OUT OF THE (PLAY)BOX:

AN INVESTIGATION INTO STRATEGIES FOR WRITING AND DEVISING

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Abstract

Sarah Sigal observes that the 'theatre-maker/writer/deviser Chris Goode has referred to […] a 'phoney war' between writing and devising'.[1] This dissertation proposes a new method of playwriting, a (play)box, which in its ontology rejects any supposed binary division between writing and devising or text and performance. A (play)box is written not only in words, but also in a curated dramaturgy of stimuli – objects, music, video, images and experiences. Drawing on Lecoq's pedagogy and in its etymology, a (play)box makes an invitation to playfully investigate its stimuli. It offers an embodied, sensory route into creation that initiates playful, affective relationships between the performers and provocations, harnessing the sensory capacities of the body in authorship.

By writing using the affordances of afferent stimuli combined with language, I draw on and extend recent experiments in collaborative authorship. A (play)box is inspired by the ways that music, things, stage directions, a collaborative generation of ideas and physical devising tasks have shaped, structured and authored the work of recent collaborative theatre-makers. I offer a context and methodology of Practice-led Research, illustrated by the rehearsals of my collective responding to the (play)box, *Provenance*, where outcomes appeared that may not have been arrived at using conventional play-text.

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[1] Sarah Sigal, *Writing in Collaborative Theatre-Making* (London: Palgrave, 2017), p. 3.

For my wonderful parents.

And for Jay, who has endured many lost weekends and early mornings ruined by an alarm clock.

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Introduction

This research project charts my creation of, and investigation into, a new mode of writing

for theatre that combines original play-text and material objects as a provocation for

theatre-making. I have named this curated dramaturgy of stimuli a (play)box – a stimulus

for theatre-making written not only in words but also in 'things' that immediately initiate

embodied, *affective* relationships in real space and linear time between the performers and

prompts, and which guide creation towards visual and physical modes of performance.[2] I

explore the epistemic nature of this dramaturgical ontology and what happens in a

rehearsal room when stimuli for theatre-making that are not usually combined by

playwrights are offered together at the start of a rehearsal process. In doing so, I aim to

expand the understanding of play-writing to encompass not only what John Freeman

defines as 'performance writing and dramatic writing', but also paratextual materials, and

explore how this new method of play-writing generates material for performance in a

rehearsal room.[3]

Theoretically, my concept of a (play)box could contain any combination of text-

based and non-text-based stimuli for devising theatre. However, those in the example I

have created and discuss here, *Provenance*, include fragments of original scripted play-text

with named characters existing in a dramatic arc expressed in dialogue and stage

directions; other kinds of text more often found in performance texts and scores such as

lists, letters and instructions; things (including newspaper, plastic wrap, red wool, and

make-up); short film clips; music and images. This approach follows what Joanna

Bucknall describes as the 'democratic, collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to

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[2] I draw on Martin Heidegger, Bill Brown and Robin Bernstein in choosing the term 'things' rather than objects. This will be discussed in chapter four.

[3] John Freeman, 'Performatised Secrets, Performatised Selves', *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 14 (4), 2004, 54-67 (p. 54.)

performance-making that has its genealogy in the paradigm shift into performance of the 1960s' and particularly to Fluxus and the Fluxkits they created (discussed in chapter two).[4]

While using a (play)box is itself a method, Jacques Lecoq's (Lecoq) *playful* pedagogy and working methodology underpins the conceptual creation of my approach and working method in rehearsals for *Provenance.* This influence, derived from my studies at the *L'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq* (2005 – 2007) underpins my work.[5] My collaborator Maiya Murphy also trained in Lecoq's pedagogies, so these ideas strongly influence the creative process of my theatre collective, Autopoetics, comprised of myself, Maiya and Chelsea Crothers.[6] Ultimately, this investigation will consider how theatre-makers can be guided to work in a *playful* way that principles creation led by the physical and the visual and how elements of Lecoq's pedagogy can be written into the structure of a (play)box.

A (play)box creates a performative world using stimuli which include fragments of dramatic play-text with named characters existing in a dramatic arc, however, the working method it aims to suggest is specifically Lecoq's - where stimuli are explored through *doing,* in *motion* and in *play.* Simon Murray and John Keefe identify play, discussed in chapter three, and *complicité* for Lecoq as 'critical in the realisation of a vibrant and immediate theatre'.[7] *Complicité*, describes ensemble sensitivity where performers are in a

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[4] Joanna Bucknall, 'The daisy chain model: An approach to epistemic mapping and dissemination in performance-based research', *Performance as Research: Knowledge, methods, impact*, ed. by Annette Arlander, Bruce Barton, Melanie Dreyer-Lude, Ben Spatz (Oxon and New York, Routledge, 2018), p. 51.
[5] <http://www.ecole-jacqueslecoq.com/> [accessed 26 August 2018].
[6] Please see our website, www.autopoetics.com for more details about myself and my collaborators – Maiya Murphy and Chelsea Crothers and our performance of *Provenance.* [Accessed 24 August 2018]. Maiya trained at the London International School of Performance Arts (LISPA). She lecturers in theatre at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Maiya has been prominent in shaping my ideas while researching for and writing this thesis. She suggested that I consider Gibson's work on affordances introduced me to the idea of *enaction.* Moreover, Maiya and Chelsea's ideas are embedded throughout the development of the (play)box *Provenance* and its resulting performances.
[7] Simon Murray and John Keefe, *Physical Theatres: A Critical Introduction*, 2nd edn (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 181. Complicité is also the name of a theatre company now led by Simon McBurney, originally founded by graduates from the Lecoq school in Paris.

state of '[p]hysical and emotional/psychological openness [and] are in symbiosis with each other', which emerges through 'deep listening, looking, touching, smelling, sensing, thinking, repetition, pleasure, boredom', the open, active, affective, sensory state I aim to invite with a (play)box.[8]

Lecoq describes his methods and his school simply as '[a] school in motion' and proposes that '*tout bouge*' (everything moves).[9] His approach, founded on a close observation and recreation of the natural world through movement, creates an aesthetic of physically and visually-led theatre, where visual images are often created by the body and objects performing in non-naturalistic and stylised ways. I adopt Patrice Pavis' definition of 'stylization' as 'eschew[ing] the mimetic representation of a complex reality or whole.'[10] However, 'style' depends on the working aesthetic adopted by the theatre-makers in question. For my collective working on *Provenance* our aesthetic is strongly shaped by Lecoq, and to a lesser extent by Suzuki as Chelsea is trained in Nobbs Suzuki Praxis.[11] While a theatre-maker using a (play)box could take any approach, our aim is to create using non-naturalistic, visually and physically-led theatre in the Lecoq tradition, and to 'explod[e] the traditions of gesture and text in search of a new language and new meanings'.[12] In chapters three, four and five, I discuss how these aims are realised in the performative outcomes of this investigation, which intend to challenge traditional theatre

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Jacques Lecoq, *The Moving Body: Teaching creative theatre,* trans. by David Bradby, 2nd edn (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2002), p. 8., *Tout Bouge* is the name of Lecoq's lecture demonstration. Simon Murray, '*Tout Bouge*: Jacques Lecoq, Modern Mime and the Zero Body: A Pedagogy for the Creative Actor', *Jacques Lecoq and the British Theatre* ed. Ralph Yarrow and Franc Chamberlain (Oxon, New York and Canada: Routledge, 2002), p. 43

[10] Patrice Pavis, *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts and Analysis* (Canada, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 1998), p. 372.

[11] John Nobbs and Jacqui run Oz Frank Theatre, which trains performers in a devolved version of Suzuki, sanctioned by Tadashi Suzuki who they trained with. http://www.ozfrank.com/ [accessed 21 September 2018].

[12] Lecoq, *The Moving Body*, p. 8.

approaches and offer a more integrated method that utilises text and non-text-based strategies that have previously been understood as binary.

Context: The post binary landscape

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, Western theatre culture has seen a division made by critics, funding bodies and educators that places different kinds of theatre and theatre-making into conflicting binaries: of text and performance, non-text-based and text-based work, dramatic and postdramatic. In *Postdramatic Theatre* (1999), Hans-Thies Lehmann argues that there is a division between 'dramatic' and 'postdramatic' theatre.[13] He uses 'the adjective 'postdramatic' [to] demote a theatre that feels bound to operate beyond drama, at a time 'after' the authority of the dramatic paradigm in theatre'.[14] Liz Tomlin argues that Lehmann's monograph consolidated the 'emerging binary' between the avant-garde and 'the dramatic text-based form', a binary that a (play)box in its ontology rejects.[15]

A division between drama/theatre and performance in education became apparent with the advent of Performance Studies and those who advocated it, notably Richard Schechner whom Stephen Bottoms observes was 'so instrumental in establishing' 'the performance studies paradigm'.[16] Performance Studies can be seen to accentuate a supposed dichotomy between 'dramatic', text-based theatre and performance. Michael Mangan makes the case that Performance Studies 'in its 'strongest' form […]

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[13] Translated into English in 2006.

[14] Hans-Thies Lehmann, trans. by Karen Jürs-Munby, *Postdramatic Theatre* (UK, Oxon, USA, New York and Canada: Routledge, 2006), p. 27.

[15] Liz Tomlin, *Acts and Apparitions: Discourses on the real in performance practice and theory, 1990-2010* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 44.

[16] Stephen Bottoms, 'In Defense of the String Quartet: An Open Letter to Richard Schechner', *The Rise of Performance Studies: Rethinking Richard Schechner's Broad Spectrum*, ed. James M. Harding and Cindy Rosenthal (New York & Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) p. 23.

determinedly and aggressively differentiates itself from its predecessors, Theatre Studies and Drama'.[17] Schechner describes Performance Studies as 'unsettled, open, diverse and multiple in its methods, themes, objects of study, and persons. It is a field without fences. It is "inter" – interdisciplinary, intercultural'.[18] Schechner references Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett who observes that performance is 'an artform that lacks a distinctive medium (and hence uses any and all media), […] attending to all the modalities in play'.[19]

These descriptions do not necessarily create a division, however, Tomlin finds that 'Schechner aligns experimental (or avant-garde) practice explicitly with non-text-based work, and positions text-based work as a production of tradition'.[20] Similarly, Bottoms refutes Schechner's argument that ''the staging of written dramas' – will be the string quartet of the 21st century: a beloved but extremely limited genre, a subdivision of performance''.[21] Bottoms observes that 'we now seem to be living with a strangely dichotomous situation, in which much that once would have been regarded as "theatrical" has been annexed off and relabelled as "performative"'.[22] Bottoms argues that 'all too often, theatre is now categorized as the acting out of dramatic literature in a purpose built-building, whereas performance is taken to encompass pretty much anything and everything else'.[23] However, Bottoms, Tomlin, Duška Radosavljević (2013), W. B. Worthern (2011), Peter Boenisch (2015) and others have questioned this binary and as Freeman espouses,

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[17] Michael Mangan, *The Drama, Theatre and Performance Companion* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 9.
[18] Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* 2nd edn (New York, Oxon and Canada: Routledge, 2006), p. ix.
[19] Schechner, p. 3.
[20] Tomlin, *Acts and Apparitions*, p. 37.
[21] Bottoms, 'In Defense of the String Quartet', p. 23.
[22] Stephen Bottoms, 'The Efficacy/Effeminacy Braid: Unpicking the Performance Studies/Theatre Studies Dichotomy', *Theatre Topics*, 13:2, (2003), pp. 173 – 187, (p. 173).
[23] Ibid.

aim to make an 'attempt at breaking down traditional distinctions between text/performance, theatre/performance and performance/life'.[24]

This binary was not only suggested in education and theatre criticism, but also in the way that arts funding bodies categorise, assign and distribute grants. Radosavljević notes the suggestion that in the UK the 'gap between new writing and devising was potentially being perpetrated by political and economic rather than aesthetic and methodological factors.'[25] Likewise, Tomlin observes that funding bodies and arts organisations which promote artists can also create arbitrary divisions between.[26] So, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century we see a collection of external influences in funding bodies, education, and theatre criticism that categorised creatives into sometimes arbitrary and conflicting binaries. Recent literature by critics such as Tomlin, Boenisch, Bottoms and Radosavljević has shown that theatre-making today cannot be easily divided into these categories, and that theatre is now in a post-binary landscape. A (play)box cannot be placed on either side of this supposed binary as it comprises elements that some commentators might divide – 'dramatic' play-text and 'aesthetic and methodological' approaches that could be considered 'postdramatic'. Chapters three, four and five will demonstrate how such divisions are irrelevant to creation using a (play)box.

Terminology

In this section, I will define the terminologies that are associated with a (play)box and the collaborative working method I propose and use in my own practice. In making these

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[24] Freeman, *New Performance/ New Writing*, p. xii.
[25] Duška Radosavljević, *Theatre-Making: Interplay Between Text and Performance in the 21ˢᵗ Century* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 86.
[26] Ibid.

definitions I place myself and this research in the UK context as the formative experiences

that have shaped my work, including the majority my training was in the UK, including

my first experience of Lecoq's ideas at the Royal Conservatoire Scotland (RCS).[27] As

Sigal notes in *Writing in Collaborative Theatre-Making* terminologies 'have a particular

meaning within different writer-company collaborative practices. Although some

definitions of terms overlap in meaning from company to company or practitioner to

practitioner, others differ within the context of the work being made'.[28] Boenisch agrees,

noting that 'terms such as 'straight' theatre and 'devising', 'dramaturgy', 'performance'

and 'postdramatic', to name but a few, resist easy translation and often add to the

mésentente'.[29]

Terminologies shift following changing cultural and historical contexts in their

understanding and application. Pertinent to a (play)box are the shifting understandings of

devising and collaborative theatre-making (and their relationship to each other), the

idea of a theatre-maker, stage-directions, functional and literary text, traditional (or

conventional) theatre, dramaturgy and writing. Defining a 'shared understanding' of

these elements is useful in as Boenisch suggests in avoiding a '*mésentente'.* Moreover,

using a (play)box these terms become operational working methods. So, for example,

practitioners who dislike and automatically eliminate stage directions might dismiss the

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[27] At RCS I studied a BA (Acting) (1995-1998), where three of the full-time faculty had trained at Lecoq. Fay Lees Lecoq, Lecoq's wife, also trained at RCS and there are strong links between the two institutions. While my two years in Paris at Lecoq (2005 – 2007) were enormously influential, I also received much ad hoc training through workshops with British theatre companies in the UK including Complicitié, Told by an Idiot, Shared Experience and Frantic Assembly. Additionally, Leocq's ideas have been enthusiastically embraced by British theatre schools and theatre companies. Lecoq's influence on practitioners in the UK is noted in his obituaries. Martin Esslin, 'Jacques Lecoq obituary', *The Guardian,* 23 January 1999, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/1999/jan/23/guardianobituaries>, [accessed 26 September 2018], John Calder, 'Obituary: Jacques Lecoq', *The Independent,* 28 January 1999, < https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/obituary-jacques-lecoq-1076692.html>, [accessed 26 September 2018].

[28] Sigal, *Writing in Collaborative Theatre-Making,* p. 11.

[29] Peter Boenisch, *Directing Scenes and Senses: The Thinking of the Regie* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), p. 2.

creative opportunities they provide if their understanding of them is as rigid and dictatorial (a notion discussed shortly). Finally, as my collaborators and I are from different countries, with training and education that both overlaps and diverges, in defining these terminologies I offer the common approach we established working together, to understand and use the (play)box *Provenance*.[30]

'Traditional' theatre is defined by Radosavljević as 'the practice of staging a play, which dominated theatre production process in Europe and America at the turn of the twentieth century and continues to be the primary mode of production in many cultures to date'.[31] In a traditional structure, practitioners are usually assigned specific roles and remain within them, whereas devised theatre-making (and Lecoq's vision of actor-creator) opens opportunities for a flow of ideas and tasks between the different creatives. Lavender and Harvie note the commonality in much theatre of 'accepting the director as a visionary leader or author/*auteur*, using text as a starting point, valuing psychological realism, structuring narrative around conflict, and practicing theatre itself as a set of conventional practices.'[32] In the UK, these 'conventional practices' - of text-based, psychologically realistic, director-led theatre have, as Radosavljević suggests 'dominated theatre production process'.

Sarah Grochala agrees with Radosavljević that 'there is a tendency within British theatre culture to make a sharp division between text-based and non-text based performance as if they were discrete, diametrically opposed forms of theatre' and that '[n]on-text-based performance is often characterized as […] progressively avant-garde,

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[30] Chelsea Crothers received her BA in Applied Theatre from Griffith University and has studied extensively Nobbs Suzuki Praxis extensively with OzFrank Theatre. Maiya Murphy gained her BA in Theatre Studies at Yale and a PhD from the University of California in Drama and Theatre. She also studied Lecoq pedagogy at the London International School of Performing Arts (LISPA).

[31] Radosavljević, *Theatre-Making,* p. 27.

[32] Ed by Jen Harvie and Andy Lavender, *Making contemporary theatre International rehearsal processes* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2010), p. 2.

produced through collaborative devising processes and privileging visual over textual

dramaturgy. Text-based theatre is, in comparison, thought to be conservative and

reactionary in its form and mode of production' but notes that 'Radosavjlevic points out

that these binaries are far too simplistic'.[33] Likewise, Vicky Angelaki cites Radosavljević

to discourage 'the segregation of plays into categories rigidly defined under terms such as

'text-based'' and argues that in the 21st century 'the binary between alternative and

mainstream became forever blurred'.[34] My concept of a (play)box develops the arguments

of critics including Boenisch, Grochala, Tomlin, Angelaki and Radosavljević exposing

these projected binaries as irrelevant when considering theatre in Britain (and beyond)

today by offering a mode of practice that resists such neat division.

Devising re-defined as theatre-making

A (play)box directly challenges 'traditional' theatre approaches by offering an integrated

method that combines dramatic play-text and non-text-based approaches that have

previously been understood as binary. It proposes a curated dramaturgy of stimuli as the

initial provocation in a theatre-making process that could be described as devised. While

devising is a widely-used terminology, it is can also engender confusion as it is fluid and

shifting in what it defines but cannot be considered in binary opposition to writers or play-

text. Devising can be understood as the creative development of ideas using a variety of

processes and strategies, usually with a range of creatives with varying skills sets, ending

in a performance for an audience.[35] Govan et al. make the important distinction that

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[33] Sarah Grochala, *The Contemporary Political Play: Rethinking Dramaturgical Structure* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen, 2017), p. 13-14.
[34] Vicky Angelaki, *Social and Political Theatre in 21st-Century Britain: Staging Crisis* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2017), p. 6., p. xi.
[35] Radoslavljević notes that the growing ubiquity of performing for an audience has been complicated by developments in performing using new media and technology. Duška Radoslavljević, *The Contemporary Ensemble: Interviews with theatre-makers* (Oxon, New York and Canada: Routledge, 2013), p. 13.

devising is '*processes* of experimentation and sets of creative *strategies* – rather than a single methodology'.[36] Heddon and Milling agree, finding that 'devising is best understood as a set of strategies' and Radoslavljević notes that it is a 'methodology rather than a genre of performance'.[37] Likewise, a (play)box, while it can be understood as a methodology in itself, also encompasses a range of methodologies, creative strategies and processes of experimentation in its structure. The processes and strategies that could be associated with devising include acting, direction, creation of text (texts of movement, sound and image) though improvisation, writing and adaptation, dance, design of set, costume and lighting, composition and use of sound or music, projection and puppetry or object manipulation.

Cathy Turner and Synne K. Behrndt in *Dramaturgy and Performance* reference Heddon and Milling as they suggest that '[d]evising, in the strictest sense of the word, implies a process where '*no* script – neither written play text nor performance score – exists prior to the work's creation''.[38] However, they observe that 'many (perhaps most) companies do use some form of script, verbal text or score, sometimes as a starting point, sometimes introducing it at a point during the process'.[39] A conflict between devising and text was suggested in Alison Oddey's seminal but now outdated 1994 text, a division that is clearly no longer, if it was ever, the case. Oddey argues that 'devised work 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'.[40] In their 2006 (revised 2016) text, Heddon and Milling observe that

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[36] Emma Govan, Helen Nicholson and Katie Normington, *Making a Performance: Devising Histories and Contemporary Practices* (London: Routledge, 2007), p.7. (Emphasis in original).

[37] Deirdre Heddon and Jane Milling, *Devising Performance: A Critical History* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 2., Radoslavljević*, Theatre-Making*, (2013) p. 24.

[38] Synne K. Behrndt and Cathy Turner, *Dramaturgy and Performance* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 170. (Emphasis in original).

[39] Ibid.

[40] Alison Oddey, *Devising Theatre: A practical and theoretical handbook,* (Oxon: Routledge, 1994) p. 4.

'some of the rhetoric that has surrounded devising suggests that it emerges from a distrust of words or a rejection of a literary tradition in theatre', but also note that 'any simple binary opposition of devising to script work is not supported by the briefest survey of the actual practice of companies who choose to devise'.[41]

Mermikides and Smart note that Ana Sanchez-Colberg argues 'a motivating factor in the development of movement-based theatre forms' stems from a 'progressive devaluation of language and […] a mistrust of language'.[42] However, they also observe that:

> Artaud, Grotowski and Meyerhold, while each espousing the belief that the body was the locus of a deeper, core primal truth than language, all worked with playtexts. What they rejected was the authority of the word and, by extension, of the playwright.[43]

Despite a 'mistrust' of language and 'the authority of the word and […] the playwright' there is a long tradition of 'devised' theatre-makers working with writers and text.[44] Not only Heddon and Milling, and Mermikides and Smart, but Radosavljević, Harvie and Lavender, Sigal, and Govan et al. all provide examples of devised theatre-makers working with writers and/or text.

It is not devising and text then that are in opposition, or language that is mistrusted in devised theatre-making, instead there is a shift of focus, interests and working methods. Govan et al. argue that 'devised performance shows practitioners interest in exploring physicality before textuality, and experimental ways of working that emphasise the

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[41] Heddon and Milling, p. 6.
[42] Alex Mermikides and Jackie Smart, ed *Devising in process,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) p. 9., Ana Sanchez-Colberg, 'Altered States and Subliminal Spaces: Charting the Road towards a Physical Theatre', *Performance Research*, 1:2 (1996), pp. 40-56 (p. 41).
[43] Mermikides and Smart, p. 9.
[44] Ibid.

creative freedom and spontaneity of both performers and spectators', which does not preclude text, but changes the nature of the relationship between text, author and the other creatives, and therefore any pre-existing structures of power and authority.[45] A (play)box combines text, 'physicality' and 'experimental ways of working', its structure troubles the notion of authorial authority and aims to show how text, somatic and experimental working methods can resist binary oppositions.

How useful the term devising is remains moot, particularly considering the role of the writer. Radosavljević suggests there could be 'the attempt at a departure from the term 'devising' [because of its] […] implied binary opposite to text-based theatre'.[46] Mermikides and Smart 'do not attempt to construct any singular definition of devising', which suggests not only the complexity and scope it covers as a process of theatre-making, but also the confusion it can generates as a definition.[47] Govan et al. also find that devising 'defies neat definition or characterisation'.[48] Radosavljević, acknowledging the confusion surrounding the term 'devising', suggests the term theatre-making and observes, 'my recourse to the term theatre-making' is intended to register a certain change of climate'.[49] This change of climate, exemplified by the work discussed in chapter two, inspire my approach, which further develops their collaborative explorations. A (play)box expands the understanding of the tools a writer may use beyond text, to include images, sounds and afferent and visceral experiences and, like Lecoq's approach aims to stimulate intellectual, emotional and tactile responses. Radosavljević observes the movement away from limiting binaries to an expanded understanding of writing and texts, such as those proposed in a (play)box.

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[45] Govan et al., p. 8.
[46] Radosavljević, *Contemporary Ensemble*, p. 10.
[47] Mermikides and Smart, p. 3.
[48] Govan et al., p.7.
[49] Radosavljević, *Contemporary Ensemble*, p. 13.

I will adopt Radosavljević's suggestion of 'theatre-making' as a term to describe the expanded practice of using a (play)box, moving away from the confusion that surrounds the term 'devising' particularly concerning writing and text. Theatre-making, as Radosavljević notes, is 'a term which is increasingly gaining currency in the twenty-first century' that is now often used with, or in place of 'devising', as demonstrated by Radosavljević and Harvie and Lavender.[50] Harvie and Lavender also link their definition of devising, a 'method of performance development that starts from an idea or concept rather than a play text' to theatre-making.[51] They describe how:

> processual refining takes place over time and in actual space, so that theatre-*making* is understood to be as plastic and time- and space-oriented as the medium of its output. This relatively recent shift towards devising's received orthodoxy as a theatre-making method reflects a handful of crucial and concurrent changes within theatre culture and beyond.[52]

Theatre-making can be understood as describing a performance made by a group of creatives, also free to work with or without a pre-existing text (and other stimuli) created by a writer who contributes actively as part of the rehearsal process. A theatre-maker generates material in the creative evolution of a piece of theatre, usually in conjunction with others. Theatre-makers include, but are not limited to, actors (or other performing artists), directors, writers, sound, set, lighting and costume designers, dancers and musicians.[53] Theatre-makers create theatre, often using devising as a strategy but also work with writers and text(s).

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[50] Ibid, p. 12.
[51] Harvie and Lavender, p. 2.
[52] Harvie and Lavender, pp. 2-3. (Emphasis in original).
[53] Radosavlijević observes that while theatre-maker is a common term which has, for example, been used previously by David Tushingham in his 'Live' series, she owes her definition of theatre-making as a 'key denominator of contemporary practice', to Lyn Gardner who describes actors who chose not to wait for paid

The benefits of 'not-knowing'

Theatre-making can in some formats embrace epistemological uncertainty, where theatre-makers actively choose to place themselves in a position of 'not knowing' where the stimuli will take them, or what shape the final performance will take. Discussing *The Arab and The Jew* by Gecko, Smart notes that:

> Lahav emphasised how important he felt it was *not* to know everything a show might be about at the beginning of a process as, he felt, this could close down essential aspects of the creation exploration. 'Not knowing' is something Gecko celebrate.[54]

Likewise, Third Angel discuss the importance to their process of 'the unpredictable emergence of ideas of solutions out of accident, boredom or exhaustion.'[55] Similarly, Catherine Alexander's account of the creation of *The Elephant Vanishes* describes how its director Simon McBurney actively choose a rehearsal state where 'nobody, especially not Simon, knew what was going on [and] […] Simon pushed us further into the chaos of unexpected discovery.'[56] Despite the temptation to make a process more directional by giving as much information and as many answers as possible, both my own experience and those of other theatre-makers suggests the importance of building areas of 'not knowing' into a process.

The tactics employed in the (play)box *Provenance* to create areas of 'not knowing' included presenting the scenes without an order, as Stephens does with *Pornography*

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work but instead make their own 'devised work' and whom she 'would call theatre-makers rather than actors'. Radosavljević, *Theatre-Making,* p. 22 – 23.

[54] Mermikides and Smart, p. 172.

[55] Mermikides and Smart, p. 114.

[56] Harvie and Lavender, p. 73.

(2008), and Johnson with *The Unfortunates* (1969); (and indeed Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, which 'presents itself as a network of "plateaus" that are precisely dated, but can be read in any order').[57] Additionally, I aimed to offer uncertainty with through the inclusion of stimuli without a clearly directional purpose. Rebellato notes that Stephens, Caryl Churchill, and Martin Crimp have all written plays where the scenes can be presented in any order, marking this as one of 'several perceptible dramaturgical shifts beginning in the mid-1990s characterised by writers abdicating from aspects of their plays that they formerly may have been expected to control' and creating opportunities for shared collaborative authorship.[58] Similarly with *Provenance* I aim to offer a dramaturgical shift of authority from writer to theatre-maker, however, as discussed in chapter five, these areas of uncertainty occasionally proved problematic in rehearsals.

Collaboration

My creation of a (play)box aims to engender a collaborative working process in the rehearsal room. Methodologically, working with the diverse stimuli a (play)box offers best suits collaborative practice. The understanding of devising and collaboration are sometimes elided as they are often used together, though certainly distinct. Collaboration suggests a group of theatre-makers who all contribute to a creative process. This supposes an equality of purpose which is not always the case in a devising process, particularly now when, as Mermikides argues, 'with the mainstreaming of devised theatre-making directors

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[57] *The Unfortunates* (1969) by B. S. Johnson is an experimental book, presented in a box in twenty-seven unbound sections, and which apart from the first and last chapters can be read in any order. (See Charles Taylor's 22nd August 2008 article in the *New York Times* 'Piece This One Together'. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/24/books/review/Taylor-t.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0> [accessed 15 September 2018]. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. ix.

[58] Dan Rebellato, 'Exit the Author' in *Contemporary British Theatre: Breaking New Grounds* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), kindle edition, location 887.

and theatre companies have created marketable brands which achieve commercial success leading to a downgrading in the importance of creative collaboration'.[59] (I use the term mainstream to refer theatre performed in commercial theatres in London's West End or other large venues, widely accessed by a large cross section of the public. This theatre has, until recently, been largely naturalistic and text-based). Mermikides cites *War Horse* as a lucrative exception despite its long creative gestation, noting that devised theatre-making can be used as a tool in commercial theatre when it sees it value, while collaboration which is more a philosophical working choice than a skill set or system is not so valuably lucrative.[60]

Inherent in the idea of collaboration is that there is some self-determination in the role and individual artistic input of these creators, but that this can alter and overlap within the collaboration. Govan et al. offer a differentiation of devising and collaboration by noting that devising is 'a process of generating a performative or theatrical event, often but not always in collaboration with others'.[61] Collaboration must be with other people, devised theatre-making not necessarily so. A group of theatre-makers can collaborate to create a piece using devised theatre-making strategies. Drawing on Lecoq's collaborative pedagogy, where groups of students are required to collaborate to present weekly *autocours* (short pieces of theatre responding to a theme), I aim to suggest a collaborative process with a (play)box, where the ideas and creative impulses of a group of theatre-makers are focused together in response to its rhizomatic structure, a flexible paradigm

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[59] Alex Mermikides, 'Brilliant theatre-making at the National: Devising, collective creation and the director's brand', *Studies in Theatre & Performance,* xxxiii: 2, (2013), 153–167 (p. 164.).

[60] Theatre-makers who started subsidising their own work have moved up the ranks and into positions of authority in the mainstream, exemplified by Emma Rice of Kneehigh taking over the Artistic Directorship of the Globe. Mark Brown, 'The Globe's Emma Rice: If anyone ever bended gender it was Shakespeare', *The Guardian*, 5th January 2016, < http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/jan/05/shakespeares-globe-emma-rice-if-anybody-bended-gender> [accessed 21 May 2018].

[61] Govan et al., p. 4.

with multiple points of entry and exit.[62] This collaborative process will be explored in chapters three, four and five.

Play or performance: Dramatic, literary, and functional text

I have argued that the unhelpful division made between 'dramatic' theatre and 'postdramatic' performance is limiting to theatre-making in general and a (play)box cannot be narrowed into either of these supposed spectrums. A (play)box uses a variety of texts, both word texts (dramatic or literary play-text, and 'functional' texts such as instructions, lists, letters, and stage directions) and material texts (images, things, music and video). 'Literary' texts in the UK are particularly associated with the notion of the 'well-made play' crafted by a playwright whose intentions are sought to be understood by those who stage it. Much has been written on this and on how text relates to performance, which will not be explored here, however it is necessary to note its importance and impact on theatre in the UK.[63] Radosavlijević cites the 'highly literary works' of the postdramatic generation' to make the case that 'theatre-making' is a framework for 'writing for performance' that 'will accommodate both the literary and the functional writing for performance.'[64] Like a 'literary' text, a (play)box can be taken and used again. It does not aim to be only a functional record of a performance, enabling technical assistance and guiding the performers.[65]

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[62] Deleuze and Guattari offer the term 'rhizomatic' in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), which will be further defined and discussed in chapter one.

[63] The 'name given in the nineteenth century to a play characterised by the perfectly logical arrangement of its action. Both the expression and the play itself are attributed to E. SCRIBE.' Pavis, p. 438.

[64] Radosavljević, *Theatre-Making*, p. 97.

[65] *An Oak Tree* by Tim Crouch was initially rejected for publication by Faber & Faber 'on the grounds of 'the second actor conceit render[ing] it "not a proper play"'. Cited in Radosavlijević, *Theatre-Making*, p.159. The functionality of a text that sees one performer giving directions to the actor, and therefore includes an element of improvisation does not, as Crouch's work demonstrates, preclude it from also being literary.

A (play)box could be taken and re-staged by different theatre-makers, unlike

entirely functional records of performance that, arguably, cannot be re-staged. Tim

Etchells observes in *Certain Fragments* of the textual records of Forced Entertainment's

performances that:

> These texts are ghosts. They were made in the midst of clumsy and long
>
> performance-making processes […] They were not made for other people to 'do'
>
> them […] I haven't tried to make a 'play' from what was not.[66]

Etchells appears to make a distinction between 'play' text and his non 'play'

(performance) text. Part of this differentiation may be in the intention (or not) for this to be

text as stimulus, or text as record. Govan et al. note that when Forced Entertainment were

'approached by someone wanting to stage its show Speak Bitterness (1996), [they were]

[…] in the words of John Deeney, 'unconvinced that it could be performed by other

people'.[67] I reject the limiting distinction that Etchells implies between texts that are 'play'

and texts that are 'performance'. Like Andy Field, I suggest that '[a] text is simply a

blueprint for performance and a basis for making something happen. […] It might equally

be something inscribed in or on the bodies of the performers – a series of movements or

gestures or acts. It might similarly be a set of rules for play.'[68] Just as Field proposes that

writing, text and authorship can be found in more diverse forms than what is written on

paper, my approach to theatre-making will illustrate how different kinds of stimuli create

texts of sound, visual image and movement, examined in chapters three, four, and five.

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[66] Tim Etchells, *Certain Fragments* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 113.
[67] Govan et al., p. 6.
[68] Ibid.

Stage directions

Stage direction in this dissertation refers to text that is not dialogue that may describe the actions of characters or aspects of the *mise-en-scène*. My stage directions aim to ignite imagination with poetic suggestions for movement and image, rather than act as prescriptive instructions, following experiments by writers such as Lavery, discussed in chapter two. As discussed, stage directions may receive antagonism from theatre-makers who view them as a limitation. Nübling, who has worked regularly and successfully with Stephens, notes that "one of the first things I asked Simon: please don't write stage directions, I have an imagination on my own".[69] He is not alone in considering stage directions intrusions from the writer into the director's imagining of a text into embodiment in theatrical space. This antagonism could stem from the authority that some writers have demanded for them, notably Beckett. Beckett, and since his death his estate, insist on his stage directions being followed as instructions, limiting the agency of the other creatives.[70]

Those, like Nübling, who argue that stage directions are unnecessary posit that good writing can supply all the pertinent information about character action and the *mise-en-scène* in the dialogue. David Mamet in *Writing in Restaurants* claims that 'good drama has no stage directions. It is the interaction of the characters' objectives expressed *solely* through what they *say* to each other – not through what the author says *about* them.'[71] Pavis agrees that text 'can do without any stage directions when it already contains all the necessary information' but also quotes

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[69] Sebastian Nübling, 'Foreword', *Plays 4: Simon Stephens* (London: Methuen, 2015), p. ix.

[70] This was famously exemplified when the Beckett estate withdrew the rights to Deborah Warner and Fiona Shaw's production of *Footfalls* in March 1994, after Shaw-Warner had changed a few lines of the text and stage directions. See Mel Gussow, 'Modify Beckett? Enter, outrage', *New York Times*, 26th March 1994, < http://www.nytimes.com/1994/03/26/arts/modify-beckett-enter-outrage.html> [accessed 24 September 2018].

[71] David Mamet, *Writing in Restaurants,* (London, New York & Toronto: Penguin Books, 1986), p. 14.

Corneille arguing that: 'the poet takes great care to mark in the margin the same actions which do not warrant his burdening his verses with them, and which would even take away from their dignity'.[72] Corneille's assertion that a play's language is weakened if all information must be written in the dialogue can be supported in modern examples. Nick Payne's play *Constellations* begins with a stage direction which is arguably impossible to include in the dialogue: 'an indented rule indicates a change in universe'.[73]

While it may be true for the kind of highly naturalistic theatre Mamet writes that all the action can be included in the dialogue, the same cannot be argued for theatre which works strongly with image and uses physical modes of performance. Graham and Hoggett discuss how the writers they work with understand that 'the text is but one form of address, […] any particular moment might be delivered by a lighting cue or the considered movement of someone's hand'.[74] Stage directions, particularly in non-naturalistic theatre, can move beyond being merely descriptive and help to provide somatic, sonic, and visual suggestions and open new avenues for the other creatives.

The dislike of stage directions exemplified by Mamet and Nübling may stem partly from a lack of clarity in their origin. Their authority is diminished when it is unclear who wrote them, at what point and for what purpose. Stage directions in published texts may be written by the writer before or after the production, or by an editor describing the original production. A distinction should be made between

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[72] Pavis, p. 356.
[73] Nick Payne, *Constellations* (London: Faber and Faber, 2012), p. 10.
[74] Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett, *The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre*, 2nd edn (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), p. 46.

these different types of stage directions as even those created by writers vary in their function. They include descriptions of:

- The *mise-en-scène*.

- Characters – 1. appearance, 2. actions and 3. the way a line could be said.

- Other action, naturalistic or non-naturalistic.

- Interstices: silences, pauses and beats.

- The intangible, for example an emotional state.

- Sonic elements.

- Visual elements apart from the *mise-en-scène*.

It is understandable why an actor might resent a line reading, or a designer feel a stage direction limits their creative scope. Simon Stephens is quoted by Lyn Gardner in *The Guardian* blog discussing *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*: 'he made the point that the show would never have ended up as it did if he had written stage directions detailing exactly how it should look and sound'.[75] Contradictorily, Gardner argues 'the idea that stage directions are sacrosanct is changing, not least because theatre is no longer in thrall to naturalism and is often most exciting, as Dan Rebellato has observed, when it is being metaphorical and is not limited by notions of resemblance'.[76] The opportunities provided by this kind of stage direction, metaphorical and 'not limited by notions of resemblance' are those that I propose with a (play)box.

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[75] Lyn Gardner, 'Exit the stage direction', *The Guardian*, 25th November 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2014/nov/25/stage-directions-simon-stephens-winters-tale> [accessed 16 September 2018].
[76] Ibid.

Defining dramaturgy in relation to a (play)box

A (play)box can be understood as a rhizomatic 'dramaturgy' of stimuli for theatre-making. Definitions of dramaturgy and the role of the dramaturg are broad and as Turner and Behrndt note 'the term 'dramaturgy' a is 'slippery term' and not easily defined'.[77] In the most basic terms, a dramaturg is someone who works on a production, while a dramaturgy denotes a broader understanding of a structure or framework related to the creation of a performance. For a (play)box, 'dramaturgy' describes the rhizomatic structure it offers, providing theatre-makers 'a weave of elements'.[78] Early dramaturgs were understood as a 'critic-theorist' or literary manager, following in the model of Lessing (usually considered the first dramaturg), or the critic Kenneth Tynan (the first literary manager at the Royal National Theatre).[79] A dramaturg might be responsible for helping select plays for a theatre's season, translating or adapting existing play-texts, or supporting the construction or re-structuring a new piece of theatre. While dramaturgy is often associated with plays, play-texts and writers, it has a broader role and function. Dramaturgical analysis extends beyond merely considering text now that, as Turner and Behrndt observe, 'both the 'open' text and devised work demand that we consider the composition of the performance as awhole' and look 'beyond the immediate structures of a play, to the play's performance in a specific social and historical context'.[80]

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[77] Turner and Behrndt, p. 17. As discussed, rhizomatic structures will be further discussed in chapter one.
[78] Turner and Behrndt, p. 39.
[79] Michael X. Zelenak, 'Why We Don't Need Directors: A Dramaturgical/Historical Manifesto', *Theatre Topics*, Volume 13, Number 1 (2003), 105-109 (p. 105). Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-81) is usually considered to be the first dramaturg. Initially employed as a playwright, he moved into acting as resident critic at the Hamburg National Theatre where he wrote a collection of critical essays - the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*.
[80] Turner and Behrndt, p. 30., p. 39.

Magda Romanska describes a dramaturgy that has expanded beyond theatre and text and 'is now permeating all kinds of narrative forms and structures: from opera to musical theatre; from dance and multimedia to filmmaking, video game design and robotics'.[81] Further, she sees the dramaturg as 'the ultimate globalist: inter-cultural mediator, information and research manager, media content analyst, interdisciplinary negotiator, [and] social media strategist'.[82] Turner and Behrnt consider that ''dramaturgy' is an overarching term for the composition of a work, 'the internal structure of a production' as well as, it would seem, a word for the collaborative process of putting the work together'.[83] Tori Haring-Smith suggests that the dramaturg helps to 'assure that both director and spectator understand the rules of meaning-making within a script or production'.[84] Romanska agrees that the dramaturg works to help with meaning making, arguing that '[m]odern dramaturgy sees itself as a field, profession, skill, and verb; as a tool of inquiry, a liberal art, and theatrical practice' and that the 'definition of dramaturgy is expanding and the concept is being refined as we speak, as verb, skill, and function, to include many modes of meaning making'.[85]

Just as the role of the dramaturg and dramaturgy has expanded beyond working in theatres with text to become 'verb, skill and function', so a (play)box is a dramaturgical structure that I have designed to offer 'many modes of meaning making' in a theatre-making process. Here, as Turner and Behrndt argue 'we see one of the clearest manifestations of the usefulness of the dramaturg's role' as 'in devising, the content, form and structure are determined as the process unfolds. The performance text is, to put it

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[81] Magda Romanska, 'Introduction', *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy* ed. Magda Romanska (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 14.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Turner and Behrndt, p. 17.

[84] Tori Haring-Smith, 'Dramaturging Non-Realism: Creating a New Vocabulary', *Theatre Topics*, Volume 13, Number 1, March 2003, 45-54, (p.46).

[85] Romanska, p. 7., p. 14.

simply, 'written' not *before* but *as a consequence* of the process'.[86] A (play)box, offers 'many modes of meaning making' (meaning made from play-text, non-play-text, music, things, sounds and images) and forms a part of the creation of content, form and structure written through the process. I will argue that a (play)box is a mode of practice and a 'tool of inquiry', giving examples from my rehearsal process for *Provenance,* answering and exploring the questions the stimuli propose. Conceptually, a (play)box's rhizomatic structure is constructed, as discussed with areas of not knowing, to create 'organised chaos' and uncertainty.[87] It is a structure that invites 'the chaos of devising', a process that is 'both chaotic and organized simultaneously'.[88] Theatre-makers who encounter a (play)box can enter its rhizomatic structure of organised chaos at any point, choosing, discarding or eliminating the stimuli at any point.

The weaving together of different elements into a performance is described as dramaturgy by Eugenio Barba, who explains that the 'word 'text', before referring to a written or spoken, printed or manuscript text, meant a 'weaving together''.[89] Barba suggests that 'the 'text' (the weave) of the performance can be defined as 'dramaturgy' […] the 'work of the actions' in the performance.'[90] A (play)box offers routes to what Barba describes as 'actions'. Barba argues that in 'a theatrical performance, *actions* (concerning the dramaturgy, that is) are not only what actors do and say, but also what sounds, noises, lights, changes in space are used'.[91] A (play)box weaves things, sounds and proposals for changes in space or tempo together by connecting them to scenes to become,

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[86] Turner and Behrndt, p. 170.
[87] Jessica Kaplow Applebaum, 'Finding our hyphenates: A new era for dramaturgs', *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*, p. 199.
[88] Sarah Sigal, 'The expansion of the role of the dramaturg in contemporary collaborative performance', *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*, p. 187-188.
[89] Eugenio Barba, 'The Nature of Dramaturgy: Describing Actions at Work', *New Theatre Quarterly,* vol.1, 1 (1985), 75-78, (p. 75).
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.

in Barba's terminology, actions. Barba claims that the 'objects used in the performance are also *actions*, transforming themselves, acquiring different meanings and different emotive colorations'.[92] A (play)box offers a dramaturgical weave of actions - sounds, texts, music, things and images, to create what Barba describes as a dramaturgy. It is a dramaturgy of actions and possibilities.

Chapter overview

Having established the context and terminologies for this investigation, I will now provide an overview of this dissertation's structure. Developing the terminologies and context in which this investigation sits, in chapter one, I discuss the theories and methodologies that shape my approach. James J. Gibson's notion of *affordances* is integral to the way that I propose a (play)box should be understood – as something that *affords* a specific range of actions and reactions in a theatre-maker, where '[t]he object offers what it does because it is what it is'.[93] This focus on how the body responds to a material stimulus leads to a consideration of notions of embodiment. Therefore, I take a phenomenological approach that places the body's *lived* experience as central to theorising my concept. Maurice Merleau-Ponty proposes that we are only able to perceive the world because we have a body and that '[t]he body is our general means of having a world'.[94] Developing this idea, Phillip Zarrilli explains 'I begin with experience because it is embodied in the here and now'.[95] The embodied interaction of performer, (play)box and the way that performance material is generated in the rehearsal room is central to this investigation. Like Zarrilli, I

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[92] Ibid.

[93] James J. Gibson, 'The Theory of Affordances', in R. Shaw & J. Bransford (eds.). *Perceiving, Acting, and Knowing: Toward an Ecological Psychology,* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1977), p. 78.

[94] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A, Landes, originally published Paris, 1945 as *Phénoménolgie de la perception* (Oxon, New York and Canada: Routledge, 2012), p. 147.

[95] Phillip Zarrilli, 'Negotiating Performance Epistemologies: knowledges 'about', 'in' and 'for'', *Studies in Theatre and Performance* (2001) 21:1, 31-46 (p. 31).

use the ideas of cognitive scientists, linguistics and philosophers who, drawing on Merleau-Ponty propose that '[f]or Merleau-Ponty, as for us, embodiment has this double sense: it encompasses both the body as a lived, experiential structure and the body as the context or milieu of cognitive mechanisms'.[96]

Francisco J. Varela, Eleanor Rosch and Evan Thompson develop the ideas of phenomenology to propose a theory of *enaction* that I will use to illustrate how cognition and meaning arrive using a (play)box. Varela et al. argue that 'cognition is not the representation of a pregiven world by a pregiven mind but is rather the enactment of a world and a mind of the basis of the variety of actions that a being in the world performs.'[97] As Teemu Paavolainen explains '*enaction* is to movement much as *embodiment* is to the body'.[98] I will show that the enactive cognition a (play)box initiates may not arrive using a conventional play-text. To demonstrate this, I adopt a practice-led methodology and illustrate my argument with examples drawn from my own practice using an original (play)box that I have written, *Provenance.* Additionally, I adopt Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's theory of the rhizome, to suggest that a (play)box is a rhizomatic structure with multiple points of entry and exit that promotes non-linear and collaborative authorship in theatre-making. I consider discussions relating to authority in authorship to develop my argument that in writing a (play)box the playwright abdicates elements of authorial ownership to instigate collaborative authorship. To place these theories in context, chapter one also includes a description of *Provenance,* its contents and my aims and intentions in its writing.

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[96] Francisco J. Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), p. xvi.
[97] Varela et al., p. 9.
[98] Teemu Paavolainen, *Theatre/Ecology/Cognition: Theorizing Performer-Object Interaction in Grotowski, Kantor, and Meyerhold* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 49. Emphasis in original.

In chapter two, I construct a genealogy that locates my work within a body of existing practice and examines the influences on my approach. I will consider the 'performance turn' of the 1960s, Fluxkits, and writers and collaborative theatre makers who inhabit an expanded understanding of playwriting. A (play)box is in natural succession to the avant-garde performance practices of the twentieth and twenty-first century and with them the development of the 'creative performer'. I offer examples of contemporary writers and collaborative theatre-makers who inhabit an expanded understanding of writing from the UK theatre context that has been my primary influence as a theatre-maker. The collaborative partnerships I will consider include Tim Crouch and his regular collaborators, Simon Stephens and his work with Sebastian Nübling, Polly Teale writing and directing for Shared Experience and Bryony Lavery's work with Frantic Assembly. These theatre-makers provide examples of shared authority, where writing in a variety of texts across a body of work has been accomplished through reciprocal collaborative authorship, a process I emulate with a (play)box.

I then consider how my (play)box, *Provenance*, generated material in the rehearsal room. My arguments in chapters three, four and five will be illustrated by moments of practice using *Provenance* and in doing so I will 'unpack' the original form a (play)box offers and discuss how it creates embodied, *affective* relationships leading to the creation of visually and physically-led performance material. Considering the ontological structure of a (play)box, in chapter three I examine how it articulates theories of 'play' drawing on the work of Donald Winnicott, Lev Vygotsky, Victor Turner and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi to show that *playful* structures and restrictions offer theatre-makers creative opportunities.

In chapter four, I develop an understanding of the objects in a (play)box using Martin Heidegger and Bill Brown's definition of objects as 'things' and ultimately Robin

Bernstein's characterisation of 'things' as 'scriptive'.[99] Bernstein notes that she uses 'the

term *script* as a theatrical practitioner might: to denote an evocative primary substance

from which actors, directors, and designers build complex, variable performances that

occupy real time and space.'[100] From this, she proposes that 'a "scriptive thing," like a play

script, broadly structures a performance'.[101] Likewise, a (play)box is an 'evocative primary

substance' that 'scripts' behaviour in the theatre-maker. The 'scriptive things' in

Provenance structured our actions as we explored their *affordances* in rehearsals. Drawing

on examples from our rehearsals for *Provenance* I show that the 'things' in a (play)box

afford a range of actions 'scripted' within a specific dramatic context to produce material,

principally led by enactive creation rather than intellectual analysis.

In chapter five, I provide further insights into my 'practice-led' research (PLR), a

term I take from Linda Candy.[102] From the perspective of my own practice, I explore what

value lies for theatre-makers in the sensory experience of encountering material

provocations 'scripted' into a dramatic context and show that these haptic provocations

produce a different afferent response in theatre-makers than that produced by working with

text alone. In situating the localised and subjective nature of my own practice as central to

my research, I draw on theories of Practice, particularly those of Robin Nelson and his

model of *praxis*, discussed in chapter one.[103] As Estelle Barratt observes '[s]ince creative

arts research is often motivated by emotional, personal and subjective concerns, it operates

not only on the basis of explicit and exact knowledge, but also on that of tacit

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[99] Robin Bernstein, 'Dances with Things: Material Culture and the Performance of Race', *Social Text 101*, Vol 27, NO. 4 (Winter 2009), 67-94.
[100] Bernstein, p. 69.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Linda Candy, 'Practice Based Research: A Guide', Practice Based Research: A Guide. Creativity and Cognition Studios Report V1.0, 2006, <https://www.creativityandcognition.com/resources/PBR%20Guide-1.1-2006.pdf> [accessed 29 April 2018].
[103] Robin Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

knowledge'.[104] I will make the case that the localised and subjective nature of my own practice provides learning and knowledge through my own 'lived experience and personal reactions.'[105] Barrett explains that '[l]earning takes place through action and intentional, explicit reflection on that action. This approach acknowledges that we cannot separate knowledge to be learned from situations in which it is used'.[106] Thus, in chapters three, four and five I give examples of my intentional explorations and reflections on them and how this operated as a methodology of praxis.

Finally, in the conclusion I will answer the research questions that have been investigated in this process to show that a (play)box presents a new method of playwriting that creates afferent pathways to creation that inspire physically and visually-led modes of performance that may not arrive using a conventional play-text.

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[104] Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, *Practice As Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry* (London & New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2007), p. 4.
[105] Barrett and Bolt, p. 5.
[106] Ibid.

Chapter One

What's in the box? The theories and strategies inside a (play)box

Introduction

A (play)box is an alternative approach to playwriting, a stimulus for embodied *action* in the rehearsal room that generates performance material in ways that play-text may not. This chapter explores the theories and methodologies that underpin my concept and 'unpacks' the material contents of the (play)box, *Provenance,* that I have written and developed through this process and with which I test my claims. My methodological approach to this investigation is research *led* by practice. Although practice is not offered as part of this submission, my arguments will be illuminated using examples from the rehearsals of my theatre collective for *Provenance.*[107] An entirely theoretical approach to this new concept could not demonstrate whether my claims for it are justified, as it is a new method and there is no existing body of work on (play)boxes from which to draw conclusions. As I propose that embodied *doing* is fundamental to the functioning of a (play)box, to test this it is essential to employ *lived* experience, therefore this research is *led* and underpinned by practice.

I aim to replicate elements of Lecoq's *playful* pedagogy by offering creative limitations that initiate a *playful* approach to theatre-making in a (play)box. Therefore, I introduce *play* as a strategic approach before it is developed in chapter three. Gibson's concept of *affordances* will be adopted to develop the suggestion I make in chapter four, that the material things in a (play)box offer concrete actions to a theatre-maker by placing them immediately in spatial, temporal and physical relationships. Next, I suggest that

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[107] When I began my MA, Birmingham did not offer an MA by practice and at the point they introduced this as an option it was too late to change courses. As discussed in the introduction, my theatre collective Autopoetics is comprised of myself, Chelsea Crothers and Maiya Murphy. https://autopoetics.com/ [accessed 26 August 2018].

Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome can be applied to the collaborative process of working with a (play)box. I argue that it is a flexible, rhizomatic structure that offers theatre-makers multiple points of entry and exit to the stimuli and in doing so invites collaborative authorship.

To define the experience of working with a (play)box as *embodied* and *enactive* I draw on the work of cognitive scientists and philosophers, particularly Varela et al. and Noë who, after Merleau-Ponty, argues that '[p]erceptual experience acquires content thanks to the perceiver's skilful activity' and who define the body's *lived* experience in the world to produce cognition using the term *enaction*.[108] I consider George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's ideas about how our understanding of the world, demonstrated by linguistic metaphor is developed through our embodied experience.[109] These ideas are situated in the context of actor training techniques including Lecoq's by Rick Kemp, John Lutterbie and Maiya Murphy, whose ideas I consider and extend.

Zarrilli, Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi are discussed to show that this investigation centres on the experiences of the lived body *(Lieb)*. I extend this consideration of the experiences of the body to use Josephine Machon's *(syn)aesthetic* approach to performance theory, which suggests that our senses help us to make sense of the world in an instinctual, physical manner, in which, as Gibson suggests, physical and emotional responses to stimuli arrive before analytic or interpretive responses. These arguments will be considered using examples from *Provenance* in chapters three, four and five. A (play)box instigates a collaboration that disrupts the supposed authority sometimes assumed for an author, and so I will examine these arguments, particularly considering the

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[108] Alva Noë, *Perception in Action* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2004), p. 3.
[109] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

work of Roland Barthes and Dan Rebellato. Initially, the concrete example I draw upon for this research, the play(box) *Provenance* and its contents will be examined.

Provenance: **contents**

In its stimuli, *Provenance* offers a variety of provocations and structures that propose different strategies for theatre-making – visual, aural, haptic, emotional and narrative. Fundamental to my aims for a (play)box is that it invites collaborative writing in a variety of texts, therefore, as I will discuss in chapter five, not only in the prompts themselves but in the *structure* of *Provenance* I aim to abdicate authorial ownership and authority. As I suggested in the introduction, these prompts aim to create a physically and visually-led performance style that I have linked to Lecoq's pedagogy though, of course, may be used in any way. In doing so, I confound the arbitrary and illusory boundaries between traditional 'dramatic' elements such as character and narrative and avant-garde, alternative strategies for performance making, and am inspired not only by Lecoq, but also by Fluxkits, Fluxus scores, the work of John Cage, and more recent experiments with text such as Claire McDonald's *In Bed*.[110] As Cathy Turner observes, theatre has become 'an increasingly interdisciplinary form, where the boundaries between theatre and live art are frequently indistinct'.[111] Like *In Bed, Provenance* aims to 'return questions of agency and authorship to the players'.[112] However, while McDonald's work has 'no narrative, no drama and no content' *Provenance* employs these tools and offers sections of original play-text, other kinds of text, including instructions, letters, lists, stage directions as well as things, images and short video and music clips.[113]

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[110] Claire McDonald, 'In Bed', *Studies in Theatre and Performance,* 30:1 (2010), 59-61.
[111] Cathy Turner, 'Learning to Write Spaces, *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 23:2 (2013), 114-119 (p. 114).
[112] McDonald, p. 59.
[113] Ibid.

Play-text

The sections of play-text trace a narrative based around Alice, and her daughter Agatha.[114]
In order to avoid giving the scenes a linear order, the sections of play-text were rolled up,
so that the theatre-makers would be required to give them a sequence. These provide an
incomplete plot, inviting the theatre-makers to resolve, reject or re-make it. The narrative
provided shows that Alice, a hoarder, is in financial difficulties and her home in a
dangerous state of disrepair. Agatha is trying to move her mother into an old people's
home, but Alice is resistant. Agatha discovers a statue – a head, which she believes may be
valuable and takes it her workplace, Christies, intending to sell it but cannot prove its
provenance. Despite this, Agatha allows the head to be auctioned and it is bought by
Caroline, who is in the process of divorcing her rich husband. *Provenance* explores the
value we give to things and people, and the connection between art, beauty, relationships,
and commerce. It contrasts the collected and the curated to ask what makes an object
beautiful or valuable, and what happens if the balance in our relationships with people and
with things tilts too far in one direction.

Other kinds of text: lists, instructions, stage directions

The lists, letters, instructions and stage directions in *Provenance* are dramaturgical
strategies to invite authorship and agency in theatre-makers. They are 'open' texts that ask
theatre-makers to make choices about how, or whether they should be used. Following
Cage and Fluxus, McDonald suggests that rather than beginning with 'narrative and
storytelling' language can be 'graphic, sonic and visual material; with words as things;
with writing as mark making and with scripts and scores as machines for making

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[114] See the appendix for different drafts of the written elements of *Provenance.*

performance.'[115] The instructions and stage directions aim to function as dramaturgical performance machines, providing offers to, for example, explore a list of body parts that '*could be spoken by several people, or just one. We could hear them repeated, or only once. They could be sung, laughed, filmed, echoed, whispered, or written*'.[116] These instructions and stage directions aim to be provocative, poetic and imagistic rather than dictatorial.

Material stimuli

The material stimuli in *Provenance* fall into two categories – those that are easily transformative and offer a range of a flexible range of affordances and more 'set' things that can transform, but immediately propose a more naturalistic function.[117] My aim for these 'things' is that they are used as they would be at a Lecoq school, explored for their inherent affordances and used in a range of transformative functions. At Lecoq, the materials are explored for their inherent affordances – what they look like, feel like, how they move and how they incite the body to move, leading to what Lecoq calls 'identifications'. Here, the movement of an element or material is imitated by the student. They 'become the different elements of nature: water, fire, air, earth. To identify themselves with water, they play at being the sea, but also rivers, lakes puddles, drops of water' and the same technique is applied to materials, such as those included in *Provenance*.[118] At Lecoq, an exploration of an object's affordances is also the basis for object manipulation, a form of puppetry. With *Provenance*, in addition my proposition to explore the anthropomorphic qualities of these prompts (hoarders are reported to 'anthropomorphise' their things), some are connected to the dramatic scenario of a specific

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[115] McDonald, p. 92.
[116] See appendix.
[117] See figures 1- 10 below.
[118] Lecoq, p. 41.

scene and offer a more naturalistic function, discussed in chapter five.[119] Finally, the

make-up, clingfilm and wool can push, pull, squash or colour the bodies of the performers,

offering routes a visual dramaturgy.

Figure 1 Red wool

Figure 2 Clingfilm and plastic wrap

Figure 3 Newspaper

Figure 4 Image of the head from a Greek statue - Acropolis museum, Athens, Greece

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[119] See, for example Chong Siow Ann, 'The hoarder's anguish and inability to discard things', *The Strait's Times,* 28 October 2017, https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/the-hoarders-anguish-and-inability-to-discard-things [accessed 20 September 2018].

Figure 5 A selection of care items including hand-cream, scent, a toothbrush and toothpaste

Figure 6 Make up
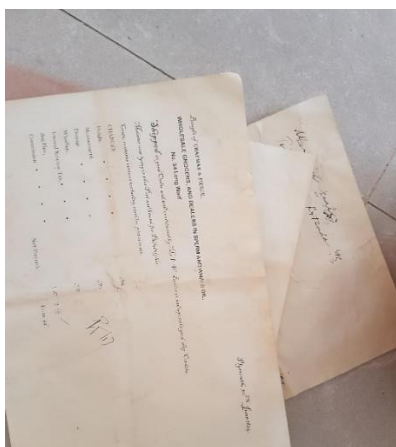
Figure 7 Paperwork describing the head's provenance
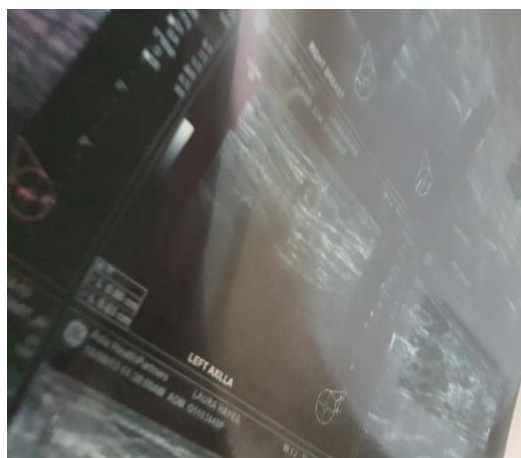
Figure 8 A chest x-ray

Figure 9 A collar-box containing collars, a pipe, an old battery, necklaces and buttons

Music and video clips

I created two short videos using google earth to show locations that were salient to the story, Christies, where Agatha works, and the approach to Alice's home. We used the latter to create a game-like time constraint in which to explore a range of actions, discussed in more detail in chapter five.[120] Music, as discussed in chapters two and five, offers rhythm, an aesthetic and a structure on which to base improvisations. I included Schuman's lieder *Ich Grolle Nicht, Pur ti miro, Pur ti godo* from *L'incornonazione di Poppea* and a video clip of Janet Baker singing *When I am laid* from *Dido and Aeneas,* which additionally provides a range of somatic suggestions that the performers could use as a basis for explorations.

Contextual 'things'

I selected 'things' to offer optional background information about the characters not included in the play-fragments. I intended these to be 'open' stimuli that would create areas of 'not-knowing' and uncertainty and lead my collaborators to author material in directions I had not considered. These include divorce papers, documents showing the

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[120] See appendix for a DVD ROM of the videos and music.

statue's provenance and an x-ray attributed to Agatha. The responses to these stimuli will be explored in greater detail in chapters three, four, and five. Next, I will consider how practice is used as a methodology that underpins this investigation.

Methodology: Practice-led research, (PLR)

Although practice is not included as a part of this dissertation, it is led and shaped *by* practice and is one of the key research methods. The place and definition of practical work within the academy has a wide variety of terminologies that vary between different countries. I adopt the term 'practice-led' (PLR) from Linda Candy, who suggests that '[t]here are two types of *practice related* research: practice-*based* and practice-*led*'.[121] Candy explains that for research to be practice-based (PBR) the 'claims of originality and contribution to knowledge may be demonstrated through creative outcomes in the forms of designs, music, digital media, performances and exhibitions'.[122] While in PBR the practice forms part of the final submission, for PLR this is not the case. Candy's definition of PLR 'includes practice as an integral part of its method'.[123] However, 'the results of practice-led research may be fully described in text form *without the inclusion of a creative work*' as is the case with this submission.[124] Finally, and critically, the research is 'concerned with the nature of practice and leads to new knowledge that has operational significance for that practice'.[125] Here, Candy develops Carole Gray's 1998 definition of PLR as 'research which is initiated in practice, where questions, problems, challenges are identified and formed by the needs of practice and practitioners; and […] the research strategy is carried

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[121] Candy, italics in original.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid. My italics.
[125] Ibid.

out through practice'.[126] Gray's definition applies to the research process of rehearsals for

Provenance, in which a (play)box poses practical 'questions, problems' and 'challenges' to

myself and my collaborators, and where practice in the form of rehearsals guided by the

stimuli in a (play)box is one of the chief methods of exploration, which underpins this

thesis and provides conceptual insights. As Donald Schön suggests, this kind of practical

methodology that provides 'knowledge-in-practice' is particularly well-suited to giving

insights into 'the situations of practice – the complexity, uncertainty, instability,

uniqueness and value conflicts which are increasingly perceived as central to the world of

professional practice'.[127]

Brad Haseman uses the term PBR to expand on what Schön describes, explaining

that they 'are practice-based research strategies and include: the reflective practitioner

(embracing reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action); participant research;

participatory research; collaborative inquiry, and action research'.[128] The 'reflective

practitioner' that Haseman outlines and the strategies she uses of 'reflection-in-action' and

'reflection-on-action' are fundamental working methods in this investigation. Here, the

problem posed through practice is how a (play)box works to create material for

performance. This is explored using 'collaborative inquiry' to provide what Robin Nelson,

who uses the term Practice-as-Research (PaR), describes in *Practice as Research in the*

Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances (2013), as 'substantial insights', as

'PaR affords substantial insights rather than coming to such definite conclusions as to

constitute 'answers'.[129]

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[126] Carole Gray, 'Inquiry through practice: developing appropriate research strategies', keynote in: 'No Guru, No Method? Discussions on Art and Design Research', 1996, University of Art & Design, UIAH, Helsinki, Finland, p.3. < http://carolegray.net/Papers%20PDFs/ngnm.pdf> [accessed 29 April 2018].
[127] Donald Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner* (London: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1983), p. 69., p. 14.
[128] Brad Haseman, 'A Manifesto for Performative Research', *Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy*, 118 (2006), 98-106 (p. 3). Emphasis in original.
[129] Nelson, p. 30.

A (play)box acts as a methodological tool, using stimuli that offer modes of action (explored in greater depth in chapters three, four and five). Throughout rehearsals, my collaborators and I solved problems with action 'through an informed reflexivity' (combined with information gleaned from existing theory and practice this informed reflexivity is *praxis,* discussed shortly). The 'problem' was how to create a performance (which will be referred to in the example I present as *Provenance*) from the stimuli in its (play)box in a Lecoq-based physical and visual performative language.[130] Responding to the stimuli within these stylistic constraints we filmed each improvised investigation and immediately afterwards watched and discussed it, reflecting on the outcomes. In doing so, we actively found solutions to problems within improvisations (reflection-in-action) and then reflected on whether we had achieved our aims immediately afterwards (reflection-on-action). Reflection-on-action was also used as a research method for *Provenance* through my written reflections (in journal form) on the work in the rehearsal room. The insights gained from these reflections were fed back into the work in the rehearsal room.

Nelson suggests that this kind of reflexivity 'concerns not only reflecting on what is being achieved and how the specific work is taking shape, but also being aware of where you stand ('where you are coming from') in respect of knowledge traditions more broadly' and placing your work in the context of 'universal knowledge'.[131] I arrived at the insights made in this thesis through these explorations in the rehearsal room and cycles of reflection upon them. In addition to PLR, I applied the frameworks of phenomenology, affordances, play, Lecoq's pedagogy, rhizomatic structures, enaction, (syn)aesthetics and reference to the work of other practitioners.

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[130] Nelson, p. 44. See the introduction for a description of my aesthetic aims for this project.
[131] Ibid. Nelson describes this 'universal knowledge' as 'know-that', discussed shortly.

Nelson, John Freeman in *Blood, Sweat & Theory: Research through Practice in Performance* (2010), and Ben Spatz in *What a Body Can Do* (2015) all find that practice alone cannot be considered as research.[132] Nelson observes that ''practice-led research' is commonly used in Australia to indicate something very similar to my conception of PaR'.[133] However, Nelson's PaR differs from this PLR as it 'involves a research project in which practice is a key method of inquiry and where, in respect of the arts, a practice […] is submitted as substantial evidence of a research inquiry'.[134] To articulate how the practice offers new knowledge, it should be accompanied by a written exegesis (as it is known in Australia) 'to assist in *articulating and evidencing the research inquiry*' or to use Nelson's term 'complimentary writing'.[135] Estelle Barrett explains that the exegesis helps to 'answer the crucial question: "What did the studio process reveal that could not have been revealed by any other mode of enquiry?"' and allows the 'creative arts researcher to elucidate why and how processes specific to the arts discipline concerned mutate to generate alternative models of understanding [and] […] elaborate the significance of these models within a research context'.[136] While this thesis is not 'complementary' to a practical submission it does, as Barratt explains, reveal how and why the studio process described 'could not have been revealed by any other mode of enquiry' and how the new method playwrighting that a (play)box proposes provides a development informed by the work of the Fluxus artists, McDonald and the practitioners I consider in chapter two.

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[132] Ben Spatz, *What a Body Can Do: Technique as Knowledge. Practice as Research* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 288.
[133] Nelson, p. 9.
[134] Nelson, p. 8.
[135] Nelson, p. 90., p. 36.
[136] Barrett and Bolt, p. 162.

Nelson, and Barrett and Barbara Bolt use the term *praxis* to describe the working

structure that I have adopted in this investigation. Barratt and Bolt argue that '[p]raxical

knowledge implies that ideas and theory are ultimately the result of practice rather than

vice versa' where ''effects' broadly understood as 'knowledge' emerge through material
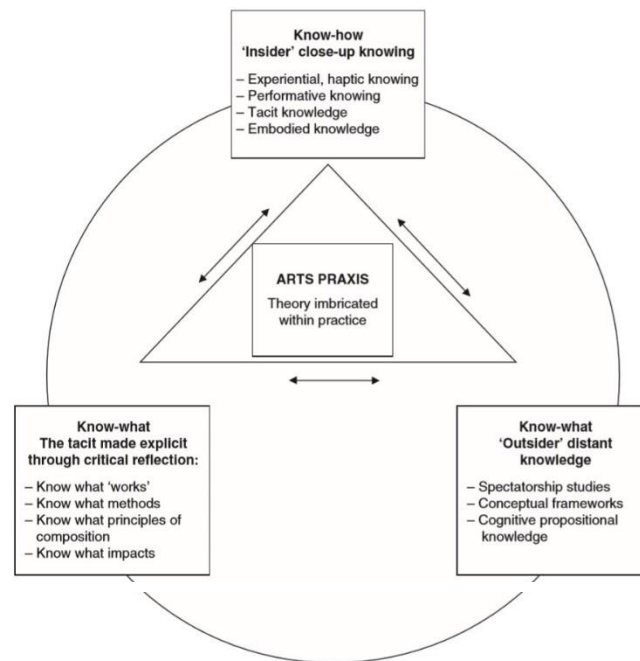
Figure 10 Robin Nelson's 'modes of knowing: multi-mode epistemological model for PaR'. Nelson, p. 37. Please note that this version in the 2013 publication is inaccurate. The 'outsider' knowledge should be 'know-that'.

processes. Because such processes are (at least in part) predicated on the tacit and

alternative logic of practice *in time*, their precise operations cannot be predetermined'.[137]

The practical explorations discussed here create knowledge that could not have been

revealed in a different manner or predetermined and are 'imbricated' with the more

traditional research and written thesis that defines my findings. Nelson has devised a

'methodology and method' that aims to 'frame knowledge not based on the formulation of

laws by way of deduction and induction […] but on a different, but nevertheless

equivalently rigorous basis'.[138] Instead, he offers a rhizomatic structure of praxis as 'theory

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[137] Barratt and Bolt, p. 6.
[138] Nelson, p. 39.

imbricated within practice' with three interweaving strands that nourish each other creating 'evidence produced through different modes of knowledge; 'know-how; know-what and know-that' that 'embrace[s] modes of knowing (tacit, embodied-cognition, [and] performative)' that are specific to practice.[139]

As Spatz observes, the terms 'know-how' and 'know-that' come 'from Gilbert Ryle, who distinguished between propositional knowledge "that" something is true and practical knowledge of "how" to do something'.[140] Nelson observes that know-that is 'the equivalent of traditional academic knowledge articulated in words and numbers' drawn from existing literature.[141] Nelson offers 'know-what' as a new model that 'covers what can be gleaned from an informed reflexivity about the processes of making and its modes of knowing'.[142] This differs from know-how because it uses 'critical reflection – pausing, standing back and thinking about what you are doing', which, as discussed, is key in this inquiry.[143] Nelson cites Schön, who notes that this kind of critical reflection can enable a practitioner to 'criticize the tacit understandings that have grown up around the repetitive experiences of a specialised practice'.[144]

Know-how describes experiential, haptic knowing that is embodied, performative, and tacit knowledge, which Nelson describes using the example of knowing-how to ride a bicycle, where although many elements such as balance are involved, the rider may not be able explain, or even be aware, that these things are happening.[145] Spatz finds this 'concept of "know-how" is problematic here, insofar as it conflates knowledge, ability, and experience. Since neither ability nor experience are transmissible, "know-how" in this

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[139] Nelson, p. 38.
[140] Spatz, p. 231.
[141] Nelson, p. 45.
[142] Nelson, p. 44.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Schön, p. 61.
[145] Nelson, p. 9.

sense cannot be a rigorous research outcome'.[146] However, Nelson explains that this 'know-how' is often embodied, like the embodied knowledge of Lecoq's pedagogy that Maiya and I bring to our practice and Chelsea of Suzuki. The embodied, experiential knowledge that a (play)box produces through *doing* in the space and time of a rehearsal room is essential in both making the performance of *Provenance* and this written examination of how it functions when theatre-makers play with it.

Taking a Phenomenological approach: The 'livedness' of embodied experience

The embodied knowledge gained from the localised and subjective context of my own practice is integral to the development of my concept of a (play)box, an approach I hope will be relevant to other writers and theatre-makers. Therefore, as discussed, the chief methodological vehicle of my investigation and my argument are based around my practice. However, I also draw on Merleau-Ponty, later phenomenologists and cognitive scientists including Varela et al., Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi.[147] Their work challenges Cartesian dualism, the idea that the body is in service to the mind, and instead as Zarrilli explains 'focus on the livedness of the actor's modes of embodiment, perception, and experience from the actor's perspective inside training and performance'.[148] Zarrilli suggests that these help to 'think and talk about the body, mind, and their relationship in acting'.[149] While he focuses on the experience of acting, I apply a similar approach to consider the experience of responding to a (play)box using the framework that phenomenology and cognitive science offer.

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[146] Spatz, p. 231.
[147] See also Antonio Damasio, Joseph LeDoux, and Vittorio Gallese.
[148] Phillip Zarrilli, *Psychophysical Acting: An Intercultural Approach After Stanislavski* (Abingdon, New York and Canada: Routledge, 2009), p. 45.
[149] Ibid.

Merleau-Ponty's work, Zarrilli observes, 'marked a paradigmatic shift in Western thinking about the role of the body in the constitution of experience when he raised the problem of the body's role (or lack thereof) in constituting experience'.[150] Merleau-Ponty argues:

> [T]hinking which looks on from above, and thinks of the object-in-general must return to the "there is" which underlies it; to the site; the soil of the sensible and opened world such as it is in our life and for our body – not that possible body which we may legitimately think of as an information machine but that actual body which I call mine, this sentinel standing quietly at the command of my words and acts.[151]

If we take the body as the site of experience and information 'the focus of philosophical inquiry [is] shifted from "I think" to an examination of the "I can" of the body, i.e. sight and movement as modes of entering into inter-sensory relationships with objects or the world'.[152] The 'I can' that Zarrilli, after Merleau-Ponty, proposes is fundamental to this investigation, which explores the dramaturgical 'I can' of the stimuli in a (play)box combined with the embodied experiences of myself and my collaborators. As Merleau-Ponty argues '[t]he world is not what I think, but what I live through'.[153]

In the exploration of *Provenance*, I 'describe the world and how it appears in such experience' drawing on phenomenology and cognitive neuroscience as a framework to explore the 'world' of a (play)box.[154] As the world and experience that are described here are those of one play(box), *Provenance*, from the perspective of myself and my

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[150] Ibid.

[151] Merleau-Ponty quoted in Zarrilli, *Psychophysical Acting*, p. 45.

[152] Ibid.

[153] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London & New York: Routledge, originally published 1945, this version 2002), p. xviii–xix.

[154] Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind*, 2nd edition (Abingdon, New York and Canada: Routledge, 2008), p. 28.

collaborators, I acknowledge that we come to this process with a set of subjective experiences, biases, and opinions. I do not aim to use what Edmund Husserl called the phenomenological reduction and *epoche* or 'bracket' them. That is, I do not aim to ignore, or bracket the personal biases, opinions, beliefs, and perspectives of myself and my collective. Instead, taking the approach Heidegger offered, who believed it was impossible to separate ourselves from our state of being in the world (*Dasein*), I consider our embodied experience as it unfolds, acknowledging the influences and experiences my collaborators and I bring to this process, and provide a record of our experiences with an acknowledgment and understanding of how our aesthetic preferences, training and experience are embodied in us and affect our explorations with *Provenance*.

Phenomenology proposes that through detailed observation of 'the things themselves' we can gain an understanding of the world. In this manner, through a close examination of the embodied experiences of myself and my collaborators during the rehearsal process for *Provenance* I aim to explore what insights and tools my approach can offer other theatre-makers. Phenomenology rejects empiricism, taking an analytic approach to understand the world, or the idea that it is possible to arrive at an ultimate 'truth', to focus instead on the 'lived body (*Lieb*)' and as Husserl famously proposed 'the things themselves'.[155] Taylor Carman explains that:

> By "things" (*Sachen*) Husserl meant not real (concrete) objects, but the ideal (abstract) forms and contents of experience as we live them, not as we have learned to conceive and describe them according to the categories of science and received opinion.[156]

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[155] Zarrilli, *Psychophysical Acting*, p. 45.
[156] Taylor Carman, 'Foreword', *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. viii.

I offer a 'descriptive' rather than 'explanatory' or 'deductive' account of this process. In describing what happens in a theatre-making process using a (play)box I aim to arrive at what Gallagher and Zahavi describe as 'the invariant structures of experience'.[157] In examining the specific responses of one group of theatre-makers responding to one (play)box, I aim to show more broadly the 'invariant structures of experience' responding to (play)boxes, however with an understanding of the variables of each (play)box, company and resultant biases. In doing so, I aim to establish what is unique to this method and what opportunities it provides for theatre-makers.

Zahavi and Gallagher observe that as 'Merleau-Ponty points out in closing, the fact that phenomenology remains unfinished, the fact that it is always under way, is not a defect or flaw that should be mended, but rather one of its essential features'.[158] So, there cannot be a clear end to the cyclical, rhizomatic process of reflection and this is not a flaw, but an integral part of this collaborative process. At the start of the rehearsals I presented a (play)box, which over the course of rehearsals has developed responding to our collaborative discoveries. The contents have been changed, re-written, added to, eliminated and developed, just as the material we have developed for performance has changed. This does not mean that the original state of this (play)box was flawed or defected, but that it is an organic, growing and developing entity, changed through exploration and reflection. In chapters three, four, and five I will give examples to show how this collaborative, reflective, integrated, embodied approach, which focuses on the 'I can' of the 'lived body' places the performer in action within the structure of a dramatic world. This *embodied* 'I can' will now be defined using the term *enactive*.

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[157] Gallagher and Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind*, p. 28.
[158] Dan Zahavi and Shaun Gallagher, 'REPLY: A PHENOMENOLOGY WITH LEGS AND BRAINS', *Abstracta*, special issue II, (2008), 86 – 107, (p. 92).

Embodiment, enaction and imagination

A (play)box in its ontological structure invites an *embodied* exploration and an approach
that I will describe as *enactive*. In defining these terms, I draw particularly on Rick Kemp
and Maiya Murphy, who have examined the intersection of cognitive science and the
Leocq pedagogy, which as discussed underpins the aesthetic aims of this project. They
follow the work of Bruce McConachie and Elizabeth Hart (2006) and Rhonda Blair (2008)
who have examined the relationship between acting and cognitive science and of John
Lutterbie (2011), who also includes in Lecoq in his survey. Blair, Lutterbie, McConachie
and Hart, Kemp and Murphy all chart the development of cognitive science from its early
understanding of the brain as a computer, to what Paavolainen identifies as three currently
prominent theories.[159] These are cognition as *embedded* or *situated*, *extended* and the
understanding I adopt here of cognition as *enacted*, discussed shortly.[160]

Murphy and Kemp demonstrate that the embodied exploration at the heart of the
creative processes that Lecoq espouses work on a cognitive, conceptual and metaphorical
level - methods which are employed in my own practice and in the construction of the
(play)box *Provenance*.[161] Both Kemp and Murphy consider the relationship between
Lecoq's ideas, cognitive science and actor training. While Kemp examines a variety of
acting techniques, Murphy focuses solely on Lecoq from an *enactive* perspective and the
'epistemological and ontological ramifications'.[162] I differ from Kemp and Murphy, in that
I extend an analysis of Lecoq using embodied cognition to consider how these ideas can be

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[159] Blair explains that the idea of the mind as a computer is associated with Daniel Bennett and Stephen
Pinker and provides a comprehensive history of the development of cognitive science contextualised as in
opposition to Skinner's behaviourism. Rhona Blair, *The Actor, Image, and Action: Acting and cognitive
neuroscience* (Oxon, New York and Canada: Routledge, 2008), p. 18 and pp. 8 – 24.
[160] Paavolainen, pp. 47-49.
[161] Maiya Murphy is also part of my collective, *Autopoetics* working with on the creation of *Provenance*.
[162] Maiya Murphy, 'Enacting the Consequences of the Lecoq Pedagogy's Aesthetic Cognitive Foundation',
Theatre Survey, 58:3 (September 2017), 326 – 351, p. 330.

applied to playwriting and the writing of performance texts, rather than individual performance.

Important to the understanding of embodiment that I use in this investigation is that, the Cartesian notion that the mind and body are separate can no longer be adhered to. This is fundamental to contemporary definitions of embodiment and is supported by cognitive scientists and philosophers who show that, as Kemp explains the 'mind is inherently embodied, not just in the physical sense that the brain operates in a body, but because physical experience shapes conceptual thought, and thought operates through many of the same neuronal pathways as physical action'.[163] Kemp notes that the term 'bodymind' is 'increasingly being used to describe this phenomenon'.[164] Murphy agrees, adding that the idea of embodiment 'points to enaction's understanding of cognition as constituted through the entire body (including the brain and all other parts of the body). This is in contrast to the notion of a mind that is encased in a brain'.[165] Murphy describes enaction (which I will return to later) as a mode that 'sees cognition as an emergent process constituted by the whole body – brain organism in conjunction with the environment in corporative relation'.[166] Ben Spatz in considering *What a Body Can Do* qualifies that 'mind is an emergent property of body […] Thought and language are fully embodied processes.'[167] Robin Nelson also agrees with Kemp, Murphy noting that Varela et al. and others have shown that the term 'embodied' indicates 'that cognition depends

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[163] Rick Kemp, *Embodied Acting: What Neuroscience Tells Us About Performance* (Oxon, Canada and New York, Routledge, 2012) p. xvi. Kemp notes that he draws 'on work by researchers such as neuroscientists Antonio Damasio, Joseph LeDoux, and Vittorio Gallese, psychologist Paul Ekman, and Linguist David McNeill that describe phenomena such as the neurobiology of emotion, the sense of self gained from movement, mirror neurons, the reflexive relationship between facial expressions and emotion, and idea units.' Kemp, *Embodied Acting*, p. xvii.

[164] Kemp, *Embodied Acting*, p. xvi.

[165] Murphy, p. 328.

[166] Ibid. Here, Murphy draws on the work of Francisco J. Varela, Evan Thompson and Eleanor Rosch (1991) and John Stewart, Olivier Gapenne, and Ezequiel A. Di Paolo (2010).

[167] Spatz, p. 11.

upon the kind of experience that comes from having a body with various sensorimotor capacities, and, second, that these individual sensorimotor capacities are themselves embedded in a more encompassing biological, psychological and cultural context'.[168]

Drawing on the work of Varela, Noë, Gallagher, and Lakoff and Johnson (who explore cognitive linguistics), Kemp, Spatz, Murphy, and Nelson show that, as Spatz explains, the Cartesian notion that body and mind are separate, or that body and cognition are separate is no longer reliable. Instead, the entire body can be understood as cognitive in its processes of exploration and understanding. Our sensorimotor cognition provides us with an embodied understanding of the world and a (play)box pulls the theatre-maker into embodied cognition through its sensory stimuli. When using the term 'embodied' in this investigation I refer to the 'bodymind', to 'thought, mind, brain, intellect, rationality, speech, and language'.[169] Encountering *Provenance*, a bodymind is asked to be active with all these elements – the experiences it offers engage a theatre-maker in listening to music, seeing video clips, the sounds and feelings of the different textures of newspaper, clingfilm, and wool and of tasting toothpaste and lipstick. To think, to feel, to see and to speak are combined as experiences in a (play)box in embodied exploration.

These physical stimuli provide haptic/sensorimotor, embodied responses in the theatre-making process. In doing so, the bodymind processes the information in the (play)box in a different way to reading a dramatic play-text. Here, I make a comparison between the collaborative theatre-making approach that a (play)box invites and the Stanislavskian approach of textual analysis (usually static table-work) that is widely employed in staging a dramatic play-text in UK rehearsal rooms. In an early Stanislavskian analysis of text the intentions of the characters are analysed to discover what they want,

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[168] Nelson, p. 40.
[169] Spatz, p. 11.

what their problem or objective is, and based on this analysis performative decisions are made.[170] In contrast, many of the stimuli in a (play)box cannot be explored through a static table read. In their very ontology they demand to be picked up, opened, felt, heard and seen. They demand embodied interaction. One way that this can be understood is with the theory of *enaction*.

Murphy uses the cognitive principle of enaction as a lens to explore the role of the actor-creator (or theatre-maker) model used in Lecoq's pedagogy. This connection between enaction and the pedagogy of Lecoq is relevant to my investigation as I have discussed earlier, the concept of a (play)box and our practice in rehearsals for *Provenance* are grounded in Lecoq's pedagogy. Murphy parallels the theatre-maker who encounters a dramatic territory to create material not only by performing a role, but in combining the functions often separated out into writer, designer, dramaturg, director, and performer with the bodymind that encounters its environment to understand it. She notes in that the 'enactive approach to understanding cognition […] "mind" is accomplished in the very fact of brains, bodies and environments in cooperative relation'.[171] Murphy explains that '[e]xperience, in the enactive approach, is not a result of cognition but, rather, an important function within it'.[172]

Drawing on this enactive approach, the theatre-maker's active experience of a (play)box is cognitive by nature, but where Murphy's ideas are of particular interest to this study is in how she connects enaction to physical movement such as the exercises in

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[170] Both Kemp and Bella Merlin discuss how more recent translations of Stanislavski have shown that the word 'zadacha' is better understood as 'problem' or 'task' that the more commonly used term 'objective' and 'super objective'. A parallel can be drawn here between the tasks or problems a (play)box delivers and those the actor identifies for a character. It should also be noted that, as Merlin has shown, Stanislavski's late work on the Method of Physical Actions and Active Analysis moved away from his earlier techniques of that principled static, intellectual analysis. Bella Merlin, *Beyond Stanislavsky: The Psycho-Physical Approach to Actor Training* (London, New York and Canada: Routledge, 2001).
[171] Murphy, p. 328.
[172] Ibid.

Lecoq's pedagogy and the enactive experience of playing with the prompts in a (play)box. These prompts *afford* instinctual, physical, sensory, experiential responses, so cognition and interpretation are derived from all aspects of the bodymind. For example, in our rehearsals the clingfilm in the (play)box *Provenance afforded* stretching, wrapping, scrunching, shinning. I *played* with the clingfilm exploring it as a child does without stopping and interpreting it or thinking about what it could do because I was within an enactive exploration of what it *did*. When we stopped playing, we *reflected* on what we had done by watching the video of our improvisation. We *discussed* what we *noticed* about our improvisation and only at this point started to connect our playful exploration back to the themes and world of the play. However, as the clingfilm, was selected to be connected to this world, written into the (play)box, these playful explorations were woven into the thematic world of the play.

The doing, the actions that the prompts in a (play)box afford can be understood as perceiving. Both Zarrilli and Murphy draw on Noë's argument that perception is embodied and that 'perceiving is not something that happens to us, or in us. It's something we do […] we *enact* our perceptual experience; we act it out'.[173] Murphy suggests that 'Noë's enactive theory of perception suggests that it is only through the possibility of physical movement and encountering the external world that we activate perception'.[174] Or as Noë explains '[p]erceptual experience acquires content thanks to our possession of bodily skills. What we perceive is determined by what we do'.[175] Drawing on Murphy's interpretation of Noë's enactive theory of perception there can be said to be a difference between experience that is 'acted out' and experience that is static. So, the experiences *Provenance* affords of wrapping and unwrapping a performer in clingfilm, of following a

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[173] Noë, p. 1. Italics in original.
[174] Murphy, p. 336.
[175] Noë, p. 1.

trail of wool, of drawing with make-up on bodies and other surfaces, or taking the different shapes proposed in a video clip, invoke a perceptual experience that is different to that of analysing a dramatic play-text in a table read. Therefore, material for performance created by a (play)box is created via a different perceptual route to that created in response to a static analysis of dramatic play-text. These examples will be examined in greater detail in chapters three, four, and five.

Drawing on the work of Lakoff and Johnson, Murphy makes the case that Lecoq's physical exercises can be understood as embodied metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson claim that the 'mind is not merely embodied but embodied in such a way that our conceptual systems draw largely upon the commonalities of our bodies and the environments we live in'.[176] So, as discussed, the mind is not something that works separately from the body, but cognition is created through an embodied interaction with our environment. Thought, in the case of a (play)box occurs through an embodied encounter with it. Lakoff and Johnson explain that thought is conceptual, happens unconsciously, and as 'our conceptual systems grow out of our bodies, meaning is grounded in and through our bodies'.[177] So, conceptual meaning arrives through physical experience.

Kemp, like Murphy draws on the work of Lakoff and Johnston and explains that 'everyday life is composed of activities that are based on unconscious concepts such as causation, the nature of the self and morality'.[178] Kemp clarifies that:

Abstract concepts are largely metaphorical, with the sources of the metaphors originating in our kinaesthetic and perceptual experiences of the material world. These experiences generate cognitive systems that reflect our physical

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[176] Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, p. 6.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Kemp, *Embodied Acting*, p. 17.

environments and form patterns for higher cognitive activity. This means that many of the words or phrases used to describe these concepts have a latent gesture or movement in them.[179]

For example, one may describe something as 'getting us down' or being 'on top of' something – our conceptual thoughts are connected to sensorimotor experiences of being on, up and down, and having things that go into and come out of us as though we are a container.[180] From these physical experiences we create metaphorical concepts. Murphy explains this connection using Lakoff and Johnson's idea of an image schema, based on Shaun Gallagher's notion of a body schema.[181] At the simplest level, body image is conscious body awareness and an image schema is unconscious body awareness. Image schemas are unconscious body experiences that are connected to abstract thought concepts. As we process information from our sensorimotor experience we do this by using concepts that relate to spatial understanding and physical concepts. Murphy gives the example 'they *pushed* the bill *through* Congress; - this the image schema 'compulsion' – 'or the ''primary experience'' of [a]chieving results by exerting forces on physical objects to move or change them'.[182] Murphy suggests that this shows us that 'physical interaction not only teaches physical principles and offers physical knowledge, but also by extension teaches dramatic principles and offers dramatic possibilities'.[183]

Murphy suggests that Lecoq's physical pedagogy transforms traditional dramatic conventions such as conflict into physical exercises that are understood conceptually by

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[179] Kemp, *Embodied Acting*, p. xvi.
[180] Murphy explains Lakoff and Johnson' image scheme of 'containment' where our lived experience of putting things into us and having them come out again produces the 'conceptual construct' of containment and thereby the abstract idea of being in or out of something such as fashion or a social group. (See Murphy p. 338).
[181] Murphy cites Shaun Gallagher and Mathew Bower, 'Making enactivism even more embodied', *Avant*, Vol V, No. 2 (2014), 232 – 247.
[182] Murphy, p. 339.
[183] Ibid.

the performer on many different levels, both consciously and unconsciously. She notes
that:

> Lecoq-based pedagogy translates that concept of "conflict" into a set of actions that
> can be literally performed, calibrated, and fashioned to resonate through and
> beyond the literal. Through an experience of the development and dramatic
> application of image schemas, Lecoq's pedagogy shows how to *make* conflict, not
> just that it exists.[184]

An action, such as Lecoq's push and pull exercise, which asks the performer to mine
pushing and pulling, is understood by the performer as a metaphorical concept in addition
to as an action. This understanding to can be applied to a (play)box, which could also be
described as a 'set of actions' or exercises. Like Lecoq's push and pull exercise, which
Murphy uses as an example, the actions and exercises in a (play)box move the theatre-
maker 'from sensorimotor to the abstract'.[185] This will be explored in greater depth
providing examples from *Provenance* in chapters three, four, and five.

Play

A (play)box, in its etymology makes an invitation to a theatre-maker not just to make
theatre with the contents of the box, but to do so by *playing* with them. The name
'(play)box' is chosen to highlight the relationship between playfulness - the creative, open-
ended play of children (who take their toys from a toy-box) and the more 'serious play' of
professional actors, or players.[186] The 'play' in (play)box also refers to the 'play' (often

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[184] Murphy, p. 340.
[185] Murphy, p. 339.
[186] Louise Peacock in her book, *Serious Play* notes that 'This concept of play as serious or non-serious recurs
in the work of other theorists. The subtitle of Turner's book, From Ritual to Theatre, is 'The Human

understood as written in text and then presented to an audience, in this case, *Provenance*) that can be created through the process of using a (play)box. The word 'play' is also used to name performers – (play)ers, the writers of theatre (play)wrights and the place theatre is presented, a (play)house. So, the theatre-maker and audience member's attention are repeatedly drawn to the importance of 'play', 'playfulness' and 'playing', which is also of great significance in the dramaturgical proposition that a (play)box makes to a theatre-maker asking them to be playful and to *play* with the contents. As 'play' is a concept and working method that is fundamental to this project I have chosen to highlight it to makers who use a (play)box by putting the word 'play' in brackets. This is one of many strategies found in a (play)box to guide theatre-makers towards working through playful exploration of the stimuli rather than principling cerebral analysis. In chapter three I will discuss play as a concept and as a working method in the context of *Provenance*.

Affordances

In chapter four, I argue that the things in a (play)box should be principally considered for how they act, what they do, and what they enable a theatre-maker to do. Building on the arguments of the ecological psychologist Gibson, discussed here, and Machon, explored shortly, I will suggest that these responses are immediate, visceral and not necessarily led by analytic thought but by an instinctive, subconscious, physical response. To do so, I will draw on Gibson's concept of *affordances*, which he developed responding to Gestalt psychology's idea of *valences*.

Seriousness of Play' (1982).' Louise Peacock, *Serious Play: Modern Clown Performance* (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect Books, 2009), p. 10.

Gibson analyses an environment considering what it 'affords the animal' including 'shelters, water, fire, objects tools, other animals and human displays'.[187] He proposes that '*the affordance of anything is a specific combination of the properties of its substance and its surfaces taken with reference to an animal'* and that the 'affordances of the environment are what it offers animals, what it provides or furnishes, for good or ill'.[188] Considering the shape and movement of an environment and how it will impact upon an animal, Gibson observes that an environment that is flat, rigid and level is 'stand-on-able' will permit an 'upright posture' and is 'walk-on-able'.[189] Following this logic there are also environments that afford sitting and 'surfaces [that] are stand-on-able and sit-on-able so also they are bump-into-able or get-underneath-able, or climb-on-able, or fall-off-able'.[190]

Gibson proposes that animals have a '*niche'*, different to a '*habitat'* and that 'a niche is a set of affordances'.[191] He suggests that there is a reciprocal relationship between the animal and their niche and that although 'an affordance consists of physical properties taken with reference to a certain animal it does not depend on that animal'.[192] According to Gibson, our actions respond to our environment and '[w]e all fit into the substructures of the environment in our various ways for we were all, in fact, formed by them. We were created by the world we live in'.[193] Offering a variety of environmental affordances – of concealment, locomotion, substances, and a consideration of 'detached objects', Gibson observes that they can 'afford[s] an astonishing variety of behaviours'.[194]

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[187] Gibson, p. 67.
[188] Ibid. Italics in original, p. 68.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid.
[191] Gibson, p. 69.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Gibson, p. 71.
[194] Gibson, p. 74.

For Gibson, for an object to mean it must be explored through embodied, enactive, motion, action, and reaction and a particular object will be defined by its 'invariant combination of variables'.[195] He gives the example of a baby who first understands what an object affords (what it can do and what the child can do with it) before it starts to begin 'discriminating the qualities of objects and then learning the combinations of qualities that specify the objects themselves'.[196] He suggests that '[p]henomenal objects are not built up of qualities' but affordances. So, the child playing with something discovers what this something can do, what it affords, *before interpreting* it. Gibson calls these affordances 'meanings'.[197] In chapters four and five, I will explore how the affordances of the things in the (play)box *Provenance* provide *actions* before they are interpreted. I will argue that these actions offer routes to creation that place theatre-makers immediately into physical, sensory and spatial relationships – an approach also found in Lecoq's pedagogy. Next, I will suggest the embodied relationships I promote are written in the structure a (play)box, which I will describe using Deleuze and Guattari's term *rhizomatic.*

Rhizomatic Mapping

The dramaturgical structure of a (play)box is rhizomic in that it offers multiple points of entry, exit and connectivity to a theatre-maker, so that she can start to play with a stimulus, explore its affordances and connect it to others in diverse ways. I will describe the openness of this structure (unlike the linearity of many conventional play-texts) as rhizomatic and suggest that this provides a *map-like* entry-point to the world it offers. A (play)box can be understood as a map that affords behavioural and aesthetic opportunities

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195 Ibid.
196 Ibid.
197 Ibid.

that describe a world. Stephens, whose work will be discussed in chapter two as influential to my approach, also finds that plays can be understood as 'being maps of behaviour'.[198] Likewise, Tomlin adopts the metaphor of a map, also taking Deleuze and Guattarai's theory of the rhizome as a descriptor for her collaborative work. She explains that 'a rhizomic dramaturgy understands that all developments will fundamentally change the rhizomic map, which pre-existed each new development forming a 'multiplicity that necessarily changes in natures as it expands it connections.''[199]

In this way, *Provenance* has changed throughout the rehearsal process, with stimuli added and removed, the written text evolving and the stimuli connecting and reconnecting. For example, the newspaper initially offered in *Provenance* is also written in the play-text and is particularly associated with Alice, as something that she hoards and is comforted by. In rehearsals, we used to make a puppet Alice, as Agatha remembers her when she was younger, to define the playing space, bank letters, to be one moment divorce documents and then next butterflies, and to represent precious antiquities at an auction.[200] So, the newspaper 'changes in nature as it expands its connections' with the dramatic context in the eventual performance and with us as theatre-makers as we find expanded rhizomatic connections within its affordances. As Tomlin explains, the rhizomatic structure a (play)box offers enables multiple connects in multifarious ways.

Adopting a collaborative approach, Deleuze and Guattari's theory of the rhizome describes a structure that a (play)box apes, with multiple entry and exit points that can be

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[198] Simon Stephens, *Simon Stephens: A Working Diary* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2016), p. 163.

[199] Liz Tomlin, ''Make a map not a tracing': From Pedagogy to Dramaturgy, *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 23:2, (2013), 120-127, (p. 124).

[200] See DVD ROM in appendix for videos illustrating this. The same videos can also be found here: < https://vimeopro.com/user39036964/out-of-the-playbox-an-investigation-into-strategies-for-writing-and-devising-1> The password is provenance.

connected to each other at any juncture.[201] It has 'no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing'.[202] Deleuze and Guattari use physical, material examples to describe rhizomatic structures, like the material structure of a (play)box. For example, the canals of Amsterdam, rat holes or a tuba, from which shoots may appear at any point, rather than a tree that extends upwards from roots to branches. In the example of a (play)box I have created, *Provenance,* I offer fragments of a world, the stimuli inside act as map and compass points for my collaborators and allow them to explore this territory and change and reconnect it with their interventions. This rhizomic map of dramaturgical stimuli is 'detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. […] A map has multiple entryways, as opposed to the tracing, which always comes back "to the same"'.[203] Likewise, the rhizomatic structure I propose with a (play)box is intrinsically collaborative, can be changed and adapted by others, has 'multiple entryways' and points of intersection, and a map-like dramaturgical structure which is 'open and connectable in all of its dimensions'.[204] I will present concrete examples of the rhizomatic working method of *Provenance* in chapters three, four, and five.

Making sense with the senses: A (syn)aesthetic understanding of a (play)box

In *(Syn)aesthetics: Redefining Visceral Performance* Machon describes the characteristics of the '(syn)aesthetic performance style' in terms of the visceral affects that performance can have on an audience. She draws on Richard E. Cytowic, A.R. Luria, E. M. Hubbard, and V.S. Ramachandran to offer a 'mode of performance analysis that defines the *full*

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[201] Deleuze and Guattari begin by explain that '[t]he two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus* together. Since each of us was several there was already quite a crowd'. Deleuze and Guattari, p. 3.
[202] Deleuze and Guattari, p. 25.
[203] Deleuze and Guattari, pp. 12 – 13.
[204] Ibid.

appreciation process that occurs (that is, from an immediate individual response to any subsequent intellectual interpretation that transpires)'.[205] Machon's (syn)aesthetic method focuses on instinctual, physical, and sensory responses before 'any subsequent intellectual interpretation' in the same way that the prompts in a (play)box afford a range of immediate sensual, instinctual responses before intellectual analysis arrives. The term (syn)aesthetic is derived by Machon from a neurological condition called synaesthesia, in which the subject's sensations are fused in relation to each other, for example, 'words or letters are perceived as certain colours'.[206] She explains that everyone initially has a degree of synaesthetic ability, but that this lessens over time. However, we still retain some elements, for example the link between taste and smell. Machon argues that '[s]ynaesthesia defines a human capacity for perception which shifts between realms; between the sensual and intellectual; between the literal and lateral'.[207]

The understanding of (syn)aesthetic perception that Machon proposes illuminates aspects of how a (play)box function at the axis of the sensual and the intellectual, offering an approach where theatre-makers are led both by sense and the *senses*. Both Machon and Gibson, who proposes that an infant responds instinctively and sensorially rather than interpretively to an object's affordances, provide insights into the ways I anticipated (and have established in my PLR process) a (play)box to function. Using a (play)box there is an instinctual, sensual, perceptive sense-making in response to the material objects, that arrives before 'intellectual interpretation'.

While Machon focuses on the experience of an audience watching a performance to suggest that performances in the '(syn)aesthetic style' elicit holistic, sensory responses

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[205] Josephine Machon, *(Syn)aesthetics: Redefining Visceral Performance* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 4.
[206] Machon, p. 15.
[207] Ibid.

from the audience using all their senses 'via a corporeal memory, the traces of lived sensate experience within the human body, activated within the perceiving individual'', I apply a similar analysis to the responses of the theatre-maker.[208] She claims that this **'fusing of sense (sematic 'meaning making') with *sense* (feeling, both sensation and emotion) establishes a double-edged rendering of making-sense/*sense*-making** and foregrounds its fused somatic/semantic nature'.[209] A (play)box fuses sense - sematic 'meaning making' (within a dramatic context) and *sense* - 'feeling, sensation and emotion' (the body's response to material things, music, image). These stimuli are contextualised and encountered together so that the body's instinctual, sensorial response to a thing's affordances is fused within and 'scripted' by the sematic.

Authority and the author

Conceptually, a (play)box aims to promote shared authority in collaborative authorship amongst theatre-makers. However, the development of my concept of a (play)box, creation of the (play)box *Provenance* and its rehearsal process have revealed a tension between my aim to share authority and authorship and my unintentional influence. One of my aims in developing this approach was to present a set of stimuli at the start of the rehearsal process that were creatively provocative, but also gave freedom for the other collaborators in the process to take authority. However, abdicating authority as a writer was more challenging than I initially assumed. Furthermore, as discussed in chapter five, this process suggested to me that when carefully used, creative limitations that could be understood as authoritarian, can be

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[208] Machon, p. 14.
[209] Ibid. Bold in original.

effectively generative and therefore that authority can be understood on a continuum.

During rehearsals for *Provenance* it became apparent that the amongst the stimuli the text assumed, or was given, authority by my collaborators in a way that the other material stimuli were not. A pattern emerged where an object, image, video, or music clip would receive an initial exploration and then be discarded. However, this did not happen with the sections of text, particularly not with the sections of play-text despite my assertions in the room that we could cut or change whatever we wanted. Late in the rehearsal process we did make extensive cuts and re-writes to the text, but the 'things' in the (play)box were 'cut' with far greater speed and ease. While my attempt to devolve authority from the writer is unusual in that it replaces written text with material stimuli, rather the more common modes of 'opening' the text (for example, by removing character names or stage directions), even writers who offer 'open' texts still retain an authorial presence, as Dan Rebellato suggests in 'Exit the Author' (2013).[210] My concept of a (play)box does not aim to support those who, as Steve Waters rhetorically notes, consider 'individual authorship […] inherently fascistic, patriarchal, phallocentric, phallogocentric – [and that] only collective creation is able to over some such thought crimes'[211]. Tomlin suggests 'the suspicion of the authority of the written text as artistic predicate can be traced back to the advent of poststructuralism', a suspicion particularly associated with the

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[210] Rebellato offers examples of writers who have offered open texts such as Sarah Kane's *4:48 Psychosis*, Martin Crimp's *Attempts on Her Life*. He also cites Mark Ravenhill, Simon Stephens, David Grieg, himself, and Caryl Churchill. He also notes that these writers offer uncertainty rather than authority – such as Churchill's stage direction in *Far Away* 'for how many performers should take part in the 'parade' scene: 'five is too few and twenty better than ten. A hundred?'' Rebellato, 'Exit the Author', p.16.

[211] Waters, *The Secret Life of Plays* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2011), kindle edition, location 2981 of 3299.

arguments of Antonin Artaud in *The Theater and Its Double* (1938) Roland Barthes in 'The Death of the Author' (1967).[212]

Barthes argues in 'The Death of the Author' that texts (which include not only word-texts but music, images, films or any piece of artistic work) should not be analysed with a consideration of the intentions of the author - their beliefs, religion, and world view, but instead be understood as 'a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture'.[213] So, texts are created using a collage of influences from existing cultures, philosophies, religions, and beliefs.[214] Authorship comes not from the person who has patchworked these influences together into a text, but from the perspective of the spectator. As Rebellato observes 'the anti-intentionalist argument states that the intentions of an author are entirely irrelevant to the meaning of a text'.[215] In this interpretation, a (play)box is authored by the theatre-makers who encounter it rather than the 'complier', which in some respects is certainly my aim. However, were I not in the rehearsal room co-authoring *Provenance* I would still lay claim to, at least partial, authorship.

Rebellato suggests that Barthes has been misunderstood. He begins by taking apart the idea that the intentions of an author are unimportant, arguing that 'intention is not some external, separable set of facts that stand apart from the text. Intention is a precondition for a certain type of meaning to be derived at all'.[216] Instead, Rebellato suggests that Barthes 'is actually not making the absolutist anti-authorial case that is commonly ascribed to him', that 'he uses characteristically intentional vocabulary to describe how writing

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[212] Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958), Liz Tomlin, ''And their stories fell apart even as I was telling them': Poststructuralist performance and the no-longer-dramatic text', Performance Research, 14:1 (2009), 57-64, (p. 59).
[213] Roland Barthes, *Music-Image-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), p. 146.
[214] 'The Death of the Author' was originally published in 1967 and then again in 1977 as part of *Image-Music-Text*.
[215] Rebellato, 'Exit the Author', p. 19.
[216] Rebellato, 'Exit the Author', p. 20.

happens' and that 'we cannot read Barthes's work in this essay, or almost anything written after it, and believe that he is engaged in anything other than considering the things that authors do and intend to do'.[217] Barthes does not banish the author from her text but *distances* her, sharing sovereignty with the reader, much as I do with a (play)box where authority, meaning and agency are shared collaboratively, a process which will be discussed in more detail in the chapters three, four and five.[218]

The understanding of what a play can be has expanded throughout the last century, from Artaud's call for a theatre 'which is *no thing*, but makes use of everything – gestures, sounds, words, screams, light, darkness – rediscovers itself at precisely the point where the mind requires a language to express its manifestations', to what Erika Fischer-Lichte refers to as the 'performative turn in the 1960s'.[219] She notes that this 'advocated a redefinition of the relationship between actors and spectators', where 'theatre was no longer considered as a representation of a fictive world, which the audience […] was expected to observe, interpret, and understand' exemplified by plays such as Peter Handke's *Offending the Audience* (1966).[220] The explorations of artists such as Artaud, Beckett, Etchells and Handke, the 'performative turn' of the 1960s, and the explorations of devised theatre-makers have expanded the notion of what a 'play' may be.[221] Likewise, the tools that a writer works with should expand to absorb the changes in perception about theatre-making, exemplified by a (play)box. These influences on my concept of a (play)box will be explored in greater detail in chapter two, which proposes genealogies of a (play)box.

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[217] Rebellato, 'Exit the Author', p. 21.
[218] Barthes, p. 145.
[219] Artaud, p.12, Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance* (New York, Oxon and Canada: Routledge, 2008), pp. 20 - 21.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Peter Handke is an Austrian writer famous for his plays *Offending the Audience* (1966), and *The Hour We Knew Nothing of Each Other* (1992). Tim Etchells is a founder member and director of the experimental British theatre company 'Forced Entertainment'. Samuel Beckett is an Irish Absurdist writer notable for writing *Waiting for Godot* (1953).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have introduced the theories, strategies and methodologies that have been fundamental in the development of a (play)box to articulate how it aims to function as a new form of playwriting. In chapter two, I will explore the genealogies of a (play)box, including the Fluxkits of the Fluxus artists and the 'performative turn' of the 1960s. Additionally, I consider recent writers and theatre-makers who inhabit an expanded understanding of 'writing' for theatre and whose experiments with text have been influential on my concept. I consider the work of Crouch, Stephens and his work with Sebastian Nübling, Lavery's writing with Frantic Assembly and Teale's work with Shared Experience to show that these artists have developed strategies to collaboratively author in a range of texts. These examples will demonstrate how my approach has developed responding to the textual experiments of these artists.

Chapter 2

Genealogies of a (play)box

Introduction

This chapter will explore the influences that have shaped my concept of a (play)box and

situate it as emergent from the cultural context created by the experiments by writers and

theatre-makers in the second half of the twentieth century. The supposed rupture between

text and performance discussed in the introduction can be seen with the post-modern or

neo-avant-garde movement of the 1960s onwards, with Allan Kaprow, John Cage and

Merce Cunningham's 'Happenings' at Black Mountain College, the Fluxus movement and

their Fluxkits, which I explore shortly, Artaud and Grotowski's work with ritual and the

growth of devised and physical theatre. I examine literature discussing the relationship

between writing and 'devised' theatre-making and offer examples of practice that trouble

the writing/devising binary where collaborative authorship arrives using a variety of texts -

of movement, image and sound.

These experiments in producing collaborative text trouble the notion that a

playwright is limited to one mode of writing. As Radosavljević observes 'academically

and politically defined distinctions between new writing, devising and live art/performance

are most definitely dissolved in those contexts where collaborative modes of theatre-

making prevail'.[222] The dissolution of these boundaries between 'new writing, devising

and live art/performance' create opportunities for what Govan et al., in their discussion of

adapted text, describe as 'a total theatre where new language is bred through the cohesion

of sound, light, image'.[223] This, to use Richard Wagner's term, *Gesamtkunstwerk* or 'total

art work', evangelised by Artaud and developed throughout the twentieth century is

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[222] Radosavljević, *Theatre-Making,* p. 103.
[223] Govan et al., p.100.

exactly what my approach aims to offer – a tool for total theatre embracing all the possibilities of a range of material stimuli, including play-text.

Complicité, a company who have regularly worked with writers and text, have a 'total theatre' aesthetic generated by their working methods, an approach that can be linked to Leocq's pedagogy.[224] Govan et al. observe that in 'Complicité's adaptations the story is told through the physical language of the actors, the fluidity of the performance space, and the transformability of objects' and that they 'utilise[s] a language that is one of multiplicity. The use of fictional material provides theatre-makers with an opportunity to discover a language of multiplicity and excess'.[225] Radosavljević notes how Kneehigh in their adaptations have also developed a performance aesthetic through their music and costume choices, playful use of the performing space and 'inventive use of puppetry and [a] theatricalization of everyday objects'.[226] Mermikides and Smart describe similar techniques at play in the work of theatre O's (also a company that emerged from Lecoq). Their production, *Delirium*, an adaptation of *The Brothers Karamazov* written by Enda Walsh, 'presented a whirling storm of movement, sound and argument […] Punch and Judy style puppetry, and aggressive use of sound'.[227] These companies work with strategies and aesthetics that I aim to provoke with a (play)box, creation in a 'language of multiplicity and excess' scripted within a narrative provided by fragments of original play-text. The working language my collaborators and I use in creating *Provenance* uses 'a fluid performance space', everyday objects that transform, and 'physical language'. I have tried to write this creative aesthetic into the prompts in *Provenance*, for example, by including

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[224] Complicité was original founded by a group of graduates from the Lecoq school in Paris.
[225] Govan et al, p.100.
[226] Radosavljević, *Theatre-Making,* p. 73.
[227] Mermikidies and Smart, p. 144.

things that hold easily transmutable qualities like newspaper, which will be discussed in more detail in chapters three, four and five.

Radosavljević's two books *The Contemporary Ensemble* and *Theatre-Making: Interplay Between Text and Performance in the 21ˢᵗ Century* show theatre moving into new constructs and definitions, in which collaborative authorship creates a rich variety of texts. In redefining ensemble, she notes how 'the overuse of the term [devising] in the British context has also led to a conflation of the terms 'devising' and 'ensemble', where it is implied that ensembles typically devise and only exceptionally work with plays and playwrights'.[228] Additionally, she observes that the different understanding of this term between America, the UK and the continent, which suggests 'different attitudes to tradition and innovation, changing conceptions of leadership and authority, and varying artistic vocabularies.'[229] She presents examples of collaborative authorship with a playwright including companies whose work is strongly associated with devising: Improbable, Derevo, Third Angel, Kneehigh and Mike Alfreds. Radoslavljević shows where these practitioners work with plays and/or playwrights finding 'that the academically and politically defined distinctions between new writing, devising and live art/performance are most definitely dissolved in those contexts where collaborative modes of theatre-making prevail'.[230] Providing examples of a range of collaborative working practices, Radoslavljević shows where 'the text' arrives in ways that both defies 'distinctions between new writing/devising and live art/performance', which inspire my approach.[231]

Most of the notable recent literature on playwriting does not focus on the role of the writer in devised or collaborative theatre-making or consider how writer/theatre-maker

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[228] Radoslavljević, *Contemporary Ensemble*, p. 11.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Radoslavljević, *Theatre-Making*, p. 103.
[231] Ibid.

relationships can co-author together suggesting that these writers may perceive themselves on one side of an illusory binary division. Fraser Grace and Clare Bayley's *Play Writing: A Writers' and Artists' Companion* (2016) and Noël Greig's *Playwriting: A practical guide* offer practical advice and writing exercises, while David Edgar's *How Plays Work* (2009) and Steve Waters' *The Secret Life of Plays* (2011) are more sophisticated considerations of the role of the writer and play-text. The former includes writing exercises using objects, experiences, or music as stimuli for writing, but unlike a (play)box, these assume a traditional approach to playwriting. Waters, responding to changes in theatre-making (including devising and collaboration) rhetorically queries 'are playwrights strictly necessary or are they an anachronism, a species replaced by a cannier predator? If they do have a niche, should they come lower in the theatrical food chain than their self-appointed place at the top?'[232] He cites a range of critiques made against the play written by a writer, citing Artaud's comment that 'all writing is pigshit' and that this critique was 'expressed in the very medium he deplored'.[233] Waters observes, or assumes, that 'the play is a thing of words, and words work at one remove from the body, and are inherently mediated'.[234] I answer these accusations with the paradigm of a (play)box, which troubles the traditional structure of the 'play-text' and invites writing through the body. It is a framework through which words are brought closer to the body in their playful combination with material stimuli, so that the 'play' is no longer 'at one remove from the body'.

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[232] Waters, location, 2912.
[233] Waters, location, 2915.
[234] Waters, location, 2922.

Art as Experience: Happenings, Ken Dewey and Fluxkits

My idea of (play)box has emerged partially in response to the theatre landscape created by the cultural and contextual shifts in theatre-making practice of the 1950s and 1960, and to the Fluxkits or Fluxboxes created by the Fluxus artists. The Happenings that began in the early 1950s in America explored the 'liveness' of an event, the boundaries and interactions between artist and spectator, moving focus from art as a product to 'art as experience' and onto the *process* itself. This was, in the words of the American philosopher John Dewey, in reaction to art which has been 'isolated from the human conditions under which it was brought into being and from the human consequences it engenders in actual life-experience'.[235] Dewey suggests that when art is sanctified and separated from lived human experience it 'renders opaque their general significance, with which esthetic theory deals'.[236] Instead, he argues for the value of art as part of embodied, lived human experience and the value of involvement in *process.*[237]

This period saw not only a shift in attention to the value of process in the creation of art, but also in the relationship between the performer/audience and performance/art object. For example, in George Brecht's Event score 'everyday actions are framed as minimalistic performances […] *Keyhole Event* (1962), framed the goings-on on the other side of a door through a keyhole'.[238] In looking through the keyhole, the spectator plays a part in the performance process, what she sees is randomised and the everyday is reframed as art. The implication of these developments on theatre, as Heddon and Milling observe, often 'led to a focus on action rather than on acting' and 'whilst not being 'anti-literary',

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[235] John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigree, 1934), p. 1.
[236] Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 2.
[237] Dewey is not only influential on this artistic and cultural shift in focus, but on the theories of cognitive science on which I draw, discussed in chapter one.
[238] Hannah Higgins, *Fluxus Experience* (Berkeley, London, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), p. 2.

the move away from a verbal art form towards a visual one challenged the authority or dominance of the written text, and arguably the means of authoring a text'.[239] Similarly, the proposal of a (play)box, 'whilst not being 'anti-literary' is concerned with promoting modes of performance making that are somatic, haptic, embodied, aims to trouble notions of authority and authorship, and uses similar devices to those employed by the Happenings and Fluxus artists.

The modes and devices of expression used by the different artists involved in the Happenings were diverse. Heddon and Milling note that the 'term 'Happening' was loosely and often problematically applied to a vast array of live performance events'.[240] These were, according to Kaprow:

> not structured according to the principles of plot development, narrative or character. In the Happening, since all properties – performer, objects, time, space, place – were accorded equal status, the mode of devising used was 'compositional', the juxtaposition of 'diverse materials'.[241]

Visual artists, dancers, and musicians applied these principles in the creation of work, including the composer John Cage whose 'untitled event' in Black Mountain College in 1952 is considered the first of the Happenings. Cage's works were ''audio-events' [which] consisted of actions and sounds – especially those produced by the listeners themselves'.[242] Similar principles, of blurred lines between performers and spectators were applied to dance by Anna Halprin, to visual art by the painter and assemblagist Allan Kaprow, and to theatre by the playwright and director Ken Dewey. Dewey saw the 'potential of the

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[239] Heddon and Milling, p. 63 - 64.
[240] Heddon and Milling, p. 64.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Fischer-Lichte, p. 19.

Happening as a new form of theatre practice, in relation to both product and process'.[243] I write *process* into the form of a (play)box as means to generate material that will then be rehearsed and eventually performed, rather than, as Dewey does, present the experience itself as a product/performance. I aim to create a new form of theatre [playwriting] practice with my collaborative, intermedial, experiential approach, which like Kaprow's work intends to accord equal status to 'all properties – performer, objects, time, space, place'.

Dewey's theatrical Happenings aimed to be collaborative, non-literary, non-hierarchical and democratic, using materials and environments as an integral structure to create his performances. While Dewey used these as techniques to make immediate, unmediated performances that asked the spectator to 'delineate the intentional from the accidental, the aesthetic from the commodity' I aim to put these processes into a (play)box itself as a method of writing for performance.[244] So, rather than the spectator making an immediate delimitation the response arrives with the theatre-maker in the rehearsal room. Dewey moved from being a playwright 'trapped, literally in the notion of all the formalities of theatre [...] the script defining what you were going to do', moving instead to 'find a non-literary base for composing in theatre', where each component or material had 'its own identity' relating to its material presence rather than to its function and he considered 'all components equal in relation to one another'.[245] Likewise, the components that make up a (play)box are considered 'in equal relation to one another' and as Dewey describes, provide a situation where the theatre-maker can 'work with a provocation, a catalytic thing, which starts somebody else's imagination going. You know it's a nuclear principle really, where you start the reaction and then it takes over'.[246] The things in a

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[243] Ken Dewey quoted in Heddon and Milling, p. 69 – 71.
[244] Mike Sell, *Avant-Garde Performance and the Limits of Criticism: Approaching the Living Theatre, Happenings/Fluxus, and the Black Arts Movement* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2005), p. 197.
[245] Ken Dewey quoted in Heddon and Milling, p. 69 – 71.
[246] Ibid.

(play)box, like Dewey's materials are given liberty to 'take over', as a catalyst for imagination that starts a chain of creative production and collaborative authorship.

Fluxkits, like Dewey's work, promote material provocations as the catalyst for a series of sensory experiences for an audience member. In this, a Fluxkit is unlike a (play)box, which is a stimuli for theatre-making where the haptic experience is for the theatre-maker and will be refined and developed to make a performance. The first Fluxkit was created by Machiunas in 1962 as part of the Fluxus movement.[247] Fluxkits are collections of objects that invite the participant to experience them through sensation. *Fluxux I*, the first Fluxkit contained 'multisensory, primary information' that would stimulate the participant in different ways including songs, a napkin, a medical glove, and 'music and performance scores'.[248] Nataliee Harren explains that Fluxkits, which were:

> produced in unnumbered, unlimited editions, are typically containerized, gamelike kits with graphic labels, inside of which one finds small found objects—typically readymade, castoff thingamajigs of little inherent value with which beholders can interact, thereby performing a Fluxus event in situ.[249]

These 'multisensory' Fluxkits share many similarities with a (play)box in both form and objective - of non-hierarchically presented stimuli and sensory provocation, though with the important distinction that the Fluxkit aims to engage a spectator and a (play)box acts as a stimulus for a theatre-maker, like a play-text, but accessing the haptic and the (syn)aesthetic.

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[247] In Fluxus, as in Happenings there are 'events' where 'everyday actions are framed as minimalistic performances or, occasionally, as imaginary and impossible experiments with everyday situations'. (Higgins, p. 2).
[248] Higgins, p. 34.
[249] Natilee Harren, 'Fluxus and the Transitional Commodity', *Art Journal*, 75:1, (2016) 44-69, (p. 46).

Just as a (play)box aims to stimulate the senses of those who encounter it to create a performance, so Fluxkits are performative with a focus on provoking a haptic response in the audience participant. Hareen observes that 'Fluxus 1 transforms the experience of reading and beholding into a performative, haptic, and collaborative encounter characteristic of the many Fluxboxes that would come'.[250] Higgins agrees, adding that the contents of 'the Fluxkit makes an experience for the handler that *is* the sensation contained in it; the Fluxkit is not *about* the sensation. The operative word *about*, like the word *of*, insists on the distance between object and user'.[251] Higgins uses the example of a pom-pom, explaining that in a 'Fluxkit, actual stuff is present – "That is a pom-pom"; it is not about a pom-pom'.[252] The contents of the (play)box are similarly present. The newspaper is newspaper, the make-up is make-up, and both are directly experienced as newspaper and make-up rather than as symbols of something else (discussed in chapter four).

Using a (play)box experience is *process* rather than *product*. However, these items are connected to a play-text and could be considered to also be 'about' the play-text - they are 'scriptive things'.[253] In this sense, the provocations function twice, both as the things that they are and the experiences they give based on their enactive affordances, and with the significance they receive in the dramatic context related to the play-text. So, as in Lecoq's pedagogy where everything is considered from the perspective of movement (*tout bouge*), there is an invitation for the newspaper in *Provenance* to be explored considering its affordances - the way that it floats, crumples, covers the space and extends the movement of the body - but it is also significant in the dramatic narrative as something that Alice hoards. In this way, my Lecoqian offer for the things in a (play)box is for them to be

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[250] Harren, p. 49.
[251] Higgins, p. 36.
[252] Ibid.
[253] Bernstein's term, 'scriptive things' is discussed in the introduction and in chapter four.

transformative, mutable though play, explored for their inherent affordances, but also with the possibility to play a given action.

Higgins describes the importance of the primary experience of the embodied encounter with a Fluxkit drawing on theories proposed by William James, John Dewey, Hilary Putnam, and John McDowell. She proposes a 'modification' to the 'signifying chain often applied to visual art in semiotic analyses' and notes the tradition in 'Western metaphysics since Aristotle and Plato, which insists on dividing primary experience […] from secondary experience'.[254] Higgins interrogates different propositions to understand the primary experience gained by a first-hand encounter with a Fluxkit and the ideas or concepts that are generated by this – the secondary experience. In doing so, she challenges the Cartesian dualism of mind-body separation. She notes that Dewey 'produced a theory of democratic culture based on the importance of experience' and his use of 'tactile tools […] containers holding objects destined for a range of multi-sensory explorations, [that] function strikingly like Fluxkits'.[255] Drawing on the arguments of Putnam and McDowell, Higgins argues that 'embodied knowledge produces abstract knowledge, and not the other way round'.[256] Similarly, the lived experience of a theatre-maker's enactive encounter with a (play)box creates embodied knowledge – both value lived, sensory, affective experience as a catalyst for creativity.

Where a (play)box is significantly different from a Fluxkit is that the viewer's exploration, their primary experience of the objects in the Fluxkit becomes the performance itself. Kristine Stiles observes that 'Fluxus originated in the context of performance and the nature of its being – the ontology of Fluxus – is performative'.[257]

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[254] Higgins, p. 36.
[255] Ibid.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Quoted in Higgins, p. 25.

Whereas, the primary experience of the creatives encountering a (play)box is part of the journey to create a 'secondary' piece of performance, which will be rehearsed, shaped and crafted before it is performed for an audience. Rather than being presented as a performance the (play)box is a stimulus, though it may be considered performative. (Performative used here should be understood as a progression from J. L. Austin's theory of 'speech acts', where words become actions, developed by Judith Butler to the notion of performative acts linked to the body as not 'merely as a historical idea but as a repertoire of infinite possibilities'.[258] So a (play)box could be seen as becoming an embodied, performative act when it is encountered). A (play)box shares many characteristics with Fluxkit and Happenings, and of Ken Dewey in their explorations of non-hierarchical, sensorial stimuli that provoke visually-led performance.

The contents of a Fluxkit, like the provocations used for Ken Dewey's Happenings, are presented as non-hierarchical hierarchy. Harren notes that 'Owen Smith, Kristine Stiles, and Hannah Higgins have previously focused on the irreducible, primary, "non-hierarchical density of experience" that arises from encounters with such Fluxus performances and objects'.[259] A (play)box also seeks to trouble the assumed hierarchy of play-text with its diverse prompts that do not insist on inclusion in the final performance. As discussed, in our initial exploration of *Provenance*, there was no assigned order to the scenes or objects. They were taken from the (play)box and experienced as they were discovered, synthesising the encounters of characters, narrative arc, objects, sounds, thoughts and sensations. This initial exploration altered between reading text and embodied sensory exploration in a non-hierarchical order unlike a conventional play-reading, which privileges textual analysis and analytic cognition over embodied cognition.

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[258] Fischer-Lichte, p.27.
[259] Harren, p. 49.

Troubling the writer/devised theatre-making binary/writing the gap

I have attempted to show how my approach can be understood as emerging from a cultural context, in which there was a shift in focus towards art-making that recognised the importance of process, the experience of the lived body, collaborative authorship, and equality amongst the texts of movement, images, sounds, and words. Recent collaborations between writers and theatre-makers who inhabit an expanded understanding of 'writing' can also be seen to have emerged from this context, and I will show how their working processes have been influential in the development of my ideas. To do so, I will examine how these collaborations have been inspired by the kinds of stimuli I use in *Provenance*: objects, music, game-based tasks, and different kinds of text. Additionally, I will consider how these collaborations have created the kind of work that I aim to suggest to theatre-makers with a (play)box – performance that values the texts of physicality and visual image, which I have suggested are exemplified in the teachings of Jacques Lecoq. As discussed, I consider Crouch and his regular collaborators, Stephens and Nübling, Teale and Shared Experience, and Lavery and Frantic Assembly. My research concerns itself with process, so my choices are based on selecting work that provide examples of music, objects and strategies for creation that principle somatic, visceral and visual performance texts. For Shared Experience, I examine *After Mrs Rochester* and *Mermaid*, for Crouch *An Oak Tree*, for Lavery-Frantic Assembly *Stockholm,* and for Stephens-Nübling *Three Kingdoms*. My observations are based recordings of the productions, the work of other scholars, interviews with these writers and on the recollections of these theatre-makers of their process. In this way, they are to some extent pre-selected by them as significant and so, I would suggest by extension hold interest to other theatre-makers.

Finally, I should note that in describing these theatre-makers as working in collaboration with others I am either using their own definition of their work, or a commonly agreed upon term and it is their *collaborative process* that I aim to engender with a (play)box. Crouch explains that 'I work with these two men […] Andy Smith and Karl [James] who are first and foremost my friends but have been alongside my work for many years'.[260] Crouch's website describes this relationship as collaboration, explaining that 'Tim works with a number of associates and collaborators to produce his writing'.[261] Stephens describes the directors and creatives he works with as 'my collaborators' and notes that in discussing strategies for continuing to write 'throughout my next two decades' was advised by Caryl Churchill 'to collaborate'. Stephens explains that, for him, theatre is 'not simply about staging the imagination of a playwright, but a multi-authored process of collaboration, conflict, intervention and exploration'.[262] Lavery, 'emphazies that theatre is a collaborative thing' and Karen Morash notes that [u]nlike a number of playwrights who experiment with devising but ultimately return to traditional modes of playmaking, Lavery has continued to work collaboratively, interspersing devised work with solo-written, commissioned pieces'.[263] In examining these processes of collaborative authorship in a range of texts I explore genealogies of practice that inspire my concept of a (play)box.

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[260] Tim Crouch, unpublished interview by skype, 11 January 2016.

[261] 'About Tim Crouch', < http://www.timcrouchtheatre.co.uk/about-the-company> [accessed 8 June 2018].

[262] Stephens, *A working diary*, p. 16.

[263] Interview with Bryony Lavery, < http://www.systemsdesign.tbm.tudelft.nl/witness/interviews/bl/interview-bl.html> [accessed 8 June 2018], Karen Morash, 'Bryony Lavery: Nerves of Steel and a Forgiving Heart', *Women, Collective Creation, and Devised Performance: The Rise of Women Theatre Artists in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*, ed. by Kathryn Mederos Syssyeva and Scott Proudfit (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 207.

Abdication of authority and equality of texts

The idea of a (play)box that I am proposing aims to generate a sharing of responsibility and authority in the rehearsal room while offering a dramaturgical coherency in its ontology, which can be seen to emerge from a collaborative turn in the practice of these writers and theatre-makers. Like a (play)box, these writers create texts, or rehearsal states that invite intervention. Lavery in her work with Frantic, Stephens with Nübling, Teale with Shared Experience and Tim Crouch's work with his collaborators, demonstrate different modes of sharing 'authority' of the writer and of the other creatives involved in the theatre-making process.

When I discuss collaborative sharing of authority, I am proposing that this is in contrast to more conventional rehearsal processes that I experienced as an actor in the UK, where a director leads the process and aims to stage their understanding of the writer's intentions. Such respect for the writer's intentions in the UK is demonstrated with Stephens description of rehearsing *Three Kingdoms.* He recalls Nübling's astonishment 'when rehearsals started he said to the British actors that he was going to ignore the stage directions. As soon as he said that, the British actors in the room looked at me, to get my approval.'[264] Stephens demonstrates his willingness to eschew authorial control and share authorship with Nübling describing and 'dismiss the notion of the authorial presence of the playwright [. . .] which is reductive and limiting and silly to me.'[265] While Stephens is happy to relinquish authority, Nübling takes it by, for example, ignoring the stage directions.[266]

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[264] Radosavljević, *Theatre-Making*, p. 204.

[265] Catherine Love, 'New Perspectives on Home: Simon Stephens and Authorship in British Theatre', *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 26:3 (2016), 319-327 (p. 323).

[266] Nübling explains that "one of the first things I asked Simon: please don't write stage directions, I have an imagination on my own". Sebastian Nübling, 'Foreword', *Plays 4: Simon Stephens*, p. ix. Sean Holmes, director of the Lyric Hammersmith which co-produced Three Kingdoms, argues that despite Nübling re-

The collaborations between Stephens and Nübling are successful because Stephens is open to Nübling taking his plays as a canvas to create on, inspired by Stephen's texts which Nübling finds 'leave space for the unspoken, for what is said between the lines or underneath the lines'.[267] Stephens, in accepting Nübling as a collaborator must expect that Nübling may make sizeable changes to the text. Rebellato notes of *Three Kingdoms* that 'Stephens has been developing a writing style that leaves space for the director. The published text is large, generous, sprawling; it asks to be intervened in, to be selected from, to be cut.'[268] Stephens explores creating texts with the expectation that his collaborators will actively co-author and that authority is shared. Stephens describes his work as providing 'narrative, world, characters, language, situation and action. I create a form. I give these things a structure' in the same way as I do with the fragments of play-text in *Provenance*.[269] Like Stephens' texts, a (play)box also creates opportunities to be 'intervened in', 'selected from' and 'cut' inviting collaborative authorship.

Crouch shares authority through his early collaboration with Smith and James as he develops the concepts and ideas. Crouch describes how throughout his writing process, from before he has started writing to the final draft 'Andy and Karl, we have conversations with my work.'[270] These conversations are not ad hoc, but structured and significant to his process. He notes that as 'the writing takes shape then we might have a couple of days together mostly sitting and talking and thinking. When the draft is written we'll work out what's best to realise the draft.'[271] Rebellato describes how this process was used in a more

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writing, editing and changing *Three Kingdoms* the play was 'robust enough to take that' Sean Holmes, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KlVAxsmFGwM>, [accessed 9 June 2018].
[267] Nübling quoted in Stephens, *Plays 4*, p. ix.
[268] Dan Rebellato, 'Three Kingdoms', https://dan-rebellato.squarespace.com/spilledink/?offset=1337499360000 [accessed 8 September 2018].
[269] Simon Stephens, by email 29 November 2017.
[270] Crouch, personal interview.
[271] Ibid.

formal workshop structure to develop *An Oak Tree*.[272] Developing Crouch's process of dramaturgical discussion, I aim to invite collaborative dramaturgical dialogue as part of the process using a (play)box, a method embraced in dramaturgy and practice-based research, as discussed in the introduction.

In Frantic's devising process, the intervention of the writer in the structural development of the piece arrives relatively late in the process, after significant generation of ideas and material through various devising strategies. Graham and Hoggett explain that 'the initial idea comes from Frantic Assembly and then we match that with a writer'.[273] Like Crouch, Frantic 'create the kernel of the idea and text this to see if it is interesting enough to us and […] whether it will stand up to scrutiny and be interesting to anyone else'.[274] Next, they take the idea and go into a research and development phase with actors/dancers 'without the writer writing a single word'.[275] This second workshopping stage uses physical devising techniques, referred to as tasks by Frantic, based on the themes and ideas which have emerged from the brainstorming session. Graham and Hoggett explain that the writer will 'observe and absorb the many situations and stories explored through physicality. Sometimes these physical moments are a launch pad to a written scene. Sometimes they become the scene themselves as the writer brilliantly laces them through the script'.[276] A circular process of writing and workshopping takes place before rehearsals. Sigal notes that Graham and Hoggett 'were pleasantly surprised when they read the first draft of *Stockholm* and found that Lavery had incorporated much of the research and ideas that were discussed in development, as well as the initial physical work

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[272] Dan Rebellato, 'Documents', *Modern British Playwriting 2000-2009* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013), p. 230.
[273] Graham and Hoggett, p. 13.
[274] Graham and Hoggett, p. 14.
[275] Graham and Hoggett, p. 14.
[276] Graham and Hoggett, p. 14.

that was devised'.[277] The rehearsal process was structured around Graham and Hoggett

setting the performers physical tasks, which Lavery and the directors would observe so

that, as Sigal argues, the reciprocal working methods they use in their creative process

mean that 'the kinds of texts that Graham and Hoggett have commissioned from writers

bear the imprint of the exercises, games and patterns of movement they have designed to

devise physical sequences with the performers'.[278] This openness to process mirrors the

concept of a (play)box which offers different possibilities for process, without insisting

that the theatre-makers must choose one. The different texts inform each other, and just as

authority is shared between the generators of these different texts in Frantic's process, so it

is with a (play)box.

Polly Teale's work for Shared Experience also explores collaborative, physical

approaches to investigating their work. She holds a double strand of authority as both

writer and director yet welcomes other authorship into her text though her workshopping

process and from the influence of her movement director. Teale explains how in rehearsals

she may work collaboratively setting physical tasks, she explains 'I've done that thing of

saying, 'Everyone have a go at this image.' And that, actually, can be very interesting,

can't it, when you get ten people all coming up with different versions of something'.[279]

Additionally, rehearsal periods begin with a research and development (R&D), which as

Mark Smith notes may be seen as a form of devising, and at which point there is Teale

notes that there would be 'about thirty pages or maybe half a script'.[280] Likewise, Graham

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[277] Sigal, 2017, p. 62.
[278] Sigal, 2017, p. 64. Sigal also notes that Frantic refer to these theatre-making exercises as 'physical tasks'.
[279] Polly Teale, 'Distilling the Essence': Working with Shared Experience. *New Theatre Quarterly*, 31, (2015), 213-222, (p. 218).
[280] Teale notes of her plays that 'There's always been a complete script before I've begun rehearsals for any Shared Experience show. But they've all had R&D rehearsals where the script was quite embryonic.' Polly Teale, unpublished personal interview with the author, 15th December 2015. Mark Smith, *Processes and Rhetorics of Writing in Contemporary British Devising: Frantic Assembly and Forced Entertainment*, thesis, 2013, p. 141.

and Hoggett and Crouch create opportunities for shared authorship and authority in their process, while keeping a dramaturgical overview of the process. In each process, these practitioners make a choice to divest themselves of some of the authority which might be assumed of a writer or director to open their process and allow greater influence by the other creatives as I aim to do with a (play)box.

These examples of collaborative authorship demonstrate 'Gentle Acts of Removal, Replacement and Reduction' as a dramaturgical strategy in the creative process.[281] Crouch, Teale and Frantic use workshopping processes either before the written or is only partially-written. Words are removed and replaced by movement or sound, objects are removed and replaced by the audience's imagination (discussed shortly). Similarly, my suggestion with a (play)box is for it to open a dialogue with theatre-makers as a dramaturgical strategy, taking away elements to allow access and intervention at many levels of creation, as discussed in chapters three, four and five. A (play)box aims to allow not just textual space, but tactile, physical, and imaginative space by presenting different facets of the theatre experience at the start of the process but avoiding defining their use.

Stage directions

In *Provenance,* the specific example of a (play)box I will refer to in chapters three, four and five, I offer stage directions that aim to be evocative, poetic, or even seemingly impossible perform to inspire the creation of performances texts that use strong visual imagery and physicality. Additionally, I employ stage directions that act as instructions for task-based theatre-making exercises. The examples I select from the work of Crouch,

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[281] a smith 'Gentle Acts of Removal, Replacement and Reduction: Considering the Audience in Co-Directing the Work of Tim Crouch', *Contemporary Theatre Review*, (2011), 21:4, 410-415 (p. 410).

Teale, Lavery, and Stephens demonstrate a range of stage directions that inspire those in *Provenance.* Some of these examples have been written collaboratively, originating in the rehearsal room as physical tasks later scripted by a writer, others operate as functional instructions, or as impressionistic, impossible-to-stage directions that challenge theatre-makers to find inventive, imaginative responses. Graham and Hoggett suggest that stage directions are 'the most obvious area within a text for physicality to flourish' and to deliver provocations for making visual images, physical actions and non-verbal material for performance.[282] They describe initially closely following the stage directions for their first production where they took them as 'autocratic demands from the omnipotent author', to their current reciprocal relationship with writers like Lavery who leave space for them to interpret the text as they wish.[283]

Lavery, Crouch, and Stephens' stage directions often suggest or imply rather than giving concrete directions and they could be considered stage 'suggestions' or 'impressions' rather than stage directions, so far are they from being 'autocratic demands'. Lavery uses language which is poetic, creating beautiful but abstract images that are open to multiple interpretations, while providing inspiration and provocation to the other creatives. For example, in *Stockholm*, Todd is described as 'a compass a weathervane a magnet', a physically 'impossible' direction that is illusory and poetic allowing a gap for the collective imagination to fill.[284] Lavery offers actions paired with a contradictory adjective, for example the fight between the protagonists is described as both 'terrible' and 'beautiful'.[285] Sigal observes that Lavery's stage directions 'are written in a loose, poetic style, suggesting physical acts, but not dictating exactly what should take place' and that

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[282] Graham and Hoggett, p. 178. Steven Hoggett and Scott Graham shared artistic directorship of Frantic Assembly from 1994 when they founded the company until Hoggett left between in 2013 and 2016 to pursue his burgeoning career as a movement director.
[283] Sigal, p. 58, Graham and Hoggett, p. 178.
[284] Bryony Lavery, *Stockholm* (London: Oberon Books, 2007), p. 21.
[285] Lavery, p. 65.

she 'embedded a need for physicality within the text by creating a continuous contradiction in the text between what Kali and Todd say and what they do'.[286] Lavery creates a pull between meaning and description that invites physicality, as the directives to 'fight' and to 'fight beautifully' clearly provoke in very different ways.

Crouch also experiments with stage directions that are potentially impossible to stage, create a pull between imagination and reality, and 'suggest' rather than 'dictate'. His play *England* ends act one with the stage direction '*The end of the world'*, which Crouch explains 'for us is a sound cue, a monumental sound cue. It might be interpreted by other people very differently and that's all good'.[287] Stephens also writes 'impossible' stage directions that offer provoke rather than dictate. As discussed shortly, in *Pornography* Stephens' has interspersed the scenes with the stage direction '*Images of Hell. They are silent'*.[288] Stephens explains how:

> I no longer think it is my job to describe a production in the stage directions so much as generate work for other artists to counterpoint their imagination with. So, I rarely describe stage images, at least not in a naturalistic way.[289]

This openness invites collaborative authorship and shares authority with the other theatre-makers by leaving space for them to fill in the gaps. While these writers create gaps using textual devices, a (play)box as well as experimenting with written text, additionally creates space for the input of the other creatives by replacing words with other kinds of stimuli, inviting collaborative authorship 'for other artists to counterpoint their imagination with'. The evocative, imagistic stage suggestions that Crouch, Stephens and Lavery write are found not only in the work I explore here but emerge as part of the wider cultural context I

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[286] Sigal, p. 67.
[287] Tim Crouch, *Plays One* (London: Oberon Books, 2011), p. 142., Crouch, unpublished interview.
[288] This stage direction is repeated on pages 215, 222, 230, 249, 275. Stephens, *Plays: 2*, p. 215, 222, 230, 249, 275.
[289] Stephens, by email.

have discussed earlier. This 'postdramatic' or 'postmodern' theatre exemplified in the work of writers such as Heiner Müller, Martin Crimp, Caryl Churchill, and Peter Handke, provides the cultural landscape from which writers like Lavery, Crouch, Teale, and Stephens emerge and is stylistically influential on *Provenance* and the concept of a (play)box.[290]

Lavery, Crouch, and Teale's stage directions sometimes reflect work created in the rehearsal room through improvisation that retains traces of this collaborative creation in the published text. Teale sees her stage directions as offers of possibilities rather than directives and 'impressions of what we came up with […] I try to say in the introductions these are the solutions we came up with, but feel free to find your own'.[291] Likewise, Crouch describes how his stage directions 'reference the work that's been done in rehearsal in addition to the more sort of foundational stage directions that are around the concept behind the piece or the ideology behind the piece'.[292] Similarly, Lavery's stage directions can reflect work done in the rehearsal room in addition to her individual authorship.

In *Stockholm,* Lavery watched the performers improvising in response to a physical task that generated a stage direction written into the published text, which can be re-interpreted by future theatre-makers.[293] It describes a couple in bed, exploring the loneliness and polarisation of attraction and repulsion in their relationship. It suggests the couple 'throw their sleeping shapes in their pattern./ Even in their sleep, there is

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[290] Stephen Bottoms argues that Crouch's work cannot be considered 'postdramatic'. He offer's Crouch's observation that his plays "subscribe to the Aristotelian unities, in terms of the nature and structure of the narrative, and that's very important to me.' Viewed in these terms, Crouch's work offers a powerful reinvigoration of dramatic traditions that a step 'beyond' them.' Stephen Bottoms, 'Authorizing the Audience: The conceptual drama of Tim Crouch', *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 14:1 (March 2010), pp. 65-76, (p. 67).
[291] Teale, unpublished interview.
[292] Crouch, unpublished interview.
[293] Graham and Hoggett, p. 160

negotiation and danger./Once, only once during the whole thing, they are both awake at the same time. At this moment, they look at each other'.[294] This stage direction, 'written' by the performers in action before Lavery 'wrote' it into text, exemplifies the collaboratively shared authority that a (play)box also aims to create. It offers both specific physical and emotional action for performers to explore, while remaining open enough to allow their creative input. Lavery and Frantic combine both physical task (from Frantic) and 'literary', poetic writing (from Lavery), in a way that I aim to mirror with a (play)box, so that it can be understood as both 'literary' and provide activities to share authorship. In chapter five, I will give examples of task-based stage *suggestions* that aim to create performance text that, like Lavery's is visually and physically-led.

Stephens experiments in creating space for collaborative authorship in the theatre-making process and insists 'that 'all generation is collaborative'', and that theatre is 'collaborative in its production and its reception'.[295] Stephens, observing Nübling's ability 'for exploding and reworking texts' in creating *Pornography* aimed to write him 'a text that was as open as possible [that] not only invites directorial interpretation, but is unstageable without it' with stage directions that 'are frankly impenetrable'.[296] In staging *Three Kingdoms,* Nübling not only responds to Stephens' invitation to co-author, but also facilitates authorship by the actor Risto Kübar who plays the Trickster, a character who is completely absent from the text. Catherine Love cites Stephens who observes 'that Kübar was 'as prominent an authorial presence in the experience of watching *Three Kingdoms* as me or Sebastian or [designer] Ene-Liis Semper''.[297]

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[294] Lavery, 2007, p. 71
[295] Love, p. 323, Simon Stephens, *Plays: 2* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2009), p. xxii.
[296] Stephens, *Plays: 2*, p. xix. The structure of *Pornography* is based on Jacques 'Seven Ages of Man' speech from *As you like it*, so while it proposes an 'open' structure, this speech provides an underlying framework.
[297] Love, p. 322.

With a (play)box I aim to invite these varied strands of authorship with prompts that may promote these different modes of authorship and writing. For example, Kübar's authorship revolves strongly around song and his character is seen singing pop songs into a microphone.[298] A (play)box may suggest this kind of authorship by offering a selection of music, as *Provenance* does, which offers not only tempo and rhythm but an aesthetic to the theatre-makers. Stage directions reach into what cannot be explored through dialogue, into silence and image. Crouch, Teale, for Shared Experience and Lavery with Frantic collaboratively author texts that are both 'present and gauntlet' in the way a (play)box aims to be, both challenging and inspiring the other creatives.[299] However, the stage directions in a (play)box are extended beyond the examples examined here to offer new opportunities for action in their coupling with material provocations, a method that will be discussed in chapter five.

Music

Music is more than just a score in the work of Stephens-Nübling and Frantic, but leads and authors their material, inspiring it, structuring and shaping it. Graham and Hoggett note that music 'has been the most essential of influences […] inspiring theatrical scenarios, offering inspiration through lyrical and compositional content, [and] providing structure for improvisations'.[300] Georgina Lamb, a regular collaborator in Frantic's early work observes that for Frantic music is 'always first […] music is a really big thing for them'.[301] Citing their collaborations with Goldfrapp on *Dirty Wonderland* and Lamb on *Peepshow*,

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[298] See German version of the trailer for *Three Kingdoms*: < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MiMWMozjQTo&index=6&list=PLlAGJTQKXgg9n8ZVP1mip8EdD5l ug4DZe&t=0s> [accessed 12 June 2018].

[299] Simon Stephens describes writing *Pornography* for Nübling to be 'both present and gauntlet'. Simon Stephens, 'Introduction', Plays 2, p. xix.

[300] Graham and Hoggett, p. 26.

[301] Georgina Lamb, personal interview, 24 May 2017.

Lamb notes that 'Steven very specifically knew […] you're having a fight, and that fight goes through the building. […] They would know exactly what Lamb track that was going to be to.'[302] Lamb explains that 'even if it was playing in the background it would definitely feed into the feel of the piece, whatever it was we were making.'[303] The music in a (play)box offers similar possibilities, to provide structure for improvisations, inspire an aesthetic, and author in the theatre-making process. As I analyse more fully in chapter five, in the making of *Provenance* music guided an improvisation to provide aesthetic and enactive, perceptual discoveries.

Frantic and Stephens describe how they use music in their work as a creative limitation to structure creation, as I propose is possible with the musical prompts in a (play)box. Angelaki notes that 'Stephens has spoken candidly about the importance of music, noting that it is a driving force in building the worlds of his plays' and in creating an aesthetic.[304] Stephens claims that 'I've learnt more from the songs of the Pixies about dramatic structure than I have from reading any play'.[305] Likewise, Frantic describe how they based the overall structure of *Klub* around the paradigm of a DJ's set.[306] *Klub* had '20 short scenes, each lasting about three minutes' imitating the structure of a DJ's set.[307] In the same way that Stephens bases his dramatic structure on the songs of The Pixies, observing 'you just do loud bit, quiet bit, loud bit, quiet bit', for *Klub* Frantic used a DJ's set.[308] Both take the rhythmic structure of music to provide the dramatic framework of their scenes – for Stephens, 'loud bit, quiet bit', for Frantic creating *Klub* multiple, short

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[302] Lamb.

[303] Lamb.

[304] Angelaki, p. 160.

[305] Radosavljević, *Theatre-Making*, p. 199.

[306] While creating *Klub*, Frantic consulted DJ Andy Cleeton who had played at the Hacidenda club. Cleeton shared 'how he constructed a three-hour set, about the shape of the evening, how many beats per minute, and also about responding to the club audience. This encouraged us to respond to audience mood'. Aleks Sierz, 'Frantic Assembly', *Theatre Forum*, Vol. 26. (2005) 3- 9. (p. 4).

[307] Ibid.

[308] Radosavljević, *Theatre-Making*, p. 199.

scenes of the same time length. Just as Frantic and Stephens use music to provide aesthetic and structure in their work, *Provenance* offers pieces of music to suggest possible sites of structure and aesthetic, without insisting it is included in the final production, discussed in chapter five.

Objects

A (play)box highlights the possibilities of objects as provocations in theatre-making, a technique that, as I will discuss in chapter four, is prominent in Lecoq's pedagogy. Additionally, I will consider the arguments that surround the understanding of objects onstage as semiotic signifiers and make a case that those in a (play)box are significant for what they *afford* theatre-makers, what they do in *action* and in *play* rather than what they symbolise. I suggest that they are, as Andrew Sofer argues in *The Stage Life of Props* 'more than just three-dimensional symbols' and should be understood in this context as sites of possibility and potential.[309] Here, I compare the ways that objects/things are used across the work of Couch and collaborators, Frantic-Lavery, Teale/Shared Experience and Stephens/Nübling and to position the (play)box as partially emergent from their experiments.

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[309] Andrew Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props* (University of Michigan Press, 2003), p. vi.

Categories of objects/things	Crouch	Frantic	Nübling-Stephens	Teale-Shared Experience	*Provenance*
Scenographic: Objects as part of the stage picture or narrative	●	●	●	●	●
Task-related: To extend a game-based or physical task		●			●
Conceptually flexible: Objects that transform	●			●	●
Performed objects: Re-created physically by a performer (Lecoq)*					●
Investigation of representation: Imaginary objects	●				●

Figure 11 Table of objects/things in the work of Crouch, Teale-Shared Experience, Frantic-Lavery and Stephens-Nübling.

* As discussed, students at Lecoq physically recreate the elements and materials. This is a process we applied in rehearsals for Provenance but is not seen in work of the examples I offer here.

Scenographic: Objects as part of the stage picture or narrative

At the most fundamental level, objects are used to serve the narrative or create the stage picture across all these examples. In *Three Kingdoms*, Nübling-Stephens juxtaposes objects with people, to create striking, provocative, sometimes disturbing images. Animal heads sit on human bodies, men wear ill-fitting, gaudy women's clothes and a woman emerges from a suitcase. (Crouch also creates striking visually juxtapositions and explores object as art often using imaginary objects, discussed shortly). Rebellato observes the 'grotesque excess' when 'the detectives interrupt a pornographic film shoot and we are shown an impressionistic riot of symbolic perversity, enormous strap-ons, anal penetration, facials, fetish gear'.[310] Rebellato and Matt Trueman note their uncomfortable responses to the tactility of 'shit and squirty cream and KY jelly' which 'goes everywhere'. [311] Things are used to generate a powerful, visceral (syn)aesthetic response that a (play)box also aims to access.

Task-related: Objects to extend a game-based physical task

Frantic do not rely heavily on objects in the creative process, however in developing *Stockholm* they were used to extend game-based physical tasks. Lamb describes how post-its were hidden by the performers for each other to find after writing messages on them and a tea-towel was used in psychological game paired with a physical task.[312]

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[310] Dan Rebellato, 'Three Kingdoms'.
[311] Matt Trueman, 'Review: Three Kingdoms, Lyric Hammersmith', *Matt Trueman,* < http://matttrueman.co.uk/2012/05/review-three-kingdoms-lyric-hammersmith.html> [accessed 24 September 2018].
[312] Lamb.

Conceptually flexible: Objects that transform

Crouch uses objects to explore questions of transformation and representation, often inspired by Duchamp and his 'transformation' of the everyday into art.[313] In *An Oak Tree,* follows Michael Craig-Martin's art work *an oak tree* (1973), which consists of a glass of water and a piece of text that explains the glass of water has been transformed into an oak tree.[314] Crouch draws a comparison between this transformation of perception through belief, independent of any visual evidence of change and the theatrical transformation of actors understood as characters, which he extends further using objects to 'play' characters.[315] The audience are shown that what they are asked to believe as 'real' is not real – their responsibility for transformative perception is laid bare. For Shared Experience objects are also playfully transformative, so a bed may become a boat or a suitcase a chair. Likewise, as discussed, in Lecoq's pedagogy and in rehearsals for *Provenance* objects transform to become puppets or other things.

Investigation of representation: Imaginary objects

Crouch plays with image and the imaginary by asking his audience to imagine acts that are spoken but not performed or shown. In *My Arm* Crouch plays a boy who decides to hold

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[313] In my interview with Crouch he observed that 'the disparity between what your mind sees and what eventually is shown onstage is a really interesting place. There's a great Marcel Duchamp quote which he talks about the unexpressed but intended and the unintentionally expressed.'

[314] This art work draws on the Catholic belief that at the moment of the eucharist during the ceremony of a mass, the communion wafer that the priest has blessed becomes the body of Christ, known as transubstantiation. The congregation are not asked to believe that the wafer represents the body of Christ, but that it *is* the body of Christ. See < http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/craig-martin-an-oak-tree-l02262> [accessed 13 June 2018].

[315] *An Oak Tree* tells the story of a father who believes that his daughter, killed in a car accident, has turned into an oak tree and the hypnotist who accidentally killed her. Crouch plays the hypnotist with a second actor, different for each performance, who is completely unrehearsed and who is openly given instructions and sections of text to read by Crouch. I watched a recording of *An Oak Tree,* in which Patrick Marber played the second actor at the Royal National Theatre archives on Tuesday 21 June 2016.

his arm above his head for the rest of his life, without lifting his arm above his head.[316] In *Adler and Gibb* both described as stage directions and in performance, the actors are stationary and deliver their lines directly to the audience while their dialogue describes a scene full of energetic action using objects.[317] Crouch suggests that 'the gap between the idea and the realisation is always the most interesting place' and that he intentionally wrote this intending to use the theatrical form to 'reflect the narrative'.[318]

Conclusion

Crouch uses objects to explore questions of transformation and representation, for Teale they are manipulated to perform multiple functions, Frantic, as part of task-based games and Stephens-Nübling employ them to shock with jarring juxtapositions as scenographic structures. The prompts in *Provenance* are both like and unlike the examples I have examined here, however, they all demonstrate a playful experimentation with the form and functionality of *things*. The physical presence and tactility of these stimuli is significant to the embodied experience of a theatre-maker, arguably more than for a spectator. By *scripting things* that can be felt, heard, smelt and smeared into a narrative *Provenance* aims to create a powerful (syn)aesthetic tool for the theatre-maker, discussed in chapter five.

The use of stimuli that I have examined across a range of practices offer a cumulative praxis which I extend beyond playwriting into my model of a (play)box.

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[316] Crouch, *Plays 1*.

[317] Tim Crouch, *Adler and Gibb* (London: Oberon, 2014), pp. 6-24. Crouch also describes being inspired by 'a pre-historic Irish storytelling tradition; the storyteller would stand behind the audience and the audience would face a wall or face an empty space, so they would then envisage their own version of it and wouldn't need the actor to contain the physical idea of the story'. Patrick O'Kane, *Actors' Voices: The People Behind the Performances* (London: Oberon Books, 2012), p. 149.

[318] Crouch, personal interview.

Elements that are influential in the creative process but unrepresented in the published text, such as music in the work of Frantic, are offered at the start of the process in *Provenance*. These examples demonstrate shared authority and collaborative authorship in a variety of texts, working methods I inculcate in the (play)box *Provenance*. A (play)box is an experiment to discover where the boundaries lie of text, authority, structure and of authorship. In the following chapters, I will offer examples of my own experiment of this new form in rehearsals for *Provenance.*

Chapter three

Play and the (play)box

Introduction

As I have suggested earlier, my aim with a (play)box is to invite theatre-makers to *playfully* approach its contents, and in doing so I aim to inculcate elements of Lecoq's ludic pedagogy. In this chapter, I will consider different theories of play, illustrated by aspects of my work with *Provenance* to show how Lecoq's approach is embodied in the concept of a (play)box, drawing on, in addition to Lecoq, Merleau-Ponty, Winnicot, Turner, Schechner, Vygotsky and Csikszentmihalyi. I will begin by exploring some of the prominent understandings of 'play'.

Defining play

Schechner observes that '[p]lay is very hard to pin down or define. It is a mood, an activity, a spontaneous eruption. Sometimes it is rule-bound, sometimes very free' also noting that 'Victor Turner called play "the joker in the deck," meaning that it was both indispensable and untrustworthy'.[319] Thomas Henricks agrees, observing that Michael Ellis in his book exploring *Why People Play* found that 'there are many ways of thinking about play and many explanations for why it occurs'.[320] Brian Sutton-Smith observes that people 'all play occasionally, and we all know what playing feels like. But when it comes to making theoretical statements about what play is, we fall into silliness. There is little agreement among us, and much ambiguity'.[321] However, Johan Huizinga in his book

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[319] Schechner, p. 89.
[320] Thomas S. Henricks, 'Play as Self-Realization: Towards a General Theory of Play', American Journal of Play, volume 6, number 2, pp. 190 – 213 (p.190).
[321] Brian Sutton-Smith, *The Ambiguity of Play* (Harvard: University Press, 1997), p. 1.

Homo Ludens suggests that there are 'universal characteristics of play' and that 'even in its simplest forms on the animal level, play is more than a mere physiological phenomenon or a psychological reflex [...] All play means something'.[322] This understanding of play as meaningful is fundamental to approaching 'play' as a strategy in theatre-making with a (play)box. Although, as Peacock notes, Huizinga argues that play is not serious, a quick scan of the subjects he discusses through the lens of play; including war, language and philosophy, indicate that he considers that 'serious' activities contain 'playfulness' within them, or should be approached using playfulness as a structure. Huizinga even concludes by rallying that '[l]ife must be lived as play'.[323] Thus, play can be understood as a way of *operating within a structure*; this could be law, war, philosophy, a video-game, a running race, or a theatre-making machine such as a (play)box.

Sutton-Smith, Schechner, and Caillois offer interpretations of structures of play that also show that play can be a way of operating within a structure or a state of *being*. Sutton-Smith offers seven rhetorics of play: 'development or progress, the self, the imaginary, competition or power, community identity, the fascination with fate, and finally, frivolity and foolishness'.[324] Schechner also offers seven approaches to play: structure, process, experience, function, evolutionary, ideology, frame and eventually the concepts of 'deep play' and 'dark play', in which people take play into identity by placing themselves in situations of danger. 'Deep play', a term initially coined by the eighteenth-century philosopher Jeremy Bentham, refers to situations where a playful activity such as gambling means we risk our lives. 'Dark play' is Schechner's own term, describing 'play'

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[322] Schechner, p. 108, Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A study of the play-element in culture* (London, Henley, & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949), p. 1.
[323] Huizinga, p. 212.
[324] Henricks, p.196.

where only one party is 'playing', and the 'play' also contains elements of danger, for example in a con or a reality TV show.

Roger Caillois puts play and games into four categories: Agon or competition - competitive games such as chess or races, Alea or chance, such as roulette where 'fate, luck or grace determine the winner', 'mimicry or simulation' such as theatre or child's play, and 'Ilinx or dizziness' to 'induce a disorienting experience or state of mind' such as going on a roller coaster.[325] (Schechner observes the connection between 'free play' and chance and the work of John Cage, Dada and Fluxus, discussed in chapter two.)[326] Caillois notes the ancient Greek understanding of free play – *paidia*, and play bound with rules - *ludus*, reminding us that our understanding of play is defined by societies' view of play as either a bacchanalian, dangerous waste of time (*paidia*), or worthwhile and improving, such as sporting activities (*ludus*). Extending the understanding of *ludus,* Natasha Lushetich and Mathias Fuchs observe that 'the current epoch is characterized by gamification and 'ludification' (Raessens 2006: 52-57). The former refers to the increasing structuring of daily activities with game principle, and the latter refers to the transformation of identities cued by digital technology'.[327] Shortly, I will expand on how game-like elements are used as a strategy in *Provenance.*

The developmental psychologist Jean Piaget suggests that play is 'a kind of free assimilation, without accommodation to spatial conditions or to the significance of objects. This is simply play, in which reality is subordinated to assimilation'.[328] This is relevant to my approach, which, as discussed in chapter one in relation to Gibson's concept of affordances, suggests that a theatre-makers response to the prompts is, in the first instance,

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[325] Schechner, pp. 93 - 94.
[326] Schechner, p. 111.
[327] Natasha Lushetich and Mathias Fuchs, 'Introduction', *Performance Research*, 21:4, (2016), pp. 1-7, (p. 3.)
[328] Jean Piaget, *Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood* (London: Routledge, 1951), p. 86.

not analytic, but somatic and instinctual like children's play. Additionally, the rhizomatic

structure of (play)box allows the prompts to be 'freely assimilated', with multiple

combinations that are unrelated to their significance. The 'play' I propose with a (play)box

aims to be child-like in the way that Piaget describes, and Lecoq, discussed shortly,

espoused. Schechner makes the important observation that, in practice, these

categorisations merge and overlap and when play takes place it does so on multiple levels,

with a variety of *affective* outcomes.[329]

The concept of a (play)box that I am proposing here as an innovation in approaches

to theatre-making, employs different elements of the structure and process found in states

of play to a variety of dramaturgical ends. While a (play)box suggests 'mimicry or

simulation' with its elements of dramatic play-text, it also uses elements of agon. For

example, for the specific (play)box, *Provenance,* a video clip gives a race-like time

constraint, during which the performers must complete a series of actions, discussed in

chapter five.[330] This time restriction provides an element of gamification to a physical task

– to finish the somatic exploration of descriptive words (splicing, wringing, retching,

dreading, dissolving, resenting, powering-on, ignoring, stressing, medicating,

disappearing), and to arrive at a position by the end of the designated time.[331] Just as in a

running race, using this device in *Provenance* the participants' attention and focus are

heightened by the time limit into a short burst of concentrated action. In this way, the task

can be understood using Caillois' definitions of play as ludic, in that it is bound by rules

and as containing elements of 'competitive' agon. We, as performers began and ended at

the equivalent of a starting and finishing line. In the same way that a competitor in a race

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[329] Schechner, p. 89.

[330] See DVD ROM in appendix for videos illustrating this. The same videos can also be found here: <
https://vimeopro.com/user39036964/out-of-the-playbox-an-investigation-into-strategies-for-writing-and-
devising-1> The password is provenance.

[331] See appendix for draft of *Provenance* (draft nine).

operates within a constricted space to deliver a focused performance, I found that the condensing of time and space heightened my focus and gave me a kick of adrenalin. Similarly, Maiya found 'the time compression […] useful' noting that 'it gives a certain urgency to that moment and to the job that we each had to do'.[332] The ludic 'rules' associated with the task helped to focus and release our creativity through structures of play.

I am suggesting that a (play)box proposes a structure and a process in its ontology to guide and enable creativity through playful activity connected to Lecoq's pedagogy. The structure – a box with things inside, offers a highly particular but innovative process for making theatre – the box to be opened and the things taken out. This creates a randomised order (process), so there is no first or last stimuli or scene inherent in its structure. It is a rhizomatic, open, intertextual, intermedial set of material provocations, providing carefully curated conditions for the stimulation of play. Practically, this means that when exploring the stimuli in a (play)box, the theatre-makers could start by playing with any one of the provocations in the box. For example, in *Provenance* the scenes of dramatic play-text are printed separately and rolled up into tubes, so they cannot be stacked in a pile and must have a randomised order, offering the theatre-makers the opportunity to create a localised and subjective order for them, that arises through and in the act of play. The structure (or specifically the lack of structure) of a (play)box ensures that through the process the theatre-makers become writers of content.

The 'box' in (play)box refers to the material object, a box, that the dramaturgical stimuli are presented in, but also alludes to other boxes and their contents: Pandora's box, a jack-in-a-box, and a toybox where children's toys are kept. These are all ludic boxes that

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[332] Interview with Maiya Murphy and Chelsea Crothers, Wednesday 18 October 2017.

connect to fantasy and imagination (one of Sutton-Smith's categories for play) as a (play)box does: Pandora's box to Caillois' definition of alea and playing with fate; a jack-in-a-box to ilinx; and most crucially for my proposition a child's toybox that connects to the imagination, mimicry and simulation of child's play. The theatre-maker is invited to play with the dramaturgical stimuli, just as a child plays with their toys. A box must be opened to reveal what is hidden inside and by nature embraces the unknown, 'not-knowing', and the possibility of surprise and delight, but also of danger and uncertainty. There is an implication that to open such a box is the start of a journey, as is often the case in fiction.[333]

As discussed in chapter one, my playful application of parenthesis in the name (play)box, aims to emphasise that both 'play' and 'box' should be considered as individual entities, as well as part of a whole. This use of parenthesis aims to draw the theatre-maker's attention to the concept of *play* as a fundamental approach to the stimuli. So, play is principled as working method, structure and final product. The understanding of playfulness, playing and play used here is directly connected the conceptual construction of a (play)box and to my own practice, which, as discussed, is informed by my training at the Lecoq school in Paris, where play, or *le jeu* is highly significant in its pedagogy. *Le jeu* is built into the idea of a (play)box, asking theatre-makers to play, as children play with their toys with an exploratory, immediacy that is somatic, tactile and initially non-analytic.

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[333] In addition to Greek myth of Pandora who opens a box that unleashes all the horrors of the world, John Masefield's book, *The Box of Delights*, centres around a box and its magical contents. Throwing the net a little wider, we find a wardrobe door that opens to another world in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis, lamps that contain genies, and a door in Bluebeard's castle, behind which are the dismembered bodies of his former wives. There is a fear and a pleasure in daring to open and venture into the unknown in all these instances, and play takes on the sense of gambling, or to use Caillois' terminology 'alea or chance'.

Lecoq and play

The importance of 'play' and 'playfulness' runs throughout the curriculum at a Lecoq school and underpins every aspect of the territories explored. Louise Peacock notes that 'for Lecoq, the concept of *jeu* runs through all his teaching. […] Alan Fairbairn (in Murray) further emphasizes the importance of play 'The whole notion of *play* is essential to Lecoq's school''.[334] Peacock quotes Lecoq to make the case that play is:

> not a technique but a state of being, a readiness to perform. It is '… the motor of performance. The driving force is not *what* to play but *how* it should be played' (Lecoq 2002: 118). For Lecoq, play exists in the space between the actor's ego and the character he is playing.[335]

Lecoq makes it clear that for him, play suggests not the subject matter (what) of performance, but the way that a performer should approach theatre-making (how). Lecoq immediately goes on to suggest that the performer ask herself '[w]hat forces are brought into play? Who is pulling? Who is pushing? Who is pulling or pushing himself? Who is being pulled or pushed?', indicating that for him, play exists not only as a mental state, but as an embodied, physical one.[336]

For Peacock drawing on Lecoq, play is a 'state of being, a readiness to perform' and she places this readiness in a liminal space between the actor's ego and the character they are playing. However, the work at Lecoq is often unconnected to character a student may be asked to embody fire, metal eroded by acid, or a falling leaf. Therefore, I would suggest that play in a Lecoqian sense, rather than existing solely in a mental space between actor and character, inhabits an embodied, liminal space of 'not-knowing', yet, as Peacock

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[334] Peacock, p. 32.
[335] Peacock, p. 33. [Italics in original].
[336] Lecoq, pp. 118-119.

suggests, of readiness and openness to accept and build upon what the other performers may do, or the way that a stimulus affords inspiration and action. Much of the curriculum at Lecoq is centred around improvisation, which relies on the performers ability to be open, responsive and to create in the moment. These improvisations are always within a given structure, for example choral exercises balancing the space, or the *mimodynamic* re-creation of colour, light, and sound, as well as dramatic character-based work.[337] (Play)box is a dramaturgical strategy that embraces the possibilities offered by 'not-knowing'. Just as a Lecoq a student creates through improvisation within a structure, the rhizomatic structure of a (play)box expects theatre-makers to use improvisation as a strategy.

A (play)box's rhizomatic structure create a dramaturgy of 'not-knowing', not only because improvisation is written into its structure, but also because, as discussed, there is no order to how the prompts should be used, or hierarchy amongst them. For *Provenance* this rhizomatic dramaturgy means that there are no limitations to how the stimuli should be used or connected to each other (although there are suggestions). This 'not-knowing' is essential to a theatre-making process using a (play)box and to the dramaturgical ontology of a (play)box. My aim with these structures of 'not-knowing' is to share authority and authorship amongst theatre-makers. A (play)box proposes a liminal space, a space conducive to a state of play. Working with a (play)box, the theatre-maker enters a space and state of ludic liminality and 'readiness to perform', open to what the other theatre-makers, or dramaturgical stimuli may offer and the unpredictable direction they may take.

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[337] Lecoq, p. 45.

Liminal and liminoid spaces of play

In *From Ritual to Theatre,* the anthropologist Turner proposes an understanding of liminal and liminoid space developed from Arnold van Gennep's *The Rites of Passage.*[338] The etymology of both words, as Turner and Bucknall explain, comes from the Latin word *limen,* meaning 'a threshold or boundary, a corridor between two different places.'[339] Van Gennep, in his study of non-western societies, identified three stages in traditional rites of passage, describing the central stage as 'liminal'. Liminal states and spaces are times, places, and states of transition – the middle stage in three phases between separation from society and reintegration back into it, arriving at the end of this cultural journey with a changed identity. For example, a wedding ceremony is a culturally significant liminal state, in which two people change their identity from being single to a married unit. Turner explains that in this liminal phase the 'subjects pass through a period and area of ambiguity, a sort of social limbo which has few (though sometimes these are most crucial) of the attributes of either the preceding or subsequent profane social statues or cultural states.'[340]

Turner developed the term 'liminoid' to describe contemporary liminality, following the same structure that van Gennep suggested, but applied to modern society.[341] Turner differentiates liminal as connected to traditional practices, and liminoid to modern culture, specifically in relation to ritual. Schechner, who worked closely with Turner, explains that liminoid spaces are those 'where elicit, subversive, subjective behaviours are allowed and encouraged, and where the persons can critique the dominant social

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[338] Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: PAJ, 1982), Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London: Psychology Press, 1960).
[339] Bucknall, p.53.
[340] Turner, p. 22.
[341] Richard Schechner, 'Performance Studies: An Introduction – liminal and Liminoid', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dygFtTWyEGM [accessed 3 June 2018].

discourse.'[342] Schechner explains that artists in the modern world often take a role equivalent to that of the shaman in a traditional ritual, able to step outside society and critique it with their work. Turner explains that this 'elicit' and 'subversive' state is a ludic state of play. So, 'a liminal or liminoid mode [is], essential interstitial, betwixt and between [...] a term derived from the Latin ex for "away" plus *ludere*, "to play"'.[343]

Liminal and liminoid states have two features that are important in relation to (play)box; firstly, that as Turner suggests, they are ludic, and secondly that they are embodied in space and time. Turner observes that '[l]iminality may involve a complex sequence of episodes in sacred space-time, and may also include subversive and ludic (or playful) events' and argues that 'liminality is peculiarly conducive to play'.[344] The rehearsal room is a place where, as Schechner has argued, the modern artist becomes the equivalent of a shaman and subversive, ludic behaviour is encouraged. Theatre-makers using a (play)box enter a 'betwixt and between' state of 'not-knowing', before the performance has been created, but amid creation, or as Bucknall describes between 'recognizable social space and the potential of new social space through the form and structure of a particular performance'.[345] Bucknall observes that 'the liminoid is forged out of 'play' scenarios that sit outside of societal rituals or practices and are therefore entered into as 'optional'.[346] The ludic behaviour of the theatre-maker in the rehearsal room using a (play)box is also inherently embodied, as they are impelled to interact spatially, somatically, and afferently with the prompts. As Turner notes, the 'passage from one social status to another is often accompanied by a parallel passage in space, a geographical

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[342] Ibid.
[343] Victor Turner, 'Body, Brain and Culture', *Performing Arts Journal,* Volume 10, number 2 (1986), 26-34 (p. 31).
[344] Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre,* p. 27. and p. 85.
[345] Bucknall, p. 54.
[346] Ibid.

movement from one place to another'.[347] The journey is not only conceptual but *enactive* and *embodied*.

Turner claims that 'in liminality people "play" with the elements of the familiar and defamiliarize them. Novelty emerges from unprecedented combinations of familiar events.'[348] Like the prompts in a (play)box 'the factors or elements of culture may be recombined in numerous, often grotesque ways, grotesque because they are arrayed in terms of possible or fantasied rather than experienced combinations.'[349] This description of liminality, where by playing with the familiar 'novelty' arises through 'unprecedented combinations', is useful when defining the liminoid space generated by a (play)box. The ludic, liminoid space of a (play)box invites the theatre-maker into an enactive, betwixt-and-between passage from ideas, inspiration, and stimuli, to creation and performance through play.

A (play)box combines the known and the unknown, dramaturgically requiring that the theatre-maker fill in the gaps between the information given by the stimuli using their imagination and experience. Further, there is intentional liminality in these stimuli. For example, newspaper could be read to provide a text or crumpled up and made into a puppet. Music can be danced to, the lyrics used as text, it can provide an underlying tempo and rhythm to a scene, or the movement and actions of the figures in the accompanying video can provide a physical structure. The stimuli are not necessarily novel in themselves (music, images, text, and objects), the novelty is in the act of playing with them and their rhizomatic combination to create a liminoid, ludic dramaturgy of the unknown, which combined with the knowledge and experience from a group of theatre-makers proposes an

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[347] Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre,* p. 25.
[348] Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre,* p. 27.
[349] Ibid.

unknown conclusion (or performance). As Bucknall argues, discussing the ''ludic'

structure of immersive dramaturgies' the 'invitation is to play, but once accepted, it has the

potential to become a liminoid act'.[350] The theatre-makers are invited to commit liminoid

acts with the stimuli to craft a performance. In this way these liminoid acts become a

theatre-making strategy embodied in a (play)box, which proposes a ludic, liminoid space

of potential and possibility.

Jon Foley Sherman acknowledges the potentiality of spaces of play through the

lens of Lecoq and Merleau-Ponty in his article 'Space and Mimesis'.[351] He argues that

'[b]oth men understood space not as a volume but as a kind of relationship founded on

possibility'.[352] Foley Sherman describes Merleau-Ponty's notion of *Spielraum* to be

literally translated as 'play space', a space of potential and imagination, just as a (play)box

provides a liminoid space of potential and imagination.[353] Drawing on Merleau-Ponty,

Foley Sherman describes how a space may feel alive to us and rich in potential or ''dead'

[…] like one drained of future possibility'.[354] He argues that '[i]magination is not

contrasted with the actual or the real but inseparably involved with it' just as when creating

a performance using a (play)box where 'real' stimuli must be articulated through

imagination and play.[355] Foley Sherman quotes Merleau-Ponty who observes:

> Besides the physical and geometrical distance which stands between myself and all
>
> things, a 'lived' distance binds me to things which count and exist for me, and links
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> them to each other. This distance measures the 'scope' of my life at every moment.
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> Sometimes between myself and the events there is a certain amount of play

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[350] Bucknall, p. 64.
[351] Jon Foley Sherman, 'Space and Mimesis', *The Routledge Companion to Jacques Lecoq* ed. by Mark Evans and Rick Kemp, (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2016).
[352] Foley Sherman, p. 63.
[353] Foley Sherman, p. 64.
[354] Ibid.
[355] Ibid.

(*Spielraum*), which ensures that my freedom is preserved while the events do not cease to concern me.[356]

Merleau-Ponty goes onto describe the opposite of *Spielraum* where there is no breathing space between him and the things around him and they 'enshroud', 'obsess' and 'rob me of my individuality and freedom' (which Foley Sherman defines as space that is dead or alive with possibility).[357] So, by inversion, a liminoid play space or *Spielraum* is one of 'individuality and freedom' (essential qualities for a theatre-maker using a (play)box), or in Lecoq's understanding, of *complicité*.[358]

Imagination is necessary for Merleau-Ponty's idea of an 'intentional arc', or 'the feeling of being able to direct ourselves towards projects not yet realized'.[359] *Spielraum* could also be understood as a liminoid space, or a place of 'not-knowing' where it is necessary to imagine a future unknown, a place of transformation from one state to another. Imagination is required to fill in the gaps of an intentional arc that imagines the future, just as a theatre-maker using a (play)box does in joining up the gaps of the unknown. As Foley Sherman concludes:

> Play can articulate space – perceived possibilities for movement and action imagined both by performers and attendants. Lecoq's notion of *jeu* (play) refers to a freedom instituted by an alert engagement with the constraints of possible movement. Space as *Spielraum* is a play-space, a space of/by/as play.[360]

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[356] Merleau-Ponty, p. 333.
[357] Ibid.
[358] See introduction for a definition of *complicité.*
[359] Foley Sherman, p. 64.
[360] Ibid.

Play articulates a (play)box just as play articulates space, using imagination to embody the 'perceived possibilities for movement and action' that fill in the gaps 'betwixt-and-between' the stimuli in a liminoid play space.

Lecoq's pedagogy, as well as considering the potentiality in articulating space, looks at the potential of everyday objects to create theatre, a technique I aimed emulate with the things in *Provenance*. The idea that objects support play is shared by Winnicott, discussed shortly, and Vygotsky. Vygotsky's theories of play explore children's learning and development – how they think, develop language, and understand the world around them. Like Lecoq, Vygotsky understood the importance of objects in 'dramatic' play observing that '[d]rama, more than any other form of creation, is closely and directly linked to play, which is the root of all creativity in children.'[361] Vygotsky observed that children learn *through* playful imitation of their experience of the world, often using objects.[362] He gives examples of a child using a stick as a horse and pretending to be the mother of a doll.[363] The child, through play, experience and imagination transforms the stick into a horse. This kind of imaginative transformation is essential for play using a (play)box, as it is to play at a Lecoq school, a methodology which, as discussed, shapes the creation of this concept.

At a Lecoq school, objects are interrogated for their intrinsic qualities and then transformed into puppets, masks, costumes and ways to extend or change the human form, or to represent other things just as Vygotsky's child uses a stick to represent a horse. My

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[361] Lev Semenovich Vygotsky, 'Imagination and Creativity in Childhood', *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology,* trans. M.E. Sharpe, vol. 42, no. 1 (original, 1967, trans. 2004), 7-97 (p.71).
[362] Bruce McConachie notes the work of Jaak Panksepp, proposing that there are 'seven distinct neurobiological emotional systems' including PLAY. He cites imitation in children's play as 'evidence for an understanding of enactive performing and spectating based in the gradual evolution of play'. Bruce McConachie, 'Introduction: Spectating as Sandbox Play', *Affective Performance and Cognitive Science: Body, Brain and Being'* ed. Nicola Shaughnessy (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 186 -189.
[363] Vygotsky, p. 11.

Lecoqian offer to a theatre-maker with the things in a (play)box is to explore a range of non-naturalistic possibilities through play. So, for example, in our rehearsals for *Provenance*, the newspaper and clingfilm became fruit and vegetables, expensive artefacts at an auction, and a rough puppet.[364] Paavolainen notes that children first explore an object's 'conventional affordances' before they 'detach or decouple' them.[365] In the same way, we first explored the objects intrinsic affordances and from this developed them into other things. The things in a (play)box acts as portals for the theatre-maker to structure and release their creative play, as Vygotsky observes in children playing and Leocq proposes in his pedagogy.

Csikszentmihalyi suggests that deep play/focus/involvement in tasks or activities take the player into a state of 'flow' where they are simultaneously deeply lost in the activity and yet also maintain control over the playful act. He argues that in this state of flow the player has 'the experience of merging action and awareness' in which 'one is very aware of one's actions, but not of the awareness itself'.[366] This is an inviting state because, as he observes '[a]n organism at play can use the full range of its genetic potential'.[367] For example, '[c]limbers report a great increase of kinaesthetic sensations'.[368] In a (play)box, its 'writer' can offer playful structures to create a state of play/flow, and thereby unleash 'the full range' of the theatre-makers creative potential. It does this by providing what Csikszentmihalyi calls 'activities which have clearly established rules for action'.[369] In *Provenance* these included using a video clip used to give a 'race-like' time constraint, in

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[364] See DVD ROM in appendix for videos illustrating this. The same videos can also be found here: < https://vimeopro.com/user39036964/out-of-the-playbox-an-investigation-into-strategies-for-writing-and-devising-1> The password is provenance.

[365] Paavolainen, p. 35.

[366] Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow and the Foundation of Positive Psychology: The Collected Works of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi* (New York and London: Springer, 2014), p. 138.

[367] Csikszentmihalyi, p. 135 – p. 137

[368] Csikszentmihalyi, 141.

[369] Csikszentmihalyi, 138.

which we explored a range of given actions, discussed in chapter five.[370] Focusing on

reaching a specific place in the space, within the time limit while exploring the actions, I

was released to explore more deeply and expressively. In these active tasks, creative

restrictions and the act of *doing* released us into a state of productive, creative, playful

flow.

Just as Csikszentmihalyi suggests that playful tasks offer a gateway to creative

flow, the psychoanalyst and paediatrician Winnicott proposes that 'transitional objects' can

transport us into a state of play. Like Turner and Merleau-Ponty, Winnicott describes a

liminal space of play, which he relates to the 'transitional objects' that help a baby, who

initially believes herself to be one entity with her mother, to cope with the potentially

traumatic understanding of individuality, and therefore of separation. Initially, the

mother's nipple, then the baby's thumb, or a security blanket, and eventually the child's

toys become 'transitional objects' that sooth the pain of transition to a separate, individual

identity. Not only the object, but the play itself is soothing to the child. As Schechner

explains 'Winnicott locates the origins of creativity and illusion in playing. He writes that

the satisfaction of playing is a feeling that comforts and sustains a person throughout

life'.[371] Winnicott claims '[i]t is in playing and only in playing that the individual child or

adult is able to be creative and use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative

that the individual discovers the self'.[372]

Playing with these toys in what 'Winnicott calls a "neutral space" of unchallenged

illusion' is the next stage in the journey into the world.[373] Winnicott explains that '[a]lmost

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[370] See DVD ROM in appendix for videos illustrating this. The same videos can also be found here: <
https://vimeopro.com/user39036964/out-of-the-playbox-an-investigation-into-strategies-for-writing-and-
devising-1> The password is provenance.
[371] Schechner, p. 99.
[372] D. W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (Oxon, USA and Canada, Routledge Classics, 2005), p. 72 – 73.
[373] Ibid.

any object, space, or span of time can be used "in play". And for the playing child within the liminal play world, anything can become something else'.[374] So, for Winnicott, objects are mutable in the same way that they are for Vygotsky, Lecoq, and the theatre-maker using a (play)box. Peacock connects Turner and Winnicott to Leocq. She quotes Winnicott arguing that '…in playing, and perhaps only in playing, the child or adult is free to be creative' (1991: 53). This view chimes perfectly with Lecoq's view that the performer can only be truly responsive when he is able to play'.[375] This understanding is fundamental to a (play)box, which asks the theatre-makers to find free, responsive creativity through play.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that play as a strategy for theatre-making is written into the structure of a (play)box, which offers a ludic space for the theatre-maker to commit liminoid acts of creation in a state of flow, both inside the creative processes as player and outside as reflective practitioner. The tools in a (play)box are liminoid portals that create a framework for what Bucknall describes as 'liminoid acts', or embodied, playful experiences.[376] These allow the bodies of the theatre-makers' and their collaborative acts to become co-authors in writing a performance. In chapter four, I examine how, responding to the affordances and creative restrictions that the things in a (play)box offer, theatre-makers are moved to create visually and physically-led material with an immediacy that play-text does not provide, an approach that is fundamental in Lecoq's pedagogy.

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[374] Ibid.
[375] Peacock, p. 12.
[376] Bucknall.

Chapter four

Objects, props, things, and affordances

Introduction

This chapter explores how the things in a (play)box may be used and understood by a theatre-maker in a rehearsal room. Pavis offers the term *object* to replace *prop* or *scenery*, suggesting that the 'neutral or empty nature of the expression explains its success in describing the contemporary stage, which uses in equal parts figurative scenery, modern sculpture or *installation* and the living sculpture of the actor*'*.[377] While Pavis considers the term object 'neutral', Brown similarly finds that the term 'thing' has a 'specific unspecificity'.[378] The neutrality or unspecificity that these words imply, and indeed, Pavis' examples of their differing functions, are useful as a descriptor for the stimuli in a (play)box. These things, as Pavis suggests, are 'non-mimetic [..] decontextualized or defamiliarized' and the suggestion that the 'same object' can be 'utilitarian, symbolic or playful'. For Pavis, this kind of flexibility 'encourages the audience's creativity', while with a (play)box it is the theatre-makers' creativity that is piqued.[379]

Both Paavolainen and Sofer consider object-performer interactions and observe that objects have not received great attention from theatre scholars, who instead have focused on 'subjects rather than objects, mimesis rather than the material stuff of the stage'.[380] Paavolainen notes that 'the study of *objects* has remained diffuse, at best, and surely marginal to theatre research'.[381] Tangential to this investigation is the study of puppetry and object theatre, which sadly time does not permit me to consider.[382] Excluding

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[377] Pavis, p. 239.
[378] Bill Brown, 'Thing Theory', *Critical Inquiry*, 1, 28, (Autumn, 2001), 1-22, (p. 3).
[379] Pavis, p. 240.
[380] Sofer, p. v.
[381] Paavolainen, p. 2.
[382] See John Bell, ed., *Puppets, Masks and Performing Objects* (New York: TDR Books, 2001).

this, as Sofer and Paavolainen observe, research into the object on stage has fallen into

three categories – materialist, phenomenological (considered briefly) and semiotic,

explored shortly.[383] Amending this, both Paavolainen and Sofer explore the 'life' of

objects on stage in interaction with performers. I find much to agree with in Sofer's claim

for stage properties that 'motion is the prop's defining feature' and Paavolainen's

suggestion to consider the stage object not as 'an isolated or fixed category' but instead to

focus on 'the fluid relations and interactions between actors and objects, people and

things'.[384]

The same approach applies to the things in a (play)box, which I suggest are

principally defined by what they *do* rather than what they might, in semiotic terms,

represent. Adding to this understanding of objects as things that *do*, this investigation of

things is placed in conversation with the ecological psychology of Gibson, and the

cognitive science of Varela et al, Thompson and Noë, particularly the notion of enaction

(defined in chapter one). While the work of the Prague School is considered, ultimately, I

argue as States does from a phenomenological perspective, that there is more to a 'thing's

interest' than 'how it works as a sign'.[385] Drawing on the insights of these theorists and

practitioners I define this as the way that the performer's body and actions are *affected*

moment by moment based on the affordances of the material stimuli in a (play)box.

Performer-object interactions using a (play)box should be understood from an

enactive perspective where cognition and theatre-making happen as a result of this

relationship. This interaction is unlike an audience's physically disconnected response to

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[383] Paavolainen*,* p. 2. and Sofer, p. 6. See also Janet Bennett's *Vibrant Matter* (2010) and Arjun Appadurai, *The social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective* (1968) for a discussion of the object viewed from a cultural materialist perspective. As Paavolainen observes Pavis 2003, and Fischer-Lichte (1992) have also considered the semiotic tradition. Bert O. States (1985) and Stanton Garner (1994), the phenomenological and Gil Harris and Korda 2002 the cultural materialist.

[384] Sofer, p. vi. Paavolainen*,* p. 3.

[385] Bert O. States, *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater* (California & London: University of California Press, 1985), p. 7.

an object on stage – the relationship explored by the semioticians. Just as Zarrilli takes an enactive approach to the 'actor-as-doer and what the actor does', I focus on the theatre-maker and object as *doers* and what they *do.*[386] Or, as discussed in chapter one, as Noë puts it, '*[w]hat we perceive* is determined by *what we do*'.[387] More specifically, I consider this *doing,* the action and motion of objects and performers, in the time and space of a *rehearsal room* rather than on stage. Next, I suggest that the things in a (play)box should be considered for their enactive affordances - their specific, reciprocal, sensory impact on theatre-makers, rather than based on the largely visual perspective of a theoretical audience. As Zarrilli argues 'the livedness of the actor's modes of embodiment, perception, and experience form the actor's perspective inside training and performance'.[388] Here, the theatre-maker's embodiment, perception, and experiences are afforded by things in a (play)box in a rehearsal process, which author material for performance.

As discussed in chapter one, Gibson suggests that environments and the objects within them, which he describes as *niches*, have a range of actions and opportunities based on their inherent properties, which he calls *affordances*. So, some surfaces *afford* standing-on or sliding-on, others *afford* sitting-on.[389] Applied to a (play)box, the things inside *afford* specific offers to a theatre-maker – for example, clingfilm is stretch-able, wrap-able, float-able, and pop-able. Paalovainen draws on Gibson's notion of affordances (discussed in more detail shortly) and cognitive science as the foundation to make sense of 'material objects, in the theatre and out' arguing, as I do, for a 'process of performative engagement with/in our world, rather than a spectatorial stance apart from it'.[390]

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[386] Zarrilli, *Psychophysical Acting*, p. 1.
[387] Noë, p. 1. Italics in original. See chapter one.
[388] Zarrilli, *Psychophysical Acting*, p. 45. See chapter one.
[389] Gibson, p. 69.
[390] Paavolainen*,* p. 23.

In addition to the investigations of Sofer and Paavolainen charting the status of objects in theatre, I consider the semiotic analysis of the Prague School, particularly considering Jiˇrí Veltruský's influential article *Man and Object in the Theatre* (1940). While, as discussed, my interest in these objects is not symbolic, Veltruský provides a meeting point for Paavolainen, myself, and to a lesser extent Sofer, as Paavolainen claims of Veltruský 'his underlying thesis that "question[ing] the relationship between man and things with respect to activity" may indeed be one of the theatre's most "fundamental features"'.[391] Paavolainen is 'sympathetic' to Veltruský's notion that considering the performer-object relationship 'with respect to activity' creates a vehicle to provide '"new ways of perceiving and understanding the world"'.[392] For Paavolainen, Sofer and myself, activity, motion, and play are fundamental in exploring performer-object interactions. Next, I examine the 'things' in a (play)box using a materialist approach drawing on Bernstein (2009) and Brown (2001, 2004). Brown, after Heidegger, argues that objects become 'things' when we become potently aware of them, either because they are not functioning well, or because they hold emotional rapport. I suggest that a theatre-maker has a similarly transformed relationship with the objects in a (play)box, where any perceived subject-object hierarchy is troubled. Finally, I consider Gibson's notion of affordances and give examples of the affordances of objects from the (play)box used in rehearsals for *Provenance*.[393]

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[391] Paavolainen, p. 16.
[392] Paavolainen, p. 16.
[393] As discussed in chapter one, *Provenance* was created by Maiya Murphy, Chelsea Crothers and I and staged in Singapore in October 2018.

Props

Sofer makes a distinction between stage objects and props, defining a prop as anything moved by an actor, even a large object like Mother Courage's cart.[394] He suggests that objects 'exist textually only in a state of suspended animation. It demands actual embodiment and motion on the stage in order to spring to imaginative life'.[395] Similarly, the principal consideration of the stimuli in a (play)box is their functionality in interaction with performers – what they afford, how they provoke, perform and inspire 'imaginative life' through embodied *motion* in the *rehearsal room*, rather than their *symbolic* meaning on *stage*. Just as Sofer argues of props, I suggest that the provocations in a (play)box are 'not static symbols but precision tools' with a 'dramaturgical role' and become significant only when a theatre-maker brings them into play.[396] These dramaturgical tools provoke and shape the construction of performance through play in ways that guide the theatre-maker to embodied, haptic working methods. The dramaturgical opportunities are wider for the stimuli in a (play)box than for the props Sofer examines (handkerchief, skull, fan, and gun), which are largely contained within one naturalistic function. Whereas (as explored shortly) the stimuli in a (play)box are transformative and their dramaturgical affordances are not only dramatic, but also haptic.

Another distinction between Sofer's prop's and a (play)box's things, is that the latter are not written into the play-fragments offered and may never reach the stage. Sofer charts objects written into texts in their stage journey, explaining that 'by mobilizing inanimate objects— literally putting them into play— actors translate these textual signifiers into physical properties that travel in concrete stage space and through linear

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[394] Sofer, p. 12.
[395] Sofer, p. 3.
[396] Ibid.

stage time'.[397] For Sofer, objects can only be symbolic when they are 'static' on page or stage, but when in motion they become 'props', and no longer limited to a 'frozen' meaning, so 'an object […] creates and sustains a dynamic relationship with the audience as a given performance unfolds'.[398] While stimuli in a (play)box are 'written' into it, a (play)box is a material, immediately physical text that affords touching, grasping, opening, listening, and tasting. For example, a ball of red wool, or sheet of clingfilm quickly draw the theatre-maker into embodied, *enactive* modes of interpretation, which do not principle speaking, modes which in a conventional rehearsal process using written text often arrive more slowly. As discussed in chapter one, Machon argues that 'sense-making' engages the corporeal memory born from lived somatic experience, which generate an instinctive, sensual perception and embodied knowledge that arrives before intellectual interpretation.

Lecoq and objects

The embodied, enactive modes of cognition and interpretation afforded using a (play)box's *things*, are inherent in Lecoq's pedagogy, which explores objects through an interaction with the body. As discussed in chapter one, students at a Lecoq school are asked to observe and then embody the elements (earth, air, fire, water) and a range of materials (newspaper, cardboard, elastic, glass, crystal, and acid eroding metal) and eventually colour and light, an approach Lecoq called the 'mimodynamic'.[399] These elements and materials are used for a variety of purposes, including character creation and creating aesthetic physical unity of movement while exploring Greek Tragedy and the chorus. Even

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[397] Sofer, p. vi.
[398] Ibid.
[399] Lecoq, p. 143. The mimodynamic method asks the student to mime colours, words, sounds, light, and eventually cities. In doing this, the student is not asked to 'act out' an intellectual understanding of the word, colour, quality of light, or place, but instead react physically to its sounds and rhythms or its inherent visual and sensual qualities.

in his approach to choral texts, Lecoq urged that '[i]n our way of working, we enter a text through the body. We never sit around and discuss but adopt the mimodynamic method'.[400] Similarly, in providing a collection of *things* that *do*, a (play)box moves the theatre-maker away from discussion and towards physical ways of working. My instinct, developed at Leocq, when given a roll of clingfilm is not to talk about it, but to unroll and stretch it. Or, when given a newspaper, to throw it and watch it fall, or crumple it to make a puppet. The Lecoq approach that asks students explore the affordances of *things* and their transmutable possibilities. In writing these *things* into a (play)box I offer elements of Lecoq's pedagogy and its playful exploration of *things*, which I have further developed into a new form of play-writing that challenges the dichotomy of playwriting and devising.

Object manipulation, a kind of puppetry using a random assortment of household objects is also explored at Lecoq. These objects are investigated to find their fundamental qualities, how they move, what they feel like, what they sound like, how they affect and change the space, and how they can become an extension of the performer's movement - in short, what they *afford,* what they *do*. What is important in Leocq's exploration of elements and materials, text and objects is not what these things might represent, but what they do, how they do it and this relates to the body. As Paavolainen suggests, there is 'a fundamental *complementarity* between objects and performers [...] such that the former materially enable and constrain the latter's actions, yet always reciprocally to her skill and intentions'.[401] A (play)box invites such reciprocal complementarity between objects and performers, her skills and intentions, affording and constraining her actions to create embodied, enactive routes to creation.

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[400] Lecoq, p. 143.
[401] Paavolainen, p. 3.

'All that is on the stage is a sign': The Prague School and Semiotics

That the props that Sofer discusses have been accorded symbolic significance in part stems from the tradition of literary analysis of dramatic text, which Kier Elam suggests started to change with the analysis of the Prague School in 1931.[402] The Prague School theorists, drawing on the work of Russian formalism and Ferdinand de Saussure's structuralism explore the significance of what happens on stage, shifting analysis from the written text to 'a semiotics of the performance proper'.[403] Among them, Veltruský in *Man and Object in the Theatre* (1940) argues that everything 'that is on the stage is a sign' and that as soon as an object arrives on stage it may acquire a significance beyond its originally intended purpose and function.[404] As Karel Brušák claims, 'while in real life the utilitarian function of an object is usually more important that its signification, on a theatrical set the signification is all important'.[405] The opposite can be said of a *thing* found in a (play)box, where its function as a dramaturgical tool is more important than its signification. For example, a newspaper may never be read, nor given the opportunity to represent 'news', but instead (as in our rehearsals for *Provenance*) immediately transformed to physically perform a function, such as wrapping a performer, defining the stage space, or becoming a puppet.[406]

In *The Aesthetics of the Art of Drama* (1931) Otakar Zich takes Saussure's ideas of connecting a mental concept to a written or verbal symbol, the signified and the signifier,

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[402] Kier Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, 2nd ed. (New York and Canada: Routledge, 2002), p. 5.
[403] Elam, p. 6. Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) is credited as the father of structuralism. He conceived the notion of the written word as a two-sided linguistic sign. For example, we hear the sounds that make up the word dog and are given the mental concept of 'dogness'. These sounds and thoughts become interrelated as the signified (mental concept of a dog) and the signifier (the word dog).
[404] Jiˇrí Veltruský, 'Man and Object in the Theater', in *A Prague School Reader on Esthetics, Literary Structure, and Style*, ed. and trans. Paul L. Garvin (Washington, D.C; Georgetown University Press, 1964), p. 84.
[405] Brušák cited in Elam, p. 7.
[406] See DVD ROM in appendix for videos illustrating this. The same videos can also be found here: < https://vimeopro.com/user39036964/out-of-the-playbox-an-investigation-into-strategies-for-writing-and-devising-1> The password is provenance.

and applies it to the stage where actors, sets and costumes signify a different reality. These ideas were developed by Petr Bogatyrev in *Semiotics in the Folk Theatre* (1938) and *Forms and Functions of Folk Theatre* (1940), in which he argues that when watching a performance, a theatre audience are simultaneously aware of the actor and the character she represents, another form of signifier and signified. Bogatryrev suggests that objects on stage become 'signs of a material object's sign'.[407] Or to put it another way, stage objects become not only what they might represent – a chair represents a throne, but also what a throne represents – royalty. As Sofer explains, '[f]or Bogatryev, all stage objects are thus "signs of signs".[408]

Karel Brušák in *Signs in the Chinese Theatre* (1939) considers the symbolic representation of performers and their actions in Chinese Theatre, a form which uses abstracted gestures and costume devices to deliver meaning, where, for example, gestures can represent the set.[409] Brušák observes that here 'performance is paramount'.[410] Veltruský agrees, noting that 'the figure of the actor is the dynamic unity of an entire set of signs, the carrier of which may be the actor's body, voice, movements, but also various objects, from parts of the costume to the set'.[411] As Brušák describes:

> A great proportion of the actor's routine is devoted to producing signs whose chief function is to stand for components of the scene […] Using the applicable sequence of conventional moves, the actor performs the surmounting of imaginary obstacles, climbing imaginary stairs, crossing a high threshold, opening a door.[412]

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[407] Bogatryev cited in Sofer, p. 7.
[408] Sofer, p. 8.
[409] Chinese Theatre is also known as Peking Opera or Beijing Opera.
[410] Brušák cited in Marvin Carlson, *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey, from the Greeks to the Present* (Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 409.
[411] Veltruský, p. 84.
[412] Brušák cited in Elam, p. 12.

The codified miming of Chinese Theatre, which uses what Veltruský describes as 'imaginary props', holds similarities to the playful, interpretive mime found in Lecoq's pedagogy and in Vygotsky's theories of play.[413] Elam agrees, noting that both mime and Chinese Theatre employ 'replacement' by 'gesture or verbal reference'.[414] As Brušák describes, in the language of Chinese Theatre, gestures can represent objects, as they may in child's play (Vygotsky), and mime (Lecoq).

Likewise, a (play)box aims to offer a structure of play found in Leocq's pedagogy (that the theatre-maker is open to accept or reject), where a performer's actions, gestures, or words may signify scenic elements or props and objects may have a transformative meaning. (The ways in which it does this are discussed shortly). Ultimately, a (play)box is intended to be functional, playful, and its contents material, dramaturgical tools rather than symbols, however, there is a blunt, representational symbolism used in play that can be connected to the far more highly sophisticated, codified gestures of Chinese Theatre. Using a (play)box there is a functional, playful shifting of a thing's meaning that issues from what it affords in reciprocal relation to the environment of performer, rehearsal room and the changing context of play. Brušák describes this as 'performance', Sofer as movement, and Paavolainen drawing on Veltruský's idea of 'action force' (discussed shortly) and the developmental psychologist Jean Mandler finds that '[c]ommonality within a domain or category depends not on the physical appearance of objects but on their roles within events – on what they do or what is done to them'.[415] What matters here is not what an object looks like, but what it *affords*, what it *does,* how it *does* it and what can be *done* to it.

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[413] Veltruský, p. 88.
[414] Elam, p. 13.
[415] Paavolainen, p. 24.

Continuing the work of the Prague School, Jindřich Honzl combines Bogatyrev's ideas of representative transformation and Zich's of seeing the stage from a structuralist perspective to argue that everything on stage can be considered a sign – actor, gesture, words, set. As Carlson explains, Honzl suggests that '[e]verything that makes up reality on stage stands for something else; thus the theatre is essentially a complex of signs, all easily transformable'.[416] This means that 'any signified may be passed along a chain of material signifiers, and even relayed from one theatrical sign-system to another, within a performance'.[417] Sofer gives the examples of a thunderstorm that 'might be conveyed now by a prop umbrella, now by a lightening effect, now by a sound effect, now by a line of dialogue' but cautions that this chain of signification may lead to 'a free play of signs'.[418] While, as Sofer suggests, this fluidity of signification may weaken the semiotic argument, it is exactly this kind of mutable signification that is playfully used by performers in Lecoq's pedagogy and it is exactly this kind of play that a (play)box invites.

A (play)box suggests a contextual performance language where a thing's meaning can change based on circumstance and where circumstance can change responding to a thing's affordances. The expectation of an umbrella found in a (play)box is for it to be freely significant, so it might transform from umbrella into thunderstorm, moon, sword, window, walking-stick, horse, etc. It offers a range of affordances that combined with a performer's imagination creates playful action. This 'free flow of signification' is unproblematic in the world of a (play)box because the concern is not principally what the umbrella 'means', but what it looks like, feels like, sounds like - in short, what it *does* in *action* and in *motion* in a range of contexts defined by play. Similarly, context is important for Sofer in his re-materialization of object from signifier to doer. He notes the family

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[416] Carlson, p. 409.
[417] Sofer, p. 9.
[418] Ibid.

resemblance of objects, but that what the 'prop must mean in the moment […] is inextricably tied to contingent circumstances'.[419]

Unlike the dematerialization of the objects considered by the Prague school, the objects in a (play)box remain firmly material, but their material use can change based on imagined circumstance. As Stanton B. Garner notes 'props differ from language in their materiality, a physicality which links body and stage', continuing that objects 'localize dramatic activity and materialize it in scenic terms. By extending and physicalizing the body's operation upon its material environment, props situate the body more firmly within it'.[420] Stage and rehearsal objects reinforce the material environment of imagined circumstance and ground the body within it. Freddie Rokem also agrees, arguing of the materiality of a chair 'the palates of our mind are stimulated primarily by the chair as a material object and not only as some abstract linguistic food for thought'.[421]

Answering Honzl's suggestion that the stage object may incite a chain of signification, Veltruský in *Man and Object in the Theatre* suggests that props have a shifting status and relevance. Sofer describes this as 'a fluid continuum between subjects and objects on stage', where Veltruský explains 'the sphere of the live human being and that of the lifeless object are interpenetrated, and no exact limit can be drawn between them'.[422] Veltruský suggests that a prop has a variable 'action force', an opportunity for possible action and that '[a]s soon as a certain prop appears on the stage, this force which it has provokes in us the expectation of a certain action'.[423] This 'action force' remains,

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[419] Wittgenstien suggests that things that can be connected by overlapping similarities. He uses the example of games – war games, ball games, card games, board games. These are all different things but connected as a family by 'game'. Sofer, p. 16.

[420] Stanton B. Garner Jr., 'Staging "things": Realism and the theatrical object in Shepard's theatre', *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 8:3, (1998) 55-66, p. 56.

[421] Rokem quoted in Sofer, p. 15.

[422] Sofer, p. 9. Veltruský,, p. 86.

[423] Veltruský, p. 88.

whether there is a performer on stage with the object or not (Veltruský uses the example of a dagger). Action, for Veltruský is the possibility of dramatic action, rather than sensory motion.

Veltruský's interpretation troubles any assumed hierarchy that places the actor/character and her actions and desires as more important and prominent than the 'passive' objects at her disposal. For Veltruský, as Elam describes, 'the relation between these apparent poles may be modified or even reversed'.[424] In this reversal a performer, or perhaps a better term would be supernumerary, may become an almost inanimate part of the set. (Veltruský unkindly suggests that these 'human props' could be replaced by 'lifeless dummies').[425] Or equally, an object might be 'promoted' up the scale of significance so that it acquires a kind of life. Veltruský gives the examples of the 'soldiers flanking the entrance to a house' who 'serve to point out that the house is a barrack' becoming akin to being a part of the set.[426] Whereas 'a stage dagger' can shift in significance from being part of a costume indicating status, to an instrument of action, to a signifier of murder.[427] Elam observes that at the furthest extreme of this scale the performer becomes dispensable and set and props are 'spontaneous subjects equivalent to the figure of the actor' exemplified in the work of Edward Gordon Craig and Samuel Beckett.[428] Sofer finds that 'Veltruský's intriguing concept of "action force" remains murky' and asks if Veltruský's dagger 'becomes a subject not when it directly participates in the stage action (by stabbing somebody), but by signifying "murder," then isn't any object that conveys an abstract idea independent of an actor […] a subject?'[429] If so, as Sofer suggests, everything (and nothing) on stage becomes significant with agency to act

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[424] Elam, p. 14.
[425] Veltruský, p. 86.
[426] Ibid.
[427] Veltruský, p. 87.
[428] Elam, p. 14. Veltruský, p. 88.
[429] Sofer, p. 9-10.

upon or wield power over another entity, leading to a 'free play of signs', a cacophony of signification.

Paavolainen takes another view, observing of 'action force' that '[a]s with "the dynamic forces of action and the static forces of characterization that Veltruský discusses, the point is not that objects actually have such "tendencies," only they are ascribed such in human categorization'.[430] He proposes a modification to 'Veltruský's "action force" with the more analytical concept of *affordances*'.[431] Taking Paavolainen's adapted understanding of 'action force' using Gibson's notion of affordances speaks to the concept to the animated possibilities of the things in a (play)box, where they are rendered significant initially by selection, next through a playful exploration of their affordances, and finally through the meaning or 'tendencies' they are ascribed by human categorisation.

Similar problems to those that Sofer attributes to Honzl and Veltruský followed the second wave of the Prague school in the 1960's and 1970's, who continued with Honzl and Bogatryev's 'dynamics of signification' abandoning Veltruský's idea of 'action force'.[432] Tadeusz Kowsan offers a comprehensive 'codification of theatrical sign systems' in *The Sign in the Theatre* (1968).[433] Kowsan proposes the concept of connotation, where one sign may mean many things, many things may have the same sign, or a collection of signs may have one meaning.[434] Umberto Eco 'insisted that stage objects are not only signs of signs, but signs of the ideology *behind* the object's sign'.[435] Shoshana Avigal and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan find that 'the definition of "object" is complex' as the word 'designates both a 'thing' and the functioning of this 'thing' within a system of

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[430] Paavolainen, p. 25.
[431] Paavolainen, p. 30.
[432] Sofer, p. 10.
[433] Carlson, p. 491.
[434] Carlson, p. 492.
[435] Sofer, p. 10.

interrelations with other components of the system (object in relation to 'subject').''[436] To answer this problem they propose understanding the object as a 'lexeme' 'a sign that can be listed in the "dictionary"' but concede that using their system 'the list of potential stage objects "runs the risk of being infinite."'[437] Anne Ubersfeld considers 'both textual and scenic items as theatrical "objects" that overlap as lexemes even though they are not homologous'.[438] Carlson, Elam and Sofer agree that by the 1990s the semiotic approach had lost 'its cultural and academic prominence' leaving the stage clear for the re-materialisation of the object that takes prominence in my argument – a consideration of *things* that *do* and afford theatre-makers to *do* in the creation of playful possibilities.[439]

Things

In his consideration of how inanimate things form and transform people, Brown can be seen to rematerialize the object. Brown's consideration of 'things' follows Heidegger's distinction between objects and things, in which he separates tangible objects such as 'a rock, a knife, a watch, a ball' from intangible 'things' such as concepts, ideas and events.[440] Brown suggests that an object becomes a thing when you become aware of it because it behaves unexpectedly and 'you trip over some toy, you get bopped on the head

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[436] Shoshana Avigal and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, 'What Do Brook's Bricks Mean?: Toward a Theory of the "Mobility" of Objects in Theatrical Discourse', *Poetics Today*, Vol. 2, No. 3, (Spring, 1981), 11-34, (p. 13).

[437] Sofer, p. 11.

[438] Ibid.

[439] Elam, p. 194.

[440] See Martin Heidegger, *What is a thing?* Trans. W. B Barton, Jr. and Vera Deutsch (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1967). Here, Heidegger describes three categories of 'things'. Firstly, tangible things 'a rock, a knife, a watch, a ball' – for Heidegger a 'narrower' sense, than the 'broader' sense in which intangible concepts should be understood, such as summer or the number five and how we think and feel – so a 'betrayal is an 'uncanny thing' and 'the things that happen in the word – occurrences, events'(4-5). Finally the 'widest possible sense' the way the first two things work together. Heidegger calls these things '[a]ll these things and anything else that is a something (*ein Etwas*) and not nothing.' (6). In making these distinctions, Heidegger separates tangible objects like a ball or a rock from intangible 'things' – ideas, concepts and events.

by a falling nut'.[441] He observes that we 'begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us: when the drill breaks, when the car stalls, when the windows get filthy'.[442] So, returning to Heidegger's logic, the object moves from being an inanimate object to have a new kind of presence, an argument which holds similarities to Veltruský's idea of a shifting scale of relevance for performers and objects on stage, in which performers may be almost 'lifeless' and objects potent with 'action force'.

Brown finds that 'things' are defined by our awareness of them when they are 'badly encountered', when they are liminal, or 'not quite apprehended' and notes that the word 'things' has a 'specific unspecificity'.[443] He suggests that '[t]he story of objects asserting themselves as things, then, is the story of a changed relation to the human subject and thus the story of how the thing really names less an object than a particular subject-object relation'.[444] Taking Brown's argument, the 'things' in a (play)box *assert* themselves, changing the subject-object relationship, so that agency is not only from performer to thing, but also (and as Veltruský would have it) from thing to performer. Or as I suggest, developing the ideas of Gibson and Paavolainen, *things* have enactive affordances in their relationship with a theatre-maker.

Drawing on Brown and Heidegger, Bernstein, as discussed in the introduction, describes 'things' with the agency to assert themselves on people as 'scriptive'.[445] Taking a cultural materialist approach, Bernstein suggests that '[t]hings, but not objects script actions'.[446] She use the example of a woman posing for a photograph with a 'larger-than-life-size caricature of an African American eating a slice of watermelon', observing that

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441 Bill Brown, 'Thing Theory', pp. 3-4.
442 Bill Brown, 'Thing Theory', p. 4.
443 Bill Brown, 'Thing Theory', p. 5, p. 3.
444 Bill Brown, 'Thing Theory', p. 4.
445 Bernstein, p. 69.
446 Ibid.

the 'woman arranged her body in response to the caricature's coordinates; it prompted, inspired, and structured her actions. In this dense interaction between thing and human, the caricature scripted the woman's performance.'[447] Bernstein, like Brown, observes that these 'scriptive things' have agency when they are transformed by human perception or skilled interaction. So, for a chef, her knife is not an object but responding to her knowledge and experience becomes a thing able to 'script' human action.[448] Here, as for Sofer, Paavolainen, Heidegger and Brown the 'meaningful' object is transformed into an *active*, 'scriptive thing' through human interaction. Or as Bernstein proposes '[an] object becomes a thing when it invites a person to dance'.[449]

The 'objects' in a (play)box are transformed into performative, 'scriptive things' first when they are selected to be 'written' into a (play)box and next when a theatre-maker accepts their 'invitation to dance'.[450] Unlike the static, racially charged caricature that Bernstein considers, fixed in a frozen proposition, the things written into a (play)box are open and mutable with a range of possibilities. The caricature and 'photographic cutout figures' that Bernstein discusses have a fixed image that prescribes one dramatic context while the material stimuli in *Provenance* (newspaper, clingfilm, wool, a collarbox, a pipe) have a wider range of performative possibilities. While these stimuli have agency to shape, script and invite a performer 'to dance' this dance is less limited than that proposed by the caricature or photographic cutout. However, both *assert* themselves on the subject, troubling the subject-object hierarchy and in the context of a (play)box scripting a selection of affordances.

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[447] Bernstein, p. 67, p. 68.
[448] Bernstein, p. 68.
[449] Bernstein, p. 70.
[450] My thanks to Lily Kelting who suggested that I consider the work of Bernstein after I presented a paper on my concept of a (play)box at the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) conference in Belgrade in July 2018.

Bernstein argues that '[t]hings script behavior not only through determined actions that are required for function, but also through *implied* or *prompted* actions.'[451] She offers the example of a recollection of childhood play by the famous children's author Frances Hodgson Burnett.[452] Hodgson Burnett describes how, as a child, she played out a racially charged scene from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* using a 'black doll' to play Uncle Tom and '[i]magining herself as "the wicked Legree," she tied the doll to a candelabra stand and whipped "Uncle Tom" with "insensate rage."'[453] In this context, the 'material doll converged in its historical context with the plot scenario provided by *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to prompt, inspire, and structure one child's performance of racial violence.'[454] Bernstein's disturbing example demonstrates how the motor of play can animate a material thing within a 'plot scenario'.

Theatre-makers playing with a (play)box are offered the opportunity to explore the performative function of material things within a plot scenario, where unlike the frozen caricature or doll Bernstein references, the stimuli are more open to be active in a range of dramatic contexts and with a variety of transformative possibilities. For example, in one improvisation as Alice (discussed in chapter five) I played with a large, newspaper sheet exploring its affordances.[455] This improvisation was guided by my embodied response to the newspaper's affordances but defined within the plot scenario. My actions were led not only by my physical response to the newspaper, but also my knowledge of Alice and her

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[451] Bernstein, p. 74. Emphasis in original.

[452] The author Frances Hodgson Burnett (1849 – 1924) is most famous for writing *A Little Princess* (1905), *The Secret Garden* (1909) and *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1886).

[453] Bernstein, p. 74. Jane Bennett also argues that 'things' assert themselves with a '*vital materiality*' and connects this animated agency to our playful childhood experiences of 'a world populated by animate things rather than passive objects'. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A political Ecology of Things* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010), p. vi.

[454] Bernstein, p. 74.

[455] See DVD ROM in appendix for videos illustrating this. The same videos can also be found here: < https://vimeopro.com/user39036964/out-of-the-playbox-an-investigation-into-strategies-for-writing-and-devising-1> The password is provenance.

motivations. In another improvisation led by smaller pieces of the newspaper we threw them into the air and found a way to make them float; and in yet another the paper became butterflies. In these instances, the improvisations were led by the newspaper's affordances but also defined within the framework of the plot. Meaning was not irrelevant but was not the guiding principle in our explorations. The things' affordances, our playful approach and the framework of plot 'scripted' our actions so that our response was defined within a specific context.

A (play)box creates a liminoid space where theatre-makers are offered a 'changed relationship' with objects. The combination of the things, the performers' skills and experience and their playful, targeted awareness transforms them into liminal portals. The performative, 'scriptive things' are investigated in the context of a plot scenario, explored for what they *afford* the theatre-maker and in this environment, they 'script' the performance. As Brown notes, the word 'things' suggests 'a certain limit or liminality, to hover over the threshold between the nameable and unnameable'.[456] Heidegger, Brown, Bernstein and Veltruský all explore the liminal space that things have in our consciousness and how they can move from being insignificant and inanimate, to be accorded a kind of life through context and perception. This is important in relation to a (play)box, because the objects chosen transform into 'things' when they are first written into, and then in rehearsals considered by the theatre-maker. They are accorded a heightened relevance and gain a new kind of meaning and life. In rehearsals, the theatre-makers open the box and consider the stimuli with a different focus to the other things scattered around the rehearsal room because they are written into the text of the (play)box and understood within its context. A newspaper on the table in a rehearsal room is just a newspaper, but a newspaper inside a (play)box is a dramaturgical stimulus alive with affordances, a shift generated

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[456] Bill Brown, 'Thing Theory', p. 5.

through the theatre-makers' playful interaction with these things in the context of the plot scenario.

Using a (play)box, through the motor of play the stimuli move from being inanimate objects to 'things' in an enactive relationship with the performers. The combination of stimuli and theatre-maker enactively creates cognition defined within the plot scenario. Using a (play)box cognition arrives through playful action defined by a specific range of stimuli. The tactility of these 'things' are explored through the different senses: they are looked at, picked up, listened to, felt, tasted and in 'play' they create a fluid range of 'meanings' in the specific dramatic context a (play)box provides. So, as discussed, the newspaper is not fixed into one meaning in one context but is able to transform and become now a cloak, now a puppet, now a butterfly, now a floating letter from the bank. As Zarrilli, after Merleau-Ponty, describes 'the focus of philosophical inquiry [has] shifted from "I think" to an examination of the "I can" of the body, i.e., sight and movement as modes of entering into inter-sensory relationships with objects, or the world'.[457] Meaning is created through *doing* in an enactive relationship between the performer and object in context, in motion and in play. Thus, a (play)box is a mode of play-writing that offers provocative affordances for creation in a way that neither play-text alone, nor devising stimuli alone can furnish.

Affordances

A (play)box, to use Gibson's terminology, can be understood as a *niche* full of *affordances*, an environment that the theatre-maker responds to in a reciprocal relationship, in which they change and are changed by each other. As Gibson clarifies they are

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[457] Zarrilli, *Psychophysical Acting*, p. 45.

complementary of each other, '[t]he niche implies a kind of animal, and the animal implies a kind of niche'.[458] Similarly, Varela et al. defining enaction draw on Merleau-Ponty to observe that 'the organism both initiates and is shaped by the environment'.[459] Varela et al. divide Gibson's theory into 'two distinct features' finding that his notion of affordances 'is compatible with our approach to perpetually guided action.'[460] However, they do not agree with Gibson's understanding of 'perception to explain how the environment is perceived.'[461] They find that 'whereas Gibson claims that the environment is independent, we claim that it is enacted (by histories of coupling). Whereas Gibson claims that perception is direct detection, we claim that it is sensorimotor enactment'.[462] Turvey, Shaw, Reed and Mace (1981) provide a useful compromise. Responding to Fodor and Pylyshyn (1981), who suggest that 'there cannot be lawful relations between organisms (as epistemic agents) and their environments' they find that affordances are 'emergent properties of the animal-environment system, that is, as properties that in our terms are enacted or brought forth from a history of coupling' and therefore 'compatible with […] [the] enactive approach'.[463] Paavolainen, drawing on Andy Clark and Noë agrees, suggesting that '[a]dding more to Gibson's complementarities […] we should not think of *cognition* as residing only in the head. In the current view, it is as once embodied, situated, distributed, and enacted – indeed *performed* in the world'.[464]

Considering the affordances offered by *Provenance*, the clingfilm scripts a change in the movement quality and the spatial and temporal relationships of the performers

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[458] James J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception: Classics Edition* (New York and East Sussex: Psychology Press, 2015), p. 120.
[459] Varela et al., p. 174.
[460] Varela et al., p. 203.
[461] Ibid.
[462] Varela et al., p. 204.
[463] M. T. Turvey, R. E. Shaw, E. S. Reed and W. M. Mace, 'Ecological laws of perceiving and acting: In reply to Fodor and Pylyshyn (1981), *Cognition*, (1981), 9, 231-304, (p. 238). Varela et al., p. 274-275.
[464] Paavolainen, p. 46.

though unrolling, stretching, pulling, restricting and wrapping.[465] It also affords a connectedness between the performers who hold each end of it. The newspaper affords crumpling, floating, wrapping, throwing, becoming a puppet, and (re)defining the space by covering the floor and walls. Exploring what a ball of red wool afforded we found that 'unlike the clingfilm it has a resistance, a colour, it's long and thin. Because it's red it makes striking images in the space. It's thinner than the clingfilm, it isn't shiny. It tangles, it rolls, you can play cat's cradle with it'.[466] Using a game cat's cradle as a structure we created big, taut shapes that changed the space, but noticed that as soon as we dropped the wool it became soft, lifeless and useless in the context of a game of cat's cradle. As we created shapes with the wool and clingfilm our bodies were forced to respond and became, like the wool and clingfilm, taut and engaged. The wool invited us to pull it taut and create geometric shapes in the space, structures to climb in and out of and trap each other within, which we connected to the dramatic context of a scene. Just as Gibson notes that an infant will explore an object's affordances before it understands or attributes it meaning, the affordances of *Provenance's* material stimuli in the context of the plot scripted our action to 'enactively' create cognition and meaning.[467]

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[465] See DVD ROM in appendix for videos illustrating this. The same videos can also be found here: < https://vimeopro.com/user39036964/out-of-the-playbox-an-investigation-into-strategies-for-writing-and-devising-1> The password is provenance.

[466] Laura Hayes, rehearsal notes, 21 March 2018.

[467] See chapter one.

Figure 12: Chelsea Crothers, Maiya Murphy (as Agatha) and Laura Hayes

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the objects in a (play)box can be understood using Bernstein's terminology as 'scriptive things'. These scriptive things offer a range of affordances that stimulate a specific range of movement and action in a theatre-maker, what Varela et al. define as embodied action, or enaction. Playing with the stimuli in a (play)box, cognition and meaning arrive through an embodied, enactive exploration of scriptive things defined within a dramatic context. This approach generates embodied creation from the outset of rehearsals, re-defining and shifting conventional play-writing techniques into a new embodied, enactive practice. In the final chapter, I will offer further examples of this theory in practice, illustrated by moments from the rehearsal process for *Provenance* and in doing so explore how the stimuli a (play)box can author performance and offer theatre-makers routes to shared authorship and authority.

Chapter five

Provenance in practice

Introduction

In chapter one, I drew on Kemp and Murphy, who have explored the intersection of cognitive science and Lecoq-based pedagogy to suggest that the actions and exercises in a (play)box move the theatre-maker, as Murphy suggests 'from sensorimotor to the abstract'.[468] I also examined the arguments of Lakoff and Johnson who suggest that metaphorical concepts arrive in our perceptual understanding and our language from embodied, enactive experiences. In this chapter, I will show how the enactive experiences provided by the (play)box *Provenance* offered productive strategies to encounter and activate perceptual metaphor for myself and my collaborators to, as Noë suggests 'act out' perceptual experience. I explore moments of practice from our rehearsal process using *Provenance* to demonstrate that an enactive encounter with these stimuli affords embodied, (syn)aesthetic responses in different ways to play-text alone. By examining why some stimuli were less productive than others in activating experiences to develop into material for performance, I discuss how I adapted them by coupling them with an action to become more actively provocative of our imagination and collective creativity.

Drawing on previous concerns in this thesis, I consider the effectiveness of the different methods I offered to share authorship and authority, comparing supposedly 'directional' play-text with what, here, are arguably 'non-directional' stimuli and the benefits of the methods of 'not-knowing' I offered to this rehearsal process. One of the key issues in this chapter is an exploration of the benefits of uncertainty, provided in *Provenance* with items for devising that are not clearly directional and presentation of the

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[468] Murphy, p. 339.

scenes so that they can be constructed in any order, cut up and re-assembled, or omitted. In considering the role of music as co-author, I refer to pre-existing, pre-recorded music rather than sound created by the theatre-makers in the rehearsal room and investigate how it shaped and structured our improvisations as discussed in the work of Frantic and Nübling-Stephens. Next, I propose that theatre-making with a (play)box requires what Gallagher and Zahavi describe as a 'smart' perspectival reinterpretation of its contents and active collaborative authorship, in order to fill in the gaps between what I offer in *Provenance* and its eventual performance text. Finally, drawing on the work of Lakoff and Johnson, I propose that *Provenance* offers motor acts that stimulate embodied cognition. In these acts, the theatre-makers explore physical and spatial relationships to reveal cultural metaphors, which in the case of *Provenance*, authored in a variety of texts.

Combining action and paratextual materials

Responding to the (play)box *Provenance* in rehearsals, my collective found that some of the stimuli immediately 'worked', activating experiences that interested us, that we returned to and eventually developed into material for performance. Other prompts were not so productive in our aim to create physically and visually-led, stylised material for performance.[469] These included videos created using google maps, a chest x-ray, a blog 'written' by Agatha, Agatha's internet dating profile, letters, an inventory and a shipping invoice charting the journey of the 'head'.[470] Although interesting, the less immediately generative prompts either did not provoke any creative response, leaving us unsure what to

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[469] Pavis, p. 372.
[470] As discussed in the introduction 'stylised' defined is in terms of our work also responds to the physical pedagogies of Leocq and Suzuki and somatic action used as metaphor.

do with them or how to begin improvisations using them, or the work produced was tangential to the main themes and dramatic arc of the performance that we were creating.

These experiments uncovered my unintentional imposition of authority in writing the (play)box. I had assumed these material, non-play-text provocations would encourage non-verbal, physically-led modes of creation. However, this was not necessarily the case and these items led to improvisations using words rather than actions and speaking rather than doing. For example, we improvised scenes including an imagined email correspondence between Agatha and potential 'dates' responding to the dating site entry, and with characters who might have encountered the head in the eighteenth-century provoked by the letters, inventory and invoices. I aimed to script open, yet thematically coherent provocations, but instead our improvisations seemed physically, stylistically, and spatially uninventive. Our attempts showed that these provocations gave too much, specific, literal information and were overly fixed in one role, unlike the more flexible stimuli discussed in chapters three and four, that offered more than one action (newspaper, clingfilm, wool). These prompts did not *afford* physical, active, embodied responses, led us too predictably in one direction and did not allow us the openness to create new material. I had imposed exactly the authorial authority I aimed to avoid, inhibiting our creative responses.

Responding to these discoveries I attempted to open pathways to collaborative authorship and increase the performative function of a video by associating it with actions. I re-rendered a writing technique used by Stephens to produce a similar result, but in a different, embodied form. Stephens suggests that a line of text must have an action inherent in it and in re-drafting his plays he will cut or re-write a line of dialogue if it does not have a clear action. He explains that 'if there's any line of dialogue that I can't do it to, I either cut the line […] or I change it so it has a specific action' to make his text more

active.[471] I attributed an action, or series of actions to a short video clip I created using google maps that shows Agatha's journey on her way to visit her mother, with the clip ending at the front door of an unkempt house.[472] These actions developed through discussion and play, from dreading, powering-on, resenting, stressing and medicating, to language with less naturalistic performance associations: splicing, retching, dissolving, wringing, and disappearing. As the actions became more extraordinary, our movement became less naturalistic, more physically inventive and more effectively represented Agatha's turmoil about her relationship with her mother using the kind of somatic, stylistic metaphor that suited our performative aesthetic.[473] In this way we *enacted* Agatha's perceptual experience.

Authority

My aim for the paratextual stimuli that make up *Provenance* was that they might extend experiments in 'opening' text and collaborative authorship; however, in practice some stimuli showed traits of the authoritarianism that some kinds of written text is accused. Early in the process, Maiya described her experience as feeling 'like a detective' and both she and Chelsea expressed a desire to understand my intentions, delivering me an authority I wished to avoid. As discussed, early explorations showed that the material created by some of the non-textual stimuli, like the google video, seemed unrelated to the themes of the piece and aiming to activate these stimuli I coupled them with an action.

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[471] https://www.writeaplay.co.uk/cms/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Simon-Stephens-Transcript.pdf [accessed 3 July 2018].
[472] See DVD ROM in appendix for videos illustrating this. The same videos can also be found here: < https://vimeopro.com/user39036964/out-of-the-playbox-an-investigation-into-strategies-for-writing-and-devising-1> The password is provenance.
[473] See DVD ROM in appendix for videos illustrating this. The same videos can also be found here: < https://vimeopro.com/user39036964/out-of-the-playbox-an-investigation-into-strategies-for-writing-and-devising-1> The password is provenance.

In writing actions and associating them with the video clip, I asserted authorial authority, yet this development responded to our collaborative explorations and therefore the actions themselves were, eventually, collaboratively written. I aimed to use techniques not only inspired by Stephens, but also, as discussed in chapters one and two, by Fluxus artists and contemporary writers such as Claire McDonald.[474] In writing actions, these stimuli became directional and could be criticized as limiting and authoritarian, as discussed in chapter one, Barthes suggests that some kinds of text may be. However, my writing, responding to our collaborative discoveries enabled our creative process. The authority I assumed by writing actions opened pathways for us to collaboratively author somatic text. So, authority in one element in a creative process can be seen to be productive and structure pathways to collaborative authorship. Thus, authority can be understood to be on a continuum – here, I accepted authority to enable our processes, rather than enforcing it as a limiting factor.

Questions concerning authority arrived not only in relation to my role in the processes, but also to the things I had written into *Provenance.* Things working in a directional, and arguably limiting way, was exemplified in a scene we improvised, in which Agatha prepares her mother to be moved into a care home, a move which Alice has been resisting throughout the play. My intention for this scene was to show a moment of peace and tenderness between Agatha and Alice with the things used within their naturalistic function to aid this and our improvisation delivered this. The stage directions read 'Agatha gets Alice ready to move into Meadow Dale. Words may not be

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[474] As discussed in chapter one, Claire McDonald's play *In Bed* includes a range of suggested actions for the performers to explore. Similarly, Fluxus event scores can offer a range of actions. See Ken Friedman, Owen Smith and Lauren Sawchyn ed., *The Fluxus Performance Workbook,* a Performance Research e-publication, 2002, < https://www.academia.edu/9983685/Fluxus_Performance_Workbook> [accessed 26 September 2018].

necessary'.[475] The associated objects were: a hair brush, hand cream, body cream, a

toothbrush and toothpaste, a mirror, scent, a towel, a lipstick, and nail clippers.[476] While all

these objects have an instrumental action strongly inherent in them, for example the

hairbrush to brush hair, it is also possible to improvise using them in non-naturalistic or

extraordinary manner. As discussed in chapter four, these things could be used, as Lecoq

proposes, to become transmutable, act as puppets or as representational of other objects.[477]

However, collected together and placed in this specific scenario with the explicit stage

direction the objects could also be perceived as suggesting only one pathway. In

assembling them as a group, they became less generative and less open to flexible usage

by my collaborators.

My authorial assumption was that writing in things was a means to generate

material without the limiting authority that some play-texts are identified with. However,

my intentions for these things through genus and dramatic situation were so clear that

Maiya felt that there was only one route available for her to play. She described that she

'felt like the most boring improviser in the world' because she had reacted to what the

objects implied that she should do. Returning to Rebellato's argument in chapter one,

'[i]ntention is a precondition for a certain type of meaning to be derived at all'.[478]

However, the combination of stage direction and things gave my 'intention' for the scene

such authority that it limited Maiya's options as a co-author. In my construction of

Provenance collaborative authority was more effectively shared by objects with a flexible

range of affordances (such as those described in chapters three and four). These had the

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[475] See appendix for drafts of *Provenance*.
[476] See chapter one for images of the contents of *Provenance*.
[477] In proposing this approach, I am influenced not only by my study of object manipulation at Lecoq but also by the work of Improbable, particularly their show *Animo* where they improvise with a random selection of objects. I vividly remember watching an improvisation between two mini pots of Vaseline skating on a table at a performance of *Animo* at the Tron theatre in Glasgow in 1997. Phelim McDermott, 'Phelim McDermott talks about Improbable and *Animo*', < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVZC-bXYhWM> [accessed 2 July 2018].
[478] Rebellato, 'Exit the Author', p. 20.

flexibility to be explored playfully within the dramatic context rather than becoming too fixed, either by assemblage or overt intentionality. The most generative affordance is that which does not necessarily imply its dramatic context but asks the theatre-maker to playfully explore its material propositions and enactively fill in the gaps.

'Not knowing': Leaving space for collaborative authorship and shared authority

The elements of 'not-knowing' I wrote into *Provenance* consisted of including things with mutable properties and presenting the scenes without an order. The dis-ordering of the scenes created an active initial exploration of the play, in which the dramaturgical stimuli were investigated in enactive, (syn)aesthteic play one piece or scene at a time. This expanded the 'not-knowing' of the knowledge presented in *Provenance* and disassembled the linearity of the traditional play. We responded to the stimuli immediately and individually and thus created possibilities that would not have arrived if we had first aimed for an absolute understanding by reading the entire text. Similarly, initially most objects were not attributed with meaning but instead explored for their affordances. In our first improvisation with newspaper it was crumpled and thrown, and we explored wrapping each other in it. We eventually returned to and developed this early experience, sticking pieces of newspaper together to create one large sheet. As Alice, I played with the newspaper cloak, hiding underneath it, pushing it into the air and letting it drop, and revealing different body parts while the rest of my body remained hidden, and exploring how it moved when I wrapped myself inside it. In my explorative play I was led by the sensation of the paper around me, the feeling of hiding beneath it, what it could do, what it sounded like, how the air lifted it after I pushed it up and how it dropped down. This approach, exploring the newspaper's inherent possibilities for *movement* and being guided by them, as discussed, is fundamental in Lecoq's pedagogy.

In my unstructured, playful exploration I did not analyse its action for potential meaning, but was led by how it made me feel, what I could do with it and what it made me do. Reflecting on and analysing the improvisation we discussed how my relationship with the newspaper was a physical metaphor for the way that Alice's hoarded objects comfort her, but, crucially, this discovery was found through enactive play rather than analysis.[479] Our initial exploration of the un-ordered scenes and dramaturgical stimuli disrupted the linearity of conventional play-text and led us to discoveries – knowing - made through (syn)aesthetic, enactive play. Not-knowing is embedded into the ontology of *Provenance* in a generative capacity that ultimately inverts itself.

Figure 13: Laura Hayes as Alice in rehearsals for Provenance

Music

In chapter two, I discussed how music informs the work of Nübling-Stephens and Frantic Assembly and for the latter offers them a framework for action relating to mood, 'theatrical scenarios', rhythm, and tempo.[480] In my selection of music for *Provenance* I

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[479] See DVD ROM in appendix for videos illustrating this. The same videos can also be found here: < https://vimeopro.com/user39036964/out-of-the-playbox-an-investigation-into-strategies-for-writing-and-devising-1> The password is provenance.
[480] See section on music in chapter two.

aimed to offer this kind of structural possibility allowing perception to be developed through action. We chose to use one of the pieces of music in *Provenance*, 'When I am laid in earth' from *Dido and Aeneas* for an improvisation where I, as Alice, sat and watched as Maiya and Chelsea sweep away the newspaper that represented Alice's home being bulldozed away.[481] Maiya commented that:

> the music gave me an instant sensation of emotion and of time, so I found myself sweeping more slowly, […] gently, and slowly, and carefully. However, because of the way that the paper was on the floor I realised that I had to actually put more effort into the sweeping […]. So, there was a little bit of conflict there.[482]

Maiya's reflections upon her experience – about the speed she swept at and how that related to the tempo proposed by the music, and the quality of sweeping itself, show that working with a (play)box a theatre-maker is guided into enactive perceptual experience. Maiya's reflection shows how the music guided her to sweep gently, slowly and carefully, so that her body's rhythm, dictated by the external source of the music, played in conflict to the violence of the narrative act. Her sensation of sweeping created a somatic conflict between what the music offered and the physical act. The combination of the music and sweeping guided Maiya, so that rather than being scripted only by her intellectual interpretation of the dramatic situation she responded to her enactive, lived experience.

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[481] See DVD ROM in appendix for videos illustrating this. The same videos can also be found here: < https://vimeopro.com/user39036964/out-of-the-playbox-an-investigation-into-strategies-for-writing-and-devising-1> The password is provenance.
[482] Maiya Murphy, interview 3 December 2017.

Perspectival reinterpretation: character development

The 'disjointed fragments' of information in *Provenance* provided us with information, but through enactive exploration of these prompts a perspectival re-interpretation of them emerged. Phenomenologists suggest that our understanding of the world is comprised of the information we receive about phenomena through our senses, coupled with and redefined by knowledge drawn from our previous experience. So, using the example Gallagher and Zahavi offer, when we see a tree, even though part of the tree is outside our field of vision we fill in the gaps with knowledge gleaned from our experience and, I would suggest, with our imagination. Despite the 'perspectival incompleteness' the viewer synthesises together 'the disjointed fragments' to become a complete and comprehensible entity.[483] Gallagher and Zahavi suggest that '[p]erception is not a simple reception of information; rather, it involves an interpretation, which frequently changes according to context'.[484] They describe this kind of perception as 'smart' and argue that 'perception *is* interpretational', in the same way that a theatre-maker using a (play)box improvises using 'smart', perspectival reinterpretation to imaginatively draw together the prompts it offers.[485] Theatre-making using a (play)box requires a 'smart' combination of perception and interpretation. Just as a woman seeing one aspect of a tree not only perceives but interprets, so does a theatre-maker using a (play)box: seeing, applying additional information gleaned from experience and context, and making creative and imaginative interpretations and reinterpretations.

Using 'smart' perspectival reinterpretation of the dramaturgical stimuli that make up *Provenance* enabled Chelsea to find a richer, more unexpected understanding of the

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[483] Gallagher and Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind*, p. 9.
[484] Gallagher and Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind*, p. 8.
[485] Ibid.

character Caroline. The play-fragments present Caroline as a character who believes her value is measured by her beauty and uses plastic surgery to enhance her looks. Through experimentation in rehearsals we associated each character with a material: Alice – newspaper, Agatha – red wool, and Caroline - plastic and clingfilm. In an improvisation, Chelsea used a monologue in which Caroline describes how she started to have plastic surgery while Maiya and I used clingfilm to cover, manipulate, and move her in the space.[486] Chelsea explained that:

> I couldn't see what it looked like from the outside, so I was really feeling what it felt like on the inside. So, for me it was more the sensation of the plastic across my face and at first, I was sort of interested that that wasn't restrictive.[487]

Analysed intellectually, manipulating someone with plastic might appear to be restrictive, but Chelsea's enactive experience provided her with a different perspective. In her reflection after the improvisation, she commented that the improvisation had given her a revised understanding of Caroline, that she was someone who felt comfortable and unrestricted by changing her appearance.

Chelesa gained a perspectival re-interpretation and a deeper understanding of Caroline's motivations, discovering that 'she's not a shallow character […] she has depth'. Before the improvisation she understood her as:

> [a] vapid woman who wanted fame, and somehow, she became more like a person. […] I could actually feel that it started with just a little bit of plastic across her face and she thought it was nice, and then suddenly there was make-up on the plastic,

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[486] See appendix for draft of *Provenance*.
[487] Chelsea Crothers, interview Wednesday 18 October 2017.

and everybody really liked that, so she went with it […] the ball started rolling and it got worse.[488]

Chelsea explored the physical sensations of being trapped, manipulated, and controlled by plastic and of fighting against or accepting being manipulated by it, which provided discoveries about the character from a unique perspective only possible through enactive improvisation. As Gallagher and Zahavi propose '[p]erception is not a simple reception of information; rather, it involves an interpretation, which frequently changes according to context'.[489] Chelsea's embodied exploration of the plastic, scripted within the dramatic context provided discoveries that may not have arrived in another mode. *Doing* was key to understanding and perception was *embodied*.

Doing is key to understanding

In chapter one, I explored the arguments of Lakoff and Johnson, connected to Lecoq's work by Murphy and Kemp, who claim that our embodied experiences produce conceptual understanding and linguistic metaphor. Here, I show that the provocations in a (play)box, both the written stage suggestions and material things, afford embodied, haptic action that translates into unconscious conceptual meaning. Thus, knowledge for the performer arrives in an alternative means to using a conventional play-text. I will also suggest that from this perspective, my method can be connected to Stanislavski's Method of Physical Actions by placing the performer into physical action to provide imaginative understanding and meaning.

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[488] Ibid.
[489] Gallagher and Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind*, p. 8.

In the later part of his life, Stanislavski abandoned static, table-based analysis and instead devised a process of 'active analysis' and Method of Physical Actions where instead of the actors 'engaging in extensive textual knowledge and prolonged discussion of a play [...] there would be some brief discussion of the structure and content of the scene – and then they would get up and improvise it'.[490] As Kemp explains, Stanislavski 'replaced "analysis of feelings" with "active analysis," after complaining that "after long discussions 'at the table' and individual visualisations, 'the actor comes on stage with a stuffed head and an empty heart and can act nothing''.[491] Stanislavski believed that 'physical action would engage the actor's body, which, in turn could ignite the life of his or her humanity and spirit', as Merlin argues 'doing it was the key to *understanding it*'.[492] Both Stanislavski's approach and that of a (play)box agree that 'doing' are key to igniting imagination, cognition and emotion in theatre-making.

Lakoff and Johnson have shown that we connect our embodied experiences to our understanding of the world. So, the lived physical experience of being comforted by warmth is translated into the conceptual metaphor of affection, more is understood as up, time as motion - 'time flies' and the example Murphy provided in chapter one, 'Causes are Physical forces [...] [t]hey *pushed* the bill *through* Congress'.[493] Meaning is created subconsciously from physical experience. When a performer is placed in action using a prompt in a (play)box, unconscious conceptual understanding arrives. For example, when we performed the actions coupled with the google video discussed at the start of this chapter, our physical experience of performing those actions provided us with an unconscious, embodied understanding of Agatha's emotional state. Similarly, as discussed

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[490] Merlin, p. 18.
[491] Kemp, p. 147.
[492] Merlin, p. 18. Emphasis in original.
[493] Lakoff and Johnson, p.50 -54.

shortly, when Chelsea was manipulated by the plastic she made discoveries that she had not anticipated about Caroline. Meaning arrived through *doing*.

Such 'on your feet' discoveries in rehearsals lead to more 'on your feet' discoveries. This is exemplified in the exercise described earlier where Maiya, as Agatha, was given a range of actions inherent in an assemblage of things to prepare Alice to go into a care home. Improvising this scene, Maiya, and to a lesser extent myself, were directly placed into physical action by the stage direction and by the collection of care items that accompany the scene.[494] Maiya used the hairbrush to brush my hair, smoothed lotion onto my legs, clipped my nails with the nail clippers, rubbed scent on my wrists and applied lipstick to my lips.[495] As performers, we were placed in an immediate state of embodied, sensorimotor doing. Reflecting on the initial improvisation of this scene Maiya described how it uncovered a new aspect of the relationship between Alice and Agatha. She commented that:

> a lot of the scenes are quite confrontational between Agatha and Alice. And I had a real sense of wanting to care for Alice, wanting to be gentle with Alice, and in fact I felt this kind of wanting to care for her coming out of me as a person and creator […] I think it brought out a certain kind of emotional quality that didn't come out from the text before that.[496]

Maiya's experience of the intimate motor acts of a care - brushing, massaging, and manipulating - stimulated a sensory and imaginative experience that was in conflict to her intellectual analysis of her character's relationship with her mother providing a new

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[494] These were a toothbrush and toothpaste, wet wipes, nail clippers, hand cream, face cream, and lipstick. The stage suggestion reads 'Agatha helps Alice get ready to move into Meadow Dale. They may eat sandwiches. Or not. No words are necessary'. See appendix for drafts of *Provenance*.

[495] See DVD ROM in appendix for videos illustrating this. The same videos can also be found here: < https://vimeopro.com/user39036964/out-of-the-playbox-an-investigation-into-strategies-for-writing-and-devising-1> The password is provenance.

[496] Maiya and Chelsea, 18 October 2017.

perspective on it. Building on this discovery we altered the relationship between Agatha and Alice, changing the written text and performance choices based on the discoveries we had made about their relationship. Doing, led to new discoveries about these characters that not only changed our understanding of the characters, but also redefined both the written and performance texts.

My experience of this scene chimes with Maiya's. Unlike Agatha, Alice does not have a strong action to play. I felt lost and purposeless, in contrast to other scenes where Alice has a strong action or task and is in action. The relationship balance between these two characters was altered, but this alteration was not revealed through a textual analysis of a written scene, but through enactive, wordless play. While, as discussed, things have affordances and make suggestions for play, as Maiya describes they also allowed us to structure the relationship between these two characters through intimate acts of care. The sensorimotor experience of enactive cognition provided new information about the characters through conscious and unconscious physical experience, developing and re-structuring *Provenance*.

Enactive perception

A (play)box creates the potential of a perceptual *experience*, one that is different to the experience of reading a play-text by immediately placing the theatre-makers into an investigation of spatial relationships, rather than waiting until blocking as is often the case in a conventional rehearsal room. For example, in our rehearsals the clingfilm from *Provenance* was used in an improvisation, in which Chelsea played Caroline. While Chelsea played Caroline improvising texts based on play fragments I had written, Maiya and I manipulated her with the clingfilm, wrapping her, using make-up to draw on her and

the plastic, and creating shapes in the space with it. In our exploration of the texts of movement and space, we were open to 'on your feet' discoveries to develop the play-fragments, as we had with Agatha and Alice's scene.

Discussing this improvisation, Maiya observed that we were immediately placed into an investigation of spatial relationships in addition to the dramatic properties of the clingfilm. Maiya commented that:

> it forces us to immediately think about space and the spatial dimension of all of this. That's not something that happens afterwards in blocking. […] I liked the way it pulled on her. It wasn't just one direction. And I like the relationship it put us in pulling diagonally. […] I learned something about space and her and this material that we're trying. And I feel that instead of space being kind of an add on, it's automatically there. We automatically have to deal with it. And so, it's kind of built into the DNA.[497]

This improvisation with clingfilm immediately placed us into spatial and physical relationships, in which, as Maiya notes, we responded to the affordances of the clingfilm by *pulling* it. Both Kemp and Murphy have discussed the significance of Lecoq's 'pushing and pulling' exercise, which moves the performer from the 'sensorimotor to the abstract' and the physical to the conceptual.[498] Kemp describes how this exercise is developed, from students performing the movement alone to working together to restrict each other's movement, a physical experience which is then applied to the dramatic scenario of a departure. Murphy observes that '[t]hrough the "push/pull" exercises, actors are taught how to identify the more foundational components of image schemas in a particular

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[497] Maiya and Chelsea, 18 October 2017.
[498] Kemp, *Embodied Acting*, p. 79-82, Murphy.

dramatic context, and how to install them as central animating forces in their own theatrical moments'.[499]

Kemp and Murphy use Lakoff and Johnson and Lecoq's work as a basis to argue that 'physical experience shapes conceptual thought' and that '[k]inesthetic and perceptual experiences of the material world generate cognitive systems that reflect our physical environments and interpersonal experiences and form patterns for higher cognitive activity'.[500] Here, the 'kinaesthetic and perceptual' experience of pulling, being pulled and manipulated offered us opportunities for conceptual discoveries about Caroline. In the text, Caroline describes herself as complicit in her surgery 'Frank was happy with the result. Our surgeon was happy with the result. I was happy with the result'.[501] However, our improvisation proposed an underlying conflict, a metaphorical embodiment of being 'pulled from pillar to post' and manipulated.

Chelsea described how 'being manipulated [..] gave me this idea about puppets […] one person on this arm, one person on that arm'.[502] This embodied experience led Chelsea to start 'thinking about Caroline as a doll […] through being manipulated, through having that sort of physical experience'.[503] Here, lived somatic experience developed into an abstract conceptual understanding about Caroline. This experience could be understood using Lakoff and Johnson's primary metaphor of 'Relationships are enclosures' as Caroline is restricted and manipulated by her husband's wishes.[504] As Lakoff and Johnson argue '[m]ost of our fundamental concepts are organized in terms of one or more spatialization metaphors' and '[s]patialization metaphors are rooted in physical and

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[499] Murphy, pp. 338-339.
[500] Rick Kemp, 'The embodied performance pedagogy of Jacques Lecoq', *Connection Science*, (2017) 29:1, 94-105, (pp. 100-101).
[501] See appendix for a draft of *Provenance*.
[502] Chelsea, 18 October 2017.
[503] Chelsea, 18 October 2017.
[504] Lakoff and Johnson, p. 50 -53.

cultural experience'.[505] The combination of material and textual stimuli in *Provenance* offered us metaphorical somatic experience rooted in experience to provide new understandings of the characters.

Conclusion

The examples of practice included in this chapter reveal how the embodied acts *Provenance* provoked led us to make discoveries through enactive play. The physical provocations in a (play)box can move the theatre-maker more quickly than a conventional rehearsal process into creating visually and physically-led performance material by placing them immediately in action via enactive spatial and physical relationships. In doing so, just as in Lecoq's pedagogy, theatre-makers start with physical, visual, and tactile responses rather than often arriving at these later in the process. In our rehearsals for *Provenance* these playful acts led to the creation of material that may not have been found through using play-text alone. Additionally, music offered rhythm, tempo and mood that combined with a physical action offered an alternative narrative to the one the dramatic scenario proposed.

Using the prompts in *Provenance* created performative acts that required 'smart' perspectival (re)interpretation so that we collaboratively authored by 'filling in the gaps' with knowledge that might not have arrived by other means. Using Lakoff and Johnson's theory of conceptual metaphor and drawing on the work of Kemp, I have also suggested that there is a connection between Stanislavski's late theories of Active Analysis and Method of Physical Actions and a (play)box inherent set of actions, so that our

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[505] Lakoff and Johnson, p. 17 - 18.

collaborative imagination was ignited in ways that would not have occurred using text alone.

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have presented a new form of playwriting - a (play)box, illustrated by moments of practice from rehearsals for *Provenance.* I have shown that in this novel process, the 'scriptive things' in a (play)box *afford* theatre-makers routes to embodied action, in an enactive exploration of its stimuli located within a dramatic context. Just as enaction proposes that cognition and meaning arrive through the lived body's interaction with an environment, so, unlike conventional play-text, meaning arrives in a theatre-makers' playful encounter with material stimuli and the body is instigated as author. The haptic, embodied experiences scripted into a dramatic context that are enabled by my approach cannot arrive with the same immediacy using conventional play-text and therefore action and cognition arrive in a unique form.

With *Provenance* I intentionally provide both knowledge and areas of uncertainty to leave space for theatre-makers to take authority and ownership, instigate reciprocal authorship and invite the unpredictable and the unknown. In this way, the possibilities for the final structure and content of the performance remain open and are less limited by the perception and imagination of one person. Thus, writing in things offers a response to concerns around authorial authority. A writer can 'open' her text without removing dramatic narrative, character names or other elements commonly eliminated by writers experimenting with opening their texts. Instead, theatre-makers receive fragmented pieces of information given by the different dramaturgical stimuli and reinterpret them to create a synthesised whole. This offers an innovative approach to authorial abdication and new routes to collaborative authorship. Moreover, I have troubled the understanding of authority as a solely limiting factor, suggesting instead that it should be understood on a continuum, in which creative limitations can help to structure theatre-making.

A (play)box invites theatre-makers to investigate its stimuli using a *playful* approach, inspired by Lecoq's ideas and pedagogy. In doing so, it places embodied approaches to *play* at the centre of a rehearsals process in a way that a conventional play-text does not. While, of course, many rehearsal processes do explore play-text using a 'playful' approach, many do not and in elevating play as essential in a theatre-making process, I am writing Lecoq's methodology into the conceptual fabric of a (play)box. This creates a liminoid play-space for theatre-makers and offers ludic structures that invite a state of *flow* in theatre-making, which Csikszentmihalyi has shown enables heightened levels of creative ability.

Like Lecoq's pedagogy, a (play)box is written in action, in motion and *doing*. *Things* lead the body to *do*. Things *afford* a range of responses that, as Gibson suggests, arrive before an intellectual analysis, so unexpected cognition and meaning arrive through *doing*. 'Scriptive things' encourage doing within a pre-determined dramatic structure, so a theatre-maker's *action* is scripted within a world shaped by the author of the (play)box. Things can encourage *doing*, while words can encourage talking and analysis. Therefore, writing in 'scriptive things' can lead a theatre-makers more readily towards creation of physically and visually-led performance material.

Among the areas that I have been unable to consider that warrant further exploration is a consideration of who holds the intellectual property rights of a 'finished' (play)box. While a (play)box is 'written' before the start of a rehearsal process, like many collaboratively developed play-texts, *Provenance* developed and changed during our rehearsals responding to our collaborative discoveries, dialogue was amended, new scenes written, and things were added and removed. As discussed, an author such as Lavery usually holds the performing rights for a collaboratively developed text, however for a (play)box the ultimate ownership may be more difficult to establish, or more readily

contested. Additionally, I have proposed a (play)box as alternative to a play-text, yet it could also be considered as a performance archive, or material 'ghost text' and so the relationship between the archive and the (play)box invites further consideration.

Just the writer of a conventional play-text may hope for future productions and interpretations of their work, so I hope that *Provenance* will be used by other theatre-makers (or artists) as a stimulus and I intend to write further (play)boxes.[506] Finally, a (play)box provides opportunities for differently-abled artists to create together with greater equality than a conventional play-text offers, a space for those without a common language (or those who cannot read) to 'read' a text together, but I have not yet had the opportunity to test this.[507] A (play)box is a democratic, collaborative stimulus, an alternative to conventional approaches to play-writing that initiates an embodied approach to theatre-making and creation led by playful, haptic *doing*.

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[506] As part of a module at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in Singapore where I teach, I am creating a (play)box called *Waste*. My thanks to Myer Taub who suggested this as a theme in a conversation at the IFTR conference in July 2018.

[507] Story Boxes are a similar proposal to my idea of a (play)box but aim to offer young children with visual impairments an additional, sensory route in the exploration of an existing story. < http://www.wonderbaby.org/articles/story-boxes> [accessed 21 August 2018].

Appendix

List of videos in appendix on DVD Rom

Prompts originally found on a thumb drive in the (play)box *Provenance*

1. Agatha goes to see Alice at home.

2. Video of approach to Christies.

3. Janet Baker – *Dido and Aeneas,* 'When I am laid in earth'.

4. Ich grolle nicht.

5. *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, 'Pur ti miro, Pur ti godo'.

Improvisations and scenes created responding to stimuli in *Provenance.*

6. Improvisation using google video (Agatha goes to see Alice at home) and actions.

7. Improvisation with newspaper cloak.

8. Improvisation with music and sweeping.

9. Improvisation with clingfilm and make-up.

10. Improvisation using care items – Agatha gets Alice ready to move into a care home.

11. Rehearsal of scene created using red wool.

12. Rehearsal of scene created using newspaper as a puppet and items for sale at an auction.

Draft of *Provenance,* September 2018

"PROVENANCE"

By

Laura Hayes

(This instruction was attached to the lid of the (play)box).

Inside this box, you will find things to make a play from. You may use as many, or as few as you wish.

Some scenes have only words. Some have words and an object, or digital file, or other stimuli. Feel free to use them, or not.

Some scenes have only an object, piece of music, or digital file related to them but no words. Feel free to use them, or not.

Some scenes are in envelopes with objects related to the scene. Some objects wait for you to create the words, or not.

You will need a computer to play videos and sound tracks on. Feel free to use them or not.

This play could be called Provenance.

NOTES ON PLAYING

I have tried to make this play open for whoever explores it to become co-authors with me. Please feel free to do whatever you want with what I have offered. Feel free to cut, ignore and alter.

In places, I have tried to suggest that stylised performance choices and abstracted movement may be used.

However, it is up to you.

provenance

1. Origin, source

2. The history of ownership of a valued object or work of art or literature

Meriam Webster Dictionary

Michelangelo himself is said to have sculpted a sleeping cupid figure and used his artistic genius to manipulate it into appearing ancient so that we could sell it to Cardinal Riario of San Giorgio.

The innocent Cardinal Riario wanted so badly to believe that he had come upon a truly special piece, something that perhaps no one else had found, that he was easy prey for Michelangelo's fake. His desire to own a true object of beauty was so great so to blind him to its authenticity.

The Art of the Con by Antony M. Amore

CHARACTERS

Agatha

Alice (her mother)

Caroline

The statue of a head

A bank manager

A volunteer docent at the National Portrait Gallery

Lines spoken by the performers marked as Laura, Maiya and Chelsea

PLACE

London.

TIME

Now.

MOUTH: IT'S THE MOST VALUABLE THING I OWN AND I'VE LOST IT

newspaper, empty wine bottles, a fishbowl filled with golf balls, important documents, paintings leaned up against the wall, books, more books, nail clippers, more books, a rocking horse, a bicycle with two flat tyres, a map of the Kennet and Avon canal, a life of Leonardo da Vinci, photograph albums with honeymoon photos of Venice and Rome, a box of Christmas decorations including pink tinsel, fairy lights and blue and pink baubles, a bronze statue of a dog, a sewing basket, a sliver teapot with a broken ivory handle, an unopened packet of superglue, unopened gas bills, a box of Lego, takeaway menus for pizza, kebabs and curry, ledgers, a palette with dried up oil paint and crusty brushes, a jewellery box, newspaper, a hairbrush, the *National Geographic* magazine 1978 - 1982, old diaries from 1968 – 1987, a packet of geranium seeds, an empty bottle of Chateau-Neuf du Pape, an oil painting of the lake district by a promising young artist circa 1972, newspaper, mouse droppings, a Claris cliff tea set, body lotion, wire cutters, two matching velvet cushions in burgundy, 97 unopened copies of *The Tablet*, thick black elastic, a massage chair – broken, a black and white television – working, but no longer able to connect to the mains, a sewing machine – previously functional now broken, water bills (opened and unopened), rubber bands, old jam jars, old ketchup bottles, newspaper, national geographic magazines 1988-1989, a complete set of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, a jar of marbles, six tubs of ponds face cream (unopened), a record player and records of Glen Gould's recordings of *The Goldberg Variations* versions from 1956, 1968 and 1982, the telephone directory 1986, 1990, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2016, a rosary, the complete works of John Donne, a first edition of *Far from the Madding Crowd* (7 pages missing) love letters, the *National Geographic* magazine 1995 – 1998 (unopened), the lease of the house, post it notes, a box of white candles, red lipstick, a toy trainset (working), a Christmas tree fairy, Blue Guide to Italy 1960, a statue of a head (body missing), a gold necklace, electricity bills (opened and unopened), a packet of coffee filters, records of Beyond the Fringe, records of Dylan Thomas reading *Under Milkwood*, train time tables from London to Manchester, a ticket stub, Christie's catalogues, a box of Christmas cards from Oxfam (unopened), a hair epilator, two tins of aubergine paint, newspaper, nail clippers, an oil painting of a female nude, a pallet knife, 3 jars of home-made marmalade, a bag of make-up, post-it notes, cables and extension leads, place mats with pictures of Scotland on them, a fishing rod, a broken hoover, 4 unused flower pots, newspaper, a box of old vogue magazines circa 1985-1995, Guide book to France 1997, a silk shawl, an invitation to the Queen's garden party on the 12th August 1987, a box of old schoolbooks – maths, English, History, Geography, French, Biology, a bag of old clothes, a bag of old shoes, scissors, a box of rubber bands, a feather duster, hedge clippers, a yoga mat, the cardboard box for a Dyson vacuum clear, the cardboard box for six crystal tumblers from Dartington Glass, the cardboard box for 6 matching wine glasses from Tesco, the cardboard box for a my little pony stable, a bag for life containing plastic bags, a box of framed paintings, a jewellery box with jewellery inside, a box of slightly chipped china teacups (saucers missing), a folder containing a selection of piano certificates Grade 1 – 5, a packet of 60 watt lightbulbs, an extension lead, a tin of loose leaf tea, a pencil case with coloured pencils inside, yin and yang balls, hair tongs, reusable Ikea bags, a jam jar of screws, a shoe box with different shades of nail polish – 6 red, 4 pink and others, a card board box with different shades of lipstick, largely different shades of pink and red, a cardboard box with black kohl eyeliners and several bottles of half- finished nail varnish remover and eye make-up remover all more than 10 years out of date, a packet of Gauloise reds, ink pens, pots of dried up ink, old packets of sunflower seeds, geranium seeds, magnolia seeds, old theatre tickets to a performance of *The Importance of Being Ernest* at the Old Vic in 1972, the Jane Fonda workout video, a wicker flower basket, a large plastic container lid – blue, a large Tupperware container of clothes, a large Tupperware container of shoes, a large Tupperware container of various kinds of tinned foods, plastic bottles containing strange liquids, rose petals, a set of unused postcards from the British Museum, and many other nameless, shapeless things.

HEAD: HOW MUCH?

                    HEAD

Head.

Head of young noble woman. Marble. 1-800 CE.

Am I? It's all a bit foggy. A bit of a haze. I remember…. I remember my body. How it felt to have one. Be one. Not disconnected, disjointed, but together. I remember emerging. Chip chip chip. Then buried. Why was that?

It's there somewhere… It'll come back to me. Excited voices scraping away the dust and gravel from around my head. My body was already gone then. Never mind. I still have my head. My memories.

I knew it early, that I was attractive to others. The way people paused when I passed. Men, women, even children smiled. That helps when you're a slave. You take what you can get. Beauty buys extra sleep, lighter work. My master and mistress chose me. We all knew the deal they were making. My skin, my curls, my eyelashes. I was a bargain. I still am.

TONGUE: WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?

A room. There is stuff everywhere, newspaper everywhere, everything everywhere. You can't tell where the floor ends and the wall starts. The floor meets the windows half way. The curtains are shut. Light comes through in cracks. Things that should be in one place in a normal room are not. This room is not normal. It moves. Things have a life of their own.

You can't see the old woman until you do. Is she stuff, or is she an old woman? She is searching for something, she may be conducting the chaos in its dance.

<div style="text-align:center">AGATHA</div>

Mum?

<div style="text-align:center">ALICE</div>

Where did I put you? I just put her down - there you are, my beautiful girl.

<div style="text-align:center">AGATHA</div>

Mum?

<div style="text-align:center">ALICE</div>

Nobody here of that name.

<div style="text-align:center">AGATHA</div>

Then what's your name?

<div style="text-align:center">HEAD</div>

Newspaper.

> *There may be something of a game of hide
> and seek amongst the things.*

<div style="text-align:center">AGATHA</div>

I've got those sandwiches you like...

> *The things will probably win.*

Mother?

<div style="text-align:center">ALICE</div>

Agatha?

<div style="text-align:center">AGATHA</div>

There you are.

<div style="text-align:center">ALICE</div>

Where else would I be?

                        AGATHA

Have you eaten?

                        ALICE

What's that you're wearing?

                        AGATHA

Did you eat the sandwiches I left you?

                        ALICE

It's very…. Yes.

                        AGATHA

Why did you put them in here?

                        ALICE

There's an interesting article in *The Lancet*.

                        AGATHA

You don't want to get mice.

                        ALICE

No? I put it aside for you.

                        AGATHA

Come on, Mum.

                        ALICE

I'd like a cat.

                        AGATHA

We said we were going to do some sorting.

                        HEAD

A ball of red wool.

                        AGATHA

Didn't we?

                        HEAD

Plastic.

                    AGATHA

Didn't we.

                    HEAD

A pack of playing cards.

                    ALICE

You may have imagined it.

                    AGATHA

We agreed. We need to get some of this stuff sorted out before the move.

                    ALICE

You may have agreed with yourself.

                    AGATHA

We agreed that it's for the best.

                    ALICE

I'm not going anywhere.

                    AGATHA

You can't stay here.

                    ALICE

Why not?

                    AGATHA

Look at this place – it's not hygienic.

                    ALICE

I'm not moving out of my home because you're embarrassed about what the neighbours think.

                    AGATHA

It's about what's best for you.

                    ALICE

You were always up early, polishing your shoes before school.

                    AGATHA

What have you done to those boxes I packed last week? You've taken everything out again.

                    ALICE

Art History isn't a proper subject. Now Classics on the other hand...

                    AGATHA

You've said.

                    ALICE

Don't you have to get back to work?

                    AGATHA

You can't stay here any longer. It's not safe. The doctor said. The council said.

                    ALICE

Have said so.

                    AGATHA

In two weeks', you're moving into Meadow Dale.

                    ALICE

Ridiculous name.

                    AGATHA

Two weeks. Mother? Do you understand? Then they will bring in the skips and empty this place.

                    HEAD

Mouse droppings.

                    AGATHA

So, would you like me to help you sort through this stuff? I am offering to help you. Would you like my help?

                    ALICE

I don't mind.

                    AGATHA

Yes, or no?

                    ALICE

If makes you happy.

                    AGATHA

I'll start over here.

                        HEAD

I can't breathe.

>   *Agatha starts searching amongst the stuff.*
>   *Alice continues conducting.*

                        ALICE

Not that.

                        AGATHA

Well what then? This?

                        ALICE

No, not that.

                        AGATHA

You have to make some decisions, Mum. Please?

                        ALICE

Alright then. Whatever will make you happy.

>   *Agatha searches and attempts to tidy. Every*
>   *pile she makes Alice dances and plays a game*
>   *with her friends, maybe musical statues.*
>
>   *Agatha finds the head.*

                        HEAD

Ahhh.

                        ALICE

Not that. That's my ashtray.

                        AGATHA

I remember this. It used to be in the cabinet in the front room.

                        ALICE

Maybe. I don't remember.

                        AGATHA

Dad restored it, didn't he? I thought it was worth something. Why are you using
it as an ashtray?

                        ALICE

Because your father was a Yankee twat.

                          AGATHA

Is it okay if I take this into work? Check it out.

                          HEAD

No. Not okay.

                          ALICE

No. Not okay. You're stealing everything. Now you want to take my ashtray too.

                          AGATHA

You shouldn't be smoking.

                          HEAD

I said, not okay.

                          ALICE

I heard you.

Add it to the booty.

                          AGATHA

I'll find out if it's worth anything.

                          ALICE

I have plenty of money.

                          AGATHA

We've talked about this.

                          ALICE

Niminee nimenee, nimenee nee.

                          AGATHA

The house is falling apart, inside and out. Drains, roof. You have a huge, overdue mortgage. You need money to pay for your care.

                          ALICE

I can look after myself.

                          AGATHA

Of course. But maybe you'd be more comfortable somewhere with….

                          HEAD

I'm not going anywhere.

                    ALICE

I'm not going anywhere.

                    AGATHA

We've talked about this.

                    ALICE

You've talked about this.

                    AGATHA

I want the best for you.

                    ALICE

Oh Good. So do I.

                    AGATHA

And this will be the best thing for you. You'll get the care you need -

                    ALICE

I don't need any 'care'.

                    AGATHA

From professionals.

                    ALICE

Professional carers?

                    AGATHA

Exactly.

                    ALICE

What makes them professional?

                    AGATHA

A diploma or something.

                    ALICE

In Art History?

                    AGATHA

I know you don't like it and if there was anything else we could do of course we would do it.

ALICE

Of course we would.

Pause.

AGATHA

Meadow Dale Mother. Two weeks.

NOSE: DO YOU REMEMBER THE DAY THAT WE FIRST MET?

CAROLINE

I was at the National Portrait Gallery, waiting for the rain to stop.

I hate umbrellas.

Frank was watching me. I wasn't attracted to him. So, determined. Not my type at all. But he wanted to go for a drink. And it was raining, so...

As he talked, it wasn't that he became more attractive, but… his thoughts, his mind. He made me laugh. Such a cliché.

He asked for my number, the rain wasn't stopping, and I found myself under his umbrella.

KNEE: WHAT AM I WORTH TO YOU?

Laura	26 March 2001
Maiya	3 May 2001
Chelsea	24 January 1999
Laura	2 February 2008
Chelsea	30 July 2005
Maiya	2 October 1998
Chelsea	1 December 2016
Maiya	2 January 2013
Laura	10 September 1992
Chelsea	Important
Maiya	57 Fairfield road
Laura	you should read this carefully
Maiya	within 30 days
Laura	you have fallen behind
Chelsea	Lloyds bank
Laura	mortgage payments

All:

The total amount due is £ 957, 858.00.

Laura: To settle your account current, you must also include with the above payment, any payments or late charges that are due during this 30-day period.

Chelsea: Lloyds Bank will start legal action to foreclose on the mortgage, which will result in the sale of the property. We may also have the right to seek a judgment against you for any deficiency after the home is sold.

Maiya: You have the right to settle your loan current after legal action has begun. You also have the right to assert in the foreclosure proceeding the nonexistence of the default or any other defence to our legal action and sale of the property.

Please send your certified cheque to:

All: 123, 123 Wilton Crescent. We want to work with you to resolve the problem and help you bring your account into good standing. We urge you to contact us.

Sincerely,

Lloyds Bank

ELBOW: WHAT IS THE MOST VALUABLE THING YOU OWN?

                    AGATHA

Marble…

                    HEAD

My master looked but didn't touch. I never understood why.

                    AGATHA

…still smooth. Faint traces of red paint in your hair.

                    HEAD

Most masters, they wanted, they took.

                    AGATHA

Black stone irises.

                    HEAD

Not mine.

                    AGATHA

Wide open eyes, Nose, half blunted…

                    HEAD

Maybe he loved his wife. The sculptor was incredulous. He'd never carved a slave.

                    AGATHA

…And lower lip. Her upper lip curves beautiful and intact.

                    HEAD

I'd sit, straight. Look at him straight in the eye. Still as a statue.

                    AGATHA

A smear of black down one cheek, like tears, but oxidisation.

                    HEAD

People said I looked as though I was alive, as though my marble would be warm to the touch.

                    AGATHA

Roman. 1st Century CE?

HEAD

I watched my master stroke my cold stone curves, the way he didn't touch me. When I died, he touched me in a different way. He couldn't bear to look at me.

AGATHA

Your chin tilts up. Your hair ripples back.

HEAD

Couldn't bear to have me around. So, he gave me as a gift to his commander.

AGATHA

2nd century CE?

HEAD

Maybe...

AGATHA

You're 3rd century CE.

HEAD

Statue of a young noblewoman. Yeah right.

AGATHA

I know it. But I can't prove it.

HEAD

Does it matter where I came from?

AGATHA

800 pounds a week. Meadow Dale is 800 pounds a week.

HEAD

Well that's alright then, isn't it? I just told you.

AGATHA

I think you came here via Italy. Someone's grand tour in the 19th century.

HEAD

You got me again.

AGATHA

I have to be able to prove it.

HEAD

I think I remember a ship. A long, stuffy journey with lots of other things. A statue of a little dog that wouldn't stop yapping. Nasty bronze thing.

AGATHA

I've looked through shipping notices, and there are possibilities, but nothing I can quite pin down. And inventories, some possibilities which could be you. I just can't quite join up the dots.

HEAD

Trace your finger across my cheek, my marble tears.

AGATHA

I know it. In my heart, I know it.

HEAD

Ahhh. Then join up the dots.

TOE: WHICH IS THE MOST VALUABLE NOW?

CAROLINE

At first, my quirks didn't bother me. But they bothered Frank, and Frank always has the best of everything. If you can pay, why wouldn't you?

Frank was happy with the result. Our surgeon was happy with the result. I was happy with the result. It meant that when I stood by his side at important events, when people pointed at, and whispered about Frank Adler and his beautiful wife, I didn't disappoint.

It is the strangest thing to stand in front a room of people and know that they love and hate you for reasons you have no control over. And that this can flip depending on the dress you wear, or how you change your hair.

I look at myself now, see the person I've become. I am a life-time away from that art school student living on baked beans, frosty mornings and chance. I wonder who I might have been with someone else. The places I wouldn't have visited. The beautiful things I wouldn't own. The men I might have loved. The thoughts, expressions. The changes I see written across my face.

BREAST: WHERE DID I PUT IT?

If anything, there seems to be more stuff. Or perhaps it's just that everything is in a different place. Alice is doing some kind of arranging, possibly. Or it could be something else, dancing, or conducting a cacophony.

Again, the stuff has a life of its own.

CHELSEA

A complete set of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, unopened gas bills, the lease of the house, old jam jars, old ketchup bottles, a ticket stub for *The Importance of Being Ernest* at the Old Vic in 1972.

ALICE

No business to come around here.

CHELSEA

An empty bottle of Chateau-Neuf du Pape.

ALICE

Barging in.

CHELSEA

A ticket stub.

ALICE

So rude.

TICKET STUBB

I told you not to answer the door.

ALICE

I thought it might be something important.

TICKET STUBB

Not over there.

Not there.

Not there.

Not there.

ALICE

Oh shush.

CHELSEA

An empty bottle of Chateau-Neuf du Pape.

ALICE

Saying I had to sell my home. I'm not going anywhere. I have money. Where did I put it? I must have put it here somewhere, where is it?

EMPTY WINE BOTTLE

I don't know. Don't put me back in that corner.

ALICE

I have plenty of money. Do I? Awful woman.

BOTTLE

Dreadful outfit. How could you let him go?

ALICE

You don't know what you're talking about.

BOTTLE

Sings Velvet Underground All tomorrow's parties:

And what costume shall the poor girl wear

To all tomorrow's parties

ALICE

Be quiet. Not now. I don't want this.

BOTTLE & POSSIBLY ALICE?

A hand-me-down dress from who knows where

To all tomorrow's parties

And where will she go and what shall she do

When midnight comes around

She'll turn once more to Sunday's clown

And cry behind the door

AGATHA

Mum?

BOTTLE

Not her again.

No I said, not there…

ALICE

Shh.

AGATHA

Mother?

Were you singing?

ALICE

It's like buses. For ten years you're off gallivanting in New York.

BOTTLE

Not that corner, please.

AGATHA

Should I go again?

ALICE

Where else then?

TICKET STUB

I think she should leave.

ALICE

Shush.

AGATHA

Mum?

BOTTLE

Not even flowers.

ALICE

Flowers aren't necessary.

AGATHA

Are you okay?

ALICE

Of course.

AGATHA

You seem a bit distracted.

ALICE

I don't sit here hoping that you'll stop by.

AGATHA

Anyway. I have some good news.

ALICE

Are you leaving again?

AGATHA

Would that be good news?

ALICE

I assume that's what you want.

AGATHA

Of course not. I want to… I don't want to be so far away from you, now that…

ALICE

Now what?

AGATHA

How are you today?

ALICE

Now that I'm about to die? Now that you want to get your hands on my money?

AGATHA

You're not about to die, and I don't want your money.

ALICE

Everyone keeps telling me I haven't got any money. Coming round here. You would say that. You're stealing it. You're stealing my identity. Stealing my money. That's why they don't think I have any money. You spent it all in New York.

What did you come here for today?

AGATHA

The statue…

ALICE

Did you bring it back?

AGATHA

I've got some good news.

ALICE

If you haven't brought it back, then it isn't good news.

AGATHA

I took it to work, like I said.

ALICE

As I said…

AGATHA

And I dated it. I believe it dates back to the 3rd century CE, the classical period. It's the head of a young noblewoman. I don't know if you realised. We're pretty certain it once had a body. You don't know anything about that do you?

ALICE

I am not in the business of decapitation.

AGATHA

So, when Dad restored it, do you remember where he got it from? We believe it is extremely valuable.

ALICE

We, we, we. It's a fake just like your father.

AGATHA

I remember it being in the cabinet. If we sell it, and it raises what we think it could raise all your issues could be taken care of.

ALICE

The issues are all in your head. I want my ash tray back.

JAM JAR

Put me on top.

ALICE

There you go.

So rude, barging in. I would have telephoned the police except that the telephone

isn't connected at present.

AGATHA

They came here?

ALICE

They can't take my house away.

AGATHA

Yes, they can, and they will unless we do something drastic. They'll sell it at auction for a fraction of what it's worth.

ALICE

Stop saying it. Barging in. Go away now. I'm dying.

You go away now. Go away.

THIGH: WHAT AM I WORTH TO YOU?

There are many old and beautiful things. The old things are presented against shiny, new new new. Amongst them is a stone head. They admire each other and their own reflections. They could be mirrors of each other, except Caroline's tears aren't black.

<div align="center">CAROLINE</div>

Beautiful.

<div align="center">HEAD</div>

I am.

You too.

<div align="center">CAROLINE</div>

I should be.

<div align="center">HEAD</div>

Should you?

I'm 1368 years old.

<div align="center">CAROLINE</div>

You don't look a day past 17.

<div align="center">HEAD</div>

Thank you. I'm worried I'm getting a bit flat.

<div align="center">CAROLINE</div>

You're beautiful. But you're crying?

<div align="center">HEAD</div>

Oxidisation. My eyelashes are made of metal. I'm very rare.

<div align="center">CAROLINE</div>

I can tell.

<div align="center">HEAD</div>

Would you like to buy me?

<div align="center">CAROLINE</div>

I'd love to, but 30,000...

<div align="center">HEAD</div>

You should have seen me before, when I had my body. At least you have a body.

CAROLINE

He says I'm heartless. My heart is stone. I couldn't squeeze another drop of love for him. I tried. Strange thing is, now I've left him everything hurts.

HEAD

I've got nothing against a heart of stone.

CAROLINE

I can't afford you.

HEAD

Don't have to worry about that.

CAROLINE

The lawyers say be cautious.

HEAD

What do they know?

CAROLINE

When I look at you…

HEAD

You feel your heart beating?

CAROLINE

Almost.

HEAD

Would you like to touch me?

CAROLINE

You're wicked.

HEAD

I'm beautiful.

CAROLINE

All my assets are frozen until the divorce is finalised.

HEAD

Suit yourself. The auction's tomorrow.

CAROLINE

Yes.

HEAD

At least that way you'd know who gets me.

STOMACH: WHO IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL?

AGATHA

The old woman at the fruit and veg stall by the station has started talking about 'girls like us'. She wears fingerless gloves and strange hats in June. She must be in her 60s and she thinks that we're 'girls'.

I look at my mother now.

I remember being allowed to watch her ritual of putting on her face. Looking at her through the reflection in the mirror. Dabbing. Spraying on scent. Plucking. Applying. Transforming. She was never one for hugs or bedtime stories. But she let me watch her in those naked moments. I felt close to her then, looking through the mirror.

She used to be so elegant.

I look at my face and trace the lines. It's more and more like hers. I'm starting to see what other people see when they look at me.

CALF: HOW MUCH AM I WORTH TO YOU?

> *An auction of expensive body parts. They*
> *float like ghosts.*

AGATHA

Good morning ladies and gentlemen and welcome to Christie's King Street, and to today's auction of Antiquities. [*Repeated in French and Chinese*] And to start today's auction we have an Anatolian Greek Terracotta Hermes. Archaic Period, circa 580 B.C.E. Bidding starts at £25,000. Do I hear £25,000? £28,000 on the phones £28,000. Sir? I have £28,000, lady at the back. £30,000? Gentleman on my left £30,000? I'll take £500 more. No? Macau do I hear £30,500? Then I have £30,000, going once to the lady at the back, going twice, sold for £30,000.

Next Lot 18, a Roman statue of Romulus and Remus circa 2nd century C.E. Bidding starts at £18,000. Do I have £18,000? £18,000. £20,000? £20,000. £24,000? On my left £24,000. £28,000. On the phones? £28,000. Do I have £32,000? In the room? On the phones? I'll take £30,000, gentleman on my right? £30,000? All done at £28,000? On the phones at £28,000, going once at £28,000, twice at £28,000, sold at £28,000.

And moving on to lot 34, a pair of Etruscan Bronze warriors. Circa 400 B.C.E. Bidding starts at £65,000. Do I hear £68,000 for this stunning piece? In the room, £70,000. £72,000. At the back, £76,000, thank you madam, £80,000? Sir, thank you? £84,000? Madam? Any more? Going once at £80,000, twice, sold at £80,000.

And next we come to lot 55, a unique piece, recently re-discovered. A Roman marble head of a gentlewoman, with a distinctive 'tear stain' caused by oxidisation. Circa 1st – 3rd century C.E. Bidding starts at £30,000.

£32,000

£48,000

£52,000

£74,000

£90,000

£98,000

£100,000. Sold to the lady at the back for £100,000

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. That concludes our auction here at Christies today. Thank you for coming and we do hope to welcome you again very soon.

FOREHEAD: WHAT IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING YOU OWN?

Maiya: Mrs Adler? Mrs Caroline Elizabeth Adler?

Caroline: Yes?

Laura: Mrs Adler? You have filed a petition for divorce citing irreconcilable differences.

Maiya: Mrs Adler, please sign here to acknowledge that upon final notarization you will no longer have access to the joint bank account or credit cards.

Laura: You understand that now glances will slide away

Maiya: You acknowledge that you are not the person you were before

Laura: recognition fades

Maiya: your name is a mistake, spoken in hushed tones

Laura: you are unsought, unloved

Maiya: unbound

CHEEK: WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?

                        CAROLINE

Hello?

                        AGATHA

Mrs Adler?

                        CAROLINE

Yes.

                        AGATHA

How can I help?

                        CAROLINE

This is rather awkward… unfortunately, I can't complete my purchase.

                        AGATHA

I'm sorry?

                        CAROLINE

Yes.

                        AGATHA

Oh, dear.

                        CAROLINE

You can't imagine how embarrassed I feel.

                        AGATHA

This is…

                        CAROLINE

I'm sorry.

                        AGATHA

This may be - difficult.

                        CAROLINE

Difficult?

                    AGATHA

You may remember that you signed a disclaimer?

                    CAROLINE

I did?

                    AGATHA

It's a standard procedure – we ask everyone to sign an intention to purchase – a protocol if you like. To avoid… later embarrassment.

                    CAROLINE

I didn't sign anything.

                    AGATHA

I'm sure you did.

                    CAROLINE

I don't think so.

                    AGATHA

It's a standard procedure.

                    CAROLINE

I don't remember.

                    AGATHA

Bear with me one minute – while I check our records. I'm so sorry Madam, but I think you will find that you have committed yourself to this purchase, with a signature, a binding signature. In our records.

                    CAROLINE

Right. Oh dear.

                    AGATHA

If it were up to me, of course I understand… and I would do whatever, we would do whatever, but you have signed a binding agreement with Christies and unfortunately, they will hold you to it.

                    CAROLINE

I feel pretty sure I didn't sign anything. I just came in and sat down.

                    AGATHA

No.

CAROLINE

I didn't realise it was such a problem to take it back. I don't want to upset anyone.

AGATHA

Of course not. This is terribly awkward. If I could help I would.

CAROLINE

But if there's no agreement – I mean I don't remember signing it and/

AGATHA

Got it. I've found it.

So sorry Madam. As I said, you have signed a legally binding contract and unfortunately, I must hold you to it.

So sorry to insist.

CAROLINE

Right. Well, okay then, I suppose.

AGATHA

I'm so sorry.

I do hope this won't be a problem for you.

CAROLINE

I suppose… I don't know. Maybe… I'll just put it on a card or something.

AGATHA

It's £100,000.

CAROLINE

A couple of cards.

AGATHA

Right.

Very good, Madam. That's - very good.

CAROLINE

Perhaps you can put that through straight away?

AGATHA

Lovely, thank you.

CAROLINE

It's only money.

Pause.

AGATHA

That's right. It's only money. Just - money. Only money.

CAROLINE

Are you okay?

AGATHA

Of course! So, delighted that I was able to help you here today with this small issue. And that it has all been settled in such a way that all parties are satisfied. And if there is anything else at all that I can help you with Madam, please do let me know how I can be of service. Christies is delighted to welcome you as a client and if you do choose to part with anything in your collection in the future we do hope you will consider us. Clementine will help you with delivery. Just over there. On your right. Thank you so much. And have a lovely, lovely day.

BRAIN: DOES IT MATTER WHERE YOU CAME FROM?

HEAD

They were running away. Running away from someone or something. Barbarians? Fires? Barbarians lighting fires? So, they buried me. If they couldn't have me no one would. Above me the world collapsed, the barbarians raged, the fires burned.

No. The barbarians burned, the fires raged. Or maybe they didn't. All I saw was darkness. Preserved in earth. Until – chip chip chip. Scorching light. Delight. How happy they were to have me. How carefully they cleaned me. Their touch was so soft, so gentle. They loved me so.

They took me to Rome and sold me to someone. Who sold me to someone, who sold me to someone who took me in a carriage. Three months in itchy straw, in a wooden chest with a nasty, yappy little bronze dog. And then, France.

EYEBROW: DOES IT MATTER WHERE IT CAME FROM?

> *Alice's home. She is asleep, cradled by her*
> *things. They sing to her. They love her. They*
> *will protect her from anything or anyone.*
>
> *Agatha enters.*

AGATHA

Mum?

I'm here.

On the train - there was this woman, and she was, at first, she seemed normal, but then she just got more and more... She was all in black- black shirt, black trousers, black trainers even, and it was all quite nice except that she had this bag, like a businessman's bag except that it was all dusty and dirty and like it had been on the floor, or in a shed for years. And you could just feel everyone in the carriage notice her and start to melt away, so she couldn't touch you. No one looked directly at her, in case she looked back and tried to talk to you or something.

She was tiny, like a bird. Her hand on the handrail was so small and delicate. But she kept moving, twitching. More and more each stop, like she was revving up, until she was standing in front of the train door jumping up and down, up and down, up and down, like a motor.

I sold it.

Don't look at me like that.

Don't look at me like that.

We didn't have any other options.

We made £100.000.

ALICE

Does it matter where it came from?

What will happen if they find out? I told you it's a fake.

AGATHA

But it's not true. It can't be. I didn't believe you.

ALICE

You did.

It took him ages, out in garden shed. Chipping away. Chip chip chip. Special paint. Reading up on all kinds of things to make it look older, wear it away. Such a good job.

Clever, clever. He did such a good job until they got him.

                    AGATHA

You could have told me.

                    ALICE

It's not yours.

                    AGATHA

I've done everything for you.

                    ALICE

I'm not going anywhere.

                    AGATHA

Listen to me for once. Don't you understand? I've saved you.

                    ALICE

Not saved, or lost, or taken.

I'm going to die here in my own home.

SHOULDER: WHO IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL?

> *Christies. Caroline is in the beautiful foyer*
> *somewhere between a chic coffee shop, art*
> *gallery and designer office. She had a box*
> *with the head inside. Alice enters.*

ALICE

That's a beautiful coat.

CAROLINE

Thank you.

ALICE

Cashmere.

CAROLINE

Yes.

ALICE

So cold at the moment.

CAROLINE

Yes.

ALICE

You need a good coat in this weather.

CAROLINE

Definitely.

ALICE

I have a lovely coat. Today… I couldn't find it.

CAROLINE

So frustrating when that happens.

ALICE

I was in a hurry. But I'm here now.

What's in the box?

CAROLINE

It's a statue. A head of a young noblewoman. Roman. 1-3rd century CE.

ALICE

May I look?

CAROLINE

It's just, it's all wrapped up.

ALICE

You must be sad to let her go.

CAROLINE

I am.

ALICE

But if you must, you must.

Does she have an interesting provenance?

CAROLINE

Well, she came to England in the late 18th century. She's on an inventory at Highbury Manor.

ALICE

Is she.

CAROLINE

Are you here to collect something?

ALICE

I am. Fortunately, it's just arrived.

CAROLINE

That's good. Hopefully you won't have to wait too long.

ALICE

No.

Agatha enters.

AGATHA

Mum, what are you doing here?

CAROLINE

This is your mother?

AGATHA

Mrs Adler. No one told me you were here.

ALICE

We've been having such an interesting conversation.

AGATHA

Is anything the matter?

ALICE

There's nothing wrong with me.

AGATHA

Of course not. Why don't you come into my office? I'll get you a nice cup of tea.

ALICE

Then why did you say it?

CAROLINE

Is this a bad time?

AGATHA

I'm just surprised to see her here.

Mrs Adler, if it isn't too much trouble - You can see that I'm a bit…

ALICE

I've been having a delightful conversation with this charming woman.

AGATHA

Lovely. Now let's get you that nice cup of tea.

ALICE

Why are you so obsessed with tea? Have I said I want a cup of tea?

AGATHA

You don't have to have a cup of tea. I just thought you might be thirsty after coming all the way here. I really think you'd be more comfortable in my office.

ALICE

I'm very comfortable here. I've been having such an interesting conversation with this lady about her statue.

AGATHA

Right.

ALICE

So interesting.

CAROLINE

I can come back.

ALICE

She's been telling me all about its provenance.

AGATHA

Thank you.

CAROLINE

Perhaps someone else can help me?

AGATHA

I'll be right with you. I don't think we should take up any more of Mrs Adler's time. I'm sure she's very busy. Come to my office, there's a comfy sofa there.

CAROLINE

It's been such a pleasure, but I really must sort this out. I've thought about our conversation. I've decided to sell the statue.

AGATHA

How interesting. I'd be delighted to help you with this personally.

ALICE

The beautiful tear stain.

CAROLINE

Its oxidization.

ALICE

Paint.

CAROLINE

I beg your pardon.

ALICE

That's mine.

                    CAROLINE

What?

                    AGATHA

You must forgive my mother, she's…

                    ALICE

I see you Agatha. I see you.

                    AGATHA

She's not very well.

                    ALICE

It's mine. That statue is mine.

                    CAROLINE

What?

                    ALICE

She stole it.

                    CAROLINE

Where did this come from?

                    AGATHA

You have all the documentation.

                    ALICE

I'd get it checked.

                    AGATHA

Come with me right now.

                    CAROLINE

What is she talking about?

                    AGATHA

She has dementia.

                    ALICE

I'm perfectly well.

CAROLINE

Why should I get it checked?

ALICE

I'd say she's had some recent work done.

CAROLINE

Excuse me?

AGATHA

I'm so sorry about this.

ALICE

Not you, it. It's a forgery. Her father made it.

Pause.

CAROLINE

Your father? I'm a bit confused here. Can you explain where your mother got this idea from.

AGATHA

I'm so sorry Mrs Adler, this is all rather complex.

CAROLINE

Yes, I understand that. But you still haven't explained to me why your mother claims that this is a forgery.

AGATHA

When we investigate a provenance, there is a protocol. The aesthetic, the shape, the style of the carving is accurate. I found no traces of modern paint on that statue.

CAROLINE

So, is your mother lying then?

AGATHA

I believe that this piece is genuine, but with a statue this old there are always shades of doubt.

CAROLINE

Then why is your mother so convinced that this is a forgery? Is what she says about your father true?

AGATHA

This is what we do. I joined up the dots.

EYELASH: WHERE DO YOU GO TO, MY LOVELY?

*Caroline is in the National Portrait Gallery
looking at a painting.*

GUARD

Excuse me Madam. A bit close.

CAROLINE

I suppose you have to say that.

GUARD

Only when people get too close.

CAROLINE

Do I look like dangerous?

GUARD

Maybe?

I'm just doing my job.

CAROLINE

What if I did this?

GUARD

I don't want to have to call security.

CAROLINE

Aren't you security?

GUARD

I am a docent. I make sure nothing bad happens to these paintings. I volunteer
for the National Trust too.

I don't know who you are. Maybe you're just interested in this portrait of Gertrude Stein,
or maybe you're going to do something to harm her. I don't know. I really don't want to
know. I just want you to take a step back.

CAROLINE

Sorry.

GUARD

That's alright.

Can I also recommend the Arts in the later 18th century room? There's a beautiful portrait of Mary Shelley. Always makes me tear up a bit. I don't know why.

CAROLINE

I'll take a look.

GUARD

On a bad day, if I wander round, say hello to everyone, tell them my troubles, it always makes me feel a bit more cheerful.

CAROLINE

Thanks.

GUARD

Always helps.

Pause.

CAROLINE

I've lost everything.

GUARD

Not everything?

CAROLINE

Almost.

No home. No money. No one.

GUARD

There's always someone.

CAROLINE

I can't go back to him.

GUARD

Then don't.

CAROLINE

I don't know what else to do.

GUARD

Why don't you go and ask Mary Shelley? She had her ups and downs.

> CAROLINE

Did she?

> GUARD

Mary Shelley, the Brontës... It wasn't as easy for them as it is for us now.

You like this one?

> CAROLINE

I like it.

> GUARD

First time it was shown the critics called it 'monstrosity en rouge'. Stein loved it, though. And it's here now, so I suppose it's just the way you look at it.

> CAROLINE

Yes.

What did you do?

> GUARD

Police. 50 years.

And you?

> *Pause.*

> CAROLINE

I'm beautiful.

> *Pause.*

> GUARD

Right.

Mary Shelley. Second archway on your left.

TOOTH: I TOLD YOU SO

AGATHA AND CAROLINE

Sharing this text

Maiya: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen and welcome to Sothebys.

Laura: Bonjour messieurs et mesdames et bievennue á Sothebys.

Chelsea: (same in Chinese) 女士们，先生们，下午好，欢迎来到 Sothebys

Maiya: As you are aware a certain amount of notoriety surrounds today's auction. You may have seen the article in the New York Times about this recently rediscovered statue in marble of a young gentlewoman, featuring an unusual 'tear stain' caused by oxidization of the metal eye-lashes, which make it appear as if she is crying. A recent forensic report has re-evaluated this exceptional piece.

We will begin bidding at 1.5 million pounds.

£1.8 million

£2.6 million

£3.8 million

£5.2 million

£16.4 million

£18.2 million

£20.4 million

Sold for £29.2 million.

HEART: WHEN DID YOU BECOME SO BEAUTIFUL?

> *Agatha helps Alice get ready to move into Meadow Dale.*
>
> *They may eat sandwiches. No words are necessary.*

THE END.

Scenes deleted from earlier drafts

LOOK, HOW BEAUTIFUL! LOOK, HOW UGLY!

We see body parts. Some of them are beautiful. A thigh or neck perhaps. Maybe a hand, a head.

These could be objects, people, images, or on film, perhaps. They may be named; the names may not match what we see. An object – for example a toy car or a lipstick, could represent one of these body parts.

For example, we might hear some of the words below:

neck

ankle

hand

back

head

lips

knee

ear

wrist

cheek

bottom

nose

thigh

chin

fat

thin

old

young

cracked

scarred

ugly

beautiful

train

lipstick

eye

tongue

mouth

head

head

head

head

head

Or not.

These words could be spoken by several people, or just one. We could hear then repeated, or only once. They could be sung, laughed, filmed, echoed, whispered, or written.

TONGUE: WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?

Suggestions for playing:

1. Watch this video. (See thumb drive for the same video in the Blue file).

    https://vimeo.com/180590482

2. Agatha is on her way to visit her mother. She is splicing, wringing, retching, dreading, dissolving, resenting, powering-on, ignoring, stressing, medicating, disappearing.

3. Play the video as Agatha explores these actions. This can be in any way you choose, explore abstract physicalisation as well as more naturalistic options.

A room. There is stuff everywhere, newspaper everywhere, everything everywhere. You can't tell where the floor ends and the walls starts. The floor meets the windows half way. The curtains are shut. Light comes through in cracks. Things that should be in one place in a normal room are not. This room is not normal. It moves. Things have a life of their own.

You can't see the old woman until you do. Is she stuff, or is she an old woman? She is searching for something, she may be conducting the chaos in its dance.

Suggestions for playing:

Alice

You are sorting your things. You may find that Agatha has been trying to remove some of your treasures, and you need to put them back. When Agatha passes freeze in a statue.

When Agatha freezes, continue sorting. Make the changes between you faster and the statue shapes become more and more beautiful, like Greek statues of idealised female beauty. (See the examples on the thumb drive).

Agatha

You are trying to tidy the chaos and get rid of stuff from Alice's house. When you she unfreezes, you freeze in whatever shape you happen to be in. Just as Alice does, the changes between action and stillness become faster, and the shapes you take become more and more beautiful, like Greek statues of idealised female beauty. (See the examples on the thumb drive).

SPINE: WHEN YOU WERE GROWING UP DID YOUR PARENTS TELL YOU THAT
YOU WERE PRETTY, CLEVER OR GOOD?

> *Agatha is surrounded by papers, electronic*
> *files, books. It's a game of hide and seek. It's*
> *there, somewhere, the proof she needs. She*
> *just has to find it.*

.

                    AGATHA

Fuck.

> *Agatha starts typing her report.*

BUTTOCK: DO YOU THINK I'M BEAUTIFUL?

*An expensive bank. The kind of place
politicians keep their money.*

BANK MANAGER

Mrs Adler. Smashing to see you. Thank you so much for coming in.

CAROLINE

My pleasure.

BANK MANAGER

😢

CAROLINE

How are you?

BANK MANAGER

As always. Now let me get you your ☕

CAROLINE

Thanks, I just had one.

BANK MANAGER

😉

CAROLINE

No thanks.

BANK MANAGER

Glass of wine?

CAROLINE

I'm okay

BANK MANAGER

😉

CAROLINE

Really, I'm fine thanks.

BANK MANAGER

Water?

CAROLINE

What was it you wanted to see me about?

BANK MANAGER

Well now. You and Mr Adler have always been extremely valued customers here at Smythes. 🤍 Your – Mr Adler has banked with us for a long time.

CAROLINE

Yes.

BANK MANAGER

🥺

CAROLINE

Yes.

BANK MANAGER

And of course, during this enormous life change we're ready to support you both in the necessary financial changes that it will entail.

CAROLINE

That's kind.

BANK MANAGER

And it seems that Mr Adler is ready to move forwards 😫 with some of those changes quite swiftly.

CAROLINE

Okay.

BANK MANAGER

😍

CAROLINE

Oh. Not your fault.

                    BANK MANAGER

😜

                    CAROLINE

What can I expect?

                    BANK MANAGER

I'm very sorry to inform you that your credit cards have been stopped, as has access to your joint account.

                    CAROLINE

I see.

                    BANK MANAGER

It seems there was some 🤔

which your husband feels violated the terms of your agreed financial arrangement. And as such we have been asked to inform you of these changes which are effective immediately.

                    CAROLINE

Okay.

                    BANK MANAGER

😢

                    CAROLINE

Oh, please don't worry.

                    BANK MANAGER

Your cards please.

                    CAROLINE

You mean immediately, immediately.

                    BANK MANAGER

😫

                    CAROLINE

Okay.

BANK MANAGER

Now, are you quite sure …🍩? 😉

NECK: WHAT AM I WORTH TO YOU?

AGATHA

On Saturday morning, I walk to the corner shop with my father. He buys a newspaper. I spend my pocket money on sweets. Not too many, he says, or you'll get fat and your teeth will fall out. Then no one will want to marry you. He's joking.

As well as sweets there are magazines, comics, and a twirling stand stacked with cheap plastic toys in hard plastic. There are water pistols, cars and guns for boys. For girls, all kinds of pink, plastic wonders: mirror and make-up sets, sparkling plastic jewellery, and most beautiful of all - pink plastic slip on stilettos encrusted with shining pink and purple jewels.

I crave for them.

I get 20 pence pocket money each week. The shoes are £1.99. I tell my father I've gone off flying saucers and fizzy cola bottles.

This Saturday I have saved enough. My father is down with a cold. Or perhaps he has already gone. I go with my mother to get the paper. I wait to buy the shoes until she goes outside for a cigarette. The man behind the counter smiles and tells me I'll look like a princess. I blush.

When I come outside my mother sees what I've bought. She doesn't say anything.

The shoes which were so beautiful, tarnish before I've fought them out of the plastic. I never put them on.

I do put them on.

In my bedroom, after school a week later. I slip them on over my white, knee high school socks. Illicit. I stand in front of my mirror and look, ready to see myself transformed.

I thought I would be beautiful in those shoes. I thought I would be the girl on the packet. Instead, I see myself in my school uniform, with cheap, plastic shoes on my ugly feet.

FINGERNAIL: WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?

*In which Agatha realises that the statue of the
head looks exactly like a photo of her mother
as a young woman.*

AGATHA

Instructions:

1. Look at the statue.
2. Describe what you see. What colour is it? What texture is it? What does the women look like?
3. Put your body into the same shape. Mirror her bit by bit.
4. Accentuate.

Tilt of the Head

Eyes

Lips

Neck

Chin

Eyebrows

5. Although you cannot see them imagine, and put your body into the same shapes as the statue's missing body:

Left hand

Back

Right leg

Right Elbow

Right shoulder

Stomach

Left thigh

SHOULDER: WHO IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL?

Alice makes her way here using public transport:

https://vimeo.com/album/4290054/video/180248951

1. She is searching, peering, avoiding, remembering, un-layering, steadying, pretending, vamping.
2. Play the video as Alice explores these actions. Explore abstracted movement choices.

Images deleted from *Provenance*

Figures 12 – 15, Greek and Roman statues of idealised female beauty.

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