



## COVER SHEET

---

Hadley, Bree H (2007) Dis/identification in contemporary physical performance: NYID's Scenes of the Beginning from the End. *Australasian Drama Studies* 50:pp. 111-122.

Accessed from <http://eprints.qut.edu.au>

Copyright 2007 University of Queensland

# Dis/identification in contemporary physical performance: NYID's *Scenes of the Beginning from the End*

---

Author's manuscript of paper published as Bree Hadley (2007) "Dis/identification in contemporary physical performance: NYID's *Scenes of the Beginning from the End*", *Australasian Drama Studies* 50, April 2007, pp. 111-122.

## Bree Hadley

---

Bree Hadley is Lecturer in Performance Studies in the Creative Industries Faculty at Queensland University of Technology. She has interests in physical performance, mediated performance, and performance as a site for the destabilisation of gender, race and class stereotypes.

Theatre, according to Richard Schechner, is 'twice-behaved behaviour'<sup>i</sup> – something known before, known again, through the physical systems of the stage. It is this basis in the familiar that gives theatre its political potential. Theatre practitioners can show spectators the best and worst of their own desires, beliefs and behaviours, with the hope of challenging or changing them.

In this paper I investigate the specific issues physical theatre practitioners face when staging recognisable gender, race or cultural characteristics for spectators. Drawing on circus, dance and popular theatre traditions, physical theatre does not stage character traits with the sort of true-to-life realism that confirms their naturalness for spectators. This said, there is still a familiarity for spectators in the abstracted or exaggerated character traits seen in physical theatre, especially when there is a clear relationship between the traits and the bodies that represent them. The hard, highly disciplined bodies central to this style of work are still immediately meaningful to spectators – culturally coded as dominant, desirable, erotic or exotic. This means physical theatre practitioners in fact have to work harder to counter the performing body's tendency to confirm the validity of the very traits it is trying to challenge, and to make the ideological agendas behind these traits apparent.

After discussing the issues involved in staging the familiar for spectators, I will devote most of the paper to an analysis of the work of Melbourne company Not Yet It's Difficult (NYID). NYID certainly show Australian audiences something familiar, though their images of racism, commercialism, surveillance and social control can be comic,

confronting, far from comfortable. Rachel Fensham gives an example from the *Austral/Asian Post-Cartoon: Sports Edition* (1997) in which the one member of the cast racially marked as Asian is brutally beaten by a team of white bodies, before stepping out of role to choreograph this cruelty to his body. This brutally real (though not realistic) representation of racism shocked many spectators, the clash between the familiar and the commentary on it creating what Fensham calls a 'representational crisis.'<sup>iii</sup> The commanding physicality of NYID's performance style means the company consistently deploy familiar bodies, almost fascistically disciplined bodies, to create this representational crisis in their commentaries on Australian culture. In most of their performances, NYID juxtapose movement, text and technology to try to radicalise their repetition of familiar bodies, familiar stories, inviting spectators to slip in and out of identification with them. They try, I think, to give spectators a sense of their own complicity in normative physical and social practices before drawing spectators into debate about them. Nevertheless, spectators can still simply accept the reality of the culturally codified bodies and bodily behaviours shown in NYID's work and refuse the debate. I will close the paper by considering how NYID tackled this issue in their depiction of Australia's urban and suburban landscapes in their 2001 production of *Scenes of the Beginning of the End*, arguably one of their most interesting productions to date.

### **Dis/identification in contemporary physical performance**

Subversion of socially constructed gender, race and cultural traits in the theatre has to be set against a backdrop of the familiar – familiar bodies, familiar relationships. By familiar bodies, I mean bodies so comprehensively encoded with cultural traits that they have begun to seem natural. The familiar body is, as Michel Foucault suggests, a site for the operation of power. Familiar bodies are inscribed by social ideas about gender, race and class. They are surveilled by social institutions to be sure they stay true to these ideas, stay 'docile' as Foucault describes it.<sup>iii</sup> Theatre has to show these bodies, and the power regimes they are subjected to, before it can start to subvert them. It does not have to be naturalistic, but script, action and staging do have combine to recall spectators of the traits associated with specific 'types' of bodies, so they will know what is being challenged.

This, however, is not necessarily straightforward. Traits staged in the theatre are, as theorists like Elin Diamond,<sup>iv</sup> Peggy Phelan<sup>v</sup> and Herbert Blau<sup>vi</sup> have noted, complicated by the bodies that stage them. Though theatre is twice-behaved behaviour, based on scripted or choreographed repetition of desires, beliefs and behaviours familiar to actors and audience, it still has to be brought into being by performing bodies in the present moment. It thus leaves room for sameness and for difference in its repetition of familiar traits. '[T]heater is,' as Diamond puts it, '...the place of play, and unlike other media, in

the theatre the same play can be played not only again, but differently.<sup>vii</sup> This raises a range of issues in terms of the spectator's ability to identify and/or disidentify with the gender, race and cultural characteristics they see onstage. On the one hand, the presence of the actors' bodies can interrupt the spectator's identification with the traits staged. This, as Diamond argues, is 'precisely what Plato feared, and Aristotle sought to regulate'<sup>viii</sup> in their classical theories of mimesis. The solution for Aristotle,<sup>ix</sup> and for subsequent realist dramatists, Diamond suggests, was to discipline the actors' bodies to be subservient accessories to the drama, disappearing into the characters they play.<sup>x</sup> On the other hand, this disciplined repetition can be problematic too, if spectators become so caught up in the recognisable scenes and characters they see that nothing can draw them out of the identification. This, according to Diamond, is the problem that forestalls the political potential of realism. Realist dramatists like Ibsen and Chekhov did show characters in conflict with their domestic confines, and did spark debate about the social realities they staged. Indeed, Diamond says, 'certain texts of early realism provoked excitement when middle-class women found, for the first time, mimetic models that sparked (and contained) their political desires.'<sup>xi</sup> The difficulty was that realism's true-to-life mimicry of a character's response to domestic crisis tended to be so recognisable, so real, it only further confirmed for spectators that it was part of the character's nature not an ideological construct. As a result, Diamond says, spectators sometimes failed to see that what they were witnessing was 'not merely a miming of a social relationship but a *reading* of it.'<sup>xii</sup> Inability to control spectators' degree of identification or disidentification meant realism in fact reinforced the realities it was trying to challenge, 'produce[d] the malady it [was] supposed to contain and cure.'<sup>xiii</sup>

Physical theatre practitioners face similar identificatory issues when they present physically, sexually, racially and socially marked bodies so closely tied to the traits they signify (either in the actors' performance or in the spectators' perception) that spectators see them as real. This, I think, is what Fensham was pointing to in her analysis of racism in NYID's *Austral/Asian Post-Cartoon: Sports Edition* – the beating was not staged in a realistic representational frame, but the specificity of the actor's Asian body, and of the brutality,<sup>xiv</sup> still made it seem all too gratuitously real to some spectators. No matter the theatrical mode, Diamond says, '[t]he actor's body cannot forget its gender [or race] ...cannot shake off the referential frame imposed by text, mode of production, and spectators' narrativity – those trajectories of scopic desire and identification that performer and performance text can only partially control.'<sup>xv</sup> The risk physical theatre practitioners face, then, is that spectators will identify so strongly with the bodies represented that this will override the intended critique, again reinforcing the reality they intended to challenge.

Physical theatre practitioners have responded to this risk in a range of ways. The dominant strategy today seems to be one whereby performers remember their gender,

race, class or cultural characteristics ‘with a vengeance,’<sup>xvi</sup> in Diamond’s words. This is not about releasing the power of a set of precultural physical characteristics. It is, rather, about creating productive juxtapositions between the performers’ bodies, the performers’ personal and cultural characteristics, and the power structures in which they sit. In this style of work, the performers amplify tensions between materiality and mimetic systems, between Artaudian work with the ‘affective musculature’<sup>xvii</sup> of their bodies, and Brechtian work with the alienatory potentials of mimesis.<sup>xviii</sup> They counterpose movement, image, text and technologies, inviting spectators to slip in and out of identification with familiar traits, making them seem absurd, alien. This, certainly, is the style of work favoured by Melbourne company NYID as they try to draw spectators into their critique of contemporary Australian culture.

### **Not Yet It’s Difficult (NYID)**

Founded by director David Pledger, dramaturg Peter Eckersall, and production manager Paul Jackson in 1995, NYID works with ideas, text, movement and technology to tap into decades old debates about how Australia’s bush-and-beach landscape, white colonial legacy, Asia-Pacific location, and contemporary politics drive its cultural identity.<sup>xix</sup> The commanding physicality of the NYID actors dominates the company’s performance style. They work with their bodies to deconstruct the behavioural codes and conventions inscribed on their bodies,<sup>xx</sup> often turning them into gestural sequences from which all naturalising substance has been evacuated.<sup>xxi</sup> Their work is then positioned in a digital landscape, and an innovative dramaturgical structure,<sup>xxii</sup> that uses a range of representational modes to connect with contemporary cultural and political events.<sup>xxiii</sup> Building tensions between bodies, technology and text NYID’s performance style becomes alienatory, confronting spectators with the stereotypes and power structures at work in the Australian cultural imaginary – be it the slick corporate sloganeering of sportspeople in the *Training Squad* (1996), the brutal impact of a mob on a lone Asian body in the *Austral/Asian Post-Cartoon: Sports Edition*, the cringeworthy sameness of suburban lifestyles in *Scenes of the Beginning from the End*, the Kafka inspired take on technocratic control in *K* (2002), or the bodies slamming into the walls of social control in the war-on-terror world of *Blowback* (2004).<sup>xxiv</sup>

NYID’s physical performance style concentrates, according to Pledger, on exploring ‘the equation of bodies in space over time and distance within a framework of content about contemporary culture.’<sup>xxv</sup> This exploration is, Pledger continues, informed by a ‘reasonably eclectic set of influences.’<sup>xxvi</sup> Disenchanted with psychological schools of acting experienced early in his career, Pledger has developed a demanding training regime around disciplines as diverse as football, biomechanics, and the dance theatre of Pina Bausch. Pledger is also interested in cross-cultural contact, and cites Tadashi Suzuki as a major influence. Suzuki’s experiments with the body’s energy, and the

body's sensibility to its environment, starting from the feet up with the Suzuki stomp,<sup>xxvii</sup> helped Pledger bring his own interest in bodies, teams, and their presence in the performance space, together into a vital, visceral performance style. 'It was a great revelation in a way,' he says, 'because it was the place where I think my sports background and performing, physical performance practices, actually met.'<sup>xxviii</sup>

NYID's interest in cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural performance, and in performance styles emerging in the wake of the mid-twentieth century *angura* or new-wave movement in Japan, connects their work with a trend towards physical theatre in Australia NYID dramaturg Eckersall and a number of other Australian theatre practitioners and theorists have commented on.<sup>xxix</sup> In fact, Eckersall goes so far as to suggest Australian theatre's interest in physicality since the 1960s means 'the so-called 'physical theatre' movement is almost an Australian genre.'<sup>xxx</sup> Moving beyond an English legacy of text-based training and performance,<sup>xxxi</sup> many Australian practitioners have embraced European mask, mime and movement techniques, popular and street theatre practices, dance, circus and body culture. Many practitioners have also found Japanese theatre practices such as Butoh, Body Weather and Suzuki Method particularly influential. Indeed, some of the most prominent physical theatre companies working in Australia in the past decade – NYID in Melbourne, the Tess DeQuincey Company in Sydney, and Zen Zen Zo in Brisbane – have had a Japanese influence, albeit producing a very different performance style for each company. Though aware of their position in this broader trend, NYID are ambivalent about the term physical theatre, believing co-option by circus performers and cathartic dance theatre performers has left it too restrictive for their form of practice.<sup>xxxii</sup> This ambivalence is also connected with a desire Eckersall describes to avoid difficulties with cross-cultural contact in physical theatre in Australia in the past, in particular a tendency to collapse the tensions in Japanese performance traditions into a singular, apolitical aesthetic.<sup>xxxiii</sup> In projects such as their *Journey to Con-fusion* (1999-2002) exchange with Japanese company Gekidan Kaitaisha, Eckersall explains, NYID have confronted problems associated with stereotyping theatrical cultures, stripping back differences between theatrical cultures, and silencing partners to collaboration.<sup>xxxiv</sup> 'As a journey to con-fusion,' he puts it, "...the project was able to investigate creative, political and cross-cultural tensions without banishing one side or the other's viewpoint.'<sup>xxxv</sup> The project explored these tensions, rather than seeking the harmoniously resolved aesthetic relationships characteristic of some physical theatre. This exploration of tensions is in fact a fundamental concern for NYID, part of their broader effort to explore the ideological structures in which bodies and bodily relationships exist, carried beyond their cross-cultural exchanges into all their productions.

Instead of seeking an harmonious aesthetic, NYID use the culturally coded markings mapped onto the actors' bodies, and the athleticism of the actors' bodies, to consider the identities acceptable in contemporary Australian culture.<sup>xxxvi</sup> However, NYID is conscious

of the fact that 'the body takes on all sorts of meanings in the performing space,'<sup>xxxvii</sup> and thus of the problems the presence of real, recognisable, highly regulated bodies in performance can bring, even when the performance style and structure works to show them as cultural constructs full of tensions and contradictions. Pledger offers the open space drill formations of the slick, sloganeering, corporate-savvy sportspeople in the *Training Squad* as an example.

At the beginning of the rehearsal there were nine different bodies in the space, but by the end of that show, there were nine very similar bodies. And they sort of metamorphosed into this kind of non-gendered athlete that has all the worst connotations in the proto-fascism that sport really is. And so, while it worked really well in that show, there are times when we actually want different kinds of bodies to be operating.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Eckersall offers the *Journey to Con-fusion* exchange as an example. 'One [Tokyo] critic's comments about the 'AFL bodies' of the Australian cast made me wonder if we are aiding an unhelpful stereotype here'<sup>xxxix</sup> he says. As Pledger and Eckersall both acknowledge, the familiar, fascistically disciplined bodies seen in some of NYID's work can be naturalised by spectators, their ideological alignments all but ignored (in spite of efforts to make them apparent), and the possibility of altering these alignments thus also ignored. Pledger's comments on this problem with the presence of bodies in performance are interesting, and worth quoting at length.

[I]t's a difficult area because you know the body exists as a sign, a cultural sign, and therefore it exists as a performative sign. As a result of which, the reading of the performance through the body can become really prescriptive, when you have only certain kinds of bodies. What I think I kind of realised is that ...I couldn't do much about that. Because I needed them to do certain things, I needed the bodies to do certain things in order for us to be having the kind of argument that I wanted to be had ...[C]ertainly I think it's one of the things that people often find a little controversial in the work. They sort of see that kind of body type, and they're inevitably suspicious. In a way one of the things I try to do is unravel all the mechanics of that suspicion. And it's never going to be satisfactory, because it's always so incredibly subjective ...[It] really made a set of problems in the way that the work was read. A good set of problems.<sup>xl</sup>

Pledger has several strategies to unravel the mechanics of the potentially prescriptive body politics in NYID's work. Firstly, Pledger asks that the actors give spectators a sense of their grappling with the corporeal and cultural constraints inscribed on their bodies. 'Generally performers like the fact that their bodies change, they like their bodies to change when they do physical performance'<sup>xli</sup> Pledger says. However

when you're making those bodies in the training you get a lot of resistance sometimes ...Well, sort of resistance is maybe not the right word, but a kind of awareness that the body is changing for a purpose ...[H]opefully it's part of the

subtext of the performance. Their questioning, the actors' questioning, how they feel about their bodies changing.<sup>xiii</sup>

Pledger also plays behavioural constraints across the bodies of the actors to the point of creating an abstracted code, what the company call a 'choreographic gestural code.'<sup>xiii</sup> This extraction and exaggeration gives a sense of the actors' struggle with the code, but also a sense of repetition, regulation and control building to the point of absurdity, alienation. Pledger then positions a profusion of other signifiers – text, multimedia, music – in counterpoint to the body as cultural signifier, to 'really draw attention to the problem of it.'<sup>xiv</sup> Finally, Pledger further fractures the terrain of NYID's performances by putting bodies to work in a range of performance styles, and a range of non-traditional performance spaces.<sup>xiv</sup>

Working with these strategies, Pledger and NYID play familiar traits across different combinations of bodies, at different intensities, in different relationships to images, sound, text and space, simultaneously displaying and disrupting the cultural mechanisms by which these traits are mapped onto bodies.<sup>xvi</sup> For Edward Scheer

Pledger's style is inherently deconstructive in precisely this way. His inflected Suzuki Method, the most original use of this system since The Sydney Front (1986-1993), provides an intriguing way of disrupting the integrity of this system while enhancing the effects of its discipline, staging it with humour and intelligence. This is quite contrary to the critics of the company who emphasis the 'totalitarian' nature of the 'hard body sameness of NYID actors,' or their AFL physicality.<sup>xvii</sup>

### **NYID's *Scenes of the Beginning from the End***

First performed in Melbourne in March 2001, *Scenes of the Beginning from the End* is a commentary on Australia's urban and suburban culture strongly informed by Pledger's longstanding fascination with Australia's geographic, cultural, domestic and digital landscapes.<sup>xviii</sup> Following NYID's preference for non-traditional performance spaces, the show favours the flexible possibilities of a public carpark to a fixed stage. Spectators travel through three desert, suburban and city landscapes created in the carpark, and through different performance styles too, the cold stained concrete combining with Astroturf, screens, cameras and computers to establish a unique environment, and a unique stage-spectator relationship.

As the show begins, sporadic blips, tones and hisses break the silence of the dim, dark carpark. Seven performers squat in a rough triangle formation in front of a screen rolling down a red desert road. Though the performers are of different genders and races, the striking thing is the sameness of their athletic bodies, highlighted by the tight black lycra they wear. They start moving, manipulating their limbs, their torsos, their weight, their



levels. In time, the screen starts the performers travelling down rural roads, suburban roads. They become more upright, more urban, more human. There is more light in the space, and what Peta Tait calls the 'soundsc(r)ape of cars parking, electronic pips, feet pounding'<sup>xlix</sup> starts to pick up pace. By the time the screen comes to city streets the performers are jogging downstage and back, one at a time, in pairs, and in groups, in straight and diagonal formations. They are an energised team, working individually and interactively, pushing themselves through these patterns to the point of exhaustion. An exhaustion plainly apparent to spectators. Abruptly, the screen stops at an image of a panel van on a suburban street, the heavy breathing of the performers filling the newfound silence, and this prompts a shift in the landscape.

The spectators are taken to a space alongside the first for a more naturalistic depiction of suburban conformity, littered with references to 'Australian dramatic literature ... *Don's Party* (David Williamson) ... *Stretch of the Imagination* (Jack Hibbard) ... *Puberty Blues* (Kathy Lette).'<sup>l</sup> Family life unfolds around three familiar cars – a teenage tryst around a panel van, a bloke sharing the technical specifics of his Torana, a husband and wife with a relationship as broken down as their old Renault. The spectators then follow the family around into a third space where a few rough props represent a suburban home. They turn on the telly, only to find two Asian actors playing Scott and Charlene on archetypal 1980s Australian soap opera *Neighbours*. Scott wants to leave Erinsborough with its same old faces, same old lives. Charlene is less certain. The scene starts to cut between conversations at a suburban barbeque, the performers clad in common suburban gear, playing common suburban types. Husband and wife build habits in a backyard where they don't truly belong. A white teenage boy and a black teenage boy play footy while debating whether politics should come before fashion. Two teenage girls debate boys, sex and life in suburbia before starting to dance. In time, all come into one conversation. What should they do? Something? Nothing? Surely something will happen? It does. A woman on skates crashes the party. Confused by all the sameness she cannot tell if this is their house or hers, their story or hers. This naturalistic scene of suburban conformity, less powerful than NYID's physical work for some commentators,<sup>li</sup> gradually gives way to the exhaustive gestural repetitions characteristic of NYID's work.<sup>lii</sup> Sleeping, washing, driving, dog walking and other familiar domestic movements are copied and corrupted across various combinations of bodies in space, in time degenerating into a rhythmic rubber-kneed dancing in place in a line downstage. The repetition limits the scope of the movements, layers them, drawing the sense of reality from the movements and from the scene itself.

Again, the landscape abruptly changes as the automated voice of Citywatch tells spectators to change platforms, and two trainguards with flashing lights lead them full circle back to the first space, now transformed into an intensely surveilled cityscape in which they will find themselves in the spotlight. The spectators are split into two groups,

'the audience in gold lounge and the audience in economy class.'<sup>liii</sup> Two screens show a dozen or so blurry, black-and-white, closed-circuit style images of corporate work, commuting, waiting. Seven almost identically suited Citywatch workers – watched live by one set of spectators, onscreen by the other – sit at desks, read, type, tap. Eventually, the workers engage the spectators. They start a regular, repetitious pattern of waving to cameras set at specific locations. They start to put signs to do with surveillance, the way watching keeps people safe, the want for instruction, etcetera, around some of the spectators' necks, telling them to smile. They project pictures of the spectators wearing the slogans onto the screens. The pace picks up, making it difficult for spectators to see what has happened to themselves and to others. 'And then,' Pledger says, 'some of us get taken away.'<sup>liv</sup> Several spectators from economy class are taken into a tiny chamber partitioned off with corrugated plastic, its interior projected onto the screens. Inside, a kneeling man is kicked in the head by two other men as a severe woman supervisor paces behind. Someone screams 'get your head up' again and again and again. This violence, again a characteristic of NYID's work,<sup>lv</sup> further fractures the narratives and perspectives at play in the performance. It pulls it to a fast, furious, fractious close, the spectators watching themselves watching a performance in which they are taking part to various degrees. According to Pledger

that's got such cultural capital ...having somebody looking at themselves in the screen watching a performance that they've now become an actor in. It sort of flips everything, and makes people think differently about voyeurism, about surveillance, about the role of the actor and the role of the spectator in the performance, about the presence of media, and all those sorts of things ...That's the point where you go mmm, there's the potential for change, there's the potential to challenge the way that people think about it.<sup>lvi</sup>

### **Dis/identification as a point of creative and political tension**

In *Scenes of the Beginning from the End* NYID shows bodies reacting to conformity and control in urban spaces in a way that resonates with Australian audiences. There is a risk spectators will take this as a familiar world with which they feel a bond, without bite to the commentary. NYID uses the actors' physicality, the proliferation of performance styles and stereotypes, and the actors' ambivalence about the stereotypes, to forestall any tendency to merge the show's strands into a metanarrative about Australian society. As Eckersall explains it, the move from running, to humorous hyper-realistic acting, to choreographic gestural codes, to graphic violence, means 'the audience is constantly reminded of the fact they're watching an actor'<sup>lvii</sup> working with and within ideologically aligned landscapes. Not that this registered with all commentators. The *Age's* Hillary Crampton, for example, experienced the show as

an accomplished blending of various experimental trends from the past four decades, resulting in an enjoyable evening in which we are provoked to laugh at

our own complicity in the journey. There is a wry message, but no alienation, and the intrepid audience had a surprising jolly time.<sup>lviii</sup>

Though NYID to me seemed to be looking for more than an indulgent laugh at Australian life, Crampton's comments indicate that attempts to foreground the ideological alignments behind the show's images did not register for her, did not disrupt complicitous identification. Despite the non-naturalism of the performance, then, its display of familiar social traits did not denaturalise them for this one spectator at least. As I have suggested throughout this paper, NYID seem well aware that people can perceive their work this way – register the controlling Citywatch workers in *Scenes of the Beginning from the End* or the racial violence in the *Austral/Asian Post-Cartoon: Sports Edition* without registering the purposive commentary on them. Still, NYID take this risk in presenting familiar bodies, familiar scenes, because, as Pledger says, it is the only way to have the kind of argument they want to have.<sup>lix</sup> They are not interested in a further abstraction that would distance their work from contemporary events (a point of tension in their collaboration with Gekidan Kaitaisha<sup>lx</sup>). They are not interested in a further narrativisation that would become prescriptive, didactic or propagandistic,<sup>lxi</sup> offering answers too clearly reconciled to sit comfortably within the sometimes ambivalent politics of their work. Instead, NYID play between the two, accepting that a range of reactions is part of what Pledger terms 'the democracy of art, and arts practice.'<sup>lxii</sup> They use their work to show some discomfiting aspects of Australian culture, including a lack of acceptance of bodily identities at the margins of Australian culture,<sup>lxiii</sup> all the while aware that the range of identificatory and disidentificatory reactions spectators bring will remain a point of creative and political tension.

---

<sup>i</sup> Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985) 118.

<sup>ii</sup> Rachel Fensham, 'Violence, Corporeality and Intercultural Theatre', in Peter Eckersall, Uchino Tadashi and Moriyama Naoto, ed., *Alternatives: Debating Theatre Culture in the Age of Con-fusion* (Brussels: PIE Peter Lang, 2004) 98; Rachel Fensham 'Anti-Asian Rhetoric in Performance', in Ien Ang and Mandy Thomas, ed., *Alter/Asians: Asian?Australian Identities in Art, Media and Popular Culture* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 2000) 176.

<sup>iii</sup> Michel Foucault, "Docile Bodies [from *Discipline and Punish*]", in Paul Rabinow ed., *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984) 179-187.

<sup>iv</sup> Elin Diamond, *Unmaking Mimesis: Essays on Feminism and Theater* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997) 152.

<sup>v</sup> Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993) 146.

<sup>vi</sup> Herbert Blau, *Take Up the Bodies: Theater at the Vanishing Point* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982) 83.

<sup>vii</sup> Diamond, *Unmaking Mimesis* iii.

<sup>viii</sup> Diamond, *Unmaking Mimesis* xvi.

<sup>ix</sup> Aristotle, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art: With a Critical Text and Translation of the Poetics* (New York: Dover Publications, 1951) 111.

<sup>x</sup> Diamond, *Unmaking Mimesis* 28.

<sup>xi</sup> Diamond, *Unmaking Mimesis* vii.

<sup>xii</sup> Diamond, *Unmaking Mimesis* 53, original emphasis.

<sup>xiii</sup> Diamond, *Unmaking Mimesis* xvi.

<sup>xiv</sup> Fensham, 'Violence, Corporeality and Intercultural Theatre' 100.

- 
- <sup>xv</sup> Diamond, *Unmaking Mimesis* vii.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Diamond, *Unmaking Mimesis* vii.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and its Double* (New York: Grove Press, 1958) 133.
- <sup>xviii</sup> See Diamond, *Unmaking Mimesis* 43-99, on the potential Brecht holds for contemporary theatre. Fensham, 'Violence, Corporeality and Intercultural Theatre' 91, also notes a tendency 'to combine the social significance of Brechtian aesthetics with an Artaudian immersion in subjectivity' in postmodern performance.
- <sup>xix</sup> See Peter Eckersall and Moriyama Naoto, 'Introduction', in Peter Eckersall, Uchino Tadashi and Moriyama Naoto, ed., *Alternatives: Debating Theatre Culture in the Age of Con-fusion* (Brussels: PIE Peter Lang, 2004) 12, on theatrical interest in Australian identity since the 1960s.
- <sup>xx</sup> Fensham, 'Violence, Corporeality and Intercultural Theatre' 92.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Eckersall, 'On Physical Theatre: A Roundtable Discussion from 'Not Yet It's Difficult' with Peter Eckersall, Paul Jackson, David Pledger, Greg Ulfan', *Australasian Drama Studies* 41 (2002): 22.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Eckersall, 'On Physical Theatre' 15.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Eckersall, 'Trendiness and Appropriation? On Australia-Japan Contemporary Theatre Exchange', in Peter Eckersall, Uchino Tadashi and Moriyama Naoto, ed., *Alternatives: Debating Theatre Culture in the Age of Con-fusion* (Brussels: PIE Peter Lang, 2004) 46, notes this tendency to refer 'to the events unfolding in the public domain'.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Eckersall, 'Trendiness and Appropriation?' 43f.
- <sup>xxv</sup> David Pledger, interview with author, 13 August 2001.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Pledger.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Tadashi Suzuki, *The Way of Acting: The Theater Writings of Tadashi Suzuki* (New York: Theater Communications Group, 1986), 6, 9.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Pledger.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Eckersall, 'Trendiness and Appropriation?' 28. For a collection of essays on this trend towards physical theatre in Australia see also *Australasian Drama Studies* 41 (2002).
- <sup>xxx</sup> Eckersall, 'Trendiness and Appropriation?' 35.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Eckersall, 'On Physical Theatre' 18, 19.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Eckersall, 'On Physical Theatre' 15, 17, 20, 21, 26.
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> Eckersall, 'Trendiness and Appropriation?' 38.
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> Eckersall, 'Trendiness and Appropriation?' 26.
- <sup>xxxv</sup> Eckersall in Peter Eckersall, Rachel Fensham, Edward Scheer and Denise Varney, 'Tokyo Diary: The City Performs' *RealTime* 39 (2000) [www.rtimearts.com/~opencity/rt39/scheer.html](http://www.rtimearts.com/~opencity/rt39/scheer.html) (accessed 4 December 2000): n.pag.
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> See Fensham, 'Violence, Corporeality and Intercultural Theatre' and 'Anti-Asian Rhetoric in Performance', for an insightful discussion of NYID's staging of unacceptably 'other' bodies.
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> Eckersall, 'On Physical Theatre' 20.
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> Pledger.
- <sup>xxxix</sup> Eckersall in Eckersall et. al., 'Tokyo Diary'.
- <sup>xl</sup> Pledger.
- <sup>xli</sup> Pledger.
- <sup>xlii</sup> Pledger.
- <sup>xliii</sup> Eckersall, 'On Physical Theatre' 22.
- <sup>xliv</sup> Pledger.
- <sup>xliv</sup> Eckersall, 'On Physical Theatre' 15.
- <sup>xlvi</sup> Fensham, 'Violence, Corporeality and Intercultural Theatre' 102.
- <sup>xlvii</sup> Edward Scheer, 'Dissident Vectors: Surrealist Ethnography and ecological Performance', in Peter Eckersall, Uchino Tadashi and Moriyama Naoto, ed., *Alternatives: Debating Theatre Culture in the Age of Con-fusion* (Brussels: PIE Peter Lang, 2004) 58; Scheer, 'Australia/Japan: Gesture and Place' *RealTime* 27 (2000) [www.rtimearts.com/~opencity/rt37/scheer.html](http://www.rtimearts.com/~opencity/rt37/scheer.html) (accessed 4 December 2000): n.pag.
- <sup>xlviii</sup> Pledger.
- <sup>xliv</sup> Tait, 'NYID's High Octane Realism', *RealTime* 43 (2001) [www.realtimearts.net/rt43/tait.html](http://www.realtimearts.net/rt43/tait.html) (accessed 25 January 2003): n.pag.
- <sup>i</sup> Pledger.
- <sup>ii</sup> See for instance Tait, 'NYID's High Octane Realism'.
- <sup>iii</sup> Eckersall, 'On Physical Theatre' 22, 25; see also Scheer, 'Australia/Japan'.
- <sup>iiii</sup> Pledger.
- <sup>liv</sup> Pledger.
- <sup>iv</sup> Eckersall, 'On Physical Theatre' 22; Fensham, 'Violence, Corporeality and Intercultural Theatre' 99.
- <sup>lvi</sup> Pledger.
- <sup>lvii</sup> Eckersall, 'On Physical Theatre' 25.

- 
- <sup>lviii</sup> Hillary Crampton, 'Road Trip of Dreams', *The Age* (23 March 2001): Today / Entertainment 4.
- <sup>lix</sup> Pledger.
- <sup>lx</sup> Eckersall in Eckersall et. al., 'Tokyo Diary'.
- <sup>lxi</sup> Pledger.
- <sup>lxii</sup> Pledger.
- <sup>lxiii</sup> Again, the position of the unacceptably 'other' body in NYID's work is the central theme of Fensham's 'Violence, Corporeality and Intercultural Theatre' and 'Anti-Asian Rhetoric in Performance'.