their production, through the design of the space, sound, and seating, Pan Pan aim to stimulate imaginative instances in each spectator that may not be directly related to the action and also seek to establish affective encounters involving the audience's body and their relation to the performance space as whole. Braidotti proposes that the truth of a text, and here I apply this thought to theatre, "resides in the transversal nature of the affects they engender, that is to say the outward-bound interconnections or relations they enable or sustain."[66] In other words, one's experience and understanding of something, a text or a performance or something else, rests

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[65] Beckett, *Samuel Beckett: The Complete Dramatic Works*, 178.
[66] Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 165.

on the mingling of the thoughts and materials contained within it and the individual's digestion and relation to it; the connections that are made to the outside; the engagement with the virtual of the subject. That is where the "truth" or the essence lies.

In *The Sound Handbook*, Tim Crook identifies "imaginative spectacle" as the "fifth dimension of sonic communication and understanding"[67] preceded by speech, music, sound noise, and pre-recorded sound. Crook defines imaginative spectacle by the simultaneously present and absent form of sound. Between the sound and the interpretation, there is an aperture that generally requires imaginative input. This gap is more pronounced in the medium of radio as the environment from which the sound originates is not present and the characters who speak are not visible. In this way the gap must be occupied by imaginative conjecture. Some of this is directly related to the action in the play, in which case it is "actualised," that is, "more like what we would ordinarily understand as the real, that is, a realm of things that exist independently of our ways of thinking about them and perceiving them."[68] Other forms of engagement, including the affective encounter of the spectator with the performance as a whole, remain a virtuality. It is a potential that is not actualised but is within "the realm of transcendental conditions for the actual, that is, things we have to presuppose for there to be an actual at all."[69] In order to illustrate this distinction, Deleuze invokes Proust: "The virtual is not opposed to the real but to the actual. The virtual is fully real in so far as it is virtual. Exactly what Proust said of states of resonance must be said of the virtual: 'Real without being actual, ideal without being abstract': and symbolic without being fictional."[70] The virtual is always tied to the actual. Thus, both the physical, external environment that is curated in *All That Fall* as well as the gaps left for imaginative engagement aid the actual visualisation and the potential virtuality through moments of imaginative engagement with Pan Pan's *All That Fall*.

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[67] Tim Crook, *The Sound Handbook* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 16.
[68] James Williams, "Real," in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 223.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 272.

Staying with the idea of the outside, understood as a challenge to the normalised, majoritarian position, we arrive at the Deleuzian idea of the stutter. The stutter is connected to the concept of the outside in a number of ways; in fact, Deleuze defines stuttering as an act of amputation converting the "major" literature—understood generally as canonical works that underline notions and modes of "uniformity and sameness"[71]—into a "minor literature," that is, a literature which disrupts and subverts. Perhaps we can say that stuttering is a device of the outside at play in literature and language. The fact that Beckett was one of the primary authors that Deleuze lauded for his use of stutter and minor language, makes the connections between the outside, stuttering, and this production of *All That Fall* all the more pertinent.

Deleuze dedicates two essays in *Essays Critical and Clinical* to exploring the work of Beckett.[72] He frequently references Beckett in relation to "creative stuttering." To reiterate, Deleuze is referring to language that has been removed from its normative, organised structure. It is language that has been deterritorialised. Deleuze proposes that when a writer such as Beckett employs creative stuttering, she makes "the language as such stutter: an affective and intensive language, and no longer an affectation of the one who speaks."[73] Through the amputation of a logical language, the affective and intensive language is set free. Deleuze explains that artists who employ creative stuttering to communicate—he uses Beckett, Franz Kafka, and Carmelo Bene as his primary examples—generate a productive disruption that "makes language grow in the middle, like grass; it is what makes language a rhizome instead of a tree, puts language in perpetual disequilibrium[…]There are many ways to grow from the middle, or to stutter."[74]

Relating to the deployment of the stutter, Stephen Wilmer and Audroné Žukauskaite mark out the various points of convergence between Deleuze and Beckett, and note:

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[71] A description invoked by Adrian Parr in the introduction of *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 5.

[72] See "The Greatest Irish Film (Beckett's "Film")" and "The Exhausted" in Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

[73] Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 107.

[74] Ibid., 111.

Both authors demonstrate distrust of any given and defined identities, of the regime of representation and the constraints of rational subjectivity [...] Deleuze and Beckett invent different strategies of evading both dominant signification and orders of subjection: they prefer incorporeal transformations as well as corporeal disarticulations, constant variations and becoming.[75]

Taking Beckett's work as an exemplification of minor literature, a further development of the stutter is demonstrated in Pan Pan's adaptation, specifically in relation to incorporeal transformations and corporeal disarticulations. The characters of the play are both physically present bodies (in the form of the audience sculpture and in the representations of their movement through lighting cues) and disembodied voices that resound through the performance space. Their essence invades the movement of the lighting, the rhythm of the rocking, and the bodies of the spectators. Equally, as recipients of these sounds and rhythms, the sculptural body of the audience in the performance space disrupts set identities and functions, the clean lines and clear roles that a spectator assumes as a theatregoer. For the duration of the piece, the spectator's body is amputated so that it may fit the audience sculpture, in addition to being able to join with the sound in an affective encounter.

Incorporeal transformations and corporeal disarticulations, to use Wilmer and Žukauskaite's terms, are crucial to the affective potential, immersive force, and becoming that is initiated in Pan Pan's *All That Fall*. In his prominent essay entitled "The Grain of the Voice,"[76] Roland Barthes employs Julia Kristeva's term genotext (which he then adapts to geno-song and later the grain) to describe the bodily way in which descriptive language is incapable of capturing the bodily communication of music. According to Kristeva, "Even though it can be seen in language, the genotext is not linguistic…it is, rather, a *process*, which tends to articulate structures that are ephemeral…and nonsignifying."[77] Barthes develops Kristeva's genotext into a notion of

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[75] Wilmer and Žukauskaite, *Deleuze and Beckett*, 3.
[76] Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," in *Image, Music, Text* (London: Flamingo, 1984, 1977).
[77] Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 86.

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"the grain of the voice" to signal something that is inherent in certain music "beyond (or before) the meaning of the words…the materiality of the body speaking in its mother tongue."[78] If we apply the principal of the grain of the voice to the disembodied voices in *All That Fall*, one can say through the evocatively designed soundscape and placement of the speakers, while the actors are not physically present in the performance space, the way in which the sound is delivered speaks to Barthes' exploration of the bodily communication which he identifies in the grain. In sum, although the actorly bodies are absent, the way in which the sound is recorded, designed, set up, and consumed renders a physical presence through the notion of Barthes' use of the grain. Thus, although there is a physical absence of actorly bodies, through the sound of their voices, and its concurrence with the entire soundscape, a type of presence is marked throughout the performance.

In each of these theories—from Grosz's concept of the outside and the connection I draw with the Deleuzian idea of virtuality and imaginative engagement to Barthes' proposal of the grain of the voice—there is an idea of a material aperture which calls to be filled with virtual potentialities to contribute to the actuality of the performance. In the gap created in the performance through deterritorialisation, each spectator is invited to relate to the performance in an individual and imaginative manner; she is invited to propose her own virtual potentialities which mix with the external materiality, the actuality, of the show.

All That Fall as a piece of writing certainly typifies the type of stuttering and minor language for which Deleuze advocates. It disrupts direct signification and power through its use of lyrical language and frequently solipsistic form. Pan Pan conduct an amputation of the text in order to create a stutter. While the medium of radio is often defined by absence, namely, the lack of image, set, or physically present performers, it is this absence that provides radio drama with its creative potency. It is absence that allows the listener an unlimited selection of possibility. The drama is combined with the individual's imagination and the different listening environments

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[78] Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," 181-2.

where the drama might be experienced. This defining feature of radio drama is developed by the Pan Pan production. In addition to sound as force for deterritorialisation, instances of silence are also used as a disruptive and stimulating force in *All That Fall*. Silence is associated with anticipation, introspection, and attention in our daily lives; within drama, these aspects are heightened. As *All That Fall* is pre-recorded, the silences are also recorded, they are carefully timed and placed. The silence, the absence, therefore signals its own presence. Thus, absence, and in turn its suggested presence, are part of the strategies of simulation and stimulation in the work. This point is, in fact, highlighted by Mrs Rooney, "Do not imagine, because I am silent, that I am not present, and alive, to all that is going on."[79]

In this discussion of virtuality, the outside, and techniques of simulation and stimulation, we should return once again to Dufrenne's three moments of aesthetic perception. As we have established, SSP seeks to prolong the first stage of presence whereby the spectator engages in a bodily knowledge. The process of aesthetic perception proceeds to a second stage known as Representation. While this stage is still very much an embodied and felt engagement, the body begins to consider what it has encountered in the first stage through a process of playful imagination. Importantly, Dufrenne notes that "By invoking a higher level of perception, we do not reject the plane of presence. We shall see that even unconscious knowledge located within presence nourishes representation."[80] This stage of Representation occurs in spaces of virtuality. When this process occurs, the audience are invited to collaborate with the performance on a deeply introspective, subjective level. As Deleuze and Grosz highlight throughout their philosophical works, the way that things, both material and intensive, relate and have the capacity to affect and transform one another is of most importance. Thus, this perception stage of Representation is a

[79] Beckett, *Samuel Beckett: The Complete Dramatic Works*, 185.
[80] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 345.

constant play between the bodily knowledge gained from presence alongside virtualities' dynamic relationship with the spectating body and their physical environment.

Drawing upon this, we can say that the physical environment that surrounds a body affects and influences virtuality. So, let us consider the following: *All That Fall* casts the audience as physical performers who fill the playing area in rocking chairs. In addition, the lights and rocking chairs work together to skew the spatial perspective of the space. This is the physical environment that is established. At the same time, the play relies on the audience to complete the performance through imaginative visualisation, thereby promoting an array of relations both actual and virtual during the performance. As Deleuze indicates:

> When it is claimed that works of art are immersed in a virtuality, what is being evoked is not some confused determination but the completely determined structure formed by its genetic differential elements, its "virtual" or "embryonic" elements. The elements, varieties of relations and singular points coexist in the work or the object, in the virtual part of the work or object, without it being possible to designate a point of view privileged over others, a centre which would unify the other centres.[81]

This space of virtuality that *All That Fall* precipitates is similar to that of daydreaming. Bachelard remarks that, during a period of daydreaming, a person is transported from the world of the "real" to a world that has infinite potentialities. However, when this temporary, imaginative transportation occurs, it is informed by the surroundings that the person inhabits as well as their memories. In other words, during a period of daydreaming, rational thought is suspended, allowing unlimited associations to be drawn from the information supplied by surroundings and memories. As with daydreaming, the physical environment created in *All That Fall* informs virtuality that is powered by the audience's relations with the performance, both in the virtual and actualised in concrete visualisations. The play's sounds play in the performance space; they inform the audience's virtuality.

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[81] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 209.

Significantly, however, the narrative does not *dictate* their virtuality, which is a space of personal potential. The physical environment acts as a suggestion or an influence rather than a prescription.

All That Fall is written in a way that directs the listener to visualise certain scenes clearly in what Deleuze calls an actualisation. This is aided by techniques of simulation within the production through sound, lighting, and the sculpture formed by the audience. Although Pan Pan encourage this type of direct narrative engagement with the play, they also aim to stimulate imaginative instances in each spectator that may not be directly related to the action and also seek to establish affective encounters involving the spectator and their unique relation to the performance. Following a change in frames and deterritorialisation, the audience are encouraged to engage with the outside, with the potentials within virtuality in which spectators are encouraged to gather and cultivate meaning. During the spaces of virtuality that occur during Dufrenne's aesthetic perception stage of representation in *All That Fall,* the audience become more aware of their bodies, the role they play in the performance. They are also allowed to engage with the virtual aperture that Pan Pan has left for the audience to fill with independent imaginative input and affective encounter, building up resonances which live on in body long after the performance.

Reterritorialisation and Becoming

In the previous two sections, I have analysed the processes of framing, deterritorialisation, and virtuality in *All That Fall* which, following the SSP model, invites an affective encounter and establishes an immersive becoming between the spectator and the performance. When I introduced the Deleuzian processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation in Chapter One, I sought to underline the continual fluctuation between the two states. Deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation are in continual flux; once there is a deterritorialisation, a reterritorialisation begins, and so on. As Grosz states, "A territory is established only once qualities/properties come to have their own resonances, their own repetition and construction; territory is the spatiotemporal

configuration of these rhythms and forces."[83] Reterritorialisation occurs when the spectator learns the new rules and qualities contained within the frame. When the process of reterritorialisation begins, the audience learns to inhabit a new frame with the new rules and conventions they have learned. So, for example, the audience may begin to realise that the rocking chairs are a physical illustration of the musical rhythm of Mrs Rooney's speech or that lighting performs several functions including diegetic roles and actorly roles.

The associations and possible points of connection between the aesthetic object of performance and each individual spectator are numerous. As Grosz indicates, "When art is produced, when it is thought or even recognized, it returns us to something of the intensity, and chaos, of the preindividual that is both within us and in the world, which we share with the world."[84] Similarly, referring to the power of the evocative nature of the poetic image, Bachelard suggests,

> But the image has touched the depths before it stirs the surface. And this is also true of a simple experience of reading. The image offered us by reading the poem now becomes really our own. It takes root in us. It has been given us by another, but we begin to have the impression that we could have created it, that we should have created it. It becomes a new being in our language, expressing us by making us what it expresses; in other words, it is at once a becoming of expression, and a becoming of our being. Here expression creates being.[85]

Therefore, once the process of reterritorialisation begins, it marks an individual connection with the performance, an understanding, a return to order; a new frame in which the qualities and properties have their own resonances, as Grosz suggests.

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[83] Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, 20.
[84] Elizabeth Grosz, *The Incorporeal: Ontology, Ethics, and the Limits of Materialism* (Colombia University Press, 2017), 202-203.
[85] Although Bachelard is referring to the potential of literary images, I contend that this statement can equally be applied to the way in which meaning is accessed in performances of sensory spectacle, and more particularly, in *All That Fall*. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, xix.

Through reterritorialisation, we reach Dufrenne's third stage of aesthetic perception: reflection. According to Dufrenne, "A theory of perception cannot remain [in the plane of presence]. It must break open a pathway from a comprehension lived by the body to the conscious intellection effected at the level of representation."[86] The first aesthetic perception stage of presence encourages a solely embodied connection with *All That Fall*. No other comprehension is required except for the affective encounter located between the content—the sounds, the lighting, the seating, the design, and the performance space as a whole—and the effect, the meaning received from the performance. Pan Pan, and indeed all SSPs, aim to prolong the presence stage of perception so that the spectator may experience the play rather than attempting to draw meaning from every instance.

Moving from this, the spectator is asked to draw upon their surroundings to enter into a stage of aesthetic perception known as representation which involves escaping into an imaginative virtuality. This stage promotes imagination and connections that are both directly and indirectly related to the performance through virtuality. Representation is still a deeply embodied mode of perception, drawing upon the bodily knowledge of presence. As Dufrenne insists, "unconscious knowledge located within presence nourishes representation."[87] The third stage, reflection, which is aligned with reterritorialisation, is concerned with limiting the possibilities that were explored and experienced in presence and representation, and distilling them into a meaning, a conceptual knowledge of the piece. In the same manner as reterritorialisation, reflection is the spectator's individual connection with the performance. It is the effect of the overall piece and their understanding of it; any review of the production would encapsulate this stage.

As I have thus far addressed each stage of the SSP model, I will now consider its cumulative progression toward becoming. On an aesthetic level, the spectator enters into a becoming with the performance for the duration of the piece by their very presence as part of the

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[86] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 339.
[87] Ibid., 345.

moving sculpture. By their presence in the performance space of *All That Fall,* they become the performance and the performance becomes them. Both sides enter into a transformative exchange of sensation. Once all of the audience members take their seats and the sounds and lights begin to perform, the installation is in operation. But on a more affective level, the spectator enters into an immersive becoming with the performance through the points of encounter and connection that are set up between their body and the forces that performance emanates. In the first instance, the rocking chair assumes most of the responsibility for balance in the body, connecting to the ground at different points, back and forth. As this motion continues it alters the spectator's rhythmic interpretation of the play. It also changes the overall perspective and scale of the space as a whole as points of focus change. The sounds, light, and rocking chairs not only deterritorialise and amputate in the Deleuzian sense, they also absorb the spectator into the performance. According to Grosz, "Sensation draws us, living beings of all kinds, into the artwork in a strange becoming in which the living being empties itself of its interior to be filled with the sensation of that work alone."[88]

The immersive and affective nature of sound is underlined by both Grosz and LaBelle in the epigraphs to this chapter. Both LaBelle and Grosz allude to the listener of sound entering into a sort becoming, emerging from it qualitatively changed. Fischer-Lichte makes a similar observation in relation to presence and rhythm in performance, asserting that "We have a particular capacity for perceiving rhythms and tuning our bodies to them. When the temporality of a performance is organized and structured through rhythm, different 'rhythmic systems' clash. The rhythm of the performance collides with the various rhythms of each individual spectator."[89] This rhythmic clash implies an encounter whereby an exchange and transformation takes place on both sides—on the part of the spectator and on the part of the performance. In short, through virtuality, the spectator is

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[88] Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, 74.
[89] Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2008), 136.

guided by an embodied imagination and an affective encounter with the performance. The outcome is that the spectator is encouraged to enter into a becoming with the performance.

Both the performance and the spectator, through the aesthetic experience, are transformed through the process by engaging in a process of becoming. As a result of the becoming, both parts—the spectator and the performance—have become more and other. Each performance of *All That Fall* will differ greatly as different bodies complete the installation and engage individually with the becoming process. Equally, each individual experience of becoming for the spectator will differ greatly as the performance is arranged in such a way as to provide endless variations of connections, forces, and affects.

Conclusion

There are numerous conceptual convergences between Deleuzian philosophy and the ideas addressed in Beckett's writing. In 2015, an edited collection exploring the philosophical association between the authors was published enumerating these conceptual convergences. In setting out these various comparisons, editors Stephen Wilmer and Audroné Žukauskaite suggest,

> [Deleuze and Beckett] both explored the idea of fluid subjectivity, with Beckett creating fragmented and vanishing characters and Deleuze expressing the concept of becoming: becoming-animal, becoming-woman, becoming-imperceptible, and so on. They both expressed resistance to narrative, language, representation, hierarchy, teleology and closure. Likewise, they both distrusted structures of signification and preferred experimentation to clarity of meaning.[91]

In this chapter, I have sought to highlight the stuttering nature of Beckett's text; *All That Fall* disrupts and subverts majoritarian language. In addition to disturbing and discomposing major language through stutter, minor literature also seeks to disrupt the reader/listener/spectator. As it presents a challenge in some way to fixed identities, ideas, and straight forward representation, this type of writing results in the reader or spectator being challenged, disrupted, deterritorialised.

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[91] Wilmer and Žukauskaite, *Deleuze and Beckett*, 1.

Beckett's radio play presented a significant challenge to the traditional radio play mode at the time of broadcast in 1957 due to its highly stylised form and use of abstract sound effects. Pan Pan's production of *All That Fall* challenges the form even further through their creative adaptation, which takes the form of a curated, sensually immersive environment that seeks to transform the relatively intimate form of the radio play into a highly subjective experience and also a collective aesthetic experience.

In his essay "One Less Manifesto" Deleuze explores his concept of minor language and stuttering using the work of Carmelo Bene as his primary example. Deleuze describes Bene's adaptations of Shakespearean texts as acts of "amputation and subtraction" of power. By averting the focus from the main characters that appear in the original text and foregrounding instead the action of a minor character such as Mercutio, Bene alters Shakespeare's major language into a minor one. In other words, Bene disrupts and dislocates the canonical Shakespearean text through an amputation of the most identifiable aspects. According to Deleuze, "all mistranslations are good [...] they multiply its use [...] they create another language inside its language."[92] As a consequence of this amputation of power, Deleuze insists that Bene "enlists and releases positive processes."[93] By this he means that by amputating the dominant power of language, representation, and gesture, a different force is set free. "But what remains?" Deleuze asks, "Everything remains, but under a new light, with new sounds and new gestures."[94] Deleuze ends the essay by claiming:

> Theatre will surge forward as something representing nothing but what presents and creates a minority consciousness as a universal-becoming. It forges alliances here and there according to the circumstances, following the lines of transformation that exceed theatre and take on another form, or else turn themselves back into theatre for another leap...When consciousness abandons solutions and interpretations, it thus acquires light, its gestures and its sounds, its decisive transformation…The more we attain this form of minority consciousness, the less isolated we feel…Under the ambition of formulas, there is the most

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[92] Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 5.
[93] Deleuze, "One Less Manifesto," 245.
[94] Ibid.

modest appreciation of what might be a revolutionary theatre, a simple loving potentiality, an element for a new becoming of consciousness.[95]

A number of comparisons can be drawn from Deleuze's proposal in this illuminative essay and Pan Pan's adaptation of *All That Fall*. Through the subtraction of power that Bene exacts in his work, he releases new transformative potentialities similar to the potentialities that are presented in Pan Pan's adaptation. Pan Pan seeks to set up an immersive affective encounter through the amputation and subtraction of traditional theatrical communication systems. By a subtraction of "constants, the stable or stabilized elements, because they belong to major usage,"[96] as Deleuze suggests of Bene's theatre, Pan Pan are thereby releasing the potential for becoming.

The absence of a physical performer in conjunction with the techniques of simulation and stimulation encourages affective encounter with the performance in addition to high levels of introspection. The loss of emphasis on the visual as a primary communication point encourages the use of other senses for comprehension. *All That Fall* demonstrates that sound, rather than playing the traditional role of accompaniment or complement, can precede and render the image through visualisation and imagination. In this chapter I have used my model of SSP in an analysis of *All That Fall* to demonstrate the ways in which Pan Pan promote sensory immersion. By applying the model, and using it in combination with Dufrenne's aesthetic perception moments, the detailed process of the immersive experience can be unpacked. The key to *All That Fall*'s sensory immersion is the manner in which the framing challenges the conventional organisation of theatrical experiences in which sound accompanies image to a non-traditional model in which sound precedes and renders image in a deeply subjective, evocative, and visceral manner. This alteration of frame causes a process of deterritorialisation during which virtuality is aided. It is in these spaces of virtuality that each spectator is invited to engage in embodied imagination to supplement their individual aesthetic experience. These individual connections present an

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[95] Ibid., 256.
[96] Ibid., 245.

opportunity for becoming. Reterritorialisation marks the spectator's return to organisation—that is, a return to comprehension of the experience held within the newly adjusted frame.

Pan Pan's production, in addition to highlighting a shift in attention styles from deep-attention to hyper-attention through its multi-form adaptation of Beckett's radio play, uses an old medium to comment on the effects of new media as well as question the simultaneously intimate and shared nature of new communication technologies. *All That Fall* moves back and forth between the techniques of simulation and stimulation which culminate in an extended field of virtuality for the spectator. Moreover, by moving between the two techniques, the performance interrogates the blurred boundaries between the real and imagined and between the actual and the virtual. Many contemporary theatre scholars, particularly those interested in digital performance and postdramatic theatre, suggest that coherent, plot-led realism no longer reflects our experiences of the world.[98] Pan Pan are offering a performative solution by delivering a multi-form, affective, immersive spectacle that interrogates and reflects different attention styles and today's mediatised environment. As director of Pan Pan Gavin Quinn suggests, as an audience member of *All That Fall*, "You don't have to understand everything. You can feel things."[99]

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[98] Notably, Hans Thies-Lehmann expresses such a sentiment in *Postdramatic Theatre*.
[99] Quinn, "Pan Pan: A Theatre of Ideas."

Chapter 3| Repetition, Phenomenal Identification, and Sensory Immersion in Corn Exchange's *Man of Valour*

> Repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change something in the mind which contemplates it.[1]
>
> —Gilles Deleuze*, Difference and Repetition.*

> Experience now consists of sudden and frequent shifts from absorption in a cocoon of control and personalization into the contingency of a shared world intrinsically resistant to control. The experience of these shifts inevitably enhances one's attraction to the former, and magnifies the mirage of one's own privileged exemption from the apparent shoddiness and insufficiency of a world in common. Within 24/7 capitalism, a sociality outside of individual self-interest becomes inexorably depleted, and the interhuman basis of public space is made irrelevant to one's fantasmatic digital insularity[2]
>
> —Jonathan Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep.*

In 1968, Gilles Deleuze published *Difference and Repetition*, which set forth one of his most revolutionary proposals—repetition, rather than an act that is identical in manner, is a generative, creative, and forward-looking process. Deleuze argues that repetition creates through difference rather than stabilises through replication, as it is often conceived. As a result, he pursues the notion that difference and repetition have the potential to be both destructive and constructive. Through each repetition, new aspects, characteristics, and qualities are observed and then responded to. Hence, as cited as the epigraph to this chapter, Deleuze suggests that repetition changes nothing in the object itself but something in the mind that contemplates it. Although this is a simplistic summation by Deleuze and not quite what he intends to be understood fully about his entire proposal of difference and repetition, namely he goes on to argue that repetition does indeed change something in the object and, in fact, it is a far more rhizomatic process than the terms "subject" and "object" convey. The statement does serve to underline the powerful effect that the act of repetition has on bodies that encounter and experience it, both human and nonhuman, living and non-living.

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[1] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 70.
[2] Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*, 89.

Through repetition the potential for habit formation is introduced. Habit is formed through repetition, and the resulting transformations can be categorised as a difference. Habit is formed as a result of rules, nature, efficiency, ease, pleasure, and/or necessity. A repeated encounter with an object, situation, or behaviour introduces a transformation evident in the way bodies perform and interact with their surroundings going forward. A transformation occurs in both/all encountering bodies, and a consequential realignment occurs with the surrounding environment. This realignment and creation of habit as a result of repetitious encounters occurs countless times every day.

The Corn Exchange production *Man of Valour* was first staged in 2011 at The Everyman Theatre in Cork as part of the Cork Midsummer Festival. Since Corn Exchange's early productions, the company have experimented widely with physicality and movement and also techniques from commedia dell'arte. In *Man of Valour*, they drive these strategies to their full potential to deliver a play that resembles a fast-paced action film and mirrors a video game aesthetic. Rather than design an expensive set and use a large cast of actors to deliver the epic and experience-driven performance that these types of action sequences construct, the company instead uses physical repetition, an appeal to habit, and invitation to enter into a process of "phenomenal identification" to impel a primarily bodily, affective response to the performance. *Man of Valour* thus seeks to harness the powerful effects of repetition and habit to appeal to certain embodied learned behaviour that spectators have developed in response to their mediatised environments to introduce moments of phenomenal identification, affective encounter, immersion, and becoming.

This chapter will explore what transpires when a performance such as *Man of Valour* makes use of the destructive and constructive power of Deleuze's notion of difference and repetition, particularly repetition's ability to appeal to habit and connect with learned behaviour, in order to deepen the immersive potential of the performance for the spectator. By applying Deleuze's notion of difference and repetition and his development of the notion of "body without

organs" alongside Dufrenne's insights into phenomenal identification during the aesthetic experience, this chapter will consider how exposure to mediatised environments, sustained digital interactions, and a particular familiarity with the structures of action-film motifs and video games inform the aesthetic experience of the piece and deepen the immersive potential for the spectator. This chapter will examine Corn Exchange's production in order to further investigate the ways in which the SSP model operates and to consider the implications of repetition, habit, and time on each of the processes involved in SSP—framing, deterritorialisation, virtuality, reterritorialisation, and becoming.

In the previous chapter I explored how the immersive potential of an SSP can be set in motion by first changing the frame of communication. In the case of Pan Pan's *All That Fall*, this change is initiated through the use of programmed sound, diegetic lighting design, and a sculpture created by rhythmic spectating bodies as the main points of information, as opposed to a set stage with physically present actor bodies. The previous chapter also considered how Pan Pan is attempting to tune into modes of counter-attention promoted by digital culture to deepen the spectator's immersive engagement with the performance. This chapter will further consider theatre's adoption of these strategies from digital culture to appeal to counter-attention and also explore the effective use of repetition and habit to achieve an immersive becoming through coinciding transformations of the performer and audience members into bodies without organs. In the section that follows, I will introduce *Man of Valour,* paying close attention to the company's constructed potential for affective encounter through the deterritorialisation of bodies, performer and spectator, into bodies without organs, thus opening a space of virtuality and creating the potential for a becoming. I will proceed to introduce a concept of phenomenal identification—the appointment of the actor as the spectator's "body double"—using Dufrenne's exploration of the sensuous and aesthetic experience as a theoretical framework.

Corn Exchange

Corn Exchange is a Dublin-based theatre company established by Annie Ryan in 1995. The company's signature style is highly physical, impeccably-timed, high-energy, and often playful delivery paired with minimalistic, refined design and distinctive mask-like, expressionist make-up. In reference to Corn Exchange's acting style, Brian Singleton notes, "As in *commedia*, the actors speak directly to the audience while the non-speaking actors look to their speaking counterpart. This shifting focus, especially in narrative theatre, creates a constantly evolving focus and energy for the stage picture that has filmic connotations to its practice."[3] Indeed, Corn Exchange's style could be considered a palimpsest of *commedia dell'arte*, techniques drawn from Jacques Lecoq and Ariane Mnouchkine, filmic framing, and improvisation. Chicago-born Ryan studied a mix of *commedia*, improvisation, and theatre games while attending The Piven Workshop as a teenager and later while working with John Cusack's company New Crime before moving to Ireland to study Drama at Trinity College Dublin. Throughout Corn Exchange's history, Ryan has collaborated with writer Michael West.

Corn Exchange's plays fall into two related categories: adaptations from the theatrical and literary canon—*A Streetcar Named Desire* (1996), *Big Bad Wolf* (1997), *The Seagull* (1999), *Lolita* (2002), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (2008), *Happy Days* (2010), *Dubliners* (2012), *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing* (2014), *Nora* (2017), and *The Misfits* (2018)—and original plays written by Michael West for the company—*Foley* (2000), *Dublin by Lamplight* (2004, 2017), *Everyday* (2006), *Freefall* (2009) and *Man of Valour* (2011). Although their fast-paced, physical, "renegade" *commedia* style, as it is frequently referred to, features in many of their productions from the last 25 years and has become somewhat synonymous with the company's identity in Ireland, Corn Exchange also produce ostensibly naturalistic, more traditional stories. Nevertheless, even in these

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[3] Brian Singleton, "Irish Theatre Devised," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Theatre*, eds. Nicholas Grene and Chris Morash (Oxford University Press, 2016), 568.

pared-back productions, Ryan insists that you can still trace elements of *commedia,* which is "the backbone" of the company.[4] West has also endorsed this point, asserting that *commedia* informs all aspects of the work, "even if it is not always obvious."[5] While *commedia* may traditionally suit the delivery of comedic material, the company does not shy away from dealing with difficult social issues in their plays. Two of their most politically-engaged works, *Dublin by Lamplight* and *Freefall*, raise important questions concerning Irish identity, its representations and manifestations.

Dublin by Lamplight, much like their 2012 adaptation of James Joyce's *Dubliners*, satirises the representation of Irish Identity alongside nationalist ideology generated in a multitude of plays and books from the last century. James Hickson notes, "When Dublin [and I would argue Ireland] is dramatised, it often ends up stabilising stereotype, and reiterating certain social and classed discourses. It forms and fastens tropes simultaneously."[6] *Dublin by Lamplight* is set in 1904 and tells the story of the establishment and opening of the "Irish National Theatre of Ireland." Considering The Abbey Theatre, Ireland's national theatre, opened in 1904, and the key figures associated with its foundation such as W.B. Yeats, Willie Fay, Lady Gregory, and Edward Martyn appear as thinly veiled characters complete with the trademark makeup, *Dublin by Lamplight* is constructed as an alternative history to the founding of The Abbey. *Dublin by Lamplight* is an entertaining and highly-skilled production but it is also a gentle mockery of the tired, monolithic notion of Irish identity perpetuated by repeated representations on the Irish stage. This underlying commentary is even more apparent in Corn Exchange's choice to reprise the show in 2017, less than two years after the beginning of the #WakingtheFeminists movement in 2015. #WakingtheFeminists began as a reaction to The Abbey commissioning predominantly male writers and directors for a programme that marked the centenary of the 1916 Irish Rising. The programme featured only one play written by a woman, three plays directed by women, and less

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[4] Lilian Chambers, Ger Fitzgibbon, Eamonn Jordan, eds., *Theatre Talk: Voices of Irish Theatre Practitioners* (Carysfort Press, 2008), 425.
[5] Ibid., 426.
[6] James Hickson, "Representations of Working-Class Dublin at the Dublin Theatre Festival," in *"That was us": Contemporary Irish Theatre and Performance*, ed. Fintan Walsh (London: Oberon Books, 2013), 153.

than ten parts for female actors. The movement has since turned its focus to pay parity, fighting sexism in the arts sector, and representations of individual and national identity. #WakingtheFeminists sparked parallel movements across the world and gave a voice and a platform to those silenced in the arts, in Ireland and abroad. By reviving *Dublin by Lamplight* on the Abbey Stage in 2017, Corn Exchange added to the voice of dissent in the arts community and beyond concerning representation and nationalistic ideology.

      Freefall is similar to *Dublin by Lamplight* in its social commentary but quite different in its execution. This 2009 play symbolically explores the fall of the Celtic Tiger—a particularly prosperous time in Ireland lasting from the mid-1990s to 2008, often associated with hedonistic lifestyles and excessive spending in Ireland—and the impact of the Ryan Report which documented over 30,000 cases of abuse carried out by the Catholic Church since the 1930s[7], through the telling of a story about a man suffering a stroke and its aftermath. In *Freefall*, there is little trace of stock characters, slapstick gesturing, or painted masks although some remnants of this certainly persist. Most of the action proceeds in a relatively naturalistic fashion but this is undercut by the use of sophisticated film design and energetically performed flashbacks that are frequently absurd in presentation. The actors play multiple characters, the set doubles up to play numerous props, and a live-feed camera presents the point of view of the stroke sufferer, unable to move, in stark contrast to the live actor who moves around the stage expressing the protagonist's thoughts. In terms of symbolism, connecting it to the political underpinnings of the economic recession and institutional abuse, Corn Exchange represent the frustration of a stagnant, immobile body at odds with a sharp mind that is incapable of letting go of the past.

      Dublin by Lamplight and *Freefall* provide a valuable illustration of the breadth and diversity of Corn Exchange's practice. The company alternate between productions that are

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[7] For more on the Ryan Report and its representations in Irish theatre, see Patrick Lonergan, "Secularization and the 'Post-Catholic' in Irish Theatre," in *Irish Drama and Theatre Since 1950*, (London: Methuen, 2019), 39-74.

predominantly *commedia*-based, with strong make-up and design, distinct gestures, direct address, and precise timing, and productions that are more restrained, with a strong focus on the narrative and the stylistic creation of a micro-environment which can be related to issues in the real world. Ultimately, it is Corn Exchange's meticulous focus on the body and gesture and the idea of status and power, both of which descend from the *commedia dell'arte* tradition that sets them apart from other Irish theatre companies that use the body as the primary material such as Barabbas, Company SJ, Blue Raincoat, and Brokentalkers. I have chosen to focus on *Man of Valour* in this thesis because it displays a distinctive attempt to immerse the spectator and to offer a transformative experience, which is quite different from Corn Exchange's other productions and certainly unique within the context of contemporary Irish theatre.

Man of Valour

Written by Michael West and directed by Annie Ryan, *Man of Valour* follows Farrell Blinks as he encounters life on an epic scale. *Man of Valour* is a one-man show that centres on the protagonist's life as he deals with the death of his father and job uncertainty. The show combines the use of mask, stock characters, precise gestures, and physical comedy with grotesque undertones, all drawn from *commedia dell'arte*. These aspects appear alongside projected film, sound effects, and music which help to materialise Farrell's real world and his fantasies. The play presents events from Farrell's point of view, with insights into his psychological breakdown leading to episodes of delusion and fantasy. Corn Exchange's intention in *Man of Valour* is not to chart Farrell's story in a linear fashion; rather, they invite the spectator to experience Farrell's perception of his world and to be immersed in his real and fantasy worlds through affective means.

Farrell is described as "an office drone with an overactive fantasy gland"[8] who has been absorbed into an existence of mediocrity. Farrell finds escape in his "fantasy world"[9] which increasingly takes over his mundane life. The performance contains minimal dialogue; the majority of the language and sounds are presented as snippets of conversation, vocal tics, noises, and sound effects. The sounds are coupled with the virtuoso physicality of Paul Reid, who expertly embodies Farrell and other characters and objects he encounters. Like all effective action films and high-impact video games, the soundtrack to Farrell's epic adventures provides impetus and intensity when needed and also drab monotony as a stark contrast where applicable. On a practical level, it helps to initially delineate between the two "worlds" effectively. Equally, the lighting, designed by Aedín Cosgrove, and the projected film, designed by Jack Phelan, completely transform the bare stage and ensure that the expertly constructed movement of Reid is carefully supported to fabricate complex scenes inside Farrell's office, inside his apartment, depicting his train journeys, and also war sequences, underwater pursuits, and the expanse of a dystopian Dublin. *Man of Valour* draws on action film and video game motifs to deliver the spectacular elements of the show using only the body of the performer, sound effects, light, and projection to depict Farrell's world. More importantly, these devices and motifs appeal to a certain type of learned perception, one that has formed as a result of exposure to mediatised environments, digital interactions, and a particular familiarity with the structures of video games and action sequences. In other words, the audience can recognise the mimed scenarios and the implied settings by accessing embodied knowledge of the motifs imbedded in digital culture.

In Chapter Two, I made the case that Pan Pan's *All That Fall* can be viewed as a model of the postdigital aesthetic of "copy and paste"—the company transferred the original radio play form to a curated listening environment that reflected both the solitary and communal multiform digital experience of life. *Man of Valour* reflects a further aspect of the postdigital aesthetic through

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[8] "*Man of Valour*," accessed November 2, 2016, http://www.cornexchange.ie/Man-of-Valour.
[9] When I refer to "worlds" in relation to Farrell's real world and fantasy world, I mean a type of state, aesthetic, and qualitative difference in two markedly different dramatic locations in the performance.

Farrell's transitions, that of the "networked interconnectivity and the transmedial." Causey explains:

> It is the data structures of networks that define so much of the relations of power and communication in contemporary postdigital cultures. The *digital* may be the means and the *network* is the system. It is the phenomenon of radical interconnectivity that acts as the substructure of network and postdigital cultures. Transmedial artworks, video games, political and advertising campaigns that operate across multiple media, and live and mediated communication platforms exemplify this modality.[10]

Causey's statement relates to Crary's proposal cited in the epigraph of the chapter regarding the contemporary experience of frequent shifts between absorption and resistance to control in the insular digital space. The aesthetic device of networked interconnectivity and the transmedial is fully integrated into the structure of *Man of Valour*. Farrell shifts between his real world and fantasy world, between boredom and invention, and between a low-level attention and a hyper-attention that demands multiple streams of information. With these sudden and repeated shifts, *Man of Valour* implores the spectators to follow Farrell and to make these transitions with him, thereby suffering the same effects as Farrell: disruption, deterritorialisation, and transformation into a body without organs.

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[10] Causey, "Postdigital Performance," 434.

Fig. 7. *Man of Valour*. Photo credit: Fiona Morgan

Man of Valour begins by showing Farrell's life in his "real life" settings of the office, the daily commute, and at home. The story then transforms to show us the "fantasy world" where Farrell is involved in high-speed chases and action-packed sequences. The play opens with Farrell standing on the side of a bridge as a train passes behind him; he runs and jumps down from a height to enter the train for his daily commute in to work. Through this opening sequence we are introduced to Farrell's transitions between his real life and his fantasy world. The transitions into his fantasy world become more frequent as the play progresses. With time, the audience may begin to notice the repeated indications that the frame is going to change, for example, a dip in the lights or music suggestive of impending doom.

Corn Exchange use *commedia dell'arte* to produce a contemporary commentary on digital media and postdigital culture. I will now take some time to explore *commedia*'s influence on contemporary European theatre, the various adaptations it has undergone, and relate this to its use and purpose in *Man of Valour*. *Commedia dell'arte* emerged in Italy in the mid- to late-1500s, continued formally throughout the 1600s with professional troupes travelling around Europe, and

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began to fade in popularity towards the beginning of the 1700s. *Commedia* had an ineradicable influence on "Golden Age" Spanish theatre, for instance, the work of Calderón de la Barca and Lope de Vega, French theatre, many of Molière's characters convey a strong resemblance to *commedia*'s stock characters, and English Renaissance theatre, most distinctly in the works of Shakespeare and Jonson. Following a period in the late 1700s and 1800s when *commedia*'s impact on European theatre was perhaps less obvious, with the exception of pantomime, it re-emerged in early twentieth century as a revolutionary theatrical force. A wide variety of avant-garde practitioners—Edward Gordon Craig, Yevgeny Vakhtangov, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Jacques Copeau, Dario Fo, and Ariane Mnouchkine—used *commedia* in different ways to relieve the constraints of a text-based, conventional theatre. Mirella Schino, tracing the use of *commedia* in experimental theatre, makes the following observation:

> In the early twentieth century, interest in the commedia dell'arte had the same effect as a bomb. It blew away the very foundations of the debate on the role of the author […] The study of and thinking about the commedia dell'arte led to the discovery of the grotesque and the tragic power of laughter […] The commedia dell'arte, considered from the respective of the great reformation in theatre, represents a violent drive towards change, a deflagration.[11]

This renewed fascination in *commedia* presented new possibilities for actors and directors alike. The privileged position of text was challenged and the pressure to create elaborate naturalistic scenography in order to produce a realistic stage world was eased. Theatre could be stripped back once again to celebrate physicality, the body of the performer, the relation between the actors, and the engagement between the actors and the audience. According to Schino: "In the late twentieth century, the commedia dell'arte bequeathed to experimental theatre something basic and essential,

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[11] Mirella Schino, "Commedia dell'Arte and Experimental Theatre," in *Commedia dell'Arte in Context*, eds. Christopher B. Balme, Permario Vescovo, and Daniele Vianello (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 305.

namely that poverty is not necessarily an obstacle. It showed that it is possible to start from scratch, from technical ignorance and poverty."[12]

This reformulation of *commedia*, in the twentieth century and in previous appropriations of the form, adapted to suit the contemporary issues and artistic objectives, relates in many ways to the presence of *commedia* devices in *Man of Valour*. Corn Exchange use the extreme physicality, stock character, and mask to reveal contemporary concerns of the postdigital, including the asynchronous and multidimensionality of social media and online transactions and the position and power of avatars in daily life. Farrell switches between his real life and contemporary world, marked by changes in his gesture and movement as well as modifications in the film and sound, signifying the contemporary ability to live, conduct business, and socialise across time zones and international locations through technology. Similarly, Farrell's mask and the many stock characters he embodies throughout the play resemble an avatar developed for a video game. Farrell's expression is fixed and his movements are precise. Corn Exchange employ *commedia* to take advantage of its particular ability to engage the audience in a direct way and to capitalise on its stylistic resonance to the figure of the avatar. These details contribute to the invitation extended to the spectator to join Farrell's world, much like living through a selected avatar in a video game or application. Corn Exchange, in line with previous iterations of *commedia*, have uncovered the possibilities of the form to respond to the complexities of contemporary society. In Man of Valour, these concerns could be categorised as the asynchronous, multidimensional, and multi-modal aspects of postdigital experience.

Key concepts and processes in *Man of Valour*

Before I can proceed further with a detailed examination of the performance and its various processes, it is necessary to define and then apply the key concepts to which I will refer throughout,

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[12] Ibid.

beginning with the Deleuzian, and later DeleuzoGuattarian, notion of a "body without organs" (BwO, hereafter). From this point, the chapter will be composed of three main parts— this section, titled "Key concepts and processes at play in *Man of Valour*," a following section, titled "Phenomenal Identification," and a final section titled "Repetition, Habit, and Learned Behaviour: tuning into a contemporary vocabulary to deepen immersive potential." Space and time, in their many manifestations, will be a recurring thread throughout this chapter; they affect and influence the considerations of difference and repetition, BwO, and phenomenal identification which will arise in this part of the thesis. Space and time should also be understood as the driving force for each of the processes involved in the sensory spectacle model displayed in *Man of Valour.* I will argue that through a disruption of the shared spatio-temporal register of the auditorium, *Man of Valour* enacts a deterritorialisation of both Farrell and the spectator; both transform into BwOs. Then I will suggest that through the coinciding transformation and the event of phenomenal identification by appointment of Farrell as a physical body double, both Farrell and spectator are entered into a space of virtuality. In this destratified space of virtuality, the spectator begins to bracket the chaos with learned behaviour and habit in order to reterritorialise themselves. I will conclude that this process as a whole should be regarded as a process of becoming. Each body engages in an affective encounter of loss and gain and emerges qualitatively altered through the immersive aesthetic experience.

1. Body without Organs

According to Deleuze and Guattari, the following conditions introduce the potential for a BwO to (de)form:

> Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialisation, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. It is through a

meticulous relation with the strata that one succeeds in freeing lines of flight, causing conjugated flows to pass and escape and bringing forth continuous intensities for a BWO.[13]

Drawing on this thought, we can say that BwO are bodies from which structure and the organising frameworks of psychology, politics, ideology, and/or biology have been removed. Rather than signifying a literal human body that has no organs, the proposal of BwO instead puts forward an idea of a body which is "non-formed, non-organised, non-stratified."[14] It can be understood as a body in transition, divorced and devolved from its organic and social confines. Significantly, as Kylie Message states, a BwO is non-stratified. For Deleuze, stratified space is organised space. Examples of stratified space include "proper language, the State, family, or other institutions,"[15] in other words, perceived structures and organising principles imposed by society. When a space presents itself as non-stratified, it not only presents a virtual potential as it has been removed from a zone of discernibility, but it also has the potential to deterritorialise other bodies it encounters. In reductive terms, stratified space is territorialised whereas non-stratified space is deterritorialised and in a state of becoming.[16]

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[13] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 161.
[14] Kylie Message, "Body without Organs," in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 37.
[15] Ibid., 38.
[16] It is important to note here that Deleuze's philosophy is based upon the notion of a plane of immanence where there is never a truly static identity or state of being meaning that there can never be a space that is entirely stratified or non-stratified. They exist on a plane that is continually changing. However, inherent in this notion is that space also has the potential to express each extreme, stratified and non-stratified; always with the disclaimer that nothing is fixed, everything is in flux.

Fig. 8. Francis Bacon, *From Muybridge*
'The human Figure in Motion:
Woman Emptying a Bowl of Water/
Paralytic Child Walking on All Fours, 1965

Fig. 9. Francis Bacon, *Three Studies for a Crucifixion,* 1944

Bacon's paintings, *From Muybridge 'The human Figure in Motion: Woman Emptying a Bowl of Water/Paralytic Child Walking on All Fours* (1965) and *Three Studies for a Crucifixion* (1944), are widely considered to be exemplary illustrations of BwOs due to the perceived deformed or non-formed nature of Bacon's Figures in motion. Deleuze notes that, "In place of formal correspondences, what Bacon's painting constitutes is a zone of indiscernibility or undecidability between man and animal."[17] Deleuze's reference to the "body" under this proposal not only refers to living or even human bodies, but also non-living matter. For example, in this particular case, Deleuze is referring to a BwO present in a work of art but he also refers to BwO with regards "A BwO of money (inflation)...a BwO of the State, army, factory, city, Party, etc."[18] Bacon depicts bodies that are removed from the organising principles of static identity and are instead depicted in the transformative process of becoming. By doing so, Bacon's paintings of BwO encourage an affective encounter, a bodied response as there can be no direct meaning assigned to the painting.

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[17] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, 21.
[18] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 163.

Bacon's BwO Figures communicate on a plane of sensation in an intensive, affective language that can only be digested and replied to by the observer in the same mode.

In *Man of Valour*, a change in frames is once again the force that sets the SSP in motion to release its immersive potential. Farrell is lost in the machine of production. He works in an office and has become absorbed by the monotony of everyday life. However, when Farrell begins to fall into moments of fantasy he disrupts the machine of domesticity and differentiates himself from it. Or rather he becomes deterritorialised and transforms into a BwO. In one of the first scenes of *Man of Valour*, Farrell hurriedly enters his office. He is late for work, again. He tries to dodge several people on his way into the office, including the overly-friendly secretary who insists on saying, "Oh, hi Farrell!" every time he passes her desk and his pompous co-worker who speaks in an overpowering County Cork accent (a highly identifiable accent for an Irish audience) and brags about his work. In this scene, the co-worker approaches Farrell's desk and says:

> Late again? Don't worry, I covered for you. I told Mr. Goodman you had a bowel problem. Listen, did you finish your report? 'Cause I finished mine. I spent the whole weekend on it and I handed it to Goodman this morning. Corky, Cork, Cork, Cork, Corky, Cork…[19]

While Reid continues to perform his co-worker speaking in the background, "Corky, Cork, Cork, Cork…", Reid also embodies Farrell who searches in a desk drawer, takes out a pencil, sharpens it, and then launches it in a slow-motion, "boomerang" style. Reid motions the pencil flying through the air with his hand, eventually piercing his co-worker's jugular resulting in blood spurting from his neck in a slapstick fashion. This fantasy is broken by a jerk in Farrell's body, a moment of "waking up," and Farrell's co-worker saying, "See you later!" This scene is an early example of the transitions between Farrell's real life to fantasy world and back.

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[19] I have transcribed this section from a filmed performance Corn Exchange shared with me.

These transitions between his real and fantasy worlds inevitably lead to a disruption and thus to deterritorialisation. His motions, gestures, sounds, and movements change to suit the world he is inhabiting. His movements are muted, domestic, restrained in his real life and more dramatic and extroverted in his fantasy world. With each transformation, there is a disruption, as I will explore in this section. In addition to Farrell becoming deterritorialised through the transitions, the spectator also enters into a coinciding and co-extensive deterritorialisation. So, there are two stages to the deterritorialisation process in *Man of Valour* which I will unpack. The first concerns Farrell's deterritorialisation through his transition between his real life and his fantasy world. The second stage of deterritorialisation in *Man of Valour* involves the audience. After a period of time whereby Farrell's transitions are repeated and the spectator engages in a process of phenomenal identification with Farrell, the spectator is also invited to enter the deterritorialisation process. The result is that both Farrell and the spectator are transformed into BwO, as I will explore in the following sections.

2. *Farrell's Deterritorialisation into a BwO*

Farrell's switching between worlds in *Man of Valour* is initially a lone endeavour. The spectator observes that with each change of frame from Farrell's real life into his fantasy world, he begins to transform into a BwO. Deterritorialisation is first set in motion in *Man of Valour* through Farrell's use of vocal tics—sound effects made through humming, using "pop" noises, intonations of accents, and snippets of dialogue to communicate language. Reid is the sole performer and embodies all of the characters in the performance: Farrell, the office secretary, his co-worker, his boss, his neighbour, and various passersby. Reid also performs most of the sound effects: doors, a printer, a computer, a television, and so on. There is no section of sustained dialogue in the play; just snippets of conversation and sound effects.

Fig. 10. *Man of Valour.* Photo credit: Fiona Morgan

As I outlined in the previous chapter, creative stuttering generates a productive disruption that "makes language grow in the middle, like grass; it is what makes language a rhizome instead of a tree, puts language in perpetual disequilibrium[…]There are many ways to grow from the middle, or to stutter,"[20] according to Deleuze. Farrell's use of vocal tics and snippets of conversation are forms of creative stuttering. By choosing to communicate in this way Corn Exchange deploys their first deterritorialisation technique thereby changing the frames of communication from a tree-like, linear narrative that is associated with more conventional theatre to a rhizomatic performance in which the verbal is transformed into a largely "affective and intensive language,"[21] as Deleuze suggests. Through the amputation of a logical language, the affective and intensive language is set free. This amputation marks the first of many removals of structure that govern the organised body so that he may transform into a BwO.

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[20] Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 111.
[21] Ibid., 107.

The second removal of structure, or amputation as Deleuze calls it, occurs in the stage area of *Man of Valour.* In reference to the deterritorialising effect of non-stratified space in Francis Bacon's paintings, Deleuze writes:

> The contour, as a "place," is in fact the place of an exchange in two directions: between the material structure and the Figure, and between the Figure and the field. The contour is like a membrane through which this double exchange flows. Something happens in both directions. If painting has nothing to narrate and no story to tell, something is happening all the same, something which defines the functioning of the painting. Within the round area, the Figure is sitting on the chair, lying on the bed, and sometimes it even seems to be waiting for what is about to happen. But what is happening, or is about to happen, or has already happened, is not a spectacle or a representation [...] It is the extreme solitude of the Figures, the extreme confinement of the bodies, which excludes every spectator: the Figure becomes a Figure only through this movement which confines it and in which it confines itself.[22]

What Deleuze is describing here is the transformative force of the contour. It does something to the Figure, and the Figure does something to it. The contour distorts and transforms the Figure and also distorts and transforms the spectator watching the action. I wish to apply the idea of the Figure and the contour to the character of Farrell (the Figure) and the confinement of the stage area (conceived as the contour) in *Man of Valour*. The entire performance of *Man of Valour* takes place on a bare stage with no props. The architecture and design of the stage is constructed and moulded with light and projected film in addition to the implied presence of surroundings and objects rendered present through Farrell's movement. Frequently, the lighting often transforms the stage into a tiled floor and back wall, indicative of the recognisable aesthetic of early tile-based video games such as the first installments of *The Legend of Zelda* (Nintendo) series in the 1980s and 1990s. It is also strongly associated with the 1982 science fiction film *Tron* (Steven Lisberger; 1982). Like these game and film references, the tiles in *Man of Valour* represent an infinite grid of possibility.

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[22] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. 12-3, 14.

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Therefore, the bare set and the projected tiles imply versatility and adaptation; it is a canvas for the changing environment that *Man of Valour* presents. The set, and separately but just as significantly, Reid's body and movements while embodying Farrell, therefore invite the processes of deterritorialisation, virtuality, and reterritorialisation to occur with ease.

Fig. 11. *Man of Valour*. Photo credit: Fiona Morgan   Fig. 12. *Man of Valour*. Photo credit: Fiona Morgan

The third removal of structure involves Reid's commedia-inspired make-up. A type of mask is constructed through the immutable expression drawn on to Farrell's face—an apprehensive brow, white face, and a downcast mouth. Regardless of the situation that the character of Farrell enters, this expression remains unchanged. To return to this idea of the stutter, Farrell is disrupting the range of emotion communication of the face that usually occurs through changing expression. He is, like Bacon's Figures, caught in a moment of static violent response and thus, his body moves from a signifying register to an asignifying register that elicits an affective encounter rather than a narrative encounter.

Again, we can draw a comparison with Deleuze's study of Bacon's artwork. In reference to the painting *Untitled (Pope)* (1954), Deleuze explores the "insupportable smile"[23] that violently radiates from the papal Figure. Beneath the smudges and rubbing techniques that distort the BwO Figure, the smile remains. However, the smile is not a representation of hope or even a sinister delight. The smile, the mouth of the pope, speaks in an intensive language. It stands for both the entirety of the body and also the void of distinction between the Figure and what surrounds him: "At this extreme point of cosmic dissipation, in a closed but unlimited cosmos, it is clear that the Figure can no longer be isolated or put inside a limit, a ring or parallelepiped: we are faced with different coordinates."[24] Masks frequently hold a subversive quality, so if we are to speak about amputation in the Deleuzian sense, the removal of expression, or as Deleuze would say the removal of the face from the head, disrupts a straightforward representation. By wearing the same masked expression throughout, Farrell is marked as a deterritorialised Figure. But the amputation of the face by the wearing of a mask is not only pertinent for Farrell's deterritorialisation and transformation into a BwO. By relinquishing the organisation of the face, Farrell is inviting the act of coinciding deterritorialisation

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[23] Ibid., 28.
[24] Ibid., 29.

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and phenomenal identification, the appointment of his body as the spectator's body double. Farrell, like his stuttered language and the contour of the bare stage, is a blank canvas for which identifications are promoted. The amputation of the face through the wearing of a mask in *Man of Valour* is pertinent not only for Farrell's deterritorialisation and transformation into a BwO but also the spectator's transition too, which we will see in the next section.

In sum, we can see that Farrell's deterritorialisation into a BwO follows a distinct path, deeply implicated by Corn Exchange's design choices and Farrell's repeated transitions between worlds. *Man of Valour*'s performance of minor language, that is Farrell's use of vocal tics, the bare stage, and the use of commedia make-up, contrive to deterritorialise the Figure of Farrell into a BwO. Next, I will focus on how Farrell's deterritorialisation and subsequent transformation into a BwO invites the spectator to perform a coinciding motion. At this point, both transform into BwOs and thereby enter a space of virtuality.

3. *Time and Space as Deterritorialising Forces*

Time and space are recurrent topics in each of the chapters of this thesis. They are dimensions that are crucial to every detailed consideration of performance and every cultural examination. With that being said, digital culture has undoubtedly made the analysis of time and space in performance and everyday life more complex. The internet alone has disrupted many previously held theories which considered time and space as fixed entities. A person, in one of their many digital forms, can be in multiple places, in multiple time zones simultaneously. We are nearly always contactable. We are nearly always "on"; performing in some way, even when we are asleep, through digital avatars or personal data. In mapping out the aesthetic devices that are deployed in postdigital art, Causey writes that,

> The structures of asynchronous time registers and multidimensionality are models almost commonplace in modernist aesthetics, with obvious examples being cubism and futurism.

Modernist notions of representation and subjectivity were directly influenced as a result of the shifts in the perception of time and space created through technologies such as the camera or the car. What digital technologies afford is a flexibility and usability that allows users the ability to reorder various virtual models and inhabit and perform their identities and 'lived experiences' within those spaces.[25]

In order to reflect the various time registers and multidimensional manner of everyday life, postdigital art embraces and reflects this new facet of experience. Social media, text messages, email, and video-calling are examples of asynchronous and multidimensional performance that one may encounter and interact with frequently. *Man of Valour* illustrates this aesthetic device in the many transitions between Farrell's real life and fantasy world, as well as the videogame appearance of Farrell's fantasy world. But Corn Exchange also exploits the familiarity with asynchronous timeframes in order to immerse the spectator in the alternate space and time of the performance.

Arnold Aronson suggests that if a performance establishes a significantly alternate spatio-temporal register than that which the audience experience while in the shared architectural space of the theatre, the equilibrium between the two zones will become destabilised. To remedy this, Aronson advises that either the performance will regulate itself to the audience's spatio-temporal registers or alternatively, the audience needs to enter the performance's spatio-temporal register for the sake of restoring equilibrium:

> In order for the spectators, who occupy one segment of the shared space, to read or to comprehend the alternate organization of the stage—to know what time it is as well as what place it is—a clear and commonly held set of rules (vocabulary) is required. The spectators must be able to integrate the two spatio-temporal structures into a unified system. Moreover, these guidelines must be firmly rooted within contemporary cultural and aesthetic parameters.[26]

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[25] Causey, "Postdigital Performance," 434.
[26] Arnold Aronson, *"*Time and Space on the Stage," *Performance Research* 18, no. 3 (2013): 85.

If the audience enters the performance's spatio-temporal register in order to restore equilibrium, the effect is that the audience are immersed in an alternative spatio-temporal register for the duration of the show. They become part of the performance world, not as a participant but rather as a phenomenal immersant. The spectator is encouraged through the disruption in the shared spatio-temporal register to enter into a process of deterritorialisation and transform into a BwO alongside Farrell. In short, Farrell's transitions and habitation of two worlds amounts to a significantly alternate spatio-temporal register to that of the auditorium. For this reason, the audience is encouraged to enter into the performance's alternate spatio-temporal register to restore equilibrium.

In *Man of Valour*, Farrell's transitions between his real world and his fantasy world create a disruption in the shared architectural space of the auditorium, thus displacing the shared spatio-temporal register. I regard these transitions as a change in frame. These transitions represent a change to the traditional theatrical frame of organisation and a shift in the rules and conventions contained within it. As discussed above, Farrell's transitions from the real world to his fantasy world presented on stage are the first, more identifiable part of the deterritorialisation process in this performance. But while Farrell is deterritorialised as a result of his transitions, with each transition the spectator also becomes deterritorialised as their frame of reference is altered. As these transitions are repeated and become more frequent in the performance, the audience begins to integrate the two disrupted spatio-temporal registers, that of the stage and that of the audience space, into a unified system, as Aronson predicts is likely to happen in such a performance. This unification draws the spectator further into the performance and invites an association, an identification with Farrell.

Aronson is not the only theorist to comment on the destabilising effects of different spatio-temporal registers and the reaction to restore synthesis. In a review of Deleuze's interpretation of time, namely the notion of "passive synthesis" which is the subconscious or perhaps preconscious notion of duration, indebted to the work of Henri Bergson, Keith Faulkner offers a similar account

to Aronson. Faulkner suggests that the body seeks to maintain unity in time by engaging in a transformative encounter with the various speeds surrounding it, "The simple organism senses a changing environment and, because it appears discontinuous, the sense must *synthesize it into a durational schema* to stabilize the object."[27]Again, we notice a strikingly similar suggestion that a disruption in the spatio-temporal register causes a disruption in unity and thereafter an active response will take place in order to restore unity. Elsewhere, Deleuze underlines the same theory. By invoking Bergson's metaphor of a dissolving sugar cube, which he has used to illustrate the notion of becoming elsewhere, he now attempts to illustrate the effect of alternate durations on the encountering bodies:

> 'I must wait until the sugar dissolves' has a still broader meaning than is given to it by its context. It signifies that my own duration, such as I live it in the impatience of waiting, for example, serves to reveal other durations that beat to other rhythms, that differ in kind from mine. Duration is always the location and the environment of differences in kind; it is even their totality and multiplicity.[28]

In other words, through a passive synthesis of affective encounter, a body can sense a disruption in the unity of time, "other rhythms, that differ in kind from mine," as Deleuze puts it. But it is through an engagement with this disruption and an openness to the alternate durations that one can be deterritorialised, enter into a space of virtuality, and are invited to become through the sensation.

In summary, it is the repetition of Farrell's passage between his world of the real and fantasy that causes a shift in durations. This enacts a change of frames. Farrell is deterritorialised first, and then the spectator through the repetition of transitions and change of frames. These deterritorialisations open a virtuality. The spectator is deterritorialised through a disruption in the shared spatio-temporal register of the shared architectural space of the auditorium. As we have seen, both Aronson and Deleuze propose that in order to restore equilibrium, one of the bodies

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[27] Keith Faulkner, *Deleuze and the Three Syntheses of Time* (Peter Lang, 2006), 61. [Emphasis in original.]
[28] Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 32.

involved in the encounter must enter the alternate register, thereby restoring unity. I have suggested that in *Man of Valour* the spectator is invited to enter the alternate register of the performance through Farrell's repeated transitions between his real life and fantasy world. Thus, the spectator is deterritorialised and transformed alongside Farrell into a BwO. Consequently, going forward the performance occurs in a space of virtuality. Therefore, let us further consider the space of virtuality created in *Man of Valour*.

4. *After Deterritorialisation: Virtuality and Becoming*

As with Bacon's paintings, *Man of Valour* invites the spectator to transform into a BwO alongside Farrell through an embodied identification. Deleuze notes that Bacon's paintings establish "a zone of indiscernibility more profound than any sentimental identification: the man who suffers is a beast, the beast that suffers is a man. This is the reality of becoming."[29] Farrell's body is disrupted and transformed into a BwO in order to enter the fantasy scenes that *Man of Valour* presents. Reid, through his movement, changes the frame whereby the stage is no longer a stage but a presentation of a whole world through Farrell's eyes. The deterritorialisation through body and stage world transformation, through the presentation of real life and the sudden and frequent shifts to his fantasy world which involves action and suspense, means that Farrell's body is deformed by the contour of the stage and merges with it. And due to the spatio-temporal disruption caused by Farrell's transitions, the spectator then merges with the stage. The performance becomes a virtual space of potentiality. As Grosz notes, "[Virtuality] consists in infinitely brief forces of opening out that continually transform themselves and are transformed in the processes of actualization […] This indeterminacy is the very openness of time itself, the very possibility of the virtual transforming with great rapidity into a new virtual."[30] The space of virtuality in *Man of Valour* is the point at

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[29] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, 25.
[30] Grosz, "Habit Today: Ravaisson, Bergson, Deleuze and Us," 230.

which both the BwO figure of Farrell and, in a connected motion, the BwO body of the spectator open themselves to transformation and begin to merge with the performance.

Dufrenne equally considers this unique space of virtuality, although he does not use that term, which is created in the immersive aesthetic experience; "painting creates its own space, which it compels us to assume. It is a space which does not make a hole in the wall because it orders its shapes pictorially instead of conceptually, and also because, disarming our ordinary habits and predispositions, it invites us not to act but to contemplate";[31] it is a space where you "coincide with the object."[32] During this encounter, imagined binaries are renounced and a new space of virtuality is opened as long as the encounter persists. According to Dufrenne, "I am in the presence of the aesthetic object as soon as I belong to it. I have become indifferent to the outside world, which I perceive only marginally and which I give up considering so as to experience the truth of what has been presented to me."[33]

Simon O'Sullivan interprets the use of amputation and stuttering as a form of glitch. As we have seen, amputation is the key to both Farrell's and the spectator's deterritorialisation and transformation. In Farrell's case, the amputation is enacted through language, stage, and make-up. In this spectator's case, it is caused by the repeated transitions between Farrell's real and fantasy worlds, thereby repeatedly shifting the frame of organisation in addition to a significant disruption to the spatio-temporal register which must be remedied through a performative homeostasis. O'Sullivan notes that the glitch "operates as a point of indeterminacy, and, as such, opens up the possibility of a multiplicity of subsequent pathways and thus a multiplicity of possible worlds. We might say in fact that the glitch always contains within it the germ of a new world."[35] Following the respective deterritorialisations and transformations into BwOs, followed by the opening of a space

[31] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 57.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid., 14.
[35] Simon O'Sullivan, "From Stuttering and Stammering to the Diagram: Deleuze, Bacon and Contemporary Art Practice," *Deleuze Studies* 3, no. 2 (2009), 251.

of virtuality in *Man of Valour*, a germ of a new world is planted. This idea will be particularly significant for the following sections of the chapter. Indeed, amputation, this concept of the potentiality of the glitch, is essential to the process of phenomenal identification which I will look at in the next section. In order to appoint a Figure as a body double, the spectator must undergo an amputation of structure.

And so we reach the point of becoming, which, as outlined in previous chapters, should be understood as a process of exchange and qualitative transformation. Grosz observes that the transformation into a BwO always occurs in "the field of becomings. Becoming-(woman, animal, imperceptible...)."[36] She further suggests that, "to make the body more amenable to transformations, realignments, reconnections with other BwOs, there are struggles within the body which require recognition."[37] The struggles to which Grosz refers are essentially systems of organisation. Through a rejection of organising frameworks deployed by society such as the division of class, race, and gender, we become more open to engage in the becoming process. As Deleuze and Guattari underline in many of their texts on the subject, becoming cannot happen through imitation of the associated body. To engage in the process of becoming each body must exist on the same intensive register. This involves a series of loss and gains for each body. But importantly, the loss, and indeed the gain, involves a dispossession, a de-structuring, and a transformation. The associated bodies become bodies without organs, destratified, deterritorialised in order to meet on the intensive register and engage in the process of becoming. Deleuze notes:

> To become is not to attain a form (identification, imitation, Mimesis) but to find the zone of proximity, indiscernibility, or indifferentiation where one can no longer be distinguished from a woman, an animal, or a molecule—neither imprecise nor general, but unforeseen and nonpreexistent, singularized out of a population rather than determined in a form.[38]

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[36] Grosz, "A Thousand Tiny Sexes: Feminism and Rhizomatics," 176.
[37] Ibid., 176.
[38] Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 1. [Emphasis in original.]

Both Deleuze and Grosz are endorsing a de-stratification or de-essentialisation of the body. In order to become a BwO or be open to the transformation one must undergo an amputation of structure to engage in the process of becoming.

Phenomenal Identification

Phenomenal identification is a term I have developed to describe the act of a spectator appointing a performer as a body double who performs an action and, through an embodied reciprocity, the spectator experiences the affect. Grosz's suggestion of the rejection of organisation as a leading principle of the formation of a BwO and a founding necessity for becoming will become more pertinent in this section which will discuss the event of phenomenal identification. In order to introduce the notion of phenomenal identification, I think it is valuable to make a brief detour back to Deleuze's study of Bacon's artwork in *The Logic of Sensation,* as this book provides his most clear commentary on BwO and will thus provide a valuable insight into the process of affective and immersive encounter. In Deleuze's exploration of the presentation of BwOs in Bacon's paintings, he maintains that it is through the Figure—the central body in Bacon's paintings —and the Figure's engagement with the contour—the ring or circle that surrounds the Figure—that the process of deterritorialisation is activated. According to Deleuze, through the observation of the deterritorialised Figure, the observer becomes deterritorialised. In other words, the invitation is opened to the observer that they may too may be transformed into BwO through a primarily bodily response and affective engagement with Bacon's BwO Figure.
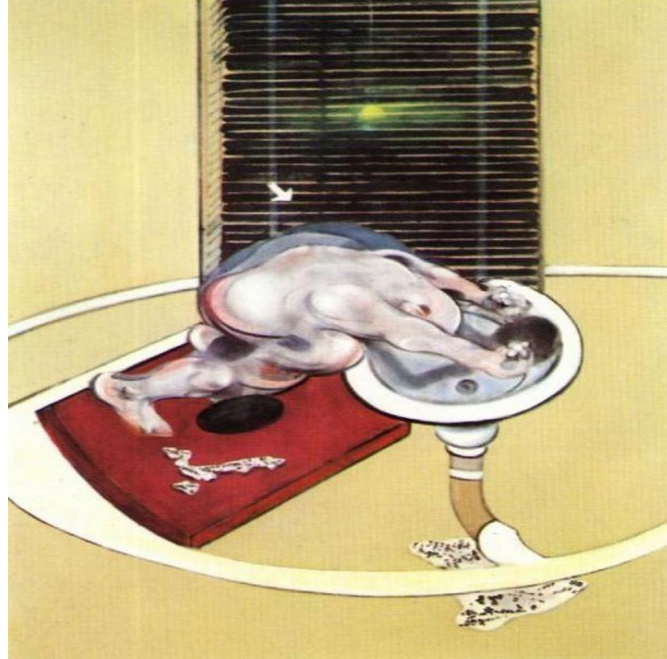
For example, in *Figure at a Washbasin* (1976), the Figure wishes to escape through the sink hole that appears within the central contour of the painting. The observer sees this action, Deleuze says, and through an affective association with the Figure, through a certain phenomenal mode of identification I will argue, the observer of the painting also transforms into a BwO and proceeds to also reach towards the sink hole in the picture.

In addition to the deterritorialising force of the Figure, Deleuze also speaks of the deterritorialising force of the contour that surrounds the BwO Figure in Bacon's paintings. While the contour provides a focus toward the Figure in the painting, it also acts as a world into which they wish to "disappear." The contour is the means and force of contraction, disruption, and deformation. The Figure, according to Deleuze, is contracted and dilated in order to pass through the contour—for example, the sink, the umbrella, the mirror—into infinity:

> [the Figure] experiences an extraordinary becoming-animal in a series of screaming transformations; and it itself tends to return to the field of color, to dissipate into the structure with a final smile, through the intermediary of the contour, which no longer acts

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as a deformer, but as a curtain where the Figure shades off into infinity. Thus, this most closed of worlds was also the most unlimited.[39]

At the same time, the force that the contour exerts on the Figure in Bacon's paintings, this transformative and contracting force, is experienced by the observer's body as they study the painting. Bacon, Deleuze insists, invites the observer to form a strong identification with the Figure, to engage in a transformative encounter, and enter into a becoming with the Figure in the painting:

> at one and the same time I become in the sensation and something happens through the sensation, one through the other, one in the other. And at the limit, it is the same body which, being both subject and object, gives and receives the sensation. As a spectator, I experience the sensation only by entering the painting, by reaching the unity of the sensing and the sensed.[40]

Man of Valour introduces a similar opportunity for the spectator. In the same way that Bacon's paintings present BwO Figures escaping through a contour, Farrell's body transforms throughout the performance into a deterritorialised body, a BwO, through his engagement with the design of the piece and the stage. In one scene, Farrell is in his flat, turns on the television, prepares a meal and then begins to play a first-person shooter videogame. While he is playing the game, there is a stark lighting change and tense action music resounds in the space. Farrell jumps up, miming the stance of a soldier holding a gun. He throws an imaginary grenade and shouts, "What's the mission?!" The audience immediately recognises that in his fantasy world, Farrell has been absorbed into the videogame. The music cuts, the lights change, and Farrell's stance and movement become more muted; Farrell is now back in his real world, his apartment. Thus, the stage, which supports Reid's actions and also serves to depict the changes in setting and tone, achieves the same role as the contour in Bacon's paintings. The stage provides a focus toward the Figure of Farrell but it also exerts a force of contraction, disruption, and deformation on his body. Farrell escapes

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[39] *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, 32.

[40] Ibid., 35.

through the contours which are established through film, projection, and sound, but with each escape and return he engages in, a process of deterritorialisation and a space of virtuality is opened. As we have covered in the previous section, an opportunity for becoming ensues as Farrell transforms further into a BwO.

Similar to the coinciding transformation of the observer of Bacon's paintings, the spectator in *Man of Valour* is invited to enter the contours that are created onstage, to engage in the deterritorialisation process, to transform into a BwO alongside Farrell. Consequently, there is a unique performative encounter established in this piece which begins by an identification of force caused by a change of frames; a coinciding identification between the Figure onstage, Farrell, and the spectator. An immersive, affective encounter elicited through the Farrell's engagement with the contour results in an invitation for the spectator to enter a potentiality.

In a corresponding proposal to Deleuze's coinciding transformations of Figure and observer into BwO, Dufrenne puts forth an argument that as an observer of a painting, and later he mentions an equal application to spectators of theatre, one must first de-realise themselves, *enter* the painting, and become a participant to achieve the most fulsome, and arguably from the manner of his description, immersive aesthetic experience. He suggests,

> For it is through our body, through its vigilance and experience, that we remain in touch with the object. But instead of anticipating action and trying to make the object submit to it, our body submits to the object, allowing itself to be moved by the object.[41]

Dufrenne further states that during this period of participation binaries are suspended. There is no longer a need to delineate between the subject and the object—what is important is an encounter in the middle where the apex of the experience is felt:

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[41] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 57.

the witness, without leaving his post in physical space, penetrates into the world of the work. Because he allows himself to be won over and inhabited by the sensuous, he thereby penetrates into the work's signification- we may say that the meaning penetrates him, so close is the reciprocity of subject and object.[42]

 In an effort to develop Dufrenne's framework for the phenomenology of the aesthetic experience, I think it is not only valuable but necessary to push his notion of relinquishing binaries to achieve an immersive aesthetic experience further than he perhaps intended. What we can take from Dufrenne's proposal is the notion that affective expression exists prior to the distinction between an interior and exterior, prior to distinction between a subject and an object, as he outlines. For him, affect lies within in the work itself and within the spectator, and the encounter between the two results in an evocation of what Dufrenne calls "the sensuous." So if we consider Dufrenne's framework alongside Deleuze's study of Bacon's paintings and his insistence on the deterritorialising potential of observing BwO figures engaging with the contour that surrounds them, both identify a significant invitation for embodied identification, which I have chosen to call phenomenal identification, and a consequent immersive transformation through this action.

A change in frame and deterritorialisation initiate the coinciding transformations into BwO. And they are the two most distinct and effective techniques in *Man of Valour* which contribute to the affective and immersive potential of the piece. A frequent change in the frame of reference between Farrell's real world and fantasy world alongside the various other deterritorialisation techniques that are deployed in a number of ways throughout the performance ensure that the model for SSP is kept constantly in motion, and therefore, the immersive potential is always present through becoming. These techniques can be seen most prominently in *Man of Valour* in the use of language, the set, and the use of make-up. With regards the spectator's transformation, deterritorialisation is enacted through a disruption in the shared spatio-temporal register. Each of these production choices contributes to a

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[42] Ibid.

change of frames and thus a deterritorialisation. They further promote the figure of Farrell into a BwO and, duplicitously, engage the audience to transform into BwO.

As we have seen from the previous chapter, Dufrenne identifies three stages of aesthetic perception—presence, representation, and reflection. *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience* is written in five parts. While Dufrenne deals with the aesthetic perception, which we have covered in detail in the previous chapter, he also attends to the qualities of the aesthetic object, which he defines as "the coalescence of the sensuous."[43] In his study, Dufrenne sets out to pair the three stages of aesthetic perception with three planes of the aesthetic object which he identifies as the sensuous, the represented, and the expressed. Therefore, he proposes that while the aesthetic object is in the plane of the sensuous, a primarily presence-oriented perception is applied; while the aesthetic object is in the plane of the represented, a primarily representation-oriented perception is applied; and while the aesthetic object is in the plane of the expressed, a predominantly reflection-oriented perception is applied. It is again important to note that these allied stages and planes do not occur in a chronological or evolutionary fashion. They should instead be understood as interchangeable, free-flowing, and dynamic.

As explored in the previous chapter, SSP will seek to prolong the presence stage of aesthetic perception to achieve its immersive effect due to its interpellation of embodied knowledge. So, let us also turn our attention to the sensuous plane of the aesthetic object, which Dufrenne suggests calls for this type of embodied knowledge used in presence. For Dufrenne, the sensuous is the affective force that aesthetic objects, to varying degrees, possess. The sensuous object invites the spectator to "do nothing but perceive, that is, open myself to the sensuous. For the aesthetic object is, above all, the irresistible and magnificent presence of the sensuous."[44] The sensuous should thus be understood as the pre-rational, affective, dominating appeal of an

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[43] Ibid., 13.
[44] Ibid., 86.

immersive aesthetic object, for our purposes this object is the SSP. It is what occurs in the body

prior to the capitulation of meaning or sense that is drawn from the aesthetic object.

However, Dufrenne accepts that some aesthetic objects are more structured to deliver a

plane of sensuousness than others. In other words, some aesthetic objects are more successful at

prolonging the aesthetic perception stage of presence than others. He also suggests that some bodies

will be more willing and capable of using this type of apprehension than others which we will

address further in the next section of this chapter vis-à-vis the consideration of repetition, habit, and

learned behaviour as influenced by digital culture. The plane of the sensuous that Dufrenne

identifies is purely affective and is deeply immersive. What Dufrenne is proposing, it seems, is a

markedly similar aesthetic experience of immersive becoming. For he proposes that, at its limit, the

sensuous is neither an attribute of the spectator nor an attribute of the artwork but rather an intensity

produced from the encounter of the two bodies—the body of the spectator and the body of the work

of art. If we incorporate this notion of the sensuous into our understanding of *Man of Valour*, and

more widely to SSP, we can consider how phenomenal identification works within them.

A guiding example of phenomenal identification can be found in the form of the video game.

Regarding the relationship between the real and fiction, video game researcher Jesper Juul explains,

> video games are real in that they consist of real rules with which players actually interact,
> and in that winning or losing a game is a real event […] To play a video game is therefore to
> interact with real rules while imagining a fictional world, and a video game is a set of rules as
> well as a fictional world.[45]

Referring to the rules that govern video games may seem like a side step, but in fact I would

suggest that they are a valuable illustration of the act of phenomenal identification. I propose that

Farrell is similar to a video game avatar and the audience members are the players. Or more

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[45] Jesper Juul, *Half-Real: Video Games between Real Rules and Fictional Worlds* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: MIT, 2005), 1.

accurately, they are both players. The audience are transformed into Farrell's fantasy world of possibilities in which learned perception allows us to accept the virtualities posed in the performance. If we understand the virtual as a "momentary indeterminate force, surrounding actuals like a cloud, always in the process of becoming something, an actual,"[46] as Grosz suggests, then a repetitious act such as Farrell's transitions between his worlds represents not only a force that enacts a change of frame and thus sets deterritorialisation in motion, but it also opens a space of virtuality, a momentary indeterminacy abounding with processes of disruption, creation, and transformation. *Man of Valour* presents an exemplary illustration of this oscillation through Farrell's transgression between his worlds of the real and fantasy. Farrell is the spectator's physical body double, similar to the role of an avatar in a video game. While on the one hand, an avatar's role in a video game is not comparable to the relationship between the audience and Farrell in *Man of Valour* as the audience do not control his movements, a video game avatar also offers a strong sense of embodiment for the player, a presence in the game world.

Furthermore, the notion of Farrell acting as an appointed affective body double is underlined by Farrell's fixed expression of unease painted on with commedia-inspired makeup. The use of this mask hints not only at the similarity to the avatar in a video game whose expression remains unchanged regardless of the action they undertake, but also at the transformation of Farrell's body as it undergoes deterritorialisation into a non-formed BwO. This, I suggest, is one of the main ways in which *Man of Valour* opens the invitation for the spectator to become immersed. Through a phenomenal identification with Farrell, through a distinct appointment of Farrell as their physically moving body double in the performance, in the space of virtuality, the spectator engages in a process of becoming through sensation.

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[46] Grosz, "Habit Today: Ravaisson, Bergson, Deleuze and Us," 230.

To conclude, Deleuze notes that the BwO Figures in Bacon's paintings are contracted and contorted by the surrounding contour. Further, through an embodied observation of certain paintings, the same transformation of the Figure and contracting force of the contour is experienced by the observer's body as they study the painting; they too begin to contract and deform through a process of phenomenal identification. Phenomenal identification is the appointment of a body double that performs an action and, through an embodied reciprocity, the appointer-spectator experiences the affect. Dufrenne speaks about the sensuous plane of an aesthetic object and how it invites a largely presence-oriented perception. At its limit, he concludes there is no difference, no binary between the artwork and the observer. From this proposal I have sought to develop a notion of phenomenal identification. Phenomenal identification can only be achieved if it appeals to habit and learned behaviour grounded in a contemporary vocabulary using instances of repetition. In what follows, I will discuss Corn Exchange's engagement with digital culture and the largely embodied habitual behaviour it precipitates in order to deepen the immersive potential of *Man of Valour* through a process of becoming.

Repetition, Habit, and Learned Behaviour

I will now turn my attention toward the effect of repetition on habit and learned behaviour and Corn Exchange's experimentation with modes of counter-attention in *Man of Valour*. The previous section sought to explore the concept of phenomenal identification through an appointment of Farrell as a physical body double. This section will take Aronson's proposal of using a contemporary vocabulary which is "firmly rooted within contemporary cultural and aesthetic parameters"[47] in order to restore the spatio-temporal equilibrium of the shared space as its stepping point. What I will argue is that by engaging with digital culture, *Man of Valour* stimulates modes of contemporary habitual behaviour and counter-attention modes developed through digital

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[47] Aronson, *"Time and Space on the Stage,"* 85.

interaction. These modes constitute a new type of consciousness that, although on first enquiry may seem automated, is in fact deeply embodied and therefore ideal to engage with in the pursuit of sensory immersive performance. In what follows, I will argue that *Man of Valour* appeals to habit and learned behaviour and draws the spectator further into the immersive qualities of the piece.

Rather than aligning the notion of repetition with an action that occurs again and again in an identical manner, Deleuze equates repetition with the generative and transformative potentialities of difference. Deleuze does not conceive repetition as identical, which he asserts from the outset is rarely, if ever, achievable. Instead, he suggests that repetition is defined through difference. In other words, because repetition by its very nature contains the past, it cannot be identical. When a repetition is marked as such, it is through its difference. Repetition, as a result of the inherent difference it produces, is creative and a force of generation. Adrian Parr notes that

> repetition is best understood in terms of discovery and experimentation; it allows new experiences, affects and expressions to emerge. To repeat is to begin again; to affirm the power of the new and the unforeseeable. Insofar as life itself is described as a dynamic and active force of repetition producing difference, the force of which Deleuze encourages us to think of in terms of 'becoming', forces incorporate difference as they repeat giving rise to mutation.[48]

We can relate repetition in this sense to habit. Habit involves a type of learned perception— through repetitious encounters we learn to interact and encounter the world in a certain way. Grosz categorises habit as a way to mark "our modes of engagement with and transformation by the real [...] a measure of the extent to which the real is itself transformed by living things."[49] And as Fischer-Lichte observes, in times of significant cultural change, the shift toward digital culture for instance, there is a perceivable triadic relation in the cultural shift's relation formed by perception, body, and language.[50] In other words, we are in a dynamic and inextricable relationship with our

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[48] Adrian Parr, "Repetition," in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 225.
[49] Grosz, "Habit Today: Ravaisson, Bergson, Deleuze and Us," 218.
[50] Fischer-Lichte, *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre: A European Perspective*, 9.

surroundings, and this in turn has a considerable effect on the way we perceive, the way we use and engage with bodies, and the way we use and perceive language(s). As discussed in the previous chapters, online platforms encourage and develop modes of counter-attention in order to extend the periods of time users spend interacting with various technologies, media, and applications. More pointedly, it seems that these platform developers have also noticed the powerful potential of repetition and habit on the duration and frequency of interaction. In fact, repetition and habit are intricately linked to pervasive modes of counter-attention in information-intensive societies.

To illustrate this point in statistical terms and within the bounds of Ireland, Deloitte's "Global Mobile Consumer Survey: Ireland 2016" recorded that 40 percent of Irish people check their smartphones within five minutes of waking up in the morning, and just under half of Irish smartphone users experience broken sleep due to checking their phones at night.[51] In their 2017 study, Deloitte found that Irish users check their smartphones, on average, fifty-seven times a day.[52] While these figures are only representative of the Irish population, what the 2016 and 2017 studies indicate on a micro-scale is the repetitive and certainly habitual use of smartphones, even to the detriment of sleep. Online platforms prime users through their information-intensive environment to frequently and repetitively interact with various online platforms, for instance, checking email, bank balance, social media accounts, and text messages. This action becomes habitual to the point of reliance.

Repetitive and habitual behaviour is largely unconscious. It relies on bodily recitation; the body performs the action or behaviour in an unconscious manner for the most part. For Dufrenne, bodily knowledge is also a conceptual knowledge, and vice versa. They are always in dialogue and

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[51] Deloitte, "Global Mobile Consumer Survey: Ireland 2016," accessed December 20, 2017, https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/ie/Documents/TechnologyMediaCommunications/Global_Mobile_Consumer_Survey2016.pdf.

[52] Deloitte, Global Mobile Consumer Survey – The Irish Cut: A land of saints, scholars and smartphones," accessed February 20, 2018, https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/ie/Documents/TechnologyMediaCommunications/IE_Ta_GMCS_global_mobile_survey.pdf

never separate in perceptual activities. Accordingly, he insists that habit and memory play a crucial part in the bodily apprehension involved in the perceptual stage of presence. Dufrenne suggests that the spectating body,

> must be equipped with habits and capable of discriminating judgement. Perhaps such virtues, inscribed in the body, do not proceed from it. If the body were left unaided in its activity, the aesthetic object could well lose patience, as it were. To be sure, in making the body the instrument of our presence to the world and of the knowledge by which the world has an aesthetic meaning, we already confer on the body powers that an objectifying perspective cannot recognize in the body-as-object. In no event must we underestimate these powers in grasping the aesthetic object [...] It is not prejudicial to the body to show (if one can) the advent of mind, that is, how the body surpasses itself.[53]

Hence, Dufrenne is claiming that the aesthetic perception required for the sensuous aesthetic object—aesthetic objects that explicitly foreground the sensuous elements—requires certain habits and learned embodied knowledge to fully experience its full impact. Accordingly, for Dufrenne, there is a distinct phenomenal implication for how the sensuous plane of an artwork, and thus its immersive qualities, can be most successfully accessed and felt. It relies heavily on a successful appeal to the spectator's habit, embodied memory, and embodied knowledge. Again we can see, like Aronson suggests, that in order to create an immersive, affective encounter between the performance and the spectator, there must be a common, recognisable contemporary vocabulary communicated. If the language of the performance occurs on an intensive, affective plane, in order for the spectating body to receive the communication and engage in it—that is, in order to ultimately engage in a process of becoming—an appeal is required to embodied habitual behaviour developed through engagement with digital culture to experience the apex of the immersion on offer. This will be the focus of the next section: how *Man of Valour* tunes into a contemporary vocabulary.

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[53] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 342.

Man of Valour repeats core movements and physicality alongside indicative changes in the setting through projected film, music, and lighting to set up Farrell's transitions to his fantasy world and back again. With each repetition of this transition, the spectator changes the frame of reference. As outlined above, the spectator initially observes Farrell's deterritorialisation through his voice, makeup, and stage contour and then through his transitions between his real life and his fantasy world. The spectator is then invited to engage in a more intimate, coinciding deterritorialisation of the encountering bodies: the body of Farrell and the body of the spectator. It is therefore through the repetition of the transition between the worlds that a virtuality is nurtured and, from there, a potentiality for a becoming is established.

Here, we must return to Aronson's proposal concerning time and space in performance. If a considerable disruption of the spatio-temporal register occurs in the shared architectural space, in order to maintain equilibrium and restore unity, the spectator is encouraged to enter the spatio-temporal register of the performance for the duration of the piece. However, Aronson further suggests that unification is achieved through "a clear and commonly held set of rules (vocabulary)"[54] and must be firmly embedded within contemporary culture and its aesthetics to ground the audience in familiarity. So, for instance, in a scene where Farrell transitions from his conventional workplace environment to jumping from a bridge in slow motion, the audience recognises the movement as a common action film motif.

Fischer-Lichte's study regarding the cultural evolution of European Theatre from the late eighteenth century onward, which I have referenced a number of times thus far, suggests that substantial developments in art, industry, and culture requires "the human body to adapt to the given rhythm of a machine."[55] A complex link lies between our bodies and their surrounding environments; a change in one generally causes the other to adapt or evolve in some way. As I have

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[54] Aronson, *"*Time and Space on the Stage, 85.
[55] Fischer-Lichte, *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre: A European Perspective*, 5.

touched upon in Chapters One and Two, one of the ways this rhythm is illustrated is in emergent forms of counter-attention, such as hyper-attention, and/or a permanent low-level attention similar to trance which is maintained and precipitated by long periods of time on a computer and online platforms. Consequently, as these forms of counter-attention pervade and develop, in parallel with the continual demands an information-intensive environment expounds, habit becomes an increasingly necessary development under which everyday tasks, and technology-related tasks in particular, are performed.

For this reason, it can be argued that habit is never more used and useful as it is today in order to engage with our information-intensive environments efficiently. With many streams of information, in many different forms, one is required to employ habit to move forward with a multitude of coinciding tasks. As a result of this, we have formed learned perception towards many activities and processes related to our mediatised lives. Many streams of information require jumping frequently and seamlessly between tasks. The most efficient way for the body to complete these tasks is to employ habitual behaviour. In *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time*, Deleuzian scholar James Williams uses the metaphor of a person pumping water to illustrate this notion of learning through repetition.[56] The metaphor acts as a clarification and development of Deleuze's proposal of difference and repetition. With each downward movement of the pump we learn how much force is needed and how the pump reacts to the movement to produce a steady flow of water. Eventually the movement becomes habitual and part of a learned behaviour. The repeated action has changed the way one performs the task and continues to do so as the embodied memory accumulates and, in turn, through that person's interaction with the pump, the pump's motion and production has been altered.

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[56] James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time*: A Critical Introduction and Guide (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 21-33.

If we ground the idea of habit in the context of digital culture, logging on to an email account or browsing social media sites has become, for many people, a frequent task performed throughout the day. Due to the rise in smartphone use—in 2017, 71% of Irish people accessed the internet on their phones as often as their computer[57]—online life has become coextensive with real life. Indeed, as Matthew Causey, Emma Meehan, and Néill O'Dwyer remark of our explorations into the virtual and our return to the real, we have created "a *new normal* of computational interference in all areas of life […] contemporary subjectivity is one that dwells within both the virtual and the real."[58] However, this new normal, this inextricably intertwined virtual and real means that society has become increasingly sedentary, with many people playing out majority of their lives as digital manifestations on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, vlogs, and blogs. These interactions are all opportunities for embodied habit formation through repetition. But, as perhaps most notably proposed by Judith Butler with regards to her eminent research on the performativity of gender, rather than a restorative act with no observable power, repetition has the potential to disrupt, dislocate, and transform. Therefore, habit in SSP not only opens up the potential for each of its processes proposed in the SSP model—frame, deterritorialisation, virtuality, reterritorialisation, and the transformative experience of becoming—it is a unique strategy to engage a spectator in a deeply immersive experience for reasons that will be explored in this chapter. Accordingly, we form habitual behaviours in order to carry out the task more efficiently. We become seemingly automated in our behaviour to adapt to the rhythm of the machine, although we will see from a proposal from Grosz regarding habit that this type of habit is far from automated.

When this idea of tuning into a contemporary vocabulary of digital culture is placed alongside the performance of *Man of Valour*, it takes flight in two ways. First, Farrell can be seen

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[57] Google, Consumer Barometer with Google, accessed February 10, 2018, https://www.consumerbarometer.com/en/trending/?countryCode=IE&category=TRN-NOFILTER-ALL.
[58] Matthew Causey, Emma Meehan, and Néill O'Dwyer, *The Performing Subject in the Space of Technology: Through the Virtual, Towards the Real* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 1.

as a characterisation of this concept of digital escapism from the commonly shared, repressed real world which he finds inadequate into the fantasy world which he has created by drawing principally on digital culture references—action films and video games. The second manifestation is not as explicit however. In the previous chapter, I discussed the performance *All That Fall* vis-à-vis the performance's exploitation of strategies used by new communication technologies to appeal to the spectator's more embodied forms of counter-attention to deepen the immersive potential of the piece. In short, I argued that due to our surroundings being saturated with technology, human modes of cognition, nervous systems, and bodies are as a result affected and altered. Accordingly, SSPs such as *All That Fall*, which presents an immersive environment created with multiform media, reflect this alteration. Similar to Pan Pan's production of *All That Fall*, *Man of Valour* exploits the strategies of digital culture but in a different way. Again, *Man of Valour* utilises the strategies used by new communication technologies and online platforms. However, this time the strategies which are developed are appealing to embodied forms of habit and learned behaviour. One of the most efficient ways to comment on a system is to exploit its inherent strategies in order to challenge them. Commenting on the means for disabling systems of "domination, coercion, oppression," Grosz remarks:

> a new set of social and political relations and new values in culture, comes only from the excessive productions of the past, the virtual force that lies still immanent in but undeveloped by the present, the dislocations between past and present that make room for unpredicted futures.[59]

In accord with Crary, Grosz explores the generative and embodied power of habit to create rather than arrest. Influenced by the writings of Félix Ravaisson, Henri Bergson, and Gilles Deleuze on the subject, Grosz concludes that repetition and habit are molecular processes that generate and

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[59] Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004), 252-53.

transform; through habit, difference is produced. Therefore molecular transformation between the habitual body and its surrounding bodies are affected.

In short, habit can be viewed as a type of becoming, an encounter with another body or bodies. However, habit formed through digital interactions differs marginally from other forms of habit. For Grosz,

> [Habit] brings about a new kind of consciousness, one not aware of itself but prone to act, that is activated by the possibility of its acting, that knows but cannot know that it knows. It is an anti-Cartesian intelligence, one that doesn't know but acts, that has effects, produces actions and sensations. It is as close to instinct as possible, yet with the possibility of invention, newness, transformation and learning, an intuition acted rather than known.[60]

Therefore, we should understand the type of habit and learned behaviour formed as a result of our interactions with mediatised environments as a new kind of consciousness rather than automated. The audience in *Man of Valour* is transformed into this world of possibilities whereby learned perception allows us to more readily accept the virtualities posed in this performance. In other words, we recognise that Farrell is making a jump in slow motion by the way he flails his arms and looks down with a projection of a background moving vertically behind him. We know what this depicts because we have watched films that use this technique to intensify the action. *Man of Valour* is tuning into the machine to engage a bodily immersion based on the techniques of new media. Accordingly, through Farrell's repetitious transgression between his real world and fantasy world there is an embodied appeal to the audience's habit whereby they identify with Farrell's movement and he thus becomes an appointed avatar for which both bodies, the performer and the spectator, are deterritorialised and transformed into a BwO.

Crary contends that the late-capitalist model is built to encourage high levels of habit-making and habit-driven behaviour to prolong our sedimentary use of online platforms and digital

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[60] Grosz, "Habit Today: Ravaisson, Bergson, Deleuze and Us," 223.

interactions. Counter-attention thrives on habit due to its uniquely affective, seemingly automatic, and embodied form. The way this is achieved can be illustrated in a study carried out by Dario Salvucci and Niels Taatgen in 2008 which discusses the strategies deployed by online platforms to prolong interaction and immerse the user.[61] What the psychological study found was that due to a realisation by online platforms, if the same type of perception is requested by an application, for example, two coinciding tasks that required visual attention or two coinciding tasks that require the linguistic faculties, it results in a "processing bottleneck." This bottleneck disrupts the flow of the experience and disrupts immersion. Salvucci and Taatgen propose that online platforms should harness "threaded cognition" which involves tasks that

> use several distinct cognitive resources, such as vision, manual operations, or memory. These resources can operate in parallel but are themselves serial in nature [...] Because of this seriality, a resource can only be involved in one operation at a time, but multiple resources can be active at the same time.[62]

 Consequently, to avoid this bottleneck of perception but capitalise on the immersive potential of this type of delivery, online platforms have and will continue to develop their interface to appeal to many faculties using multi-form means in a nearly simultaneous delivery style. Salvucci and Taatgen's study, and the many other associated studies that are being built upon their work, seek to explore how online platforms can further precipitate and develop forms of counter-attention in their users. As we know, counter-attention seeks to disable a deep-attention on one task and replace it with many streams which require a more automatic, embodied, habitual response. Deep-attention in an online platform is undesirable, because this will inevitably cause a processing bottleneck, disrupt

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[61] Dario Salvucci and Niels Taatgen, "Threaded Cognition: An Integrated Theory of Concurrent Multitasking," *Psychological Review* 115, no. 1 (2008).
[62] Jelmer Borst, Niels Taatgen, Hedderik van Rijn,"The Problem State: A Cognitive Bottleneck in Multitasking," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (2010), 363.

the flow of experience, and consequently affect the time spent online. Counter-attention prefers many streams of information through different channels. It is therefore the ideal attention mode for eliciting a threaded cognition and consequently a more prolonged, immersive experience spent online. As Crary points out,

> The goal is to refine the capacity to localize the eye's movement on or within highly targeted sites or points of interest. The eye is dislodged from the realm of optics and made into an intermediary element of a circuit whose end result is always a motor response of the body to electronic solicitation.[63]

It is significant why this may be of interest to both technological innovators and indeed, in a very different way and for very different reasons, immersive performance makers. To return to Fischer-Lichte's triadic relation, when a cultural shift occurs, such as the advancement of digital culture, the relationship between perception, body, and language is affected. As digital culture becomes increasingly pervasive, it will have a pronounced impact on our perception, bodies, and language.

In the epigraph to this chapter, Crary puts forth a concept that contemporary experience consists of shifts between instances of complete social, political, cultural, biological, and psychological control exerted by late-capitalist models and the individual in this perceived repressed society exploring the possibilities of a shared digital world that resists these types of control. He contends that these shifts ultimately serve to highlight the lack of common society in the real world and the insufficiency of the public sphere when compared to each individual's tightly constructed, fantasy-driven digital world. What Crary is suggesting is that we are escaping further into our digital lives, a life of "fantasmatic digital insularity,"[64] as he calls it, in order to rebel against the inadequacy of the world we commonly share. To support Crary's point further, one only needs to consider the complex algorithms that control social media accounts. For instance,

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[63] Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*, 76.
[64] Ibid., 89.

Facebook uses an algorithm called Edgerank. Algorithms dictate the types of advertising, sponsored links, posts, and new stories that a user will see on their newsfeed based on their likes, interactions, location, and friend's likes. This means it is more likely that this person will be exposed to articles, videos, advertising, games, and marketing campaigns that the algorithm perceives fit into their ideology. In so doing, a person's digital world increasingly supports their views, making them feel part of a majority consensus rather than creating the isolating effect of incongruity in the real world that is reported. Consequently, the appeal of the digital world and the personalised community generated by the individual becomes increasingly enticing.

On the 12th of July 2016, The Guardian published a commentary written by Katharine Viner on the effects of such algorithms, focusing mainly on the vote for Brexit in the United Kingdom in 2016.[65] She notes that many people who voted to remain in the European Union felt that it was a majority-held view due to the evidence of their social media accounts and, in fact, many claimed they didn't know anyone who voted to leave. In regard to this reported experience, Viner mentions the term that the co-founder of Upworthy, Eli Pariser, coined to describe a perception of consensus on online platforms: the "filter bubble." Pariser suggests,

> When you enter a filter bubble, you're letting the companies that construct it choose which options you're aware of. You may think you're captain of your own destiny, but personalization can lead you down a road to a kind of informational determinism in which what you've clicked on in the past determines what you see next.[66]

As a result, what a person encounters on a social media account will, more than likely, validate and support their beliefs and preferences rather than challenge them or offer a strong opinion to the contrary. The reason this is significant to this particular discussion of SSP is that the notion of a filter bubble is not only what makes the digital world seem more stable and trustworthy than the

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[65] Katharine Viner, "How Technology Disrupted the Truth," *The Guardian*, July 12, 2016.
[66] Eli Pariser, *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet Is Hiding from You* (London: Viking, 2011), 16.

real world; it is also how digital platforms entice us to spend longer periods of time interacting with digital platforms. Consequently, as we have already explored, this increasingly results in a shift in attention from deep-attention, which focuses on one main task, toward counter-attention, which can include hyper-attention and contemporary forms of trance and reverie elicited through static physicality and many streams of information at society's fingertips. Importantly, algorithms provide the illusion of free travel through information; however, as each search is personalised to an individual's history, they are more likely to be exposed to self-validating information. The effect of this is what Crary calls "states of neutralization and inactivation, in which one is dispossessed of time."[67]

Crary argues that the main way that these neutralized modes are maintained is through habitual repetitions, "But even within habitual repetitions there remains a thread of hope—a knowingly false hope—that one more click or touch might open onto something to redeem the overwhelming monotony in which one is immersed."[68] Although this type of online interaction— the continual search for information—appears to be heavily cognition-driven, the way that majority of online platforms are designed means that the sheer wealth of information leads a user into a series of habitual physical repetitions of clicks, scrolls, and touching screens. Movements that have been acquired through repetition and learned behaviour. The interaction ends up having a much more affective impact compared to the information acquired. In other words, the user enters into a predominantly physical, sense-driven, affective engagement with the device for extended periods of time until something breaks the immersion.

Returning to the triadic relation, in this section I have put forward arguments which outline the implications of digital culture on perception, body, and language—as posed by Grosz in relation to habit and new consciousness, Salvucci and Taatgen's study which endorses the implementation

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[67] Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*, 88.
[68] Ibid.

of threaded cognition in online platforms, and Crary in relation to the appeal and effect of digital insularity. What is clear is that *Man of Valour* seeks to channel the effects of repetition and habit to appeal to these particular learned behaviours; which spectators have developed in response to their mediatised environments to introduce moments of phenomenal identification, affective encounter, and immersion. By tuning into aspects of digital culture, for instance, an understanding that a spectator may be accustomed to accessing experience through an appointed body double, and appealing to the embodied learned behaviours associated with digital interactions, *Man of Valour* succeeds in reaching a more willing immersant and uncovering a more potent immersive experience.

Conclusion

Applying Deleuze's notions of difference and repetition and BwO together with my proposal of phenomenal identification developed from Dufrenne's framework of aesthetic experience, I have sought to explore the techniques deployed by Corn Exchange that establish an affective encounter and allow for an immersive becoming through sensation. The chapter began by outlining key terms and processes involved in *Man of Valour* such as the formation of a BwO, de-stratification, changes in frames of reference, deterritorialisation, virtuality, and becoming. Farrell transforms into a BwO through deterritorialisation illustrated in his repeated transitions between his real world and his fantasy world. Through this repeated action, the audience observe Farrell's transformation and are exposed to the same contracting and deforming forces of the contour of the stage. They too are invited to become deterritorialised alongside Farrell. Consequently, both bodies are transformed into BwO through deterritorialisation. Once this occurs, a space of virtuality is opened and a process of becoming is initiated.

Throughout the chapter, I have frequently returned to the disruptive and generative concepts of space and time. In Deleuze's preface to the English edition of *Francis Bacon: The Logic*

of Sensation, he mentions painting's ability to conquer time, which I would suggest is equally, if not more applicable to SSPs such as *Man of Valour*:

> It is as though painting were able to conquer time in two ways: through color as eternity and light in the infinity of a field, where bodies fall or go through their paces; and in another way as passage, as metabolic variability in the enactment of these bodies, in their flesh and on their skin.[69]

The spectator's transformation into a BwO is further provoked through a disruption in the spatio-temporal register of the shared architectural space. If Farrell is inhabiting a fantasy world and the audience remain embodied in the time and space of the auditorium, they will, Aronson asserts, shift their register to share the character's register and return to shared equilibrium. This contention is echoed by Deleuze in his development of Bergson's duration, as I have outlined. Rosi Braidotti notes that "Habits are the frame with which nonunitary or complex subjects get reterritorialized, albeit temporarily."[70] Hence the disrupting force is also ultimately the synthesizing or reterritorialising force, as after the identification with Farrell's BwO and following the spectator's consequent transformation into BwO, an attempt to synthesise durations has been achieved and thus reterritorialisation, a bracketing of the chaos, has been achieved, albeit temporarily.

However, Aronson also cautions that in order to encourage a move to an alternate spatio-temporal register, the performance must be firmly rooted in a "contemporary vocabulary," as he puts it. I have made the case that Corn Exchange has engaged with the techniques, platforms, and devices of digital culture, including action film and video game motifs, along with a precipitation of primarily embodied form counter-attention developed as a result of digital insularity, in order to tune in to the spectator's openness to phenomenally engage in affective encounter with performance. The types of habit, learned behaviour, and counter-attention modes that mediatised environments and

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[69] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, xii-xiii.
[70] Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 291.

digital culture encourage prime the spectator into their role of immersant in this piece. Through an appeal to habit and learned behaviour acquired through exposure and interaction to digital culture—mediatised, technology-driven environments inherent in the depictions within action films and video games—I have argued that we are more likely to accept the fantasy world as our own, to identify phenomenally with Farrell, and to appoint him as a physical body double. Indeed, we should consider habit as a form of becoming; it is a qualitative change in both of the encountering bodies. These processes cumulatively constitute the conditions for intensive, affective communication to take place. In other words, the transformations that happen to Farrell, the stage, and the audience which I have delineated invite the spectator to experience the immersive qualities of the performance.

The spectator's transformation is further elicited through a process of what I have called phenomenal identification. Phenomenal identification is a process similar to a player's appointment of an avatar in a video game. Using Bacon's paintings as an illustrative example and also Dufrenne's framework of aesthetic experience and the sensuous, I have sought to develop this notion of phenomenal identification. Both Deleuze and Dufrenne note a certain type of spectatorship involved in artwork where the body is foregrounded. These types of artwork impel a type of phenomenal participation. Both mention an idea of relinquishing binaries between subject and object, entering the artwork and subjecting oneself to the forces that govern it. This type of spectatorship is affect-based. In *Man of Valour*, the spectator appoints Farrell as a body double that performs an action and, through an embodied reciprocity, the appointee-spectator experiences the affect. Through an intensive and affective language, the performance encourages the spectator to relinquish the binaries that separate themselves from the performance and through phenomenal identification with Farrell they are invited to enter or merge with the performance, thus subjecting themselves to the forces within it. This is the essence of SSP. An immersive and qualitative

becoming is set up between the spectator and the performance and, significantly, both emerge from the encounter qualitatively changed.

Chapter 4 | *The* **[Posthuman]** *Body*

Art, not unlike critical philosophy, is for Deleuze an intensive practice that aims at creating new ways of thinking, perceiving and sensing Life's infinite possibilities. By transposing us beyond the confines of bound identities, art becomes necessarily inhuman in the sense of nonhuman in that it connects to the animal, the vegetable, earthy and planetary forces that surround us. Art is also, moreover, cosmic in its resonance and hence posthuman by structure, as it carries us to the limits of what our embodied selves can do and endure. In so far as art stretches the boundaries of representation to the utmost, it reaches the limits of life itself and thus confronts the horizon of death.[1]

—Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman*

"Not all of us can say, with any degree of certainty, that we have always been human, or that we are only that."[2] This now oft-cited provocation, put forward by Rosi Braidotti in *The Posthuman,* offers one of the most compelling starting points from which to consider the role of the human in a postdigital, posthuman world. Digital culture is now moving towards the postdigital. As previously highlighted, the two cultures are inextricable. They are co-present, related, and overlapping. This thesis aims to demonstrate various progressions in SSP's engagement with digital culture. It also aims to show a maturation of digital culture itself in the form of its assimilation by the postdigital; the terms are now interchangeable. The postdigital is characterised chiefly by a growing indistinction between the virtual and the real as well as a difficulty in extricating man from machine due to embedded technologies, applications, and reliant behaviours toward computers.

While the proposal of the postdigital may be argued from a number of angles,[3] the idea that the once distinct defining boundary between the human and nonhuman has quietly dissolved remains deeply unpalatable to most. One of the reasons for this discomfort is that if we have indeed moved past the distinctions of "human" and "machine," this will incontrovertibly affect our definitions of what it means to identify ourselves as human, and accordingly implore us to

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[1] Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 107.
[2] Ibid., 1.
[3] See a collection of essays edited by David M. Berry and Michael Dieter entitled *Postdigital Aesthetics: Art, Computation And Design* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). Matthew Causey applies the concept directly to performance in the article *"Postdigital Performance."*

formulate a new characterisation of ourselves and our position in the world. Braidotti's statement disrupts the widely accepted ontology of anthropocentrism. It encourages one to instead focus on the many relations humans have with their surrounding environments. As focus is directed away from the human as the central figure in the world and democratisation of anthropological hierarchy is encouraged, previously held distinctions between human and nonhuman are rendered unhelpful if not practically impossible. In this lone statement, Braidotti sets out the foundations from which we can examine our position in not just a posthuman but also a postdigital landscape.

In the previous chapter, I proposed a notion of phenomenal identification—the spectator's appointment of the performer as their body double, thereby allowing a coextensive transformation into bodies without organs. This instance, I argued, impels an affective encounter and activates an immersive becoming between the body of the performance and the body of the spectator; both emerge from this process of becoming qualitatively altered. Through an examination of Nigel Barrett and Louise Mari's production *The Body*, this chapter will explore the performative area of affective encounter that lies beyond phenomenal identification in performance which seeks to construct a more intense becoming; a mode of sensory immersion that further dismantles the boundaries between subject and object, internal and external, human and nonhuman. With this step toward a more intense becoming and sensory immersion we also see the step toward postdigital culture and towards more affectively potent channels of communication in its various platforms and media.

Thus far, I have used the SSP model to unpack the various processes at work in Pan Pan's *All That Fall* and Corn Exchange's *Man of Valour*. In this chapter, I build upon the theories I have put forward in the previous two chapters regarding the preparations and conditions that SSPs establish to incite an immersive becoming experience. Furthermore, I consider what affective engagement and immersive becoming, as aesthetic and visceral responses to digital culture, can *do*

to the spectator and to the performance. The focus will be on the impact, the effect, and the aftermath of the immersive sensory experience of the SSP.

This chapter explores the ways in which *The Body* employs an affective language in order to displace the various boundaries that persist within society between human and nonhuman bodies through sensory immersion. *The Body* invites the spectator to form what Deleuze calls an assemblage—a collection of elements that shed their ontological status and respective hierarchies in order to come together to form a new entity which performs a new function. *The Body*, I will argue, constructs an assemblage within the performance between the human performer, the doll performer, and the spectator in order to suppress rational thought that encourages identification and signification and instead brings affective communication to the fore. As a result, the differences and boundaries between the human and nonhuman body are confused. Referring to the SSP model to approach the immersive aesthetic experience of the piece, I will explore Barrett and Mari's use of assemblage and affective encounter. I will demonstrate the ways in which digital culture provides the objects of desire such as representations of AI, robots, and dolls in film and TV that *The Body* utilizes to impel the spectator into the processes of deterritorialisation and virtuality, and to invite them to join an assemblage with human performer and doll performer. This amounts to an immersive transformation on the side of the spectator and the side of the performance. Both sides enter into a becoming, and it is through this becoming that *The Body* challenges the perceived boundaries between the human and nonhuman body and, moreover, highlights the potency and impact of affective communication which is the main communication mode of digital culture's online platforms.

This chapter is comprised of four main sections. The first section will introduce the performance, *The Body,* considering both the performative strategies of the SSP and the philosophical questions it poses through immersive affective encounter. Next, I will outline the philosophy of posthumanism in regard to moving beyond fixed identities and the relation of human

and nonhuman, living and non-living bodies. This section will review Braidotti's writing on the subject of critical posthumanism, providing a theoretical approach and context to the performative themes and strategies used in the performance. From this, the concepts of desire and assemblage will be introduced and explored regarding the construction of an affective encounter with the nonhuman. Lastly, I will use Dufrenne's theory of the affective *a priori* as a framework to discuss the type of affective encounter that is established in *The Body* and the process of becoming that follows.

Again, I will refer to the processes from the SSP model to address the performative strategies that lead to an immersive becoming. We will see that the acts of desire and assemblage are coextensive and indeed reliant on the processes of changing frames and deterritorialisation. The affective communication and consequent alteration of bodies illustrated in Dufrenne's affective *a priori* are dependent on spaces of virtuality and induce a process of becoming. The result of these respective processes culminate in a reterritorialisation, a return to order in a new, modified state of being; an outcome celebrated in Braidotti's posthumanist affirmative politics, which I will outline. In the section that follows, I will introduce *The Body,* attending to the occasions within the performance which seek to disrupt fixed notions of human and nonhuman identity and their relationship with one another. Through carefully devised vignettes, *The Body* temporarily suspends concerns that take their root in logical thought and instead seeks to release an affective and intensive language to affirm the posthumanist philosophy of vital materiality and nomadism. In order to gain a comprehensive view of these issues presented in *The Body*, I will proceed to review the main philosophical concerns promoted by critical posthumanism, particularly in the writings of Braidotti.

Nigel Barrett and Louise Mari

Nigel Barrett and Louise Mari are London-based collaborators who began working together as part of the Shunt collective. Together they formed the Shunt Lounge, a legendary arts venue which ran from 2006-2010. One cannot fully understand the work of Barrett and Mari, without knowing their artistic origins with Shunt. Their connection to Shunt is so strong in fact, that when Barrett and Mari started making work outside of the collective, they billed their work as "by Nigel Barrett and Louise Mari from Shunt."[4] Shunt was formed in 1998 by a group of 10 Central School of Speech and Drama graduates who met on the Advanced Theatre Practice MA the previous year. Among these founding members was Louise Mari, and Nigel Barrett joined them soon after as an associate member. Shunt is known for its experimental, immersive, audacious, and extravagant events, encounters, performances, and live art, which take place in unusual locations around London—Bethnal Green Railway Arch, The Museum Of located on London's South Bank, Croydon Clocktower, and London Bridge Station. This last location became a permanent venue called Shunt Lounge in 2006, and at its peak attracted over 600 people every weekend to attend events mostly held at night. Shunt Lounge was a performance area which was accessed through a black door under London Bridge Station and consisted of a series of vaults and tunnels where various micro-performances from theatre, dance, film, installation, live music, and DJ sets took place. Visitors were free to explore the vaults and relax in the bar area of the venue. Occasional Shunt collaborator and co-director of Forest Fringe, Andy Field, describes the Lounge as follows:

> [It was] an immersive light and sound installation, a cavernous art-machine smelling of railway-arch damp and looking like the mines of Moria if the Dwarves had all been really into techno; a vast subterranean labyrinth filled with lights and noise and people, carrying in its huge crocodile jaw an ever-changing line-up of performances, encounters, interventions, live bands, DJs and numerous other uncategorizable goings-on. There was a giant zip-line at one point, I think, and a temporary lake with its own rowing boat and a

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[4] "One Man Show," Cargo Collective, http://cargocollective.com/nigelandlouise/One-Man-Show

caravan and a forest of antique pinball machines. Then unexpectedly in its quieter corners you would find smaller, more delicate things; intimate shows in dusty rooms for a handful of people. Mischa Twitchin's hands moving very slowly for half an hour in near total darkness; Simon Kane covered in rice pudding and carrying a giant dead fish, leading us out into the late-night emptiness of London Bridge station. [5]

The success of Shunt Lounge during the four years it was open meant that the collective were free to make the ambitious and experimental work that might not have been possible under the strictures of Arts Council funding.[6] The Lounge closed in 2010 due to construction work beginning on The Shard. One of Shunt's most ambitious pieces, which opened just after the Lounge closed, was aptly named *Money*, perhaps a dig at The National Rail who terminated their lease to facilitate the building of a commercial skyscraper. For *Money*, Shunt rented a former tobacco warehouse in Bermondsey Street, close to the former Shunt Lounge, and built a three-story steel structure. Lyn Gardner notes that the structure was designed to "take us inside the money machine itself, an extraordinary three-storey Victorian contraption, guarded by security guards with balloons, that heaves and puffs like a steam engine going nowhere."[7] The scaffolding, levels, and stairs resemble constructivist staging, particularly Lyubov Popova's original design for Meyerhold's 1922 production of *The Magnanimous Cuckold,* and are also suggestive of Schechner's Environmental Theatre, specifically The Performance Group's production of *Dionysus in 69* which used a scaffolding structure as one of its key design features. Although *Money* played to a full house each night for a year, many of the reviews for the show were unfavourable, remarking on the lack of dramaturgy and performance quality in comparison to the dazzling structure Shunt had constructed. Perhaps these comments are missing the mark of what Shunt wanted to produce however, as Shunt consistently pronounced that their mission is to "explore the live event,"[8] to take the audience on a

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[5] Andy Field, "Criticism & Love #8: Nigel Barrett and Louise Mari," Cargo Collective, http://cargocollective.com/nigelandlouise/Criticism-Love-8-Nigel-Barrett-and-Louise-Mari-by-Andy-Field
[6] Following the closure of the Shunt Lounge, the collective did receive Arts Council funding for their show *The Architects* in 2012-13.
[7] Lyn Gardner, "Money," *The Guardian*, October 11, 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/oct/11/money-shunt-review
[8] "About Shunt," https://www.shunt.co.uk/about

journey, and to offer them a unique experience removed from the pressure of meaning or interpretation. One big outcome of *Money* was Shunt's relocation of the Lounge to the factory on Bermondsey Street, with the structure built for *Money* as its central feature. This reimagined Shunt Lounge ran until 2012.

While Shunt were still producing work, Barrett and Mari began collaborating on their own work which was similar in its experimental, visual, and immersive remit, but smaller in size than Shunt's often immense productions. For Andy Field,

> Nigel and Louise remain the living embodiment of the Shunt Lounge; its apostles, its torch-bearers, its designated mourners [...] there is something of the raggedy, subterranean spirit of the lounge that finds its ultimate expression in Nigel and Louise and the wilfully idiosyncratic, endlessly unpredictable, fearlessly audacious work they continue to make.[9]

Barrett and Mari's collaboration outside of the collective began with *One Man Show* which started life at the Shunt Lounge, played at Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2011 winning the FringeReview Outstanding Theatre Award, and also showed at the ICA Theatre, London. *One Man Show* deconstructs the figure of the actor, the notion of acting, and the essence of performance through a series of monologues, direct address, quips, awkward silences, projections, and choreographed movement. The show takes on a cabaret form, similar in kind and quality to their 2015 show *The Body,* which will be the main focus of this chapter. Since 2011, Barrett and Mari have created a number of performances that largely retain the cabaret and visual sketch show quality. Their productions focus on the presence of the audience throughout, playing directly to them and with them at all times. Barrett and Mari's shows experiment with projection, movement, light, and music by testing the boundaries and possibilities of each. As a result of this intense experimentation, they often re-appropriate traditional theatrical tools for bizarre effects—for instance projecting moving

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[9] Field, "Criticism & Love #8."

cartoon lips onto the face of the actor to produce a comically large speaking mouth. These experiments make Barrett and Mari's work amusing, captivating, and inventive.

The Body began life as a work in progress, programmed as part of Forest Fringe, Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and presented at Shunt's space on Bermondsey Street in 2010. Although it had a relatively long incubation period of five years following this while Barrett and Mari created other shows, the turning point for *The Body* and the collaboration between Barrett and Mari came when the show was awarded the Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award in 2015. According to the Barbican, the purpose of this award is "to help the development of emerging practitioners engaged in bold, challenging and innovative performance and, in general, to encourage the new generation of creative artists."[10] As part of the award, theatre artists are allocated research and development grants, a production grant of up to £32,000, a mentor, in-kind support, and space for the production in either The Pit theatre or a supported site-responsive piece. This award allowed *The Body* to be a substantially more ambitious and daring piece of theatre than Barrett and Mari's previous collaborations as a duo. It also meant that they could present the performance to a small audience of approximately 15 spectators, despite The Pit's capacity for 180 seats. Given Shunt's inclination towards unlikely locations in which to show their work, it is of little surprise that Barrett and Mari have carried on this tradition, completely transforming the open studio space into a closed area comprised of chairs for the audience and a playing area for performers. The size of the audience and the confined space make it easier for *The Body* to generate the intended immersive, transformative experience for the audience. However, in true Shunt style, and continued in Barrett and Mari's work, all is not what it seems, and the space changes to reveal hidden depths as the vignette-play develops. In what follows, I will introduce *The Body,* and position it within the parameters of SSP and digital culture.

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[10] "Theatre & Dance: The Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award," Barbican, https://www.barbican.org.uk/our-story/our-programme/theatre-dance/the-oxford-samuel-beckett-theatre-trust-award

The Body

The Body, written by Nigel Barrett and Louise Mari, opened at the Barbican in November 2015,

performed by Barrett and Jess Latowicki. The show is comprised of a series of short sketches that

question the identity of the human and the position of the nonhuman figure in society by using doll

performers and human performers and placing them in different imagined scenarios. For the most

part, the doll performers act like humans, and the human performers act like dolls. The audience are

asked to participate in the show in various ways, including providing bio-data and being paired with

a baby doll for the entirety of the show. As the title of the piece suggests, *The Body* seeks to cover

the subject of "the body" in every sense: from the multi-sensory experience it offers the spectator,

to the use of dolls as human counterparts and vice versa, and the inclusion of bio-surveillance as

performance. *The Body* premiered in The Pit Theatre, a studio contained within the lower floors of

the vast Barbican Centre. Speaking about selecting a space for the performance, set designer

Myriddin Wannell noted:

> It was clear from the beginning that we didn't want to work with traditional theatre setting,
> or a studio theatre space. We started looking at vessels, like sheds, houses, crates, boxes,
> coffins that throughout our lives hold the body. Materials that appear solid but are
> permeable, like skin. Depending how you look at them and in what light. There is a world
> outside the box and a world inside the box. There are bodies within bodies, at different
> levels. The box itself is a body that contains other bodies within it and so on and so on.[11]

The audience are brought down a corridor, asked to remove coats and bags, led past a mound of

black ash and then into the seemingly small and confined black studio.

Asking its audience to remove their belongings and then isolating them in the studio space

below ground level and away from the main theatre area, *The Body* seeks to actively change the

audience's frame of reference and enact a deterritorialisation from the beginning. Hereafter, the

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[11] Myriddin Wannell, "Building The Body," Barbican, last modified November 17, 2015, http://blog.barbican.org.uk/2015/11/building-the-body/.

spectator is, to a certain extent, a depersonalised body waiting to be moulded by the performance. There are approximately fifteen seats in the space for the audience. As each person takes their seat, they are instructed to attach a heart monitor to their chest. As they do so, their heartbeats feed into the speakers to form a collective soundscape; lights also flash overhead to reflect each individual heartbeat. This arrhythmic beat resounds in the space for a number of minutes before the performance formally begins, setting the tone for the type of multi-sensory, body-responsive, immersive performance that will follow.

Fig. 15. *The Body*. Photo credit: Cargo Collective

The Body is structured through a series of vignettes. The performance begins by ceremoniously presenting each audience member with a strikingly realistic infant doll, or reborn doll as they are more commonly known. The doll not only looks like a real baby—each crafted with a different appearance and different outfit—it is the same weight as an infant and, for the performance, each doll has been fitted with a heartbeat. Moreover, the dim light of the studio in parallel with the overhead lights work to create the illusion that, at various instances, the reborn doll's face is moving, grimacing in the same way a human baby's face might.

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Fig. 16 and 17. Reborn doll. Photo credit: http://bespokebabies.webs.com

The personalised doll stays with each audience member for the duration of the performance. Within the first minutes of *The Body*, as the audience sits hooked up to a heart monitor and holding a lifelike doll with a heartbeat, questions concerning the bounds of what defines a human are already prompted. Moreover, the audience are immediately introduced to the mode of affective, bodily communication that *The Body* will use throughout the performance. There is minimal dialogue used in *The Body* and no discernible narrative, just a series of vignettes that speak about the body, using human and nonhuman bodies alongside projected film to communicate.

The vignettes each focus on a specific body part, introduced by projected titles, for instance "The Eyes" or "The Lips," bracketed by a blackout. The vignettes consist of: a montage of medical diagrams; a nude tableau with Barrett and a doll standing side by side; stilted exchanges between Barrett and Mari using doll-like stock phrases such as "Will you play with me?"; shadow puppetry; a projected age progression simulation of Latowicki and a doll as they stand side by side holding hands on stage; Barrett and Latowicki performing impressions of the audience members by mimicking facial expression and gestures, dancing, serving birthday cake, playing "pass the parcel"; crash test dummy simulations; instances of bio-surveillance including checking spectator's

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lung capacity and inviting the audience to use a microscopic camera to run along their skin; and animation of dolls using moving human faces projected onto their faces.

At various points in the performance, the projector screen at the back of the stage is lifted to reveal a much larger space behind the screen populated by a community of dolls. One of these brief instances presents a tableaux that resembles a mass grave of mannequin body parts while snow is blown onto the stage and a doll with one arm rotates on a plinth. As I have mentioned, there is no distinct narrative in *The Body*. It seeks a bodily response to the performance. However, this vignette is instead intended to be affectively potent due to its abstract relation to a mass grave. This instance, and indeed most of the other vignettes in *The Body*, seek an immediate bodily response and are presented in such quick succession that the spectator is encouraged to leave contemplation and the search for significance until after the performance has ended.

Fig. 18. *The Body*. Photo credit: Richard Davenport

The space behind the screen is revealed completely in one of the final vignettes of the performance as a human violinist walks through what appears to be a warehouse. Dolls of different

shapes and sizes stand facing the audience like an army standing to attention, implying both a readiness to act and also an obsolescence as they remain motionless in the faint light of the warehouse. A few vignettes later, as the end of the show is indicated and the audience applaud, Barrett places a large cardboard box in the middle of the stage in which Latowicki places the doll that played her daughter in the previous scene. By doing so and then exiting the stage, Latowicki encourages the audience to also place their dolls in the box. This is the final, if not the most affectively intense challenge that *The Body* poses to the spectator: to, perhaps reluctantly, place the doll that they have comforted throughout the performance in a box on top of the other dolls in an almost mirror image of the earlier scene involving a mass grave of mannequin body parts piled on top of one another. The subject matter of the human performer placed alongside the nonhuman doll performer and the affective, immersive encounter that each vignette in *The Body* seeks to establish will be the focus of this chapter.

Both the figure and the imitation of the nonhuman—specifically the doll, the marionette, and the puppet—have been present onstage at various times throughout theatre history. However, it was the emergence of modernism and work of theatre makers in the twentieth century that took the concept of staging the nonhuman furthest. Building upon the ideas contained in Heinrich von Kleist's 1810 essay, "On the Marionette Theatre," Edward Gordon Craig advocated to replace the human actor with, what he termed, an "über- marionette." Whether Craig was advocating for puppets on stage or for actors to move, act, and appear like puppets, is the subject of scholarly debate. Nevertheless, in his 1908 article "The Actor and the Über- Marionette," Craig leaves the readers in no doubt of his thoughts on the quality of theatre and actors at the time by including a provocative quote from Italian actress Eleonora Duse as the epigraph to the article published in *The Mask*: "To save the Theatre, the Theatre must be destroyed, the actors and actresses must all die of the plague. They poison the air, they make art impossible."[12] Craig believed that the actor brought

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[12] Edward Gordon Craig, "The Actor and the Über--Marionette," *The Mask,* April 1908. Quoted in Edward Gordon Craig's *On the Art of Theatre* (London: Heinemann, 1957), 79.

too much of themselves to the character, detracting from the impression of a total theatre, and generally impacting the stage creation in a detrimental manner:

> Do away with the actor, and you do away with the means by which a debased stage-realism is produced and flourishes. No longer would there be a living figure to confuse us into connecting actuality and art; no longer a living figure in which the weakness and tremors of the flesh were perceptible.[13]

In quite a different way, the theatre produced by Bauhaus in the 1920s and 30s also sought to transform the human body into a nonhuman form. Oskar Schlemmer suggests that "The history of theatre is the history of the transfiguration of the human form."[14] For Schlemmer, the transfiguration of the human performer's body was a response to the times they were living in and came under the headings of abstraction, mechanisation, and the potentials of technology and invention. To put these ideas into action involved the use of costume and mask and to adjust the way the human body moves and push beyond its limitations. We might also consider the work of Tadeusz Kantor and his proposal of a "Theatre of Death" on which he published an essay in 1975. Kantor, like Craig, believed that by using human actors on the stage, a director is attempting to produce an imitation of life and, in doing so, produces weak theatre because life cannot be portrayed in such terms. Conversely, in moments that the theatre relies on "artificial equivalents to life" they end up being "more alive because they submitted easily to the abstractions of space and time and were capable of achieving absolute unity."[15] In his productions, Kantor placed nonhuman performers, in the form of large puppets, alongside and in juxtaposition with human performers. In doing so he hoped to raise questions concerning existence, and comment on the relationship between life and death, past and present.

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[13] Craig, *On the Art of Theatre*, 81.

[14] Oskar Schlemmer, "Man and Art Figure," in *The Theater of the Bauhaus*, eds. Walter Gropius and Arthur S. Wensinger (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 17.

[15] Tadeusz Kantor, "The Theatre of Death," in *Further On, Nothing: Tadeusz Kantor's Theatre*, ed. Michal Kobialka (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 232.

In each of these proposals, whether replacing the human actor with a doll-like figure or training and transfiguring the human to act, move, and appear as a nonhuman, there is a central desire to uncover a hidden truth about humanity and to express elements of the metaphysical—for Craig, "The über--marionette will not compete with life—rather will it go beyond it"[16]; for Schlemmer, "Everything which can be mechanized *is* mechanized. The result is our recognition of that which can *not* be mechanized"[17]; for Kantor, "it is possible to express *life* in art only through the absence of life, through an appeal to DEATH, through APPEARANCES, through EMPTINESS and the lack of a MESSAGE."[18]

So what is the intention behind using doll performers alongside human performers in *The Body*? What do Nigel Barrett and Louise Mari hope to achieve by tapping into this rich line of theatre history which advocates the use of the nonhuman onstage? I argue that by presenting the doll and human bodies alongside one another and by performing imitations of the other, *The Body* asks the audience to reconsider how human identity is characterised in a postdigital world. By putting the human and nonhuman on the same plane, they seek a democratisation of all elements and attempt to displace the privileged position of the human. Much like the use of the puppet in modernist theatre, *The Body* is an attempt to bring to the surface hidden truths about the postdigital experience.

Critical Posthumanism

Since its foundation in the 1980s, the field of posthumanism, in its various manifestations,[19] has argued that the prevalence of modern technologies and society's repeated and prolonged interaction with them has led to an extension of the human body and mind beyond its previous categorical

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[16] Craig, *On the Art of Theatre*, 84.
[17] Schlemmer, "Man and Art Figure," 17.
[18] Kantor, "The Theatre of Death," 325. [Emphasis in original.]
[19] David Roden suggests that theres at least four branches of posthumanism including Speculative Posthumanism, Critical Posthumanism, Speculative Realism and Philosophical Naturalism. David Roden, *Posthuman Life: Philosophy at the Edge of the Human* (London; New York: Routledge, 2015), 21.

limitations. As cited in the previous chapter, Matthew Causey, Emma Meehan, and Néill O'Dwyer maintain that "digital culture has developed into a bio-virtual environment in which the categories of the biological and the virtual no longer stand as separate situations."[20] Rather than suggesting that we are in a period where the human has ceased to exist, or to put it more bluntly, that we are experiencing a period "after" the human as the name might initially imply, critical posthumanism is concerned instead with the deconstruction of a fixed identity of the human which characterises itself in opposition with the nonhuman, the non-organic, the non-living. Braidotti articulates this thought as follows:

> [T]he point about posthuman relations, however, is to see the interrelation human/animal as constitutive of the identity of each. It is a transformative or symbiotic relation that hybridizes and alters the 'nature' of each one and foregrounds the middle grounds of their interaction…Intensive spaces of becoming have to be opened and, more importantly, to be kept open.[21]

Critical posthumanism is a branch of posthumanism that seeks to challenge Humanist philosophy and dislocate the anthropocentrism that it promotes. Critical posthumanism contends that it is no longer viable to consider the human as one, but rather we should recognise that there are many types of human by employing techniques of pluralisation and an extensive acknowledgement of multiplicities and vital relations. In other words, through a pluralisation, posthumanism aims to disturb the idea of a fixed human identity. Although it is worth noting, as Grosz emphasises, "A multiplicity is not a pluralized notion of identity, identity multiplied by n locations, but is rather an ever-changing, non-totalizable collectivity, an assemblage defined, not by its abiding identity or principle of sameness over time, but through its capacity to undergo permutations and transformations, that is, its dimensionality."[22]

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[20] Ibid., 3.
[21] Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 79-80.
[22] Grosz, "A Thousand Tiny Sexes: Feminism and Rhizomatics," 170.

Perhaps most importantly, critical posthumanism places the human species on the same level as other species and matter. As a philosophical approach, it seeks to move beyond anthropocentrism and instead frequently promotes vital materialism as a way to engage and relate to our environment. Here, vital materialism refers to a concept formulated by Jane Bennett in response to Michel Foucault's "bio-power." Vital materialism considers all material, human and nonhuman, to have a vital force. In line with posthumanism, it contends that organic material is involved in a series of actions, relations, and productions that should be considered as significant and essential to the world as human actions, relations, and productions. Vital materialism promotes the idea of "the active participation of nonhuman forces in events."[23] Thus, in dialogue with the concept of vital materialism and the rhizomatic philosophy of Deleuze, among others, Braidotti continually questions and frustrates the idea of fixed identities. The performance which this chapter explores, *The Body,* radically disrupts the boundaries between the human and nonhuman form and identification. Therefore, posthumanism provides valuable guidance on the philosophical and performative strategies employed by Barrett and Mari.

The posthuman project asks that we re-evaluate and thereby redefine our connections with the world around us in order to align ourselves with other vital forms and processes. The practice of becoming posthuman, Braidotti suggests, "expresses multiple ecologies of belonging, while it enacts the transformation of one's sensorial and perceptual co-ordinates, in order to acknowledge the collective nature and outward-bound direction of what we still call the self."[24] It is the argument of this chapter that *The Body* attempts to elicit a re-evaluation and redefinition of relations with the nonhuman and nonhuman forces through the deterritorialisation of bodies, a formation of an assemblage, and the establishment of an affective *a priori* encounter. Importantly, this takes place in the present moment in a largely extra-discursive, intensive, and affective manner so that it promotes a qualitative change in the spectator's body through immersion prior to the meaning or

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[23] Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010).
[24] Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 193.

resonance from the encounter being acknowledged or reviewed. In other words, the relational alteration with their environment has already occurred through affective channels before the re-evaluation can be digested and processed conceptually. Or, to put it more simply, *The Body* places the most important communication in the present moment, in the presence stage of aesthetic perception as Dufrenne theorises, and it is subsequent to this that the digestion of the bodily knowledge can take place and one can make sense of the resonance of the communication.

Of particular interest in the posthumanist philosophical framework is Braidotti's emphasis on the potential impact of active change on our relations with nonhumans and nonhuman forces as opposed to the use of linguistic measures to promote change. Braidotti states: "Post-anthropocentrism displaces the notion of species hierarchy and of a single, common standard for 'Man' as the measure of all things. In the ontological gap thus opened, other species come galloping in. *This is easier done than said in the language and methodological conventions of critical theory.*"[25] This thought is characteristic of Braidotti's firmly held "affirmative politics." Affirmative politics, according to Braidotti, "combines critique with creativity in the pursuit of alternative visions and projects."[26] In its most powerful form, it *does* through the means of action using, I suggest, a largely affective, asignifying language prior to *saying* the message through the critical language of Humanism. Humanism, Braidotti contends, still holds remnants that habitually promote normalisation, regulation, and a fixity of the human subject as one unitary thing.

I wish to pursue this idea of affirmative politics further with particular reference to action as the most powerful way to enact change. Considering Braidotti's emphasis upon real action above or prior to linguistic reflection, theatre seems like an apposite channel to explore posthumanist issues through affirmative political means. If one considers the largely affective and extra-discursive manner in which *The Body* communicates, this concept becomes even more compelling. *The Body* engages actively with several concerns of posthumanism including vital materialism,

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[25] Ibid., 67. [Emphasis own.]
[26] Ibid., 54.

embodied relation, pluralisation of identities, and the promotion of multiplicities in a performative approach which encapsulates Braidotti's project of affirmative politics. Barrett and Latowicki have created a performance that employs a largely affective, extra-textual language as the most effective way to enact change and challenge, pluralise, blur, and multiply how the human is defined alongside the nonhuman.

The Body seeks to enact a qualitative change in the spectator through pluralisation of identity and an affective immersive becoming in Deleuzian terms. Deleuze makes the argument that the type of extra-discursive, extra-textual, affective form of communication, which I am examining in *The Body,* is the *only* form that can facilitate the mode of the qualitative alteration I have outlined above. In other words, becoming can only take place in an affective form through sensation. Deleuze explains that encounter and becoming consist of "finding, encountering, stealing."[27] If it occurs solely on a conceptual level, he argues (and with this he seems to echo Braidotti's suggestion of action over language to enact change) it instead turns into a process of "regulation, recognition, and judging."[28] Deleuze finishes this thought by the summation, "For recognition is the opposite of encounter."[29] Indeed, this is what Braidotti implies in her proposals concerning creative thought and affirmative politics, and also what I wish to be understood when I say that immersive, affective communication is one of the most potent and deeply embodied modes of transmission that the creators of *The Body* could choose.

The Body seeks to pluralise identity and complicate the boundaries between the human and nonhuman. The performance is designed to encourage bodies to communicate, compare, and reflect in an affective manner. This, in turn, establishes a becoming and enacts a consequent qualitative alteration of bodies, the body of the human performer, the doll performer, and the spectator, prior to a conceptual digestion of the encounter. For instance, Barrett and Mari anticipate that by the

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[27] Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 8.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

spectator cradling the reborn doll for the duration of the performance, some level of a bond will form, and this will only fully come to light in a conceptual, reflective manner when the performance has ended and the spectator is asked to place their doll in a box with other dolls piled on top. The purpose of presenting the spectator with a personalised doll for the duration of the performance is to demonstrate the relations and connections that can be formed with the nonhuman doll and how difficult this bond may be to sever. Arguably, this transaction would not be as potent in its delivery if it had been communicated through language alone, which is why the performance's techniques of affective encounter and immersion in relation to the processes of the SSP model are of particular interest.

Desire and Assemblage

In brief, posthumanism sets out to de-centre the human as the hierarchical being, "the measure of all things," as Greek philosopher Protagoras famously declared. It seeks to embrace the connections and relations humans have with the material that surrounds them and also to open the possibilities for new relations with nonhuman bodies and material. This is achieved through an affirmative politics enacted through action for change rather than in a language that proposes change. In this next section, I will outline Deleuze's concept of assemblage and desire, and the associated processes of frame and deterritorialisation, paying particular attention to how each process is established in *The Body* for the purposes of intensifying the spectator's immersive experience. As mentioned above, through the examination of *The Body* through the lens of Braidotti's posthumanist theory, I will arrive at the various points of the SSP model—change of frame, deterritorialisation, virtuality, reterritorialisation, and becoming.

I have returned to Fischer-Lichte's triadic relation throughout this study and maintained that digital culture has had a profound effect on the perception, body, and language of the general populace. In this section, I will be focusing on specific shifts in the triadic relation caused by digital

culture, concentrating specifically on *The Body*'s use of robots, AI, dolls, and their representations in mainstream media to tap into desire. The performance uses a cultural desire for a doll-like form to both deterritorialise the human bodies of the spectator and performer and to invite all moving bodies in the performance space—the human performer, the doll performer, and the spectator—to enter into an assemblage. This process reflects the changes in the triadic relation due to the re-evaluation of bodies, the use of affective communication as the primary transmission tool, and the suppression of the rational and linear to give room for the use of counter-attention.

In 1970, roboticist Masahiro Mori compiled a study which examined the unsettling feeling human observers frequently report when faced with lifelike robots. From this, Mori formulated a theory of the "uncanny valley." What this theory purported was that certain forms of humanlike robots "pass" as human for a period of time. Mori suggested that the more humanlike the robot is, the more attractive it is to the human observer, to a certain point. Yet, once an observer notices there is something peculiar about the robot, for instance a mismatch between lower face emotion communication and upper face emotion communication, the observer's initial attraction turns into repulsion and thus, the observer descends into a figurative valley of repulsion caused by the uncanny nature of the experience.
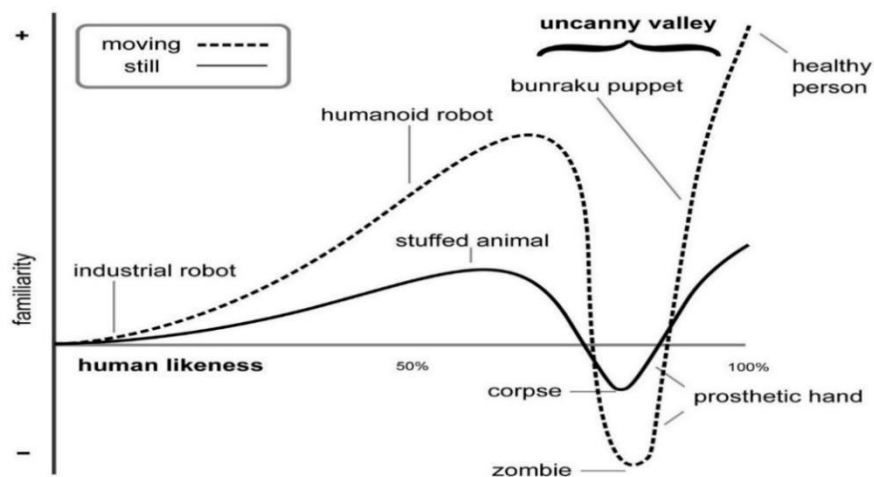

Fig. 19. Simplified diagram of the uncanny valley. Image source: ResearchGate

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While Mori's theory was criticised for its lack of scientific grounding and largely intuitive nature, later studies which did apply scientific means of evaluation built upon his theory[30] concluded that the repulsion that the observer experiences is due to a perceived disparity between the robot's appearance, movement, and behaviour and the expected appearance, movement, and behaviour of a "real" human. In other words, it is through direct comparison with the nonhuman and self-reflexivity that the observer reaches a point of repulsion towards the nonhuman figure of the robot.

While admittedly Mori's theory of the uncanny valley is based on subjective experience rather than systematic scientific evidence, I wish to nonetheless pursue this notion that a lifelike nonhuman might trigger such a stark bodied response, which seems to be inherently hinged on a process of comparison and self-reflexivity. Certainly, there is something noteworthy about observing an animated nonhuman that forces us to evaluate our own human characteristics and hold them up in comparison to the nonhuman's attributes and behaviour. As a result of this experience, it seems that both parties, the human and the nonhuman, become altered by the encounter. On the one hand, during the period of observation the human observer reflects upon their own human form and seeks to distil the categorical identity of the human being in order to set itself apart from the nonhuman. In doing so, they have thereby refined and thus altered the notion of their own identity. While on the other hand, the animated nonhuman doll that the human spectator is observing has also been altered through this process by means of a changed categorisation, relation, and function going forward. In fact, the encounter alters the categorisation on both sides. Braidotti makes a similar point in her analysis of the pluralising effect of creativity on fixed lines of thought:

> Creativity constantly reconnects to the virtual totality of a block of past experiences, memories and affects, which, in a monistic philosophy of becoming, get recomposed as action or praxis in the present. This approach to critical thinking is an exercise in

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[30] See Jan-Philipp Stein and Peter Ohler, "Venturing into the Uncanny Valley of Mind—the Influence of Mind Attribution on the Acceptance of Human-Like Characters in a Virtual Reality Setting," *Cognition* 160 (2017); Jun'ichiro Seyama and Ruth S. Nagayama, "The Uncanny Valley: Effect Of Realism on the Impression of Artificial Human Faces," *Presence* 16, no. 4 (2007); Angela Tinwell, Deborah Abdel Nabi, and John P. Charlton, "Perception of Psychopathy and the Uncanny Valley in Virtual Characters," *Computers in Human Behavior* 29 (2013).

synchronization, which sustains activity 'here and now' by making concrete or actual the virtual intensity. This intensity is simultaneously after and before us, both past and future, in a flow or process of mutation, differentiation or becoming. It is the 'matter-realist' core of critical thought.[31]

Therefore, with each act of comparison, self-reflexivity, and categorisation, an alteration takes place in both the human and nonhuman counterpart. It is an act of creativity that connects the present experience with past and future to create a multiplicity. Rather than making the categorisation more fixed and defined with every re-evaluation, in this case the re-evaluation of what qualifies and constitutes as a human being through comparison with a nonhuman body, a pluralisation has occurred. The creativity of thought prevents fixity and rather encourages multiplicities and pluralisation of identities.

Each vignette in *The Body* sets up a similar observational study to Mori through performative means. However, the aim and intended outcome of the observation is different. Rather than encouraging the spectator to experience the uncanny valley, *The Body* harnesses the expected bodied response to promote new relations with the nonhuman and disrupt the boundaries between the two. Each vignette addresses either the function of the human body, the function of the doll body or, most often, compares the function of the two bodies side by side. For instance, a vignette entitled "The Eye" shows Barrett sitting on a chair with a doll on his lap. The doll has a string and he repeatedly pulls it so that the doll speaks. The speech has been altered so that what the doll says is not distinguishable. While this action occurs, a series of clips of human eyes blinking is projected onto the screen. Latowicki stands on the opposite side of the stage with a doll head in each hand. She throws her head back repeatedly. She shuts her eyes when her head is fully back and opens them when she tilts her head forward, mimicking the action of the doll heads that she rotates in her hands to complete the same motion. In this vignette, we can see the human reliance on sight is

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[31] Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 166.

amplified firstly in the nonsensical language that the doll is speaking. This part of the sequence compels the audience to perhaps look for stimulation elsewhere so their attention is placed on the projection of human eyes blinking and the action of Latowicki and the doll heads. In this example, *The Body* invites the spectator to compare human and nonhuman functions through observation of the human performers struggling to understand their doll counterparts—Barrett's doll is speaking nonsense and Latowicki seeks to mimic the eye closing and opening motion of her doll heads. All the while, in the middle of the two performers, close ups of human eyes are projected.

Taking this example, we can see that the intention is to invite comparison and self-reflexivity from the observing spectator in the manner outlined above. By doing so, *The Body* asks the human spectator to re-evaluate what qualifies and categorises the human. As these vignettes that invite observation and comparison continue and repeat in kind, the question posed becomes altered and essentially inverted. It no longer asks the spectator to consider what qualifies and categorises the human, but rather what makes us, the spectators, nonhuman, and is it possible, or even perhaps ethical, to differentiate humans from nonhumans? Next, I will consider the connection between digital culture, depictions of human relationships with nonhumans in mainstream media, and the cultural desire for youth and perfected doll appearances that is perpetuated by late-capitalist structures. This relates again to the shifts in the triadic relation brought on by the prevalence of digital culture.

In the past eight years, both film and television have displayed a considerable interest in the subject of human interaction with robots, dolls, doll-like figures, and artificial intelligence. Many of these films and television programmes focus specifically on challenging the ethical and physical boundaries that separate humans from various forms of artificial intelligence (AI) and computer technologies. For instance, the 2010 sequel *Tron: Legacy* (Joseph Kosinski) follows a son's journey into a cyber world in search of his missing father; Spike Jonze's 2013 film *Her* explores the relationship between a human and a computer; Alex Garland's 2015 film *Ex Machina* challenges

the distinctions between artificial intelligence and humans; and 2017 film *Ghost in the Shell,* based on Masamune Shirow's manga, explores the transplantation of a brain into an artificially-engineered body. In television, *Humans* (Channel 4; 2015-) and *Westworld* (Sky Atlantic; 2016-) focus on the ethical implications of AI becoming self-aware and uncovering a consciousness, while a number of *Black Mirror* (Channel 4, Netflix; 2011-) episodes address concerns surrounding simulated life and uploaded consciousness. Indeed, one of the most commonly referenced films associated with themes surrounding AI, and the archetypal dystopian reference to the subject, *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott; 1982), based on the Philip K. Dick book *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, released a sequel, *Blade Runner 2049* (Denis Villeneuve) in late 2017.

The reason this engagement is notable is that it indicates a cultural demand to explore such issues from a number of different angles. These examples suggest a renewed interest in the human relationship with a nonhuman counterpart that hasn't been addressed to this level in popular culture since the 1970s and 1980s.[32] Moreover, many of these examples connect with a culturally created and supported fetish and desire, particularly geared towards girls and women, to emulate aspects of a doll's appearance which is the form that, certainly most female, robots take. Although the cultural pressure may fall on mainly female bodies to attain doll appearance, such cultural desires affect the broad spectrum of people living in such a culture.

The concept of an ever-youthful appearance is perpetuated by the image that most dolls embody. They are most often designed in the form of a supposed aspirational figure or alternatively they seek to introduce a type of aspiration through the creation of a new form to aspire to. Mary F. Rogers conducts an interrogation of "Barbie culture'' by temporarily disregarding the fantastical element of Barbie and instead linking her with the real-life counterparts of Cyd Charisse, Vivian Leigh, Jayne Mansfield, and Audrey Hepburn. Rogers remarks, "Overall, then, Barbie is neither an

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[32] For example, *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Stanley Kubrick; 1968); *Westworld* (Michael Crichton; 1973); *Blade Runne*r (Ridley Scott; 1982); *Tron* (Steven Lisberger; 1982); *The Terminator* (James Cameron; 1984); *Robocop* (Paul Verhoeven; 1987).

isolated object nor a pure fantasy. Linked to real life and actual people, Barbie gathers iconic force from the culture embedding her."[33] Drawing on Rogers' observation, it is reasonable to assume that culture influences and propels the production and aspirational qualities that dolls such as Barbie sell. This is even more apparent if we take the more recent introduction of Bratz dolls to the market. Arguably a contemporary take on the Barbie doll, Bratz dolls extend the following invitation, "So, do you wanna join us and be a Bratz? We hope so! Because . . . . It's good to be yourself! It's good to be a Bratz!"[34] This remark is of course paradoxical. It says on the one hand it's good to be yourself but follows with "it's good to be a Bratz." If we are to temporarily suspend the fantasy element of the dolls, just as Rogers does in her study on Barbie culture, the Bratz image is being sold as an attainable image with real-life counterparts[35] relating again to the power of culture to influence and propagate desirable forms. Moreover, the pressure to emulate the doll-like image is not the only aspect that these dolls contribute to cultural norms. It is the type of lifestyle, the social field that these doll characters inhabit, that is also being sold. For instance, Barbie drives a convertible sports car and has a range of different clothes and accessories. Taking this concept of buying into a lifestyle one step further, Lisa Shapiro, who was in charge of licensing of the Bratz dolls in 2004 is on record as saying:

> We want to take Bratz out of the toy aisle and into lifestyle...We want the girls to live the Bratz life - wear the mascara; use the hair product; send the greeting card. The toy business is shrinking. Kids are getting older younger and we're losing them to clothing, computers and DVDs. If Barbie is about fantasy, then Bratz is about real life. It has to be.[36]

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[33] Mary F. Rogers, *Barbie Culture* (London: SAGE Publications, 1999), 22.
[34] "About Bratz," Bratz, accessed March 22, 2018, https://web.archive.org/web/20170505052645/http://www.bratz.com/en-us/about.
[35] In numerous articles, Bratz have been likened to the appearance of American socialite Kylie Jenner, infamous for undergoing dramatic lip augmentation and several other cosmetic surgery procedures, allegedly, prior to turning 18 years old. Vice, an online pop news provider, claimed that an unnamed employee of the Bratz Company said, "[Kylie] looks like a Bratz doll. She embodies the dolls…Kylie is the essence of being popular on social media and reaching out to others and just being, like, unique." Mitchell Sunderland, "Meet the Designers Behind the Controversial Bratz Dolls," *Broadly*, accessed February 20, 2017, https://broadly.vice.com/en_us/article/meet-the-designers-behind-the-controversial-bratz-dolls. Again, one can see the paradoxical nature of this statement due to the emphasis on both striving to attain the socialite's appearance but also commending her for being "unique."
[36] Tanya Gold, "The Queen is dead," *The Guardian*, October 6, 2004.

Dolls such as Barbie and Bratz dolls contribute to a cultural pressure and desire to resemble a doll's appearance. But further, they sell an entire lifestyle. The desire surrounding the dolls is not just confined to appearance but the attainment of the lifestyle that these companies say follows from this appearance.

Equally, Jonathan Crary addresses the appeal of youthful appearance in his evaluation of late-capitalism and its effects on society. He suggests that, "In the contemporary marketplace, the many products and services that promise to 'reverse the aging process' are not appealing to a fear of death so much as offering superficial ways to simulate the nonhuman properties and temporalities of the digital zones one is already inhabiting for much of each day."[37] That is, in an effort to almost defeat or outrun time, he suggests that we attempt to control our ageing so it is in line with the late-capitalist infinite timeframe of 24/7. A doll's image, and equally the image of a female robot which is most often doll-like or a perfected image of a human, support this idea of anti-ageing and a desire to obtain nonhuman properties in many parts of the world. On the one hand dolls and robots remind us of our limits as human and, on the other hand, under the pressure of late-capitalist society and digital culture, we seek to overcome these limits by desiring their form.

Rather than perceive desire as a negative or as a lack which will inevitably result in a feeling of incompleteness and insatiability based on the Oedipal psychoanalytic theories, Deleuze and Guattari instead build upon the Spinozist model of desire as positive and productive. For them, desire produces reality; it is "the circulating energy that produces connections."[38] In *Dialogues II*, Deleuze sets out the three main misunderstandings as he sees it concerning desire—that it is related to a lack or law, that it is caused by a spontaneous reality and that its purpose is above all pleasure. Rather, desire experiments, produces, fabricates, assembles, and produces connections; the product or outcome of desire is reality. Desire is always part of a social field, it produces reality by

[37] Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*, 101.
[38] Graham Livesey, "Assemblage," in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 18.

connecting with other elements to form an assemblage. Deleuze suggests that we never desire an object or a person, something or someone, but rather the aggregate that forms an assemblage related to that object.

In Charles Stivale's synopsis of *Gilles Deleuze's ABC* (*L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*), a series of interviews with Deleuze produced by journalist Claire Parnet, Stivale outlines Deleuze's proposal that desire is irreducible to an object because the desire-production is aimed at connecting with "the whole context, the aggregate, 'I desire *in* an aggregate.'"[39] Deleuze proceeds to offer an example of drinking alcohol. This is not a desire for a drink, he suggests, "but for whatever aggregate into which one situates the desire for drinking (with people, in a café, etc.)."[40] Finally, Stivale summarises from the interview that "desire constructs in the collective, the multiple, the pack, and one asks what is one's position in relation to the pack, outside, alongside, inside, at the center? All phenomena of desire."[41] Therefore, we can see that desire is the initiating force which draws elements together to form an aggregate. This aggregate can be recognised as what Deleuze calls an assemblage. Assemblages are, as defined by Grosz, "heterogeneous, disparate, discontinuous alignments or linkages brought together in conjunctions (x plus y plus z) or severed through disjunctions and breaks […] significantly, an assemblage follows no central or hierarchical order, organization, or distribution […] human, animate, and inanimate—all have the same ontological status."[42] Desire, then, works as a type of magnet to draw the elements together, a motivation for the function the newly-formed assemblage will play.

If desire is the force that brings together the elements of the assemblage, what I am seeking to establish in this discussion of cultural demand, production, lifelike dolls, and anti-ageing is the cultural context in which *The Body* is located. This is imperative on two counts. Firstly, I wish to

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[39] Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, "D as in Desire," in *Gilles Deleuze's ABC Primer,* accessed April 5, 2017, http://www.langlab.wayne.edu/cstivale/d-g/abc1.html.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, 167.

align the performance with a posthumanist concern. That is, in order to seek a pluralisation of a fixed human identity and introduce new relations with nonhuman material and forces, one must first attempt to understand how these current identities are created and expressed. Secondly, as mentioned above, Deleuze counters the Oedipal idea that desire is lack. Rather, he sees desire as a desire for a thing that leads to an aggregate or, in other words, an assemblage. Hence, it is valuable to briefly review some examples of desire aggregates which are not only presented on television and film but also propounded by the mechanisms of late-capitalism, as this information is equally as relevant to the analysis of desire and assemblage in *The Body*. As O'Sullivan notes, "Others precisely assure the margins and transitions of the world I inhabit. Indeed, the other expresses other possible worlds, and as such it is through the other that I come to 'know' the world. Furthermore, all my desires pass through these others; I desire what I perceive others as having. In this sense even my very desires are produced by, and pass through, others."[43]

An assemblage is a collection of elements that shed their ontological status and respective hierarchies in order to come together to form a new entity which performs a new function. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari give the example of a book as an assemblage. Firstly, they identify that a book is not a subject or an object; it is comprised of various matters, and its contents have been compiled on different dates and at varying speeds. As a result, it is not a uniform object but a "hybrid machine" constituted of different elements coming together to form a new purpose. Then, Deleuze and Guattari turn their attention to the strata and territories at work in every book:

> [T]here are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an *assemblage*. A book is an assemblage of this kind, and as such is unattributable. It is a multiplicity [...] All

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[43] O'Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation*, 95.

we talk about are multiplicities, lines, strata and segmentarities, lines of flight and intensities, machinic assemblages and their various types, bodies without organs and their construction and selection, the plane of consistency, and in each case the units of measure.[44]

Consequently, Deleuze and Guattari define a book as an assemblage due to the heterogeneous elements of information and matter being deterritorialised and coming together to form a new function within the book. But even in the book there are lines of segmentarity and lines of flight. Within the assemblage, there is still this idea of a creative stutter that we have looked at in Chapter Two and Chapter Three that deterroritorialises and reterritorialises. In this respect, the book, indeed any work of literature, is an excellent example of an assemblage that can illustratively ground the concept as we continue to explore its manifestations in the performance *The Body*.

Fig. 20. *The Body*. Photo credit: Richard Davenport

In sum, desire is what propels an assemblage to form. Rather than understanding desire as a lack, Deleuze suggests that desire is productive because it creates new lines of flight: "Desire is always assembled; it is what the assemblage determines it to be. The assemblage that draws lines of

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[44] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 4.

flight is on the same level as they are."[45] In order to tap into desire, the democratisation and

deterritorialisation of the elements must occur; each element must enter an assemblage as a

deterritorialised body. The cultural review at the beginning of this section concerning desire, human

interactions with lifelike, animated dolls, and robots is of course relevant to the exploration of the

use of dolls and their potential effect on the spectator's aesthetic experience in *The Body*. *The Body*

plays with this notion of initial disparity outlined in Mori's theory between the animated nonhuman

doll and the human observer. The human performers act like dolls in their speech, thought, and

movements, and the dolls act like humans in their facial expressions and the subject and content of

their dialogue. In other words, the human performers act more like animated dolls throughout the

performance and the dolls act more like human performers. There is certainly an "eerie" element in

both sets of performances; neither is acting or reacting like they should but because this fact is

accentuated in the performance, the two sets of bodies, human and nonhuman, begin to distort.

Therefore, what Mori's uncanny valley theory lays a foundation for is an exploration into the

notably strong reaction and a catalyst for qualitative change in both encountering bodies. As we

will see, one way to consider this encounter is through Deleuze's concepts of desire and

assemblage.

An assemblage is formed in *The Body* through an encounter between the human performer,

the doll performer, and the spectator (referred to as Human Performer + Doll Performer + Spectator

hereafter). Desire, as outlined above, impels the spectator's bodies to form an assemblage with the

human performer and the nonhuman doll performer, consequently disrupting the distinction of

human identity. In order for an assemblage to take place, there must be a democratisation of the

elements, a disruption and disorganisation of bodies through deterritorialisation so that they are free

to assemble on a shared milieu to form a new function. The following are five main approaches

used in *The Body* to deterritorialise the bodies of the spectator, performers—human and

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[45] Ibid., 229.

nonhuman—in addition to the performance space, corroding the hierarchy and allowing for an assemblage between elements to take place.

1. *Biosurveillance*

The Body draws attention to the vulnerability of the human body through a series of vignettes involving occasions which I will refer to as "biosurveillance," defined as an often involuntary or covert form of obtaining personal biological data. Biosurveillance occurs at the very beginning of *The Body*; as previously mentioned, the audience are hooked up to a heart monitor for the entire performance and the heartbeats are projected into a soundscape that fills the space prior to the main performance starting. Later, using medical equipment, Latowicki gauges the audience's blood oxygen levels by pointing to each of them with a diagnostic gun and announcing to the room each spectator's personal blood oxygen level. In another scene, the performers run a microscopic camera along their own skin and then invite the audience to also do so projecting the footage on the screen onstage.

Fig. 21. *The Body.* Photo credit: Cargo Collective

As the vignettes are arranged under headings relating to various parts of the body—"The Bladder," "The Lungs," "The Heart" etc.—the performance also projects several medical diagrams of

diseased body parts and accident simulations such as car crashes and fires that relate to that organ. By means of bio-surveillance, exposure, and projection, *The Body* asks the audience to confront the fragile nature of the human body and inevitably compare it to the less fragile doll bodies onstage. In doing so, *The Body* seeks to deterritorialise the human bodies involved in the performance, both spectator and human performer, through a removal of hierarchy and thus aims to disrupt the notion of the robust human form.

2. *Comparison*

There are two notable vignettes in *The Body* that explicitly invite the audience to compare the body of the human with the body of a doll. In the first, Barrett stands nude beside an undressed doll. There is nothing more to the vignette other than the two bodies standing side by side for a period of approximately 15 seconds, followed by a blackout. Watching an undressed doll beside an undressed man highlights the perpetual progression and decline of the human body alongside the biologically unchangeable and ageless plastic body of the doll. Later in the performance, Latowicki stands beside a doll onstage. Latowicki and the doll are wearing similar dresses and both remain motionless and expressionless for the duration of the vignette. A close up of their faces appears on a split screen behind. An age progression programme is used on both faces, ageing both to the point of old age. The purpose of these vignettes is firstly to highlight the differences and similarities between the two bodies but also the inherent vulnerability of ageing for humans. This is further accentuated by the age progression of the doll face alongside a human face, as ageing is a biological fact for the human but not, at least biologically, for the doll. However, by drawing attention to the differences and similarities in the two sets of bodies, the performance has already set them on the same plane. For in order to compare, one must, even momentarily, consider them hypothetically side by side and on the same level.

Fig. 22. *The Body.* Photo credit: Cargo Collective

3. *Imitation*

The human performers in *The Body*, Barrett and Latowicki, act like dolls for the majority of the

performance. Their movement, speech, behaviour, and interaction with the audience intentionally

comes across as curated, naïve, childlike, and programmed. When on stage, the human performers

do not express a wide range of emotions, but either act immutably happy or display a juvenile

sadness. For the most part, their movements are bold and exact. They walk in long strides with arms

swinging or sit upright with excellent posture. In addition, Barrett and Latowicki's speech is

generally childlike and simplistic, using stock phrases that suggest the programming of a talking

doll; their delivery is equally artificial, timed rather than responsive. The purpose of the imitation of

dolls is to demonstrate in physical terms the similarities between the human and nonhuman. While

Barrett and Latowicki exaggerate the movement, speech, and behaviour of the doll, in doing so they

ask the spectator to recognise aspects within these physicalities that human bodies frequently imitate unconsciously.

At one point in *The Body*, Barrett and Latowicki sit side by side facing the audience and begin to mimic the audience members one by one, using gestures, expression, and movement. For example, if a spectator nervously giggles and leans forward in reaction to the performers observing them, Barrett or Latowicki will mimic this movement exactly. Again, the purpose of this vignette is to pick up on movement, speech, and behaviour of the human spectator and demonstrate the ease at which these physicalities can be imitated by another.

Fi 22. Photo credit: Richard Davenport

The sum of these vignettes involving imitation not only changes the frame of reference for the spectator, thereby deterritorialising them further, but also deterritorialises both the doll performer and human performer body as the human performer assimilates nonhuman qualities and modes of behaviour. If the act of biosurveillance accentuates the vulnerability of the human body, the embodiment of nonhuman dolls by the human performers accentuates the impregnable, almost invincible constitution of the doll, and more widely, the nonhuman, and, at the same time, also points to and then complicates the fine line between human and doll behaviour.

4. *Animation*

At various points in *The Body*, vignettes are presented which show dolls that have human faces which move in conversation. This is achieved by projecting a filmed human face in action onto the blank face of a doll. The result is an unsettling disparity between the stiff, plastic body of the doll and the animated human face with blinking eyes and relatable human expression. In order to underline the unsettling nature of this vignette, the interactions sometimes include rude language or a sinister undertone referring to "a secret." For instance, one vignette projects a film of two young female dolls (I have called them Doll A and Doll B in this sequence) sitting on a park bench:

> Doll A: Do you want to tell me a secret? Tell me a secret and I won't tell anyone.
>
> *Doll B does not reply. She remains still and stares straight ahead. A younger doll who is dressed as a jockey rides on a small mechanical horse past Doll A and B who continue to sit on the park bench. Doll A and B's faces continue to move and grimace. Their eyes blink as the jockey doll passes by. The jockey doll exits the shot.*
>
> Doll B: I hate that bitch.[46]

Once more, *The Body* is emphasising the disparity between the appearance of the dolls and the humanlike behaviour on display in this vignette. The dolls in these sequences are behaving like humans and are unpredictable in their interaction, whereas in the rest of *The Body,* the human performers are behaving like dolls and are programmed and often predictable in their exchanges. Therefore, we can see that alongside the human performer and spectator, the doll performer is also deterritorialised, removed from their system of organisation and caught in a line of flight, a place outside consistency and order.

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[46] I have transcribed this sequence from a filmed performance of *The Body* that Louise Mari shared with me.

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5. *Caregiving*

As previously mentioned, the audience is presented with their own personalised reborn doll for the duration of the performance. As these dolls are crafted to be extremely realistic—they are the correct weight and have been fitted with a beating heart—the audience is, I believe, subtly encouraged to treat them as though they are real babies. While this suggestion will of course raise several issues surrounding whether humans have an innate caregiving tendency toward the young, I would propose that at the very least, if presented with a prop such as a doll for a show, an expected response by a spectator would be to "play along." This response is further encouraged by the fact that the caregiving action is a communal activity. There is an added pressure to play along that is produced by fellow audience members playing the part with their reborn dolls. Even if the spectator were playing along and suspending disbelief, I am arguing that it is improbable that a spectator will not experience some level of bodily reaction while holding a doll such as this with a beating heartbeat for that duration. Because the doll is treated as a reliant being, whether through an innate caregiving tendency or by simply playing along, both the bodies of the doll and the spectator are deterritorialised through a change of frame and the assimilation of the roles of caregiver and baby.

In *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari discuss the role of simulation and identification. They propose that if one considers something to be real then it succeeds in producing reality and is thus a real experience. Brian Massumi further explores Deleuze and Guattari's proposal by invoking the example of pop art. He states, "[The simulacrum] undermines the very distinction between copy and model […] A copy is made in order to stand in for its model. A simulacrum has a different agenda. It enters different circuits […] The resemblance of the simulacrum is a means, not an end."[47] In other words, rather than the

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[47] Brian Massumi, "Realer Than Real: The Simulacrum According to Deleuze and Guattari," *Copyright* 1 (1987), 91.

simulation replacing reality, it produces a reality of its own and therefore generates its own forces, affects, relations, and encounters, as Deleuze and Guattari establish in the following:

> If the identification is that of the object on high, the simulation is indeed the writing that corresponds to it, the flux that flows from this object, the graphic flux that flows from the voice. Simulation does not replace reality, it is not an equivalent that stands for reality, but rather it appropriates reality in the operation of despotic overcoding, it produces reality on the new full body that replaces the earth. It expresses the appropriation and production of the real by a quasi cause.[48]

Thus, in regard to the reborn doll in *The Body*, while it is a simulation of a human baby and certainly does not replace the presence of a human baby, Deleuze, Guattari, and Massumi would contend that it produces its *own* reality. Notably, in the performance I attended, each audience member held their doll as though it were a real baby, changing positions from cradling to over the shoulder, or warmly rocking it in order to soothe it. On reflection of my experience of *The Body*, the audience appeared to be drawn to the reborn doll and find it difficult to disrupt what one might call biological magnetism between their body and the body of their personalised doll. If, as intended, a bond is formed between the reborn doll and the spectator, it is thus largely dependent on an affect-based caregiving relation. Set designer, Wannell, summarises the intention as follows:

> It is uncanny. But when treated with the right kind of atmosphere you endow these objects with your own experiences and emotions. You start to see the dolls as extensions of you. It removes the ego to see the body for what it is. You find yourself really connecting with these plastic objects.[49]

The Body's intricately designed multi-sensory vignettes seek to momentarily stifle the rational distinctions between the bodies allowing for immersive becoming to occur. By exploring the boundaries of human physicality through bio-surveillance and direct comparison, *The Body*

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[48] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 210.
[49] Wannell, "Building The Body."

accentuates the vulnerability of the human alongside the imperishable nature of the nonhuman, doll

performer. In addition to exposing vulnerabilities of each form and disrupting boundaries between

them, the performance seeks to establish a personal bond between the spectator and their reborn

baby, exposing the connections we have and are likely to increasingly have with inanimate objects.

By foregrounding the caregiving behaviour towards the doll over the rational acknowledgement

that a doll does not necessarily require a guardian or caregiver, *The Body* persuades the spectator to

adopt the doll and become its primary caregiver. On one level, what is evidenced in each of *The*

Body's vignettes is the posthumanist appeal that humans should no longer be the sole, dominant

focus in our definitions of life. But on another level, these vignettes display the potent impact of

affective communication on bodies. The performance overall demonstrates the techniques and tools

that both SSPs and the various digital culture platforms use and the significant bodily impact they

can have.

Fig. 23. *The Body.* Photo credit: Cargo Collective

In sum, Mori's theory of the uncanny valley suggests that human observers are attracted to

lifelike robots. However, once the observer notices a disparity in the robot, an aspect of their

appearance, behaviour, or movement that is distinctly nonhuman, the observer becomes repulsed by

the figure. Drawing on Mori's study, this section has focused on the stark, bodied response humans

may have towards nonhuman forms and further, the process of comparison and self-reflexivity that

is involved in the process. In most observations of this kind, in which humans observe nonhumans, the human observer seeks to categorise and identify what it is that classifies "the human." For that reason, I have argued that in each encounter of this kind, the encountering bodies are qualitatively altered. The observer has been altered because in their search to distinguish a human identity, they have consequently re-evaluated and re-defined their previous concept. Similarly, the nonhuman that was being observed has been qualitatively altered in the encounter, because through the act of being observed, a re-evaluation and re-definition of their identity has also occurred. In other words, through the act of acknowledging a boundary, the perceived boundary has already moved. I have sought to support this claim with Braidotti's proposal of the pluralising effect of creativity on fixed lines of thought. Accordingly, their categorisation, relation to the human, and perceived function have changed thereafter. We can see an application of this proposal in *The Body*. Each vignette sets up a similar act of observation with the intention that it will result in a re-evaluation and re-definition. In other words, a pluralisation of identity occurs through comparison and self-reflexivity. Following this, an alteration in the relation with the nonhuman can be noted going forward.

I have argued that desire is always part of a social field. Rather than a yearning for a person or an object, desire is in fact a wish to form an aggregate or an assemblage related to that person or object. Consequently, desire can be considered a magnet that drives the various elements of an assemblage together. Thus, I began the discussion of desire by first outlining the most recent cultural and social productions of desire and the nonhuman using television, film, and anti-ageing products as my examples. Then, I introduced the assemblage that is formed in *The Body*, Human Performer + Doll Performer + Spectator. Related to the processes of the sensory spectacle model, for an assemblage to take place there must be a deterritorialisation of the elements involved so that they may form a non-hierarchical, hybridised machine. This section proceeded to outline the various ways that *The Body* enacted deterritorialisation in order for the assemblage to take place.

This section has also proposed that through a series of vignettes that use techniques such as biosurveillance, comparison, imitation, animation, and caregiving, *The Body* intends to deterritorialise the bodies involved in the performance so that they may enter an assemblage. Once the bodies have been disrupted, disorganised, and democratised they can come together to form the Human Performer + Doll Performer + Spectator assemblage. In order to further understand the effect of the assemblage that is constructed within the performance of *The Body*, we must turn our attention to the type of communication that takes place between the elements involved in the assemblage and the becoming that occurs as a result of this communication. This takes the discussion once more to Dufrenne's phenomenological framework.

Affective *A Priori*

Thus far in this thesis, each chapter of performance analysis has outlined specific aspects of Dufrenne's phenomenology of aesthetic experience framework in relation to each SSP being examined. Chapter Two set out Dufrenne's three planes of aesthetic experience—presence, representation, and reflection—suggesting that SSP will seek to engage and prolong the aesthetic perception stage of presence in order to deliver an immersive, affective encounter through a becoming. Building upon this, Chapter Three covered the three corresponding levels of the aesthetic object: sensuous, represented, and expressed. Focusing on the sensuous level of the aesthetic object in particular, I sought to introduce the act of phenomenal identification within performance, once again contending that this process had deep implications on the immersive and affective qualities of the performance and the becoming it seeks to establish.

Collectively, Chapters Two and Three concentrated on the aesthetic plane of presence and the corresponding sensuous aesthetic object, finding in each of these concepts the essence of SSP and the affective, immersive experience it seeks to deliver. This section will hence seek to explore these theories further by introducing one of Dufrenne's most insightful proposals regarding

aesthetic experience, that is, his theory of the affective *a priori*, understood as follows: "Just as the a priori of sensibility and understanding are the conditions under which an object is given or thought, so the affective a priori provide the conditions under which a world can be felt."[50] Interestingly, Dufrenne's theory of affective *a priori* is mentioned by Deleuze in his 1983 book *Cinema 1: The Movement Image* and is, I believe, Deleuze's only published reference to the work of Dufrenne. In this brief mention, Deleuze acknowledges the ingenuity of Dufrenne's proposal and suggests it might suitably be compared with C.S. Peirce's study on Firstness.[51] Deleuze's interest in Dufrenne's proposal of affective *a priori* undoubtedly comes from the affective and intensive nature of the experience in addition to Dufrenne's acknowledgment of cosmological forces and emphasis on qualitative change.

Dufrenne begins to explain his notion of the affective *a priori* by first defining each term individually. Affect, or affectivity as he refers to it, is both a quality of the aesthetic object and a quality of the observer. It occurs within the present experience and is felt prior to being known or identified. This is the main reason why Dufrenne connects "the affective" with the notion of "*a priori*" which, in its essence, means something that is known outside of previous experience. Therefore, affective *a priori* is something that is known affectively, or through the body, in the present moment independent of prior knowledge. Dufrenne suggests that, "There is something in the object that can be known only by a sort of sympathy in which the subject opens himself to it. Indeed, at the limit, the affectively qualified object is itself a subject and no longer a pure object or the simple correlate of an impersonal consciousness."[52] Affective quality, therefore, is a quality found in both the aesthetic object and the spectator but is revealed or comes to the fore in the aesthetic encounter between the two bodies. Thus, Dufrenne classifies the affective *a priori* as

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[50] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 437.
[51] For context, Peirce sought to categorise experience into three fields—Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness. Firstness, which Deleuze suggested a comparative study to be made with Dufrenne's affective a priori, "is prior to predication, and is neither available to direct consciousness nor differentiable." Gary Slater, *C.S. Peirce and the Nested Continua Model of Religious Interpretation* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 65.
[52] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 442.

"both cosmological and existential [...] prior to the distinction between the body and the soul, exterior and interior."[53]

In his initial outline of the affective *a priori*, Dufrenne first aligns his definition with Immanuel Kant's proposal of the *a priori*. However, he states that while "sensibility and understanding are the conditions under which an object is given or thought so the affective a priori provide the conditions under which a world can be felt."[54] He then highlights a further departure from Kant's proposal, that is, while Kant speaks of "an impersonal subject who feels the world,"[55] Dufrenne is basing his notion on a "concrete subject capable of sustaining a vital relation with the world."[56] While this deviation may initially seem inconsequential, it certainly foregrounds Dufrenne's interest in the perceiving spectator and the role of affectivity and bodily knowledge rather than perhaps an abstract view of a perceiving subject.

I consider the mode of the encounter formed in *The Body* and communicated through the assemblage to be affective *a priori*. Through the construction of the assemblage Human Performer + Doll Performer + Spectator, the quality of the encounter and the mode of affective communication in the present moment established constitutes an affective *a priori*. As Dufrenne outlines, "The affective a priori constitutes a consistent and coherent world because it resides in the deepest stratum of the subject, as well as forming the most profound aspect of the aesthetic object."[57] Edward Casey elucidates this point by describing the type of affective, intensive, and pre-discursive communication that proceeds through the affective *a priori* as follows: "What is expressed as a quality in that world is at the same time grasped, pre-reflectively, within the subject and through its feeling. This indicates that the affective a priori, rather than being a matter of knowledge alone (as in Kant), is 'existential,' ie. based on human subjectivity at the deep level of

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[53] Ibid., 454, 455.
[54] Ibid., 437.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid., 450.

feeling."[58] With regards to *The Body*, affective *a priori* is a felt mode of bodily communication that occurs within the relations between the elements in the assemblage in the present moment, independent of prior experience.

In the sections that follow, I wish to connect Dufrenne's affective *a priori* to the earlier proposal concerning observation of the nonhuman and the ways in which this can compel a re-evaluation and redefinition of identities and qualitative change in both the human observer and the nonhuman under observation. In regard to *The Body*, this type of observation results in the formation of an assemblage and the establishment of an affective *a priori* communication. As I have outlined, affective *a priori* occurs in the present. It is an extra-discursive and intensive communication. This is the only form that an assemblage can take and communicate in. For that reason, it promotes qualitative change in the body through immersion before meaning can be accessed from the encounter. In other words, the qualitative change within the assembled bodies has already occurred through affective, immersive, bodily channels before the re-evaluation can be digested and processed conceptually.

As the affective *a priori* occurs within presence, Dufrenne acknowledges that we cannot "know" the *a priori*. Here, he is alluding to a conceptual knowledge and understanding, through the *a posteriori*. Later in this section, I will consider the affective *a priori*'s association with the process of becoming in *The Body*. But before I reach that point, I find the following remark by Deleuze pertinent to Dufrenne's view that one can only know the *a priori* through the *a posteriori*. He says that,

> [W]hat is good in a gang, in principle, is that each goes about his own business while encountering others, each brings in his own loot and a becoming is sketched—a bloc starts

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[58] Edward S. Casey, "Mikel Dufrenne 1910-1995," in *Handbook of Phenomenological Aesthetics*, eds. Hans Rainer Sepp and Lester Embree (Springer, 2010), 82.

moving—which no longer belongs to anyone but is 'between' everyone, like a boat which children let slip and lose and is stolen by others.[59]

Here, Deleuze is referring to the transitory nature of the actual becoming, but he is also underlining the consequential changes of becoming which can be felt "between" those elements involved. I have compared this effect in Chapter One to a kind of qualitative, bodily resonance of change that can be accessed after the encounter. What I am suggesting, with reference to Deleuze, is that these resonances are the affective knowledge *a posteriori*, not the same in kind as the affective *a priori* but a remnant from the aesthetic experience following the encounter. Indeed, in reference to Bacon's paintings, Deleuze insists, "What matters is the confrontation of [sensations], and the resonance that is derived from it."[60] In sum, we understand the affect and seek out conceptual significance or meaning from the resonance left by the affective encounter subsequent to the event.

Grosz also makes reference to this in *Space, Time and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* which I quoted in an earlier chapter. She marks out the point at which immersive experience steps out of its present moment and enters reflection, thus altering the encounter. She connects her point to Deleuze's notion of desire. Once desire is categorised, she suggests, it becomes molar, it turns into control and power. It is worth quoting this section again in full:

> Any experience, any organs, any desire is capable of categorization and organization, but only at the expense of its continuity with the rest of the body and experience, and only at the cost of separating oneself from immersion and its complexity and intensity. To submit one's pleasures and desires to enumeration and definitive articulation is to submit processes and becomings, to entities, locations and boundaries, to become welded to an organizing nucleus of fantasy and desire whose goal is not simply pleasure and expansion, but control, and the tying of the new models of what is already known, the production of endless repetition, endless variations of the same.[61]

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[59] Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 9.
[60] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, 68-9.
[61] Grosz, *Space, Time and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies*, 223.

The notion of a flux between the molecular form of desire which encourages immersion and intensity and the molar form of control caused by categorisation and organisation is an idea both Deleuze and Grosz return to frequently. Because Deleuze does not believe in dualisms, for him, everything occurs on a plane. Each process is moving and changing. For instance, deterritorialisation will eventually swing towards reterritorialisation, desire will move towards control, etc. This is a subject that I will return to in a later section which outlines virtuality. But before that, it is important to note that flux can also be applied to desire, assemblage, and the affective *a priori* in relation to the *a posteriori*. Once we seek to categorise the affective *a priori* experience and access its meaning, the type of experience has changed, and we have stepped out of the immersion and intensity as Grosz suggests. The *a posteriori* seeks to understand the affective *a priori* from the resonance it has left. Therefore, this chapter can be considered to be a reflective analysis occurring *a posteriori*. It is an analysis of *The Body* based on the remnants and resonance from the present moment affective *a priori* that is communicated in the assemblage. The affective *a priori* cannot be accessed directly, as it occurs only in the present experience. With Dufrenne's understanding of the affective *a priori* now outlined, we can now begin to answer the questions of why the notion of the affective *a priori* is significant to the performance of *The Body* and the wider discussion of SSP.

If an aesthetic object communicates on an affective register, Dufrenne suggests that by means of the spectator receiving this communication through presence in the body, they have succeeded in making the communication their own. This, as Dufrenne sees it, is the most salient point of aesthetic experience. For through an affective *a priori* encounter, we discover something about ourselves and are transformed by the experience:

the spectator shares in the dignity of the artist with whom he collaborates. The spectator also alienates himself in the aesthetic object, as if to sacrifice himself for the sake of its advent and as if this were a duty which he must fulfill.[62]

So, as Dufrenne sees it, the spectator sacrifices himself in order to partake in the aesthetic experience. Applying this idea of sacrifice to *The Body* in order for the affective *a priori* to progress is compelling, not least due to its pronounced connections with the previous section, whereby I outlined the several vignettes that impelled a process of deterritorialisation, understood as an act of amputation and disorganisation of structure. But further, in the larger discussion of encounter, connection, and immersion, we have consistently returned to the occasion of sacrifice in some form in order for the immersive qualities detailed in the SSP model to reach their full potential. In what follows, I will link Dufrenne's proposal of sacrifice in the affective *a priori* to the opening of a virtual space that lies beyond thought and the actual and allows for an affective encounter and an immersive becoming to take place. The result of these actions is a re-evaluation and qualitative alteration of identity of the bodies involved in the assemblage Human Performer + Doll Performer + Spectator through pluralisation.

A surrender of self is significant within the wider discussion of this chapter concerning the pluralisation of identities and moving beyond previous categorical identities. It is equally notable when related to the SSP model. Sacrifice and surrender of the self for even the briefest moment points firmly to processes of deterritorialisation, virtuality, and most definitively to an immersive experience of becoming. The spectator in *The Body* goes through a process of deterritorialisation as a result of a series of vignettes designed to change the frame of reference and disrupt fixed concepts through direct comparison. The spectator is thus moved from order into chaos through the act of surrendering herself to the aesthetic experience during the affective *a priori*. Then the spectator is encouraged to enter a space of virtuality, a space where there is a "continually changing

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[62] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 555.

series of force-effects, force-impulses that make the real, but make it in such a way that it must always differ from itself, always be in the process of self-explication."[63] In other words, the virtual is a space of potential that is real in the sense that anything that can be imagined or abstracted is real, but may not be actualised. If the virtual is actualised, it will differ in kind from its virtual form. Grosz validates this point, saying "the rules of actualization are not those of resemblance and limitation, but those of difference or divergence and of creation."[64] For example, if one imagines a ship on a choppy sea, it is real in the sense that it has a presence even if it still remains a potential. However, if the ship on the choppy sea is actualised, it materialises in real life. The experience of the actuality differs greatly from the virtual notion of it. In terms of *The Body*, the affective comparison that is established between the bodies of the human performer and spectator and the nonhuman bodies of the doll performers remains largely virtual. If these comparisons which take place in virtuality were actualised in the real world outside of the performance, the actuality would not resemble the virtual potential. Nonetheless, this does not make their affect or consequent qualitative change any less real than actual events. Virtuality is the most important aspect of *The Body*, along with becoming, in regard to the posthumanist aim of pluralising identities and encouraging an acknowledgement of vital materialism in the relations between the human and the nonhuman through affective, immersive means. As previously proposed, *The Body* temporarily suspends concerns that take their root in logical thought and instead seeks to release an affective and intensive language to affirm the posthumanist philosophy of vital materiality and nomadism. This can only take place in a space of virtuality and through a process of becoming.

As detailed on a number of occasions previously in this study, the processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation are in constant flux. For Deleuze, the most important point of creation is always in the middle. As Jeffrey Bell explains in relation to an assemblage

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[63] Grosz, "Habit Today: Ravaisson, Bergson, Deleuze and Us," 230.
[64] Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 97.

being in the middle, "An assemblage is thus a dynamic assemblage, a multiplicity that is drawn into a plane of consistency that maintains itself without being reduced to either side of a dualistic relation."[66] Amid each vacillation between deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, a "breach"[67] is generated, and this breach is constituted by the virtual. If we consider reterritorialisation as the systemisation and organisation and consider deterritorialisation as de-systemisation and disorganisation, between these two processes a space of potential, or virtuality, is generated. Through the deterritorialising techniques of the vignettes and by the act of surrender in the affective *a priori*, the spectator is deterritorialised and enters a space where the virtual potentialities begin to be actualised.

While the concept of a space of virtuality is an abstract philosophical concept that may at times be difficult to conceptualise directly in relation to performance, the space of virtuality in *The Body* can be located in real terms within the blackouts that bracket each vignette. Most vignettes last eight minutes at the most and then return to a blackout before the next vignette begins. The repeated blackouts in *The Body* offer a type of resting period between the deterritorialising vignettes and the reterritorialising outcome of the performance. These instances of blackout can therefore be considered the site of potential in which no action or stimulation is being directed on or towards the spectating body, thereby allowing a breach in which potentials are encouraged, a space of virtuality.

The reason this space of virtuality is significant in *The Body* is that this is the point where the affective *a priori* and potential site of change are primed to occur. An assemblage is formed through a deterritorialisation and a democratisation of the elements involved, namely Human Performer + Doll Performer + Spectator, which I have outlined in the above section. By means of

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[66] Jeffrey A. Bell, "Assemblage + Architecture," in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 19.
[67] This is a term that Massumi mentions in relation to the space that opens between deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. Massumi, "Realer Than Real: The Simulacrum According to Deleuze and Guattari," 96.

comparison and relation in the space of the virtual, a pluralisation through self-reflexivity is introduced. Each body in the assemblage, located in the middle, between the swing towards deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, molecular and molar, minor and major has been altered. Similar to the way in which the observation of the nonhuman can impel a re-evaluation of bodies and a pluralisation of categorical identities, as established earlier in this chapter, the same process has the potential occur within the middle, virtual space of the assemblage in *The Body*. There is an exchange between the assembling bodies, a qualitative change, a becoming.

This thesis has emphasised the connections between the affective, bodily encounter and the process of becoming on many occasions. While Dufrenne links the notion of affective *a priori* to a surrender of the self, he suggests that following this, a discovery of a new self occurs, and qualitative changes brought about by the encounter are thus identified:

> Still, losing himself in this way, the spectator finds himself. He must contribute something to the aesthetic object…He is at home in this world. He understands the affective quality revealed by the work because he is that quality, just as the artist is his work. Therefore, at the same time that the aesthetic object invites the spectator to be himself, it teaches him what he is. The spectator discovers himself by discovering a world which is his own world. [69]

The spectator surrenders by means of the affective *a priori* that *The Body* establishes through the formation of the assemblage. The assemblage not requires a deterritorialised body that is devolved from order and hierarchy. Again, we must keep in mind that the assemblage occurs in the middle, in the space of virtuality. The surrender of self occurs by contributing to the aesthetic object followed by a discovery of a renewed self that is qualitatively changed *a posteriori*. In the virtual space opened up between the processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, a becoming

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[69] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 555. [Gendered in original.]

occurs. Thus, Dufrenne outlines the consequence of the affective *a priori* on the spectator as follows:

> He learns that the existential (which he is) and the cosmological are one, that the human is common to both him and the real, and that the real and he himself belong to the same race to the extent that one and the same a priori is realized in both and illuminates them with a single light.[70]

This instance that Dufrenne is alluding to can be conceptualised in several key moments in *The Body,* particularly in the moment when the reborn dolls are presented as the audience's heartbeats resound in the performance space and in the age-progression simulation vignette, which projects Latowicki's face beside a doll's face. These moments call for a direct comparison between human and nonhuman, spectator and performer. However, the final two vignettes of *The Body* fully encapsulate Dufrenne's proposal of belonging to the "the same race" as the aesthetic object, when the existential and cosmological are one.

The vignette, entitled "The Heart," opens with Barrett and Latowicki sitting on the stage with a blonde doll. A melancholy violin piece plays in the space. Latowicki sets a sandcastle and props the doll against it. A projected film begins behind them. It shows a home movie of children playing on a beach. Meanwhile, Barrett and Latowicki set up a similar scene on stage with the doll. They sprinkle the doll's legs with sand and place one of her hands on the sandcastle bucket. Then Latowicki takes out a necklace and places it around the doll's neck. The music changes from the violin to choral music suggestive of sorrow and lament. Barrett and Latowicki look at her lovingly as the film continues behind them. Eventually, Latowicki kisses the doll on the head and leaves the stage, and Barrett strokes the doll's hair and also leaves the stage to the opposite side. The doll begins to babble like a toddler against the music and the film behind her. Her eyes dart from side to side. Contrary to previous instances in *The Body* in which the doll's faces moved by superimposing

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[70] Ibid.

projected film of human faces moving onto theirs, this doll has been altered so that her mouth and eyes appear to move of their own accord. Although this difference may at first seem minor, it accentuates the lifelike manner of the doll's presence and behaviour. If we are to surrender ourselves to the aesthetic object and find something of ourselves in it as a result, if we are to experience the existential and the cosmological as one, this conflation of human memories with a doll characterised as a human child is a significant choice made by the creators of the piece.

Further, this vignette is followed by a long blackout to mark the end of the official performance. Barrett and Latowicki come on stage for the applause and gesticulate toward the doll, who is still sitting on the stage with her bucket and sand on her legs. Barrett drags on a cardboard box and Latowicki places her in it and they leave the stage. The audience are invited to perform the same action and place their reborn doll in the box on top of her. As I have previously suggested, this is arguably the most affectively potent point of *The Body*. Any indication of reluctance or hesitation to place the doll in the box points to a bond you have formed with your reborn doll. Therefore, this point of the piece indicates that a qualitative alteration through becoming has already taken place. It is only in this moment of conceptual reflection on the affective bond *a posteriori*, in the perception of hesitation to sever the bond in such an impersonal manner, that a process of reterritorialisation takes place.

At this point, it is perhaps valuable to return again to Braidotti's affirmative politics and the concept of nomadic thought. As we have seen in the previous section of this chapter regarding desire and assemblage, *The Body* amplifies the human-like qualities of the doll and also foregrounds the vulnerability of the human body through a series of vignettes that seeks to deterritorialise all bodies involved in the assemblage. The common thread in the deterritorialialising vignettes in *The Body*, categorised under the headings of Biosurveillance, Comparison, Animation, Imitation, and Caregiving, is not narrative or thematic, or rather this is not their primary function. Instead, by applying the question of "What constitutes, defines, and is

identifiably human?" to each object, to each encounter, to each image, and experience within *The Body*, the performance encourages us to affectively respond.

A common language of affectivity between the performance and the spectator is firmly established so that the spectators' bodies betray them. The line that previously separated the human from the dolls becomes radically challenged. If the aesthetic object of the performance, and more so the assemblage I have outlined above, speaks in an affective manner, and Dufrenne suggests that affective encounter with an aesthetic object involves digestion of the affect and a pre-rational mix with internal forces and rhythms, this leads to an uncovering of "the real." With each affective encounter such as this, Dufrenne suggests, we discover the true nature of ourselves, the real, and are qualitatively altered each time. Therefore, through this particular assemblage presented in *The Body*, a new function emerges. For the idea of a human and a nonhuman is a dualism that this assemblage subverts by offering a multiplicity and a new function through affective encounter. The spectator emerges from the assemblage and the becoming as a reterritorialised body. For as Deleuze and Guattari propose, "Territorialization is an act of rhythm that has become expressive, or of milieu components that have become qualitative."[71]

In summary, the formation of an assemblage and the nature in which it is delivered through affective *a priori* is a form of becoming. An assemblage brings different elements together through desire and, as a collective, they form a new function. Between deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, between the affective *a priori* and *a posteriori*, between molecular and molar, a virtual is opened and the becoming process of the assemblage occurs in this space. What is significant is that between these two states, in the space of the virtual, the present moment of affective communication introduces a profoundly immersive instance within the performance. All elements involved in the assemblage emerge qualitatively altered through the processes of

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[71] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 315.

surrender and discovery, as outlined by Dufrenne. The encountering bodies thus emerge reterritorialised. This qualitative alteration can only be accessed and mined for significance through the *a posteriori*, again reaffirming Braidotti's proposal of affirmative action over promotion of change through language. Language reintroduces organisation, judgement, and control.

Conclusion

At the beginning of the chapter, I introduced the aims of critical posthumanism and Braidotti's affirmative politics. Central to this proposal is the suggestion that to positively alter or challenge the normative philosophy promoted by Humanism, it can cause more of an impact to the overall body to enact change through action prior to the promotion of change through language. Thus, I have made the argument that performance in this sense, particularly SSP which focuses less on the narrative and more on physicality and sensation, appears to be an incisive vehicle to enact affirmative politics, because by its very form it explicitly acts upon bodies rather than speaking about a subject. Thus, I have put forward the example of *The Body* as a performative dismantling of boundaries that persist in society between the human and nonhuman, as per the philosophical aim of critical posthumanism.

The Body can be considered a form of affirmative politics due to its affective enticement of the spectator to make direct connections and comparisons with the nonhuman performers, while also asking them to offer up their human identity for the purposes of biosurveillance and observation. As Braidotti notes,

> Becoming-posthuman consequently is a process of redefining one's sense of attachment and connection to a shared world, a territorial space: urban, social, psychic, ecological, planetary as it may be. It expresses multiple ecologies of belonging, while it enacts the transformation of one's sensorial and perceptual co-ordinates, in order to acknowledge the collective nature and outward-bound direction of what we still call the self. This is in fact a moveable

assemblage within a common life-space that the subject never masters nor possesses but merely inhabits, crosses, always in a community, a pack, a group or a cluster.[72]

If we understand Braidotti's concept of posthumanism and affirmative politics as a pursuit to re-evaluate and thus re-define human identity and open up new relations with the world, it is the argument of this chapter that *The Body* attempts to elicit a re-evaluation and re-definition of relations with the human and nonhuman forces through a deterritorialisation of bodies, the formation of an assemblage with the nonhuman doll performers, and the establishment of an affective *a priori* encounter, resulting in an immersive becoming. Importantly, this takes place in the present moment in a largely extra-discursive, intensive, and affective manner, so that it promotes qualitative change in the body through immersion *prior* to the meaning or resonance from the encounter being reviewed conceptually. In other words, the change has already occurred through affective, immersive, bodily channels before the re-evaluation can be digested and processed conceptually.[73]

The Body aims to disrupt the boundaries between the human and nonhuman. It does so by first presenting a number of deterritorialising vignettes, each designed to disrupt and disorganise either the body of the human performer, doll performer, or spectator; some vignettes aim to coextensively deterritorialise all bodies. Once this occurs the bodies are primed to form an assemblage and are brought together through desire. Desire is always part of the social field. Therefore, I have attempted to map out a brief cultural context to demonstrate desire's connection to dolls, doll-like figures, and robots in contemporary society and digital culture.

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[72] Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 193.
[73] As I have mentioned in this thesis before, I am not suggesting that there is a split between mind and body, quite the opposite. I am proposing that bodily knowledge that we receive in the present moment of experience is a particular type of knowledge that can only be accessed for conceptual meaning after the experience through the resonance and remnants in the body. Bodily knowledge and conceptual knowledge have a symbiotic relationship; they occur on different planes but are inextricable from one another.

The mode of the encounter formed in *The Body* and communicated through the assemblage is affective *a priori*. Affective *a priori*, a concept proposed by Dufrenne, is a mode of encounter with an aesthetic object that occurs within the present experience and is felt prior to being known or identified. It is a quality that is known affectively, or through the body, independent of prior knowledge. Based on Dufrenne's notion, I have suggested that the mode of encounter that is established in *The Body* and communicated within the assemblage bodies can be classified as affective *a priori*.

Lastly, between deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, desire and control, the molecular and the molar, a breach of potentiality is opened known as virtuality. Within this space, an immersive becoming occurs. Consequently, a qualitative change occurs in the elements involved in the assemblage. This change can only be known *a posteriori*, and once identified, a reterritorialisation has taken place supporting the posthumanist aim of pluralising the human identity and opening up new relations with nonhuman forms.

The Body asks the spectator to re-evaluate and thereby redefine their connections with the nonhuman, and further, to the world around them, in order to align one's self with other vital forms and processes. Importantly, this invitation is asked and answered through a largely extra-discursive, affective communication, meaning that it is bodily communication and comparison that is brought to the fore instead of conceptual analysis, hence the argument that it constitutes a type of affirmative politics. The invitations being posed and answered in *The Body* by means of an affective communication result in both the nonhuman doll and the human performer and spectator being qualitatively altered. The encounter has altered the categorisation on both sides through the respective re-evaluation of categorisation, relation, and function going forward. Thus, *The Body* is attempting to invoke a pluralisation of identities and a blurring of boundaries between the human and nonhuman, notably and necessarily through affective, immersive becoming. As we continue to navigate our complex relationship to digital culture and re-consider the role of the human in an

information-intensive world, *The Body* seeks to pose one of Braidotti's most compelling

provocations through performative means: "Not all of us can say, with any degree of certainty, that

we have always been human, or that we are only that."[74]

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[74] Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 1.

Chapter 5| Conclusions and Future Directions

Art is this processes of compounding or composing, not a pure creation from nothing, but the act of extracting from the materiality of forces, sensations, or powers of affecting life, that is, becomings, that have not existed before and may summon up and generate future sensations, new becomings.[1]

—Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*

I will now revise and reassess the several thrusts of the thesis for the purpose of conducting an overarching analysis in their wake. This thesis explores a strand of immersive theatre which I have identified and termed "sensory spectacle performance" (SSP). It considers the aesthetic experience offered by SSP and investigates its relationship and engagement with digital culture. I have argued that there is a significant relation between the affective mode of communication utilized by SSPs and the dominant modes of affective transmission employed by digital culture through various channels. I have proposed that the primary vehicle of communication within digital culture is affect. In other words, its various central online platforms—social media, applications, smartphones, online media—predominantly attempt to reach the body of a user in the affective gap that lies between content and effect. Affective engagement most often results in a longer period of interaction with the given online platform. Therefore, these platforms seek to appeal to this mode of engagement over and above a direct conceptual connection. Responding to this contemporary appeal to affective engagement, SSP also uses affect as its dominant mode of communication to deliver its immersive objectives. Affect, sensation, and the sensory, alongside the consequent phenomenal immersion SSP delivers, are its defining qualities. Likewise, these qualities are also what defines SSP's unique relationship to digital culture: the desire to both utilise and exploit the operations and systems propagated by online platforms.

SSP is an experiential, affective, and immersive mode of performance. It is not concerned with imparting meaning or a linear narrative. Its interest lies within the felt experience it delivers

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[1] Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, 75.

and the physical resonance from the performance that is left with the body of the spectator. Rather than placing a spectator-immersant at the centre of a fictional environment to achieve its immersive intention, as many other strands of immersive theatre do, SSP instead deploys techniques of process, presence, relation, sensation, and affect as a way to deliver its immersive experience. In this thesis, I have discussed these techniques in relation to the processes of the SSP model I have formulated: change of frame, deterritorialisation, virtuality, becoming, and reterritorialisation. This study attempts to establish the connection between the types of techniques that are used in SSP and the type of methods and approaches used by online platforms and information-intensive environments in digital culture to appeal to the individual user and the public. Both demonstrate a desire to establish an affective encounter which will lead to an immersive experience through a becoming—a transformative connection and exchange between two entities that results in a qualitative change in both sides.

The introduction to the thesis outlined my formulation of SSP, defined its characteristics, and positioned it as a strand of immersive theatre. The introductory chapter began by establishing my particular approach to the study, in which I proposed to employ Deleuzian philosophy as developed by Elizabeth Grosz alongside the phenomenological framework of Mikel Dufrenne. I formulated a theory of affective encounter based on Deleuze's concept of affect and suggested that this is the dominant communication mode of both SSP and digital culture; a principal trait that defines them both and also serves as the most pertinent demonstration of their interplay. Affect is present in the gap between content and effect. In short, it has an impact on the body. Due to its place in presence, meaning may only be accessed and analysed through the resonances left in the body, the effect. Both SSP and online platforms aim to reach their audience on an individual, affective level. This results in a communication that is sensory-driven and focused directly at the body. Subsequent to this engagement, the spectator/user has been qualitatively transformed; the performance or the online platform has impacted the body and the meaning of this impact can only be accessed and examined through resonance, effect, and emotion.

In support of this thought, I turned first to Erika Fischer-Lichte's triadic relation which proposes that there is a deep interplay between society's bodies, languages, and perceptions and their surrounding environment and culture. With every significant shift that occurs within society, there is a consequent shift and alteration in the triadic relation. Using this triadic relation, in conversation with Jonathan Crary's insights into attention, perception, and the use of technology, N. Katherine Hayles' theories on the changing way we think under the influence of computers and online platforms, and Grosz's writing on habit, repetition, and behaviour, I theorised that the various channels of digital culture use affective encounter in order to cultivate and also engage with counter-attention modes. In response to this technique, SSP in the same way uses affective encounter to reflect the methods used by digital culture, to engage spectators' more embodied counter-attention modes, and to use this form of communication to immerse the audience in a deeply embodied way.

Lastly, I developed a model to demonstrate the processes and preparations involved in setting up an affective encounter in an SSP which leads to an immersive Deleuzian becoming experience. These processes, which draw on the work of sociologist Erving Goffman, various concepts from Deleuze, and Deleuze and Guattari, set out the preparations and conditions necessary to deliver an SSP. My model begins with a change to the traditional theatrical frame. This leads to a disorganisation of the social space and a deterritorialisation. The spectator is encouraged to enter into a space of virtuality in which she is invited to connect on a one-to-one basis with the performance via imaginative collaboration. This sets up the conditions for a transformative becoming to occur between the spectator and performance. Both sides, the spectator and the performance, emerge from the becoming "more and other,"[2] to use Grosz's expression. After the new organisation of the adjusted theatrical frame is learned, the spectator becomes reterritorialised.

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[2] Grosz, "Bergson, Deleuze and the Becoming of Unbecoming," 11.

The purpose of my model is to demonstrate the various processes at work in an SSP. As I have sought to highlight throughout the thesis, the model is neither prescriptive nor a form of containment. It does not claim that all SSPs are the same or that that they follow the same path; quite the opposite. The model provides a guide to the preparations and conditions necessary for an affective encounter and immersive becoming between the performance and the spectator to occur. Each point of the model is intended to prompt focused consideration about what the particular SSP under examination has done to promote its desired immersive effect. This ranges from the alternative frame they have put in place, the type of deterritorialisation that takes place, how a space for virtuality is advanced, what sort of becoming takes place, and how the reterritorialisation develops. Through my study, I have identified each of these processes as pivotal to the SSP's sensory, relational, and immersive objectives. The model reveals the types of theatrical devices used and the sorts of engagement with digital culture that are undertaken. My model is designed to be used by other researchers to unearth new insights into the aesthetic experience of immersive performance, particularly visceral, relational, sensory-driven, affective performance.

Immersive Theatre

Immersive theatre and immersive practices have become increasingly pervasive in the past ten years. Theatre makers are continually exploring ways in which they can absorb the audience in some sort of experiential event. Of course, immersive theatre is not a new mode of performance. We could look to Richard Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*, elements of symbolist theatre, Jerzy Grotowski's paratheatrical experiments, Allan Kaprow's Happenings, Richard Schechner's concept of an environmental theatre, or indeed the Theatre of Images from the 1970s as just a handful of immersive practices explored in the last century and a half. So, what is it about this present time that has prompted such a strong interest in the idea of immersion? This concluding chapter will attempt to tie up the arguments made in the preceding chapters in order to answer this particular query. More pointedly, it will underline the fact that it is due to the isolating effects of digital

culture that we seek experiential, communal experiences. There is a particular desire for contemporary theatre to reflect what it feels like to inhabit an information-intensive environment and to present a response to the day-to-day experience of ubiquitous technologies, media, and digital culture.

A point I have sought to highlight in the thesis is that "immersive theatre" as a mode of performance is an extremely broad descriptor and covers such a diverse expanse of work and artforms that it would be impregnable if considered in a comprehensive, all-encompassing way. For this reason, I favour Josephine Machon's use of the pluralised term "immersive theatres" when she explores the subject. At its core, immersive theatre engages and involves the audience directly in a special way; the experiential aspect of the performance is prioritised and generally, an attempt is made to absorb the spectator through some creation of alternate space, time, and/or place. Immersive theatre has many strands that are multifarious and distinct. Each strand requires separate study in order to uncover its intricacies and particular characteristics. In this thesis, I have chosen to identify and focus on one of these strands of immersive theatre, which I have termed sensory spectacle performance. In doing so, I hope that other strands will be identified and researched and that the scholarship surrounding immersive theatre will continue to develop in a nuanced manner.

The Challenge of Invisible Forces

Invisible forces are central to this study, namely in the form of affect, sensation, immersion, and becoming. Understanding each of these forces as forms of alternative communication and exchange, I have chosen to refer to their mode of transmission, which is representative and distinctive to SSP, as affective encounter. Building upon Deleuze's writing, affective encounter can be understood as an event whereby an extra-discursive, intensive, and felt communication takes place between two or more bodies. Throughout the thesis, bodies have been referred to in the

Deleuzian sense; the term is not limited to the biological body but might also indicate a social, political, animal, linguistic, musical, art, or philosophical body.

While the methodological approach for this research is phenomenologically guided, meaning it is based upon describing perception of SSPs in the most detailed manner possible, there is an inherent difficulty in choosing to examine the aesthetic experience of invisible forces—forces that have an impact and are felt, forces that are transformative and immersive, but can only be studied in the after-event through the trace left. This trace is the resonance left in the body, the effect of the affect. Brian Massumi goes into this point in some detail. As he sees it, because affect is only available in the present experience, we can only analyse it subsequent to the event and in the deviated form of effect, in other words, the resonance, the emotion, the impact left by the affect.[3] That is precisely what this thesis has strived to do: to study the effect of the invisible forces at work in an SSP by employing the "particularizing mode of attention" of phenomenology and the fitting Deleuzian theory which is hinged on the idea of immanence. My research focuses particularly on forces that are largely invisible but nevertheless have a powerful impact on the Deleuzian concept of bodies that comprise a performance—the performance area, the spectators, the performers, and so on.

At the beginning of the thesis, I also introduced Dufrenne's book, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, as the main phenomenological framework from which I would base my analysis. One of Dufrenne's main propositions is that at the pinnacle of aesthetic experience, there is a connection, an exchange, an extra-discursive communication that is outside reason. In other words, the observer and the work of art make an initial connection above and beyond the meaning that can be drawn from the artwork. Dufrenne calls this stage of perception presence whereby an embodied connection is forged with the aesthetic object comprised of invisible forces. Creators of an SSP will attempt to prolong this stage of perception. Using various techniques of

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[3] Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, n3, 260.

deterritorialisation and amputation—suppression of a logical language, facial expression, specific location, the presentation of blurred identities and realities, and the use of alternative communication methods such as sound, light, and movement—SSP encourages the spectator to protract the presence stage of aesthetic perception. By withholding a recognisable frame of organisation, SSP invites the spectator to engage in an affective encounter, to be present in the performance and communicate on an asignifying plane.

I have chosen to approach this study by placing Dufrenne's phenomenological framework and Deleuzian theory primarily as developed by Grosz in conversation. This thesis is built upon the similarities between Dufrenne and Deleuze's respective theories. Furthermore, it is interested in unearthing the complementary potential of each approach and identifying room for exploration, particularly as Dufrenne and Deleuze's concepts relate to immersive performance and aesthetic experience. In the course of this study, I have pushed both conceptual frameworks to exciting new ground. By employing Dufrenne's phenomenology of aesthetic experience and Grosz's interpretation of Deleuzian theory, using their concepts to create a performance model, and adopting this model to examine several SSPs, I hope to provide a precedent on the ways in which one can analyse performance and art that is concerned with process, presence, relation, sensation, and affect. To clarify these terms once more: process in the sense that it values change and continual transformation over static being and identity; presence in the sense that these transformations and affective communication take place in the present moment and can only be accessed after this through their resonant traces in the body; relation in the sense that SSP is concerned predominantly with establishing relations between bodies and the surrounding curated environment; sensation in the sense that SSP uses the sense and the sensation of a body as its transformative force; affect in the sense that it is the primary source of impact in an SSP. Affect is the measure of what a body can do.

Digital Culture-Postdigital Culture

Digital culture describes a period in time, roughly from the start of the 1990s through to the present-day, in which virtual environments, new communication technologies, the internet, and online platforms began to exert such an impact that they came to define the culture that we live in. As a term, it expresses the pervasiveness of the virtual (in the non-physical, online sense) environments that we interact with and that surround us on a daily basis and suggests that the digital's influence is to such a degree that it defines the cultural values of a society. The virtual is so ubiquitous that it can no longer be separated from the real; the virtual has been woven into the real. Naturally, digital culture raises many questions in relation to theatre and performance, specifically, as this thesis suggests, in relation to immersive performance. What is it about our current experience that has aroused an interest in creating works that can be defined as SSP? Why and how is SSP connected to digital culture? What distinguishes SSP from other strands of immersive theatre?

A shift in the triadic relation is often most profoundly illustrated in the art of the time because it will most commonly attempt to capture the contemporary condition. Digital culture marks a significant shift in the way information-intensive societies think, feel, relate, behave, and create. The art of a particular society, at a particular time in history, has the capacity to demonstrate the position of perception, the body, and language in that historical context. One of the ways this change is expressed and may be examined is in the type of art that is being produced and how it treats the body of the spectator in the performance transaction.

Digital culture uses affective communication because it aims to speak to the body, to deliver information through a number of channels, to bypass boredom, and most of all, to deliver constant stimulation. This type of communication disrupts the formerly prevailing perception mode of deep-attention which allows long periods of attention on one subject through one channel and has instead precipitated a counter-attention, a type of perception that favours multi-form, multi-

channel, embodied stimulation. This thesis has made the case that immersive theatres, particularly the strand that I have identified and explored, SSP, are a reply to digital culture. SSP uses the techniques used by online platforms in order to reflect and also exploit the systems at work in digital culture. These range from an appeal to counter-attention, the amputation of logical communication and the introduction of stuttering, changing the frame of organisation so that there can be very little anticipation of what is to come or how to behave, phenomenal identification, and affirmative politics.

Each of the performance case studies I have chosen engages with digital culture in a different way and in an increasingly apparent manner. The structure of the thesis is designed to reflect the development and growing influence of digital culture on society as it moves toward and is assimilated by postdigital culture. *All That Fall* presents a curated sensory chamber in which lights, sound, and audience as a rocking sculpture encourage an immersive becoming with the performance. By presenting this type of performance experience, *All That Fall* reflects the information-intensive environment we inhabit and appeals to modes of counter-attention which are precipitated through the various platforms of digital culture. *Man of Valour* encourages the spectator to enter the spatiotemporal register of the performance, transform into a body without organs alongside the main character, and thereby enter into an immersive becoming with the performance. *Man of Valour* connects to repetition, habit, and learned behaviour through engagement with the tools of digital culture such as videogames, affective communication, and alternate spatio-temporal registers. *The Body* explores the advanced relationship that humans have forged with nonhuman bodies and material. It invites a redefinition of the human in the context of a postdigital landscape. This new level of close engagement wherein the human and nonhuman are regularly indistinguishable from one another and distinct boundaries have dissolved is, on one level, a direct result of the pervasiveness of technology in everyday life and, on another level, the direct result of the political, philosophical, and sociological implications brought on by digital culture as a whole.

The Sensory Spectacle Performance Model

In order to illuminate the concept of affective encounter in performance and demonstrate the immersive practices that SSPs use, I have devised a performance model. Central to the SSP model is Elizabeth Grosz's interpretation and expansion of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of sensation, affect, territory, and becoming. The model provides a framework through which the embodied aesthetic experience of a chosen case study can be fed and its immersive intentions and practices can be unpacked. During the course of the thesis, I referred to the SSP model and used it to examine my elected objects of study—Pan Pan's *All That Fall*, Corn Exchange's *Man of Valour,* and Nigel Barrett and Louise Mari's The *Body*.

The aim of the SSP model is to demonstrate the way in which the affective encounter between the performance and the spectator is established. Once this encounter takes place, the potential for a becoming is opened—in other words, the potential for a transformative exchange of loss and gain between the spectator and the performance that leaves both sides qualitatively altered. The culmination of these two interlinked objectives, affective encounter and becoming, is a distinct type of immersive aesthetic experience particular to SSP.

The model begins with an adjustment of the theatrical frame. In the case of *All That Fall* this is demonstrated in the alternative communication channels of sound, light, and movement in addition to the audience being cast as actors in the performance space listening to disembodied actor voices. *Man of Valour* changes the theatrical frame by removing coherent language, facial expression, and disrupting the spatio-temporal register of the shared space of the theatre. *The Body* changes the theatrical frame from the very start of the performance by asking the audience to remove their coat and bags before entering the space, inviting each spectator to hook themselves up to a heart monitor, and presenting each person with a reborn doll. Following the adjustment of frame, the anticipated conventions and set roles associated with the theatrical frame are removed,

and a process of deterritorialisation is set in motion. Deterritorialisation leads the spectator to actively connect with the performance in an embodied and imaginative manner, offering and combining their own material with the production in a space of virtuality. Through the act of mixing the virtuality of ideas with the actuality of the performance, a becoming takes place. During becoming, each side becomes "more and other."[4] It is a transformative experience and a qualitative exchange. Both parts of the becoming—the performance and the spectator—has become more and other, affective and affected. Once each of the processes has taken place and through repeated exposure to the alternative theatrical frame, the spectator learns the new rules and conventions associated with it and becomes reterritorialised.

I will now briefly recapitulate what type of preparations and conditions each performance analysis uncovered using the SSP model. First, Chapter Two examined Pan Pan's production of Samuel Beckett's radio play *All That Fall*. This adaptation seeks to challenge the very form of the radio play by translating the piece into sensually immersive experience. I considered how the elements of sound, light, and sculpture formed by audience members contributed to the processes of changing the frame of reference, deterritorialisation, opening a space of virtuality, inviting a becoming between the performance and the spectator, and a reterritorialisation. The main thrust of *All That Fall* is amputation and stutter. Pan Pan amputate a logical language through the use of diegetic lighting. They amputate physically-present actor bodies—the voices are disembodied and the audience are the only bodies in the space forming a rocking sculpture. Finally, they amputate a steady sense of grounding and perspective by seating the audience on rocking chairs. This offers multiple lines of focus with every move forward and back and encourages a unique attunement to external rhythms. It also affects the interpretation of the sounds. These amputations amount to change of frame and a deterritorialisation.

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[4] Grosz, "Bergson, Deleuze and the Becoming of Unbecoming," 11.

Following this, the audience are encouraged to engage with the virtual aperture that Pan Pan creates for the audience to fill with independent, imaginative input and affective encounter. Each spectator connects with the piece in their own way, contributing and relating to the material on a one-to-one basis. Becoming in *All That Fall* occurs on what one might regard as two levels. On a physical level, the spectator enters into a becoming with the performance of *All That Fall* for the duration of the piece. Through their presence as part of the moving sculpture, they become the performance and the performance becomes them. Both sides enter into a transformative exchange of sensation. On an affective level, the spectator enters into an immersive becoming with the performance through the points of encounter and connection that are set up between their body and the body of the performance. Becoming occurs through the communication and exchange of forces between the two bodies. In the first instance, the rocking chair assumes most of the responsibility for balance in the body, connecting to the ground at different points, back and forth. In the second instance, the sound and lights invade the spectator's body so that the spectator or performance can no longer be regarded on an individual basis. For this performance they become a symbiotic organism joined through their desire to exchange material. Reterritorialisation can be marked once there is a return to order. The alternative frame that Pan Pan has curated, the new rules, conventions, and qualities that are contained within this frame, becomes familiar to the spectator.

Chapter Three explored Corn Exchange production *Man of Valour*. It considered the performance's use of the destructive and constructive power of Deleuze's notion of difference and repetition, particularly repetition's ability to appeal to habit and connect with learned behaviour, in order to deepen the immersive potential of the performance for the spectator. The protagonist of *Man of Valour*, Farrell Blinks, embodied by actor Paul Reid, transitions between his real and fantasy worlds. I regard these transitions as a change of frame, a disruption that leads to a deterritorialisation. Farrell's deterritorialisation into a BwO is invoked in three ways: Farrell's use of vocal tics, the bare stage, the use of commedia-inspired make-up. Farrell's deterritorialisation

and subsequent transformation into a BwO invites the spectator to perform a coinciding motion. His transitions between his real life and fantasy world affect disruption in the shared spatio-temporal space of the theatre. To restore equilibrium, the spectator is persuaded to enter into the spatio-temporal register of the performance. Through this motion, they also transform into a BwO.

Therefore, both Farrell and spectator transform into BwOs and thereby enter a space of virtuality. In this space of virtuality, *Man of Valour* encourages the spectators to relinquish the binaries that separate themselves from the performance, to open themselves to the performance world. Through what I have called phenomenal identification with Farrell they are invited to enter or merge with the performance, thus subjecting themselves to the forces within it. By means of phenomenal identification with Farrell, through a distinct appointment of Farrell as their physically moving body double in the performance, in the space of virtuality, the spectator engages in a process of becoming through sensation. Once a synthesis of durations takes place between the spectator's spatio-temporal register and the performance's spatio-temporal register, reterritorialisation occurs. This can be understood as a bracketing of the chaos and disruption that has preceded it and a return to order.

Chapter Four used the SSP model to examine Nigel Barrett and Louise Mari's production *The Body*. I proposed that *The Body* employs an affective language in order to displace the various boundaries that persist within society between human and nonhuman bodies through sensory immersion. In this chapter, I considered the mode of sensory immersion that *The Body* employs, which aims to further dismantle the perceived boundaries between subject and object, internal and external, human and nonhuman. The change of frame and deterritorialisation of human performer, doll performer, and spectator in *The Body* take place through several complementary performative techniques which I categorised as biosurveillance, comparison, imitation, animation, and caregiving. *The Body* intends to deterritorialise the bodies involved in the performance so that they may enter an assemblage.

Between deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, desire and control, the molecular and the molar, a breach filled with potentiality is opened—a space for virtuality. Within this space, an immersive becoming occurs; a qualitative change occurs in the elements involved in the assemblage (Human Performer + Doll Performer + Spectator). This change can only be known *a posteriori*. Once the change has been identified, a reterritorialisation has taken place supporting the posthumanist aim of pluralising the human identity and opening up new relations with nonhuman forms.

By using the SSP model as a guide, these three chapters of performance analysis demonstrate the preparation and conditions that each SSP put in place to promote affective engagement, sensory immersion, and a transformative becoming. The SSP model should be used as an illuminative key; the SSP model is a tool to help unpack the various processes at work in sensory-driven, immersive performance.

Future Directions

Momentous events, national moments of adversity or success, significant cultural developments, powers of dominant religions, politics, or philosophies, and social awakenings throughout history have shaped the type of theatre that is produced and the type of spectatorship and demand that it is met with. In the same way, this thesis argues that digital culture has affected contemporary forms of art, theatre, and performance in both subtle and incontrovertible ways. My research considers the connection between SSP and digital culture to be striking and inextricable. First, digital culture has impacted the way society considers, approaches, behaves, and interacts with their own bodies and other bodies—human and nonhuman. Social media, avatars, personal data, and the ability to occupy several online platforms at the same time mean that one cannot separate their physical self from their virtual identities. We are pluralised bodies and pluralised identities; even if we do not interact with any social media or input information of any kind into online platforms, it is highly unlikely

that our identity does not exist elsewhere in a database of some sort.

Second, digital culture has affected the way that society perceives and applies its attention. Even though attention is a largely unconscious act, the type of attention mode one reverts to most often is shaped through one's repeated interactions and surrounding environments; people learn which attention mode to use through neuroplasticity. Digital culture's online platforms—text, email, WhatsApp, Viber, Snapchat, Tinder, Grindr, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Spotify—aim to precipitate counter-attention modes, particularly hyper-attention, in their users. Users that apply counter-attention to tasks are generally sensation-driven, favour continual stimulation, and seek out multi-form streams of information.[5] This ties into the third point: digital culture has affected the way society uses language and the way that that society communicates at large. Online platforms appeal to and advance the use of counter-attention by communicating in a predominantly affective manner in order to deliver stimulation to the senses and to deliver a potent bodily impact. Affective communication has an impact on the body and lies outside the constraints of signification. It is a mode that is extra-discursive and occurs in the present moment. By communicating in an affective manner, online platforms avoid a processing bottleneck and users will stay online for longer periods of time.

These three points of the triadic relation that I have uncovered about digital culture—body, perception, language—are relevant to any analysis of art that occurs within the contemporary information-intensive, postdigital age. This thesis contributes to the current discourses surrounding aesthetic experience, immersive performance, digital culture, and postdigital aesthetics. I have sought to identify and characterise a strand of immersive theatre. Josephine Machon and Adam Alston, two theatre scholars who have contributed the most comprehensive studies of immersive

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[5] See previously referenced studies: Hongjin Shima and Ki Joon Kimb, "An Exploration of the Motivations for Binge-watching and the Role of Individual Differences," *Computers in Human Behavior*, Volume 82 (May 2018); Jelmer Borst, Niels Taatgen, Hedderik van Rijn,"The Problem State: A Cognitive Bottleneck in Multitasking," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (2010); Salvucci, Dario, and Niels Taatgen. "Threaded Cognition: An Integrated Theory of Concurrent Multitasking." *Psychological Review* 115, no. 1 (2008).

theatre, emphasise the broad range of performance and artforms that the term appears to cover. For this reason, it is extremely difficult to characterise immersive theatre in a precise way. Machon gets around this by naming her study "Immersive Theatres," highlighting the plurality and multiplicities of immersive practice and experience. In choosing to use the plural form, Machon draws attention to the many diverse strands that come under this mode of performance, all joined by a common goal: to uncover and intensify the most experiential dimension of performance for each individual spectator, placing them "at the heart of the work."[6] By identifying SSP as a strand of immersive theatre, detailing its processes, and providing three close-analyses of concrete examples of SSP, I hope that I may encourage others to build on the research and further, encourage others to identify additional strands under the wide umbrella of immersive theatre. To aid the understanding and further research into SSP, I have constructed the SSP model.

I have chosen to draw on aspects of Dufrenne's phenomenological framework of aesthetic experience and Deleuzian theory as interpreted and developed by Grosz. By bringing these two methodologies together in order to study SSP and digital culture, I have sought to locate both common ground and gaps in which I could contribute knowledge. To reiterate a point I addressed in the introduction: I see the main points of convergence between Dufrenne and Deleuze to be their consistent focus on the relation of bodies to their surroundings. Phenomenology's primary concern is the perception of the human body, the human body's relation to its surroundings. In contrast, Deleuze suggests a body encapsulates many other forms outside of the human: a biological, social, political, linguistic, animal, or artwork body. Throughout this thesis, I have undertaken the Deleuzian perspective—I focus on the body of the performance and the body of the spectator, and many other bodies are referred to in the course of the study. The performances I consider in the course of the thesis are not passive objects; they are live bodies in the same way as the spectator is a live body. Dufrenne's framework is essential because it covers aesthetic experience and the

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[6] Machon, *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Performance,* 22.

Deleuzian philosophy is essential because it underlines the role of invisible forces, nonhuman social agents, and multiplicity. The research that I produced would not have been possible without both sides. For that reason, this thesis marks a completely new perspective on the study of the aesthetic experience of immersive sensory performance and postdigital art.

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