The 'rhetoric' of devising: a critical study

by

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Abstract:

Recent commentary has acknowledged a certain 'rhetoric' that has built up around the practice of devised theatre-making, and has suggested that certain aspects of it may be less relevant to current practice than they once were. This paper offers a critical analysis of three of the ideas most typically associated with devised theatre making: collaboration, the 'creative performer' and the move away from written text. Firstly, each idea is identified within a broader critical context and explicated with reference to the work of contemporary devising companies. Secondly, the contemporary efficacy of each idea is addressed in light of how it can be said to have informed the practical element of this practice-based research project. The paper draws on post-structuralist theories of logocentrism and authorship throughout, especially to inform an understanding of the place of hierarchy and authority within the rhetoric. It concludes by arguing that devised theatre-making cannot be understood as non-hierarchical, and therefore that a renegotiation of its relationship with authority may be now be useful.

For Pete

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FOREWORD

Motivations

This practice-based research project comprises a practical and a written element. Early in 2012 I decided that the practical element should be a piece of devised theatre created by myself, with the help of three undergraduate actors. The decision to create work in this way, however, brought with it an accompanying sense of obligation to a certain set of ideas that I understood as fundamental to that mode of practice. As work on my show progressed, I became increasingly interested in the relationship between these ideas and the practice I was undertaking. Although the work I was doing seemed to support many of these notions, I found also that it deviated from them. Did this mean the work could not be understood as 'devised'. Or, more intriguingly, could there be elements of these ideas that were less relevant to theatre-making than they had been previously? Could a critical (re)interrogation of these ideas be useful and timely for contemporary theatre-making?

Critical and theoretical context and structure

Such questions are reflected within the pages of a number of recent academic publications on devising. A certain 'rhetoric' that has built up around the practice has been acknowledged, and commentators have evidenced that the work of many practitioners today deviates from as much as it conforms to the ideas most typically associated with that mode of working. They suggest that, although such a rhetoric historically has been fundamental to the identity of devising, a (re)interrogation of its comprising ideas might be appropriate for our time. For example, in their book *Devising Performance: A Critical History* Deidre Heddon

and Jane Milling (2006, p.4) argue that 'in the twenty-first century, it is more than possible to take to task many of the 'ideals'' found within the 'rhetoric' of devised theatre-making, which, they argue, have 'serve[d] to give it an almost mythical status'. Similarly, Alex Mermikides and Jackie Smart (2010, p.5), in their introduction to *Devising in Process*, ask:

> If [devising] is now an orthodoxy, what are the current assumptions about it? If earlier models of devising process represented collaboration as an alternative to the hierarchy of the director's theatre, is contemporary devising still defined by its collaborative nature and, if so, what kinds of collaboration are employed? Do established traditions of devising still have an influence? What kinds of relationships now exist between visual, physical, verbal and textual elements of performance?

The aim of the written element of this project is to contribute to this spirit of critical address and questioning by reflecting, through a discussion of theory and practice, on the contemporary efficacy of certain paradigms upheld by the 'rhetoric' of devising. The project draws explicitly or implicitly on post-structuralist theory throughout, and refers in particular to Jacques Derrida's theory of logocentrism and Roland Barthes' theory of authorship. Such thinking is relevant to any discussion of devised theatre-making, a practice which, in its contemporary incarnation has often been said to share typical post-modern concerns, such as the suspicion of authorship and of authority, and the questioning of grand-narratives. In addition, it is an appropriate tool for critically addressing the relational development of concepts and considering their effects as part of a wider rhetoric or discourse.

In **Chapter One** I will identify and explicate three ideas most typically associated with devised theatre-making: collaboration; the 'creative performer'; the move away from written text. In **Chapter Two** I will return to each of these ideas in turn and, with the help of post-structuralist theory, consider their efficacy in the context of the practical element of the project, my devised piece *As Good As New*. In the **Conclusion** I will summarise my findings and consider what new questions may be asked of devised theatre-making in light of them.

'Dramatic Theatre' and a note on terms

It is my aim, in line with the post-structuralist motivations of this project, to remain suspicious of the possibility of any clear-cut distinction between devised work and the 'mainstream'. However, since the conceptualization of devised theatre-making as 'alternative' or 'unorthodox' has been crucial to its developing identity, it is necessary, when addressing such a development, to refer to the model against which that mode of working asserts itself. I will therefore look to Hans Thies Lehmann's (2006) terms, those of 'dramatic' and 'postdramatic' as set out in his book *Postdramatic Theatre*, and refer to what otherwise might be identified as 'text-based' theatre, or the-staging-of-plays, or 'traditional' or 'mainstream' theatre as 'dramatic theatre' or variants thereof. Certain conventions relating to illusion, realism and unity are said to govern the structure of the 'dramatic' piece, as Lehmann (2006, p.22) explains:

> Wholeness, illusion and world representation are inherent in the model 'drama'; conversely, through its very form, dramatic theatre proclaims wholeness as the *model* of the real

Furthermore, the dramatic model is popularly associated with a particular kind of methodology, described by Alison Oddey (1994, p.4) in her book *Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical Handbook*, as 'one person's text under another person's direction'. Within this methodology the playwright and/or the director are perceived of as authority figures. The playwright is understood as an abstract authority, in the sense that she is a 'source' of meaning: it is to her authorial intention that the performers look in the event of confusion about what is 'happening' in the narrative. The director too is understood as a 'source' of meaning: it is to her directorial vision that the performers look in the event of wondering how the characters should be interpreted. Since the director is typically present in the rehearsal process where the playwright is not, however, her authority is understood as a more concrete one. Ultimately in charge of ensuring that, artistically and practically, a performance shall happen on a certain pre-determined date and time, she has the power to allocate tasks to others and legitimately expect them to be done. Of paramount importance to the functioning of the dramatic model, however, is the primary positioning of the written text. Both Oddey (1994) and Lehmann (2006) identify the written text as the central point of authority for that mode of theatre-making, and this authority can be understood in two ways: it acts as the ultimate source of meaning before and during the making process, which it precedes; it is the element of theatre-making to which all other elements, for example visual or aural, are subordinated. References to 'dramatic theatre' throughout this dissertation pertain to the model outlined here.

CHAPTER ONE: THREE IMPORTANT IDEAS

Idea One: collaboration

The idea of collaboration is integral to the popular conceptualization of devising. The importance of the practice is in part a legacy of ideas that were in circulation during the politically charged era of the 1960s and 1970s. British theatre companies such as the Agitprop Street Players founded in 1968 sought to reject dominant bourgeois ideology and find new, fairer structures that were appropriate to the left-wing political ideologies of the time. Where the structure of theatre-making, and of the establishment more generally, were hierarchical, these practitioners offered an alternative way of working that was based, not on the principles of authority, but on those of democracy and equality. Thus, collaborative working, as an alternative to the hierarchical structure of the mainstream, has historically asserted devising's identity as an intellectually informed, counter-cultural practice. Although the contemporary cultural milieu is very different to that of the 60s and 70s, the legacy of democratic working as a politically informed departure from the mainstream remains, as academic Karen Fricker (2008) suggested at a round table discussion held at Central School of Speech and Drama in 2008 entitled *Auteurship and Collaboration: Developments in Facilitated Creativity*:

> Devising seems to be democratic; it seems in some ways to be an oppositional practice, to be connected to a kind of socialist ethos rather than an individualist ethos. And these associations are still powerful enough […] For example, Complicite and Ex Machina insist on a group identity and a name; Complicite not Simon McBurney; Ex

Machina not Robert Lepage. […] Is it because the notion of branding
is so strongly associated with capitalism and the global circulation of
consumer products that Ex Machina and Complicte resist the notion
of their companies' identities being referred to as brands?

Perhaps the most significant contemporary incarnation of devising as 'alternative',
however, is evident in its relationship with the authority-led dramatic model. Alison
Oddey (1994, p.4) writes that devised theatre is:

a response and a reaction to the playwright-director relationship, to
text-based theatre, and to naturalism, and challenges the prevailing
ideology of one person's text under another person's direction.
Devised theatre is concerned with the collective creation of art (not
the single vision of the playwright)

Here, and elsewhere, devised theatre is defined as a resistance to the dramatic
model, and one of the focal points of this resistance is the adoption of flexible
collaborative working processes in place of a pre-determined hierarchy. Inclusive
and democratic methodologies have become one of the defining aspects of
devising, as Govan et al. state (2007) in their book *Making a Performance:
Devising Histories and Contemporary Practices*. They write that 'democratic
working processes' are:

perhaps [the] aspect of practice with which devised theatre has
become most associated; devised theatre is often characterised by
its emphasis on improvisation, on ensemble acting, on collective

> decision-making and skills-sharing within a non-hierarchical
>
> company structure. (Govan et al., 2007, p.47)

Described by Lyn Gardner (2009) as 'that all too rare thing in British theatre: a true ensemble', Forced Entertainment are well known for their resistance to hierarchy. Director Tim Etchells (1999) talks passionately about the benefits of collaborative working, and specifically identifies it as a messier, but altogether richer and more productive space than that of a system which functions under authority. He writes that there are:

> no clean single visions in our work, no minimalist control freak
>
> authorial line- since by collaboration- impro, collage, the bringing
>
> together of diverse creativities- one gets an altogether messier
>
> world- of competing, actions, approaches and intentions (Etchells,
>
> 1999, p.55)

Etchells suggests here, and throughout his book *Certain Fragments,* that a collaborative process naturally incorporates multiplicity and contradiction, which in turn creates a more fragmented and unreliable but more interesting and 'diverse' aesthetic that is somehow more in touch with real human experience. For example, he argues as follows that the tensions inherent in collaboration are 'echoed' in the incoherent experience of perceiving a theatrical event itself:

> Collaboraton then not as a kind of perfect understanding of the other
>
> bloke, but a mis-seeing, a mis-hearing, a deliberate lack of unity.
>
> And this fact of the collaborative process finding its echo in the work
>
> since on stage what we see is not all one thing either- but rather a

> collision of fragments that don't quite belong, fragments that mis-see
>
> or mis-hear each other. (Etchells, 1999, p.56)

The idea that collaboration produces a fragmented and diverse aesthetic which is more in tune with lived experience is widely associated with devising, as Heddon and Milling (2006, p.192) suggest:

> a group devising process is more likely to engender a performance
>
> that has multiple perspectives, that does not promote one
>
> authoritative 'version' or interpretation, and that may reflect the
>
> complexities of contemporary experience and the variety of
>
> narratives that constantly intersect with, inform, and in very real ways,
>
> construct our lives

Oddey's ideological concerns are reflected in the above quote as well as in Etchells' suggestion that collaborative working is a departure from a 'control freak authorial line'(1999, p.55). As in Oddey's description, such a practice is offered as an alternative to the principle of single authorship found in the dramatic model. Where, in dramatic theatre, authority figures are 'sources' of meaning, responsibility for meaning-making in companies such as Forced Entertainment is distributed equally amongst practitioners. Company members are urged to take collective responsibility for the meaning of the theatre they create, rather than locating it in an estranged source of authority, such as the playwright, as evidenced by the following anecdote from Etchells (1999, p.48):

> At a recent event I attended someone asked a performer what was
>
> going on in a certain part of the piece he'd been in- the performer

replied, 'I don't know about that, ask the writer….'. That answer simply shouldn't be allowed.

Thus, the idea of collaboration promotes a politically and artistically informed shared responsibility for meaning-making in place of the (hierarchically positioned) single author convention propounded by the dramatic model. The shift in responsibility from the single author to the collective, however, highlights the importance of the personal input of each and every artist working on a project. This is the second important idea that I will address through a discussion of the 'creative performer'.

Idea Two: the 'creative performer'

Govan et al. (2007) devote a chapter of their book to a discussion of the 'creative performer', a concept which indicates a focus on the devised theatre-maker's personal ownership of both artistic product and process. Such ownership identifies the performer as the origin of her artistic expression and the 'author' of her work, although, as discussed above, as a devised theatre-maker she is likely to be one of a number of individuals working together collaboratively. Inspired by 'theories of selfhood and creativity' such as those of Freud and Jung, Govan et al. (2007, p.30) evidence this idea in the context of a variety of practitioners working from the early twentieth century onwards. The practice of avant-garde practitioner Jerzy Grotowski, for example, proposed ritual and performance as a means by which the performer, and indirectly the audience, could access a universal and non-verbal mode of being. In their discussion of European and American companies who prioritised the self in this way, Heddon and Milling (2006, p.30) point to the

emergence of improvisation and games (techniques currently readily associated with devising) as a means of allowing the performer to be reunited with 'an inner creativity that had been repressed, socialised, censored or hidden'. Such a reunion was said to allow a more 'authentic' type of 'self-expression'. This concept is prevalent today in relation to all kinds of theatre, as Govan et al. (2007, p.29) show:

> the emphasis on the 'presence' of the actor in performance, and the rhetoric of truthfulness, honesty and authenticity […] have now become commonplace descriptions of good performance.

In terms of devising rhetoric more specifically, the focus on the creative performer can be linked to the themes of counter-culture and alternativeness discussed in relation to the idea of collaboration. Of particular importance is the idea that the movement inwards in the search for inspiration brings with it a 'freedom' or sense of liberation from prescriptive authority. Alison Oddey (1994, p.1) writes, for example, that devised theatre can 'start from anything' and holds a 'freedom of possibilities' for performers to use 'spontaneity' and 'intuition' and to draw on 'personal experiences, dreams, research, improvisation, and experimentation'. In this way the performer has the right to cast off any outmoded or ill fitting set of conventions and establish something new in their place in line with her own sensibilities and intellect. Instead of an 'unthinking' conformity to a pre-determined set of conventions, devised theatre-makers can make a personal judgment about which structures and forms serve them best, and then act on that judgment. The most immediate example in light of the discussion so is the abandonment of the conventions of the dramatic model: the performer ceases to draw on the writerly authority of the playwright as a source of meaning and turns instead to her own

resources and motivations, which may or may not be motivated by an interest in written text. However, such a 'freedom' might just as easily equate to a liberation from the bourgeois state, as in the case of the politically motivated theatre-makers of the 60s and 70s discussed earlier, or from any other source of repression. Whatever the guise of the 'enemy', devising reserves the right to cast off unwanted convention and 'start from anything', and the focal point of this 'right' is the merging of the personal and the political: a transfer of power from an extraneous and potentially repressive authority to that of the 'creative performer'.

If the 'creative performer' is fundamental to the process of meaning-making, then the importance of her creative process is in turn highlighted within devising rhetoric. As Heddon and Milling (2006, p.195) argue:

> the [devised] performance evolves entirely from the process of its making, from the materials, movements, and structures that surface as each different component is brought into contact with each, enabling new associations and possibilities to freely emerge.

Indeed, the idea that a performance can reflect the preceding process so intimately that, to some degree, the process is *itself* the product is widely associated with devising. Chicago based company Goat Island, for example, are understood to focus as much on the method of creating performance as on the performance itself. In traditional dramatic theatre-making there is a sense that the process (the structure of which is predetermined) ultimately is subordinate both to the play text that marks the beginning of the process and the performance that marks its end. The aim of the process is to make the forthcoming performance a 'success'. Goat Island offer an alternative to this model by engaging in a

meandering and reflexive process which makes personal response its focal point and which values mistakes and digressions as a means of theatrical discovery. Director Lin Hixson (cited in Bottoms and Goulish, 2007, p.117) reflects this idea when she says that:

> We begin each new collaborative work with our own particular experiences and continue working until relationships are forged with events and ideas outside ourselves.

In her book *Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure*, Sara Jane Bailes (2009, p.111) discusses Goat Island's methodology, arguing that their long rehearsal processes (sometimes up to a number of years) diminishes the influence of a looming performance date and allows the performer the freedom to explore 'the fruitful space of error'. She writes that:

> a slower, more indeliberate style of delivery, and the difficulties encountered in working things out, enable the group to capture the fragility of the task at hand: to try to demonstrate the event of memory (as much as the memory of an event) or of an idea or an individual (Bailes, 2009, p. 111)

For Bailes, the idea of failure characterises a sustained focus on process: where 'success' is never achieved, so the process of artistic discovery can continue. The embrace of failure can be linked also with Oddey's notions of 'freedom'. Self-granted permission to fail suggests a liberating abandonment of the prescriptions of authority. Bailes (2009, p.2) argues that:

A failed occurrence signals the unpredictable outcome of events where a successful instance might, by comparison, be considered exclusive, prohibitive, and militated by mainstream values. A prescriptive definition of success appeals to conservative ideology and the normative ambitions that consolidate its ideals, whilst the altogether messier undisciplined tactics that failure permits contribute to an anti-conformist ideology, one that seeks to redefine and loosen the boundaries that determine lived experience and representations that chase after it.

For Bailes, the embrace of subjective process, characterised by failure, is linked specifically with a rejection of 'conservative ideology'. The idea of devising methodologies as counter-cultural is again invoked: where success is limiting, exclusive and authoritative, failure (which she links specifically to the work of devising companies) is a non-conformist and irreverent force. Furthermore, the messiness of a fragmented process wracked by failure has the power, unlike the dramatic theatre of 'representation', to 'loosen the boundaries that determine lived experience'. The suggestion is that devised theatre is less representative than dramatic theatre, and therefore, perhaps, more 'real'. This is an idea I will return to presently, but before that I will explore the idea of the 'move away from written text'.

Idea Three: the move away from written text

Widely understood to pose a challenge to dramatic theatre's primary positioning of the written text, devising is often referred to in current discourse as 'non-text based' (as opposed to 'text based' or dramatic theatre). Returning to Oddey (1994, p.4), we can see that she describes devised theatre according to its difference

from 'the dominant literary theatre tradition' which she frequently refers to as 'text-led' or 'text-based theatre', and which 'revolves around and focuses on the interpretation of the playwright's text by a director'. Hans-Thies Lehmann's (2006) book *Postdramatic Theatre* significantly bolstered devising's reputation as a non-textual practice within university departments and in the industry more generally. The work of 'post-dramatic' companies was identified by Lehmann (2006, p.22) according to its difference from 'dramatic theatre', which is based on a 'subordinat[ion] to the primacy of the text'. Although Heddon and Milling (2006, p.3) reject any straightforward distinction between devising and other types of theatre-making, their definition of it is as a 'mode of work in which no script- neither written play-text nor performance score- exists prior to the work's creation by the company'. Thus, indicating a departure from the primary positioning of the written text is a convenient and possibly useful way of identifying devised theatre-making.

The 'primary positioning' of the written text upheld by the dramatic model is challenged by devised theatre-making in two important ways. Firstly, if the 'creative performer' has the right, as Oddey (1994, p.1) suggests, to 'start from anything', then text need not instigate the process: non-textual starting points are of equal value to textual ones. Furthermore, if responsibility for meaning-making is shared equally between practitioners, then no individual artist can determine the meaning of the piece in advance of the rehearsal process. Secondly, the primary positioning of the text in terms of its dominance over other elements of the theatrical vocabulary within the making process itself is questioned. In line with his concept of 'postdramatic theatre', Lehmann argues, for example, that written text should be seen only as part of a whole range of elements on which theatre-making must draw. According to Lehmann (2006, p.46), we find in devised or

'post-dramatic' theatre that 'staged text (*if* text is staged) is merely a component with equal rights in a gestic, musical, visual, etc., total composition'. Text must not be afforded its traditional elevated status in the making process, he argues, since it cannot legitimately be extricated from the here-and-now of the theatre event as a whole, which necessarily includes a variety of elements. Both the temporal authority of the text and its dominance over other elements within the making process is thus taken to task by devised practice.

Lehmann's stress on the importance of multiplicity finds resonance in the aesthetic of much devised theatre. Multifarious, fragmented, non-linear narratives created from the juxtaposition of a range of original and already existing textual and non-textual material into a 'collage' or 'montage' format are frequently associated with that mode of working. New York based ensemble the Wooster Group are well known for their use of 'found' material and the splicing together of verbal and non-verbal elements, as director Liz LeCompte's (cited in Aronson, 1985, p.73) words reflect: 'It's all there', she says, 'I've just taken it. It's all recycled junk'. In his essay *The Wooster Group's "L.S.D (…Just the High Points…)"* Arnold Aronson (1985, p.70) explains that LeCompte has 'never read' Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* which the piece draws from, since she 'tends to choose texts based on a visual or aural image'. In this way, the devised work of the Wooster Group, in line with Lehmann's propositions, refuses to uphold written text as a source of authority and source of meaning. Instead, the meaning(s) of the piece are dissipated through layers of juxtaposed verbal and non-verbal material, with the effect of offering multiple interpretations and viewpoints, as David Savran (1986, p.35) outlines:

> In gathering together fragments of action, drama, film, and video, the
> Wooster Group produces a kind of performance that is quite different

> from that of most scripted theatre. In building a piece it does not
> begin with a theme or message to be communicated. […] Ideas and
> themes that emerge from the pieces do so only in retrospect, as a
> residue of the textualising process- much as, in a chemical reaction,
> solid flakes precipitate out of a solution.

Thus, the singular authorial voice of dramatic ('scripted') theatre, 'the text', is replaced in devised work such as that of the Wooster Group by a 'texture', whose meaning(s) cannot be traced to one source or 'fixed end point' such as the playwright's 'intention'. The previously held 'power' of the single author is dispersed in devised work not only between members of a company working collaboratively but fractures infinitely within a fabric of 'found' material that has been severed from but bears the trace of its original positioning.

In this way, the rhetoric of devising finds resonance in the terms of post-structuralism since they both can be said to submit a challenge to 'logocentrism', a concept propounded by post-structuralist Jacques Derrida. In his work, Derrida addresses the problematic hierarchical relationships within metaphysics, looking at binary oppositions and the privileging and subordination of terms. In *Of Grammatology* (2001, p.1825), for example, he discusses the privileging of speech over writing, questioning its positioning as a 'transcendental signified' or 'referent', 'whose content could take place, could have taken place outside language'. The impulse towards transcendental signifiers, Derrida calls 'Logocentrism' (derived from the Greek *Logos,* meaning logic, reason, the word, God), which is 'the drive to ground truth in a single ultimate point- an ultimate origin'(Collins and Mayblin, 2000, p.45). Derrida contests the use of the 'transcendental signified' within language (for example, 'God', 'truth', 'logic', 'rationality'), showing that meaning

does not have an origin in such concepts, or indeed anywhere, but is constructed by the relationships between signifiers which are in turn identifiable by their difference from one another. In light of this theory, we might see the dramatic theatre against which devised theatre asserts itself as logocentric, and 'the text' as the transcendental signified in which it spuriously locates an origin of meaning. Indeed, Derrida is often referred to in relation to the critique of the primacy of the text (Auslander, 1997 ; Bottoms, 2011), and in particular the following quote, which closely reflects devising rhetoric:

> The stage is theological for as long as it has a structure, following the entirety of tradition, comports with the following elements: an author-creator who, absent and from afar, is armed with a text and keeps watch over, assembles, regulates time and meaning of the representation, letting the latter represent him as concerns what is called the content of his thoughts, his intentions, his ideas. (Derrida, 1990, p. 235)

Derrida's absent 'author-creator' finds resonance in Tim Etchells' (1999, p.55) 'control freak authorial line' or in Alison Oddey's (1994, p.4) 'one person's text under another person's direction'. The reluctance to depend on a single source of authority in the endeavour to create meaning is not limited to a mistrust of the primacy of the text, however. The various adversaries of devising outlined in this discussion- the political establishment, the artistic establishment, the playwright's intention, the director's vision, 'success', the 'static end point' of a looming performance date- all can be understood as examples of the 'transcendental signified', whose falsely elevated status can be exposed. The multiplicity and diversity of the collaborative process and its associated aesthetic thus inherently

take to task such sources of authority, whose power relies on singularity and unity. Such an idea is integral to the rhetoric: the possibility of a singular, 'correct', way of making meaning, or, in other words, an authority, is consistently called into question by the counter-cultural practice of devising. Indeed, we might apply James Harding's (2000, p.4) reflections on the theatrical avant-garde to the history of devising more generally:

> historically the theatrical avant-garde has consistently defined itself vis-à-vis a negation not only of text and mimesis but also of author-ship and author-ity.

Within devising rhetoric the statement of resistance to the written text found in such labels as 'non text-based' can be understood as a focal point of such a negation, since it is convenient shorthand for indicating its difference from the 'mainstream'. In her article *'And their stories fell apart even as I was telling them': Poststructuralist performance and the no-longer-dramatic text*, for example, Liz Tomlin (2010, p.59) discusses Hans Thies Lehmann's outline of postdramatic theatre, arguing that:

> Lehmann directly confronts the role that the written text *as text* has played in the history of the dramatic, and begins to reconfigure a text-based/non text-based binary by aligning the written text explicitly with the dramatic logos in opposition to a non-hierarchical postdramatic.

Lehmann's promotion of the move away from written text is underpinned by a resistance to logocentrism within the dramatic model. Thus, the written text

becomes the focal point of the challenge to authority, authorship and singularity more generally.

The rejection of singularity and consequent embrace of multiplicity by devised theatre-making is often said to offer us an experience that is somehow closer to the fragmentary and incoherent nature of human experience, as I suggested earlier in relation to my discussion of Etchells and Bailes[1]. The latter suggests that the 'messier', more fragmented process characterised by failure has the ability to 'loosen the boundaries that determine lived experience and the representations that chase after it' (Bailes, 2011, p.2). Etchells (1999, p.56) suggest that 'the collaborative process find[s] its echo in the work since on stage what we see is not all one thing either- but rather a collision of fragments that don't quite belong'. Lehmann explores a similar idea in his work, as reflected in the quote below. He writes that

> A more superficial yet simultaneously more comprehensive perception is taking the place of the centred, deeper one whose primary model was the reading of literary texts. (Lehmann, 2006, p.16)

Lehmann's word 'comprehensive' suggests that the 'new perception', post-dramatic theatre, is able somehow to reach or see further than its literary counterpart. The suggestion in these examples is that work that embraces multiplicity and 'messiness' is somehow more in touch with the incoherence and confusion but also the actual breadth and diversity of human perception. In this

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[1] See pages 8 and 14 of this thesis respectively.

way, the rhetoric suggests that devised work is closer to the 'real' than dramatic

theatre, which, can only 'chase after it' with representation.

CHAPTER TWO: As Good As New

In Chapter One I explicated three of the ideas most readily associated with devised theatre-making and, through the use of critical sources and descriptions of the work of contemporary theatre-makers, attempted to evidence the reasons for their currency within the rhetoric. I will now return to each paradigm in turn in the context of my MPhil thesis performance *As Good As New*. In each case I will consider how useful the idea was to my practice, with the aim of reflecting both personally and critically on its contemporary efficacy.

Methodology

Eventually entitled *As Good As New*, the two performances shown in June 2012 were the result of a six week devising process directed by me, and with a cast of three undergraduate performers. The initial idea for the production (mine) was that it should explore the theme of restoration. Before auditioning for three actors, I had outlined a list of thematic questions that I hoped might guide the making process, a few examples of which can be found below:

- Why are humans compelled to restore objects?

- What makes an object worthy of restoration?

- What happens when an object is restored badly?

- Is restoration culturally specific?

- What is problematic about the idea of an 'original state'?

I also had collected about twenty pieces of 'found' text on the subject of restoration, to include articles, instructions for restoring, fictional accounts of restoration, TV transcripts and so on. In addition I had asked a number of writers if

they would write something that was a 'personal response' to the theme, and had conducted a couple of interviews with professionals on the subject. I also had a collection of objects and images.

After spending some time discussing ideas and exploring the actors' personal responses to the theme, we began the process by looking at the collection of 'found' texts. Asking them to pick those that they liked the most, we began to build scenes around them based on improvisations, exercises and games. The process continued in this way until we had roughly ten scenes. Then, three or four weeks into the process a number of things happened: we used improvisation and group discussion to begin to cut the number of scenes and locate them within a framing narrative; the actors began to develop the individual characters that would be used as part of that framing narrative; I drafted up a script based on the edited versions of the found texts plus the dialogue generated by the production of the scenes; we decided on a site-specific venue for the show- one of the rehearsal rooms in the department which had been built as an exhibition space; we began to collect objects that we wished to use in the show. Then, over the following weeks we worked on drawing all of these elements together. In support of this I produced six or seven further drafts of the script to reflect the changes in the show as they took place in the devising process. At times we made changes to and edited the script as a group; at times I did this individually.

As Good As New and 'collaboration'

In Chapter One I suggested that the idea of collaboration identifies devising as a politically informed counter-cultural practice and signifies its departure from the mainstream 'dramatic' model. I proposed that it transfers responsibility for meaning-making from the hierarchically positioned single author to a group of practitioners of equal status, and that this, in turn, offers a more diverse aesthetic that is more in tune with 'real' human experience.

From the outset I hoped that *As Good As New* would be a collaborative effort. Although I took the role of 'director' I felt inspired by the principles of fairness and democracy outlined within the rhetoric and wanted to uphold them. The process was flexible and reflexive throughout, and we settled into a particular set of relationships through trial and error, not through prescription. There was continual group discussion and a consensus of opinion about which ideas we should try out or take forward and which we shouldn't. If I was asked a question by a performer as to how something 'should be' on stage, I tried to discourage the idea that I had 'the answers' by responding with another question to lead the process of enquiry forward. This question was very rarely asked, which suggests that I was not perceived by the actors as an authority in the sense that I was 'source' of meaning, but that responsibility for meaning-making was shared. Six weeks later, however, when it came to writing the copy for the programme a few days before the performance, the performers suggested (in good humour) that it should read '*As Good As New*, by Zelda Hannay', which rather unequivocally suggested that the work had been made hierarchically. Indeed, I would argue, ultimately, that it was: it was my initial idea on which the show was based; it was me who had the 'final say'

as to whether material ended up in the show or not; I was in 'control' of the script and spent time working on it at home.

I often felt that the performers' 'collaborative' input was a 'second-guess' of my expectations rather than a reflection of their personal likes and dislikes. In her chapter on Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui in *Making Contemporary Theatre*, Lou Cope (2010, p.50) writes that:

> What's interesting is how the dancers who have worked with Cherkaoui before are creating ideas. Are they working to what they think he wants, what they think he likes, or what *they* like, what *they* want, what feels right? […] Are they trying to second-guess what they think a 'Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui show' should be?

Such reflections are entirely applicable to the undergraduate actors working with me on *As Good As New*. This caused me to consider the extent to which the idea of 'collaboration' was anachronistic, an ideal to which we paid lip service but from which ultimately we were estranged. I would certainly argue that I, nor the undergraduate students with whom I was working, did not view our *method* of working as politically or ideologically motivated, or, indeed, consider that there was anything unusual or 'alternative' in it at all. As it turned out, a hierarchical structure worked well for us, despite a niggling sense of 'betrayal' to the rhetoric.

The lack of a clear sense of why we were using such a methodology is indicative of devising's ubiquity as a mode of theatre-making. Mermikides and Smart (2010, p.4) write that:

While it was once an alternative and radical form of theatre-making, devising is now recognised as one of the major methodologies through which leading practitioners create innovative work on an international scale

That devising no longer occupies the marginal status that it once did clearly undermines its identity as a counter-cultural practice, as outlined by Alison Oddey (Oddey, 1994) in the 1990s. Since anti-hierarchical working was central to this identity, it follows that, as devising enters the mainstream the idea is likely to be re-evaluated and revised, as Mermikides and Smart (2010, p.12) go on to argue:

One of the markers of devising's new position as an 'orthodoxy' has been to challenge its perhaps mythical status as an inherently anti-hierarchical form

Indeed, the idea that devised theatre *can* be directed is more readily acknowledged than it once was, with directors such as James Yarker, Tim Etchells, Elizabeth LeCompte and Simon McBurney frequently cited. Within the rhetoric, the work of such individuals offers us the interesting possibility that the director of devised theatre need not be an authority. Etchells (cited in Helmer and Malzacher, 2004, pp. 269) suggests for example that his directorial duties were adopted simply because he suited that role:

We didn't know what people were good at, so we all kind of had a go at performing, we all had a go at directing, and we did three or four shows that way.

In this way, devised theatre can borrow from the dramatic model whilst still staying true to its collaborative principles. I would argue, however, that this idea is problematic. Alex Mermikides (2010, p.116), in his chapter on Tim Etchells, *The Anti-theatrical Director*, in *Making Contemporary Theatre* writes that:

> Although the performers' comments were invited during the re-writing process, Etchells created each version of the script alone (they were not, for example, group-written); he made the major structural decisions. Performers offered suggestions as to the arrangement of the material, but their attention tended to be on the details

Whilst Etchells may well be acting on behalf of the group in completing such tasks, this account indicates a paradox in the idea of work that is said to contain a collaborative *and* hierarchical element. Etchells (1999) writes about the benefits of democratic working in *Certain Fragments*, but in doing so his voice comes to represent many, and we must accept that representation in the absence of the others' voices. In the case of *As Good As New*, I believe it would be somewhat disingenuous to argue that I didn't have the 'last word', and therefore that outlining it as a collaborative piece is problematic, and potentially does a disservice to the performers. The overtly political references in the piece are of particular significance here, since the politics to be found there were mine, and not those of the performers. Whilst our motivations for using devising as a *method of making work* weren't politically and ideologically motivated, the show's dramaturgical structure and some of its content was. References to the twin towers and to Cameron's Broken Britain speech were an explicit attempt to link the ideas of restoration and brokenness to the various discourses of late capitalism, which, I

would argue, are helped to function smoothly by offering consumers/citizens the spurious possibility of a redeemable perfect or original state. In the case of the twin towers scene, for example, I wanted to suggest that the iconic visual and verbal narrative of 9/11 is framed as a perceived breaking of the world as we know it, and therefore that actions that follow the event somehow are exempt from a previously upheld moral code. The subsequent incorrigible actions of governments around the world, for example the vast increase in the trade of arms, are justified by the impulse, reflected as the consumer's/citizen's responsibility, to return the world to a pre-9/11 state. In light of this fairly resolute political stance, to imply that the ownership of such ideas was collective is misrepresentative and potentially ethically questionable. In the case of *As Good As New*, the residual politics inherent in the idea of devising as collaboration weren't relevant. Instead, a political agenda was created within a hierarchical structure.

If we understand collaboration as an ideal which deserves our interrogation, then such a position serves ultimately to leave it unquestioned.

If we return to Forced Entertainment, Mermikides (2010, p.116) writes that

> I would argue, then, that what Etchells calls 'sampling' does constitute a form of individual authorship- though the question of whether the final script is an expression of Etchells individual voice does not anticipate an objective answer

In the case of *As Good As New*, I would argue that the final script was not an expression of my individual voice, but a 'record' of a constantly renegotiated dramaturgy. Whilst I felt that the performers filtered their contributions according to their understanding of what they felt was needed, so I too filtered mine. David

Rosenburg (2008), one of the founder members of British theatre company Shunt reflects that directing is:

> Never about fulfilling a personal vision of what the show is going to be. It's about trying to fulfil what the collective ambition was

Such a statement suggests an interesting possibility: that a hierarchical structure might look further than the roles allocated to individuals. For *As Good As New* both the actors and I subordinated ourselves to 'dramaturgical thinking', which, as Synne K. Berhndt (2010, p.191) argues, can 'be facilitated in a number of different ways and by different collaborators'. Each of us shaped or edited our contribution directly in response to a shared sense of the making process, of what worked in the rehearsal room in terms of material *and* personal relationships. Whilst I was undeniably in a position of authority, I often abandoned my personal vision in favour of the developing dramaturgy of the piece. Furthermore, if we are to extend our understanding of hierarchies from artistic roles to include the material itself, it might be interesting to reflect on the extent to which the dramaturgical process of devising is heavily reliant on negotiations of hierarchies in terms of the constant evaluation and re-evaluation of material. As Rich Brown (2005, p.62) argues, 'the nature of devising has, it seems, a need for over-collection and ruthless cutting'.

As Good As New and the 'creative performer'

In Chapter One I suggested that the idea of the 'creative performer' imbues the artist with the 'freedom' to reject the prescriptive influence of extraneous authority (such as, but not limited to, the dramatic model) and take personal ownership of

product and process. Such ownership gives the artist permission to value her process as much as her product and to embrace failure and mistakes as an integral part of self-expression.

It was very important to me that the performers should take ownership of their process and product in relation to *As Good As New*, and as such I drew strongly on the idea outlined in the critical context in Chapter One. In particular, I tried to disallow the possibility that there was a single 'source' of meaning to which the group could refer, either in the form of a pre-written script or my directorial 'vision'. I wanted the performers to 'think for themselves' and to understand and take responsibility for the dramaturgical decisions that were made. In order to facilitate their ownership, I filtered my contributions and requests according to a commitment to the evolving dramaturgy of the piece, avoiding anything that I felt wouldn't incite the performers' curiosity, regardless of whether it interested me personally. For example, although I started the process with a number of 'found' texts and objects, I had chosen only those that I thought would be the most productive starting points for the actors. Although I sometimes worked independently on the script in the latter stages, my edits and additions were always only suggestions that had to be agreed by the group. The idea of the embrace of failure was useful to us: I attempted to foster an environment in which the performers felt that they could fail and make mistakes and that such mistakes might enrich the material. In this way the idea of the 'creative performer' was invaluable to our process. The understanding of personal ownership of product and process as an ideologically informed statement, as outlined by Oddey, however, is perhaps less relevant than it once was, however. Devising's new

'orthodoxy', and the lack of political or ideological motivation on behalf of the undergraduate actors and myself that I referred to earlier, would suggest this.

The piece was indebted to the ideas discussed in terms of its aesthetic too. The story of *As Good As New* drew on the idea of failure and attempted directly to contest the problematic notion of wholeness: the performance, suffering a rip and water damage, became 'un-restorable'. I felt, however, that, because it was a 'devised' piece we were creating, that the ideas relating to the performer's self and process must be represented *on stage*. For example I felt particularly obliged to include fictionalised versions of the actors' selves (personas) and to present a narrative that had 'broken' or 'failed' in some way, thus 'exposing' the performers' 'incompetency'. Whilst I was interested in these ideas, they appeared to me to be quite prescriptive, which suggested that I was experiencing them out of context. In the absence of the political and ideological discourse of which these ideas originally were a part, and of a rehearsal period lengthy enough to create a shared vocabulary and distinct methodology, they became simply part of an (important) range of conventions available to us. In this way, the possibility that the presence of failure can make an aesthetic more real than 'representational' dramatic theatre, as suggested by the rhetoric and outlined in my analysis in Chapter One, becomes problematic. 'Failure' was a convention that *As Good As New* could draw on, and where it did occur in the performance, it was ultimately a fiction and a representation.

In accordance with the post-structuralist motivations of the project I remain suspicious of the possibility of 'the real' on stage, and the idea that the origin of this reality is the performer's subjectivity. In light of Derrida's theory of logocentrism outlined in Chapter One such an idea appears contentious. It might

seem that the turn away from the unwanted extraneous authority of dramatic theatre aligns devising with Derrida's (1990, p.235) notion that the stage will remain theological for as long as it upholds a distant 'author-creator'. However, the focus on the actor's self, as outlined in the critical context in Chapter One, can be viewed also as a spurious point of origin in light of the theory of logocentrism. Phillip Auslander (1997, p.29) argues that

> the theatre remains theological as long as it is logocentric, and the *logos* of the performance need not take the form of the playwright's or creator's text. Other grounding concepts include the director's concept and, more interesting, the actor's self.

The liberation from authority characterised by the turn inwards to the actor's self is paradoxical, because it replaces an external authority with an internal one and suggests that the self transcends or is the 'origin' of the meaning-making process. From the minute we set foot in the rehearsal room in a university drama department twelve years into the twenty-first century we brought with us a culturally and historically specific set of artistic, social, class-based, gender-based, economic, political, social and emotional conventions. In light of this, I would argue that the notion of 'freedom' is contentious. The fact that we were creating a 'devised' piece of work (especially in a university context) perhaps brought with it a set of ideas as pre-determined as they would have been had we decided to stage a play. If so, this raises questions about the continuing legitimacy of an identity for devised theatre based on its suspicion of an 'unthinking' conformity to a pre-determined set of conventions as is allegedly the case with the dramatic model. Furthermore, its departure from the 'representational' nature of the dramatic is

called into question, as I will go on to discuss further in relation to 'the move away from written text'.

As Good As New and 'the move away from written text'

In Chapter One I explored the 'move away from written text' and argued that it signifies devising's objection to the primary positioning of the written text within the dramatic model. I suggested furthermore that such an objection is indicative of a wider suspicion of authority, authorship and singularity, and that this equates to a challenge to 'logocentrism', as set out in post-structuralist theory. I argued that devised theatre is said, through the multiplicity inherent in both its methodology and aesthetic, to offer an experience that is more in tune with 'real' human perception.

As Good As New was indebted to many of the ideas associated with the move away from written text, as outlined in Chapter One. The process upheld devising's challenge to the primary positioning of the written text, both in the sense of its temporal authority and its dominance over other elements within the making process. As such, we did not begin with a script. Where we did use written text, we used a variety of 'found' texts, not written for the purpose of being staged, and which I selected because I thought they would make good starting points for the generation of material. The original texts that we had were in the form of a handful of poems written as a response to the theme of 'restoration'. All of these texts were then either heavily edited or discarded according to the developing dramaturgy of the piece. The narrative of the piece developed out of the work we did in the rehearsal room, which necessarily included verbal and non-verbal

games and exercises and work with objects and space. We thus wove a dramaturgy from a number of theatrical elements including but not limited to text. Once we did begin to use a script as a means of recording changes it could be viewed as a 'performance text'. Such texts can, as John Freeman (2007, p.29) suggests, are 'rarely [be] regarded as literary and are seldom seen as stand-alone objects, forming as they do part of a continuum of process'.

In line with the post-structuralist motivations of the project, the challenge to the logocentric notions of authority and authorship signified by the move away from written text were of particular interest to me, and informed the process throughout. Indeed, the desire to work with a wide range of 'found' materials and build a narrative through their layering and juxtaposition was for me a highly productive and inspirational way of working that resonated with the post-structuralist theories of authorship and intertextuality in which I was interested. Closely linked to Derrida's notion of logocentrism is that of the 'death of the author', a concept expounded by the theorist Roland Barthes (2001). According to post-structuralist thought, the 'author' is not the means of unlocking the (singular) meaning of a text, but is another transcendental signified in which we spuriously identify an 'ultimate origin' of coherent meaning. Barthes (2001, p.1469) writes that 'To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing'. The effacement or 'death' of the author as such causes a subsequent 'opening up' of the text that allows meaning to emerge from its complex relationship both to the reader and to the multifarious texts from which it was explicitly or implicitly formed. The relationship between texts in this context is known as 'intertextuality', a term coined by post-structuralist Julia Kristeva (1986, p.37) but that has itself been interpreted and reinterpreted many times. By using

fragments of 'found' text juxtaposed with one another, and with other elements of the mise-en-scene, meaning was not traceable to a single point of origin, an authorial voice. Each text we used drew meaning both from the context from which it had been lifted but also took on fresh meanings in light of its new one.

However, the process can also be said to have deviated from the rhetoric, especially as outlined by Lehmann (2006). Ultimately, in *As Good As New* the written texts formed the anterior strand in the various layers of material that we used, and the verbal narrative was also the main structure of the piece, thus suggesting that the process, like that of logocentric dramatic theatre, was subordinated to the 'primacy' of the written text. However, I would argue that, in spite of this, *As Good As New* still constituted a challenge to logocentrism, and therefore also to the idea that the 'written text' represents in devising rhetoric, in two significant ways. Firstly, the foregrounded role of written text was one that emerged as the process progressed: we did not set out with the intention of drawing on written text more than other elements, but came to that approach through a process of exploration which drew on all aspects of the theatrical vocabulary equally. In that way, from the beginning of the process, text was not afforded special 'rights' (to use Lehmann's word) over any of the other elements, and therefore was not looked to as a source of authority. Secondly, although the piece itself drew on many typical traits of dramatic theatre, for example '[w]holeness, illusion and world representation' (Lehmann, 2006, p.22) and the use of character, it, quite explicitly attempted to take the concept of 'wholeness' to task. At various points in the narrative, certain areas of 'damage' to the scenes were uncovered, until a point where the scenes began to fracture and the possibility of a realist narrative was subverted, for example where the character

Harold discovered a fragment of Cameron's 'Broken Britain' speech on the underside of a plate where previously there had been the date and the manufacturer. In this case the illusion of the enclosed 'world' of the piece was intentionally compromised (there was no 'explanation' for this occurrence as with a realist narrative) and the method of construction exposed. More broadly, the choice of the show's theme, restoration, was an explicit attempt to question the problematic idea of wholeness. The use of the clock in the second and sixth scene, for example, was an attempt to point to the idealistic and ultimately futile human impulse to 'get back' to an 'original state'. The characters Harold and Ana wanted to stop time in order to repair and restore the damage that had been done, but, ultimately they failed- the 'real' time of the show was never going to stop for them. The environmental nature of the piece meant that the audience was allowed relative freedom to move about in the space as they wished and so to create their own sense of the meanings offered to them. In this way, the idea of wholeness was challenged further, as the audience were framed as individual collaborators in the creation of meaning, and not treated as an homogenous entity in the secluded darkness of a seating bank.

I would therefore argue, in the context of *As Good As New*, that a challenge to logocentrism need not indicate a suspicion or move away from the written text per se. This argument is in line with Tomlin's (2010, p.58), as set out in her aforementioned article. There she indicates the potential limitations of a conflation of a criticism of the written text with a criticism of the philosophical underpinning of the dramatic, arguing that it 'reduc[es] the potential for productive cross-pollination' between young theatre-makers. Her concerns are reflected by a variety of

academics and practitioners. For example, Peter Boenish (2010, p.162), who cites Tomlin in his discussion and argues that the text-based/devised binary has:

> been fully institutionalized within the country's theatre system, from aesthetic considerations, criticism, venue programming and funding policies to academic debate and theatre training

He goes on to argue that the 'rift' between the text and the theatre should be acknowledged within staging, rather than endlessly debated in terms of the 'power structures (and struggles) between the (written) text and other theatre signs'. In this way, he suggests perhaps that hierarchy cannot be eradicated from theatre-making.

The distinction between dramatic theatre and devised work is further called into question by the idea that a fragmented and multifarious aesthetic is somehow more in tune with the real, as outlined in Chapter One. Whilst I would agree that such an aesthetic presents an interesting challenge to the problematic notions of authority, authorship and singularity, I would suggest that this does not make it more 'real', since, presented on stage, it is a fiction, or a representation, like any other. In his essay *In Defence of the String Quartet: An Open Letter to Richard Schechner*, Stephen Bottoms (2011, p. 27) writes that, in line with post-structuralist theory, '*there is no non-theological stage to be had*, no purely present performance in the moment, no escape from representation'. According to this thinking, the challenge to 'wholeness, illusion and world representation' (Lehmann, 2006, p.22) of dramatic or 'text-based' theatre is called into question. If we understand all theatre as representation, then the idea that devised theatre can transcend realism by offering something *more* real is paradoxical. In this way, the

boundaries between the two modes of working begin to blur, and the potential of the use of written text in devised theatre-making may perhaps be readdressed.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the written element of this research project, this dissertation, has been to reflect critically and personally on the contemporary efficacy of three paradigms- collaboration, the 'creative performer' and the move away from written text- upheld by the 'rhetoric' of devising.

I have used post-structuralist theory throughout the dissertation in an attempt to interrogate the efficacy of these three important ideas. Whilst theories of authorship and intertextuality may usefully inform our understanding of devised theatre-making, such ideas do not give rise to the absence of authority, nor can they. I would argue that it is idealistic to suggest that devising can eradicate authority from its processes more generally, even while it remains healthily suspicious of it. The performance drew usefully in a number of ways from the 'rhetoric' of devising, for example, by using a reflexive and inclusive working process that valued the contributions of individual performers, but departed from it significantly in other ways. The political agenda of the piece, for example, was not created collaboratively and did not inform the choice of method itself as has previously been the case with devised work.

Returning to Stephen Bottoms' (2011) discussion of representation, we can see that his comments are made in relation to the quote I referred to earlier in which Derrida (1990, p.235) discusses the absent 'author-creator' as the centre of the 'theological' stage. He argues that:

> anyone who has actually read the essay […] knows that Derrida's underlying point is that (and here I am necessarily reducing a complex argument to sound-bites), for all Artaud's passion and desire, *there is no non-theological stage to be had*, no purely present performance in the moment, no escape from representation. Directors like you and me are always already as "theological" as playwrights, insofar that we orchestrate (*write*) the performance event in advance (i.e. "absent and from afar"). (Bottoms, 2011, p.27)

Bottoms proposes that the director's position of authority can be compared directly with the playwright's, despite Schechner's criticism of the power with which the latter's role is imbued. He goes on to suggest that Schechner's point of contention therefore may be with a particular *kind* of authority, i.e that of the 'theatre industry', not with authority per se, and that the focus on the playwright's apparent 'power' is a form of scapegoat for such a position:

> it seems to me that your own challenges to unjustly-held power relate less to the playwright-as-god myth than to a suspicion of the theatre industry more broadly. (Bottoms, 2011, p.27)

His charge may be applied more widely to devising rhetoric. If, as I have suggested, devising has not the capacity to escape hierarchy, even while it necessarily remains suspicious of it, then it might be interesting to (re)consider

which types of authority it prefers and to which it most objects and on what grounds. In other words, what is devising's current relationship to the mainstream or the establishment, both in terms of its politics and in terms of its aesthetic and form? If devising is to maintain an identity on the basis of its departure from the dramatic, then what are the reasons for this? Are the old 'adversaries' of devised theatre outlined in this dissertation still as objectionable as they once were, and on what grounds? What new possibilities are there for the use of written text in devised theatre-making? How might hierarchical working and a shared responsibility for dramaturgical thinking be combined? What is the relationship between hierarchy and dramaturgy? A renegotiation of devising's relationship with authority thus might be appropriate in order for the practice to stay critically and artistically alert to fresh challenges brought on by changing times. As Heddon and Milling (2006, p.230) argue:

> In a globalised world, the 'enemy' is not so easily identified. Concepts of singular identity and cohesive community, of nation and nationality, and indeed of 'margin' and 'centre' have similarly been contested and problematised. Such challenges make it difficult, and arguably naïve, to discuss devising in the terms previously ascribed to it.

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