(Syn)aesthetics and Disturbance
tracing a transgressive style in contemporary performance practice

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
by
Josephine Machon

Abstract

An examination and exploration of 'the (syn)aesthetic style', a particular sensate mode of performance and appreciation that has become prominent in recent years in contemporary arts practice. The (syn)aesthetic performance style fuses disciplines and techniques to create interdisciplinary and intersensual work with emphasis upon; the (syn)aesthetic hybrid; the prioritisation of the body in performance and the visceral-verbal '*play*-text'. '(Syn)aesthetics' is adopted as an original discourse for the analysis of such work, appropriating certain quintessential features of the physiological condition of synaesthesia to clarify the impulse in performance and appreciation which affects a 'disturbance' within audience interpretation. Original terms employed attempt to elucidate the complex appreciation strategies integral to this performance experience. These include the double-edged semantic/somatic or making-sense/*sense*-making process of appreciation, which embraces the individual, immediate and innate, and the 'corporeal memory' of the perceiving body. Liveness and the live(d) moment are considered, alongside notions of ritual and transcendence and the primordial and technological.

The argument surveys the inheritance that saw to this contemporary style emerging, in Britain in particular, considering female performance practice, intercultural and interdisciplinary ensemble performance and the 'New Writing' aesthetic. Critical and performance theorists referred to include Friedrich Nietzsche, the Russian Formalists, Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Antonin Artaud, Valère Novarina, Howard Barker and Susan Broadhurst. Contemporary practitioners highlighted as case studies exemplary of (syn)aesthetic practice are Sara Giddens, Marisa Carnesky, Caryl Churchill and Sarah Kane. Furthermore, documentation of a series of original performance workshops explores the (syn)aesthetic impulse in performance and analysis from the perspectives of writer, performer and audience.

 (Syn)aesthetics as an interpretative device endeavours to enhance understanding of the intangible areas of performance which are increasingly difficult to articulate, thereby presenting a mode of analysis that extends performance theory for students and practitioners within the arts.

Department of Performing Arts, Brunel University

March 2003

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For my Mum and Dad
&
For Andrew

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'memories and fragments and echoes and traces'

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Susan Broadhurst for her advice and encouragement throughout the writing of this thesis. Thanks also go to Barry Edwards and Dr. Ana Sanchez-Colberg. Many thanks to Sara Giddens and Marisa Carnesky who were incredibly generous with their time and willingly provided me with material to aid my discussion of their work. An acknowledgement should also go the Arts and Humanities Research Board for the Award in Doctoral Study in the Creative and Performing Arts, given to me in the final year of research. I also wish to record my gratitude to those people who have, at various points in my research, given their time and advice; Howard Barker, Linda Bassett, Ingrid Craigie, Jo McInnes, Peggy Phelan, Helen Rogers, Graham Saunders, Georgia Sion, Max-Stafford Clark, Kathy Tozer, and Alan Williams. I am indebted to the following individuals for their participation in my performance workshops; in the early stages, Sarah Ball, Erina Bass, Rolande Beugré and Leone Hanman; latterly, Sarah Ball, Alex Dungavel, Sam Fenton, Vicky Hooper, Verity Newman and Paul Woodward. Their creativity proved vital to the development of my thinking and I feel privileged to have worked with them all. I am also grateful to those students of the Drama Department at St. Mary's College, Strawberry Hill, who made up the audience for, and provided insightful feedback following, our workshop performance. A special acknowledgement to my family; my mum and dad, Eleanor and Nick, and also to Barbara and Rachel, for being proud of me for doing it – even though most of the time they had no idea of what it was I was doing. And finally, to Andrew, for everything.

Creating performances and writing about those performances require acts of critical and creative imagination; both contend with the imperatives carried by 'the act' (Peggy Phelan, 1998: 7).

[T]hings such as sound, images and the energy of the play, are extremely difficult to describe. To fill this textual void, we have to tell what can be told and try to clarify what drives us (Robert Lepage, 1997a: 26).

Interpretation takes the sensory experience of the work of art for granted, and proceeds from there. This cannot be taken for granted now. . . . What is important now is to recover our senses. We must learn to *see* more, to *hear* more, to *feel* more (Susan Sontag, 1982: 104, emphasis original).

Introduction

> Theatre is an adventure that's bigger than we are; an adventure which we embark on with many questions, but virtually no answers (Lepage, 1997a: 25).
>
> Believing in the power of theatre is like believing in religion: you have to experience its effect in order to understand the attraction of it (Richard Eyre & Nicholas Wright, 2000: 11).

In recent years a performance style has emerged in the West, in Britain in particular, which consists of a variety of performance texts that are fused in a special way in order to produce a visceral experience.[1] Such a style exploits the potential of all manner of performance languages, to affect an audience on a sensate level. Impossible to define as a genre due to the fluidity of forms explored, this performance mode places emphasis on the human body as a primary force of signification, and plays with the ever increasing possibilities in design and technology. In addition to this, it has embraced the written word, reclaimed the verbal as a visceral act, a factor previously denied in certain performance practice where physical language has been prioritised. This ritualised style enables humans to engage with an awareness of the primordial via such sensually stimulated perception.[2] It can also engender a certain feeling of transcendence, of comprehending ideas, experiences and concepts in a unique way. As a result, this style produces a response of disturbance that can be simultaneously challenging and unsettling, pleasurable and exhilarating.

Such a performance style can be traced through ancient performative-ritual practice such as Greek tragedy, Japanese Noh, Kathakali; through Shakespearean and Jacobean theatre, to the avant-garde practice of Jacques Copeau, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Antonin Artaud, Isadora Duncan, Samuel Beckett, Jacques Lecoq, Martha Graham (to name but few); and onwards to the innovators of the present, Pina Bausch, Caryl Churchill, Robert Lepage and so on. All encompass the artistic impulse and engage the spectator in a holistic manner, which suggests that this style is embedded

in theatrical history. To attempt to define it as a specific style in contemporary performance proves difficult. I posit that it draws widely on the ancient modes of theatre mentioned above. It is prevalent in, and thus as a contemporary style inherits, the forms and techniques of certain late 20th Century performance practice. In particular, the transgressive female practice (from the late 1960s onwards); the intertextual mode of intercultural, interdisciplinary ensemble work which became most prominent in the West from the 1980s and through to the present; and the developments of a play-writing aesthetic developed, in Britain in particular, throughout the 1990s.[3]

In defining this as a particular contemporary style, an integral feature of such practice is that whilst pushing forward the boundaries of performance to explore contemporary experience it returns to existing conventions that draw on the unique power of ritual in performance. This style thus foregrounds primordial means of communicating, in order to affect an audience in a most fundamental way. Consequently, such performance practice demands a change in the criteria of appreciation, as it is at loggerheads with the analytical methods previously applied to the intellectual and literary style of theatre production prominent in Westernised theatre of the 20th Century.[4] Performance work that is ritualised, sensate and transgressive in its very form can produce a response in the individual audience member that goes beyond the discourse of critical analysis as it stands. The problem of articulating experiences that are, on the whole, 'unarticulable', arises due to the fact that the act of immediate perception is primarily located in the body. Secondly, this style of performance may affect a certain transcendental quality, which is also difficult to put into words. Therefore, the immediacy of such a fused corporeal and esoteric response has to greatly influence subsequent processes of cogitation.

The dilemma of verbally analysing such performance work needs to be addressed in performance theory in order to foreground the significance of this style in theatre – historically, culturally, and in terms of academic study. Finding the 'right' words to define a response can be challenging and frustrating but is ultimately pleasurable within such an artistic framework, providing the strategies to distinguish, discuss and further explore the impulse of such performance and the mode of appreciation that it affects. It is my own, individual confrontation with such a style in general, as illustrated by the work of Sara Giddens, Marisa Carnesky, Caryl Churchill and Sarah Kane, and throughout my own practice, that has led to this investigation into the methodological gaps that exist in current performance analysis. I have identified a need for an interpretative device that conjures such a style, and explains the varied processes of the appreciation strategy, rather than reducing the work as it is discussed. There is a need for a theoretical discourse that itself is primarily of the body and provides specific, yet open, vocabulary that acknowledges and encompasses the corporeality of the response.[5]

In order to provide a mode of performance analysis that defines the *full* appreciation process that occurs (that is, from immediate individual response to any subsequent intellectual interpretation that transpires), I have exploited the idea of exchange and adaptability and played with the space, the slippage, in-between theory and practice in an attempt to fuse both within a mutually sympathetic discourse. I have adopted the term '(syn)aesthetics' (from 'synaesthesia', the Greek *syn* meaning 'together' and *aisthesis*, meaning 'sensation' and 'perception'), developing the term to define an interpretative device which describes *simultaneously* a performance style - its impulse, and processes of production - *and* the appreciation strategy necessary to articulate a response to such work.[6] Important to stress is how both the performance

style and the appreciation it affects have an integral feature of disturbance, a disturbance that can be unsettling and/or exhilarating.

My intention is to assert that the '(syn)aesthetic style' identifies a particular, exciting contemporary performance practice that has grown in recent years, and '(syn)aesthetics' the necessary mode of appreciation to analyse such work. It is my belief that (syn)aesthetics as an interpretative device, which develops previous usage of the term in the arts, is vital to contemporary practice. Without it, any work that exhibits features akin to this style cannot be appreciated fully within critical analysis. My aim is to engender an open discourse that embraces sensate, ritualised practice and allows for the symbiotic exchange that must occur between performance and any theory that seeks to articulate and define it. Consequently, (syn)aesthetics encompasses all the areas of the artistic process, from impulse to performance *and* all the areas in the appreciation process, from immediate perception to subsequent interpretation.

(Syn)aesthetics presents an original theory for performance as it combines both an artistic principle of fused aesthetics, marrying the interdisciplinary with the intersensual in artistic terms, with characteristics of the physiological condition of synaesthesia (a condition that involves a fusing of the senses) within the appreciation process due to its fused perceptual function.[7] Certain quintessential features of the physiological condition of synaesthesia are crucial to understanding the (syn)aesthetic appreciation strategy, and characteristics of the impulse in performance. The writings of Richard E. Cytowic (1994) and A.R. Luria (1969) are heavily drawn on, as theorists who have highlighted the immediate, visceral cognition and interpretative processes of the physiological condition of synaesthesia which are applicable to the (syn)aesthetic mode of appreciation. I adopt these theories of synaesthesia to highlight

the fact that such fused perception, draws attention to the unsettling and/or exhilarating nature of *the process of becoming aware* of the fusion of senses within interpretation. A crucial feature of (syn)aesthetics as a mode of analysis, is the fact that synaesthesia, as an occurrence and concept, contains the corporeal and 'ineffable', a quality of experience that is, by its very nature, indefinable. As a result when appropriated within a performance discourse to analyse and discuss this particular performance style, (syn)aesthetics defines the ineffable within performance appreciation, aiming to describe the indescribable nature of the experience.

(Syn)aesthetics focuses on the potential of the body as a sentient conduit for the impulse and exploration of performance as well as the primary locus of reception and consequent interpretation. Fundamental to the (syn)aesthetic response is the notion that the body is the channel for the appreciation of artistic work in general, and performance in particular, which endorses arguments for embodied knowledge. The corporeal memory that resides within human experience, an entirely physiological mode of appreciation that challenges linguistic expression, is integral to the appreciation of (syn)aesthetic work. I discuss this idea in more detail in Chapter 1 below. This challenge is contained within the term '(syn)aesthetics' itself via the allusion to the condition of synaesthesia, where perception resides firmly in fused sensual experience which overwhelms any subsequent process of cognition.

Corporeal memory and embodied knowledge refers human perception back to its own primordial, or *chthonic* (from the Greek, 'of, or to, the earth') impulse. The primordial is a feature fundamental to the (syn)aesthetic creative process. Work invested with such a quality has the potential to appeal to an equivalent chthonic sensibility within audience reception that allows for the slippage between the human

faculties of intellectual and instinctual perception.[8] It is this which can affect a certain disturbance in the processes of production and appreciation in (syn)aesthetics.

(Syn)aesthetics is a heterogeneous mode of analysis which supports a continually morphing and mutable performance style. Like the performance style it scrutinises, (syn)aesthetic theory, and the terms employed therein, serve to resist definition in the very act of defining. As a result, it is my intention to make a performance discourse available to that work which has previously been difficult to name in critical theory due to the inexplicable, intangible quality integral to the innate, individual response during performance and appreciation. The purpose is to provide a theoretical term that encompasses a non-linguistic, intersemiotic mode of interpretation and analysis.[9] As emphasised above, the term (syn)aesthetic is incumbent of all these features in its etymology. Drawing on the experiences of the physiological condition, (syn)aesthetics serves to define that which is inexpressible and firmly based in the interpretative capabilities of the human body.

Following this, a further important factor within this thesis is the fact that the theory, the terms used to explain the experience of the work, have been generated by the performance work itself. In this way, I have attempted to find what Susan Sontag argues for; that is, theory which reveals the 'sensuous' nature of form (Sontag, 1982: 103). Or, in this case, of per*form*ance. Furthermore, many of the ideas and terms assigned come primarily from an audience perspective of what it is to experience this work in a fused corporeal and intellectual fashion. With this in mind it must be emphasised that a crucial feature of (syn)aesthetics as an appreciation strategy is that it prioritises an immediate, individual and innate response to work.

As is apparent in this introduction, throughout this argument, there is a preponderance of notions of slippage, exchange and play in all areas of this study; a

pleasurable revelling in the potential of boundaries blurred. That is, the slippage, exchange and play between theories, style, form and content, and that between production and appreciation. Of the latter, the pleasure to be taken in blurring the place where strategies of appreciation start and processes of production end has been emphasised. This continuum of theory, practice and individual, immediate appreciation is of great significance to my argument. By focusing on the exchange between theory and practice, the verbal and physical, the corporeal and intellectual, there is a prioritisation of fusion between these areas that underpins my use of the term (syn)aesthetics.[10] In this way, practice is fundamental to theory and individual experience is fundamental to analysis.

The premise of the argument is laid down in Chapter 1. I provide a preliminary overview with a detailed explication of the central features of (syn)aesthetics and clarification of the concepts and terms integral to it. I draw from certain quintessential features of the physiological condition of synaesthesia as documented by Cytowic (1994) and Luria (1969) and highlight how (syn)aesthetics, as an appreciation strategy, is firmly located in the body. Within this overview I foreground the significance of live performance as a highly sensate practice and explain the three key strategies of the performance style; the (syn)aesthetic hybrid, the predominance of the human body in performance and the particular visceral-verbal quality of the (syn)aesthetic *play*-text.

In Chapter 2 I examine critical and performance theories, which I have termed, 'theories of disturbance' to foreground the transgressive and playful pivot of each. I assert Friedrich Nietzsche's argument for a 'Dionysian' impulse as fundamental to (syn)aesthetic acts (Nietzsche, 1967a). Nietzsche prioritises embodied knowledge in the appreciation of the arts and places emphasis on ideas of chthonian slippage and

disturbance within artistic processes that resonate with lived human experience in an unusual, sensual and exciting way (see Nietzsche, 1967a). A Dionysian undercurrent is present in all the theories that clarify and support my own argument for (syn)aesthetics.

To elucidate the verbal play integral to (syn)aesthetic performance texts I explore the significance of the Russian Formalists theories of disruptive linguistics, in particular those of Mikhail Bakhtin, Osip Brik (as documented by Boris Eichenbaum), and Viktor Shklovsky (see Bakhtin, 1984; Eichenbaum, 1965; Shklovsky, 1965), alongside Roland Barthes' arguments for 'pleasurable text' (Barthes, 1975). I apply Julia Kristeva's theories for the *semiotic* as a governing signifying modality (Kristeva, 1999a) where unconventional linguistic practice, the unconscious and the corporeal are prioritised in signification. Lastly, providing a methodology for converting the chthonic Dionysian impulse into a creative practice, I survey Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigarays' theories of *écriture féminine* (literally 'female/feminine writing', also understood as a writing of the body) (Cixous, 1993; Irigaray, 1985).

The particular (syn)aesthetic style and its quintessential feature of disturbance under scrutiny in this thesis is further elucidated by certain performance theories. Antonin Artaud's manifesto for a 'Theatre of Cruelty' (Artaud, 1993) foregrounds the visceral and experiential in embodied and hybridised practice. Valère Novarina's 'Theatre of the Ears' (also known as *écrit bruts*, literally,' brutal writing') (Novarina, 1996) and Howard Barker's theories for a 'Theatre of Catastrophe' (Barker, 1997) are especially pertinent to the argument for a (syn)aesthetic linguistic impulse and approach in performance. Finally, Susan Broadhurst's theory of 'Liminal Performance' (Broadhurst, 1999a) clarifies the integral contemporary features of my classification of a (syn)aesthetic performance style.

(Syn)aesthetics surveys these critical and performance theories to support and present the terms of its own analysis. As critical tools they are employed and applied solely to explain, describe and illustrate the (syn)aesthetic style in both production and appreciation. As regards (syn)aesthetics and the application of theory to it, I must stress that these critical and aesthetic theories serve to emphasise quintessential features of the impulse in production and appreciation. In particular they highlight the notion of immediacy in analysis and place great emphasis on the body and embodied knowledge as the primary force of interpretation.[11]

These theories of disturbance, collected together in this way, fuse aesthetic, linguistic and performance theory and highlight notions of free-play and transgression. They embrace intertextual practice and celebrate the interface between, and flux within, linguistic, corporeal and technological praxis, serving to support (syn)aesthetics as a new form of aesthetic interpretation, and the (syn)aesthetic style as a transgressive performance mode. My own argument for (syn)aesthetics as a contemporary performance theory draws on these theories for a continual destabilisation of formal conventions in favour of playfully disturbing practice, as evidenced in the work of Giddens, Carnesky, Churchill and Kane, which causes the receivers of the artistic work to (re)cognise sensate and unconscious communicative processes.

The particular strategies of the (syn)aesthetic performance style that are introduced in Chapter 1 are examined more thoroughly in Chapter 3. Here I analyse in detail; the (syn)aesthetic hybrid; the particular emphasis on the actual body in performance; and the visceral-verbal *play*-text. As I stress in both Chapters 1 and 3, these performance strategies are discussed in no order of preference. Instead I highlight how the (syn)aesthetic style is a mode of practice which focuses on the

impulse and effects of performance, and the symbiotic relationship between form and content within an intertextual mode. In borrowing from, and referring to, the theories of disturbance surveyed in Chapter 2, (syn)aesthetics establishes a new mode of analysis firmly based in arts practice, specifically in live performance.

A crucial factor is that, as a performance theory (syn)aesthetics does not push the potential of linguistic practice to the background, as occurs with Artaud and Broadhurst's theatres, nor does it focus on verbal practice as the foremost language in performance, as with the arguments of Barker and Novarina. (Syn)aesthetics reclaims the potential of verbal language to (re)present intangible ideas and emphasises the potential of verbal language to affect an individual physiologically and prioritises the human body as the sentient force in the creation and appreciation of performance. It highlights the symbiotic exchange that can occur between all the performance languages; verbal, corporeal, visual, aural, technological and so on. Furthermore, in stressing the importance of theorising from the work itself, where the impulse to analyse comes directly from the disturbatory quality of the live performance moment, rather than divorcing the theory from the practice, I examine the experience of the audience in interpreting such open and complex performance texts. I identify the pleasures and challenges (for practitioners and audience) of presenting, accessing, negotiating and interpreting such work.

Chapter 4 presents the first two of my five case studies. This chapter will consider the work of choreographer and director Sara Giddens, and performance artist, Marisa Carnesky, both of whom are concerned with a contemporary (re)writing of the body. Both explore the actual body's live presence in relation to site, speech, sound, video and film, challenging traditional forms of (re)presentation. I consider Giddens and Carnesky's hybrid modes and their concern with the textuality of the

human body. Particular focus is drawn to the ways they employ pre-recorded and live

recorded forms to contrast, complement and highlight the (corpo)reality of the live

body in performance.

In Chapter 5 I look at the writing practice of Caryl Churchill and Sarah Kane

and examine the visceral-verbal quality of their *play*-texts. Fusing disciplines and

discourses, the writerly (syn)aesthetics of both Churchill and Kane ensure a

defamiliarised, immediate, visceral impact which disturbs 'reading', allowing words

to touch the unconscious.[12] In considering the exciting exchange between their

writing and its live performance I refer to recent productions of their work and the

hybridised modes employed that result from the demands of their written texts.

The relevance of choosing female practitioners as case studies, in this

exploration of what I intend by the (syn)aesthetic performance style, is entirely

personal. As much as I have a sexed/gendered identification with these practitioners,

and thus have chosen female practice to prioritise the position of women in

contemporary performance, it is the work itself, irrespective of gender, which

provides strong examples in elucidating my argument.[13]

In Chapter 6 I examine my own writing in performance in a self-reflexive

exploration, to put into practice theories and ideas that I have addressed within my

research. I record the stages of development of a (syn)aesthetic *play*-text and explore

the symbiotic relationship between the verbal and physical in documented practical

workshops following this through to a performance for an audience. The original

play-text, developed and shapeshifted in league with the writing of this thesis,

endeavours to exploit the written word in a playfully disturbing, visceral-verbal

manner. The interrogation of this *play*-text, and its translation into a sensate

performance text, provides an active exploration of a (syn)aesthetic style in practice

and appreciation from the perspective of writer, performer and audience member. An important feature of this chapter is the inclusion of the performers' reflections on their immediate, physicalised response to the writing alongside the audience response to the live work in progress.

It is important to note that throughout all of these case studies, reference to the audience draws on my own individual, innate experience of the performances as well as from additional accounts of other individual encounters with the work under scrutiny. Crucial to the (syn)aesthetic mode of appreciation applied within this thesis is the fact that from the outset, with regard to specific performances scrutinised, any reference made to audience response should be understood as a fusion of the immediate, innate and intellectual.

In conclusion, Chapter 7 provides a summary of my argument and findings, highlighting the complexities encountered with the study and implementation of the (syn)aesthetics as a mode of performance and analysis. I intend to expose the potential of (syn)aesthetics and disturbance in contemporary performance to (re)connect individuals with an immediate sense of the chthonic, establishing a highly sensate performance experience. I identify the importance of developing further the potential for various performance texts to 'mean' symbiotically. By incorporating my own work as a case study I highlight the fact that, in studying any performance work, practical interrogation is fundamental to understanding performance analysis, placing theory firmly within creative practice.

Throughout this thesis I have encountered my own concerns with defining and clarifying an interpretative device that describes a particular style of practice and strategy of appreciation that is highly sensate, visceral and corporeal, in a theoretical, academic format. I deliberated over a variety of ways of presenting my findings that

drew on the fusion of the creative and the theoretical in linguistic style, that played

with the senses in presentation, that manipulated the visual and performative in form.

However, first and foremost my aim is to articulate an argument that is heterogeneous

by nature and challenging in concept in a way that clarifies the complexities of these

ideas in order that it may be fully understood by those who will be employing the

theory. For this reason alone I have followed an accessible academic format and, as

far as possible, have attempted to use language that clarifies in simple terms the ideas

and concepts under scrutiny.[14]

Notes

[1] I use the term 'visceral' throughout this thesis to denote those perceptual experiences that affect a very particular type of response where the most inward, often inexpressible, emotionally sentient feelings a human is capable of are actuated. The term also describes that which, simultaneously or in isolation to the emotions, affects an upheaval, or disturbance, of the physiological body itself, so literally a response through the human viscera.

[2] 'Ritualised' here defines that performance work which, to borrow from Richard Schechner's outline, strives to 'seek roots, explore and maybe even plunder religious experiences, expressions, practices, and liturgies' (1995: 19-20). This occurs in theme and form where the style exploits customs of cultural rituals, 'ordinary behaviour transformed by means of condensation, exaggeration, repetition, and rhythm' (Schechner, 1995: 228), stressing the role of risk and investment to performers and spectator.

[3] Intertextual, as I use it here, defines those creative works that employ a variety of texts to produce and play with meaning. I discuss this, with particular reference to Kristeva's arguments, in greater detail in chapters 1 and 2 below (see also Kristeva, 1992).

[4] I have found it problematic to use the term 'Western' to denote those cultures and societies where this development in the creation and appreciation of performance practice has occurred. My own experience of such work is entirely within a British climate of theatre going in the latter years on the cusp of the 20th and 21st centuries. The term Western is employed here to identify those cultures where mainstream performance practice engages its audience on a primarily cerebral level. I accept that in using the term Western it enforces a generalisation.

[5] As Susan Broadhurst has noted, there is 'a noticeable lacuna between such practices and current critical theory' (1999a: 1). Geraldine Harris also highlights the divide between theory and practice as experienced in performance terms, where the artistic work can be seen to be appropriated by the discourse, and reduced by over intellectualisation. I agree with Harris that the ideal relationship between theory and practice 'is one of equal exchange if not interchangeability' where the 'perceived gap between theory and practice' can be seen as 'a potentially productive space' (Harris, 1999: 1-2).

[6] In this way (syn)aesthetics presents the double play and slippage of 'both/*and*'. It is both the mode of production of a particular sensate performance style *and* the impulse and mode of the particular sensate interpretative strategy. Rebecca Schneider highlights the 'philosophical positioning of "both at once"' which develops Luce Irigaray's notions of the 'double gesture' (Schneider, 1997: 36). Arising from feminised practice and developing Bertolt Brecht's 'not/but' or *nicht-sondern*, 'which supports difference in performance' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 78), the '"both/and" makes room for critical inquiry, political agency and discursive mobility' (Schneider, 1997: 36).

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[7] From the outset it is important that it is understood that I am taking as read the fact that humans are each individual perceiving beings made up of a fusion of the social, cultural, intellectual, emotional, primordial and so on. Also human perception should be understood to be inherently synaesthetic in its widest sense. Humans never experience objects or subjects via an isolated cognition or through isolated senses. I examine this notion in greater detail in Chapter 1 below.

[8] Regarding this insistence on slippage as integral to the chthonic force of the (syn)aesthetic mode, Michael Taussig highlights, from an anthropological, ethnographic perspective, how all human origin histories (including the Western theory of evolution) expound slippage as central to the process. This 'slippage' is 'the attempt to trace the connection through history . . . of how one thing becomes another thing' in an evolutionary 'action of becoming different while remaining the same' (Taussig, 1993: 125). This foregrounds how humans already accept their inherent primordial connection through this sense of origin, or evolution, where human ancestry is understood to be scientifically, metaphorically, and actually, of the earth. Thus, corporeal understanding can actuate a chthonic experience that reclaims this potential. This is useful when considering the theories of disturbance, in particular those of Friedrich Nietzsche (1967a, 1994) and Hélène Cixous (1993), as discussed in Chapter 2 below.

[9] Horst Ruthrof and Broadhursts' arguments for intersemiotics is discussed in more detail in Chapters 1 and 2 below (see also Ruthrof, 1992, 1997 and Broadhurst, 1999a, 1999b). Here, 'language cannot mean by itself but can do so only semiotically, i.e. in relation to and through corroboration by non-verbal systems' (Ruthrof, 1992: 6).

[10] To quote Eugenio Barba, this focus on the slippage between the different languages of performance and appreciation thus becomes a pleasurable, 'struggle against the fixity of words' (Barba, 1995: 141).

[11] By using these theorists, establishing a dialogue and tracing the connections between all, I aim to highlight the privileging of a sensate and experiential quality of perception within (syn)aesthetic interpretation. In my argument I enjoy the play of theories and theorists who share ways of philosophising, the play and slippage between theories and schools of thought. My consideration of these critical and performance theories is not exhaustive but intends to show how ideas within the theories under scrutiny support and elucidate my own argument for a (syn)aesthetic mode of production and appreciation.

[12] 'Writerly' follows the theories of, in particular, Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes. Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson and Peter Brooker define writerly texts as those that encourage the receiver 'to *produce*', and play with, 'meanings' rather than simply consuming a specific 'fixed' meaning (1997: 159). See also, Derrida, 1976, 1978, 1981 and Barthes, 1982b, 1982f, 1987b, 1987c.

[13] Although there is a debt to the feminised nature in the theories which I draw on within my discussion, my aim is to highlight the innate, primordial quality of this style which itself celebrates the

slippage between masculine and feminine in the creation and appreciation of the work, favouring the human and instinctive in the (syn)aesthetic process.

[14] Throughout this thesis I have followed British English spellings, as opposed to American English. However, where I quote directly, those references that employ American English remain unchanged.

1. (Syn)aesthetics and Disturbance – A Preliminary Overview

> [T]he senses . . . become directly in their practice theoreticians (Karl Marx qtd. in Taussig, 1993: 98).
>
> Whoever says feeling also says intuition, that is, direct knowledge, inverted communications enlightened from within. There is a mind in the flesh, but a mind as quick as lightning. And yet the agitation of the flesh partakes of the mind's higher matter (Artaud, 1978: 166).

1.1 (Syn)aesthetics – A Theory and Practice

My use of the term (syn)aesthetics derives from 'synaesthesia' (the Greek *syn* meaning 'together' and *aisthesis*, meaning 'sensation' or 'perception'). Synaesthesia, and thus synaesthetic, is defined as the production of a sensation in one part of the body resulting from a stimulus applied to, or perceived by, another part. Also, the production, from a sense-impression of one kind, of an associated mental image of a sense-impression of another kind. Alongside this I employ the definition of aesthetics as the subjective creation, experience and criticism of artistic practice.[1] Following these definitions, my reworking of the term as '(syn)aesthetics' encompasses both a fused sensory perceptual experience and a fused and sensate approach to artistic practice and analysis.

My appropriation of the term as (syn)aesthetics aims to foreground various notions of slippage and fusing together. These are, the fusing of separate disciplines within the artistic process; the fusing of this performance practice with a special individual aesthetic appreciation; the fusing of sensory experience within this aesthetic appreciation, combining cerebral and corporeal perception; and the fusing of performance practice with critical analysis. Furthermore, fused here also reaffirms the 'fused' experience of the human body, an holistic entirety - physiological, intellectual, emotional – thus prioritising a connection of body and mind within experience.[2] As a result my argument for (syn)aesthetics provides a discourse that defines

simultaneously the impulse and processes of production *and* the subsequent appreciation strategies which incorporate reception and interpretation.

I argue that (syn)aesthetics is an aesthetic potential within performance which embraces a fused sensory experience, in both the process and the means of production, insofar as it consists of a blending of disciplines and techniques to create an interdisciplinary, intertextual and 'intersensual' work, coupled with a sensorial mode of appreciation affected within the audience resulting from exposure to such work.[3]

Characteristic of the (syn)aesthetic performance style is its consolidation of a variety of artistic principles, forms and techniques, manipulated in such a way as to fuse the physical and the linguistic, the cerebral and the corporeal, the somatic, ('affecting the body' or 'absorbed through the body') and the semantic (the 'mental reading' of signs) *in order to produce* a visceral response in the audience. The (syn)aesthetic style thus allows the explicit recreation of sensation through visual, physical, verbal, aural, tactile, haptic and olfactory means.[4] By this I do not simply refer to the mere description of a sensual experience but *the sensation itself* being transmitted to the audience via a corporeal memory, the traces of lived sensate experience within the human body, activated within the perceiving individual. This fusing of sense (semantic 'meaning making') with *sense* (feeling, both sensation [or hapticity] and emotion) establishes a double-edged rendering of making-sense/*sense-making* and foregrounds its somatic/semantic nature.[5] As I discuss in more detail below, this is crucial to understanding the (syn)aesthetic strategies of performance and appreciation.

The (syn)aesthetic performance style explores various combinations of verbal, physical, design and technological texts, with a particular predominance given to the

actual body in performance and to playfully-disturbing written texts, referred to here as *play*-texts, that are marked by a visceral-verbal quality.[6] A crucial feature of the (syn)aesthetic style is the (re)claiming of the word, the act of writing and verbal delivery, as an embodied event and a sensual act which take on the visceral qualities of communication – both the ability to stir innermost, inexpressible human emotion and to disturb those viscera which cause aural, visual, olfactory and haptic perception. In this way, language itself takes on the double-edged quality of making-sense/*sense*-making akin to the (syn)aesthetic style.

The (syn)aesthetic style in performance has the ability to communicate that which is intangible, in a live and sensate manner, enabling an encounter with ideas as much as with actual presence. It thus provides a '(syn)aesthetic-sense' within appreciation. This term defines the intuitive human sense that presents the unpresentable and allows a 'sensing beyond' (after Nietzsche, 1967a: 132). The (syn)aesthetic-sense is made manifest in performance practice where dramatic techniques express ideas, thoughts, emotional experience, psychological states and so on, that are beyond the bounds of conventional communication. As a result the (syn)aesthetic performance style can make, to paraphrase Peter Brook, 'the invisible visible' (see 1986: 47), or as I prefer to put it, the 'intangible tangible'.

In this and the following chapters, I will show that (syn)aesthetics is a style in practice, and an interpretative device, that embraces performance work which constantly resists and explodes established forms and concepts. Consequently, (syn)aesthetics, as a specific style, is always open to developments in contemporary practice and analysis. (Syn)aesthetic work shifts between performance disciplines, just as it shifts between sensorial and analytical modes. As a result it can be understood to have a certain shapeshift morphology, its only constant being the

somatic/semantic manner of its performance style and subsequent audience response.[7] It is also concerned with a primordial, or chthonic, response to creating and receiving performance, which enables both performer and audience member to tap into primordial, pre-verbal, communication processes.

Within the fused approach of (syn)aesthetics lies a discourse that defines simultaneously the impulse and processes of production *and* the subsequent appreciation strategies which incorporate reception and interpretation. It provides a mode of analysis for non-genre specific performance, embracing intertextual practice, thereby celebrating the interface between, and flux within, linguistic, corporeal, visual, aural and technological praxis. In responding to performance work which resists closure, so too does the (syn)aesthetic mode of appreciation and analysis resist closure.

I posit that (syn)aesthetics presents an original theory for performance as it combines the artistic principle of (syn)aesthetics (literally, fused aesthetics), marrying the interdisciplinary with the intersensual in artistic terms, with characteristics of the physiological condition of synaesthesia (the neurological condition involving a fused sensual perception) within the appreciation process.

In order to clarify fully the process of audience appreciation, I have drawn heavily on quintessential features of the physiological condition of synaesthesia to elucidate traits of the (syn)aesthetic style.

1.2 Synaesthesia and (Syn)aesthetics - Disturbing Sensations

The physiological condition known as synaesthesia is a neurological complication where there is a crossover between the senses. To return to the Greek derivation of the word, *syn* ('together') and *aisthesis*, ('sensation', 'perception'), the

condition of synaesthesia can be understood, literally, as the joining of sensorial

effects coupled with a combining of cognition and consciousness. In the physiological

condition a fusing of sensations occurs when one sense is stimulated which

automatically, and simultaneously, causes a stimulation in another of the senses.[8]

Cytowic provides a detailed study of the features and experiences of various

forms of the condition of synaesthesia (see Cytowic, 1994). He argues that

synaesthesia may result from the limbic system (the area of the brain that is the source

of the emotional responses) collecting fragments of memories from all over the brain

and pasting them together to produce a complete memory. Certain diagnostic features

of the condition are useful to my argument as they define the experiential quality of

the audience response (see Cytowic, 1994: 76-7). Firstly, the sensations experienced

are involuntary, they cannot be suppressed but are elicited, and the intensity can be

influenced by the situation they occur in. Secondly, the sensations can result in a

highly emotional response, drawing on a *noetic* (from the Greek *nous* meaning

'intellect' or 'understanding') sense, a 'knowledge that is experienced directly' which

can provide 'a glimpse of the transcendent' (Cytowic, 1994: 78). The noetic has an

'ineffable quality' (Cytowic, 1994: 121) in that it makes manifest a complex

experience that defies explanation, most simply understood as 'the "a-ha" of

recognition' (Cytowic, 1994: 229). The 'ineffable' is greatly significant to my

argument in that it defines 'that which by definition cannot be put into words'

(Cytowic, 1994: 119).

Cytowic details how synaesthetic experiences can be both distracting and

difficult to cope with, and can also cause ecstasy and be viewed as an achievement.

Important to note is the fact that Cytowic records how synaesthesia is 'an additive

experience' (Cytowic, 1994: 92) where the combination of senses creates a more

complex experience for the perceiver allowing a '*multisensory evaluation*' (Cytowic, 1994: 167, emphasis original). Furthermore, the experiential nature of synaesthesia that evidences 'the force of intuitive knowledge' is crucial in affirming how immediate, personal experience 'yields a more satisfying understanding than analyzing what something "means"' (Cytowic, 1994: 7). Thus an acceptance, celebration even, of 'other kinds of knowing' (Cytowic, 1995: 14).

Luria documents how 'synaesthetic sensations' produce states within an individual where 'there is no real borderline between perceptions and emotions' and sensations are 'so vague and shifting it is hard to find words with which to convey them' (1969: 77). Key terms he refers to are 'primitive sensitivity', the 'visual quality of the recall' and 'overall sense' (see Luria, 1969: 28-80).

Particularly interesting as regards my focus on the potential of verbal text in the (syn)aesthetic performance style is Luria's consideration of language as a physical, defamiliarised and sensational act that draws on the powers of the imagination - hearing, appreciating, interpreting and understanding words as rich visual images - which enables their sensual recall and (re)perception. Luria records how the interpretation of words 'synaesthetically (determining meaning, that is, through both sound and sense)' ensures that the '*experience* of words' is 'a measure of their expressiveness' (1969: 91, emphasis added); a linguistic communication that induces an embodied and imagistic word perception and interpretation. Thus synaesthetic appreciation means perceiving the details corporeally.

Luria states that the physiological condition can mean that the synaesthete is 'forced to convert senseless words into intelligible images' (1969: 43). In doing this, Luria draws attention to how synaesthetes '"semanticize" images, basing them on sounds' (1969: 44). He describes how a synaesthete has 'a different form of extended

reference, based on the synaesthetic sense one has of a word' (Luria, 1969: 86).

Unlike 'usual' word perception which means that individuals ignore 'the phonetic

elements of words' in favour of a primary concern with 'meaning and usage' (Luria,

1969: 86), in a synaesthetic response it can be the case that the meaning of words is

reflected in the sound they embody.

Of great significance to my argument is Luria's highlighting of the power of

the imagination within a synaesthetic response. Synaesthetic imagination has the

ability to 'induce changes in somatic processes' (1969: 138) and disrupt 'the boundary

between the real and imaginary' (Luria, 1969: 144). Whereas most individuals have in

place 'a dividing line between imagination and reality', in those who experience

synaesthesia this borderline has 'broken down'(Luria, 1969: 144). The condition thus

engages a perceptive faculty that can see, experientially, that which the majority can

'only dimly imagine' with a palpability that 'verge[s] on being real' (Luria, 1969: 96).

Here the synaesthete's experience inhabits 'two worlds at once, like being half awake

yet still anchored in a dream' (Cytowic, 1994: 119). Accordingly, within a

synaesthetic reaction a somatic, imagistic response can dominate the semantic as

'images begin to guide one's thinking, rather than thought itself being the dominant

element' (1969: 116). Luria highlights the fact that this play with the imagination

allows 'transition to another level of thought' (1969: 133), thus corroborating

Cytowic's notion of noetic capabilities in synaesthetic perception.

I argue that the quintessential features of the physiological condition as

documented by Cytowic and Luria encapsulate the (syn)aesthetic mode of

appreciation within the field of performance. Fundamental to such an audience

response is 'primitive sensitivity', a 'visual quality of recall' and the experiencing of

such work via an 'overall sense' where the somatic response dominates the semantic

(Luria, 1969: 28-80). Here then, a 'multisensory evaluation' (Cytowic, 1994: 167) establishes an 'additive experience' (Cytowic, 1994: 92) within a complex appreciation process. (Syn)aesthetic disturbance defamiliarises 'known' experience and causes a (re)awakening of a fused cerebral and corporeal memory. It thus has the potential to provide an audience member with a complete memory akin to that produced within certain synaesthetic experiences. (Syn)aesthetic appreciation strategies demand 'a different form of extended reference' (Luria 1969, 86) in the approach to meaning making which prioritises giving into sensation and experience and engaging the critical faculty of the mind later, endorsing 'other kinds of knowing' (Cytowic, 1995: 14).

Also significant to the (syn)aesthetic appreciation process is the breaking down of the boundary between the real and the imaginary to provide a (re)perception of hidden states, that draws on a 'noetic' sense (Cytowic, 1994: 78), itself demonstrating the 'ineffable quality' (Cytowic, 1994: 121) of the perception. The ineffable defines the (syn)aesthetic-sense and the potential of corporeal cognition within (syn)aesthetic work where the emotionally sentient human body, 'responds with the "a-ha" of recognition' which provides an 'aesthetic validation that cannot adequately be put into words' (Cytowic, 1994: 229). This highlights a certain dreamlike inhabiting of two states within the appreciation experience of (syn)aesthetic work (after Cytowic, 1994: 119).

The (syn)aesthetic performance style is concerned with harnessing the full force of the imagination and in breaking down boundaries between the 'real' and the imaginable. It uses graphic images, palpable forms and visceral words to (re)present ideas and experiences. Of absolute relevance is the insistence on language as a corporeal, defamiliarised and sensate act. Significant here is the way in which the

neurological condition of synaesthesia illustrates the potential for words to be perceived in a new and exhilarating way. With the visceral-verbal *play*-texts of the (syn)aesthetic style the word is defamiliarised and has to be (re)cognised and made sense of via a sensate fusion of verbal and non-verbal means. Thus, within a (syn)aesthetic appreciation process a certain semanticising of the somatic experience of words during and/or following a performance, where the 'meaning' of the words is reflected in the sound, and I would add the *feeling* (both emotion and hapticity), they embody.

The quintessential features of synaesthesia I draw on highlight the condition as a special perception where fused perception is made unusual due to the unsettling and/or exhilarating nature of *the process of becoming aware* of the fusion of senses within interpretation.[9]At its very essence then, the physiological condition of synaesthesia is a disturbing procedure in terms of sensory impressions; of cognition and reaction; of memory and emotion. These are quintessential traits of the (syn)aesthetic appreciation strategy. As with the physiological condition, this disturbance can be difficult and unsettling, and/or, exhilarating and liberating. It requires a degree of interpretative (re)cognition by the audience which returns to an innate knowledge, that of emotion over reason, the pre-knowledge of emotional sentience that is peculiar to human consciousness. An unconventional and innate, primordial knowledge.

In (syn)aesthetic performance appreciation a fusion of body and mind is activated, which dislodges and disturbs reception, causing the receiver to wake up to how they have responded to the work. This visceral impact ensures that the receiver becomes highly sentient. In this way thinking is disturbed which causes the spectator to see the ideas, experiences, states (and so on) of the performance *in the moment*,

which can shock the audience into (re)perceiving the state presented as if for the first time. As a result, in terms of phenomenology a (syn)aesthetic performance mode can deeply affect the way an individual perceives their immediate world and the way in which they perceive themselves in this world.[10] Following this, the effect of such a response can ensure that the individual holds onto the moment they have experienced. Consequently, when recollecting the experience, to use Neil Bartlett's description, 'complete, visceral recall' (1999: 4) is encountered which affects the overall interpretation of the work.

Finally, fundamental to (syn)aesthetics is the understanding that the condition of synaesthesia, as an occurrence and a concept, defines a quality of experience that is, by its very nature, indefinable. This ineffable factor is absolutely implicit in my use of the term (syn)aesthetics, in an attempt to describe the indescribable nature of experience and appreciation within the (syn)aesthetic performance style. By employing this term I intend to define the ineffable via linguistic means within critical discourse. Furthermore, the emphasis on the senses and the human capacity for innate, embodied knowledge is of utmost importance within (syn)aesthetics as an appreciation strategy and an analytical discourse.

1.3 (Syn)aesthetics and Disturbance - A Somatic/Semantic Appreciation Strategy

Crucial to my argument is the fact that, for a performance to be wholly (syn)aesthetic there must be an element of disturbance and (re)cognition, within appreciation. Like the experience in certain synaesthetic conditions, this is a disturbance (instigated by the somatic/semantic nature of the work), that can be difficult, unsettling, alarming, and/or exhilarating and liberating. It requires a degree of interpretative (re)cognition within the fused response. Such sensate disturbance,

and the idiosyncratic connection it forms between the audience and the work, is an important factor in the (syn)aesthetic appreciation strategy.[11]

Norbert Servos' discussion of a 'theatre of experience' (see Servos, 1998) helps to clarify the disturbatory impact of the fused experience within the (syn)aesthetic appreciation strategy. According to Servos, certain performances can become 'a communication of the senses' where the work presented is 'made *experienceable*' (1998: 38-9, emphasis original). Following Servos, with (syn)aesthetic performance work, 'passive reception is impossible' (Servos, 1998: 39), *because* it fuses the senses with sense. This double-edged rendering of making-sense/*sense*-making within performance means that the performance 'does not anaesthetise the senses' but 'sharpens them' (Servos, 1998: 40) and as a result the spectator 'is included in a total experience . . . in a state of sensual excitement' (Servos, 1998: 39). It is this that 'allows curiosity to be reawakened' and ensures that 'the logic of emotion and affects does not depend on reason' (Servos, 1998: 41). Such a response demands that the audience absorb and make-sense/*sense*-make in such a way that the 'dissemination of knowledge is secondary to the experience' (Servos, 1998: 39).

(Syn)aesthetic disturbance is a direct result of the unusual manipulation of combinations of performance elements, specifically the verbal and/or physical alongside light, sound, digital technology, film, video and so on, to procure an exciting, fused experience that affects a fused perception – cerebral, corporeal and emotional. Furthermore, the ability to activate a (syn)aesthetic-sense that affects the ineffable, making the intangible tangible, also has a disturbatory, visceral impact on the senses. Aside from the sensually responsive potential of the mind, performance can produce a corporeal memory in an individual's body that, at some point (whether simultaneous or consequent), return to the mind for a cerebral interpretation. In this

way the 'dissemination of knowledge *is* secondary to the experience' (Servos, 1998: 41, emphasis added). Such a response stimulates a visceral cognition and encourages, 'complete, visceral recall' (Bartlett, 1999: 4) in the processes of interpretation and of recollecting the experience.

This disturbatory, visceral cognition of the (syn)aesthetic response adheres to Immanuel Kant's theories of 'the sublime', a state which articulates 'the mere capacity of thinking which evidences a faculty of mind transcending every standard of sense' (Kant, 1911: 91). The sublime develops the human perceptual capability which draws on the '*free play* of the cognitive faculties' fusing 'imagination' and 'understanding' in a way that has the potential for expressing the inexpressible (Kant, 1911: 58-60, emphasis original). In this way it foreshadows the ineffable quality of noetic experience integral to the (syn)aesthetic-sense.

Kant's sublime further supports the (syn)aesthetic mode of appreciation via the experience of '*negative pleasure*' (Kant, 1911: 91, emphasis original). For Kant the negative pleasure of the sublime comes about through perceptual experience which appears 'to contravene the ends of our power of judgement' (1911: 91). It defines that which is 'an outrage on the imagination . . . judged all the more sublime on that account' (Kant, 1911: 91). Kant's negative pleasure supports the appreciation experience in (syn)aesthetic work in that it is 'excited . . . by the imagination in conjunction with the understanding' and 'the sensations' (Kant, 1911: 120-131). Thus, Kant's sublime helps to clarify the experiential nature of disturbance within appreciation integral to (syn)aesthetic work. Kant's negative pleasure also clarifies how the (syn)aesthetic style, when manipulated to its full, encourages performance to be an experience in its purest definition, to feel, suffer, undergo.

1.4 Somatic/Semantic (Syn)aesthetics and the Body

It is this visceral disturbance within (syn)aesthetic appreciation that produces an affective reading, highlighting traits of immediacy and transgression. Crucial to the (syn)aesthetic appreciation strategy is the potential of the body to 'read' the performance and become the experiencing and interpreting agent thereof. The sensory experience within the (syn)aesthetic response can be more immediate, more tangible than subsequent processes of cerebral analysis particularly as such cerebral interpretation usually follows the sensory impact. It is this fused corporeal/cerebral experience that substantiates 'the "a-ha" of recognition' (Cytowic, 1994: 229). In this way, the somatic combines with the semantic, the corporeal with the cerebral, to create a response that is fused, where 'knowledge is secondary to experience' (Servos, 1998: 41). Therefore, fundamental to the (syn)aesthetic response is the notion that the body is the sentient conduit for the appreciation of artistic work in general, and performance in particular, which endorses arguments for embodied knowledge.

With (syn)aesthetic signification and reading, the body produces and interprets a language of the flesh, aided by a corporeal memory. What I intend by 'corporeal memory' is that the sensate external body produces its own language in performance which is read through the traces of this language in our own flesh, both the external tactile flesh and the internal viscera. This 'internal' encompasses the emotional *and* the physiological/sensational capabilities of the physical body.

Nietzsche's thinking is fundamental to this idea where the body and its (re)cognitive powers are the key to artistic appreciation. For Nietzsche art is 'an organic function' which 'exercises the power of suggestion over the muscles and senses' (1968: 426-7) to (re)invigorate mind *as* body, where one 'hears with one's muscles, one even reads with one's muscles' (1968: 427-428).[12] Thus, the corporeal

memory of the actual body has recollective capabilities which can produce and

(re)cognise on an entirely physiological level – a level of appreciation that, by its

very nature, challenges linguistic expression. The body thus generates a wholly

sensate form of expression, communicable in its own sensate form. Corporeally it is

language creating as well as (in terms of linguistics) language destroying.[13]

This potential of the actual body in performance to communicate is vast due to

what Margrit Shildrick and Janet Price refer to as a 'textual corporeality that is fluid in

its investments and meanings' (1999: 1) and I would add, in its ability to interpret

corporeally. As Elizabeth Dempster argues, the body becomes 'available to the play

of many discourses' and 'multiple representations' (1998: 229), illustrating, what

Gabrielle Cody defines as, a 'multilingual' (1998: 118) capacity within the actual

body's signifying processes.

Elaine Scarry validates corporeal capabilities of perception, emphasising the

human body's primordial presence, by arguing that the flesh is 'the sentient source'

(1985: 123) which exists both outside and inside of linguistic sign-systems. The

performing body has the ability to communicate via a corporeal memory, the traces

and memories of corporeal experience in the spectator's body - which incorporates the

fused capability of the human body; emotional, physical, sensational, physiological

and so on.[14] In this way the human body actuates 'the sharability of sentience'

(Scarry, 1985: 326) via embodied experience whereby 'having a body means having

sentience and the capacity to sense the sentience of others' (Scarry, 1985: 233). The

sentient human body is thus 'pre-language' (Scarry, 1985: 6), simultaneously

asserting and reclaiming a primordial mode of communication. Thus the holistic,

sentient body in the (syn)aesthetic appreciation strategy is crucial in making sense *of*

and from the senses.

The performing body in the (syn)aesthetic style can be, as Rebecca Schneider argues, both 'sight' and 'site' of performance, demanding a 'sensate involvement' from, the audience (1997: 22-36). I argue that in addition to this, the actual body becomes 'cite' of performance in (syn)aesthetic work, both in the bodies of the performers and those perceiving bodies in the audience, due to the potential it has to affect a corporeal memory in the immediate response, and subsequent processes of recall.[15] This somatic approach to performance, foregrounded in the corporeal, produces what Carol Brown refers to as 'sensuous contact' (1999: 13), highlighting the 'sharability of sentience' (Scarry, 1985: 326) between performer, performance and audience. Furthermore, to use David Jays description, 'lives and bodies' employed as 'raw material' (1999: 525) activates an experiential immediacy in the performance moment where sentient and sensuous sharability enables an embodied knowledge of other(ed) identities and experiences.[16] As a result, embodied knowledge can engage in a unique way with the marginal and transgressive.

The making-sense/*sense*-making process that occurs within the (syn)aesthetic performance style asserts an embodied knowledge due to the fusion of corporeal and cerebral perception.[17] This idea of the body as not only a primary signifier but also the principal human instrument that reads in a unique and innate way is of supreme importance to the (syn)aesthetic mode of appreciation. The disturbatory factor within the palpable content of (syn)aesthetic work and the subsequent (syn)aesthetic reading is a direct result of such corporeal intervention. Barbara Schmidt talks of the 'subversive power of sensory, corporeal experience' (1999: 290) which highlights the transgressive potential of the body as the site of performance signification and as the modality for, and cite of, experiential interpretation. This is important in situations where the performances themselves present, as well as produce, a series of sensations

which are disturbing in essence because of their visceral impact and demand an appreciation strategy that is inclusive of linguistics yet firmly based in corporeality.

1.5 (Syn)aesthetics - An Interdisciplinary and Sensate Performance Style

As introduced above, with its fused aesthetics, the (syn)aesthetic style consists of a variety of performance texts, which can be combined and contrasted in innumerable ways. The somatic/semantic nature of the (syn)aesthetic style, due to its intersensual, intertextual and interdisciplinary praxis, that prioritises the body as the primary interpreter of the work, demands an analytical approach which supports this. Horst Ruthrof and Broadhursts' 'intersemiotic' analysis is appropriate here (see Ruthrof, 1992, 1997 and Broadhurst, 1999a, 1999b).

Alongside Kristeva's arguments for 'intertextuality' (see 1992: 36), intersemiotic analysis is important to any performance work which manipulates a variety of texts to communicate together, including the corporeal and the technological.[18] As Broadhurst explains, intersemiotic analysis is a 'non-formal . . . hetero-semiotic' (1999a: 179, n.6). She states 'formal semantics . . . is homo-semantic, where meaning is determined by fixed stipulated rules', in contrast, 'non-formal semantics is hetero-semiotic' where meaning is 'constituted from interpretive approximations' and 'non-linguistic readings are reconciled by the principle of linguistic expression' (1999a: 179, n.6). Consequently, 'language and non-linguistic sign systems develop side by side toward ever more complex formations (Ruthrof, 1992: 102). Intersemiotics thus provides a critical modality that supports the emphasis on the corporeal in (syn)aesthetic analysis and allows the diverse texts of the (syn)aesthetic style, the physical, the verbal, the technological, the disruptive and so on, to 'mean' together with equal value.

Within the diverse texts of (syn)aesthetic practice, there are three key performance strategies, (arising in no order of priority), which are peculiar to the (syn)aesthetic performance style. These are; the (syn)aesthetic hybrid, which is a special manipulation of the *gesamtkunstwerk* (a term coined by Richard Wagner meaning 'total art work');[19] a predominance of the actual body as text in performance; and finally an unusual rendering of writerly speech to establish a visceral-verbal *play*-text. This is not to say that a (syn)aesthetic performance always incorporates all three of these strategies. As the consideration of the (syn)aesthetic hybrid emphasises, the performance style consists of diverse combinations of texts. Following this, within any (syn)aesthetically styled performance there can be a fusion and slippage between the dominance of any one of the three key strategies I scrutinise in this thesis.

It is necessary to emphasise exactly what I intend by the special use of the *gesamtkunstwerk* to establish a (syn)aesthetic hybrid. It is arguable that any theatre work manipulates various design and performance techniques within the staging, which renders the term hybrid unnecessary. However, it should be stressed that I employ the term here to refer to the particular way in which these elements are fused in order to generate a visceral quality within the processes of production and appreciation. The way in which these elements are combined ensures that the (re)presentation itself is called into question through the disturbatory set of (syn)aesthetics. The symbiotic, or contrasting, relationship between all the performance elements (verbal, physical, design, light, sound, technology etc.) is fused, or hybridised, in an exciting manner *in order to produce* a (syn)aesthetic response.

The (syn)aesthetic hybrid develops Wagner's and the early Romantics arguments for the inherent unity of all the arts. Rose-Lee Goldberg affirms that such cross-fertilising of various aesthetic disciplines, explored further by Modernist artistic

practitioners (Dadaists, Surrealists and so on), established the effectiveness of 'an exchange between the arts', in the pursuit of the 'development of a sensibility' (1996: 46, 9).[20] It is the particular nature of the exchange within the (syn)aesthetic hybrid that procures an unusual, or 'defamiliarised', fusing of the aural, visual, olfactory, oral, haptic and tactile within performance, enabling a (re)cognition of the form due to the unsettling and/or exhilarating process of becoming aware of the special fusion. 'Defamiliarised' in performance terms is developed from the idea of *ostranenie* (literally, 'making strange'), first coined by the Russian Formalist Viktor Shklovsky.[21] This unusual manipulation of sensate performance elements is crucial to the (syn)aesthetic style as it is this that creates a disturbatory mode of communication, thus developing a sensate sensibility.

The (syn)aesthetic hybrid equates exactly with Artaud's theories of 'Total Theatre', combining speech, movement, dance, design, sound, light, puppetry, mask, technology and so on, making use of advances in technology, site and performance techniques (see Artaud, 1993). The (syn)aesthetic hybrid embraces a variety of arts disciplines and practices from high and low culture (such as, theatre, dance, circus, cabaret, puppetry, film, video, music, design, technology) and manipulates each element in an entirely playful, inherently disturbing and/or exhilarating way. As I discuss below, Carnesky's performance work is exemplary of such (Carnesky, 1999a, 2001a, 2001b, 2002) and Giddens' work exploits the potential of hybridised performance to affect an audience (Giddens, 1999a, 2000b). The writing of Churchill and Kane also play with the possibilities of hybridised performance languages within the very form of their *play*-texts (Churchill, 1994a, 1998; Kane, 1996, 1998a)

The predominance of the body is the second key strategy of (syn)aesthetic performance. A crucial aspect of (syn)aesthetic work is that it is both signified, or

told, *and* experienced, or read, through the actual body. It is this factor that is responsible for the immediacy of the appreciation experience. The body in (syn)aesthetically styled performance is foregrounded as a sensate text which can be read via sense/*sense* impressions. As argued above, the actual body can be sight, site and cite of performance, establishing a 'sensate involvement' from performer and audience (Schneider, 1997: 32) and enabling 'sensuous contact' (Brown, 1999: 13). This highlights the 'sharability of sentience' (Scarry, 1985: 326) capable between performer, performance and audience. The performing body can be manipulated in the (syn)aesthetic style in a variety of ways. Giddens', *Not all the Time . . .* (1999a) and Carnesky's *Jewess Tattooess* (1999a, 1999b, 2001b) are exemplary of practice which foregrounds the body as both form and content, using technology to produce live and mediated situations (which highlight the intertextuality of the live(d) body), within a (syn)aesthetic hybrid.

To distinguish the third key strategy within the (syn)aesthetic style, the reclamation of writing practice as a sensate and multi-layered mode of expression, I have coined the visceral-verbal *play*-text. As with the physical performance language of the (syn)aesthetic style, verbal language takes on a corporeal signification when played with and disfigured in a (syn)aesthetic manner so that it reads in an entirely sensate and disturbatory way. In short, language is both a cerebral and a corporeal act, and the cerebral and corporeal potential of verbal texts fuse in (syn)aesthetic work in a special way.

Important here is Kant's notions of '*free play*' of imagination and cognition (1911: 58-60, emphasis original) induced by such texts in the processes of individual interpretation possible within writerly practice. Following this, for Jacques Derrida imagination activates the primordial, 'inscribes the animal within human society'

(Derrida, 1976: 186-7). Imagination is also always 'representative and supplementary' (Derrida, 1976: 184) and engages 'free-play', 'iterability' and 're-mark' in terms of writing and interpretation (see Derrida, 1976, 1978, 1981).[22] The ability to re-mark and trace is played with, made manifest, in the interplay of various performance texts in (syn)aesthetic performance and is truly embodied in corporeal memory. In particular it is evident in the writerly (syn)aesthetic; in the counterpoint and slippage between live and technologically mediated texts; and is important to notions of corporeal citation in (syn)aesthetic appreciation. These notions are important to, and illustrated by, my own explorations of (syn)aesthetic practice as discussed in Chapter 6 below.

(Syn)aesthetic writing crystallises and concentrates the intensity of personal, lived experience and themes, revealing the intangible (ideas, internal experiences, emotions, states, taboo concepts) through the tangible words. The writing of Churchill and Kane is exemplary of this. *Play*-texts can explore the border between language and sound, often demonstrating the effects of language at its most damaged and destroyed in order to reve(a)l in its sensate and physical quality. Defamiliarised language, like that presented in Churchill's *The Skriker* (1994a), *Blue Heart* (1997), or *Far Away* (2000) and Kane's *Cleansed* (1998a) or *4.48 Psychosis* (2000a), demonstrates how verbal language can be (re)played, destroyed and (re)invented in order to produce a more visceral form of verbal communication and thereby find the somatic essence of words and speech.

Words themselves, via their sound and form and their disfigured, or disturbed, 'meaning' have the potential to transmit emotive and sensate experience and become 'verbal lacerations' (Cody, 1998:122), etching themselves into the perceptive faculties of the holistic body. This ludic disturbance of language can discomfort and unsettle

the audience in a sensate and cerebral manner. It causes a (re)cognition of language and allows a (re)cognition of ideas, events, states, experience and so on to achieve a new point of verbal making-sense/*sense*-making.

(Syn)aesthetic writing can cross boundaries and cross fertilise itself with other disciplines and discourses, interweaving these within the substance of the text, and juxtaposing various linguistic registers, *in order to produce* a defamiliarised, visceral impact which disturbs 'reading' and activates the senses. *The Skriker* (1994a) and *The Lives of the Great Poisoners* (1998) are examples of Churchill's work which interweave diverse linguistic registers with dance, music and design – elements written into the very substance of the *play*-text. In this way, where linguistic acts have previously been considered to be reductive, enforcing closure in meaning-making processes, with (syn)aesthetic *play*-texts (from conception to performance), an opening process is established in terms of appreciation and analytical strategies.

1.6 Live Performance – A (Syn)aesthetic Medium

It is my opinion that live performance reaches beyond the experience of sensations in the singular due to the fact that it is an amalgamation of all of the senses within a three-dimensional, heterogeneous form. Live performance is a medium which can encompass all of the senses, both in production and reception, and thus provides a fused (syn)aesthetic experience. Being a blend of many different artistic impulses, disciplines and techniques (word, movement, design, sound, light, dance, technology etc.), it has the ability to communicate and affect in the greatest sense.

Of course, an element of (syn)aesthetic performance is the manipulation of form to present a dimension of a sensory experience found in lived experience. The (syn)aesthetic style seeks to (re)present certain sensual perceptions and artistic forms

via alternative senses and alternative aesthetic strategies. For example, a quality of the aural (re)presented in the visual (a scream as a physical image held), the aural through the oral (a musical melody transposed into a speech pattern), the literary through the physical (the transcription of written data through dance), or the tactile (re)presented in the aural (the buzz of a needle on the skin translated through music). Furthermore, the (syn)aesthetic style is able to reproduce intangible sensate experiences through tangible means, for example, psychological and emotional experience in abstract physical movement which generates the (syn)aesthetic-sense in appreciation.

Most significantly, live performance differs from any other artistic medium due to the very fact of its liveness. As Peggy Phelan asserts, live performance colludes in a continuing, immediate 'interactive exchange' between the work and the audience, where the performers and audience unite in a 'maniacally charged present' (1993: 146-8). As a result the '*presentness*' (Scarry, 1985: 9, emphasis original) of sensory experience may be experienced through this immediate witnessing, taking 'present' as 'from *prae-sens*, that which stands before the senses' (Scarry, 1985: 197, emphasis original). Following this, with (syn)aesthetic performance, the liveness of the performance moments reve(a)ls in the corporeal pleasure of embodied knowledge. In the present, sentient moment of a (syn)aesthetic performance, bodily knowledge engages a human's capacity for a primordial knowing, a pre(sent)-knowing. Thus, a very real, exchange of *prae-sens* and energy between humans exists within the immediacy of live(d) performance

This is not to argue that any other mode of performance does not exist as 'live' performance or to say that the (syn)aesthetic impulse and process of appreciation is not available with mediated performance. Audio-visual, automated and digital media do allow for an experiential perception, particularly those which demand an

interactive response, and can affect a sensate experience, existing as (syn)aesthetic performance in its own right. However, with cinema and television, automated and digital performance, the 'live' performance has usually been recorded, or programmed, in the past. Even with live-aired television, automated and on-line performance, camera, mechanics, screen, monitor (mouse and keyboard) mediate the various ways of experiencing the work and there are no living, haptic performance elements in the same playing space as the audience to challenge and stimulate. Furthermore, unlike video or film, with live performance, movement, speech, design, technology and site, are all presented and received in 'real time' (even though linear time can be played with and distorted in the performance itself). Thus, this fused experience is concentrated within actual space and time.

Design and technological aspects in live performance can be manipulated in order to strengthen and foreground the liveness of the live moment. Technology and multi-media design can be interwoven in order to add to the sensate quality of the piece (as in the work of Giddens or Carnesky). The employment of mixed-media within live performance serves to produce symbiotically compelling performance languages which assert a (re)valuation of live presence in mediatised performance.[23] The (syn)aesthetic response here then, has a great impact, is immediate, intense and powerful because the physical body live in the audience responds to the physical body (alongside additional elements) live in performance. This establishes 'sensuous contact'(Brown,1999: 13) via the 'sensual presence of bodies' (Servos, 1998: 39), which enables the 'sharability of sentience' (Scarry, 1985: 326). The (syn)aesthetic impulse can be amplified in those performance experiences where there is a direct, visceral connection between the performer and individual, perceiving body in the same space.

1.7 The (Syn)aesthetic Inheritance

The (syn)aesthetic style can encompass a number of genres and elements of the style can be present within a variety of productions. However, it is prevalent in those performances that are on, and push forward, the boundaries of performance conventions. It is, therefore, useful to trace the performance inheritance that I consider directly influenced and instigated the emergence of a specific (syn)aesthetic style in contemporary practice.

In addition to the ancient and avant-garde praxis that I discussed in the Introduction, particularly important to the production *and* interpretative strategies of a contemporary (syn)aesthetic style is the influence of feminised practices, specifically from the late 1960s onwards. Also, the experimentation with intercultural and interdisciplinary practice, in particular throughout the late 1980s to the present; and the emergence of a 'New Writing' aesthetic from the mid-1990s onwards.[24] Acknowledging the overlaps between these three strands, there are distinct features from each which the (syn)aesthetic style is indebted to.

1.7.1 Tracing a Feminised Style

Contemporary female performance practice, from the late 1960s onwards, created modes of practice, including writing practice, which were resistant to conventional theatre genres and styles, and examined and celebrated female artistic modes. Feminised modes are aligned to female physicality (an adherence to the internal and external rhythms of the female physiological, biological and sexual body). Female practitioners also explored alternative conventions of production - site,

staging, performance style, writing, devising - in order to resist traditional processes of performance and find a mode that expressed female experience.

There are three areas of female practice that contribute to the (syn)aesthetic inheritance. Firstly, the experimentation with transgressive forms and content which includes active exploration of hybridised practice, incorporating film, video and aural technology into the work, alongside innovative experimentation with writing practice in form and content; secondly, an explicit use of the body in performance; and lastly, the prioritising of a discursory position which locates critical theory firmly within artistic practice.

Contemporary female practice in the arts developed new aesthetic forms and strategies, playing with layers of signification and meaning in order to highlight the fragmented form of individual, social and cultural experience. In doing so it became a forerunner for that performance work which explores and expresses *différance* (Derrida, 1987a: 8-9) in terms of experience and perspectives on reality.[25] Female performance art thus in the *very form* of the work addressed the theoretical and actual experience of *différance*. By fusing various disciplines and techniques, such disruptive and disturbing experimental work served to advance writing practice alongside contemporary, feminised (re)workings of the *gesamtkunstwerk* in order to (re)present female experience and sensibilities.[26]

In addition to the formalistic transgressive acts, female performance practice addressed disturbance in terms of content. Female practitioners throughout the 1970s through to the present have been particularly keen to explore 'reality' from a feminised perspective, with a willingness to explore taboo personal and political issues via taboo corporeal forms, which influenced wider performance practice. *A*

Mouthful Of Birds written by Churchill and David Lan is an example of such an influence (see Churchill & Lan, 1998).[27]

The second major thread within female performance practice which is of relevance to the (syn)aesthetic style is the utilisation of the body as stimulus, content, form and site of performance. Female performance instilled an important appreciation of the status of the body *in general* in contemporary performance practice as a mode of exploration and a site for examination. This examination and exploration of the politics and problems of (re)presentation of women - women's bodies and images of women - specific to the women's movement in the arts has had a huge impact on much of today's performance and visual arts practice.

In female practice the explicitly chthonic exploration of corporeality was responsible for finding a physical form for marginal experience and foregrounded a visceral, physical and visual encounter. Female performance was responsible for establishing the body as both site and sight of performance as a result of the use of the self and the body as the content and form of the piece (see Schneider, 1997). The body in performance became a site of potential rather than a fixed given, enforcing a celebration of the actual body (physical, physiological, cerebral, sensate, sexual and so on) rather than a rejection of it. Using the body in this way was a direct celebration of the chthonic and primordial integral to human experience (and aligned with the female) and emphasised the abject and sensual within performance.[28] As a result, female explicit body performance demanded a 'sensate involvement' of the audience, exploring the idea of 'eyes which touch' (Schneider, 1997: 32). In doing this it established in performance practice complex and highly interrogative physical texts which collapsed the 'distance between sign and signified' and encouraged 'embodied

vision' entering a 'feminized domain' of 'seeing beyond the visible' (Schneider, 1997: 22-36).

As a direct result of female creative work the body is now not only a stimulus, subject, site and sight for sex-gendered scrutiny and identification but also for the exploration of a complex blend of highly charged mappings – individual, emotional, historical, social, sexual, political, psychological and so on. Additionally, it becomes the cite of performance in (syn)aesthetic work, engendering a corporeal memory in the processes of immediate and subsequent appreciation. Consequently, in (syn)aesthetic performance the complexity of the actual body is exploited - as physical signifier, psychological vessel, sensory receptor and so on. It thus becomes a versatile conduit for the sending and receiving of diverse performance messages.

The third thread which is of great significance to the (syn)aesthetic style is the fact that female practice upturned strategies for critically appreciating the work presented. Geraldine Harris draws attention to the 'radically ambiguous and "open"' (1999: 49) form of female performance practice and theory which in its ambiguity and playfulness confuses (or defies) categories. Harris emphasises the feminised questioning of the modes of interrogating performance work which by its very nature 'resist attempts at authoritative, interpretative "mastery"' and as a result evade the appropriation 'to a single, "pure", uncontradictory theoretical position' (Harris, 1999: 21). Harris asserts that the analysis of such work demands a perspectival shift from one theory to another, finding the connections and foregrounding the practice in order to make sense of the practical and theoretical shifts within the performances themselves. In this way, the theoretical tools used when examining the work in question becomes automatically 'self-reflexive in so far as it offers interpretations of performance while questioning the grounds on which these interpretations are

constructed' (Harris, 1999: 21). The open and shifting theories proffered in feminised analysis are thus sympathetic to such creative work.

Rather than theory being separated from practice, female analysis, in particular that referred to as *écriture féminine* (Cixous, 1993; Irigaray, 1985) with its focus on a writing of the body, located theory firmly within creative practice and moved away from dry and closed styles of theoretical discourse. Furthermore, as Sue Ellen Case argues, feminist practitioners and performance academics used the political strategies produced within feminist thinking 'to create new ways to read a play, to view a production and to deconstruct the canon of dramatic criticism' (1993: 112-3). Female practice and theory has been responsible for changing the way that the field of signs is constructed and read within performance work, stimulating an arena for wider discourses that address *différance*. Such practice ensured that previously held notions of fixed identities and known gender traits became unfixed and overturned.

The feminised approach that establishes an open and supportive theory, which morphs and expands in order to celebrate the free-play of polyvalent reading, holds the means of responding with both body and mind vital to the appreciation of much performance work. Such a mode of interpretation is fundamental to the (syn)aesthetic performance approach and appreciation strategy which concerns itself with the (re)presentation of experience in performance, defamiliarising and disturbing signifiers so that the audience reads previously 'understood' signs anew. The significant factor in certain feminised theories which support arguments for a (syn)aesthetic style is, rather than providing essentialist arguments, they embrace disturbance and transgression, notions of play and pleasure, and the shifting perspectives integral to the experience of *différance*.[29]

1.7.2 Intercultural/Interdisciplinary Practice and the (Syn)aesthetic Hybrid

The prevalence of intercultural/interdisciplinary ensemble companies in Western performance practice in recent years provides an important foundation for the (syn)aesthetic style. In particular the impulse of these companies, such as Tanztheater Wuppertal, Théâtre Bouffes du Nord, Ex Machina and Theatre de Complicite, to interrogate the human and experiential by fusing performance techniques, pushing forward developments in technological, digital and mixed-media possibilities for use in live performance work. With intercultural performance there came a need to explore the universalities of performance 'languages' (the verbal and physical alongside, design, technology and so on) in order to communicate. Such practice thus asserted the interlingual (fusing the verbal, physical, technological and so on) potential of performance as a mode of communication.

Interdisciplinary practice was also fuelled by a cultural blurring of boundaries between the arts. The fusion of arts practice from high and low culture has become patently clear in both mainstream and experimental performance. Work that straddles disciplines such as theatre, dance visual art, virtual reality game-playing, closed-circuit surveillance, opera, pop-music, stand-up comedy and so on, is increasingly prevalent and defies categorisation. For example, a significant collaborator in the development of the interdisciplinary (syn)aesthetic style, is 'Dance Theatre'. Taking its lead from Pina Bausch's Tanztheater Wuppertal, this interdisciplinary mode combines dance with speech, contrasting everyday gesture and objects with ethereal images and abstract physicality, and blurs aesthetics from opera to cabaret.[30] Furthermore, practitioners such as Robert Wilson, Laurie Anderson and Pete Brooks fuse the visual, aural, technological and so on, to create a performance aesthetic that

meets art installation. The influence of such a fused artistic impulse is clear in the work of Carnesky, Giddens, Churchill and Kane.

In terms of the increase in intertextual and interdisciplinary performance, in recent years it has become increasingly apparent that the theatrical inheritance of early 20th century practices, (for example, Naturalism, Expressionism and Epic Theatre), are being manipulated, abused, reworked and rejected to produce a melting pot of styles, techniques, forms, ideologies and conventions.[31] Thus recent performance writing traces the inheritance of the linguistic and formalistic experimentation from Greek Tragedy through to the Jacobean sensibility and on to Modernist experimentation (in particular writers such as Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco), whilst simultaneously being influenced by current television, film and digital praxis. Physical experimentation is indebted to the avant-garde forms of practitioner theorists such as Meyerhold and Artaud as well as to such diverse activities as circus acts, martial arts and bungee jumping.[32]

As a result of intercultural/interdisciplinary experimentation, in Britain in particular from the 1980s onwards, the challenge to play with interwoven performance signifiers became foregrounded. This provided a wealth of forms and strategies for practitioners to explore, and also demanded new appreciation strategies amongst audiences. Such strategies encouraged an instinctive response, allowing the blend of signifiers to work on a number of levels and make meaning from the visceral effect as well as the cerebral impact of the piece. Intercultural/interdisciplinary work demanded a particular sensibility in appreciation and emphasised the fact that such practice does not offer answers or make the journey through the performance easy, but opens up questions and embraces the free-play of a polyvalent response.[33]

It is my opinion that the intercultural/interdisciplinary experimentation with hybridity, particularly in recent British history, is important to the (syn)aesthetic style as it demonstrated a need to find a new, fused performance language in order to communicate contemporary human experience. Such work, which blends aesthetics and conventions in this way, celebrates the essence of diverse forms and techniques whilst simultaneously regenerating that essence, thereby producing 'new' techniques and modes of artistic expression for a contemporary audience.[34]

The fact that in recent years intercultural, interdisciplinary practice has been embraced by the mainstream (particularly evident in the success of Ex Machina, Theatre de Complicite and De La Guarrda), suggests that contemporary audiences are excited by work which presents a transgressive blurring of boundaries and that stimulates more than just the intellect. The free-play and open quality of interdisciplinary work is an integral feature of the (syn)aesthetic performance style and the polyvalency of (syn)aesthetic interpretation. I posit that contemporary performance has developed a (syn)aesthetic sensibility in collusion with, and as a result of, this recent heritage of intercultural hybridisation of disciplines and intertextual modes that explores the full potential of the liveness of live performance.

1.7.3 Making Waves – 'New Writing' and the (Syn)aesthetic *Play*-text

Alongside this experimentation with interdisciplinary practice in recent years, a further contributor to the inheritance of the (syn)aesthetic style is the developments in theatre writing from the 1990s onwards. Contemporary performance writing has engaged with alternative disciplines and found new ways to communicate influenced by (and influencing) the socio-political and cultural milieu. This has affected an upheaval in the structures, form and content of performance practice.

The term 'New Writing' describes plays that are written to express with new verve and passion the concerns of an era, that strive to find new forms and to produce a new stage language which questions and reflects the social, political and cultural mood of an age. In Britain in the mid to late 1990s new writing was discussed by critics and audiences alike as if it were a new theatre genre and it was clear that writers such as Kane had developed a style which challenged and disturbed the theatre and its audience. As Aleks Sierz argues, this writing 'opened up new possibilities' and revived playwriting, 'exploring new areas of expression' by 'suggesting daring new experiments' (2001: xii). The significance of these developments in theatre writing to the (syn)aesthetic style is the establishment of a writing 'of sensation' that 'jolts both actors and spectators out of conventional responses, touching nerves and provoking alarm' (Sierz, 2001: 4). It is an explicit, contradictorily tender and confrontational, style that transgresses 'the boundaries of what is acceptable' where 'the use of shock is part of a search for deeper meaning' and a 'rediscovery of theatrical possibility' (Sierz, 2001: 5).[35]

The propensity to challenge and disturb has defined this style as a new writing aesthetic that cannot be categorised by any one genre and does not employ any one formalistic device. Instead it attempts to embrace and manipulate a variety of dramatic influences in order to explore the fragmented concerns of contemporary experience. This movement in play writing embraced 'a new theatrical vocabulary' of brutally poetic language and 'highly explicit stage pictures' alongside 'innovations in structure' (Sierz, 2001: 32). The play texts written with this sensibility demand experimentation in terms of the performance style. As I will go on to demonstrate in Chapter 4, Churchill is an emissary for engaging the imagination and breaking down categories by employing dance and music within the layers of her written text. In this

way she became a forerunner for a performance-writerly practice that blended forms and disciplines within play writing. In many ways, it is this commitment to formal experimentation that creates a new performance style and likewise demands innovation in terms of design, sound, lighting and technology. Thus, it is not just the content of the work but also the form that engages the imagination of the audience, breaking down barriers between traditional theatre writing conventions and new performance potentialities.

These features of 'new writing' are integral to the reclamation of verbal language and the innovations in form and structure in the visceral-verbal (syn)aesthetic *play*-text. It is a practice of *play*-writing produced from the *play* with the complexities and possibilities offered in performance, committed to harnessing the power of live performance. This is apparent in the formalistic experimentation with image, movement and physicality, which is woven into the very fabric of the *play*-text itself as evidenced in the writing of Churchill and Kane. The transgressive quality of *play*-texts in performance encourages practical inventiveness from directors and performers alike. They also demand an immediate and emotionally sentient response from the audience. Such writing is 'experiential, not speculative' (Sierz, 2001: 4) with a viscerality that 'forces audiences to react' (Sierz, 2001: 5) due to the violation of performance expectations in form and content. In this way (syn)aesthetic *play*-writing focuses on the live performance and interrogates the essence of the live theatrical event. This results in a rich and versatile performance style and asserts a fluid and shapeshifting form, exciting and challenging, which contravenes categorisation.

In tracing the inheritance of the (syn)aesthetic style, the different modes of experimental work surveyed above can be seen to be driven by a desire to explore and

express different ideas and experiences using convention-fusing elements that prioritise a shapeshifting free-play and pertain to differing views of reality. Such experimental performance enables practitioners to explore what they know about theatre and to go beyond that, encouraging individuals within an audience to transgress their own boundaries in appreciation of form, content and liveness (or, presentness). As a result, such practice demands an analytical approach that fuses with the open, ambiguous and perspective shifting style of the work under scrutiny.

1.8 The (Syn)aesthetic Style and Theories of Disturbance

(Syn)aesthetics presents an original theory for performance as it combines both an artistic principle of (syn)aesthetics (literally, fused aesthetics), marrying the interdisciplinary with the intersensual in artistic terms, with characteristics of the physiological condition of synaesthesia (a neurological fusing of the senses) within the appreciation process, to provide an extraordinary, fused perceptual function. Crucial to the (syn)aesthetic style and its appreciation process is the understanding that the term defines a quality of experience that is, by its very nature, indefinable. This ineffable factor is absolutely implicit in the term (syn)aesthetics in an attempt to describe the indescribable nature of experience and appreciation of the (syn)aesthetic performance style, thereby defining the ineffable linguistically in critical discourse.

(Syn)aesthetic performance has the ability to communicate an ineffable (syn)aesthetic-sense which can make the intangible tangible. It focuses on the body as the sentient source, foregrounding it as the modality of experiential interpretation, thereby prioritising corporeal memory within embodied knowledge. For a performance to be truly (syn)aesthetic there must be an element of disturbance and disquiet, of (re)perception and (re)cognition within the processes of reception and

interpretation. Live performance is exemplary of this artistic mode as it is a medium

which encompasses all the senses within the processes of production and expounds

'presentness' (Scarry, 1985: 9) in form and concept.

(Syn)aesthetics defines both the performance style *and* the appreciative mode

required for the interpretation of such work, providing a discourse for intersemiotic,

non-genre specific work that resists closure and encompasses intellectual,

physiological and sensate appreciation strategies. It is an interpretative mode that has

a dual nature, blending somatic appreciation with semantic interpretation, as one

stimulates the other, thereby allowing a crossover of sensations in the reading and

interpretation of the work and implementing a somatic/semantic appreciation mode. It

is this that develops the making-sense/*sense*-making quality within appreciation. The

quintessential features of the physiological condition of synaesthesia, as documented

by Cytowic (1994) and Luria (1969), are crucial to understanding the (syn)aesthetic

appreciation strategy which includes; the dominance of the somatic response over the

semantic; a predominance of multisensorial evaluation which prioritises immediate,

innate experience over intellectual cogitation; the breaking down of the boundary

between the real and the imaginary to provide a (re)cognition of hidden states; and to

the insistence on language as a physical, defamiliarised and sensate act.

(Syn)aesthetics goes some way to answering the antagonism between

performance work and critical analysis as the (syn)aesthetic style *is* the work itself *as*

well as the accompanying mode of analysis that describes an innate, individual and

fused response to the work. It also denies a theoretical perspective that is seen to close

the work and to restrict interpretative freedom via a 'single and uncontradictory

theoretical position' (Harris, 1999: 21). The (syn)aesthetic performance style can

manipulate various combinations of performance texts to establish a special

(syn)aesthetic hybrid. Within this, particular emphasis is placed on the actual body in performance and on the visceral-verbal *play*-text. As well as the ancient and avant-garde inheritance previously outlined, this style has its foundations in transgressive female performance practice from the late 1960s onwards, and benefits from the open and perspective-shifting theories of feminised analysis. It also has its roots in the intertextual mode integral to intercultural, interdisciplinary ensemble practice and the developments of a *play*-writing aesthetic developed, in Britain in particular, throughout the 1990s. The (syn)aesthetic style is indebted to the commitment of each of these performance modes to harnessing the power of live performance.

   (Syn)aesthetics presents a performance theory that is open and embraces immediacy, ambiguity, disturbance and playfulness. In doing so it celebrates creative work that shares these essential traits and provides a means of articulating a response to such work. Crucially then, (syn)aesthetics provides a foundation for the analysis of *both* performance *and* appreciation strategies simultaneously.[36] Thus, (syn)aesthetics defines both a creative strategy and a viewing, receiving and appraising process. The (syn)aesthetic style denies a single accepted valuation as the nature of the work presented strongly favours individual reaction and interpretation. It is a process of interpretation which prioritises fused perception, engaging the senses, the imagination, and the intellect in an alternative way. Consequently, a personal, innate response is respected over accepted codes of analysis and judgement.

   Intersemiotic analysis (Ruthrof, 1992, 1997, Broadhurst, 1999a) is useful to the (syn)aesthetic strategy of appreciation as it allows a variety of texts, physical, verbal, technological sensate and so on, to 'mean' together with equal value. Following this, the critical tools I employ throughout this thesis support my argument for a (syn)aesthetic style as they highlight notions of free-play and transgression, embrace

intertextual practice and celebrate the interface between, and flux within, linguistic, corporeal and technological praxis. Furthermore, the analytical strategy of the (syn)aesthetic style demands a fusion of theories that support, elucidate and celebrate performance work that allow meaning through corporeality to dominate and generate a polyvalent interpretation due to a particular hybrid, intertextual mode.

I have termed the proceeding theories that help to elucidate (syn)aesthetics as a fused mode of practice and appreciation, 'theories of disturbance' to foreground the transgressive and ludic pivot of each. Crucial to the understanding of the (syn)aesthetic impulse in performance and analysis is the way in which all of the following theories return to the body as the primary force of interpretation. These include, Nietzsche's arguments for a 'Dionysian' artistic impulse (1967a); the Russian Formalists theories regarding disruptive linguistics (Bakhtin, 1984; Eichenbaum 1965; Shklovsky, 1965); Barthes' arguments for 'pleasurable text' (1975); Kristeva's theories of transgressive communication (1999a); Cixous and Irigarays' *écriture féminine* (Cixous, 1993, Irigaray, 1985); and the disturbatory performance theories of Artaud (1993), Novarina (1996), Barker (1997) and Broadhurst (1999a).

In addition to the ludic, transgressive core and the return to the body as the primary force of interpretation, a further connection between these theories is the emphasis on slippage between the verbal and physical, the feminine and masculine and the primordial and intellectual. These connections serve to clarify the impulse underpinning the (syn)aesthetic style, its mode of production, immediacy of appreciation and its requisites in interpretation.

The (syn)aesthetic style has arguably existed from ancient practice onwards which suggests that the style itself is not new (although, this naming of it is), and attempts to articulate it are not new.[37] Where my theory intends to instil a new

discourse is by way of drawing together the various critical tools which describe such

work, tracing the connections between them in order to clarify (syn)aesthetics as a

practice and mode of analysis. In this way I aim to provide a stimulating vocabulary

that emphasises the visceral nature of the performance style and defines the ineffable

nature of the appreciation mode.

Notes

[1] As Raymond Williams points out, 'aesthetics' in the Greek sense (and early 19th century usage) defines the 'science' and conditions of sensuous perception. It is only latterly that the term has been adopted, in artistic practice in particular, to define in general terms the form and content of visual appearance and effect (see Williams, 1987: 31-2).

[2] As opposed to the assumption of a mind/body split following René Descartes' philosophy known as Cartesian dualism. Here thought is independent of bodily experience so that the thinking mind, rather than the experiencing body, defines human beings. To concur with Elizabeth Grosz, I believe that '[o]nly when the relation between mind and body is adequately retheorized' will there be a valorization of 'the contributions of the body to the production of knowledge systems' (1994: 19). As Camille Paglia asserts, 'mind, which has enabled humanity to adapt and flourish as a species, has also infinitely complicated our functioning as physical beings' (1992: 16). My argument returns to the notion of the human body as a perceiving entity 'total and holistic, a completed and integrated system (albeit one that grows and transforms itself)' (Grosz, 1994: 13). (Syn)aesthetics thus draws on 'the daemonism of the senses' ensuring that 'mind' remains the 'captive of the body' (Paglia, 1992: 17).

[3] The importance of the term 'inter' to (syn)aesthetics - interdisciplinary, intertextual, intersemiotic, intersensual, intercultural - is that it suggests an exchange, rather than 'multi' which defines quantity.

[4] I use the term haptic (from the Greek, 'to lay hold of') alongside tactile as the latter tends to connote only the superficial quality of touch. Haptic, taken from Paul Rodaway's usage, emphasises the tactile perceptual experience of the body as a whole (rather than merely the fingers) and also highlights the perceptive faculty of bodily kineasthesics, (the body's locomotion in space). This encompasses the sensate experience of the individual's moving body, and the individual's perceptual experience of the moving bodies of others. Following this, within a live performance moment there comes about a 'reciprocity of the haptic system' of perception (Rodaway, 1994: 44) through this experience of tactile and kinaesthetic moments, whether actual or observed.

[5] This play with the duality of the word 'sense' is fundamental to my argument for (syn)aesthetics. The term 'making-sense/*sense*-making' intends to clarify the fact that human perception, by its very definition, fuses 'the *reception of information* through the sense organs' with perception as '*mental insight*', that is, 'a sense made of a range of sensory information, with memories and expectations' (Rodaway, 1994: 10, emphasis original). Thus, perception as sensation, that is, corporeally mediated, and perception as cognition, intellectually mediated (accepting that the latter also involves cultural and social mediation) (see Rodaway, 1994: 11).

[6] Play as a foregrounded in my emphasis here (in *play*-texts) is fundamental to the impulse in creation and appreciation of the (syn)aesthetic style, and particularly to my intentions for the written and verbal

texts introduced here. Developing Immanuel Kant's '*free play* of imagination' (1911: 58-60, emphasis original) summarised as a 'pleasure that depends . . . on consciousness of the harmony of the two cognitive powers imagination and understanding' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 28), this concept of 'play' is discussed in more detail below. In terms of my own arguments for *play*-text, Jacques Derrida asserts '[w]riting *represents* (in every sense of the word) enjoyment. It plays enjoyment, renders it present and absent. It is play' (Derrida, 1976: 312, emphasis original). Notions of play are also integral to the theories of disturbance surveyed in Chapter 2 below.

[7] 'Shapeshift' here is taken from 'shape-shifter', naming Churchill's mythical underworld creature, the Skriker, which has the ability to morph and change form as desired (Churchill, 1994a: 1).

[8] So an individual may perceive scents for certain colours, see a word as a particular colour or shape, experience a taste as a tangible shape and so on. Synaesthetes also have extraordinary powers of perception and memory (see Cytowic, 1994).

[9] It is arguable that all human perception is synaesthetic as, following Paul Schilder, '[t]he isolated sensation is the product of analysis. . . . [T]actile, kinaesthetic and optic impulses can only be separated from each other by artificial methods' (qtd. in Grosz, 1994: 67). Maurice Merleau-Ponty states that 'sensory experience' is achieved with the 'whole body at once' itself 'a world of inter-acting senses' within which 'the experience of the separate "senses" is gained only when one assumes a highly particularized attitude' (1967: 225). The implication that all humans are synaesthetic but 'only a handful of people are consciously aware of the holistic nature of perception' (Cytowic, 1995: 8) validates the assertion that '[s]ynaesthetic perception is the rule' (Merleau-Ponty, 1967: 229).

[10] Phenomenology, as I refer to it here, is best defined by Stanton B. Garner Jr. in the following way: 'How does my "life-world" (*Lebenswelt*) constitute itself as a world? . . . In what ways do I come to know and interact with a world of which I am always, inescapably and ambiguously, a part? . . . Defining consciousness as an intentional relation to its object, phenomenology deals with the modes of givenness intrinsic to experience' (1994: 2-3). Important to the (syn)aesthetic mode is the phenomenological perspective adopted by Merleau-Ponty where 'we are in the world through our body . . . we perceive the world through our body' (Merleau-Ponty, 1967; 206). Here, the body is an individual's 'being-to-the-world . . . the instrument by which all information and knowledge is received and meaning is generated' (Grosz, following Merleau-Ponty, 1994: 86-7).

[11] As Steven C. Dubin describes 'disturbatory art' is that 'in which there is an immediate connection between artist and audience' (1992: 153).

[12] Following this, '[d]ulled' senses can be produced through the emphasis on cerebral reasoning; '[t]he more the eye and ear are capable of thought, the more they reach that boundary line where they become asensual' (Nietzsche, 1994: 130).

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[13] As Peggy Phelan argues, there exists a 'grammar of words' and a 'grammar of the body' (1993: 150). As I argue below, in (syn)aesthetic work these two grammars can be fused to produce highly sensate modes of expression.

[14] Henry Daniel identifies how '[t]he "remembrance" of physical actions . . . embodied in the body as bio-evolutionary is never lost' and can be 'set in motion through physical, mental, emotional and psychic . . . re-cognitive processes' (2000: 63-4). Here the body is able to remember 'the history of processes that it has undergone at the genetic and cultural level' which can encourage an entering into other's (and thus othered) realities (Daniel, 2000: 64). This recognition of corporeality allows for an immediacy within 'another kind of experiencing, a remembering or retracing of certain paths' (Daniel, 2000: 61). Taussig further clarifies my own argument for corporeal memory as 'sense-data in the bank of the self' (1993: 98).

[15] I use 'cite' and 'citing' on a corporeal and sensate level to denote that which inscribes, marks, takes back to a source.

[16] Taussig validates this notion, and confirms Scarry's 'sharability of sentience' (Scarry, 1985: 326), in stating that, sentient (re)presentation enables a 'flow[ing] into each others' otherness' (Taussig, 1993: 192). With such 'sentient contact', that draws on the 'tactile knowing of embodied knowledge', the work presented allows the perceiver to affect '[c]orporeal understanding' where 'you don't see as much as be hit' (Taussig, 1993: 30-1).

[17] Ana Sanchez-Colberg refers to this immediate, sensate communication within live performance as a defining 'sense-sual moment' (1996: 55).

[18] Kristeva's 'intertextuality' is a 'permutation of texts' which foreshadows Ruthrof and Broadhursts' intersemiotic analysis as it argues that 'contemporary semiotics takes as its object *several semiotic practices* which it considers as '*translinguistic;* that is, they operate through and across language, while remaining irreducible to its categories as they are presently assigned' (Kristeva, 1992: 36, emphasis original).

[19] For further reference to Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerke*, see Dieter Borchmeyer's summation of Wagner's theories on theatre (Borchmeyer, 1991) and also Nietzsche's early writings on Wagner's work (Nietzsche, 1967a).

[20] Modernism is the movement that attempted to represent modern thought and experience in the first half of the twentieth century following the impact of both world wars and their repercussions on social, cultural and individual outlook. Peter Barry summarises, modernism prioritised 'experimentation and innovation' placing emphasis on 'impressionism and subjectivity . . . *how* we see rather than *what* we

see' with a 'blurring of distinctions between genres' and a preference for 'fragmented forms' that tended towards 'reflexivity' (1995: 82, emphasis original). Dadaism (from the French, '*être sur son dada*', 'to ride one's hobby-horse', the title of a review which appeared in Zurich in 1916), was applied to the international artistic movement that repudiated tradition and reason with the intention to outrage. Surrealism was the movement in art that, primarily, attempted to represent and interpret the phenomena of dreams and subconscious experience.

[21] The Formalists were concerned with the 'nature of the [linguistic/literary] devices which produce the effect of "defamiliarization"' emphasising the processes of presentation 'called "laying bare" one's technique' (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker, 1997: 33-5). Defamiliarisation, along with the *gesamtkunstwerk*, are notions which directly influenced Brecht's Epic Theatre and his *Verfremdungseffekte* ('defamiliarisation devices') whereby performance processes are made clear, designed to awaken an audience to an active and political way of receiving theatre. For a brief introduction to Brecht's theories and practice see Colin Counsell on Epic Theatre (Counsell, 1996: 79-111). *Ostranenie*, along with further theories of the Russian Formalists, is discussed further in Chapter 2 below.

[22] Derrida's iterability 'marks the relation between repetition and alteration' thus critiquing 'pure identity' and his notions of re-marking 'suggests that everything is marked forever leaving new traces and supplements on signification' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 50); 'Language *adds itself* to presence and supplants it, defers it' (Derrida, 1976: 280, emphasis original). Barthes also refers to corporeal communication that leaves traces as an '*anterior immediacy*' that is 'distinct, abrupt, framed, it is already (again, always) a memory' (1982a: 439, emphasis original).

[23] Philip Auslander considers such 'shifting among realms' in the 'juxtaposition of the live and the digital' as a 'fusion' rather than a 'con-fusion, of realms' (1999: 38). He also argues the potential of work that only involves automatons to be accepted as live performance (Auslander, 2002) which adds to an exciting debate regarding what constitutes live performance, incorporating notions of agency and presence. Yet, although automatons can affect an audience in an unusual and disturbing manner, the very fact that such performances are known, or found, to be mechanical or digital serves to reassert the significance of 'sensuous contact' (Brown, 1999: 13) between the live performing human body and the live perceiving human body that can exploit the *full* potential of live performance.

[24] I posit that the (syn)aesthetic style, as with all arts movements, developed out of the social, political and cultural concerns of recent years which, to some extent, produced a desensitised age. A possible reason for this is the contemporary experience of individual, national and international events, certainly in Britain, via a saturation of media(ted) images. Such a process of distillation and political media manipulation establishes a cynicism of 'lifestyle', politics, national and international affairs and reportage, responsible for a general feeling of political apathy and social lethargy. Out of this came a need for performance work to resensitise a desensitised age.

[25] 'Difference' is a term adopted by a number of contemporary thinkers including Derrida, Barthes, Cixous and Irigaray. In terms of Derrida's critical analysis and the significance of the 'a' in his '*différance*', this has diverse meaning incorporating; the deferral of presence; the movement of difference in terms of oppositions, and the production of those differences (see Derrida 1987a: 8-9). The wider understanding of 'difference' developed from the 'decentring' of human experience from a point where the 'existence of a norm or centre in all things was taken for granted . . . white Western [male] norms of dress, behaviour, architecture, intellectual outlook, and so on, provided a firm centre against which deviations, aberrations, variations could be detected and identified as "Other" and marginal' (Barry, 1995: 66-7). In the twentieth century these centres were eroded (Barry, 1995: 67) following the disruptions of World Wars, scientific progressions, intellectual and artistic revolutions and so on. Regarding Derridean *différance*, as a result of social, cultural and individual experience of this, there can be 'no absolutes or fixed points' instead all is '"decentred" or inherently relativistic', rather than deviation from a given centre, 'all we have is "free play"' (Barry, 1995: 66-7).

[26] As John Deeney posits, interdisciplinary modes provide a 'deliberate strategy of disruption at the boundaries of practices, forms and terms' (1998: 46). In female practice, Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollack verify, performance was 'more open' allowing 'new meanings' and 'an active relationship between performer and audience' with 'unlimited possibilities for combination' where the 'complexity of subject and form and address' matched 'the complexity of feminist analysis' revealing 'that which is dimly perceived but never publicly acknowledged (1987: 39).

[27] Using Euripedes *The Bacchae* as a backdrop Churchill and Lan explored the messy issues of transgression and possession, of gender and sexuality for women and men. The *play*-text, written within a mixed gender, intercultural devising process, incorporated dance and overturned conventional modes of staging, highlighting tenderness and brutality, the chthonic and primordial, in the content and the form of the play (see Churchill & Lan, 1998). Notable in my argument is that Dionysian possession and impulse was stimulus, form and content for the piece (see Chapter 2 below).

[28] See Kristeva, 1982 regarding corporeal abjection within creative and theoretical practice.

[29] Essentialism is defined by Diana Fuss as the 'belief in a true essence' that is 'irreducible, unchanging . . . constitutive of a given person or thing' (1989: 2). In feminist practice, 'essentialism can be located in appeals to a pure or original femininity, a female essence outside the boundaries of the social' (Fuss, 1989: 2). I consider arguments against essentialism within Cixous and Irigarays' writings in more detail in Chapter 2 below.

[30] In terms of the fusion of form and content, and performance inheritance under scrutiny here, Bausch's work was influenced by a variety of aesthetic practice such as German expressionist dance and American modern dance as well as incorporating techniques from vaudeville, cabaret, film and

everyday human behaviour. For examinations of Bausch see Broadhurst 1999a, Cody 1998, Dempster 1998, Sanchez-Colberg 1996 and Servos 1998.

[31] Naturalism is the movement in literature and theatre that applied the scientific theories of natural selection and natural behaviour to writing and performance, showing in detail the struggles and conflicts in human behaviour. In production it sought accuracy in the external representation of human social behaviour and interaction. Expressionism was a style in performance that was concerned with internal human experience, the interior self and its conflicts with family, society and so on, informed by modernist principles. Epic theatre is a style of theatre, theorised and employed by Brecht following his own commitment to the theories of Marx. The Epic style, via techniques of defamiliarisation, aims to show the dialectics at work within the larger, politicised social forces and the struggles and contradictions between them that impact on human existence.

[32] With these Expressionist practitioners exampled, it is interesting to note that they looked to ancient and worldwide ritualistic dramatic practice for inspiration which continues to impact on current performance practice. These include the primordial and philosophical rituals of ancient Greece, Africa, China, India and so on. Consider Artaud and his adoption of Balinese Theatre to articulate his manifestos for a Theatre of Cruelty (see Artaud, 1993). Artaud's ideas can be charted through the practice of Bausch, to that of Lloyd Newson and DV8. Artaud's theories have also been embraced by Japan's Butoh Theatre thus illustrating a cyclical exchange from East to West, of ritualistic performance practice.

[33] Lois Keidan, suggests that a reason for the evolution of such work in the early 90s was because 'fewer and fewer contemporary artists can say what they want in a single form' (qtd. in Jim Hiley, 1991: n.pag). An example of such collaboration is that between Churchill, choreographer, Ian Spink and the composer Judith Weir, on *The Lives of The Great Poisoners* and *The Skriker* (see Churchill, 1994a and 1998b). Spink notes of this approach, 'we offer an assemblage of ideas for each member of the public to put together. We don't provide pat solutions' (qtd. in Hiley, 1991: n.pag).

[34] Hiley highlights the socio-political mirroring present in intercultural practice of the 80s and 90s; 'just as international barriers and long-cherished ideologies appear to be fragmenting, so also are artistic boundaries being dismantled' (1991: n.pag). In terms of resensitising a desensitised age, this suggests that 'disenfranchised and ennervated [sic] audiences' demand a 'diversity of approaches to inspire them' (Deeney, 1998: 47).

[35] Writers of such plays were 'drawn to the extremes of experience' (Sierz, 2001: 30) in order to resensitise a desensitised audience through the disturbance of 'the spectator's habitual gaze' (Sierz, 2001: 5).

[36] In this respect, I posit that (syn)aesthetics is an exciting mode of analysis as it suggests, to use Schechner's term, a playful 'theory-to-be' (1995: 27). It is a shapeshifting discourse that is constantly in the process of re-evaluating itself, just like the performance modes it seeks to analyse.

[37] As highlighted in the Introduction, ancient performative-ritual practice such as Greek tragedy, Japanese Noh, Kathakali, through Jacobean and Shakespearean theatre, to the avant-garde practice of Jacques Copeau, Meyerhold, Isadora Duncan, Beckett, Jacques Lecoq, Martha Graham (to name but few) and onwards to the innovators of the present – all encompass the artistic impulse and engage the spectator in an holistic manner that I am attributing to this (syn)aesthetic style.

2. Theories of Disturbance

Chapter 1 presented an overview of the exciting and disturbatory (syn)aesthetic style and appreciation strategy, providing an outline of the performance inheritance which saw to its emergence in contemporary practice. (Syn)aesthetics go some way to answering the antagonism between performance work and critical analysis as the (syn)aesthetic style *is* the work itself *as well as* the accompanying mode of analysis that describes an individual and fused response to the work. The following theories of disturbance are employed to elucidate notions of embodied knowledge, transgression, slippage and sensate upheaval, by way of clarifying the impulse behind the (syn)aesthetic performance style and (syn)aesthetics as a strategy of interpretation.

2.1 Critical Theories of Disturbance–Nietzsche's Dionysian to *Écriture Féminine*

2.1.1 Nietzsche's Dionysian

> The muses of the art of 'illusion' paled before an art that, in its intoxication, spoke
> the truth (Nietzsche, 1967a: 46).

Nietzsche is crucial to understanding the (syn)aesthetic style as his arguments for the Dionysian artistic impulse prove fundamental to the creation of (syn)aesthetic work.

For Nietzsche, the Dionysian and Apollinian are 'interwoven artistic impulses' (1967a: 81) which, via the tension between them, 'continually incite each other to new and more powerful births' (1967a: 33).[1] The Apollinian stands for clarity, lucidity, reason and rationality. Dreams and illusion of reality encapsulate the Apollinian impulse. Following this, the Apollinian artistic impulse employs 'measured restraint' and 'freedom from the wider emotions' (Nietzsche, 1967a: 35-38). Nietzsche's

Apollinian espouses controlled form with the 'urge' to make 'unambiguous' allowing artistic freedom only within a given 'law' (Nietzsche, 1968: 539).

In opposition, Nietzsche's Dionysian presents a shapeshifting and transgressive impulse which revels in ambiguity, immediacy, excess, sensuality, barbarity and the irrational; 'a passionate-painful overflowing into darker, fuller, more floating states' (Nietzsche, 1968: 539). These traits are expounded through the 'Dionysian content' of an artistic work (Nietzsche, 1967a: 37-54). Intoxication, and its phantasmal effect, which works on the imagination to produce a (re)perception of 'intoxicated reality' (Nietzsche, 1967a: 35-38), is paradigmatic of the Dionysian artistic impulse. Unlike the Apollinian which only allows an individual to experience work in a mediated fashion, constantly aware of the representational quality of the work, the Dionysian impulse directly connects an individual with primordial, instinctive processes of perception and analysis (see Nietzsche, 1967a: 35-38). This is a crucial factor in the (syn)aesthetic appreciation process.

A slippage between states is integral to the Dionysian impulse with its metamorphic, shapeshifting quality, which includes a blurring of opposites. Most significantly, the Dionysian hermaphroditic characteristic abolishes the distinction between masculine and feminine, to prioritise primordial instinct. This extends to creation within destruction found within Nietzsche's 'eternal recurrence' (1968: 544) which provides the rhythm and mode of this impulse. It is a 'continually creative' (Nietzsche, 1968: 545) continuum, a shapeshifting 'play of forces' that resides in the 'Dionysian world of the eternally self-creating, the eternally self-destroying' (Nietzsche, 1968: 550).

The Dionysian body is of consequence to the (syn)aesthetic style in that it is the primary receptacle for the intuitive processes of appreciation and the

producer of philosophical analysis.[2] The fused Dionysian body provides a

paradoxical sensuality, 'full of wisdom – a plurality with one sense' (Nietzsche,

1967b: 90). Such (re)cognition through sensate perception enables a reconciliation

of body and mind in order to achieve a slippage between the noetic and chthonic.

This can produce an, often ineffable, disturbatory perceptual experience. With

Nietzsche's Dionysian impulse there is a fused possession of body and mind

within artistic appreciation, working on the senses with an urgency that activates

corporeal memory, imagination and intellect.[3]

Nietzsche argues for work that enables an audience to 'feel most assuredly by

means of intuition'(1967a: 46-8). Thus, the Dionysian impulse embraces immediacy

in response and allows a complete perception via a visceral cognition. This

substantiates a making-sense/*sense*-making faculty of appreciation which ensures that

those ideas, states and experiences that are intangible are made tangible, allowing a

noetic 'sensing beyond' (after Nietzsche, 1967a: 132). Dionysian artistic works

invigorate the 'aesthetic state' (Nietzsche, 1968: 422), a primal and sensate mode of

appreciation which draws on the (re)cognitive powers of the human body, a '*special

memory . . .* a distant and transitory world of sensations' (Nietzsche, 1968: 427,

emphasis added). Such intensity of perception produces a '*resonance*' where the

spectator 'remembers and becomes aware of similar states and their origin'

(Nietzsche, 1994: 22, emphasis original). Such Dionysian resonance is attributable to

the corporeal memory activated within (syn)aesthetic perception. I would argue

further that Nietzsche's 'aesthetic state' (1968: 422) comes close to the ineffable

quality of the (syn)aesthetic-sense with its slippage between the noetic and chthonic.

The dominance of Nietzsche's Dionysian impulse is crucial to an

understanding of the (syn)aesthetic style. The primordial, shapeshifting qualities of

duality and paradox, support the cross-fertilised, interdisciplinary nature of the (syn)aesthetic performance mode.[4] As with the Dionysian impulse, in (syn)aesthetic work the body is an integral feature to performance and the primary receptacle in appreciation. The 'Dionysian content' (Nietzsche, 1967a: 54-6) of creative practice provides the tool within (syn)aesthetic performances by which a performer may make tangible the intangible and thus activate a (syn)aesthetic-sense within individuals.

Nietzsche's 'resonance' (1994: 22) provided by the 'aesthetic state' (Nietzsche, 1968: 422) which allows a 'sensing beyond' (after Nietzsche, 1967a: 132), endorses the sensate mode of (syn)aesthetic appreciation. (Syn)aesthetic work itself requires that the audience's interpretative faculties be influenced by an intoxication of the sensate body.[5] This fusion of mind and body to allow complete appreciation fully supports the (syn)aesthetic mode of visceral appreciation and combined somatic/semantic analysis. Also important to the (syn)aesthetic mode of performance and appreciation is the activation of the imagination which allows a (re)cognition of intangible states. The Dionysian impulse clarifies the immediacy of the innate response integral to the (syn)aesthetic style, where the audience is expected to feel 'by means of intuition'(Nietzsche, 1967a: 46-48).

Following this, an important feature of Nietzsche's theorisation which is fundamental to the (syn)aesthetic mode of appreciation is the emphasis on immediacy in the Dionysian mode of aesthetic analysis. The Dionysian impulse heralds a theoretical approach which takes into consideration the immediacy of the disruptive semiotics of internal, subconscious, corporeal and transgressive signifying practices.[6] (Syn)aesthetic interpretation denies a single, 'accepted' valuation, instead favouring individual reaction. Thus, a rejection of any philosophical authority in favour of an individual's intuitive and creative response in the production and appreciation of any

artistic work. (Syn)aesthetics is an interpretative device that prioritises sensual perception and imagination and engages cerebral powers of cognisance in an alternative way.

As I will go on to highlight, it is my opinion that the Dionysian impulse underpins the theories of the Russian Formalists, Barthes, Kristeva, Cixous and Irigaray and the performance theories of Artaud, Novarina, Barker and Broadhurst, thereby highlighting a transgressive, playful and disturbatory undercurrent in (syn)aesthetics via the theories that clarify it.

2.1.2 The Russian Formalists - dionysian disruptions in linguistic play

> [T]he analysis of form understood as content (Eichenbaum, 1965: 113).

> [T]o clarify the unknown by means of the known (Shklovsky, 1965: 6).

> The sensitive ear will always catch even the most distant echoes of a carnival sense of the world (Bakhtin, 1984: 107).

The Russian Formalists' concern with the form of verbal language is useful in clarifying the (syn)aesthetic style and its disturbatory visceral-verbal *play*-texts (see Bakhtin, 1984, Eichenbaum, 1965 and Shklovsky, 1965). Shklovsky argued for the act of *ostranenie*, or defamiliarisation, as being integral to the production and reception of creative texts.[7] Shklovsky refers to this model as 'roughened form' (qtd. in Eichenbaum, 1965: 114). Here, form made difficult slows down perception ensuring that the experience is perceived lucidly. It is this that allows, via linguistic means, a (re)cognition of language, situation, event, experience, emotion, and so on, enabling the audience to perceive anew.

Shklovsky argues that 'the acoustical, articulatory, or semantic aspects' of verbal language '*may be felt*' as a 'perceptible structure designed to be experienced within its very own fabric' (qtd. in Eichenbaum, 1965: 114, emphasis added). The

purpose of such play with verbal language is 'to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known' (Shklovsky, 1965: 12). Brik added to Shklovsky's ideas with his proposition that rhythm is no longer an abstraction but 'relevant to the very linguistic fabric' of the verbal play (Eichenbaum, 1965: 124). Rather than a 'superficial appendage, something floating on the surface of speech' (Eichenbaum, 1965: 124) rhythm becomes an integral part of defamiliarised, sensate expression. Thus defamiliarised form ensures an experiential mode of interpretation via a 'special perception' (Shklovsky, 1965: 18) where the cognisance of form transfers into this 'sphere of a new perception' via a 'unique semantic modification' (Shklovsky, 1965: 21). I posit that within (syn)aesthetics these specially modified semantics owe much to the somatic cognition of the form in question.

Important to the transgressive linguistic practice of the (syn)aesthetic performance style is Bakhtin's notions of 'carnivalisation', a term that defines the shapeshifting effect that the substance of 'carnival' can have on artistic works (see Bakhtin, 1984). Of particular relevance to the (syn)aesthetic style is the associations of carnival with sensuous experience and disturbing play.

Bakhtin stressed that language can be used to 'disrupt authority and liberate alternative voices' i.e. those voices of difference assigned to the margins (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker, 1997: 42). The associations with carnival, an inherently Dionysian act with its 'roots in the primordial order and primordial thinking' (Bakhtin, 1984: 122), are the impulse behind 'carnivalised' works (Bakhtin, 1984: 107). Here, 'hierarchies are turned on their heads. . . opposites are mingled (fact and fantasy, heaven and hell); the sacred is profaned' and '[e]verything authoritative, rigid or serious is subverted' (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker, 1997: 43) ensuring that the ludic quality inherent to the process is foregrounded and the 'concretely sensuous

nature of linguistic interpretation is prioritised' (Bakhtin, 1984: 122). Here the 'essence of carnival' is that which is 'vividly felt by all its participants' and demands 'ever changing, playful, undefined forms' (Bakhtin, 2001: 217-219). Regarding my focus on notions of slippage within this thesis, Bakhtin argues '[c]arnival celebrates the shift itself, the very process of replaceability' and 'proclaims the joyful relativity of everything' (1984: 125).[8]

Bakhtin's carnivalisation provides the inception of 'polyphonic' works of art, which allows 'the development of a plurality of consciousnesses and their worlds' (Bakhtin, 1984: 17-18) so that 'voices are set free to speak subversively or shockingly' (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker, 1997: 44) without the author coming between individual 'consciousnesses' and the audience. In terms of the (syn)aesthetic appreciation process, carnivalisation subverts linguistic praxis and overwhelms traditional theoretical discourses via 'an indeterminacy, a certain semantic open-endedness' which produces 'counter-identification' or 'disidentification' (Bakhtin qtd. in Selden, Widdowson, Brooker, 1997: 193) allowing the immediacy of individual interpretation to validate its own discourse. This also ensures that linguistic signification is defamiliarised, engaging alternative capacities for (re)cognition.[9]

The Formalist's emphasis on a 'controlled violence' (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker, 1997: 32) and ludic subversions applied to verbal language is integral to the defamiliarised linguistic play of the (syn)aesthetic style. Bakhtin's argument for speech texts which 'disrupt authority and liberate alternative voices' (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker, 1997: 42) highlights the marginal quality of (syn)aesthetic *play*-texts that present the voices of *différance* (Derrida, 1987a: 8-9). The theories of the Formalists directly equate with the (syn)aesthetic approach to linguistic texts which enable an audience to interpret with a 'special perception' (Shklovsky, 1965:

18) due to the disturbance of language from its usual context. This unsettling of

cognition, thereby imparts the sensation of the object, state, experience or idea as

perceived and not as it is known (after Shklovsky, 1965: 12). Such defamiliarised

linguistic play enables the emergence of the (syn)aesthetic-sense integral to the

(syn)aesthetic strategy of appreciation. In this way, the audience experiences the

sensate form of the language, which heightens and dislodges its usual semantic

making-sense procedure allowing for a somatic *sense*-making process to be of equal,

or greater, significance.

2.1.3 Barthes – *jouissance* and writerly texts

> Does the text have human form, is it a figure, an anagram of the body? Yes, but of
> the erotic body (Barthes, 1975: 17).

There is much in Barthes theorising to support the potential that linguistic acts

have in causing a (syn)aesthetic response via sensate and disturbatory communication

in the substance of the text itself, which results from a distinct (syn)aesthetic impulse

in the creation of the text (see Barthes, 1975).

(Syn)aesthetic *play*-texts are commensurable with Barthes' 'pleasurable text'

which is a writerly 'text that discomforts' producing a response that 'unsettles . . .

historical, cultural, psychological assumptions' as well as 'the consistency of . . .

tastes, values' and 'memories' (Barthes, 1975: 14).[10] In pleasurable texts a

'*disfiguration* of the language' (Barthes, 1975: 14, emphasis original) occurs to bring

the receiver 'to a crisis' in their 'relation with language'(Barthes, 1975: 37). Barthes

asserts that such text, as well as unsettling and disturbing an audience due to its form,

provides *jouissance*, (the nearest translation being 'unspeakable bliss') where

linguistic play 'granulates', 'crackles', 'caresses', 'grates', 'cuts', and 'comes' (1975:

67).[11] *Jouissance* thus names a fused physiological and psychological experience,

simultaneously pleasurable and disturbing, that accentuates the human experience of the live(d), present, as in *prae-sens*, 'that which stands before the senses' (Scarry, 1985: 197), moment. It takes the actual body beyond that which is already known, enabling an encounter with the state of 'negative pleasure' (Kant, 1911: 91). The disturbance of sensations resulting from the defamiliarised state of *jouissance* produces a corporeal and cerebral impact which engages a (syn)aesthetic-sense and causes a (re)perception allowing an individual to experience anew, consider anew, interpret anew.

Barthes' thinking is useful in elucidating the (syn)aesthetic performance style and its visceral-verbal *play*-texts as he does not confine his theories to the written text, as much linguistic analysis does, but to that which is performed; '*writing aloud*', or 'vocal writing' (Barthes, 1975: 66, emphasis original). Writing aloud is an entirely corporeal act that foregrounds, 'the articulation of the body', a physicality of verbal play that conveys 'language lined with flesh' (Barthes, 1975: 66). Here semantic meaning is secondary to the immediate experience of the sensate nature of verbal play as a corporeal linguistic delivery shapeshifts 'the signified a great distance' (Barthes, 1975: 67). This causes a (re)cognition of language which allows the audience to experience the work physiologically. Following this, it is an 'anterior immediacy' (Barthes, 1982a: 439) in the 'complete visceral recall' (Bartlett, 1999: 4) of the (syn)aesthetic experience of words in performance, that (re)actuates the *prae-sens* of that moment of experience.

Writing and verbal acts manipulated in the spirit of *jouissance* have direct connections with Nietzsche's Dionysian impulse with its 'immutably structured and yet infinitely renewable' shapeshifting form and disturbatory content that is manipulated in a 'ludic manner' (Barthes, 1975: 51). Barthes thinking validates

(syn)aesthetics as an interpretative device, in concurrence with Nietzsche, by

demanding modes of interpretation and theorising that belong to the immediate and

the innate. That is, analytical discourse that meets the creative impulse of the texts

under scrutiny to articulate the slippage between the corporeal and transgressive, the

disturbatory and ambiguous in vocabulary, style and application. Such analysis must

prioritise interpretation via a sensual impact on the cerebral where the body is the

sensate conduit of such.[12]

Barthes' 'pleasurable text' is useful to aiding understanding of the

(syn)aesthetic impulse and response in performance as he argues for linguistic text

that is created, delivered and appreciated corporeally demanding an experiential

appreciation strategy. The disturbatory nature of such writing clarifies

(syn)aesthetic visceral-verbal *play*-texts in that both form and delivery of the text

cause the receiver to (re)perceive and (re)cognise the embodied nature of verbal

language. (Syn)aesthetic writerly practice has the Dionysian qualities of

intoxication, immediacy and corporeality and highlights *jouissance*, sensate

access and sensate pleasure, as the ultimate form of appreciation. Thus, Barthes'

thinking supports (syn)aesthetic appreciation, affirming a theoretical mode that

embraces, celebrates and employs the chthonic and noetic essence of the

performance texts within its analysis.

The Russian Formalists and Barthes' theories are important in elucidating the

(syn)aesthetic style as both draw on a Dionysian impulse within the play, pleasure and

disturbance integral to the creation and appreciation of the linguistic texts they

scrutinise. Also important is the assertion that linguistic texts can be multi-layered,

polyphonic and resistant to singular readings. As regards (syn)aesthetic work, this

promotes the significance of the audience within the matrix of meaning-making,

allowing for a multiplicity of interpretations that encompass the somatic and semantic,

leaving the work open to polyvalent readings that prioritise innate, immediate

response.

2.1.4 Kristeva – the *semiotic chora* and genotext

> The transfinite in language, as what is 'beyond the sentence', is probably foremost a going through and beyond the naming. This means that it is going through and beyond the sign, the phrase, and linguistic finitude (Kristeva, 1992f: 190).

> To discover our disturbing otherness (Kristeva, 1991: 192).

Kristeva's theories are useful to understanding the (syn)aesthetic style as she

provides an argument for a primordial site of communication which supports the

fusion of the verbal and physical as an important means of signification. Her

arguments for a *semiotic chora* ('chora' from the Greek 'distinctive mark, trace,

precursory sign, imprint, figuration') and 'genotext' help to clarify the (syn)aesthetic

modes of communication within performance (see Kristeva, 1999a).[13]

Kristeva's *semiotic* and *symbolic* are 'two modalities . . . inseparable

within the signifying process that constitutes language' (Kristeva, 1999a: 92). The

symbolic is the modality, associated with reason, repression and control, that

produces syntax, fixing form in the process of making meaning.[14] According to

Kristeva, the process of 'accepted' meaning-making through language occurs via,

'an acute and dramatic confrontation between positing-separating-identifying [the

signifier/signified] and the motility of the semiotic chora' (1999a: 100) where the

order and rationality of the symbolic is threatened and transgressed by the

disorder and irrationality of the semiotic.

Kristeva's semiotic is useful to understanding the (syn)aesthetics in

performance and appreciation as it presents a chthonic site of articulation which

expresses innate and primary processes that are 'pre-sign, pre-meaning' (Kristeva, 1982: 212, n.3) able to tap a pre-verbal consciousness. It provides a discourse for the unconscious and the body – both internal and external human experience through a 'recasting of language' (Kristeva, 1982: 61). Kristeva's semiotic recognises the significance of the visceral and the inarticulable in affecting individuals in a meaning making way. Here, as with (syn)aesthetics, analysis and signification 'refers back to an instinctual body' that 'ciphers the language' (Kristeva, 1992: 146), ensuring that, 'sense topples over into the senses' (Kristeva, 1982: 140).

The chora is 'the dimension beneath the surface of signification' (Kristeva, 2000: 268), a space that articulates passions and drives, demanding liberated structures for expression and interpretation. It is thus associated with unconstrained connections and transgression. Here an individual's conscious and unconscious impulse, and varied processes of interpretation and 'meanings' reached, are simultaneously connected, allowing for an 'intertextuality' that is 'translinguistic' (Kristeva, 1992: 36).[15] Most significantly, the chthonic drives which articulate the chora are 'always already ambiguous, simultaneously assimilating and destructive', making 'the semiotized body' a Dionysian site of 'permanent scission' (Kristeva, 1999a: 95).[16] The semiotic chora thus expounds a chthonian rhythm, that retains a Dionysian '*repetition* and *eternity*' (Kristeva, 1999c: 191, emphasis original), imposing a primordial temporality which may 'shock' yet also be experienced as an 'unnameable *jouissance*' (Kristeva, 1999c: 191, emphasis original).[17] Such rhythms and repetition dominate in (syn)aesthetic performance texts.

Following this, for Kristeva, any text that is close to, and includes, semiotic processes is a 'genotext' (1999a: 120).[18] Defined as 'language's underlying foundation' the genotext is 'not linguistic' but a 'process' (Kristeva, 1999a: 121), which construes a shapeshift discourse (creative and theoretical) and explores transgression and corporeality in all signifying practices.[19] This articulates the fused textual practice of the (syn)aesthetic style.

Kristeva highlights how the persistent 'influx' of the semiotic 'remodels the symbolic order' (1999a: 113).[20] This constant 'tearing open' of the symbolic by the semiotic allows the 'interplay of meaning and *jouissance*' (Kristeva, 1992: 148) and necessitates a 'transgression' that enforces the shapeshifting signifying practice 'called "creation"' (Kristeva, 1999a: 113). This transposition from the semiotic to the symbolic holds a key to understanding the flux in making-sense/*sense*-making. Within this flux, Kristeva argues that certain artistic works have the potential to 'reach the semiotic chora' (1999a: 122) and 'destroy the symbolic' (see Kristeva, 1999a: 103).

A (syn)aesthetic performance engages the semiotic chora primarily in its fusion of conscious and unconscious perception. The signifying processes of the chora is also activated when transgressive signifiers come into play in (syn)aesthetic work, particularly when the verbal is explored through the body and the corporeal explored through speech. The dualistic idea of the performer as a site, sight and cite for the exploration of verbal and physical, internal and external, and cerebral and corporeal experience in (syn)aesthetic work evidences Kristeva's notion of a human subject as an intertextual 'play of signs' (qtd. in Broadhurst, 1999: 6).[21]

The semiotic chora, the genotext and their inherent chthonic processes of communication support and clarify the fused communication and perception capable in (syn)aesthetic performance. Kristeva's semiotic provides a strong critique of

semanticising corporeal and transgressive linguistic signification and recognises the

significance of the sensate and visceral in affecting individuals in a double edged

making-sense/*sense*-making way. Like Nietzsche, the Russian Formalists and Barthes,

she highlights aspects of transgressive and disturbatory linguistic play which explore a

corporeal mode of communication. Such linguistic analysis, responsible for

reclaiming the verbal (spoken and written) as a physical and physiological act, is

crucial in supporting the (syn)aesthetic style's somatic/semantic function and its

quintessential visceral-verbal feature.

2.1.5 Cixous and Irigaray - *écriture féminine*

> The essence of nature is now to be expressed symbolically . . . and the entire
> symbolism of the body is called into play (Nietzsche, 1967a: 40).

> Write yourself: your body must make itself heard (Cixous, 1993: 97).

> We have to discover a language which does not replace the bodily encounter . . . but
> which can go along with it, words which do not bar the corporeal, but which speak
> the corporeal (Irigaray, 1985: 43).

Écriture féminine goes some way to providing a framing methodology for the

(syn)aesthetic style. *Écriture féminine*, Dionysian in impulse, is both a sensate writing

practice and an analytical tool. As a fused creative and critical methodology it

establishes a multiple perspectival process 'another way of knowing . . . . Another

way of producing. . . where each one is always far more than one' (Cixous, 1993: 96),

highlighting a fusion of ambiguity, slippage and transgression.

Écriture féminine, like Kristeva's semiotised genotext, establishes a

shapeshifting 'eternal recurrence' (Nietzsche, 1968: 544) as it is a 'feminine

morphology' (Irigaray, 1999e: 55) which is always in the process of becoming. As

Irigaray asserts, '*form is never complete in her*' and it is this 'incompleteness' of form

that allows the 'feminine', as a writing effect, to eternally morph its own morphology,

becoming, 'something else at any moment' (Irigaray, 1999e: 55, emphasis original).

The 'eternal recurrence' (Nietzsche, 1968: 544) is also evidenced in the fact that codes and conventions of creative practice must be continuously overturned and replaced by '*a new insurgent writing*', a writing of the body where 'the huge resources of the unconscious . . . burst out' (Cixous, 1993: 97, emphasis original).

Écriture féminine establishes a linguistic practice 'which does not replace the bodily encounter' but goes along with it (Irigaray, 1999a: 43).[22] Thus a feminised mode of conveying meaning occurs primarily through the body, paralleling Barthes' pleasurable text and Kristeva's semiotic chora. The feminine, 'does not deny unconscious drives the unmanageable part they play in speech' (Cixous, 1993: 92). Furthermore, Irigaray argues that the Dionysian impulse of *écriture féminine* 'intervenes between body and soul. . . endlessly pulling down the barrier between them' (1991: 129). This dualistic intervention makes the process 'accessible to the senses' (Irigaray, 1991: 134). In embracing the corporeal, *écriture féminine* prioritises sensate communication and sensate perception, 'does not privilege sight' but 'takes each figure back to its source, which is among other things, *tactile*' (Irigaray, 1999b: 126-7, emphasis original). In prioritising the body as the source and morphology of creative practice, *écriture féminine* supports the emphasis on the body as producer and receiver of signification in (syn)aesthetic performance work.

In applying *écriture féminine* in this thesis I adhere to Cixous' anti-essentialist outlook. *Écriture féminine* aims to break down any rigid oppositions (especially of feminine/masculine) to embrace and take pleasure in the slippage in-between, which for Cixous, enables a return to the primordial. This slippage provides a 'bisexual' (Cixous, 1993: 84) state that embraces and celebrates differences, fuses them and uses them creatively.[23] Cixous (re)evaluates this Dionysian plurality and blurring of opposites as 'the location within oneself of the presence of both sexes . . . the

nonexclusion of difference or of a sex' and asserts that there is a need for the 'I/play

of bisexuality'(Cixous, 1993: 84) in order to create.[24]

Following this, *écriture féminine* presents a subversive mode of thinking and

practice that emerges from the margins. In that respect it is open to, and adopted by,

anyone who perceives their own 'difference' in the sphere of the 'accepted',

conventional system where 'the marginal' persistently morphs and fluctuates in order

to contradict, transgress and destroy dominant laws (Cixous, 1993: 84 - 97).[25] It is a

critical discourse and creative practice that emerges from the margins and explores the

pleasures, transgressions and in-betweens of *différance*.

Écriture féminine aids understanding of the (syn)aesthetic impulse and response

in that it fuses with Barthes' arguments for a pleasurable text and Kristeva's

semiotised genotext, defining a corporeal writerly practice where the transgressive

and insurgent nature of the writing stimulates *jouissance* which establishes a visceral

(re)cognition of verbal language within appreciation. Furthermore, it is in

performance that *écriture féminine* is most present (as in *prae-sens*) providing a

creative site where 'it is possible to get across the living, breathing, speaking body'

(Cixous, 1995a: 134).[26]

In clarifying (syn)aesthetic signification *écriture féminine* (Cixous, 1993;

Irigaray, 1985) connects with Kristeva's semiotic chora, celebrating the slippage

between the conscious and unconscious and prioritising a chthonic Dionysian impulse

of intoxication and immediacy. It highlights sensate access and sensate pleasure as the

ultimate form of appreciation. Where *écriture féminine* is particularly useful to the

(syn)aesthetic style is in establishing a creative methodology and discursive practice

that can be applied to the body as text in performance. In this way, Cixous and

Irigaray provide a critical discourse for Artaud's 'writing *of* the body' (Derrida, 1978:

191, emphasis original), in performance, as discussed below, thus fusing the physical

with the verbal, and analysis with practice.

This consideration of these critical theories of disturbance exposes the slippage,

disturbance, play, pleasure and transgression underpinning all of them in impulse,

practice and analysis. All expound a Dionysian essence which is a crucial factor

within (syn)aesthetic analysis. These features are also demonstrable within the

performance theories of Artaud (1993), Novarina (1996), Barker (1997) and

Broadhurst (1999a). Furthermore, the discernible (syn)aesthetics notable within each

of these performance theories substantiates my own argument for the emergence of a

(syn)aesthetic style within contemporary Western performance practice.

2.2 Performance Theories of Disturbance – Cruelty to Liminality

2.2.1 Artaud – disturbance and sensation in the theatre of cruelty

> One cannot separate body from mind, nor the senses from the intellect, particularly
> in a field where the unendingly repeated jading of our organs calls for sudden shocks
> to revive our understanding (Artaud, 1993: 66).

Artaud's manifestos for a Theatre of Cruelty underpin the (syn)aesthetic style

and its experiential strategy of appreciation. Artaud's Cruelty asserts performance

techniques that aim to (re)connect body and mind through the prioritisation of the

human body within performance.[27] Artaud demands a 'total' experience for performer

and audience alike through a manipulation of all the elements of theatre via unusual

and exciting *gesamtkunstwerke*. Furthermore, as Derrida highlights, Artaud demanded

a new taxonomy to provide the means of scrutinising and understanding such

performance, where the work itself 'governs' the 'commentary' applied (Derrida

1978: 175).

Artaud argues that the fusion between body and mind can only occur through a 'fundamental theatre' which urges forward 'the exteriorisation of a latent undercurrent of cruelty' (Artaud, 1993: 21). Artaud's insistence on the actual body as the primary performance signifier presents 'another form of writing . . . the writing *of* the body itself' (Derrida, 1978: 191, emphasis original). It is this commitment to the body as the primary signifier and translator of a visceral performance language that foreshadows a physical practice of *écriture féminine*, employing the actual body as the performing and receiving receptacle to express and perceive chthonic states, and defines a mode of performance practice that signifies through the semiotic chora.[28]

A crucial aspect of Artaud's theatre which supports my own arguments for the (syn)aesthetic style is the power to disturb and enliven through the very interaction of the live physical body in performance affecting the sensate physical body in the audience. As Nigel Ward posits, in Artaudian practice it is 'the body of the actor' that works 'directly upon the nervous system of the audience' (1999: 124). The cerebral appreciation of the work is part of this fused experience as it is connected with the body, allowing semantic and somatic readings to combine. In Artaud's theatre this is a direct result of the fact that 'the brain is another organ to be acted upon . . .in the same way as the rest of the body' (Ward, 1999: 124). As Artaud states, 'cruel' theatre 'upsets our sensual tranquillity' and 'releases our repressed subconscious' (1993: 19). This ensures that those inner, primordial states and experiences which are considered inexpressible are (re)cognised cerebrally as a direct result of the corporeal 'communion' between performer and audience, where the inexpressible is 'made to enter the mind through the body' (Artaud, 1993: 77).

In this way Artaud's theories articulate the somatic/semantic nature of the (syn)aesthetic style where the sentient source and conduit of the body affects a

(syn)aesthetic-sense which allows a visceral cognition of intangible states. This is equivalent to Artaud's '*active metaphysics*' where the performance mode affects 'on all conscious levels and in all senses' which leads to 'thought adopting deep attitudes' (Artaud, 1993: 33, emphasis original).

Artaud's arguments regard performance as 'an immanent, damaging, purging event' (Ward, 1999: 123) that 'wakes up . . . heart and nerves' (Artaud, 1993: 64). This transforms 'the relationship between the mind and the body' (Ward, 1999: 123) via a 'tangible laceration' inflicted on 'the senses' (Artaud, 1993: 65). Heralding a (syn)aesthetic style of production, such a performance mode is 'enacted upon the body, to assault the senses' (Ward, 1999:123) in an entirely Dionysian manner. The aim is for the audience to experience a 'metamorphosis' within this 'total experience' through the disturbatory impact of these 'visceral assaults' (Ward, 1999: 128). Such a visceral experience produces a fused 'consciousness' of 'exposed lucidity' (Derrida, 1978: 242) where 'body and mind . . . senses and intellect' are conjoined through the 'sudden shocks' which 'revive . . . understanding' (Artaud, 1993: 66) in a total and sensate way. The experiential quality of performance defined by Artaud affects a practice of *jouissance* and thus foregrounds the shapeshifting, visceral effects that the (syn)aesthetic style has on the individual's body in appreciating the work.

Artaud's theories embrace the Dionysian impulse, with its 'eternal recurrence' (Nietzsche, 1968: 544) in his calling for a theatre of 'creation in destruction' (Derrida, 1978: 332) where old forms of (theatrical) communication and renderings of aesthetics are continuously destroyed in order to create a new and vital performance mode, perpetually in the process of (re)defining itself (see Artaud, 1993 and Derrida 1978: 169-195, 232-250).[29]

The theory of Cruelty supports the (syn)aesthetic performance style, in form and content, as it embraces a hybrid mode and foregrounds the body in performance as a sight, site and cite of disturbance and *jouissance*. Furthermore, Artaud's principles of taxonomy, where the work itself and subsequent appreciation 'govern' the analysis (after Derrida, 1978: 175) affirm the need for a (syn)aesthetic contact in performance analysis that engages a making-sense/*sense*-making faculty in the processes of appreciation.

2.2.2 Novarina – corporeality and carnage in the theatre of the ears

> We write in confrontation, through the love of hand-to-hand fighting with our language. . . . My language is not in my mind, like a tool that I would borrow in order to think. It is entirely within me: words are our true flesh (Novarina, 1996: 125).

As a theatre practitioner and theoretician, Novarina puts forward a strong argument for the visceral impact of the writerly and verbal act in performance. His theories accentuate the corporeal, especially the physiological, sexual and gastronomical, aspect integral to the creation, rehearsal, performance and interpretation of (syn)aesthetic *play*-texts (see Novarina, 1996).

Novarina talks of speech as 'the *speak*' that is 'most physical in the theater' (1996: 58, emphasis original), echoing Barthes' theories of the *jouissance* of 'vocal writing' (Barthes, 1975: 66). Novarina demands a liberation of the body into verbal acts in order to overturn the Cartesian implication that 'words fall into our heads from the heavens, that is thoughts which are expressed, and not bodies' (Novarina, 1993: 100). He talks of 'articulatory cruelty, linguistic carnage' within the creation of the text suggesting that via such brutal and disturbatory manipulation of verbal language 'perceptions' can be 'changed' (Novarina, 1993: 96-9).

Novarina parallels Artaud's call for a holistic performer, body and speech fused in the processes of production, where the 'entire body must come into play' (Novarina, 1996: 108). The performer must 'put his body to work . . . . sniffing, chewing, breathing in the text. . . vigorously working it over' in order to 'discover how it breathes and how it is rhymed' (Novarina, 1993: 101). Such a physical wrestling with the text enables 'a profound reading, ever deeper, ever closer to the core' (Novarina, 1993: 101). In this way Novarina asserts that 'the text becomes the actor's nourishment, his body' and he echoes Artaud and Cixous in his demands that performers, 'rewrite' verbal text with the 'body' (Novarina, 1993: 101) for 'words are our true flesh' (Novarina, 1996: 125). Novarina asserts that, 'the text is nothing but footprints on the ground left by a dancer who has disappeared' and as a result the performance of the text is ' a matter of manifesting, of soliciting, the existence of something that wants to dance' (1993: 102).

Allen S. Weiss posits that Novarina follows Artaud in establishing 'a theatrical practice that leads well beyond the textual, directly into the morass of the body' (Weiss, 1993: 85). Novarina demands an appreciative mode which allows the body to 'open up' its 'mental flesh' (Novarina, 1996: 64) and experience the work produced via an 'amorous interchange' (Novarina, 1996: 108) between text and performer, performance of the text and audience. This enables a 'reconciliation of word and body' (Weiss, 1993: 86) in interpretation.[30]

It is the case that 'the refusal of meaning and the reduction of speech to the pure voice, of language to the body' (Weiss, 1993: 88) in Novarina's theories can be a significant feature of the (syn)aesthetically styled performance and *play*-text. Further to this, I argue that verbal language which plays with 'levels, and not origins, of meaning' (Weiss, 1993: 88), shapeshifting the traces of semantic meaning integral to

words, encourages an audience to interpret meaning on both a semantic level that is

present, if somewhat disfigured, and also to (re)cognise this meaning within the

simultaneous (re)perception of the *sound* of the word. Here 'the phonetic elements of

words', concerned with 'meaning and usage', are ignored in favour of a somatic

response where the meaning of words is reflected in the sound they embody (Luria,

1969: 86). In this way 'perpetual linguistic shifts and stresses' force a reconstitution

of an individuals 'lexicon' and 'thought' (Weiss, 1993: 92). Thus, Novarina's theory

and practice, like Artaud's, play within Kristeva's semiotic chora where 'texts

composed of glossolalia which mean nothing and are totally explosive' become 'no

longer language but pure drive' (Kristeva, 2000: 265).[31]

      Novarina meets Barthes, Cixous and Irigaray by establishing a

performance writerly practice that returns to the corporeal in the *act* of writing and

the subsequent translation to performance. He foregrounds a performance praxis

that emphasises Nietzsche's Dionysian impulse (1967a) integral to the translation

of disturbatory *play*-texts in performance. His theories are important to the

(syn)aesthetic style as he highlights the corporeality of verbal language within the

processes of creation, production and appreciation – stressing that the visceral

brutality of such 'defamiliarised' and 'carnivalised' (Eichenbaum, 1965; Bakhtin,

1984) texts allow a (re)perception of language and meaning to occur. A

(re)perception that invigorates the imagination and is primarily interpreted

through the body in a sensate manner.

      Fundamental to my argument for (syn)aesthetics, is Novarina's argument

for the act of writing as a physical performance practice itself which collaborates

with the processes of performance, highlighting the exchange of corporeality

between writer and performer, 'to change bodies . . .to breathe within another's

body' (Novarina, 1996: 108), emphasising how the traces of the living body that writes remain within the text to be interpreted by the living body that performs. This foregrounds the corporeal 'sharability of sentience' (Scarry, 1985: 326) between all participants, including the audience, within such creative practice.

With his consideration of sound and 'verbigerations' (Weiss, 1993: 84), Novarina answers Artaud's demand for organic human sound in performance, alongside the manipulation of spoken language 'in a new, exceptional and unusual way, to give it its full, physical shock potential' (Artaud, 1993: 35). Novarina provides a bridge between Artaud's physical theatre and Barker's writerly theatre, confirming the transgressive nature of (syn)aesthetic practice as he asserts the potential of primitive sounds as much as the eloquence of verbal language to communicate via Kristeva's semiotic dimension (1999a), on a visceral level, within writerly *play*-texts.

2.2.3 Barker – imagination and disturbance in the theatre of catastrophe

> In the anguished, catastrophic times we live in, we feel an urgent need for theatre that . . . arouses deep echoes within us (Artaud, 1993: 64).

> This pain is *necessity*. The Theatre of Catastrophe is not the comfort of a cruel world, but the cruelty of the world made manifest and found to be – *beautiful* (Barker, 1997: 116).

> To speak is truly catastrophic (Novarina, 1996: 134).

Barker's arguments for a Theatre of Catastrophe are useful in elucidating the (syn)aesthetic style as he establishes a writerly performance practice that reve(a)ls in the sensate quality of verbal language and emphasises the importance of a disturbed imagination within audience appreciation. Barker's notion of language as a physical act that is both sensual and cruel immediately draws on the dualistic Dionysian impulse (Nietzsche, 1967a). Echoing Novarina in his

assertions for speech as a sensual act, Barker asserts that the transgressive and
disturbatory potential of the verbal act, 'breaks the bonds of the real, disrupts the
familiar' thereby instilling a Dionysian 'intoxication' in appreciation which
'subverts reason' (Barker, 1997: 213).

Barker argues for the need to return an audience to the primordial
imagination. With Catastrophe 'the audience will not struggle for permanent
coherence . . . but experience the play moment by moment, truth by truth,
contradiction by contradiction' (Barker, 1997: 38). It is this breaking of traditional
performance conventions, a 'breaking of false dramatic disciplines' which 'frees
people into imagination' (Barker, 1997: 38). The 'imagination' here then
expresses both the human mental, visual-imaginative capabilities and the noetic
'secret' (Barker, 1997: 166) or ineffable potential of human perception. Thus,
imagination articulates and finds form for that which is intangible and helps
stimulate the emergence of a (syn)aesthetic-sense. Here Barker's writerly practice
links closely with the highly physical signification in Artaud's Cruelty via the
(re)examination of 'all aspects of the inner world' in order to position
'imagination's rights in the theatre once more' (Artaud, 1993: 71).[32]

Barker's insistence on the imagination in performance establishes work
that is 'tentative, speculative' and creates 'anxiety in the beholder' (Barker, 1997:
135). Here Barker echoes Kant's 'negative pleasure' (Kant, 1911: 91), where the
experience of pleasure 'is only possible through the mediation of a displeasure'
(Kant, 1911: 109) and such a process 'strains the imagination to its utmost' (Kant,
1911: 120).

Barker's theories thus articulate the need for a performance style which works
on the imagination as well as the senses and returns performance to its ritualistic

'sacred . . . other-worldliness' (Barker, 2001: 2). His arguments immediately correlate with the (syn)aesthetic style which highlights a 'primitive sensitivity' and breaks down the boundary between the 'real' and the 'imaginable' (Luria, 1969: 80, 144). This vivid and lucid imaginative capacity disturbs in order to (re)awaken ideas and experiences within its audience, liberating the imagination and powers of cognisance within this disturbance, thus causing an 'exposed lucidity' (Derrida, 1978: 242). Barker's arguments insist on the audience drawing on their own experience within, and beyond, the performance moment in order to find 'meanings' for themselves where 'powers of reconciliation or resolution are abolished in favour of a passionate assertion of human complexity' (Barker, 1997: 79).

Barker argues for a theatre that confronts, amazes and disturbs its audience, assaulting the imagination and the senses. Barker clarifies that this assault occurs via the inundation of 'experiences which attack all the senses' (qtd. in Penny Francis, 1999: 37). Barker asserts that it is the job of the audience to work through the difficulties of interpretation, work out the difficult form and content through complete, corporeal cogitation. In this way individuals within the audience have the 'rights of interpretation' which causes a creative tension between the 'audience and the stage itself' (Barker, 1997: 51-2). Thus performance, from conception to reception, is a journey of unknowing for writer, director, actor and audience alike which 'insists on the limits of tolerance' and 'inhabits the area of maximum risk, both to the imagination and invention of its author, and to the comfort of its audience' (Barker, 1997: 52). As a result meaning is derived 'from the dissolution of coherent meaning' (Barker, 1997: 53).

Barker's theories support and elucidate the (syn)aesthetic style as he affirms the need for a visceral-verbal writerly practice that disturbs via its difficult form and in

doing so, attempts to articulate that which is hidden, or intangible. The insistence on

the fusion of the sensual, beautiful and cruel within writerly practice foregrounds the

visceral nature of the (syn)aesthetic *play*-text. Barker further substantiates the

(syn)aesthetic mode of appreciation in his insistence on an individual's 'rights of

interpretation' (1997: 51) which equates with the (syn)aesthetic appreciation strategy

where an innate, individual interpretation is prioritised in performance work that has

been experienced 'moment by moment' (Barker, 1997: 38). Also important in

clarifying the form and content of (syn)aesthetic performance is the transgressive

nature of Catastrophe where 'theatre is law-breaking' and insists on 'infringing the

moral sense of right and wrong' (Barker, 2001: 3) in order to disturb, destroy and

(re)create notions of production, appreciation and interpretation.

2.2.4 Broadhurst and the Liminal – reaching the edge of the possible

> All liminal works confront, offend or unsettle (Broadhurst, 1999a: 168).

Broadhurst's theory of liminal performance follows Victor Turner's arguments

for the liminal as a Dionysian site of 'fructile chaos, a fertile nothingness, a

storehouse of possibilities, not . . . a random assemblage but a striving after new forms

and structure (Turner qtd. in Broadhurst, 1999a: 12), placing 'greater emphasis on the

corporeal, technological and chthonic' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 12).[33] As a result, liminal

performance can be described as being located at the 'edge of the possible'

(Broadhurst, 1999a: 1). The quintessential aesthetic features of liminal performance

are hybridisation, indeterminacy and the collapse of the hierarchical distinction

between high and popular culture. The quasi-generic traits of liminal performance are

experimentation, heterogeneity, innovation, marginality, 'a pursuit of the almost

chthonic' and an emphasis on the 'intersemiotic' (Broadhurst, 1999a:12-13).

Of primary importance in support of (syn)aesthetics is Broadhurst's insistence on intersemiotic analysis, which embraces the intertextual layering in the (syn)aesthetic performance style. Central characteristics of the liminal, which include the employment of Derrida's 'wide, jarring metaphors' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 10), for example sex, blood, violence and death, and the utilisation of the latest developments in media technology which lead to increased creative possibilities (see Broadhurst, 1999a: 10-13) highlight the visceral and transgressive strategies of the (syn)aesthetic style.[34] These jarring metaphors 'unsettle the audience by frustrating their expectations of any simple interpretation' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 175).

This is further developed in a concrete manner in Broadhurst's attention to liminal hybridity which helps to clarify the (syn)aesthetic hybrid. Hybridised performance 'simultaneously distances and engages the spectator' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 71) and establishes form as 'a merging of the aesthetic with everyday life', 'montage', 'dreamscape', 'collage' and 'imagination', thereby instilling 'lasting effects' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 77-89). In answer to the assumption that all performances present a *gesamtkunstwerk*, Broadhurst clarifies that hybrid performance should be taken to mean that which combines disparate disciplines *in order to undermine* 'accepted boundaries and definitions' (1999b: 24).

A significant aspect of liminal performance is that it continuously challenges traditional aesthetic concepts due to its indeterminate nature of process and production. As a result, inherent experiences from the audience are responses of disquiet and discomfort. Features such as 'immediacy, disruption and excess' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 171) are Dionysian dominant traits inherent in liminal performance, which presupposes the Dionysian impulse at the root of liminal work.[35] Liminal performance relies on the corporeal 'transmission of primarily emotive

experience' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 79), which, as Broadhurst points out correspond to the Dionysian impulse in appreciation of 'tremendous awe which seizes man when he suddenly begins to doubt the cognitive modes of experience' (Nietzsche qtd. in Broadhurst, 1999a: 105). Liminal performance seeks to bring about a 'consciousness' via 'emotive experience' which produces an opposition to traditional, mainstream performance modes 'on the basis of . . . the disruption of the emotions' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 79). This impact of corporeal and cerebral disturbance in the reception of liminal work immediately suggests a sense-shift in reading which supports the (syn)aesthetic process.

Just as Barker highlights the 'discomfort' and 'irrational' qualities of Catastrophic Theatre, Broadhurst highlights the disturbing nature of the liminal in that, 'all liminal works confront, offend or unsettle' (1999a: 168). Broadhurst states that liminal theatre works to leave 'many spectators exhausted by the end . . . overwhelmed by the emotional complexity of the experience' (1999a: 71). In this way it is the experience of sensate disturbance, as a result of a transgressive performance style and hybridised mode which takes the audience 'to the edge of the possible' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 1).

As with Barker's Catastrophe, in liminal performance there is an insistence on the audience drawing on their own experience within, and beyond, the performance moment in order to find 'meanings' for themselves. Broadhurst argues that a 'lack of resolution or closure is a central trait of liminal performance' (1999a: 71). Within liminal theatre, the 'free association of themes rather than a linear narrative' subverts logical explanation in favour of an immediate and innate response where a spectator 'is required to turn to his or her own life experiences' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 77).

Following this, Broadhurst foreshadows the (syn)aesthetic mode of appreciation in that liminal performance demands that 'neither the ingredients to be judged nor the toolkits of analysis are given', but instead 'elaborate one another in a progressive dynamic' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 19). Broadhurst heralds the (syn)aesthetic mode of analysis in arguing that '[l]iminal performance demonstrates a need for a new form of aesthetic interpretation' that identifies the exciting and unsettling experience for the audience provoked by such work, allowing for 'intersemiotic modes of signification', and provides an appropriate explication of the heterosemiotic practice attributable to the liminal (Broadhurst, 1999a: 171-8).

Liminal performance identifies a 'genre' which includes quintessential features that support the (syn)aesthetic performance style and pertains to (syn)aesthetic analysis. The liminal is particularly useful in clarifying the (syn)aesthetic hybrid and its potential for visceral disturbance with its shapeshifting morphology and interlingual mode, that enables a (re)cognition of form through the process of becoming aware of the special fusion of diverse performance languages. With its hybridisation and emphasis on the intersemiotic; its pursuit of the chthonic; its foregrounding of the actual body and its use of Derrida's 'wide jarring metaphors' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 10), the liminal clarifies the features present in the (syn)aesthetic style and prioritises the need for an intersemiotic approach in performance analysis that is substantiated in (syn)aesthetic strategies of analysis and interpretation.

2.3 (Syn)aesthetics – a theory of disturbance in practice

> We want to hold fast to our senses and to our faith in them – and think their consequences through to the end (Nietzsche, 1968: 538).

(Syn)aesthetics, as a transgressive and disturbatory performance mode which emphasises the primordial and chthonic, presents a series of significations where Nietzsche's Dionysian impulse is dominant (Nietzsche, 1967a). It draws on theories of disturbance which argue for the continual destabilisation of accepted order and formal conventions in favour of playfully disturbing practice which causes an audience to (re)cognise sensate and unconscious communicative processes. Kristeva's semiotic chora (1999a) and Cixous and Irigarays' *écriture féminine* (Cixous, 1993, Irigaray, 1985) provide supporting modalities of signification and creative practice. The Russian Formalists notions of defamiliarisation, special perception and carnivalisation (see Bakhtin, 1984, Shklovsky, 1965); Barthes' arguments for *jouissance* integral to pleasurable text (see Barthes, 1975) and the arguments of Novarina (1996) and Barker (1997) for visceral-verbal *play*-writing, clarify the transgressive and playful nature of (syn)aesthetic writerly practice. Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty (1993), Novarina's Theatre of the Ears (1996), Barker's Catastrophe (1997) and Broadhurst's Liminal (1999a) present performance perspectives, encompassing strategies of practice and criteria for analysis, which underpin the (syn)aesthetic performance style and highlight a need for (syn)aesthetics as a discourse within performance appreciation.

Certain connections between the above critical and performance theories serve to validate their support of the (syn)aesthetic mode of performance and appreciation. In particular, integral to all the theories surveyed is the presence of the Dionysian impulse, the pursuit of the chthonic and the emphasis on a transgressive and playful physical and linguistic corporeality. Each performance

theory expounds that which is the essence of (syn)aesthetics; a communication with all the senses and a (re)cognition of intangible states through tangible traces in the processes of appreciation.

The primary strategies of signification in (syn)aesthetically styled performance practice; the (syn)aesthetic hybrid; the predominance of the sentient body in performance; and the visceral-verbal *play*-text are all supported and elucidated by these theories of disturbance. As I highlighted in Chapter 1 above, although I detail three key strategies here, it is important that it is understood that the consideration of the (syn)aesthetic hybrid, consisting of all manner of performance techniques and disciplines, emphasises that (syn)aesthetically styled work results from diverse fusions within the interdisciplinary and intertextual. Furthermore, it must be understood that in (syn)aesthetic performance there is a constant slippage and exchange between the dominance of any one of the three key strategies surveyed in the following chapter.

Notes

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[1] Walter F. Kaufmann asserts the translation of *Apollinisch* as 'Apollinian' rather than 'Apollonian', 'after all, Nietzsche did not say *Apollonisch'* (see Nietzsche, 1965: 9 n.9). I have chosen to continue with the term 'Apollinian' to remain in keeping with Kaufmann's translation.

[2] Grosz states that, for Nietzsche, '[t]he body is the intimate and internal condition of all knowledges, especially of that knowledge which sees itself as a knowledge of knowledges – philosophy' (1994: 125). The Dionysian impulse in analysis is thus 'a bodily activity . . . capable of dynamizing and enhancing life' (Grosz, 1994: 128).

[3] To clarify, Walter F. Otto highlights how the mythic Dionysian possession was 'a stunning assault on the senses' (1965: 91), forcing individuals to give up the self to the intoxication of the body. The paradoxically sensual and disturbatory nature of the mythic Dionysian possession is 'startling, disquieting, violent' and 'arouses opposition and agitation', causing an ecstasy of disturbance and of wonder (Otto, 1965: 74). This supports the experiential quality of (syn)aesthetic appreciation, with its slippage between disturbance and exhilaration drawing on visceral cognition and corporeal memory.

[4] Additional Dionysian traits that illustrate certain stylistic features of (syn)aesthetic performance are the characteristics of repetition and shapeshifting; the prevalence of corporeality; the elements of dance, music, intoxication and brutal play; the primordial manipulation of organic human sound; and the exploration of the ecstatic and sensual, the barbaric and cruel, via form and content (Nietzsche, 1967a; Otto, 1965). Performance with a disturbatory and ritualistic quality, allows the Dionysian to dominate where a (re)cognition within the processes of reception and appreciation occurs due to combinations of defamiliarised visceral texts. The performance work of Giddens, Carnesky, Churchill and Kane, are models of such work.

[5] Paglia highlights the importance of returning drama to the Dionysian in order to (re)connect it with its latent primordial potential and to (re)capture its ritualistic and ludic potential (see Paglia, 1992). She asserts, 'Drama, a Dionysian mode, turned against Dionysus in making the passage from ritual to mimesis, that is, from action to representation' (1992: 6). For Paglia, Western arts practice represses and evades the chthonian, 'earth's bowels, not its surface', in favour of an Apollinian aesthetic that revises 'this horror [of the chthonian] into imaginatively palpable form' (1992: 5-6). A chthonic practice of artistic disturbance rejects mimesis for ritual, for representation *within* action enabling a 'reconciliation' (Nietzsche, 1967a: 49) of humans with the primordial.

[6] Here Nietzsche foreshadows Kristeva's *semiotic*, as discussed below, and Ruthrof and Broadhursts' intersemiotic approach. Ruthrof argues Nietzsche sees linguistic analysis alone as presenting 'obstacles in our paths when we proceed to explore inner phenomena and impulses' (Nietzsche qtd in Ruthrof,

1992: 10). Broadhurst highlights the Dionysian 'commitment to immediacy . . . a knowledge that does not proceed from analysis or concepts' (Broadhurst, 1999: 31).

[7] Here defamiliarisation is a 'perception of form' which 'results from special artistic techniques' that force the receiver 'to *experience the form*' (Eichenbaum, 1965: 113, emphasis added). The Formalists' defamiliarised language has the ability to 'make us *see* differently' by exercising 'a controlled violence upon practical language, which is thereby deformed in order to compel our attention to its constructed nature' (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker 1997: 32). 'Practical' language is that which is used for 'acts of communication' functional and easily accessible, without the 'constructed quality' of the 'literary' (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker, 1997: 32).

[8] Following this, for Derrida festival, is, 'the movement of a birth, the continuous advent of *presence*' providing 'the moment of pure continuity' and 'the model of the continuous experience' (Derrida, 1976: 262-3, emphasis original) which establishes *jouissance* (the nearest translation being 'extreme pleasure' or 'unspeakable bliss'). Thus, *jouissance* is the experience of absolute presence or the moment of continuous presence, foregrounding an actualisation of *prae-sens* and fused disturbing/exhilarating experience which clarifies Kant's 'negative pleasure' (1911: 91). Further consideration of *jouissance* and its importance to (syn)aesthetic appreciation continues in my discussion of the theories of Barthes, Kristeva, Cixous and Irigaray below.

[9] These ideas thus foreshadow notions of the writerly text. As Bakhtin asserts, '[a]rtistic form, correctly understood, does not shape already prepared and found content, but rather *permits content to be found and seen for the first time*' (1984: 43, emphasis added).

[10] Pleasurable texts are 'writerly' because they 'encourage the reader to *produce* meanings' rather than simply consuming a specific 'fixed' meaning (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker, 1997: 159).

[11] Further to n.8 above, for Barthes, *jouissance* defines an experiential state of 'intense crisis' combining 'connotations of sexual orgasm and polysemic speech' (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker, 1997: 144). Stephen Heath translates Barthes' *plaisir* (pleasure) as, 'linked to cultural enjoyment and identity , to the cultural enjoyment of identity, to a homogenizing movement of the ego', which is contrasted with *jouissance* 'a radically violent pleasure' that 'shatters - dissipates, loses – that cultural identity, that ego' (Heath, 1987: 9).

[12] Thus enabling 'meaning' to be sensually, and individually, produced and theorised in a way that matches the corporeal, pleasurable nature of the work itself; 'you cannot speak "on" such a text, you can only speak "in" it, in its fashion' (Barthes, 1975: 22); 'Whenever I attempt to "analyze" a text which has given me pleasure, it is not my "subjectivity" I encounter but my "individuality", the given

which makes my body separate from other bodies and appropriates its suffering or its pleasure: it is my body of [*jouissance*] I encounter' (Barthes, 1975: 62).

[13] Kristeva's semiotic chora thus connects with Derridean notions of iterability and free-play, trace, mark and re-mark (see Chapter 1 above; Derrida, 1976).

[14] Kristeva's symbolic is bound up with Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytical mirror stage where the subject, becomes aware of absence and representation and the process of making meaning through language as an individual's absence from the signifier is recognised (see Lacan, 1977: 1-7). Kristeva entitles this fixing of signifier/signified as the '*thetic* phase', insisting 'all enunciation, whether of word or of sentence is thetic. It requires an identification' (1999a: 98, emphasis original). Kristeva's semiotic chora transgresses this conventional process as it is, '[i]ndifferent to language, enigmatic . . . rhythmic, unfettered, irreducible to its intelligible verbal translation . . . anterior to judgement' and is only 'restrained' by the 'syntax' of the symbolic (Kristeva, 1999a: 97). It 'can be understood as what the child . . . possesses before being able to speak' (Kristeva, 2000: 268).

[15] Thus foreshadowing the transgressive and corporeal signification present within an intersemiotic approach.

[16] The 'semiotized body' (Kristeva, 1999a: 95) is comparable to the dualistic and chthonic Dionysian body. Kristeva further compounds the chora's connection with the creative/destructive duality of the Dionysian, as she posits that the chora is a site where 'the subject is both generated and negated' (1999a: 95).

[17] Leon S. Roudiez translates Kristeva's use of the term *jouissance* as 'totality of enjoyment' a simultaneous sensual, sexual, spiritual, physical, conceptual' experiential capacity (1992: 16). It also 'implies the presence of meaning . . . requiring it by going beyond it' via the phonic '*j'ouïs sens* = I heard meaning' (Roudiez, 1992: 16).

[18] The genotext is in opposition to the 'phenotext' which is defined as, 'a structure', a matter of 'algebra' (Kristeva, 1999a: 121). The phenotext, includes the symbolic modality and denotes that language which 'obeys rules of communication' and is described linguistically in terms of 'competence' and 'performance' (Kristeva, 1999a: 121), thus, akin to the Formalists' 'practical language' (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker, 1997: 32).

[19] In this way it is aligned with Barthes' pleasurable text. As Barthes states 'writing aloud . . .belongs to the geno-text' (Barthes, 1975: 66).

[20] As a result there is a slippage and fusion within interpretation as, 'no signifying system [the subject] produces can be either 'exclusively' semiotic or 'exclusively' symbolic . . . instead necessarily marked

by an indebtedness to both' (Kristeva, 1999a: 93). Kristeva states that the dialectic between the semiotic and symbolic 'determines the type of discourse . . . involved', asserting that 'the subject is always *both* semiotic *and* symbolic' (1999a: 92-93, emphasis original). I suggest that, just as the Dionysian is dominant in (syn)aesthetics, so too is the semiotic dominant in (syn)aesthetic signification and discourse, where a chthonian measure and the traces of primary processes and *jouissance* are abundant.

[21] This exposes an individual's ability to transgress and displace linguistic communication by playing with her/his corporeal potential for transgressive signification. Broadhurst draws attention to how the 'play of signs' for Kristeva 'is the basis for all creation and the artist knows it well' (Kristeva qtd. in Broadhurst, 1999: 6).

[22] Like Barthes and Kristevas' theories, *écriture féminine* encompasses *jouissance*. Defined from a feminised, perspective, 'at the simplest level of meaning – metaphorical – woman's capacity for multiple orgasm indicates that she has the potential to attain something more than Total, something extra . . . Real and unpresentable' (Cixous, 1993: 165-6). Phonically, as discussed above (n.17), with *j'ouïs sens* 'another level of activity is implied . . . in which the word is all important' (Cixous, 1993: 165-6) and a sensate perceptual function, crucial.

[23] This argument for *écriture féminine* as a primordial mode of practice is further elucidated by Irigaray's notions of a 'double style' or 'double syntax' which slips between masculine and feminine (see Irigaray, 1999c and 1999d). The 'conscious' masculine and 'unconscious' feminine are two syntaxes which complete each other and are equals (although there is potential for one to dominate at any given time). Thus the bisexual/primordial mode of *écriture féminine* asserts the chthonic core in humans and mirrors the reciprocity of Nietzsche's Apollinian and Dionysian, Kristeva's split semiotic and symbolic subject, and the 'intellectual' semantic and 'sensate' somatic of the (syn)aesthetic style.

[24] Susan Sellers affirms the anti-essentialist argument, clarifying Cixous' 'insistence on the "feminine"' as a position open to both men and women does not mean the denial of biological sex differences' but 'a valuing of differences of all kinds' (1988: 2-3). *Écriture féminine* 'urges recognition of the multiple nature of the self' and the equally fragmented nature of human experience that accepts chaos, and values and celebrates difference (Sellers, 1988: 2–3). Sandra M. Gilbert strengthens the connection with the Dionysian by proposing that *écriture féminine* is 'a fundamentally political strategy, designed to redress the wrongs of culture through a revalidation of the rights of nature' (Gilbert, 1993: xv). Claudette Sartiliot asserts that by liberating the 'ties between writing and the unconscious' *écriture féminine* is a subversion and transgression of genres/genders and of 'Western thinking itself' which returns creative and analytical practice to the senses, 'especially hearing, smell and touch' (Sartiliot, 1996: 149 -156).

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[25] The 'eternal recurrence' (Nietzsche, 1968: 544) of *écriture féminine*, a perpetual development and (re)creation that exists due to the fact that those who are 'other' and 'write' from the margins always (re)generate and (re)position themselves due to the flux and flow of accepted discourse. This *différance* produces the transgressive powers of artistic creation; 'there is no invention possible. . . without there being in the inventing subject an abundance of the other, of variety' (Cixous, 1993: 84 - 97). As a 'writing effect' *écriture féminine* 'encourages textual free-play' and can 'revalue', 'reshape' and 'explode' previously fixed beliefs and dramatic canons, proving that the political is present in all domains of 'discursive practice' (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker, 1997: 145). Following this, the political is present in all (syn)aesthetic work as it explores and celebrates transgressive practice and marginal experience.

[26] For Cixous the theatre provides a space which allows for the truest sharing of human experience in an experiential way (see Cixous 1995b).

[27] Like Nietzsche, Artaud laments 'the experience of having lost life, of separation from thought, of the body exiled far from the mind' (Derrida, 1978: 180). Artaud concludes that 'the integrity of the flesh torn by all these differences must be restored in the theater' (qtd. in Derrida, 1978: 179).

[28] Kristeva asserts that Artaud's theories argue for transgressive bodily signs which operate within and beneath language, exciting components of the chora via 'a dance which mobilises gestures' and voice (Kristeva, 2000: 268). Artaud's ideas collude with 'the traumatic and the archaic' and make manifest 'the unnameable place of the passions and drives, linked to the energies of the body' (Kristeva, 2000: 268). Edward Scheer asserts the 'vibrant ludic quality' to Artaud's work defining him as 'a practitioner of *jouissance*' (qtd. in Kristeva, 2000: 269).

[29] Artaud's theatre 'attempted to destroy a history, the history of the dualist metaphysics . . . the duality of body and soul . . . speech and existence, of the text and the body', of practice and 'commentary' (Derrida, 1978: 175) releasing a 'dark potential which . . . through the act of destruction itself recreates and strengthens' (Ward, 1999: 124). Artaud's manifesto thus foreshadows Paglia's suggestion that drama must be returned to the Dionysian, in order to (re)instil the chthonic in Westernised minds (see Paglia, 1992: 6).

[30] Echoing Barthes arguments for speaking in the fashion of the work under analysis (see Barthes, 1975: 22), Weiss suggests that linguistic 'aberrations reveal the madness of the imagination, the manifestation of difference *in extremis*' and need equivalent, 'grammatical, rhetorical, and poetic models . . . to describe such irregular, eccentric, heteromorphic discursive patterns' (Weiss, 1993: 85).

[31] Here, as with Artaud's corporeal practice, writing leaves the literary and becomes 'an experience which embraces the body of the subject and its relation to the other' (Kristeva, 2000: 267).

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[32] Barker's theories for a verbal theatre are equivalent to Artaud's physical practice in that 'Neither Humour, Poetry or Imagination mean anything unless they re-examine man [sic] organically through anarchic destruction', harnessing the potency of the language of 'dreams' thereby 'generating stupendous flights of forms' (Artaud, 1993: 71).

[33] Turner's definition of the liminal describes it as a state of being, 'betwixt and between', where creative and experiential possibilities are at their most powerful, a 'site' where creation and destruction reside in a state of fecund potentiality (Turner, 1982: 47). It is significant that both Artaud and Turner view theatre as a space ripe for 'communion' or '*Spontaneous Communitas*' (spontaneous communal experience), 'a direct, immediate and total confrontation of human identities', where there is a 'liberation of human capacities of cognition, affect, volition, creativity etc' (Turner, 1982: 44).

[34] Broadhurst heralds the effects of (syn)aesthetic appreciation suggesting that, such a 'mixture of a wide metaphor produces a synaesthetic effect caused by the interplay of various mental sense-impressions' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 175).

[35] '[Nietzsche's] insistence on free creativity, invention and experimentation is central to liminal heterogeneity and indeterminacy' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 171).

3. (Syn)aesthetics - Performance Strategies in Practice

Chapters 1 and 2 show that (syn)aesthetics is a style of performance practice and an analytical approach which encompasses the audience appreciation strategy, that has emerged in recent contemporary practice. The critical and performance theories surveyed in Chapter 2 go some way to supporting and elucidating the (syn)aesthetic mode of production and appreciation. (Syn)aesthetic performance foregrounds visceral experience through sensate impressions, which are created and delivered through diverse elements of theatre within the performance experience as a whole. The sensate impact of the work affects a visceral cognition which leaves its traces on the perceiver's body via the immediacy of a corporeal memory. This allows a double-edged making-sense/*sense*-making process to occur that can affect an ineffable quality, which allows for 'the "a-ha" of recognition' (Cytowic 1994: 229) attributable to the (syn)aesthetic-sense.

The (syn)aesthetic style is a mode of practice which is concerned with strategies rather than being categorised by genre. It focuses on the impulse and effects of performance, and the symbiotic relationship between forms and content. The three key performance strategies integral to the (syn)aesthetic style are; the (syn)aesthetic hybrid; the prioritisation of the body as site, sight and cite of performance; and the visceral-verbal (syn)aesthetic *play*-text. Thus, the (syn)aesthetic style embraces the disturbatory potential of verbal and physical texts, and the intersemiotic, somatic/semantic approach complicit in the (syn)aesthetic hybrid. This intertextuality encourages an intersensual communication which can activate a (syn)aesthetic-sense. Thus, the (syn)aesthetic style when manipulated to its full encourages performance to be an experience in its purest definition, to feel, suffer, undergo.

3.1 The (Syn)aesthetic Hybrid – a 'total' (syn)aesthetic

The triumph of pure mise en scène (Artaud qtd. in Derrida, 1978: 236)

The particular *gesamtkunstwerk* of the (syn)aesthetic style, which I have named the (syn)aesthetic hybrid, establishes a foregrounded symbiotic relationship between all the performance elements (speech, movement, dance, design, light, sound, music, technology etc.) manipulated in an unusual manner *in order to produce* a (syn)aesthetic style and response. As argued in Chapter 1, the (syn)aesthetic hybrid develops Wagner's *gesamtkunstwerke* and the cross-fertilising of various aesthetic disciplines as explored most fervently by Modernist artistic practitioners, which provided an experimental foundation for contemporary arts practice. The particular 'exchange between the arts' (Goldberg, 1996: 46) in the (syn)aesthetic hybrid procures an unusual, or defamiliarised, fusing of the aural, visual, olfactory, oral, tactile and haptic within performance and creates a disturbatory mode of communication, thus developing a sensate, disturbatory sensibility.[1] In the (syn)aesthetic hybrid the fusion of disciplines and experiential forms amounts to 'an additive experience' (Cytowic, 1994: 92) in reception which can be exhilarating and/or disturbing. With its slippage between disciplines from high and low practices and its transgressive blurring of aesthetic states, the (syn)aesthetic hybrid is inherently 'Dionysian' in impulse (Nietzsche, 1967a).

A (syn)aesthetic hybrid embraces interdisciplinary practice, blending a variety of arts disciplines and techniques from high and low culture (for example, diverse historical theatre and dance conventions, stand-up, stripping, puppetry, film, video, music, design, technology and so on) and seeks to explore content through form in an original and unusual manner. As a result the very form of the performance takes on a

'polyphonic' quality (Bakhtin, 1984: 17). The multilingual nature of the fused

elements can provide a concrete haptic and tactile rendering of different

'consciousnesses' (Bakhtin, 1984: 17-18) and experiences with a 'carnivalised'

layering of the ritualistic, the sacred and the profane (Bakhtin, 1984: 107). These

modes, forms and techniques are manipulated in such a way as to fuse the physical

and the linguistic, the cerebral and the corporeal, the somatic and the semantic and

transgress notions of what performance is and can be. A (syn)aesthetic hybrid may

fuse disciplines to the extent that demarcation is impossible, or alternatively, any one

element can dominate at any time. Furthermore, the (syn)aesthetic hybrid insists on a

vitality of form to produce sensate experience.

    The (syn)aesthetic hybrid equates with Artaud's theories of 'total theatre',

combining speech, movement, dance, design, sound (organic and/or composed), light,

puppetry, mask, technology and site (see Artaud, 1993: 68-87). Various combinations

of performance elements, arranged within a piece of total theatre, 'transgress the

ordinary limits of art and words' (Artaud, 1993: 71). Such a fusing of aesthetics

ensures that the performance space speaks 'its own concrete language', a tangible

'many-hued spatial language' which 'develops all its physical and poetic effects on all

conscious levels and in all senses' with exhilarating and disturbing results (Artaud,

1993: 27-45). Following Artaud, within a (syn)aesthetic hybrid there is a fusion of

each visceral performance language to ensure that, 'connections, levels, are

established between one means of expression and another' in order to 'fuse sight with

sound, intellect with sensibility'(Artaud 1993: 38-73).

    In contemporary practice Artaud's theories are enhanced by the exciting

advances in performance techniques, design (light, sound, video, film, digital

technology and on-line interaction) and site. An exciting element of the (syn)aesthetic

hybrid is the developing experimentation with site-specific work. Site not only adds to the (syn)aesthetic interpretation of performance events but site-specific productions also ensure that theatre is no longer placed in a darkened auditorium, behind heavy velvet curtains, but moves and breathes anywhere, the site itself inspiring and (shift)shaping the work. Furthermore, it provides an alternative level of formalistic defamiliarisation by making the audience aware of the haptic quality of spatial presence and their position within that. This embellishes the stage image and produces a lucid evocation, a further dimensional layer of visceral meaning, for the audience to absorb and interpret. As discussed in Chapter 4, Giddens and Carnesky provide exciting examples of the possibilities of space as a tangible presence, or *prae-sens*, 'that which stands before the senses' (Scarry, 1985: 197) in performance.

The (syn)aesthetic hybrid pertains to Broadhurst's descriptions of hybridity within heterogeneous liminal performance, 'that simultaneously distances and engages the spectator' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 71). Such hybridity establishes form as 'a merging of the aesthetic with everyday life', 'montage', 'dreamscape', 'collage' and 'imagination', that works to instil 'lasting effects' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 77-89). Within a visceral (syn)aesthetic hybrid, digital and multi-media technology can be manipulated to counterpoint and co-exist with the live performance, in order to foreground and interrogate the live experience of the performer/audience relationship. As I discuss in Chapter 5 below, both Giddens and Carnesky in their performance work manipulate a live recording of sections of the performance as it runs. They juxtapose the live with the pre-recorded, the live with the live-recorded and the live-recorded with the pre-recorded, engaging a defamiliarised form which itself demands a 'special perception' (Shklovsky, 1965: 18).

Within the (syn)aesthetic hybrid, form is no longer perceived as an 'envelope' but instead is a dynamic entity that alone delivers content, crafted in such a way that the audience 'experiences' the sensual quality of form itself as a 'perceptible structure designed to be experienced within its very own fabric' (Shklovsky qtd. in Eichenbaum, 1965: 114). The physical performance form is foregrounded and defamiliarised in order to impart 'the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known' (Shklovsky, 1965: 12).[2] Following this idea, the workings of the (syn)aesthetic hybrid ensure that space truly becomes 'a tangible, physical place' (Artaud, 1993: 27). In the (syn)aesthetic hybrid the design is woven into the fabric of the performance in order to create tangible sets, 'poetic playgrounds' which 'offer resistance' establishing 'a physical reality that is like a foreign element' (Servos, 1998: 44-45). The design of the piece can also be shapeshifted within the real time staging of the performance to emphasise its tangible, transgressive quality.

This is apparent in the design of Carnesky's *Jewess Tattooess* (1999a, 1999b, 2001b) where the design morphs from venue to venue, due to Carnesky's artistic (re)writing of the work, and mutates further within each performance due to her interaction with the shapeshifting sets she performs within. In the most recent production at Copenhagen (Carnesky, 2001b), Carnesky emerges from a Star of David made entirely from pages of the Torah (Hebrew sacred text), leaving the traces of her body in the set as she issues from it. Later she adds to this with bloodied footsteps, leaving further imprints of her body upon the already (im)printed text. As she scars her own flesh with the tattooist's needle her sensate body fuses with the design of the piece as site, sight and cite of performance. Each Star of David inscribed in her flesh remains throughout the run of the performance, and last beyond as the traces of her work in her own flesh (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b, 2001b). In this way, a (syn)aesthetic

hybrid can demonstrate 'stage effects [that] have real consequences'(Jays, 1999: 525), producing a 'theatre of traces' (Cody, 1998: 129). Traces of the performance are left within the design just as traces of the sensate moment are etched within and upon the individual performer and cited within and upon the corporeal memory of the audience member.

Performance practice that executes a complex (syn)aesthetic hybrid demands much of its audience. The audience is expected to 'read' and interpret a whole stage picture which interweaves live performers, design elements, pre-recorded and live verbal texts, film and video, where divisions between form and content become perceptibly inseparable. All the senses are called into action – that which is visible, audible, olfactory, haptic, tactile and tangible becomes crystallised in the performance format, foregrounding the form of the performance as a semiotic site of transgressive and intertextual communication (after Kristeva, 1999a, 1992). Within the (syn)aesthetic hybrid there exists a 'semiotised' (Kristeva, 1999a: 95) performance space where transgressive speech signs (written and spoken, the intellectual/semantic qualities), can be explored through the body, and corporeal signs (internal and external physicalities, the chthonic/somatic qualities), can be explored through speech.

The polyvalent potential of a (syn)aesthetic hybrid, demands a shifting audience perspective. This ensures that an audience perceives the work in a multi-dimensional manner.[3] I would argue that when any performance practice manipulates hybridity in this particular way, it results in a multi-dimensional (re)cognition within the audience that draws on a 'multisensory evaluation' (Cytowic, 1994: 167). Here a Dionysian 'resonance' (Nietzsche, 1994: 22) is affected, which enables a 'sensing beyond' in the appreciation of the work (after Nietzsche, 1967a: 132). In this way, a (syn)aesthetic

performance effect is presented which in turn demands a (syn)aesthetic response due to the nature of such a sense-layered, intertextual stimulus.

The open, ambiguous and complex nature of such work necessitates a deconstructive approach within an intersemiotic process of analysis.[4] Due to its intertextualised form, a (syn)aesthetic hybrid ensures a 'complex simultaneity of stage processes leading to the impossibility of producing a single interpretation' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 78). It is open to many readings, in fact, demands polyvalent interpretation. This foregrounds the audience as active participants in the performance experience and the matrix of meaning making. This polysemantic approach invites mental play, causing what I consider to be a visceral-cerebral disturbance, and requires an intersemiotic mode of analysis. The simultaneous, sensate readings resulting from the interplay of the various layers within the (syn)aesthetic hybrid are important to the (syn)aesthetic performance style and its appreciation strategy. It is the playful defamiliarisation integral to the shapeshifting form of the (syn)aesthetic hybrid that is responsible for much of the cerebral disturbance that occurs in reception of (syn)aesthetic work.

Following this, the varied visceral languages of a (syn)aesthetic hybrid when fused and contrasted can produce a 'total experience that allows the experience of reality in a state of sensual excitement' (Servos, 1998: 39). A (syn)aesthetic hybrid, via a corporeal 'resonance' (Nietzsche, 1994: 22), establishes an enjoyable and/or disturbing fusion of the somatic/semantic allowing the double-edged making-sense/*sense*-making process to occur. This ensures the performance event is far more that an intellectual exercise and emphasises its visceral, experiential quality. Broadhurst highlights the experiential significance of interdisciplinary practice in that

as 'a deliberate and creative differend' the 'intersemiotic practices and aesthetic features' provoke 'sensations of disquiet and discomfort' (1999a: 65).

This is evident in the hybridised Royal Court production of Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* (2000b & 2001d), directed by James Macdonald, where the use of film projections of a grainy external world leaves its traces on the bodies of the performers and in the minds of the audience. Interwoven with the powerful and haunting verbal text and the intensity of the concentrated physical performances, this fusing of technology within the design jars reception and produces a disturbing visceral response by establishing a dreamlike quality. It fuses notions of the real with the imagined, the past with the present, the live with the pre-recorded, and exposes traces of moments equivalent to those traces of the performance left within the audience member's body. An interdisciplinary approach to this same *play*-text is espoused in Paul Woodward's production (Kane, 2001e), a highly physicalised (re)writing of Kane's words which exploits the potential of the (syn)aesthetic hybrid to affect on an intensely visceral level.

Within the (syn)aesthetic hybrid discrete elements may dominate which become primarily responsible for affecting the (syn)aesthetic response in appreciation. Bearing this in mind, I will now go on to consider the unusual manipulation of physical and verbal texts as prioritised within (syn)aesthetic work.

3.2 The Disturbatory Body and the (Syn)aesthetic Style

> [T]he transmission of body signals, opens the way to defining a reality determined by corporeal conventions. (Broadhurst, 1999a: 77).

> Whatever can be said of the body can be said of theater (Artaud qtd. in Derrida, 1978: 232).

The human body as a signifier within (syn)aesthetic performance holds great potential for deep penetrating communication. The eloquence of the human body to translate, or (re)present internal and external human conflict and experience, is a factor that confronts and disturbs the traditional Westernised, particularly British, modes of producing and interpreting performance. An individual body presents an intersemiotic text as it is open to an abundance of readings. This intersemiotic potential of the actual body in performance is vast due to the 'textual corporeality that is fluid in its investments and meanings' (Shildrick & Price, 1999: 1) which enables 'multiple representations' within the play of 'multiple [corporeal] discourses' (Dempster, 1998: 229). The (syn)aesthetically styled body in performance provides the slippage and fusion between various sensual languages, such as the verbal, haptic, olfactory and so on, which is experienced through the equivalent (syn)aesthetically perceiving bodies in the audience.

Artaud's arguments for a 'writing of the body' (Derrida: 1978: 191) are made manifest in performance which utilises the actual body as the sentient source and conduit of sensate communication. The exploration of marginalised experience within and between actual bodies in performance demonstrates a physical practice of *écriture féminine* (Cixous, 1993, Irigaray, 1985). Embodied narratives embrace the notion of writing from the margins via a truly corporeal writing of the body (see Cixous, 1993: 84-97). The body in performance automatically displays the 'transformation of each one's relationship to his or her body (and to the other body)' (Cixous, 1993: 83).

In (syn)aesthetic performance 'the multilingual body as text' (Cody, 1998: 118) equates with Bakhtin's notions of 'polyphonic' linguistic texts (1984: 17). This prioritisation of the polyphonic body highlights the shapeshift nature of the human body as well as its potential to communicate and interpret multiple corporeal

'consciousnesses' (Bakhtin, 1984: 18). As site, sight and cite of performance, the polyphonic body and its multi-faceted capacity for communication is crucial to the (syn)aesthetic style. Rather than supporting or representing 'something spoken' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 65) the movement and physical quality of the actual body in performance 'speaks' itself, 'leading to a free association of themes rather than a linear narrative which can provide no answers in manifest or rational (or linguistic) terms' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 65). Thus, 'as direct working material' the human body 'goes beyond the representational role-playing of theatre' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 103).

The body in performance participates in both, 'telling its own story' (Servos, 1998: 42) and simultaneously confronts diverse corporeal polyphonies, or consciousnesses (after Bakhtin, 1984: 17-18) in the expression of marginal experience. Significant to the (syn)aesthetic style is the fact that emphasis is often placed on a very real *lived* and *living* body conveying its own history.[5] In this way, works which foreground the body align themselves with the marginal by (re)presenting a 'reality determined by corporeal conventions' (Broadhurst, 1999b: 22). Here it is the body that is 'carnivalised' (Bakhtin, 1984: 107), 'set free to speak subversively or shockingly' (Selden, Widdowson, Brooker, 1997: 44). Thus, the (syn)aesthetic body in performance 'tells' an individual's experience of their own body which in turn allows the perceiving body in the audience to (re)cognise, in an experiential manner via a corporeal memory, both the other individual body and her or his own individual body.

The (syn)aesthetic mode of production and appreciation exploits the actual body's potential for deep penetrating communication. This feature is evidenced in the work of Giddens and Carnesky who present the play of the body and its multiple discourses, demonstrating shifting identities and mutating morphologies within the

interwoven form and content, further highlighted by interjections from mediated

images (pre-recorded and live recorded) of those live bodies present in the

performance.[6] This 'staging of bodily identities' (Brown, 1999: 15) that reveal

consciousnesses, employing the multiple representations of the polyphonic body, fuels

the immediacy of (syn)aesthetic appreciation and its intersemiotic mode, by opening

the meaning-making matrix 'to multiple spectator positions' (Brown, 1999: 15).

The performing body (re)presents 'narratives of corporeal displacement and

disintegration' (Brown, 1999: 15) which disturb traditional methods of appreciating

and analysing certain physical performance work, demanding the sensate involvement

of the (syn)aesthetic strategy of appreciation. The actual body in performance thus

expounds Kristeva's notion of the human subject as the 'play of signs' (qtd. in

Broadhurst, 1999a: 6), fulfilling an individual's ability in performance to transgress

and displace linguistic communication by playing with the corporeal potential for

signification. This is particularly apparent in Carnesky's *Jewess Tattooess* (1999a,

1999b, 2001b) where her body reveals her historical, cultural and performing identity

– as a (tattooed) woman, as a Jew, as an artist astride and in-between the fringes of

performance. Her actual body is presented for the audience to touch, to experience in

the flesh, whilst the interwoven narratives of the (syn)aesthetic hybrid engage

spectators in the historical, cultural and personal experience on both an abstract and a

concrete level. It is just such a manipulation of 'lives and bodies as raw material'

(Jays, 1999: 525) that can be the cause of disquiet and disturbance in appreciation of

(syn)aesthetic work.

Following this example from Carnesky's work, an additional disturbatory

quality integral to the actual body in performance is its shapeshift potential, its

mutational capabilities which defamiliarise what is understood about the body via its

'transgressive morphology' (Shildrick & Price 1999: 11) in both performance and

appreciation.[7] A transgressive body in performance can present those bodies which

fail to conform in such a way that the transgressions are felt through the perceiving

bodies in the audience. Strong examples of such are Churchill's shapeshifting Skriker,

as damaged, twisted and mutating as her speech (Churchill, 1994a); the tormented

bodies of Kane's work - non conformist bodies which 'transgress' because they are

'other' (gay, abused, disfigured) that also perform transgressive acts (raping,

dismembering, bodies in seizure) (Kane, 1996, 1998a); the scrutinised lived and loved

bodies in Giddens' work (Giddens, 1999a, 2000b) and Carnesky's tattooed and

tabooed body (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b, 2001b). Broadhurst, following Michel

Foucault, highlights how disturbatory bodies are 'non-"docile bodies"' (1999a: 178)

which confront and explode notions of conforming bodies. This disturbs and

(re)writes conformity in terms of both the immediate individual body - sensual,

emotional, psychological, sexual and so on - as well as in terms of the historical,

social, cultural and political body.[8]

The 'polyphonic' body (Bakhtin, 1984: 17), with its potential to (re)present

itself as a site of struggle and conflict, is a primary exposer of the Dionysian traits of

duality, disturbance, shapeshifting and playfulness (see Nietzsche, 1967a). It can

expound the lived experience of an individual (gendered, sexual, historical, political

and so on) by ensuring that, 'the entire symbolism of the body is called into play'

(Nietzsche, 1967a: 40). A playful performing body makes physical Derrida's notions

of iterability marking a 'relation between repetition and alteration' and critiquing

'pure identity' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 50).

Exploring the potential of the body as a site of performance enables the

experience of Kristeva's semiotic, that which is irrational, unconscious, sensate and

transgressive (Kristeva, 1999a). In this way, the human body explores and presents

the dialectic between internal and external reality. This idea is made manifest in

Giddens' *Not all the time . . .* (1999a, 1999b) where internal and external lived

experience is translated through the visual, aural, spatial and corporeal. Thus, in

(syn)aesthetic performance the body is a means of making the intangible tangible, a

mode of communication that enables the saying of the unsayable. Such corporeal

signification is written into the verbal and physical imagery of Churchill and Kanes'

writing. This is evident in particular in *A Mouthful of Birds* (Churchill & Lan, 1998)

and *Cleansed* (Kane, 1998a). It is thus a crucial factor in producing a (syn)aesthetic-

sense within the audience. In this way it is the actual body as the 'sentient source'

(Scarry, 1985: 123) that employs and instils a 'primitive sensitivity' (Luria, 1969: 80)

in the strategies of production and appreciation.

A crucial aspect of (syn)aesthetic performance is that it is both signified, or

'told', *and* experienced, or 'read', through the body. The actual body thus proves itself

to be a chthonic conduit, an experiencing agent, for performer and audience alike,

evoking complete, corporeal memory (sensate, emotional, physical and so on) in the

perceiving bodies in the audience and manifesting an actual 'multisensory evaluation'

(Cytowic, 1994: 167) in interpretation. The body also provides the means by which

there is a return to the primordial within this fused cognition and an emphasis on the

sensual, haptic and tactile. (Syn)aesthetic performances present (as well as produce) a

series of sensations which are disturbing in essence because of their visceral impact.

Arguably it is the live presence, as in *prae-sens*, of bodies in performance that can

create physical images which have a 'lasting effect' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 80-1).

In this way, a (syn)aesthetically styled body within performance provides a

unique access to the 'lived' as an experiential dimension. Following Artaud, the

performer's body in a (syn)aesthetic performance is manipulated so that it works 'directly upon the nervous system of the audience' (Ward, 1999: 126). This highlights the significance of the body as the primary interpreter, where the performance is 'aimed at the whole anatomy . . . unafraid of exploring the limits of our nervous sensibility' (Artaud, 1993: 66), whereby performer and audience make a 'substantial journey *through the senses*' (Artaud, 1993: 89, emphasis original). The perception and interpretation of the piece is thus designed to 'enter the mind through the body' (Artaud, 1993: 77).

By prioritising the performance potential of the sensate body, the (syn)aesthetically styled body ensures that corporeal images, traces and memories, 'rather than thought guide thinking' (Luria, 1969: 116) and the 'primitive sensitivity' (Luria, 1969: 80) of the body is called into action by performing and perceiving bodies alike. In engaging a making-sense/*sense*-making strategy of appreciation, the audience appreciates body before knowledge, corporeal memory before intellectual analysis so that the 'dissemination of knowledge is secondary to the experience' (Servos, 1998: 39).[9]

As the sentient source of performance signification *and* the sentient receiver, the (syn)aesthetic body is responsible for a Dionysian immediacy in its sensory appreciation experience that achieves a slippage between the noetic and chthonic (see Nietzsche, 1967a). The (syn)aesthetic body thus produces *and* interprets a (syn)aesthetic language of the flesh through a corporeal 'sharability of sentience' (Scarry, 1985: 326). This results in the body becoming both sight and site of performance, demanding a 'sensate involvement' (Schneider, 1997: 32) from the audience. Yet furthermore, the body becomes the cite of performance in its corporeal interpretation, in the immediate moment and in the subsequent processes of

'complete, visceral recall' (Bartlett, 1999: 4). Here the notion of 'embodied vision' (Schneider, 1997: 35) and the capacity to 'see beyond the visible' (Schneider, 1997: 22), where the intangible is made tangible, becomes paramount. It is the somatic approach to performance, foregrounded in the corporeal, which produces 'sensuous contact' (Brown, 1999: 13) between performer, performance and audience, allowing a making-sense/*sense*-making interpretation to occur.

The body as a 'semiotised' site (Kristeva, 1999a: 95) of performance becomes the source by which 'feeling and form are organically connected' (Dempster, 1998: 229). Within (syn)aesthetic work, the actual body is both polyphonic performance signifier and the very *form* of the performance. Such an interface within (syn)aesthetic performances means that the vitality *of the form alone* becomes a sensate experience enabling a 'special perception' (Shklovsky, 1965: 18) within the perceiving individual via corporeal memory. The (syn)aesthetic body in performance thus articulates those sensations, those experiences of the (syn)aesthetic-sense, that are beyond the powers of verbal communication. It attempts to 'retrieve a chthonic identity by direct corporeal insertion into the creative act' (Broadhurst, 1999b: 22) and thus (re)asserts a fused body by moving away from the mind/body split, thus privileging 'the immanence of the body' *alongside* 'transcendent reason' (Brown, 1999: 16 n.10).[10]

The (syn)aesthetic style foregrounds the body in performance as the sentient conduit for communicating and interpreting human experience. Developing Artaud's demands for performance work to communicate with a new language through the 'writing of the body' (Derrida, 1978: 191), (syn)aesthetically styled contemporary performance prioritises the body in such a way that it continuously (re)writes itself as a multi-faceted, sensate signifier in order to explore, present and interpret contemporary states, events and concerns.

Following this, (syn)aesthetically styled speech concerns itself with a corporeal quality in writerly style and exposes the possibilities for saying the unsayable through a fusion of verbal and physical image. (Syn)aesthetic *play*-texts explore embodiment and embodied knowledge in their processes of creation and appreciation via their visceral-verbal effects.

3.3 Disturbing Speech Patterns - (syn)aesthetics and the visceral-verbal *play*-text

> Sometimes there are sentences . . . which you love so much you want to inscribe them on pebbles, tattoo them on your arms . . . . Like stones for our minds to ruminate on, to turn over and over in every direction (Novarina, 1996: 113).

> [I]t is possible to present the 'unpresentable'. . . from beyond but also including language (Broadhurst, 1999a: 8).

An important feature of my argument is the way in which verbal text can be manipulated to (syn)aesthetic ends. Spoken language, when interwoven with other components of the (syn)aesthetic hybrid, becomes a further sensate component within the fused corporeal communication. (Syn)aesthetic verbal texts explore somatic experience through the sensate - texture, colour and so on - which the audience can appreciate through the form itself. In this way it is the manipulation of speech, gesture and image, written into the *play*-text, alongside the layers of texts within the (syn)aesthetic hybrid (bodies, light, sound, colour etc.) that work with and/or against the words, which ensures a powerful (syn)aesthetic response is achieved. Here, (syn)aesthetic writing practice embraces a 'colourful and figurative use of language and the juxtaposition of metaphors' that produce 'a synaesthetic effect caused by the interplay of various mental sense-impressions' (Broadhurst, 1999b: 20).

The inheritance of (syn)aesthetic writing can be seen to lie in a fusion of the linguistic lusciousness of Jacobean writing and in the aesthetics of Modernism and feminised practice. Such writing breaks away from narrative and conventional

dialogue and (re)writes linguistic conventions in order to (re)present and make sense/*sense* of the social, cultural and political mood of the time. Following this, (syn)aesthetic *play*-texts demonstrate a need to show that internal, chthonic human experience (the subconscious, abject, emotional, psychological and so on) is as complex and significant as external experience.

(Syn)aesthetic writing crystallises and concentrates the intensity of personal, lived experience and themes, revealing the invisible (experiences, emotions, states, concepts) through the words. Also characteristic of (syn)aesthetic *play*-texts is the exploration of taboo states - violence, love, abuse, tenderness, relationships and so on. Furthermore, (syn)aesthetic *play*-texts also connect wider social, historical and cultural issues with the individual and personal in an unusual and evocative way. The writing of Churchill and Kane are exemplary of both these features.

As with the play of multiple discourses available to the actual body in performance, as discussed above, *play*-writing can explore a variety of linguistic registers, emphasising the corporeal and interdisciplinary within its very form. When manipulated to (syn)aesthetic ends writing has the ability to cross boundaries and cross fertilise itself with other disciplines and practices. For example Churchill's *The Skriker* (1994a), or *The Lives of The Great Poisoners* (1998), interweaves dance, music and design within the substance of the text, demonstrating that *play*-writing can be perceived as a physicalised practice in itself, with an indefinable nature and inherent resistance strategies.[11] This allows the (syn)aesthetic writing style to actively embrace diversity in form, content, register and so on proving how verbal signification morphs its own morphology, becoming, 'something else at any moment' (Irigaray, 1999e: 55).

Prevalent in (syn)aesthetic *play*-texts is a writerly ambiguity that provides interpretative freedom and disturbatory pleasure in the layers of meaning which explore difficult and complex states. The (syn)aesthetic style thus disrupts traditional modes of writing practice, in structure and form, and also conventional modes of reception. It is my opinion that (syn)aesthetic writing engages with such cross-fertilisation in terms of disciplines and discourses, and embraces resistance strategies, *in order to produce* a defamiliarised, immediate, visceral impact which disturb 'reading', activate the senses, and have the potential to allow words to touch the unconscious as well as reveal 'polyphonic consciousnesses' (Bakhtin, 1984: 17-18).[12]

This Dionysian play (Nietzsche, 1967a) of speech-shifting is evident in the damaged and playfully disturbing language in Churchill's work, to the brutally tender speech of Kane; the physically explored verbal transcripts in Giddens' choreography to the prismatic mixture of Yiddish, carnival vernacular, fairy-tales, Hebrew scripture and playful, erotic banter in Carnesky's writerly practice. All draw the audience inward to a chthonic knowledge by stimulating, through word-play, sensations which are read through the body.

In terms of words touching the unconscious (see Cixous, 1993: 92-97; Irigaray, 1991) visceral-verbal *play*-texts have the power to make tangible the intangible, where words have the ability to activate the (syn)aesthetic-sense. Broadhurst, following Jean-François Lyotard, highlights the experience of the unsayable as that 'something which should be put into phrases, cannot be phrased' (1999b: 21). With (syn)aesthetically styled speech, this 'something' *has* been phrased, and phrased in an unusual and immediate linguistic manner in order to foreground that which formally denied phrasing. The noetic capabilities of language in (syn)aesthetic *play*-texts comes about because the audience hears the words first with their bodies, with a

primordial sentience, an embodied knowledge. To achieve this the transcendent

quality of language itself is manipulated, enabling the verbal act to return to the

chthonic forces and possibilities of the imagination (see Barker, 1997: 38). This

language is 'the normally *unspoken*' which articulates the ineffable, allowing

audiences to 'become party to a secret . . . share a transgression' (Barker, 1997: 167,

emphasis original).[13]

    In this defamiliarised state of 'exposed lucidity' (Derrida, 1978: 242), words

become integral to the (syn)aesthetic nature of a performance and are responsible for

the disturbing nature of the reception. Etched onto the bodies of the audience, the

words themselves become corporeal citations in appreciation. This is particularly true

of Churchill's *Far Away* (2000a, 2000b), where verbal language is manipulated in

such a way that the familiar is made unfamiliar. Such visceral play allows the

audience to 'experience the play moment by moment' (Barker, 1997: 38) where it is

the words that stimulate an immediate (re)cognition, which evokes the ineffable and

allows for the '"a-ha" of recognition' (Cytowic, 1994: 229). In this way the audience

receives the spoken words through the senses.[14]

    In playing with the fused noetic and chthonic potential of verbal language,

(syn)aesthetic writing explores the border between language and sound. Often it

shows the effects of language at its most damaged and destroyed in order to reve(a)l

in its sensate and physical quality. Defamiliarised language, like that presented in

Churchill's *The Skriker* (1994) or *Blue Heart* (1997a) demonstrates how

(syn)aesthetic *play*-writing can (re)write speech, expose its shapeshifting, 'infinitely

renewable' form (Barthes, 1975: 51). By deconstructing it as an 'understood'

semantic tool the verbal becomes a visceral form of communication that releases the

somatic essence of words.

Disfiguring words in this way allows a (re)perception in interpretation reached by a process of making-sense/*sense*-making. Words themselves, via their sound and form and their 'disfigured' (after Barthes, 1975: 14), or disturbed, 'meaning' have the potential to transmit primarily emotive and sensate experience and become 'verbal lacerations' (Cody, 1998: 122), etching themselves into the perceptive faculties of the sentient body. Language in this mode becomes far more than merely aural description. It is able to penetrate deeper as a result of the manipulation of word as somatic sound capsule and semantic sign.

(Syn)aesthetic *play*-texts thus allow 'words without meaning' to be 'necessary' (Shklovsky qtd. in Eichenbaum, 1965: 109). Such a playful, physical quality of pronouncing and articulating, or performing, verbal language becomes a Dionysian 'dance of the organs of speech' (Shklovsky qtd. in Eichenbaum, 1965: 109). This ludic 'disfiguration' (Barthes, 1975: 14) is evident in Churchill's *The Skriker* (1994a) and *Blue Heart* (1997a) as highlighted in Chapter 5. Such play not only reveals the disturbatory potential of the imagination but can also release the performers and audience member into the 'free-play' of their imaginative faculties (Kant, 1911: 58-60). By playing with the vestiges of linguistic meaning, an audience can interpret via a (re)perception of this meaning through the visceral (re)perception of the *sound* of the word. The shapeshifting nature of such linguistic play forces an audience to 'materially recast' (Novarina, 1996: 52) in a corporeal manner both 'lexicon' and 'thought' (Weiss, after Novarina, 1993: 92).

Here, the disturbatory 'Dionysian content' (Nietzsche, 1967a: 37-54) within verbal language, encourages the 'experience of words' to be 'a measure of their expressiveness' (Luria, 1969: 91).[15] Such embodied and imagistic word perception enables an audience to experience every word, perceiving the details – aurally,

visually, physiologically. Thus, the semantic 'meaning' of words is reflected as much in the somatic sound and emotional resonance they embody. Via this sentience, words can 'impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known' (Shklovsky, 1965: 12) where a 'special perception' (Shklovsky, 1965: 18), shapeshifts 'the signifier' that the words formally encompassed, 'a great distance' (Barthes, 1975: 67). This playful defamiliarisation ensures that its making-sense capacity, of a semantic, cerebral kind, is (re)instilled with a *sense*-making capacity of a somatic, corporeal kind.

The (syn)aesthetic play with the spoken word exposes feeling (both hapticity and emotion) and experience through its rhythms, its sounds, its connotations so that the powers of 'intoxication' serve to 'subvert reason' in interpretation (Barker, 1997: 213). Developing Brik's proposition of rhythm as an integral part of sensate expression (see Eichenbaum, 1965: 110-1, 124), these playful verbal texts in performance highlight the fact that (syn)aesthetically manipulated language takes on a physical signification producing a visceral experience of the words themselves.[16] Perceived and understood on a sensual level, the aural, physical and intellectual powers of language, as a fusion of sound, emotion and signification, establish a (re)cognised meaning through the double-edged somatic/semantic mode of communication. Verbal language is thus appreciated via a 'multisensory evaluation' (Cytowic, 1994: 167).

Following this, (syn)aesthetic *play*-texts can engage words in a manner, 'distinct from their actual meaning and even running counter to that meaning' by way of creating 'an undercurrent of impressions, connections and affinities beneath language' (Artaud, 1993: 27). In this way the (syn)aesthetic visceral-verbal can 'give words something of the significance they have in dreams' (Artaud, 1993: 72). This is

evidenced in particular in Kane's *Crave* (1998b) and *4.48 Psychosis* (2000a). The manipulation of linguistic devices (onomatopoeia, sonority, intonation, intensity), and of up-turning grammatical rules in a Dionysian fashion (Nietzsche, 1967a), can return speech to its disturbing primal roots, 'its full, physical shock potential' (Artaud, 1993: 35). Here words are employed 'not only for their meaning, but for their forms, their sensual radiation' (Artaud, 1993: 83).[17] (Syn)aesthetic performance thus creates a space where verbal 'images are relished for them-selves, and language becomes a sensuality' to counter the 'naturalistic, populist and mechanistic metres of the street' in order to enhance contradiction and disturbance and extol '*the beauty of language*' (Barker, 1997: 88, 114, emphasis original). Such verbal play activates the (syn)aesthetic-sense, engaging a noetic transcendence within interpretation.

It is via such ludic play with the physicality of the verbal that body and word find an unusual and symbiotic relationship, where the intertwined corporeality of the human body and visceral-verbal language 'speak the corporeal' (Irigaray, 1999a: 43) and produce 'a compelling imagistic language' (Jays, 1999: 524).[18] (Syn)aesthetic writing appeals to the imagination, in an acknowledgement that the sentient body is able to listen to, and understand, a more imagistic language at a deeper, somatic level. It is this corporeal aspect of delivered speech that feeds into, and derives out of notions of 'writing the body' (see Barthes, 1975; Cixous, 1993: Irigaray, 1985). It is the corporeality of the word which a (syn)aesthetic writing style explores and expounds that encourages a (syn)aesthetic perception of verbal language. In doing so, such writerly practice highlights a certain antagonism between speech and physicality, whilst simultaneously foregrounding the potential for a symbiotic relationship between the two.

(Syn)aesthetic *play*-texts can be entirely corporeal in performance and interpretation. They can often stimulate and accompany movement based performance or arise out of physiological experience, as evidenced in the physicalised interpretations of Churchill and Kanes' writing (Churchill, 1988, 1994a, 2002c; Kane, 2001e). What is clear is that the physicality in the visceral-verbal text demands to be interpreted through movement and striking physical images. Here, linguistic play uncovers the 'extreme possibilities of language' and actually leads 'beyond the textual, directly into the morass of the body' (Weiss, after Novarina, 1993: 84-7).

In terms of (syn)aesthetic performance, 'vocal writing' or 'writing aloud' (Barthes, 1975: 66), is of acute importance to the (syn)aesthetic *play*-text. Here the experience of the words is carried by the 'grain of the voice', the 'erotic mixture of timbre and language' (Barthes, 1975: 37, 66). Such an 'articulation of the body' (Barthes, 1975: 66) accentuates the corporeality of the written text, ensuring that it is 'the *speak*' that becomes 'most physical in the theater' (Novarina, 1996: 58, emphasis original). A physical wrestling with the text in the verbal-delivery can stimulate a visceral interpretation of the work, which can be responsible for 'a profound reading, ever deeper, ever closer to the core' (Novarina, 1993: 101).

This 'dance of the organs of speech' (Shklovsky qtd. in Eichenbaum, 1965: 109) (re)writes the *play*-text via both the act of performing the piece and also in the translation of this within the process of interpretation. In translating the viscerality of this experience to the audience the 'reconciliation of word and body' (Weiss, after Novarina, 1993: 86) truly occurs via the corporeal exchange from writer, to performer to audience (see Novarina, 1996: 108). Thus a making-*sense*/sense-making process is put to full effect in the fused somatic/semantic appreciation. The predominance of the

senses and corporeality in (syn)aesthetic writing ensures that it is a very real *writing*
of the body in concept and form.

3.4 (Syn)aesthetics - A Sensate Style

> Theatre is the only place where the mind can be reached through the organs and . . .
> understanding can only be awakened through our senses (Artaud, 1974: 182-3).

The complex and sensual manipulation of physical and verbal language in
performance work; the embracing of the technical possibilities that video, film, digital
and on-line interaction provide; the fact that design, light and sound play a major role
in a variety of productions and are increasingly technologically advanced, all blend
together to ensure the progressively innovative quality of the (syn)aesthetic hybrid. Its
intertextual layering of performance languages goes far beyond linguistic analysis and
demands the intersemiotic approach of the (syn)aesthetic strategy of appreciation.

The (syn)aesthetic style celebrates the physical image as much as the spoken
word. It explores the potential of spoken language to affect on a physical level. As I
argued in Chapter 1, its visceral impact and the disturbatory effects it has on the
audience are emphasised by the immediacy of the live experience. In highlighting the
way in which certain contemporary performance practice has employed such a mode
in recent years I will now go on to survey how the performance practice of Carnesky,
Giddens, Churchill and Kane, is exemplary of this (syn)aesthetic style.[19] It is
important to note that in discussing the work of these case studies I draw on my own
individual, innate experience of the performances as well as from additional accounts
of other individual encounters with the work under scrutiny. As a result any reference
to audience response throughout the proceeding chapters should be taken as a fusion
of the immediate and innate with subsequent interpretation of the work through
(syn)aesthetic analysis.

Notes

[1] In terms of disturbance, the (syn)aesthetic hybrid thus becomes a 'deliberate strategy of disruption at the boundaries of practices, forms and terms' (Deeney 1998: 46).

[2] The defamiliarised performance mode of the (syn)aesthetic hybrid can be seen to be designed to disturb the audience into a new way of perceiving theatre. The Formalist Alexander Veselovsky asserts, 'the purpose of new form is to express new content' (qtd. in Eichenbaum, 1965: 118). Shklovsky reworked this idea to argue that '*the purpose of new form is . . . to change an old form which has lost its aesthetic quality*' (Shklovsky qtd. in Eichenbaum, 1965: 118, emphasis original). Regarding the political and social motivation behind the trends in performance work under scrutiny here, it is arguable that the performance work which embraced a (syn)aesthetic hybrid throughout recent years created this new form for a desensitised age in order to (re)sensitise its audience.

[3] As Robert Ayers suggests, a fusion of aesthetics demands that the performance be 'perceived at different pitches' (1999: 11).

[4] Deconstruction is the tool used within post-structuralist thinking (such as that of Derrida, Barthes, Cixous and Kristeva in particular), where definitive readings are proven to be impossible, or futile, as all meaning is shown to be 'shifting, multi-faceted and ambiguous' (Barry, 1995: 35). As a result there can only be free-play within interpretation as evidenced in the deconstructive approach akin to intersemiotics and thus (syn)aesthetic analysis (see also Derrida, 1976, 1978 and Barthes, 1975, 1987c).

[5] Lynda Birke asserts, following Grosz and Judith Butler, that the '*lived body*', is a body that is 'both signifying and signified, historically contingent and social', a 'social and discursive object . . . bound up in the order of desire, signification and power' (Birke, 1999: 43 emphasis original). Thus the living body is inextricably linked with the political, the social, the cultural, the philosophical and so on (see Grosz 1994: 19 and Butler, 1993). An interrogation of 'the unpacking of the Body' (Brown, 1999: 14) as stimulus, site and sight of performance, upturns and unsettles conventional modes of practice and strategies of appreciation. The human body in performance explores and exposes conflicts 'within individuals not just between them' (Deeney, 1998: 35). Here, the body can 'explore the hidden, forgotten, or silenced: as well as the unspoken' thereby interrogating 'marginalised experience: the unarticulated, irrational and transgressive aspects of the human psyche' (Deeney, 1998: 35).

[6] The body has become an important performance signifier within the recent socio-political and performance climate, particularly as 'an antidote to the more stilted manifestations of an overtly "British" theatre' (Deeney, 1998: 35). The 'realness' of live bodies, juxtaposed with, and emphasised by, the close-ups of the technologically mediated bodies, as evidenced in the work of Carnesky and Giddens, highlights how 'the body might be more eloquent in expressing the experience of an

atomised, technology-driven culture' (Deeney, 1998: 35). The actual body in performance can thus present itself as both the exposer, and the experiential sight/site/cite, of contemporary human conflicts.

[7] As Birke argues, 'living the body means experiencing it *as* transformable, not only as cultural meanings/readings, but also within [and upon] itself' (1999: 45 emphasis original).

[8] See Foucault on arguments for the 'docile' human body as produced by social control (1991: 135-169; see also Butler, 1993).

[9] As with the physiological condition of synaesthesia where a synaesthete's experience of 'reality', or cerebr(e)ality, cannot be disassociated from corporeality. This ensures that, as Ayers puts it, 'tactility is hyper stimulated' (1999: 10)

[10] The (syn)aesthetic performing body thus has the potential to return drama to the Dionysian, its ludic and ritualistic potential, by foregrounding the visceral and chthonian (see Paglia, 1992: 6).

[11] Contemporary performance writing is 'able to give immediate voice to questions of identity, technology, politics and language' and can manipulate the 21st century 'vocabularies of literature, science . . . music, television and film' (Deeney, 1998: 47). Furthermore, writerly performance text can 'engage with the terms' of its own 'creation' as well as 'engag[ing] its audience in that redefinition' (Deeney, 1998: 48), which encourages a 'transgressive morphology' (Shildrick & Price, 1999: 11) within writing practice equivalent to that of the performing body. Such an exciting fusion in writing practice shows that, as Deborah Levy insists, the 'formal idea of the play has been blasted open' (qtd. in Deeney, 1998: 31).

[12] As a result, (syn)aesthetic writing becomes a deconstructive opening process rather than a reductive or limiting process in terms of appreciation strategies.

[13] Barker here echoes Artaud in wanting to (re)trace the primordial 'memory of a language of which theatre has lost the secret' (Artaud, 1993: 100).

[14] Just as with the physiological condition of synaesthesia where words can be heard and read in a crossed sensual way, (syn)aesthetic *play*-writing manipulates verbal language so that delivery confronts the audience in a visceral manner.

[15] Here language is manipulated and deployed to have the resonance of music. (Syn)aesthetic linguistic play comes close to Nietzsche's thinking where he suggests that 'the whole linguistic capacity is excited by this . . . principle of the imitation of music' (1967a: 54-6). Yet, the (syn)aesthetic style differs from Nietzsche's notion that '*language*, as the organ and symbol of phenomena, can never by any means disclose the inner most heart of music . . . can only be in superficial contact with music'

(1967a: 54-6, emphasis original). If it is the case that language, as 'the symbol of phenomena', i.e. that which explains and makes sense of the world as we experience it, in a rational and lucid manner, then (syn)aesthetically styled language is able to make more than 'superficial contact with music' (Nietzsche, 1967a: 56) due to the manner in which it is defamiliarised and subverted.

[16] What Christy Adair describes as 'tactile words' (1999: 12). With a (syn)aesthetic manipulation of language it is word-tactility which becomes 'hyper-stimulated' (Ayers, 1999: 10).

[17] In (syn)aesthetic performance work and writerly practice, those texts based on sound or 'composed of glossolalia' as put forward by Artaud and Novarina, become ludic emissions that convey 'pure drive' (Kristeva, 2000: 265). Artaud did not want to suppress speech, 'there is no question of abolishing speech in theatre' (Artaud, 1993: 53), but to make it a sensual act that communicated on a visceral level, 'to appeal to the senses' (Artaud, 1993: 27). Just as Nietzsche argued against the 'dispossessive', dictatorial nature of the classical written text, in favour of the rediscovered language of the primitive (see Nietzsche, 1967a: 114-121), Artaud argued against the written texts of 'classical theatre' and for a 'universal grammar of cruelty' (Artaud, 1993: 53).

[18] As Ayers describes 'the body's physicality and its possible fragmentation' can find 'a strange parallel in the physicality of a shattered language' (1999: 10). Neil Greenberg suggests, 'words which are from the conscious, verbal part of the mind, the part that learned language' can work symbiotically with that which is 'abstract . . . movement and spatial relationships and sounds, very experiential stuff' (qtd. in Michel Sapir, 1999: 27). Meg Stuart argues that when such a language is used as a soundscore for movement, 'bodies start being that word' (qtd. in Ayers, 1999: 10). Following this, where the *play*-text can give itself over to transgressions in delivery and to improvisation, or where verbal interjections are produced by the physical performance, words become 'spontaneous emissions, states of mind and being, utterances that simply make audible the traces of a moment' (Cody, 1998:122).

[19] I am interested in Carnesky, Giddens, Churchill and Kane, as subjects who explore the sensate and corporeal quality of performance via its many languages rather than as females working from gendered space. Indeed, although female experience and female history is evident in certain works of Churchill, Kane, Giddens and Carnesky, it is not the only concern of their work, and certainly not my concern in analysing their work. Rather, I am interested in them as practitioners who are exemplary of a (syn)aesthetic style.

4. Giddens and Carnesky - Transcriptions and Transgressions

> The principle of presentation is the everyday process of understanding through body language, a process that is translated on stage by a distinctive corporeal language. Moreover, because bodily gestures on stage originate directly in everyday life, art and everyday life are no longer separated (Broadhurst, 1999a: 78).

Giddens and Carnesky expound a (syn)aesthetic (re)writing of the body in performance. Their work presents the play of the individual body and its multiple discourses, the living body 'telling its own story' (Servos, 1998: 42), demonstrating shifting identities and mutating morphologies within the interwoven form and content.

Giddens and Carnesky exploit the potential of the (syn)aesthetic hybrid, foregrounding the encounter of the 'polyphonic' body with 'polyphonic' verbal texts (Bakhtin, 1984: 17) and employing technology, sound and design to further highlight the 'presentness' (Scarry, 1985: 9) of the live bodies. They employ technology as a visceral component of live performance, juxtaposing the live with the pre-recorded, the live with the live-recorded, and the live-recorded with the pre-recorded to engage a defamiliarised form which emphasises the presence, as *prae-sens* ('that which stands before the senses' [Scarry, 1985: 197]), of the actual bodies in the live moment. In this way they play with notions of sensate presence and absence in the midst of a performance moment.

With the work of Giddens and Carnesky the complexities of the (syn)aesthetic hybrid and the predominance of the actual body within this, ensure that a multi-dimensional perception is exercised within appreciation. As a result they foreground the form of performance itself as a 'semiotised' (Kristeva, 1999a: 95) space where transgressive visceral-verbal texts are explored through the body and corporeal signs are explored through speech. As a site of transgressive, intertextual communication the hybridised modes of Giddens and Carnesky demand the intersemiotic mode of analysis attributable to the (syn)aesthetic style.

4.1 Sara Giddens - Transcriptions

> I have found my own texts. Developed my own language(s), writing with and through bodies (Giddens, 2001: n.pag).

> [T]o engage further and deeper and more, more of the senses, to make sense of: the tactile, the kinaesthetic and the somatic (Giddens, 2001: n.pag).

Sara Giddens is choreographer and co-director, with writer Simon Jones, of Bodies in Flight. Her performance work explores the immediacy of the individual body and its live presence in relation to site (architectural and digital), verbal text, sound (verbal, organic and composed) and technology, generating a 'many hued spatial language' that fuses 'sight with sound, intellect with sensibility' (Artaud, 1993: 45, 3). The liminal nature of the work asserts itself through the 'inbetweens' (Giddens, 2001: n.pag) that result from the disturbatory, intertextual performance experimentation. Her work, both with Bodies in Flight and her collaboration with Maggie O'Neill (see Giddens & Jones, 2001, Giddens, 1999b), challenges conventions of linear narrative and transgresses traditional forms of representation.

Giddens' commitment to hybridity is evidenced through her playful approach to the interplay of the body with diverse performance texts. Giddens' interdisciplinary practice fuses diverse dance genres, 'seduced by the inter-relationship and contrast between these styles', with a choreographed 'micro-naturalism' (Giddens, 2001: n.pag).[1] Through this corporeal communication is prioritised, as the audience is made wholly aware of the idiosyncrasies of the individual body through the minut(ia)e-movement that reveals it. With Giddens' micro-choreography, the slightest movement, both live and on monitors, produce multi-volumes of meaning, 'subtle shifts that *reveal*' (Giddens, 2000a: n.pag, emphasis original). Here Giddens reve(a)ls in the physical, sensual quality of the actual body as a very real 'language lined with flesh' (Barthes, 1975: 66), where 'the smallest of actions can refer to the complexity of shared experience' (Giddens, 2001: n.pag, emphasis original).[2]

As a result sensations created within Giddens' choreographies can be felt, via a corporeal memory, the traces, memories and (re)creation of the sensation in the perceiving bodies that is made manifest in and through the choreographed movement. Giddens' work demonstrates how the body becomes a conduit for the 'sharability of sentience' (Scarry, 1985: 326) in (syn)aesthetic performance.[3] Such present(ed) physicalities, both (im)mediate and removed from the mediated, emphasise the performing body and its potential to signify and connect with the receiving bodies in the audience, making 'sensuous contact' (Brown, 1999:13). Thus the body becomes site, sight and cite of performance in the (syn)aesthetic processes of interpretation. This illustrates how Giddens' choreographic impulse is to produce work that explores both the 'sensorial and sensual' in order to 'impact upon each individual' (Giddens, 2001: n.pag).

Giddens' work with Jones, as Bodies in Flight, pushes forward the symbiotic relationship between spoken and physical language, exploring the liminal point where 'flesh utters and words move' (Giddens & Jones, 2001: n.pag). As a consequence of her collaboration with Jones in Bodies in Flight, Giddens asserts the fundaments of (syn)aesthetics, and evidences in her work how, '[t]he language of words is not disassociated from the text of the body' and a 'negotiation between the elements is always and ever present' (Giddens, 2001: n.pag).[4] Giddens' choreography thus exploits the potential of visceral-verbal text and finds the somatic essence of words through a true articulation of the body itself (after Artaud, 1993, Cixous, 1993, Irigaray, 1985).

In Giddens' hybridised practice, coinciding with the encounter between the verbal and the physical, is the further interjection of the technologically mediated image which serves to defamiliarise the body. The disturbatory nature of Giddens'

work results from this transgressive approach to the (re)consideration of the body and

its potential to make, and undo, meaning in performance and to emphasise this within

a hybrid of verbal, technological, design and spatial texts.[5] The body within the

hybrid becomes a living canvas upon which is etched out emotional, sensational,

linguistic and technological expression. Giddens' attention to the language of the

body, exposed through digital and video monitors, focuses on a use of repetition 'that

produces not sameness but difference' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 169). Giddens' hybridised

work thus exploits the Derridean concept of *différance* (Derrida, 1987: 8-9), playing

with meaning, alongside 'a differing space' and a 'deferring of, a postponement of

presence' (Giddens, 2001: n.pag). As a result the repeated actions she choreographs

become re-markable, re-traceable, through the lens as well as upon both the

performing and perceiving flesh.

   A focus on areas of the body, both live and magnified on screen via mini-cam,

serve to deduct the identity belonging to the individual body and make those areas

take on their own idiosyncratic physicality – the body as site, landscape, bodyscape.[6]

Giddens' choreography ensures that the actual body is 'put forward as a site for

contemplation and projection' (Giddens, 2000a: n.pag). Within the multi-layered,

interdisciplinary performance text, the physical body is 'constantly viewed in relation

to the spoken text' as well as 'to the monitors mediated through the mini-cameras'

(Giddens, 2000a: n.pag; see Fig. 4.3.1-4.3.3 and 4.4.1-4.6.2).[7] This live and mediated

choreography demonstrates a playing with the means of (re)presentation in

performance. Giddens here foregrounds complex questions about notions of liveness

and the way in which the live(d) body is presented in performance. Furthermore, the

audience member is forced to make decisions about which (im)mediate bodies to view

and can find their own perceiving bodies caught and held in the live video image. This

generates a further in-between and retracing between the performing bodies, the observing bodies in the audience and the monitor(ed) bodies of both.

The particular piece which I will analyse as exemplary of Giddens' (syn)aesthetics, separate to her work with Bodies in Flight, is *Not all the time . . .* (Giddens, 1999a, 1999b), a collaboration between Giddens and social theorist and ethnographer Maggie O'Neill. With *Not all the time . . .* Giddens and O'Neill have explored the interrelation and intertextuality between ethnographic social data and live performance forms, focusing on the physical body in performance (live and mediated) in order to create a new performative-ethnographic language.[8] Giddens (re)writes the (im)mediate body as a visceral documentation of the 'real' life experiences and stories of O'Neill's transcripts of interviews with women working as prostitutes.

4.2 *Not all the time…*

> I feel an acute awareness of one's own body through others, through the presentation of those other bodies (Giddens, 2001: n.pag).

Not all the time. . . (Giddens, 1999a), is exemplary of the (syn)aesthetic style in its impulse to translate transcribed sociological data into a sensate, embodied performance text to convey, re-mark, the lives (re)presented in ethnographic documentation through a very real 'writing of the body' (Derrida, after Artaud, 1978: 191).

As the audience enters the space from the foyer they can see themselves projected onto the backdrop wall from a hidden video camera. The projected image covers a 45° angle, the greater edge of which stretches to the adjacent wall (and thus leads the eye to) where the 'full picture' is projected, raised about six feet, and to the right of the audience viewing position. A cacophony of bass guitar overlaid with

indecipherable, synthesised samples of the verbal text to come, penetrates the perceiving body, ensuring haptic and aural powers of reception are hyper-stimulated.

To this bizarre soundscape, the audience view, via the projection, 'the subject' (performed by Patricia Breatnach) walk through the foyer, barefooted, wearing a mini-skirt and a tight T-shirt. She seizes a hidden mini-cam and takes it to the floor, then swiftly takes it over her head as she upturns her body by forcing her legs and feet against the wall, torso forced upwards then lowered, vertebra by vertebra. Her body is doubly upturned on the projection, as this movement is viewed by the mini-cam from her head. Thus, from the outset, visual perception is disturbed, defamiliarised, embracing the 'carnivalised' (Bakhtin, 1984: 107) subversions to come and highlighting the perspectival attitude demanded, which is itself to be constantly upturned.

Initially, the living body of the woman performs in actuality behind the audience (as opposed to the projection of this 'live' performance in front of them). She dances with the camera, a Dionysian dance, both creative and destructive (Nietzsche, 1967a), simultaneously stimulating, distorting and destroying its own liveness in a 'play of forces' that is truly 'self-creating' and 'self-destroying' (Nietzsche, 1968: 550). She colludes with this relationship through her fixed stare, and yet simultaneously rejects it as she keeps the mini-cam literally at arms reach. As she does so, the audience is made wholly aware of the actual body, the individual body, (re)presented (some watching her 'live' movement, the majority her projected image), and the play with the 'ghosting and tracing of images' where the living body dances 'upon and within itself within the one sp(l)ace' (Giddens, 2001: n. pag).

This play of the performer with the mini-cam colludes ludically with the processes of (re)presentation and re-marking. By 'offering a choice. Soliciting a

decision' it makes the audience 'complicit' (Giddens, 2001: n.pag) in the process of

(re)presentation and of making sense/*sense*. As an ethnographic document, this

(im)mediate play forces the perceiving individual to locate themselves within the

creation of the document, 'inextricably drawn into the matrix of discourse' (Machon

& Woodward, 1999: n.pag). Obliged to become aware of a chosen perspectival stance

the audience makes direct contact with the lived experience under observation.

     The transgressive nature of the play with the (im)mediate, impacts further on the

processes of audience appreciation. Drawing the camera slowly to her eye, whilst

simultaneously turning the gaze onto the audience, She evaluates the audience, 'the

subject under surveillance, on a textual and actual level, becomes the surveyor'

(Machon & Woodward, 1999: n.pag). This unsettling act furthers the notions of a

'non-"docile"' (Broadhurst after Foucault, 1999a: 178) body in performance, which

defies by staring back.[9] Those in the audience who choose to watch the live performer

observe her scrutinising the lens, as if searching for herself, the intimacy between

mini-cam and performer becoming ever clearer through her proximity to it. Those

watching the (im)mediate image see only the eye/(I).[10] The hugely magnified eye

blinks back from the vast wall, the image itself becomes disturbed due to the 45°

angle at which it is projected (see Fig. 4.5.1, 4.5.2). With this moment the audience

experiences with a (syn)aesthetic-sense, encountering multifaceted ideas (of identity

and Derridean *différance*) as much as actual bodily presence.

     This image is doubly (re)presented and re-marked when, later, the large,

blinking eye of the pre-recorded video stares back, defiant, omnipotent, at the

audience. As it does so, the live performer also turns to survey them (see Fig. 4.8).

She watching them, watching her mediated body, waiting (as if on a street corner).

The live performer copies, repeats, re-marks and retraces that movement which is

choreographed on the screen. The disjointed, defamiliarised magnified, (im)mediate body has its fragmented pieces pulled back together via the presence of the live performing body. Against the backdrop of the huge eye/(I), the live performer appears small, vulnerable, shadowed, 'performing' 'real' gestures, pulling her hair behind her ears, fumbling. Yet this image playfully defers meaning by simultaneously suggesting empowerment as She holds the audience in her gaze, whilst the pre-recorded speech talks of viewing every male individual as a prospective client, 'all the time you're looking, looking, looking' (Giddens, 1999a, 1999b).[11]

The gaze-shift from audience to performer, performer to audience, performer to projection, performing body to observing body, observing body to projection, ensures a 'palpable' tension between the live and (im)mediate body (Giddens, 2000a: n.pag) and becomes an ultimate recognition of the 'other' within performance (Giddens, 2000a: n.pag), making the othered experience of the transcripts a live(d) moment. Thus, Giddens' play with the slippage and exchange in-between these embodied texts foregrounds the possibility of the 'sharability of sentience' (Scarry, 1985: 326). As a result, the free-play of the various combinations of the live and the mediated body evokes, re-marks and defers 'traces and ghosts' (Giddens, 2000a: n.pag). The immediacy of the response to the live, physical body and the subsequent dislocation of this through the mediated image draws both sensate and intellectual interpretations.

This presence of *différance* and re-mark (Derrida, 1976, 1987a) is further accentuated by a pre-recorded film which plays against the living body in the space, displaying traces of the movements observed previously in the live performance. This repetition highlights, and ensures, a (re)perception of the recurring movement and produces unusual perspectives of the body through the compartmentalised view; a '"peep-show-body" - feet, hands, knees, eyes, midriff, head' (Machon & Woodward,

1999: n.pag) that moves to a fusion of verbal text (developed from the ethnographic transcripts) and a composed soundscore. This defamiliarised and 'carnivalised' (Bakhtin, 1984: 107) play of the (re)presented body is thus (re)cognised by the audience and further made sense/*sense* of by the perceiving body in the live performance.

The video, played alongside the live performance, enables the audience to 'acknowledge the realness of the data, the very realness of an exposed, vulnerable body' (Machon & Woodward, 1999: n.pag) through the visceral somatic/semantic exchange between the live and mediated image. The live performer is dwarfed by the projections of different body parts, which are tested, manipulated, caressed, made tangible via the vast mediated image. The action truly takes the image 'back to its tactile source' (after Irigaray, 1999b: 126-7) and makes the material 'accessible to the senses' (Irigaray, 1991: 134). Here real 'lives and bodies as raw material' (Jays, 1999: 525) are manifested – from the transcribed women to the choreographed performer.

Giddens' live and (im)mediate micro-choreography shows that the human body itself is overlain with identity, with function – a fragmented, multi-layered site for exploration. By playing the live body off the pre-recorded body in a highly physicalised form, an interrogation of the live(d) and living (im)mediate, individual and social body occurs throughout this piece and iterates, via physical means, the Derridean critique of 'pure identity' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 50). Such disturbatory play with the live and mediated body enables a vast array of meaning to be received simultaneously, enabling the audience 'To look / To look again / To re-look / At the fragmented and unfinished body' (Giddens, 2001: n.pag).[12] As a result, the somatic/semantic nature of the work becomes explicit.

Highly charged choreographed sequences that foreground the body and its

potential for (e)motion prioritise the physicality of the body as text and actuates an

exchange of 'sensuous contact' (Brown, 1999:13) between the lived bodies of the

transcripts, the performing body and the observing bodies. A 'profound reading' of

the original transcripts is made possible, by performing and perceiving bodies alike,

that is 'closer to the core' (Novarina, 1993: 101) due to the 'reconciliation of word

and body' (Weiss, after Novarina, 1993: 86). In this way Giddens choreography

demonstrates how (syn)aesthetic work engages Kristeva's semiotic chora (1999a) as

transgressive verbal transcripts are explored through the body. This corporeal and

(im)mediate text morphs further into a 'living, breathing, speaking body' (Cixous,

1995a: 134). The transcripts are (re)written verbally to 'speak the corporeal' (Irigaray,

1999a: 43). Like the movement before it, the speech is fragmented, hesitant, stilted –

made more so by the fact that She repeatedly pulls herself away from the mini-cam,

unable to speak, daring to speak, unwilling to speak, desperate to speak. The

'speaking subject' subject(ed) to fragmented speech, a speaking mouth subjected to

anonymity (see Fig 4.5.3). An immense image which, in its impotency, demands a

double-edged making-sense/*sense*-making from the audience.[13]

A play with fairy-tale imagery, present in the original transcripts, is made

manifest in the choreography. Sparkling slippers appear, as if by magic, yet unlike

Cinderella or Dorothy, these are bright pink, heavy heeled, cheap looking party

sandals. It is these shoes, as if filled with the power to possess like the fabled Red

Shoes, that coerce her, to perform in front of the audience, propelling her forward, no

longer in control of her own action, her own body (see Fig. 4.6.1-4.7). Still 'caught in

the act' by the camera, She forces herself to be caught further, wedging the toes of her

right foot into the bridge of the left shoe, disturbing the 'natural' positioning of foot

against foot as well as disturbing accepted conventions and codes of dance with this awkward, unsightly yet strangely compelling movement.

Another strong signifier is the play with her hair. On screen it becomes a new site/sight, overwhelming the whole of the screen, golden, glimmering, each strand discernible. Immediately connotations of Rapunzel, Goldilocks, spring to mind, against the verbal line, 'he didn't realise it was going to be me, his little princess' (Giddens, 1999a, 1999b). The 'play of signs' (Kristeva qtd. in Broadhurst, 1999a: 6) within the choreography, through the 'story' of the body, serve to critique the mythical, historical and cultural representations of women as princess/witch, mother/daughter, virgin/whore, always emphasising notions of women in (and out of control) of their own (re)presentation and foregrounds the performing body as a visceral 'staging of bodily identities' (Brown, 1999: 15).

The (re)presented, re-marked and so (re)perceived movements that are integral to *Not all the time …* (Giddens, 1999a) become entirely disturbatory. They are experienced in an immediate fashion via a 'multisensory evaluation' (Cytowic, 1994: 167). Always the projected image lengthens, reduces, distorts the image and the timing of the live movement. And all the time the audience is caught between viewing the overblown body, the fragmented and mediated image, and the live, antagonised performance. The interdisciplinary authoring within the (syn)aesthetic hybrid thus forces the question about authorship of the text. The play of each layer of signification upon the other ensures that contradictions 'within the processes and power relations in the conditions of production' are made clear (Machon & Woodward, 1999: n.pag).

This 'layering of voice/soundscape, visual image/dance and the movement of predominance from, the live to the pre-recorded' succeeds in its aim to 'reflect the complexity and multiplicity of the women's lives whilst making apparent the tension

between the 'real' and the 're-presented' (O'Neill & Giddens, 1999: n.pag). The (syn)aesthetic style of Giddens' choreography, intertextualised with the other performance forms of the (syn)aesthetic hybrid, provokes the audience into 'questioning the medium, the concept, the content, the form'(Machon & Woodward, 1999: n.pag). Most importantly, the corporeal document which expounds the transcripts through movement ensures a (re)writing of the body that cites the experience in the somatic/semantic bodies of the audience.

In *Not all the time. . .* (Giddens, 1999a) the body translates the dry language of sociological data to a sensorial language, that fuses with space, sound and technology to produce a visceral data of 'spatial expression' (Artaud, 1993: 68). Thus 'the performance text both "embodies" and makes apparent the ethnographic text' (Giddens & O'Neill, 1999: n.pag). It translates the 'themes, images, rhythms, moments' of the lived transcripts and explores the multi-dimensional 'lived body(s) - gendered, imaginary, performative and social' (Giddens, & O'Neill, 1999: n.pag), traces of a fragmented, lived narrative that is read in a fused somatic/semantic manner.

In this way the hybridised form of the piece takes on a 'polyphonic' quality and provides a sensual rendering of different 'consciousnesses' and experiences (Bakhtin, 1984: 17-18). It is this vitality of form that translates the sensate experience, relaying this via embodied knowledge to the individual in the audience. The sensations created within the performance are corporeally cited in the audience via the traces, memories, and (re)creation of the sensation of the choreographed movement. The performer's body thus becomes a sentient conduit, delivering the immediacy of the moment to the receiving body of the audience. The physical body is always disturbatory, unsettling for the audience to see it up close, in close up, and always (im)mediate.

Technology is used to in an entirely (syn)aesthetic way to foreground and interrogate the live experience of the performer/audience relationship, which in turn, foregrounds the lived experience of the women's stories undergoing (re)presentation. The juxtaposition of the live with the pre-recorded, the live with the live-recorded and the live-recorded with the pre-recorded engages a defamiliarised form which itself demands a 'special perception' (Shklovsky, 1965: 18). Giddens' deconstructive play with the body, alongside its interactions with space, sound, verbal text and video, ensure that senses and intellect are disturbed in (re)cognition of the lives and the body exposed.

The (syn)aesthetic hybrid of *Not all the time . . .* with its fusion of the performing body with spatial, visual and aural texts, enables a new ethnographic documentation 'to say what cannot be said through words alone' (O'Neill & Giddens, 1999: n.pag). In doing so it is able to acknowledge and articulate the complex nature of human experience in contemporary society by providing a (re)presentational form that foregrounds these complexities in an entirely sensorial (as opposed to censorial) way.[14] In this way, *Not all the time . . .* provides a unique access to the lived as an experiential dimension within a (syn)aesthetic hybrid, fusing the human body, space and technology in 'an additive experience' (Cytowic, 1994: 92) that demands 'multisensory evaluation' (Cytowic, 1994: 167). This ensures that the audience receive the work in a (syn)aesthetic manner, via (re)cognition of the stories that that live(d) and living body has to tell.

4.3 Marisa Carnesky - Transgressions

> [A]rt is making sense of life . . . offering dreams, or the unconscious, as something
> we can see or hear or touch (Carnesky, 1999e: 1).

In Marisa Carnesky's work, there are explicit (syn)aesthetics at work, all
exposing notions of identity, all expounded through the individual, lived body.
Carnesky's work explores the narrative of the lived body, exposing it to reve(a)l its
own 'polyphonic' stories (Bakhtin, 1984: 17), entwining the cultural and the personal,
the historical and the mythical, (re)presenting the self and the body through sensate
performance. The immediacy of Carnesky's writerly text (1999c) arises from a direct
connection with the audience via the physical presence of the writing on and from
Carnesky's body.

Carnesky's work demonstrates a sensibility drawn from the traditions of folk
and popular entertainment alongside the cabaret, dance and underground stand-up
environment she works within. Female performance art and writing, alongside visual
art and postmodern performance practice also has direct influences on her own work.
These formal fusions fuel an 'extreme vision' of 'grotesque burlesque' in her early
work, which Carnesky pertinently describes as 'Karen Finley meets Angela Carter'
(1999d: n.pag).[15] As a result of these colourful influences Carnesky talks of a 'jarring'
between her work with text and her former training in dance, and it is this contrast
which she exploits in order to produce an idiosyncratic, intertextual performance
mode (Carnesky, 1999d: n.pag). Carnesky thus employs Derridean 'wide, jarring
metaphors' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 10) in impulse and form, as well as in the visual and
verbal images in her writing, which serve to affect on a visceral level.

Contriving her work as a (syn)aesthetic hybrid, Carnesky collaborates with
artists, designers, filmmakers, musicians and so on, to guide and fulfil her artistic
conception. An integral part of Carnesky's performance history is the potential of site

to influence the experiential quality of the work. Her work embraces space as an experiential presence within the (syn)aesthetic hybrid (Carnesky, 1998a, 1998b, 2002).[16] Carnesky explores the theatrical possibilities generated by intertextualising site, *play*-text, film, dance, music and body art to present fused, ritualistic performance. In arguing for the need for ritual within this media(ted) age Carnesky explores the positioning and exploitation of the live body in performance, the body on stage played against the visual spectacle, asserting this 'carnivalised' (Bakhtin, 1984: 107) fusion as the instigator of the unique relationship between the live performer and the audience (Carnesky, 1999d, 1999e). In all of her work, Carnesky examines the potential for changing the body in performance, shapeshifting it via such means as costume, dance, film and tattooing, ensuring her work becomes intensely live(d).[17]

Throughout her own practice Carnesky exploits notions of ritual and the experiential versus play and illusion, exploring identity, reality and representation and interrogating 'the role of difficult work for people . . . the role of people being shocked, or upset or turned on or confused' in contemporary theatre going (Carnesky, 1999e: 1). Aside from the breaking of boundaries in terms of content, bringing taboos to the forefront, she believes that the significant role of such performance is 'the audience being involved in a ritual, of having an ecstatic experience, going into another world' (Carnesky, 1999e: 2).[18] Carnesky's work probes this potential to inhabit 'two worlds at once' (Cytowic, 1994: 119), attempting to break down 'the dividing line between imagination and reality' (Luria, 1969: 144). Exploring ritualised practice 'that *is* real, and people are afraid of *because* it is real and it isn't illusion' (Carnesky, 1999e: 2, emphasis original), Carnesky employs the body as the primary site for disturbing play within performance. She then upturns this via its fusion with

that which is 'completely illusion, completely unreal' such as fake blood, magic tricks and theatricality (Carnesky, 1999e: 3).

In this way, Carnesky once again returns to the conflict, or jarring, between opposing forces in order to find her own performative methodology and to engage with an intersensual praxis. The 'Dionysian content' (Nietzsche, 1967a: 37-54) of her work is made explicit through this commitment to assaulting the senses of the audience via an 'intoxicated reality' (Nietzsche, 1967a: 35-38). Here, Carnesky's 'experiential' performance becomes the attempt to return to the 'Dionysian' (Nietzsche, 1967a), 'the very old roots of performance and theatre, of what ritual was all about' where participating spectators become 'part of that otherworldliness' (Carnesky, 1999e: 3).

Overall, Carnesky's aim with her practice is 'to find the raw edge' (Carnesky, 1999e: 5). The use of her actual body as 'raw material' (Jays, 1999: 525), makes that rawness the affective point of appreciation within the audience enabling a very real, chthonic 'sharability of sentience' (Scarry, 1985: 326) via direct corporeal intervention. With *Jewess Tattooess* (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b, 2001b) Carnesky is self-consciously writing herself as abject subject and site of performance. The work manipulates theatrically notions of identity and individual *différance*. She highlights the use of the stage as a space to exist most intensely, playing in a disturbatory manner with the practice of performing, fetishising and fulfilling fantasies. It is the weaving of herself, her own history and her cultural inheritance, with disparate performance practice - ritual, theatrical and experimental – that (re)presents a transgressive challenge both to herself as auteur and the audience as participants in the interpretative process.

4.4 *Jewess Tattooess*

> [T]hat's when the art becomes really exciting because, yes this is a show but it's a
> show that's real, because it's her . . . it carries on after her, she lives with this
> (Carnesky, 1999e: 4).

Jewess Tattooess was conceived and toured as a work-in-progress. From its

premiere national tour begun in October 1999 at the Battersea Arts Centre in London

through to its most recent incarn(ivalis)ation at Kanon Halleh, Copenhagen

(Carnesky, 1999a, 2001b), Carnesky's formal intention was that the piece would

shapeshift playing with an 'incompleteness' of form that would morph its own

morphology, becoming 'something else at any moment' (Irigaray, 1999e: 55).

The shapeshifting form is apparent in the design of Carnesky's *Jewess Tattooess*

(1999a, 1999b, 2001b) where the design morphs from venue to venue, due to

Carnesky's artistic shapeshifting of the work. It also morphs with the actual timing of

each performance due to her interaction with the tangible, mutating sets she performs

within. The original set consisted of six twenty foot high tattooed arms stretching up,

serpent-like, placed so that they receded back to the film screen, seeming like a

tattooed temple, surrounding the central playing area (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b). For

the most recent production at Copenhagen, the set design had shapeshifted completely

so that Carnesky emerges from a Star of David made entirely from pages of the Torah

(Hebrew sacred text) scattered across the playing space, which further mutates as

Carnesky leaves the traces of her moving body in it (Carnesky, 2001b). Later she adds

to this with bloodied footsteps, leaving yet more imprints of her body upon the

already (im)printed text. The projection screen employed in all of the productions

itself suggests a canvas to be drawn on and, alongside the design of the film,

foregrounds the disturbatory play and carnivalisation (both Bakhtian and literal) in her

work (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b, 2001b).

Regarding the shapeshifting form of *Jewess Tattooess*, most significantly, the live scarring of her own flesh with the tattooist's needle at the close of the piece emphasises the actual time and actual experience of the event (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b, 2001b; see Fig. 4.17.1- 4.18.2). Her sensate body is fused with the external design as, unequivocally, both 'site and sight' (after Schneider, 1997: 22) of performance. It becomes the cite of performance as the tattooing in her flesh remains beyond the performance moment, etched into her living body and her living performance memory. The traces of each Star of David that she inscribes in her flesh are left throughout the run of the performance, and last beyond as the traces of her work in her own flesh. Thus, the audience experiences 'stage effects [that] have real consequences' (Jays, 1999: 525), and a very real 'theatre of traces' (Cody, 1998: 129). Here, real time traces of the performance are left within the design just as traces of the sensate moment are left within and upon Carnesky herself as well as within the corporeal memory of the audience member. Following this the bodies of the individuals in the audience cite the performance in the processes of 'visceral recall' (Bartlett, 1999: 4).

The constant throughout *Jewess Tattooess* is the manipulation of Carnesky's lived body as the site which reveals her historical, cultural and performing identity. It is this that allows for the disquiet and disturbance prevalent in the piece. Her actual body is presented for the audience to view, to touch, to experience in the flesh, whilst the interwoven narratives of the (syn)aesthetic hybrid engage the audience in the historical, cultural and personal on both a concrete and conceptual level. Extending the idea of the body as site, sight and cite, (re)writable working material, the dancing body is exploited in *Jewess Tattooess* (1999a, 1999b) as a sensual and disturbatory

text which reve(a)ls in the play with identity, embracing the notion that the performer is a 'play of signs' (Kristeva qtd. in Broadhurst, 1999a: 6).

A ballet performed by Carnesky's character 'Lulla' (1999a, 1999b) is stilted, clearly imposed on the body, not moving with the body but against it. The traces of this dance are re-marked, overwritten, when Carnesky performs the highly charged, overtly sexual, dance of 'The Tattooed Lady' (1999a, 1999b), a (re)writing of the body in a new form, a burlesque dance. Lulla sheds her outer skin, like a butterfly shedding its chrysalis, allowing the painted body to speak its language and reveal its brightly coloured illustrations. The stripping dance subverts notions of the 'tease' because, although in front of an audience, it seems to be performed for herself without acknowledgement of the observers. The dance of the body is eloquently sexual, the body moving by itself, moving in a way that is natural to it, following the curves and gyrations of the body itself, undulating, rhythmical. She bends over, as if to reveal her genitals in full yet slides her hand between her legs, at once hiding herself and also finding herself, explicitly exploring the body, finding it anew, claiming it.

This highly charged dance is, in complete contrast to the imposed, stylised and restrictive ballet, an unconstrained writ(h)ing of the body. Slippery and serpentine, the effortless writhing calls to mind notions of serpents shedding skins, reminding us that this skin is her original skin, integral to the mover and the movement, the two inseparable. The dance, symbolising the passage from one state to another, both chrysalis and catalyst, the body speaking itself, (re)marks the journey from child to adult, girl to woman, innocent to experienced. What is interesting is the fact that throughout, she retains the ballet shoes, as if retaining a part, an essence of the former life (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b).

Through this dance Carnesky's performative body expounds a 'transgressive morphology' (Shildrick & Price, 1999: 11), and (re)presents the 'semiotised' body (Kristeva, 1999a: 95) that expounds the unconscious. Always multi-layered with dual personalities, always (re)presenting that which is fluid(s), both secreting and secreting, a body that is fluid in movement and excretes fluids (demonstrated through blood spat out of Lulla's mouth earlier), a body that effortlessly reveals itself and always hides itself. Just as the Tattooed Lady's dance reveals the genitals to be hidden, Carnesky's body is both revealing and concealing itself through various live and mediated characters and disguises throughout the performance.

As with Giddens' *Not all the time . . .* (1999a), throughout all the productions of *Jewess Tattooess* (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b, 2001b), Carnesky exploits visceral imagery from fairy-tales. Theatricality, ritual and multiple identity are etched out through this ludic subversion of the conventions of cautionary story-telling. Possession by Lilith, the first woman to be cast out of Eden in Hebrew scriptures, and the presence of Red Riding Hood, foreground the theme of woman as abject body within Carnesky's work (1999a, 1999b). [19] Carnesky exploits this potential to play on the otherworldliness of myth and fairy-tale in all her work, whilst simultaneously reve(al)ling in the disturbance and transgressions integral to the themes of the stories, made manifest within her hybridised performance.

The fairy-tale symbolism enmeshed within *Jewess Tattooess* (1999a, 1999b, 2001b), is artfully subverted by contemporary references. For example, the image of needles is continually re-marked via the (omni)presence of the tattooist's needle and 'disfigured' (after Barthes, 1975: 14) fairy-story citations; 'Grandma's needle glowed. Lulla awoke in a trance and became enchanted by it' (1999a, 1999b, 1999c: n.pag). The original production began with a soundscore of ethereal, childlike singing against

discordant chords and the buzz of the tattooist's needle, instantly establishing an atmosphere of trepidation and disquiet. A low, red light comes up on the kneeling, rocking Carnesky who slowly brings her arm up to reveal that she is employing a heavy, automatic, tattooist's needle, yet employing the motion of conventional folklore needlework, an unsettling darning action akin to a traditional needle and thread (Carnesky, 1999a).[20]

The (syn)aesthetic hybrid employed by Carnesky emphasises the play with identity, a fusion of disciplines, genre and pastiche contrasting conventions from high and low culture. The overtly theatrical styling of silent film sub-titles; 'see the human exhibit, an oddity extraordinaire, a creature from your strangest dreams, born with the second sight! A rarest of beauties. Alive!' (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c: n.pag), draws attention to transgressive identities and notions of artifice. Throughout the performance film sequences expose the exploration of duality, the multi-layered and fragmented personality, the self and the alter-ego, and the years of ancest(o)ry within the self. The very form of the piece, including Carnesky's (re)written body, makes manifest the notion of the Dionysian body as 'a plurality with one sense' (Nietzsche, 1967b: 90).

As with *Not all the time. . .* (Giddens, 1999a), technology in *Jewess Tattooess* (1999a, 1999b, 2001b) highlights notions of (re)presentation. The effects of the film leave their traces on the performance and highlight the pre-recorded morphing of Carnesky's body, a disfigured play with her face and limbs to create new characters and reveal more of the story (see Fig 4.10, 4.12-4.13).[21] This (re)writing of her body, playfully, disturbingly, foregrounds the visceral quality of the film within the (syn)aesthetic hybrid. A filmed possession sequence plays on notions of 'being beside oneself' where 'Lulla's' pre-recorded body levitates above Carnesky's live body in

the role of Lulla (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b; see Fig. 4.11). This encapsulates notions of double identity, re-marking the living body in the films, highlighting the potential of the performing body to (re)iterate itself as a 'play of signs' (Kristeva qtd. in Broadhurst, 1999a: 6).

A particular incarn(y)ation provided by these films is the 'Siamese Tattooed Carny Creature' (1999a, 1999b; see Fig. 4.12) which expounds notions of doubled identity and Derridean iterability, marking 'repetition and alteration' and critiquing 'pure identity' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 50). This ludic image is creat(ur)ed from Carnesky's torso, mirror imaged, the two bodies growing out of the same hips, holding each other in their own arms. The duality of the double bodied creature is further emphasised by the twofold delivery of speech, a vocal play with a sultry, seductive Deep South drawl, Carnesky's voice overlaid on itself, comprising of two different tonal qualities, one always slightly behind the other with the completion of sentences. This is strengthened by a repetition of certain words within the speech;

> I am the tattooed soothsayer. Dragon lady, dragon lady, Serpentina, Serpentina. Read my skin, watch my lips, lips. My complexion tells a story (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c: n.pag).

The Carny later shapeshifts, the body becomes joined at the breasts, four hanging as if strange udders from a human-beast. The arms, also suspended, writhe and punctuate the speech, the hair lusciously falling, accentuating the femininity of this creature. Here, the doubled, filmed Carnesky calls the live Carnesky to herself, in a tri-personal display of the multi-layered self. Calling Carnesky playing Lulla playing the Tattooed Lady to them as 'a shameless bird of passage' (1999a, 1999b, 1999c: n.pag) – a passage that highlights the liminal nature of a body that is continuously in-between.

In terms of the live(d) body as a re-mark, 'telling its own story' (Servos, 1998: 42) whilst simultaneously confronting diverse corporeal polyphonies in the expression of marginal experience, Carnesky uses the formal transgressions of the filmed role-playing to emphasise the live(d) and living body conveying its own history. Carnesky plays a Rabbi, again her own face and upper body reflected in on itself to produce a disturbatory physiognomy (see Fig. 4.13). As the tattooist's needle buzzes a backing soundtrack, the Rabbi's speech harangues, 'how can you claim the tattoo as a mark of freedom when for us it meant so much suffering' (1999a, 1999b, 1999c: n.pag, 2001b). The traces of the full force of this acknowledged history of the Jews who were tattooed with their Nazi concentration camp number make their own mark on the bodies of the audience via an overwhelming corporeal memory that is heightened by the collective social history.[22] The response to the image, the simplicity of the verbal text yet the resonance it holds, offset by Carnesky's real tattooed body, causes a somatic/semantic response and enables the audience to make *sense*/sense from the historical, cultural, social, and corporeal material presented for interpretation (see Fig. 4.15, 4.16).

Carnesky further plays the sign and (re)writes the body, by exploiting the potential live performance has to draw attention to its own artifice via explicit role-playing. Accompanied by eerie music, she enters as the Tattooed Lady, costumed in a sequinned burlesque outfit. In this altered, (re)written state she stares at the audience, for the first time acknowledging them, playing with them, forcing direct participation which is part of the 'act', the transformation she has become within the narrative. This direct interaction with her audience ironically jests - 'if you want riches to come into your life, you must tell people about my show' as she reminds the audience of the dates of following performances (1999a, 1999b). This highlights notions of the 'real'

self and the performative self, reflexively referencing the performance artist who uses autobiographical detail as material for their work. Carnesky in role as Lulla in role as the Carny/Tattooed Lady, also playing at being out of role as the 'real' auteur of the performance, yet doing this in (role as) the 'cabaret style' Carnesky (1999a, 1999b).

Carnesky foregrounds notions of 'writing the body' (Artaud, 1993, Cixous, 1993, Irigaray, 1985) through the diverse exploitations of her actual body as performance text. Furthermore, the verbal text that she performs in this role repeatedly refers to the idea of being the object of the gaze (as performer and as a woman), being on show, a naked body that is read fused with an embodied writerly text that is as explicit as the naked body itself; 'I'm always a performance in your eyes', 'read my limbs', 'skin that sings', 'I rewrite my sex on my skin' (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c: n.pag).

The play with theatrical signs to foreground the actual body as the omnipresent text of the audience is underlined by the final sequence of the shapeshifting performance. The multiple characters of the performing Carnesky sheds her sequinned skin to stand as the naked body, imprinted with tattoos. The sequinned costume is rolled up and made into a fire. By using the costume as the pyre in this way, connoting a Phoenix from the sequin flames, she draws attention to the destroying of the Carny self, claiming a new, fragmented/multi-layered self, compounding images of metamorphosis and rebirth, of the 'newly born woman' that 'writes herself' (Cixous, 1993). *Jewess Tattooess* ends with the line, 'like the tide, I reinvent myself . . . it's something in my blood' (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c: n.pag). With this playful visceral-verbal text, Carnesky exploits *différance*, exposing ideas of multiple identities, ancestry and the tattooist's ink, all of which remain simultaneously a visible/hidden bodily presence (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c: n.pag).

In a closing sequence that illustrates the manifold possibilities of corporeal citation, Carnesky turns a camera onto herself, so that she now relays her live image in performance on the screen, behind the live performance, magnifying her body in the projection (1999a, 1999b, 2001b). With the heavy tattooist's needle she adds to her body adornment, scarring a Star of David into skin with the needle.[23] In the close up the audience can see the traces of the stars she has etched in previous performances – thus leaving the traces of the performances on her body, to tell another bodily story, actually cited in her flesh (See Fig. 4.17.1- 4.18.2).

For the Copenhagen production, following the live scarring Carnesky inserts two mezuzahs into her vagina before inserting herself back into the manuscript entrance/exit she emerged from at the start (see Fig. 4.14).[24] This ritualised double insertion and (re)moving, an act of burial and rebirth, asserts an image of 'eternal recurrence' (Nietzsche, 1968: 544). It highlights the passing of the performance as a continuum within and upon her, leaving only scars and traces of her body on the Torah fragments, in the performance space, when she is gone (Carnesky, 2001b). Both acts of corporeal insertion are highly visceral and are cited within and upon the audience, in the subsequent processes of recall.

In *Jewess Tattooess* (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b, 2001b) Carnesky employs the 'transgressive morphology' of a disturbatory body (Shildrick & Price, 1999: 11). She presents a transgressive body in performance, an explicit body which is aberrant in traditional performance terms, and a tattooed body which fails to conform on a cultural, historical and social level. Paradigmatically, a 'non-docile' body (Broadhurst after Foucault, 1999a: 178) which takes pleasure in its own transcendence of 'existing typologies' (Brown, 1999: 16). By using her own flesh as the direct source and site for the performance these transgressions are (re)cognised by, and cited within and upon,

the perceiving bodies in the audience. *Jewess Tattooess* is characteristic of the (syn)aesthetic style as it (re)presents the self and the body through various corporeal writings, a deliberate textual writing of the body, and a physical writing of the body. A continual order to 'read my skin', 'read my limbs' (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c: n.pag), demands that we read the body that she has written on with her tattoos, that she translates into a physicalised performance, that she has written into a *play*-text and that she further inscribes with self-applied markings.

The performance presents a formal fascination with an extreme vision intended to both intoxicate and unsettle the audience in a Dionysian fashion (Nietzsche, 1967a). It is a hybrid piece mixing different strands of performance inheritance, from traditional storytelling to burlesque to performance art. It also weaves layers of discourse and textual signification, overlaid with theatrical, historical and cultural images which Carnesky highlights and references to (re)present her own narrative. The shapeshifting form of the work, from the original to the most recent production, moves towards the body speaking for itself, the verbal play reduced to reflect upon the narrative of the previous performances (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b). Instead, Carnesky in various guises retells those moments as dreams, so that the verbal text literally (re)traces the performance history within and upon the final performance (Carnesky, 2001b)

Jewess Tattooess (1999a, 1999b, 2001b) is a (syn)aesthetic work, concerned with notions of ritual, which seeks to create a space for an experiential performance to occur. It is Carnesky's positioning and exploitation of the live body in performance that provides a 'rawness' (Carnesky, 1999e: 5) that produces the visceral quality of the piece. The Dionysian nature of *Jewess Tattooess* is evident, not only in the ritualised forms within the work itself, but also because of its exploration of conflict

and 'jarring' between opposing forces within the form and within the self. Ultimately the story told in performance reflects Carnesky's physical body – a body in the process of continually writing itself.

4.5 (Re)writing the *Body*

Giddens' *Not all the time . . .* (1999a, 1999b) and Carnesky's *Jewess Tattooess* (1999a, 1999b, 2001b) are highly (syn)aesthetic in their attention to the body speaking itself, fusing this with a variety of visual and aural technological media to produce a (syn)aesthetic hybrid that establishes multidimensional connections and levels 'between one means of expression and another' (Artaud, 1993: 73). The predominance of the actual body in the work of Giddens and Carnesky attempts to 'retrieve a chthonic identity' (Broadhurst, 1999b: 22) via direct corporeal intervention. It addresses the mind/body split of conventional, intellectual performance practice by (re)asserting a fused body that prioritises the somatic/semantic in impulse and interpretation in order to explore, on a visceral and imaginative level, the lived experiences underpinning both pieces.

Giddens and Carnesky create work that is exemplary of the (syn)aesthetic style in their concern with communicating a sensate experience to the audience where the appreciation of the piece completes the complex performance matrix. They blend interdisciplinary, intertextual practice that employs a defamiliarised, blending of the aural, visual, olfactory, oral, haptic and tactile. This demands a sensorial (as opposed to censorial) interpretative device that induces a double-edged making-sense/*sense-making* process of appreciation. Following this, their work activates a corporeal memory in the perceiving individual which ensures 'complete visceral recall' (Bartlett, 1999: 4) in any subsequent processes of (syn)aesthetic interpretation.

Notes

[1] Giddens' refers to her exploration of the moving body in performance as 'micro-choreography' (Giddens, 2000a: n.pag), a concern with the tiniest details of movement, magnifying areas of the body so that they, and the dance they perform, are defamiliarised and (re)perceived. Here the 'functional and the social' are 'played against and developed into a more abstracted and stylized physical language' where the 'particular set of body/text practices and aesthetics of dance 'are placed within a very different *performative* context (Giddens, 2001: n.pag, emphasis original).

[2] Here, 'small actions that reveal the complexities of human experience' follows Theodor Adorno (see Giddens, 2001: n.pag).

[3] For example, in *Deliver Us* (Giddens, 2000b; see Fig. 4.3.1-4.3.4) the female pushes the mini-cam away in order to experience her 'real' body. She 'writes' her body by letting her own chosen rhythm speak , rotating in a deep second position unmediated by the screens (Giddens, 2000a: n.pag). This mo(ve)ment enables the audience to become instantly attuned to the traces of the sensation, the cradling of the moment, the feeling - tenderness, happiness, contentment.

[4] Bodies in Flight work is concerned with 'the encounters between body and medium, flesh and language, text and texture' where each language becomes '*an inbetween unto itself*' (Jones, 2000b: n.pag, emphasis original). 'I have come to know, that actions are gestures, gestures are dances, and dances are texts. They are texts amongst other texts . . . brimming and swelling with meanings' (Giddens, 2001: n. pag). Adrian Heathfield states Bodies in Flight produce a performance language that 'talks through bodies and though words in a mutual resonance' (1997: n.pag).

[5] Bodies in Flight latest explorations of the live performance with pre and live recorded internet performance demonstrate a further development of this hybridised approach to sensate work that plays the (im)mediate body within, against and upon itself (see Fig. 4.1, 4.2; Giddens, 2002b; Giddens & Jones, 2001).

[6] Paul Rae states, 'the play is in the details' where bodies 'invite ever more refined attention . . . . Freckles become constellations: veins tattoo the limbs: scalp, toenails and bruises yield endless anatomical intrigues' (Rae, 2000: n.pag).

[7] In *Deliver Us* (Giddens, 2000b) the live performers at one point ignored their live partner in order to interact with the mediated image of their live partner (see Fig. 4.3.2), highlighting notions of role-playing, broken communication, barriers, mediation and the idolising of the image, or idea, of a loved one, the 'present absence, absent presence' (Jones, 2000a: n.pag), that can occur between two people within a relationship.

[8] Referring to their collaborative results as 'ethno-mimesis', a 'Renewed Methodology' (O'Neill & Giddens, 1999: n.pag), with this production Giddens and O'Neill explored new methodological approaches and theories for social and artistic praxis, in response to 'the fragmentation, plurality, and utter complexity of living' (1999: n.pag).

[9] Here, the 'concept of Foucault's panoptican is exploded . . . only to reform to suggest a much larger scale of power through surveillance' (Machon & Woodward, 1999: n.pag), making the audience aware that 'the gaze is alert everywhere' (Foucault, 1991: 195). See Foucault in reference to the panoptican, where 'visibility is a trap' (1991: 200) to create docile bodies within systems of discipline (Foucault, 1991). Giddens extends notions of 'surveillance and self-surveillance' to a very real and multi-layered scrutiny of the body (Shildrick & Price, 1999: 8), which, according to Elizabeth V. Spelman makes apparent 'attitudes toward the body' and the link with 'attitudes towards women' (1999: 32 –41).

[10] Here the play with the gaze also connotes a looking glass (to another, fantastical world?); a glass through which she is 'looking, looking, looking' as if searching for her own identity (Giddens, 1999a, 1999b). By staring into her own, video manipulated 'soul' in this way the action can be viewed as an instant critique of the emptiness and complexities of identity in a technological age.

[11] In terms of articulating marginal experience, Rolland Munro posits that this moment reveals, 'the crisis' in the performance where the performer, and the performance, turns the audience into participants; 'sums up how this way of looking at people has changed her world . . . the ethnographic moment – the writing of ourselves as others see us – is when the defining of herself as a prostitute slips across into everyday ways of conducting ourselves' (1999: n.pag).

[12] Via this '[r]epetition, repetition that attempts to freeze, to hold time, coupling and doubling' (Giddens, 2001: n.pag), attention 'is seduced through the use of the cameras to monitors or screens, and once again to the tension inbetween. . . . To how this can problematize further the relationship between the body and an image of that body' (Giddens, 2001: n.pag). This exemplifies, as Caroline Rye suggests, how the hybridised approach establishes performance moments that become 'a multifaceted place, simultaneously past and present, frozen, interrupted, fragmented, layered and distorted' (2000: n.pag).

[13] The projected image displaying a wide, teeth-filled mouth, tongue visible. Like the *vagina dentata*, She becomes a fearsome, sexual aberration, lacking any identity, mythically perceived. She also connotes Mouth in Beckett's *Not I* (Beckett, 1990), the dislocated, mid-air image of a mouth is charged with speaking, yet the speech, like the mouth is dislocated, suspended, attempting to 'make sense', an unidentified individual giving testimony, made vulnerable by the intimacies revealed (see Fig 4.5.3). From an ethnographic perspective, this action finds a physical form for the paradoxical desire to speak, and the difficulties in giving testimony to this lived experience, for the subjects of the transcripts.

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[14] *Not all the time . . .* (Giddens, 1999a) thus becomes 'a complex series of negotiations between sociological data and the performance medium; between the performer and the text, between the [performance] text and the audience' (Machon & Woodward, 1999: n.pag), that affects the audience 'aesthetically, emotionally and intellectually' (Munro, 1999: n.pag).

[15] Karen Finley, the American explicit body performance artist and Angel Carter, the writer of prose and plays that explore female representation within myth and cautionary tales. Carnesky conceives her work as a total performance abstract. Beginning with issues, ideas, her own visual art and materials which stimulate the form and style of the piece, illustrating her affinity with the creative working processes of British and American female performance artists of the early 1990s, such as Annie Sprinkle who Carnesky worked with in New York (Carnesky, 1999d, 1999e). For detailed accounts of Sprinkle's work see Harris, 1999 and Schneider, 1997. See Schneider, 1997 for references to Finley's work, and Carter, 1996 for examples of the writer's visual and theatrical style.

[16] Carnesky is furthering the possibilities offered by site specific work in her latest piece, still in development, *Carnesky's Ghost Train*. The content of the work explores aspects of journeys, boundaries, displacement, cultural belonging and memory in relation to Eastern European immigrants, past and present. Her intention is to adapt a traditional touring fairground ghost-train ride, ('I wanted to use the most experimental, experiential, ridiculous thing that I could') into an interdisciplinary artwork with 'visual and magic illusions; visual and sound installations; dance, theatre, film' using 'digital, video and special effects . . .fairy-tales and folklore' to push 'boundaries of tied geography and the body' (Carnesky, 2001c: 6).

[17] This changability of the body is often disturbingly explored in Carnesky's work, such as the live scarring of her flesh in *Jewess Tattooess* (1999a, 1999b, 2001b) or writing into the body of the Divine David (David Hoyle) with a broken glass. Carnesky cites Hoyle's influence as important to her own approach to performing verbal text. See Paul Burston, 2000 for reference to the work of Hoyle.

[18] Regarding ritualised performance, Carnesky believes live performance provides a place for collective experience and suggests the explicit and disturbatory arts practice of recent years has developed by way of a return to ritualistic practices 'of the ecstatic and the extreme that play with the possibility of death or blood letting' (1999e: 1-2). She cites as influences Ron Athey, Franko B and Orlan, Live Artists who use their bodies as stimulus, subject and form of their work, 'putting themselves into a state of ecstasy that's real' (Carnesky, 1999e: 2). See Tanya Augsberg, 1998, Auslander, 1997: 126-140, and Amelia Jones, 1998 on Athey, Franko B and Orlan.

[19] This possession by 'Lilith' (1999a, 1999b) provides an example of the unsettling theatricality in Carnesky's work. Playing with the language of Red Riding Hood, 'why grandma, what big eyes I have!' (1999a, 1999b), Carnesky as Lilith is revealed, on a stool with the unusually long night-gown touching the floor, creating a sense of baffling height and the impression that she is suspended in the

air. Red Riding Hood is further played with via the presence of a red cloaked, otherwise naked figure, performed by Heidi James (1999a). A transgression occurs as it is Red Riding Hood who leads Lulla astray, rather than a wolf, a theatrical sign that plays both the amoral mark of female sexuality, and the moral protector that oversees the change from child to woman, (re)presented by the theatrical spitting of fake blood onto the white night-gown, a sign left to speak for itself (Carnesky, 1999a).

[20] The forementioned stylised ballet also produces connotations of pinpricks; the pain of the naked foot against the *pointe*, jabbing into the floor, just as the needle jabs into skin; connoting broken and bleeding feet and the physiological 'pins and needles' (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b). In the latter production Carnesky reworks this image by dressing her naked body in heeled shoes from which we slowly become aware that her feet are oozing blood. When she takes the shoes off she then continues to walk this blood into the pages of the Torah, leaving further visible traces of her body in the design of the piece (Carnesky, 2001b; see Fig 4.14).

[21] Exploring notions of ancest(o)ry and fairly tale Carnesky presents a Grandmother, Carnesky's face and upper body reflected in on itself in film, recognisably human yet defamiliarised (1999a, 1999b, 2001b; see Fig. 4.10). Carnesky's play with her breath and verbal delivery as the Grandma becomes an aural 'disfiguration' (Barthes, 1975: 14), a 'vocal writing' that foregrounds, 'the articulation of the body' (Barthes, 1975: 66). In this way, through the amplified sound of the film, the physicality of the verbal and aural play cites itself in the subsequent 'visceral recall' (Bartlett, 1999: 4) in the audience.

[22] Presenting a '*lived body*', that is 'historically contingent and social', truly 'bound up in the order of desire, signification and power' (Birke, 1999: 43 emphasis original) enforcing the notion that the living body is inextricably linked with the political, the social, the cultural, the philosophical and so on (see also, Grosz 1994: 19 and Butler, 1993). This idea is further explored via the visceral-verbal text in the most recent production of *Jewess Tattooess* (Carnesky, 2001b), delivered in an unsettling monotone, a story of a sailor who tattoos over the concentration camp number of a prostitute, with the image of a rose.

[23] In the early productions Carnesky scarred her thigh, adding a new Star of David with each performance, to a starred/scarred garter (1999a, 1999b). In the later production, she etches the Star of David around her navel (2001b; see Fig 4.17.1-4.18.2).

[24] Mezuzahs are tiny fragments of parchment inscribed with Hebrew text, encased and placed on doorposts as an amulet of protection. Carnesky first places these on her eyes at the start of the piece once she has emerged from the Torah, completely wrapped in bandages. She then removes these, slowly, ritualistically, to reveal her naked, tattooed body and let it speak for itself (Carnesky, 2001b).

5. Churchill and Kane – Distillations and Disturbance

> There is a nascence and a renaissance, an amorous interchange, and a perceptual resurgence within writing. Writing is resurrectional. . . . We are lost within and guided by our speech (Novarina, 1996: 108-9).

> [L]anguage becomes a sensuality (Barker, 1997: 88).

Churchill and Kane produce work that encapsulates the (syn)aesthetic writing style. Their writerly practice demonstrates a defamiliarised, immediate, visceral impact that plays with perception and causes a (re)cognition of words, of moments, of ideas, of experience. Their (syn)aesthetic visceral-verbal *play*-texts achieve this through a 'disfiguration' (Barthes, 1975: 14) of words and language as a somatic/semantic tool. A crucial feature of the (syn)aesthetic style that is illustrated by the work of Churchill and Kane, is the (re)claiming of the word, the act of writing and verbal delivery, as an embodied event and a sensual act which take on the visceral qualities of communication. Here verbal and writerly (syn)aesthetic practice can stir innermost, inexpressible human emotion and disturb those viscera which cause aural, visual, olfactory and haptic perception, engendering 'the force of intuitive knowledge' (Cytowic, 1994: 7). In this way, language itself takes on the double-edged capacity of making-sense/*sense*-making akin to the (syn)aesthetic style.

The writing styles of Churchill and Kane are exemplary of the (syn)aesthetic style as they destroy language, shapeshifting words, formal structures, linguistic patterns and 'understood' meaning. Both reinstall language with a transcendent quality, returning it to the primordial, noetic and ludic possibilities of the imagination and of lived experience. This encourages an audience to (re)perceive spoken language as a sensate form of communication. The defamiliarised verbal play of Churchill and Kane disturbs audience reception, enables it to be perceived in a multisensorial manner, making the verbal a visceral act that encourages a double-edged, somatic/semantic perception.

5.1 Caryl Churchill – deconstructions and distillations

> The theatre is ripe for crystallising language (Artaud, 1974: 179).
>
> I often find with Caryl's plays that when people try and follow them with their head,
> it doesn't work – they get stuck. What I mean by bypassing [the logical brain], if
> you sit there and let her work on you, you get the experience. But people who fight it
> and try and make sense of it along the way get stuck and then say, 'this doesn't
> make sense' (Linda Bassett, 2001: 1).

Caryl Churchill's manipulation of the multiple languages in *play*-texts creates

defamiliarised and sensate texts that stimulate the imagination. Her writing demands a

visceral response and engages a (re)cognition of verbal language in the act of

appreciation. The interpretation of words in this way, 'through both sound and sense',

ensures an embodied and imagistic word perception and interpretation where the

'experience of words' is 'a measure of their expressiveness' (Luria, 1969: 91). Her

playful disturbance of verbal acts becomes, simultaneously, a critique, a re-evaluation

and a celebration of language. For example, in *The Skriker* (Churchill, 1994a, 1994b,

1994c)*,* in the same way that the shapeshifting body of the Skriker is twisted and

deformed when we first see it, Churchill twists and deforms meaning and confounds

expectation in language, reve(al)ling in its rhythmic and visceral potential;

> SKRIKER   Heard her boast beast a roast beef eater, daughter could
> spin span spick and spun the lowest form of wheat straw into gold,
> raw into roar, golden lion and lyonesse under the sea, dungeonesse
> under the castle for bad mad sad adders and takers away. Never marry
> a king size well beloved (Churchill, 1994a: 1).

This makes manifest Brik's arguments for rhythm within word play as an

integral part of sensate expression (see Eichenbaum, 1965: 110-1, 124). Churchill

takes this de(con)struction of language further in *Blue Heart* (1997a) where in the first

part, *Heart's Desire* (Churchill, 1997a: 3-36), she upturns expectations in the form

and content of the *play*-text, and then in the second, *Blue Kettle* (Churchill, 1997a: 37-

69), she pares language down to its most basic of sounds. In this way she semanticises

image and sound so that when performed the 'meaning' of words are reflected in the

sound and feeling (both hapticity and emotion) they embody as much as in the traces

of semantic layers integral to them. This enables the individual in the audience to 'see

every word' (Luria, 1969: 124), perceiving the details aurally, intellectually,

corporeally;

DEREK	Ket ket still . . . I'm still ket I am . . . if bl like me.
MRS PLANT	T t have a mother
DEREK	K

(Churchill, 1997a: 68).

As these examples from *The Skriker* and *Blue Heart* demonstrate, Churchill's

(syn)aesthetic *play*-writing disfigures verbal language, deconstructing it as an

'understood' semantic tool in order to produce a visceral form of verbal

communication, thereby finding the somatic essence of words and speech (Churchill,

1994a, 1997a). (Re)cognition of words, images and ideas is actuated by her writing

due to the way in which she makes the familiar unfamiliar. In this way Churchill's

linguistic play explores words afresh to get to a heightened point of making-

sense/*sense*-making, which enables an 'a-ha of recognition' (Cytowic, 1994: 229).

When delivered verbally, or written aloud (after, Barthes, 1975: 66), such

'carnivalised' language (Bakhtin, 1984: 107) becomes 'the *speak*' that is most

physical' in performance (Novarina, 1996: 58, emphasis original) and makes explicit

Shklovsky's idea of 'the dance of the organs of speech' (qtd. in Eichenbaum, 1965:

109). Here rhythm becomes integral to expression (Brik in Eichenbaum, 1965: 110-1,

124) and the words demonstrate a Dionysian, musical, visceral-verbal play that

engages the (re)cognitive potential of speech (Nietzsche, 1967a: 54-6).[1] Churchill's

play with words thus transmits primarily emotive and sensate experience via their

sound, form and disturbed 'meaning'. Her verbal texts become 'verbal lacerations'

(Cody, 1998: 122), etching themselves into the perceptive faculties of the sentient

body. Manipulated (syn)aesthetically in this way, Churchill's verbal texts evoke the ineffable, transcending speech as we 'know' it.

Far Away (Churchill, 2000a) and *A Number* (Churchill, 2002a) are emblematic of Churchill's manipulation of language and of visual image through the most minimal means. It is this powerful concentration of the speech and a focus on the imagination that leads to Churchill's idiosyncratic crystallisation of form and her compulsion to delve deeper into the possibilities of human perception through the word. Consequently, Churchill continuously evolves a disturbed and playful approach to the illusional possibilities of writing for theatre. In all of her *play*-texts it is the play of image and action in the verbal and physical that is the instigator of corporeal perception; words fused with the body and delivered in space that manipulate the aural potential of conjuring the visual, haptic, olfactory and so on.[2]

In terms of exploring the 'free-play' of the imagination (Kant, 1911: 58-60) Churchill has persistently played with different planes (time, dimensions, worlds), demanding that the audience engage with realms that activate the imagination and disturb human cognition. Such ludic subversion can be traced from early plays such as *Not . . . not . . not . . . not enough oxygen* (Churchill, 1993) through *Cloud 9* and *Fen* (see Churchill 1997, 1996) to *Far Away* (Churchill, 2000a) and *A Number* (Churchill, 2002a). Within all her work this 'plane-play' serves to upset logic and disturb conventional capacities for meaning-making within performance.

The realms that Churchill presents on stage play with liminal space, explore the in-betweens and slippage of experience; between life and death; between reality and fantasy; between past and present, present and future; between logic and the illogical; between madness and sanity; between femininity and masculinity, between the tangible and intangible. She presents places within the performance space (both time

and location) which allow the unthinkable to happen, truly taking the audience to 'the edge of the possible' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 1). In much of her work there is an all pervasive sense of the nightmare, of hauntings, of intoxication, of transgression and disturbance in thematic and formalistic concerns. Such hauntings remain as traces within the corporeal memory of the audience's experience of the ideas, images and narratives received. Here Churchill's (syn)aesthetic writerly practice employs words to 'impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known' (Shklovsky, 1965: 12) which enables a lucid perception within the appreciation strategy. As a result Churchill's work 'frees people into imagination' (Barker, 1997: 38) and expounds the 'Dionysian content' (Nietzsche, 1967a; 37-54) of (syn)aesthetic visceral-verbal texts.[3]

In probing the possibilities of the imagination and theatre, Churchill's writing exploits the potential for movement, sound, design, music and speech to force each other into new dimensions for communication. As a result, Churchill steadfastly deconstructs boundaries, shifts and disturbs the divisions of performance conventions so that the sign-systems of performance follow a Dionysian 'eternal recurrence' (Nietzsche, 1968: 544), to be constantly destroyed and reinvented.[4] Churchill expounds a (syn)aesthetic blending of disciplines and verbal registers. Her *play*-texts demonstrate a continuum of (re)negotiating linguistic and performance structures in order to play with language, with the effects of disorientating and unsettling both expectation and perception.

Churchill interweaves diverse linguistic styles with dance, music and design – elements written into the very substance of the *play*-text. Much of her work explores the fusion of words, music and dance, such as; the hybridised *The Skriker* (Churchill, 1994a) and *Lives of the Great Poisoners* (Churchill, 1998), to her linguistic

soundscores for dance, *Fugue* (Churchill, 1988) and *Hotel* (Churchill, 1997b), to the *play*-text within the Siobhan Davies Dance Company's installation, *Plants and Ghosts* (Churchill, 2002c). With each of these hybridised modes Churchill fuses the verbal, aural, visual and physical capability of words into the fabric of the sensate explorations of space, movement, speech, sound and design.

The way in which Churchill's writing deconstructs boundaries and cross-fertilises itself with other disciplines and practices, demonstrates how *play*-writing can be perceived as a sensate genre, with an indefinable nature and inherent resistance strategies. Consequently, where linguistic acts have previously been considered to be reductive, enforcing closure in meaning-making processes, with Churchill's (syn)aesthetic *play*-texts, from conception to performance, an opening process is established in terms of appreciation and analytical strategies. What this allows is for a (syn)aesthetic writing style to actively embrace diversity and *différance* (Derrida, 1987a: 8-9) in form, content, register and so on.

A focus on the body as a 'polyphonic' signifier that exposes marginal 'consciousnesses' (Bakhtin, 1984: 17-18) within much of Churchill's (syn)aesthetic writing proves her commitment to pre-expressivity and chthonic communication. By 'recasting language' Churchill taps a pre-verbal consciousness which allows the 'instinctual body' to 'cipher' the words (Kristeva, 1982: 61).[5] Her work foregrounds sensate experience, focusing on corporeal memory and traces within theme and content as well as demanding these as perceptual factors in interpretation. With *play*-texts such as *A Mouthful of Birds* (Churchill & Lan, 1998) and *The Skriker* (Churchill, 1994a), Churchill employs the multi-layered potential of the body as signifier within the images and action of the text in order to work on the audience in a highly physicalised manner.

In highlighting the (re)presentation of the body within the form and content and by playing with a double-edged process of making-sense/*sense*-making through a (syn)aesthetic manipulation of words, images, meaning and bodily experience, Churchill actuates the human 'sharability of sentience' (Scarry, 1985: 326) in form, content and appreciation. Her (syn)aesthetic writerly style explores concrete corporealities and abstract ideas and thus fuses a chthonic and noetic response within appreciation.

5.2: *Far Away*

> Ever since I started this play I've had this line in my head from *The Wasteland*, 'I could not speak, and my eyes failed - Looking into the heart of light, the silence'. And this play to me is about that. That moment . . . when you wake up from a dream and you think you've understood something huge and then it slips away from you again. It takes you to that very point (Kathy Tozer, 2001: 11).[6]

Far Away premiered at the Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Upstairs (Churchill, 2000b). This is an intimate space, which was made smaller through the design of the piece. The playing space had been converted to a small, claustrophobic proscenium arch that presented a story-box like set. Here the audience was sitting up close to the performance, yet still viewing it as if it is a tiny story box, a toy theatre from where stories are told.[7] This compact design encapsulated in its very form the encounter that was to follow - a concentrated space, a concentrated time-scale, a concentrated experience.

The audience entered the space to idyllic bird song, which was played along the stairway entrance leading to the theatre. However, the aural quality of this sound contained an ominous undercurrent. It foregrounded the 'unnaturalness' of something 'natural' which was further compounded by the *trompe l'oeil* front cloth that displayed a picturesque, fairy-tale image of a cottage in the countryside. This curtain took on an overwhelming presence within the performance, and foregrounded how the

play-text is highly imagistic and intensely allegorical. In these initial moments the painted image drew attention to the romanticised, the idealised. Its overpowering presence at the start, and the manner in which it came crashing down at the end of the performance, was visually, aurally and haptically disturbing. It also served to intensify the connotations of a safety curtain - a screen hiding, covering up, protecting us from whatever may be inside. The unsettling presence of the curtain was further defamiliarised by a disturbatory soundscape. The eerie quality of the birdsong gently began to be fused with a female voice singing 'Far Away', ethereal, distant, yet surrounding the audience aurally.[8] This combination of sensate experiences ensured that the romantic, 'oil painting reality' of the curtain subverted any sense of peace and childhood security that the image might offer in favour of the anticipation of a horror.

Via these visual, aural and spatial means, the opening experience manifested the underlying thematic substance of the piece; the notion that what is to follow could never happen here, could only exist in a place, a time, a realm, that is far, far away. In the concentrated use of these words a collusion and collision of overtones are implicit; suggestions of the territorial and the international are infiltrated by the fairy-tale language of 'long ago and far away'. This ensures that an allegorical presence permeates the piece, always removed, distanced, yet always far too 'real'. It also serves to illustrate how *Far Away* (Churchill, 2000a, 2000b) plays with the imagination and concentrates language and image through defamiliarised and disturbing techniques.

In doing so Churchill engages human logic in an unusual way. Linda Bassett, who played Harper, describes how in wrestling with the text as a performer the very form of the writing excites the brain, because the 'form of expression is so exciting . . . it's enlivening' (Bassett, 2001: 4). As a result this is relayed in the appreciation of

the delivery of the language, where, 'like lateral thinking games' the visceral-verbal

texts allow the mind to make 'fascinating journeys' where 'you can feel your nerves,

your brain cells being forced into a different synapse' (Bassett, 2001: 12).[9]

The 'laser precision' (Bassett, 2001: 12) of the penetrating verbal images and

concentrated actions written into *Far Away* (Churchill, 2000a) demand an equivalent

response in the visual realisation. This is exposed in particular in the dance-like hat-

making sequence that occurs in the second act (Churchill, 2000a, 2001). A visual play

with the design of the hats is accentuated in the details of the actions:

> JOAN and TODD *are sitting at a workbench. They have each just*
> *started making a hat. . . . Next day. They are working on the hats,*
> *which are by now far more brightly decorated . . . . Next day. They're*
> *working on the hats, which are getting very big and extravagant. . .*
> *Next day. They are working on the hats, which are now enormous and*
> *preposterous* (Churchill, 2000a: 16 – 22, emphasis original).

Not only is a 'carnivalised' (Bakhtin, 1984: 107) response necessary in the

design of the hats but the actions, alongside the rhythm and content of the dialogue

that ensues demands that an intensely physicalised creation of the hats is made clear.

As a result, the hat sequence conveys a formal expression of the intensely felt

relationship that is developing between Joan and Todd (Churchill, 2000a, 2000b,

2001; see Fig. 5.1). It is this balletic sequence which leads to the visually disturbing

presence of the hat parade:

> *Next day. A procession of ragged, beaten, chained prisoners, each*
> *wearing a hat, on their way to execution. The finished hats are even*
> *more enormous and preposterous than in the previous scene*
> (Churchill, 2000a: 24, emphasis original; see Fig. 5.2).

Accompanied by distorted, unsettling cavalcade music, the chilling movement

of the hat parade produces a disquieting effect, which draws on traces and echoes of

lived historical events. The prison clothes, the bodies chosen (all shapes, sizes and

ages – most disturbing the fact that the wearer of Joan's winning hat is a child,

clinging on to an adult's hand) instantly evokes the holocausts, genocide, of recent

history - Auschwitz, Cambodia, former Yugoslavia, and on. Yet, the presence of the

hats serves to push this image further, delving deeper into the dark and dangerous

possibilities of human nature. It is the concentration of the images found in

Churchill's words that engage 'intuitive knowledge' (Cytowic, 1994: 7), and provide

an embodied understanding of simultaneously abstract and primordial idea – the

notion of the human heart of darkness – via a (syn)aesthetic-sense.

The intensely performed, intensely perceived, action of these sequences is

emphasised by the stillness of the movement that occurs in the scenes immediately

before and after. In these first and last acts, the quiet, still rhythm of the movement

ensures that it is the verbal delivery that penetrates and dances, expanded in the

stillness of the movement and the darkness of the design. For example, in the opening

scene Harper and Younger Joan are subtly lit by the ominous glow of a single table-

lamp. This focuses and exposes the soundscore of the words and makes the tiniest

detail of expression appear like a choreographed dance (Churchill, 2000b, 2001).

The concentrated style of Churchill's extraordinary language further explores

the noetic capabilities of the imagination in the final speech. Kathy Tozer, who played

Older Joan, (Churchill, 2000b, 2001) describes how the exploration of this speech as

paradigmatic of the play, in rehearsal and performance, 'brutalised' her senses (Tozer,

2001: 3). Here the sensational and conceptual are fused; ideas are made tangible and

emotional and sensational resonance is forced through the body with the visceral

trigger of each and every word. As the concluding experience, this speech

concentrates and crystallises the corporeal engagement with the performance. The

absurd, lyrical, cruelty of the piece is delivered with absolute solemnity, absolute

brevity – all the more defamiliarised and disturbing for it. In its ludically disfigured language it explores the apocalyptic, irreparable damage that humans are capable of.

This speech is exemplary of Churchill's ability to concentrate form and verbal play in order to expose themes and philosophical concepts through the distillation of what is said, which enables the audience to perceive the undercurrents of what has not been voiced, condensing time and articulating vast concerns. The references to the animals, vegetables and minerals, all forces of nature, that have taken arms against each other again draws on traces and associations of lived history, the apocalyptic and destructive creation that initiated human evolution. Yet Churchill unsettles and subverts this by the description of the atrocities being engaged in;

> there was one killed by coffee or one killed by pins, they were killed by heroin, petrol, chainsaws, hairspray, bleach, foxgloves, the smell of smoke was where we were burning the grass that wouldn't serve. The Bolivians are working with gravity, that's a secret so as not to spread alarm. But we're getting further with noise and there's thousands dead of light in Madagascar. Who's going to mobilise darkness and silence? (Churchill, 2000a: 38).

As a result this speech enables an encounter with ideas as much as actual presence though the viscerality of the language and the ideas it suggests which evoke a (syn)aesthetic-sense.[10] Churchill thus establishes a defamiliarised state of 'exposed lucidity' (Derrida, 1978: 242), where words are integral to the (syn)aesthetic nature of a performance and are responsible for the disturbing nature of the reception, enforcing a 'resonance' (Nietzsche, 1994: 22) that makes tangible the intangible. Here the unsayable as that 'something which . . . cannot be phrased' (Broadhurst, 1999b: 21) *is* phrased, and is responsible for evoking the '"a-ha" of recognition' (Cytowic, 1994: 229).

Tozer refers to the 'transcendental' (Tozer, 2001: 3) quality of this final speech.[11] This evidences the (syn)aesthetic-sense which draws on a 'knowledge that

is experienced directly', that provides 'a glimpse of the transcendent' (Cytowic, 1994:
78). Just as the Older Joan closes the play with, 'I put one foot in the river . . . when
you've just stepped in you can't tell what's going to happen' (Churchill, 2000a: 38),
we as an audience, through the visceral-verbal quality of the words, that cause a
(re)cognition in terms of meaning, are enticed to place our foot in the water. What I
intend by this is that, metaphorically, throughout the play we are at the liminal point
'of a realisation - stepping in the water' (Tozer, 2001: 5). This transcendental quality,
'leads people to, not being quite able to articulate what they're feeling because it's
still too embryonic' (Tozer, 2001: 5) ensuring that meaning is derived 'from the
dissolution of coherent meaning' (Barker, 1997: 53). The safety curtain crashes down
at this point, like a physical representation of the forces of being in the moment of
(re)cognition.[12] This provides a visual equivalent to the forceful experiential quality
of the (syn)aesthetic-sense, when ideas and experiences are presented on a visceral
level, as if for the first time.

 Far Away (Churchill, 2000a, 2000b) unsettles an audience by 'frustrating their
expectations of any simple interpretation' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 175). The ludic
manipulation of the visceral-verbal words allow a grasp of a defamiliarised semantic
understanding whilst simultaneously necessitating a somatic engagement with ideas
and concepts in an entirely experiential way.[13] The sensate manipulation and
'disfiguration' (Barthes, 1975: 14) of these words have huge ramifications in terms of
their visceral quality and the unsettling, intangible ideas they make manifest. In this
way, *Far Away* (Churchill, 2000b) inhabits 'the area of maximum risk' to 'the
imagination and invention of its author and the comfort of its audience' (Barker,
1997: 52). What becomes evident is that a disturbatory 'free-play' of language,
imagination and cognition (Kant, 1911: 58-60), is overwhelming within this work –

free-play particularly in terms of identifying meaning. By playing with the vestiges of semantic meaning and prioritising somatic expression, *Far Away* (Churchill, 2000b) evidences 'perceptual linguistic shifts' which force an audience to 'reconstitute' both 'lexicon' and 'thought' (Weiss, following Novarina, 1993: 92).

The adjective I have repeatedly used throughout the discussion of the work is 'concentrated'. And this is a word that can be applied to the whole production. It has the (syn)aesthetic effect of being concentrated, halting, stunned into receiving and (re)cognising the ideas, translated through the ludically subverted language. Tozer identifies how *Far Away* 'means so much and it's so sparse' (2001: 10). Similarly, Bassett describes it as 'like a homeopathic remedy, it's been distilled and distilled and distilled so that you say one word and it's doing the work of four sentences' (Bassett, 2001: 1). In *Far Away* (Churchill, 2000a, 2000b), Churchill's writing has distilled the somatic/semantic potential of verbal language 'down to something essential' (Bassett, 2001: 1). As a result, this distilled and disturbing performance haunts the memory as a concentrated encounter with ideas, images and emotion. Like a remedy prepared for further distillation, the effects of Churchill's *play*-text remain as a visceral presence within the body, to be extracted further in the processes of (syn)aesthetic interpretation.

5.3 Sarah Kane – dreams and disturbance

> Performance is visceral. It puts you in direct contact with thought and feeling (Kane qtd. in Graham Saunders, 2002: 15).

> [L]anguage is always our very body which is there to be entirely traversed again, and one never writes except to attempt to escape alive once again from the human prison (Novarina, 1996: 66).

Kane's work is exemplary of the (syn)aesthetic style as her writing employs a visceral style, in form and content, that demands an equivalent response from

performers, directors and designers, in the processes of production. As a result her

writing activates a parallel visceral appreciation in the audience via an immediate and

innate sensate involvement.

　　　With all Kane's work there is a very clear attention to a Dionysian destructive

creation of new forms (Nietzsche, 1967a), where the form itself makes the play

experiential.[14] The form of all Kane's plays, particularly *Crave* (1998b) and *4.48*

Psychosis (2000a), make the work experienceable in a 'multisensory' (Cytowic,

1994: 167) manner. In an entirely (syn)aesthetic style, the experience of *Crave* and

4.48 Psychosis becomes an explicit fusion of senses, images and ideas where 'phrases

collide, clash and mix' (Sierz, 2001: 119).

　　　(Syn)aesthetics are evident in Kane's exploration of taboo states - violence,

love, abuse, tenderness, relationships and so on. Kane also explores extreme physical

actions in writing which allows a very real 'writing of the body' (Derrida, after

Artaud, 1978: 191) into the fibre of the *play*-text. Striking physical images and

visceral-verbal words are inextricably linked in all of her works, the poetry of

language is within the physicality and vice versa. As with each *play*-text's form and

content, from *Blasted* (Kane, 1996) to *4.48 Psychosis* (Kane, 2000a), one *is* the other.

Thus in performance Kane's *play*-texts produce a (syn)aesthetic fusion where the

senses are blurred in the production and appreciation of the work. Kane's

(syn)aesthetically styled writing in performance ensures, for the audience, a very real

and immediate experience in its purest sense, to feel, suffer, undergo.

　　　Kane explores the potential of 'articulatory cruelty, linguistic carnage', proving

how such brutal and disturbatory play with the verbal enables 'perceptions' to be

changed (Novarina, 1993: 96-9). Kane's ludic, verbal subversions with speech and

physical image, emphasise both the beautiful and noetic possibilities in language,

whilst simultaneously exploiting the chthonian essence of the scatological and base. Kane's handling of language thus, 'breaks the bonds of the real, disrupts the familiar', which enforces an 'intoxication' that 'subverts reason' (Barker, 1997: 213). Kane's play with form and her explorations of extreme (lived and imaginable) experience breaks down the 'boundary between the real and the imaginary' (Luria, 1969: 144). In all her work Kane's manipulation of language, of physical image and verbal play, ensure a brutally tender resonance in the live moment and the subsequent processes of recall;

> Grace is raped by one of the voices. She looks into Graham's eyes throughout./ Graham holds her head between his hands. . . . Graham presses his hands on to Grace and her clothes turn red where he touches, blood seeping through. Simultaneously, his own body begins to bleed in the same places.
> (Kane, 1998a: 26).

> a consolidated consciousness resides in a darkened banqueting hall near the ceiling of a mind whose floor shifts as ten thousand cockroaches when a shaft of light enters as all thoughts unite in an instant of accord body no longer expellent as the cockroaches comprise a truth which no one ever utters
> (Kane, 2000a: 3)

Kane pushes the boundaries of verbal expression by reve(al)ling in its corporeality. The extreme physical images present in all her works serve to break down the boundary between reality and imagination, between mind and body, between lived experience and sympathetic understanding.

The corporeal experience of the words in Kane's writing is brought about by the physical wrestling with the text that the performers experience in working through the piece. This ensures 'a profound reading, ever deeper, ever closer to the core' (Novarina, 1993: 101), that is subsequently transmitted to the audience. Jo McInnes, performer in both Royal Court productions of *4.48 Psychosis* (Kane, 2000b, 2001d), talks of 'the form . . . the control of language' executed by Kane which enables the

performer to follow 'the shape if it' and become 'part of it' (McInnes, 2001b: 5). As a

result the performer can then become extremely 'imaginative with it' (McInnes,

2001b: 5) due to structure, the punctuation and layout and the twists and turns in the

verbal play.[15] Ingrid Craigie, M in the original and revived productions of *Crave*

(Kane 1998c, 2001c), similarly describes a surrendering of the performer to the text in

performance, which allows the audience member a shared experience (Craigie, 1999:

4). In particular Craigie highlights the *prae-sens* embedded in the verbal play of the

text demanding that the performers are 'absolutely in the moment all the time'

(Craigie, 1999: 4).[16]

All Kane's work demonstrates how (syn)aesthetic *play*-texts explore the

internal, chthonic human experience, connecting the individual and personal with

wider social and cultural issues. In *Crave* (Kane, 1998b) Kane expounds the taboos of

society and the disruptions of contemporary human experience alongside the

disintegration of the mind, memories of the body, the abyss of traumatic, individual

experience. *4.48 Psychosis* (Kane, 2000a) is illustrative of (syn)aesthetic writing

where the exploration of taboo states is paramount. Developing the style initiated in

Crave (1998b), the *play*-text makes present the clamorous, clambering, voices of

disturbed and disturbing minds, of human experience.[17] In doing so Kane does not

limit and locate the work solely in the individual mind of the depressive, but instead

opens the text through the form and language of the piece to reveal wider, universal

themes. As McInnes argues of *4.48 Psychosis* (Kane, 2000a);

> It's not about a single journey, it's about all our journeys . . . there's
> so much reality in it without it being a documentary, without it
> representing an extreme realism, it allows people to have their own
> take on it, it's expressive and free enough not to pin thoughts down
> (McInnes, 2001b: 6).[18]

Kane's cross fertilisation and juxtaposition of linguistic registers and diverse discourses opens up the verbal play of the *play*-text and crystallises and concentrates personal lived experiences alongside the wider social ideas and themes presented.[19] In doing so she ensures that the (individual and social) ideas and experiences explored become simultaneously mythic and firmly based in reality. As a result Kane's work deploys a 'passionate assertion of human complexity' (Barker, 1997: 52) and becomes 'law breaking' by continuously infringing 'the moral sense of right and wrong' (Barker, 2001: 3), in content and form.

5.4 *4.48 Psychosis*

> [T]hat's how good, I think, the writing is, it takes you to places that you don't know
> . . . . [A] supernatural . . . huge place that you really do visit (McInnes, 2001b: 4).

As with Churchill's *Far Away* (2000b), the original production of Kane's *4.48 Psychosis*, opened at the Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Upstairs (Kane, 2000b). The intimacy of the space emphasised the immediacy of the piece and highlighted the 'sharability of sentience' (Scarry, 1985: 326) between the performers and the text, between the performers and the audience, between each individual in the audience receiving the work. In contrast to the minimalist staging of this original production, I also experienced a highly physicalised interpretation of *4.48 Psychosis*, this time with a cast of eleven performers, directed by Paul Woodward (Kane, 2001e). The work became an entirely new experience as a result, testament to the open quality of the text. Yet throughout each of these productions, the visceral and experiential quality of the writing remained.

To illustrate the open quality of this *play*-text it is interesting to note the difference between the visual and stylistic concerns of each production. The original production had an austere appearance. A clean white space within the black box of the

studio. Directly over the playing space at an angle a mirrored ceiling was suspended (see Fig. 5.3). This instantly presented a looking–glass world, where, as with Lewis Carroll's mirrored realm (1968, 1985), the (sur)real and the psychotic make sense/*sense*.[20] Three performers remain in the space throughout where they simply move from one place to another (lying on the floor, sitting in the 'doctor's chair', writing on the table, backwards, so that the numbers can be read by the audience in the mirror).

In this mirror, the reflected bodies, that make no direct contact with each other or the audience, become bodies floating in space, removed from the words that at once ground them and make them hover – suggesting an out of body experience that returns to the body in appreciation. During the performance grainy films are projected onto the floor – sometimes the words as they are spoken, 'flash flicker slash burn wring press' (Kane, 2000a: 29); sometimes moving images of buses, people, lives, moving around in the 'real' world that exists outside of this playing space; sometimes simply the 'flash-flicker' of the television's white noise, suggesting the depths of the night, or a dark internal landscape, where only '[b]lack snow falls' (Kane, 2000a: 29, 42; see Fig. 5.3).

By contrast Woodward's production (Kane, 2001e) placed the mind of *4.48 Psychosis* (Kane, 2000a) in the world of *Cleansed* (Kane, 1998a) where a bleak soiled expanse, only broken by an oasis of green grass around its margins, overwhelmed the black studio space. The performers who initially took on the role of 'Victims' wore white ragged clothes, the 'Perpetrators' wore dark, formal suits, and the 'Bystanders' wore grey. Just as the clearly defined roles became less distinctive as the performance progressed, these costumes morphed, via a gradual undressing, and actual soiling, to be indistinguishable variations of the same.[21] The wire frame of a bed took centre

stage locating the place in a world where destruction has occurred, providing overtones of bedlam whilst simultaneously foregrounding a Beckettian everywhere and nowhere (see Fig. 5.4).

The (syn)aesthetic design of both productions established a disturbing and enchanting quality of dreamscape and otherworldliness where the experience of the work actuates the sensation of being 'half awake yet still anchored in a dream' (Cytowic, 1994: 119). Such play with these transitory worlds in the language of the text, and the design of the performance, ensures that the audience have the ability to perceive 'the edge of the possible' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 1) and encounter that which the majority 'can only dimly imagine' (Luria, 1969: 96).

Following a (syn)aesthetic impulse, the Woodward production employed a highly physicalised vocabulary to penetrate the form and content of Kane's writing. Just as the words dance on the page, this production traced moments in the text via choreographed movement, which fused with the raw, visceral-verbal delivery of the speech. Both visual interpretations, in design and performing style, of *4.48 Psychosis* (Kane, 2000b, 2001e) showed at once a clinical exploration of psychosis which became simultaneously a ubiquitous space, an exploration of the twisted challenges of human experience. In this way, following the tone, themes and images of the *play*-text, the layers of text within the (syn)aesthetic hybrid, ensured a powerful (syn)aesthetic response in appreciation was achieved.

The hybridised Royal Court production of Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* (2000b), highlighted notions of the (syn)aesthetic corporeal memory and Derridean traces and re-marks, where the use of film projections of a grainy external world leaves its traces on the set, in the mirror, on the bodies of the performers and in the minds of the audience (see Fig. 5.3). The physical performances are (re)presented, via reflections,

above the performers in the mirror canvas that covers the playing space. Interwoven

with the powerful and haunting verbal text and the intensity of the physical

performances, the fusing of technology within the design, combined with the verbal

language, jarred reception and produced a disturbing visceral response by establishing

a dreamlike quality – fusing notions of the real with the imagined, the past with the

present, the live with the pre-recorded – halting time and leaving traces of moments.

This was further heightened when the shutters were finally opened (Kane, 2000b) to

let the real, buzzing world of Sloane Square into the ritualised hush of the performing

space.

This trace and remark-able quality was also emphasised in the Woodward

production (Kane, 2001e) where the soil remained on the performers' bodies just as

the imprints of their moving bodies remained in the soil (see Fig. 5.91-5.9.3).[22] The

corporeal memory of the (syn)aesthetic style, that furthered these notions of re-trace

and re-mark, was felt throughout this performance through the haptic quality of the

movement, the visceral delivery of the speech and the power of disturbing images.

One in particular occurred after a female performer, having emerged from the soil,

buried there for over twenty minutes of the performance (see Fig. 5.7.1-5.7.2),

delivered the brutal and evocative speech that is overwhelmed by the loss of love,

ending with;

> Fuck you for rejecting me by never being there . . . but most of all,
> fuck you God for making me love a person who does not exist, FUCK
> YOU FUCK YOU FUCK YOU (Kane, 2000a: 13).

And her tongue is then aggressively washed with soap and grey water (see Fig.

5.8). The connotation of the childhood image of cruel chastisement is heightened by

the innate, individual corporeal memory in the audience that is activated by this

disturbingly sensate action. As a result, 'complete, visceral recall' (Bartlett, 1999: 4)

occurs when intellectualising the sequence, which cites the experience within a bodily

(re)cognition. With this example, the transgressive, distorted and transformed

visceral-verbal resonance integral to the whole speech, uncovers 'the extreme

possibilities of language' and leads 'beyond the textual, directly into the morass of the

body' (Weiss after Novarina, 1993: 84-7), engaging the subversive communicative

potential of the semiotic chora (Kristeva, 1999a). Following this the disturbatory

potential of the imagination when activated by such powerful verbal and visual

images, releases the spectator into embodied experience and thus embodied

knowledge.

The strength of the (syn)aesthetic quality of Kane's writing is due to the fused

noetic and chthonic substance of the highly imagistic language deployed. The poetics

of her ludic style expounds a 'Dionysian content' (Nietzsche, 1967a: 37-54) that is

'carnivalised' and 'polyphonic' (Bakhtin, 1984: 107, 17). Both on the page and in

performance, Kane's writing presents the sensual and disturbing play of the

(syn)aesthetic visceral-verbal where the 'experience of words' is 'a measure of their

expressiveness' (Luria, 1969: 91). The exchange between the page and the

performance demonstrates the 'amorous interchange' (Novarina, 1996: 108) that can

occur between *play*-text and performer, performance of the *play*-text and audience.

This was absolutely evident in both productions under scrutiny here, both

(syn)aesthetically conveying through design, verbal delivery and physical presence

the visceral quality of the ideas and languages integral to the writing.

In *4.48 Psychosis* (Kane, 2000a. 2000b, 2001e), Kane's writing fuses the noetic

and chthonic which ensures that the quality of appreciation is firmly grounded in the

messy taboos of the base, of the lived, whilst simultaneously enabling a

transcendental experience in the immediate reception of the work. McInnes identifies

this transcendental quality of *4.48 Psychosis* (Kane, 2000a, 2000b). Her delivery of the speech, whilst lying back on the desk, resulted in a feeling of levitation, 'actually floating' (McInnes, 2001b: 4) which was reflected (literally) in the out of body imaging that the mirror presented. In this way Kane's transgressive and highly poetic manipulation of verbal language actuates in delivery and reception words that are given 'the significance they have in dreams' (Artaud, 1993: 72). Here words are employed 'not only for their meaning, but for their forms, their sensual radiation' (Artaud, 1993: 83).

Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* (2000a, 2000b, 2001e) demonstrates how the 'intuitive, non-verbal, non-rational' (Broadhurst, 1999b: 22) interpretative approach integral to (syn)aesthetics is heavily influenced by the non-rational use of verbal language in the (syn)aesthetic performance style, as well as via its varied non-verbal means. The predominance of the senses and the body in the visceral-verbal of the *play*-text ensures that it is a very real 'writing of the body' (Barthes, 1975; Cixous, 1993; Irigaray, 1985) in concept and form. For example the repeated, retraced words 'flash flicker slash burn wring press dab slash' (Kane, 2000a: 29) in the original production (Kane, 2000b), became physical expression through the very act of 'the *speak*' (Novarina: 1996, 58, emphasis original) via a verbal delivery and the visual 'speaking' of these words in the filmed projections.

In Woodward's production, this sequence was explored through a highly physicalised choreography (Kane, 2001e). The performer delivering the speech was twisted and turned in increasingly desperate movements, forcibly interacting with the bed (which seemed to become a cage, a fence, a trap resisting her), enabling an unusual and symbiotic relationship between verbal and physical expression to become clear (see Fig. 5.10.1-5.10.2). Thus, Kane's *play*-text actually becomes a movement

score, the traces and imprints of, 'something that wants to dance' (Novarina, 1993: 102). This ensured that the inarticulable quality of the experience inherent in the linguistic sequence became articulated via fused verbal and physical means. Together, these (syn)aesthetically charged fused performance modes made tangible, via 'compelling imagistic language' (Jays, 1999: 524), an intangible state, etching the experiences of the words as 'verbal lacerations' (Cody, 1998:122) within the perceiving bodies via a 'special perception' (Shklovsky, 1965: 18).[23]

The predominance of the senses and the body in the visceral-verbal of Kane's *play*-text ensures a very real 'writing of the body' (Derrida, after Artaud, 1978: 191) in concept and form. Following a (syn)aesthetic impulse, Woodward's production employed a highly physicalised vocabulary to penetrate the form and content including sign language, 'which provided a sympathetic and beautiful visual grammar to Kane's more poetic textual moments' (Woodward qtd. in Machon, 2002a: 15).[24] Just as Kane's words dance on the page in terms of layout and physicality, Woodward's company traced moments in the text via choreographed movement, which fused with the raw, visceral-verbal delivery of the speech (Kane, 2001e). These striking physical images came about due to the corporeality integral to the writerly style of the text. As a result, Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* (2000a, 2000b, 2001e) becomes a 'semiotised' (Kristeva, 1999a: 95) site/cite which demonstrates how speech as a signifier is explored through movement and the movement finds its stimulus, and equal, in speech. Here Kane's *play*-text actually becomes a movement score that traces somatic experience. This demonstrates how (syn)aesthetic *play*-texts can stimulate and accompany movement-based performance, where the visceral-verbal language is translated through an equally visceral physical language to affect the audience in a highly sensate way.

In both productions the movement quality, whether still and concentrated (Kane, 2000b) or highly physicalised (Kane, 2001e), along with the verbal delivery, explored the spaces between the words, elaborating and crystallising the images, experiences and ideas in the *play*-text (Kane, 2000a);

> Black snow falls / in death you hold me / never free / I have no desire for death / no suicide ever had / watch me vanish / watch me / vanish / watch me / watch me / watch / It is myself I have never met, whose face is pasted on the underside of my mind / please open the curtains (Kane, 2000a: 42-3).[25]

In the original production the bodies that levitated as reflections in the mirror, floating, still, as this final speech is delivered, commanded a hushed sense of ritual within the theatre. This was both re-marked and released with the cleansing opening of the shutters, forcibly touching the senses of each individual in the audience as they did so (Kane, 2000b). A similar regard for a ritualised ending, providing further traces of out-of-body experiences, occurred with Woodward's production (Kane, 2001e). The final image of an isolated female, figure upon a heightened platform, entangled in a mesh of masking tape was, literally, stunning, holding the gaze of the audience. The tape, still attached to the roll hung upon her neck, arms, waist, and legs. In a ceremony that appeared to slow down time, the performers offered members of the audience the tape so that they actually held the performer within their hands. The figure connoted a multitude of images; a broken body wrapped in bandages, a fly caught in a web, a balloon tethered to the ground. Yet, as one by one, each strand of tape was cut, she seemed to float up, be freed. The remaining performers then moved into the audience, solemnly urging individuals to open the curtains. Those that finally did so, revealed a burning flame. A final chthonic image that simultaneously cleanses, releases, disappears (Kane, 2001e; see Fig. 5.11.1-5.11.3, 5.14, 5.15).

In both productions (Kane, 2000b, 2001e) the visceral-verbal 'full, physical shock potential' (Artaud, 1993: 35) was affected by Kane's ludic 'disfiguration' (Barthes, 1975: 14) of language, which affected a highly physical realisation, however still the images may have been in actuality. The 'tangible lacerations' inflicted 'on the senses' (Artaud, 1993: 65) also occurred via 'the grain of the voice' and the 'carnal stereophony' (Barthes, 1975: 66) of the fused corporeal delivery. Here the act of writing and verbal delivery was an embodied event which established a somatic/semantic process in the double-edged making-sense/*sense*-making strategy of appreciation that was demanded by the work. It is the symbiotic and unusual interlingual play between speech and body within *4.48 Psychosis* (Kane, 2000a, 2000b, 2001e) that proves capable of producing the (syn)aesthetic-sense, a 'sensing beyond' (after Nietzsche, 1967a: 132) that fuses the corporeal with the noetic, emotion with understanding.

5.5 (Re)*writing* the Body

Churchill's *Far Away* (2000a, 2000b) and Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* (2000a, 2000b, 2001e) are highly (syn)aesthetic in their attention to a visceral-verbal style that actuates a (syn)aesthetic-sense in the immediate experience of the work and the subsequent processes of recall. Both Churchill and Kane create texts that play with an open quality and demand a visceral response in terms of the verbal, physical, spatial and visual realisation of the *play*-texts. As a result their writing enforces the communication of sensate experience to the audience. The writerly practice of both demands that the audience is challenged to confront an intuitive response in order to appreciate the work, thereby prioritising individual interpretation within the performance matrix of meaning-making. Churchill and Kane both blend the aural,

visual, olfactory, oral, haptic and tactile to create intersensual work. This activates a double-edged making-sense/*sense*-making process of appreciation and ensures that the performances of these *play*-texts become an experience in the fullest sense of the word – to feel, suffer, undergo.

Notes

[1] As Richard Eyre and Nicholas Wright assert, in Churchill's play with verbal language, even the most 'transparent of statements hint at more beneath' (2000: 294) and a Dionysian 'musicality . . .[p]ace, inflection, tempo' is 'embedded in the scoring' (Eyre & Wright, 2000: 103).

[2] The influences of this concentrated writing style and her manipulation of the imagination can be traced back to Churchill's early writing for radio. Frances Gray sums up the 'radiophonic virtues' for writers 'in a single word: concentration' (1994: 41-4). Radio 'has the intimacy of the storyteller's fireside; it can make ambitious leaps, in time and space . . . it can play upon [the] mind's eye to create scenes of great imagined visual beauty. . . . [I]t cannot cope with clutter' or 'redundant images' (Gray, 1994: 41-4).

[3] Geraldine Cousins suggests Churchill employs the 'stage as a place of magic possibilities' (1989: 61). This reveals 'new worlds beyond and beneath the surface of ordinary life' and exposes a 'secret underside: magical, sexual, criminal' where there is a 'shifting of the ground' beneath the feet of her characters' (Eyre & Wright, 2000: 294-5). According to Elin Diamond, it is this play with 'representational space' which alters the audience's perspective on the play's "world"' (1997: 92) and thus their own worlds. Magic, play, transformation, transgression and disturbance, all work together for the releasing of 'alternative realities' and allows a 'movement away from constraint towards the freeing of possibilities' (Cousins, 1989: 61). Examples of those *play*-texts that explore such realms are *Vinegar Tom*, *Fen* (see Churchill, 1997, 1996), *The Skriker*, (Churchill, 1994a) *A Mouthful of Birds* (Churchill & Lan, 1998), *Far Away* (Churchill, 2000a) and *A Number* (Churchill, 2002a).

[4] Thus Churchill displays a 'passion for re-inventing forms' thereby 'shaking up our notion of what a play is like' which causes an audience to 'apply . . .the same astonishment to life' (Eyre & Wright, 2000: 297). Elaine Aston refers to Churchill's 'challenge to form' as an 'unfixing of boundaries' (Aston, 1997: 27).

[5] This focus on the human body and its potential to make an undo meaning in diverse ways can be charted from *Vinegar Tom*, *Cloud 9, Fen* and *A Mouthful of Birds* (see Churchill, 1996, 1997, Churchill & Lan 1998), to the present. The body in Churchill's writing is 'a special site of inquiry and struggle' and her writing itself 'empowers speakers with vital words, incites bodies to move in space' (Diamond, 1997: 83).

[6] T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* (see Eliot, 1989).

[7] It later transferred to The Albery Theatre (Churchill, 2001), a much larger space that accentuated the notion of looking into a traditional proscenium arch, fairy-tale theatre, although in my opinion, lost the immediacy and disturbing edge offered by the intimacy of the Royal Court space.

[8] Linda Bassett describes how the presence of the song within the performance came about from her singing it unintentionally in a rehearsal; 'There is a happy land/ far, far away./ Where we have bread and cheese three times a day./ Egg and bacon we don't see/ they put sawdust in our tea/ that is why we gradually/ fade, fade away. It's based on a hymn . . . about a happy land' (Bassett, 2001: 11). Bassett explains, 'Caryl said later that she thought of putting it in the play, because she knew the song, slightly different words, so it had obviously been in her head' (Bassett, 2001: 11).

[9] '[I]t's like taking a mind expanding drug. Because that's what she's doing, she's expanding your brain' (Bassett, 2001: 3).

[10] In the immediate moment this speech covers the evolutionary survival of the fittest - cockroaches, wasps, crocodiles, humans, and the 21st century 'apocalypse' of humans against nature, confronting the danger in separating humanity from nature and the primordial. Most disturbingly this speech exposes the recurrence of culpability, drawing attention to the play's own form within that recurrence (the play begins with Harper ensnaring herself in her own chilling lies to the younger Joan). It makes tangible the fact that humans collude with acts of atrocity against other humans, other species and are culpable in globalisation, culpable in pollution, culpable in ethnic cleansing, culpable in lying to children and in believing their own lies. This short speech enables, in the fleeting moment of immediate delivery, and in the subsequent processes of visceral interpretation, a disquieting (re)cognition that, like the chaos theory, the act of lying to a child can produce a world that destroys itself.

[11] Tozer also identifies a 'complicated' and 'ethereal emotion' (Tozer, 2001: 5- 6) that exists within the fabric of the text.

[12] Tozer describes the final curtain as coming down in a 'kadoom' (2001: 9) which effectively describes the 'kadoom', the 'negative pleasure' (Kant, 1911: 91), of (re)cognition.

[13] As Bassett explains '[h]ow you feel about something is different from how you think about it . . . . We do an awful lot of thinking in our society, feeling we're not so good at' (2001: 7)

[14] 'I made a decision about the kind of theatre I wanted to make – experiential (Kane qtd. in Sierz, 2001: 92). Kane asserts how she 'wanted to do things that hadn't been done, to invent new forms, find new modes of representation' (qtd. in Sierz, 2001: 92) as, '[a]ll good art is subversive, either in form and content. And the best art is subversive in form *and* content' (Kane, 1997: 130, emphasis original).

[15] In terms of exploring Kane's text via physical means, this concentration and control in her writing becomes 'a filter system for any bullshit. . . . [A]ny false move, be it based on intellectual over eagerness or movement for movement's sake [is] simply rejected by the text itself' (Woodward qtd. in Machon, 2002a: 8).

[16] Craigie also recalls, '*Crave* was the most intense experience I've had of using your voice like an instrument . . . there were four instruments, four of us, all individual but all part of one voice, one experience' (1999: 4).

[17] Graham Saunders suggests that as a result, characters become 'more an expression of emotion than the outward manifestations of psychology and social interaction' (2002: 88).

[18] McInnes continues, 'it's about how we all live, the bullshit we all swallow. It's about how hard it is to try and be a better person. The way we live and the way we want to be are in conflict. To me it means everything; it's me talking here with you, it's going on the tube, it's reading about the twin towers' (2001b: 6). As if echoing McInnes, Alan Williams, who played A in the original production and revival of *Crave* (Kane 1998c, 2001c), says of the taboos and transgression explored and exposed in *Crave*, 'the horror that is conveyed is one that is available to everyone at all times' (1999: 6).

[19] These discourses of diversity - doctor-patient conversations, medical questionnaires, 'self-help' psychology books, the Book of Revelations, 'as well as disembodied text and numbers that the characters do not speak' enable language to 'express the boundaries between reality, fantasy and different mental states' (Saunders, 2002: 112). Together this fusion of registers creates a '*meta-discourse* – unbounded by conventional language, and relying on theatrical imagery to take on the task of communicating emotions and ideas to the audience' (Saunders, 2002: 112, emphasis original).

[20] 'The mirror's presence meant that the audience could simultaneously see the drama on two planes, so that they could both witness the actors playing in front and above their heads' (Saunders, 2002: 115). A play with planes in design that truly mirrors the shifts in realms woven into Kane's *play*-text.

[21] Thus following the form of the *play*-text where 'Victim. Perpetrator. Bystander' is a line (Kane, 2001a: 29), but throughout no direction is given as to individual delivery or character. This highlights the continuum that exists between these roles in lived human experience; 'I write about human beings, and since I am one, the way in which all human beings operate is feasibly within my understanding. I don't think of the world as being divided up into men and women, victims and perpetrators' (Kane, 1997: 133).

[22] Throughout this production (Kane, 2001e) there was an emphasis on the visceral qualities conjured by the aural, visual and physical presence of the elements, earth, water, wind and fire. This play with the primordial ensured an open and affective signification in the tangible images. For example, following the release of the female figure in the final sequence, as discussed below, in the space where her body had been, a flame remained. Casting light and shadow, connoting life and death; purifying, burning, remaining, releasing (see Fig. 5.15).

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[23] In this way, just as the language was compounded by the corporeal expression, 'the body's physicality; found a 'parallel in the physicality of a shattered language' (Ayers, 1999: 10).

[24] Regarding this physicalised interpretation, Woodward's company followed an instinctual approach which informed the organic growth of the spatial, physical, verbal and aural hybrid. They used the Playback method, a discipline which demands an intuitive, emotive non-cerebral, highly ritualised response to an individual's memory where performers respond to lived testimonials through repeated gesture, movement, verbal phrasing, which build a whole stage picture; 'The experience is played back in this almost hallucinogenic form, the emphasis is on remembering and doing justice to the memory not in a literal way but so as to re-experience the memory in a sensate form' (Woodward qtd. in Machon, 2002a: 9). Applying this method to the *play*-text, 'the students' own histories and identities were fused with those of the voices in the text . . . allowing the words deep inside the performer's body . . . to write themselves large upon the stage . . . sensual re-enactment through image' (Woodward qtd. in Machon, 2002a: 9).

[25] In the *play*-text these lines are traced across two pages, providing a spatial experience in the very act of reading, underscoring the resonance of the visceral words (see Kane, 2000a: 42-3).

6. (Syn)aesthetics as a Style, An Exploration – (re)writing the *play*

> I think there's an important word that has lost its sense in theatre, and that's the
> word 'playing'. . . .[T]heatre is a place of form. You explore mediums until one day,
> you express something very profound that has some echo in the audience.
> Sometimes it doesn't work but at least if you put that word 'play' back, the audience
> is much more moved and feels more stimulated and excited by something that
> allows them to be inventive with the actor (Lepage, 1997b: 241-2).

In this chapter I explore a (syn)aesthetic style in practice through the writing of a *play*-text and the exploration of this in performance workshops. My intention within the *play*-writing, developed and shapeshifted in league with this thesis, has been to exploit the written word in a visceral-verbal manner, relishing images and engaging verbal language as 'a sensuality' (Barker, 1997: 88). The interrogation of my own original *play*-text in a continuum of performance workshops, and its translation into a sensate performance text, provides an active exploration of a (syn)aesthetic style in practice and appreciation from the perspective of writer, performer and audience member.[1]

An intention behind the practical exploration of my own writing and the theories and forms under scrutiny was to approach the *play*-text and its thematic ideas, with a group of performers, through exercises that were simultaneously experimenting with notions of the playful and disturbatory.[2] In doing so, throughout the series of practical sessions the performers and myself asked questions and attempted to articulate a response for the more elusive, ineffable areas of (syn)aesthetically styled practice. As a result I became aware that the process was indeed fusing the theoretical and creative; fusing theory in practice; fusing the verbal and physical; fusing active research and ongoing performance; fusing *sense* and sense.[3]

In the evolution of my own *play*-text an aim has been to employ written language that stimulates a corporeal response in the physical and verbal exploration of the text in performance. As a result, the writerly *play*-text created demands a

physicalised expression by the 'living, breathing, speaking body' (Cixous, 1995a: 134) within its very form. In particular I was focusing on the visceral quality of words that produce a 'carnal stereophany' (Barthes, 1975: 66) when 'written aloud' (after Barthes, 1975: 66) and employing corporeality within the very fabric of the *play*-text to engage with a sensate involvement from the performer and, consequently, the audience.

I intended that a process of making-sense/*sense*-making be instilled in interpretation due to the somatic/semantic nature of verbal signification. Underpinning this research was an interrogation of the 'play' integral to writing, reading and responding to *play*-text (in discussion, practical exercises and live performance). Consequently, there has been an intention to fuse the verbal and physical in the impulse, exploration and execution of the written text, providing an entirely open and playful form to highlight the demands of the sounds, ideas, senses, sensations and physicality of the words themselves.[4]

The inspiration and propulsion for the work was the (syn)aesthetic style as a mode of writerly performance practice. Through this, in terms of my examination and experience of the writing process as *play*-write, it became evident to me that there was a true exchange of ideas, emotions, corporeality and cerebr(e)ality between the performers and myself. Within each different, individual workshop, I became a trace in their performance. In this way this performance investigation became an actual manifestation of the exchange of corporeality between writer and performers, elucidating what it is 'to change bodies' and 'breathe within another's body' (Novarina, 1996: 108) via a (syn)aesthetic *play*-text. As a result, and documented throughout this chapter, I identify the potential I have, as producer of the writerly text, to engage with a very real 'writing of the body' (Artaud, 1993; Barthes, 1975; Cixous,

1993; Irigaray, 1985) in terms of inspiration, ongoing drafting and the physicalised translation that exists throughout the live performance, whatever form that may take.

A crucial component within my own writing, and the practical exploration of the *play*-text (as work in progress), was to investigate the processes involved in fusing physical text and verbal text within performance. Within this there was an examination of the activation of a corporeal memory stimulated by writerly words as much as physicalised translation of the words, where words have the capacity to generate a bodily response in performance. Thus, active analysis of the capacity verbal text has to encourage 'multisensory evaluation' (Cytowic, 1994: 167) in the performer's immediate response to the work, where 'the experience of words is a measure of their expressiveness' (Luria, 1969: 91).

A primary impulse behind this active research has been exploring ways of reclaiming verbal text in performance. The live(d) presence of the *play*-text as a 'personality' within the exploration remained throughout each workshop, through to the final performance for an audience. The form of the writing, and the way in which the text itself was presented to the participants within each workshop, intended to engage the performers in a 'Dionysian' experience that was both pleasurable and disturbing (Nietzsche, 1967a). As a result the form that the text took morphed from workshop to workshop, just as it came to be visibly shapeshifted further through its interaction with the performers.

Throughout these workshops the performers and myself developed and established the 'rules of play' as a consequence of their exploration of the (syn)aesthetics behind and within the words, 'action' and ideas. Following this, a second area of research that became clear was the interrogation of how writerly text can stimulate the impulse to respond. Within this, how *play*-texts, in collaboration

with the performer in the live performance moment, can destroy and recreate, via a

Dionysian impulse (Nietzsche, 1967a), notions of *play*-writing, and thus, notions of

the *play*-write.

From the outset my intention with these workshops was to confront the fusion

within my own inquiry between finding and establishing a framework, that was both

theoretical and creative, to stimulate and analyse the performance work produced,

foregrounding the notion of (syn)aesthetics as both impulse and process of

performance as well as the means by which that performance is interpreted and

elucidated.

6.1 Early Workshops – fusing word and body, sense and *sense*

> Neutral activity./ Pauses within the body./ Sensory movement./ To be echoed as an
> action, a thought, a moment . . . (Machon, 2002c: n.pag).

The initial workshops, conducted over the summer of 2000, examined, and in

some cases provided, the key terms and concepts that are fundamental to

(syn)aesthetics. These initial explorations actively scrutinised the sensations and

strategies involved in producing performance. The performers and myself interrogated

impulses for physical and verbal practice. The specific workshops referred to here

were significant in what they revealed about analysis of performance work which

identifies the body as text and its symbiotic relationship with verbal text where the

body translates writerly text into physical performance.

6.1.1 Body

> [T]he body reacts rather than the mind (Sarah: 10.07.2000).

Initial exercises within the original series of workshops (workshops 1.1-1.6:

2000; see Fig. 6.1.1-6.1.3) became an active exploration of a 'writing of the body'

(Derrida, after Artaud, 1978: 191). A particular area interrogated was a consideration

of how, in performance, it is difficult to distinguish what comes first, a movement or

the thought of the shape to create that movement, or the feeling (both emotion and

hapticity) which is the impulse of the movement. Erina, in particular, questioned the

cerebral or intellectualised involvement within moving, arguing that movement itself

by its physiological nature was a cerebral process, 'we don't move without the thought

of moving' (06.06.2000). It was agreed that there is never any way of completely

separating the thought from the feeling and the movement from the thought, in

physical performance work, identifying the possibilities and exchange that exists in-

between 'mental flesh' (Novarina, 1996: 64).

Ro, Leone, Sarah and Erina talked of how their individual movements,

generated in physical performance exercises, 'felt' for them. They discussed being

internally aware of the shapes and patterns being made by the body, whilst

simultaneously being able to visualise the body's patterns as if from above, 'an

out of body' experience. Here, the performers were attempting to explore a

physicality that was 'pre-sign, pre-meaning' (Kristeva, 1982: 212, n.3) in order to

tap a pre-verbal consciousness and expose 'the dimension beneath the surface of

signification' (Kristeva, 2000: 268). Thus, a Dionysian 'assault on the senses'

(Ward, after Artaud, 1999:123; Otto 1965: 91) became the underlying impulse to

move – the body and the audience (emotionally and haptically).

This raised the idea that performers can invest the external, the form and

the shape of the movement, with the immediate memories, or traces, of the

internal. Thus an external somatic created from the internal somatic which

engages a true 'intertextuality' (Kristeva, 1992: 36) of drives that encourage the

unconscious and the disorder and irrationality of the semiotic chora to dominate

(Cixous, 1993; Irigaray, 1991; Kristeva, 1999a). We agreed that form is inevitably

invested with what a performer is feeling (emotionally, physically, sensationally)

as they perform. It was established at this stage that references to 'feelings' were

referring to a fusion of the physical sensation, the haptic and tactile with the

emotional, and the potential of such to provide a total somatic in the performance

experience for the performer and audience alike.

Initial movement exercises exploring the impulse to move proved useful in that

they enabled, as Ro put it, 'the body to move us before the mind took over'

(06.06.2000). Thus, the body and its 'real time feelings' became the impulse for the

motion, without engaging the mind in any intellectual process, without thinking any

movement through, or into, action. Instead the motion alone generated the impetus to

continue.

6.1.2 Body and Word

> So what you have to do . . . with words is think of them as another form of
> choreography. You've got to think of them, not as an intellectual thing, but a
> physical thing – part of the physical performance, the movement of the piece. So
> there's no distinguishing between dancing, sounds, speech and physical movement
> (Jo, 11.08.2000).

Early exercises within this preparatory series of workshops explored the

relationship between verbal and physical text. The fragments of *play*-text given were

literally played with, actually distorted, disturbed and transgressed. Erina, Leone, Ro

and Sarah cut it with scissors, found single words, phrases or section that they were

drawn to in order to play with the words and their connotations or denotations as

desired. Each pair had to contemplate the reasons why they were drawn to certain

sections and words, finding the essence of why that word or section resonated for them

in terms of emotions, sensation, intellect, as well as in the formal shape and sound of

the words. Following an impulse written into the fabric of the text the performers

actually defamiliarised the language – playing with the sound and rhythm as well as with disturbed meaning (see Shklovsky, 1965; Brik in Eichenbaum, 1965: 110-124). From those chosen words, each pair then allowed their interpretations of, and responses to, the verbal text to stimulate a movement sequence in an exploration of the 'reconciliation of word and body' (Weiss, after Novarina, 1993: 86). The intention was that an exploration of the essence of the words chosen alongside the essence of their response developed through play.

An aim was to question the way in which the physical language works with certain vocal and organic sounds (such as the breath and the sound of limb against limb), attempting to reach a point where the impulse for the vocal language and the physical language are indistinguishable. This became a critical quest in order to find the moment where words truly 'speak the corporeal' (Irigaray, 1999a: 43). Sarah and Leone shared that the section of text that they had been drawn to together which included the phrase, 'I was making a fool of myself' had stimulated a discussion about 'how you feel when you "cringe"' (06.06.2000). This led them to identify and scrutinise the internal sensation of cringing in an attempt to convert that to a physical act.[5] They had also chosen the word 'hear' and explored and tried to express the internal 'hear', when Leone makes a sound on her own body. They played with the corporeal possibilities of 'hearing', as more than an aural quality, as a vibration, a tangible, haptic sensation, interrogating the fusion of senses in human perception, identifying the live(d) (syn)aesthetics at work in creating physical performance (Workshop 1.1: 06.06.2000).

In developing this notion, Leone became intrigued by the idea of 'how do I hear "hear" on another person' (06.06.2000). Erina noted that this connected with something that she and Ro had explored in the beating of the chest, which meant that

an individual has a simultaneous 'hearing' of the action as both a fused

internal/external physicality and an aural action. Within these reflections on the

sequences each pair presented, the group agreed that they felt like they were exploring

an alien medium through these sensations. In doing so they identified a transgressive

and 'semiotised' core (Kristeva, 1999a: 95) to the performance, and their experience

of that performance, due to the disturbing yet playful language of the *play*-text

(Workshop 1.1: 06.06.2000).

During an early consideration of the visceral verbal quality of the *play*-text

Leone suggested that the visceral quality of the words enabled, 'a shared experience'

where 'the descriptions are the point of reference' (10.07.2000), becoming 'verbal

lacerations' (Cody, 1998: 122) which etch themselves into the perceptive faculties of

the sentient body.[6] Such a notion affirms Scarry's, 'sharability of sentience' (1985:

326) where the words provide a point of association which rekindle the traces of that

sensation or feeling in our own bodies via a corporeal memory.[7] In this way the words

are an attempt to make the performer and audience understand a tactile or emotional

sense through the aural. This embraces a Dionysian 'resonance' (Nietzsche, 1994: 22)

through a 'special perception' that ensures the words are experienced as 'perceived

and not as they are known' (Shklovsky, 1965: 12-18). Here word-play engages a

'multisensory' cognition (Cytowic, 1994: 167) where the 'experience of words is a

measure of their expressiveness' (Luria, 1969: 91).

A conclusion reached was the importance of letting the senses work on the

audience as the primary form of communication, thereby engaging a 'semiotised'

(Kristeva, 1999a: 95) mode of signification. As a result I identified the need to

(re)evaluate the term 'making sense' as a primarily somatic experience rather than a

solely intellectual pursuit. In this way, 'making sense' would be literally 'making

sense' within performance, making sensation. Furthermore, in terms of the fused somatic/semantic process affected by corporeal memory, it was agreed that, the immediate visceral experience could be heightened, rather than reduced, by intellectual cogitation in processes of recall and analysis that allowed the instinctive response to dominate. Here sensate performance work affects corporeal memory, which 'refers back to an instinctual body' that 'ciphers [verbal] language' (Kristeva, 1992: 146) ensuring 'sense topples over into the senses' (Kristeva, 1982, 140). Following this commitment to the instinctive and intuitive, (syn)aesthetically styled performance work must embrace the experience of immediacy or, 'being in the moment', for the performer and audience alike, which enables such a visceral response to occur in the process of appreciation.

In exploring verbal text and its potential to create and destroy meaning we examined defamiliarised speech and physicality and its signifying potential. In terms of reclaiming the verbal as a visceral act it was important to identify how traditional attitudes to text can be restrictive.[8] (Syn)aesthetic *play*-texts demand a pleasure to be taken in investing a text with personal experience and a variety of interpretations. Notions of narrative, theme and so on, must be played with, overlaying the text with multi-layers of signification, creating internal, defamiliarised narratives rather than logical ones, where 'the signified' is truly (shape)shifted 'a great distance' (Barthes, 1975: 67).

A further conclusion drawn from these initial workshops was how playing with language in performance enabled a (re)perception of the word, interrogating the words as both sound and meaning capsules. Here the performance of the words, the play with the natural sounds of the full word, as well as the deconstruction of words into, letters, vowels, consonants or syllables, produces or creates a further pleasure in the text - a

'dance of the organs of speech' (Shklovsky qtd. in Eichenbaum, 1965: 109). Here, a 'disfiguration' (Barthes, 1975: 14) of the text is actually observed, where rhythm becomes a sensate layer in appreciation (see Brik in Eichenbaum, 1965: 110-124) and words are employed 'not only for their meaning, but for their forms, their sensual radiation' (Artaud, 1993: 83). This influenced the way in which I redrafted the written text to make it a visceral, labyrinthine springboard for highly physicalised performance.[9]

These preliminary workshops (1.1-1.6: 2000) concluded with an exploration of the *play*-text in its early form. The performance tasks were invested with notions of defamiliarised emotional states and subconscious time; finding performance styles to convey these illogical moments, attempting to (re)cognise through physical and verbal play, the 'semiotised' (Kristeva, 1999a: 95) and disturbatory, and thus actuate in (syn)aesthetic form the inhabitance of, 'two worlds at once, like being half awake yet still anchored in a dream' (Cytowic, 1994: 119). Following this the group physicalised notions of displacement, playing with disturbing sight, sound and sensation. The performance ideas explored included working only with sounds rather than using words and then gradually reducing them so that it becomes the traces of the words revealed in the actions. They also experimented with how the words of the speech text filled the space, playing with different sound qualities and modes of delivery.[10]

Following these initial workshops I spent time allowing the *play*-text to develop. I drew on the impulses in the movement work and playful exploration presented by Ro, Sarah, Leone and Erina and on ideas that had arisen from our group reflections. Underpinning this was a desire to explore 'the beauty of language' as a 'sensuality' (Barker, 1997: 88-114) , reve(al)ling in the potential of the visceral-verbal as impulse and soundscore for physical practice. In order to locate the *play*-text firmly

within corporeality I researched the sight/site/cite of the body in lived experiences of

sleep, insomnia, dreams and death. The ideas and theories in my own research were

fused with an extensive range of sources including Sigmund Freud's *The*

Interpretation of Dreams (1997) and Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice*

Through the looking Glass (1968, 1985), to drawing on individual accounts of sleep,

dreams and relationships with individual corporealities.

Due to the length of time spent writing and the various stimuli that inspired

ideas at different times, the form that the *play*-text was taking was one of fragments

and traces. Seemingly unrelated sections of memories, experiences, imaginations,

which themselves were underpinned by the conceptual idea of fragments, traces,

memories and sensory experience, established itself as the text, as a score for physical

investigation. In this way form and content (creative and theoretical practice) were

inextricably linked. An intention became for this *play*-text to shapeshift and

persistently morph its own morphology, to become 'something else at any moment'

(Irigaray, 1999e: 55). For this reason, throughout the latter exploratory workshops

(Workshops 2.1–2.10; 23.01-23.10.2002) the *play*-text remained (and will remain) in a

format that is open and demands to be played with.[11]

6.2. (Re)writing the *Play*-Text

> And don't forget that all positives have a negative. The alternative, mirrored effect
> for every character, event, sentence, pause. Be always aware of the flipside. The
> traces in the mirror in the lens (Machon, 2002c: n.pag).

The latter workshops became focused on the transgressive nature of play

integral to working with sensate and disturbatory written text in performance. In

practice this became an active exploration of fusing corporeal utterances and corporeal

play. Equally, this performance research prioritised the performers' experience of

connections with the immediate moment and of an innate response to the written text

in that moment, where connections and traces are uncovered, discovered, experienced

in the moment through the form of spontaneous play. Alongside this, the exploration

of the liminal point between writing and performance became paramount. Active

interrogation of the *play*-write's presence in the words allowed for a writerly breathing

'within another's body' (Novarina: 1996: 108) which pursued the 'sharability of

sentience' (Scarry, 1985: 326) from author to performer to observer, via the writerly

text.

The workshops, due to the performer's response, became a continuum of live

performances, stimulated by the *play*-text, rather than a more conventional succession

of academic practical exercises engaged in by the performers following their

discussion of the work (as I had initially anticipated). The shapeshifting of the

performance style, of the *play*-text, of the space, of the performer, within this

(syn)aesthetic process provided a viscerally stimulating experience. Throughout the

process there was an emphasis on play, responding to the language via physical

expression. The shapeshifting form of the workshops became live, immediate (i.e.

non–rehearsed) performances. The warm-ups always had a focus on the physical and

playful, with an holistic approach to the physical and vocal. Following this, the

performers' immediate, innate response to the written text fed into and derived out of

their heightened awareness of an embodied response.

Consequently I became finely attuned to a very real presence of (syn)aesthetic

writing as a corporeal writing of the body/the text (Artaud, 1993; Barthes, 1975;

Cixous, 1993; Irigaray, 1985), where a verbal 'language lined with flesh' (Barthes,

1975: 66) fuses with physical translation and becomes 'accessible to the senses'

(Irigaray, 1991: 129). Here (I was)/we were (re)writing *play*-text as physical and

verbal text, (re)writing the *play*-text as a performance text, (re)writing the performance

within the *play*-text. This led, finally to the (re)writing of all these texts, all these

experiences as a live performance in the presence, as in *prae-sens*, 'that which stands

before the senses' (Scarry, 1985: 197), of an audience. The corporeal writing, in all its

forms, thus continually became an exchange between writer, performers and audience.

6.3 Playing with the *Play*-Text

> I offer them a brief to see how they'll respond
> I know that I don't yet know what it is that I want from them
> because I want them to show me something that I don't yet know (Jo, observations,
> 23.01.2002).

From the outset the performers' early interaction with the *play*-text was shaped

by a written brief which suggested possible modes of play, itself developed from the

participants' post-performance reflections. The briefs became known as 'the rules of

play' and were invested with a (syn)aesthetic impulse and strategies for responding to

text (see Appendices 1-10). The *play*-text and the rules of play were always within the

performing space, into which the performers had to enter, defining the pre, present and

post performing experience. The space that had been created for the performers to

engage with the *play*-text, was always made special in some way, by light, aural

soundscores, the presence of varied equipment or props. The result of this was to

establish a liminal space for the performers, a 'poetic playground' (Servos, 1998: 44)

that served to heighten the presence of the *play*-text within it and thus their response to

it.[12] The presence of these other performance languages converted the space into a

defamiliarised, 'semiotised' (Kristeva, 1999a: 95) site/sight/cite for exploration where

the performers could 'become party to a secret . . . share a transgression' (Barker,

1997: 167). Each makeshift design of the performing environment became part of the

play, shapeshifted in the real time of the workshop performance.

The first of the second phase of workshops (2.1: 23.01.2002) was initiated by the rules of play in an envelope attached to the box that contained the *play*-text (see Appendix 1; Fig. 6.2.1, 6.2.2). The work that ensued became a pleasurable disturbance in that the performers jumped into a performance of the text and played with it in a transgressive fashion so that the written text began to breathe, to morph and mutate in front of me. Made live(d) and sensorial with the different voices and personalities behind the delivery of it, the performers' own interjections engaging in a dialogue with it, providing actual 'polyphonic consciousnesses' (Bakhtin, 1984: 17-18) through a direct interaction with the text, as well as liberating those already written into the text via 'the *speak*' that is 'most physical' in performance (Novarina, 1996: 58, emphasis original). The performers transgressed conventional responses to text - disturbing it, visibly shapeshifting it - as it was ripped up, read, screwed up, played with, so that the *play*-text itself becoming a ludic presence/*prae-sens* (Scarry, 1985: 197) in the space.

The group identified that the *play*-text literally took on a life of its own, leading and shaping the performance in an omnipresent fashion; the verbal and physical evocation, and the actual paper remains, leaving traces of the text in the performer's bodies, in my observing body, and in the space.[13] Paul in particular experienced a highly charged, intensely corporeal, relationship with the text;

> [E]very time I picked up a piece . . . it was angry and it was to do with bodies and . . . with having a certain response to your body so I was getting really caught up in it . . . I felt persecuted by the text because it took me on a journey, it wasn't giving me a choice. It was giving me signals, but I was allowing it as well, so I thought okay this is a journey, I'm going to go with the journey I'm going to see where it takes me (Paul: 23.01.2002).

As the writer observing, it was pleasurably disturbing to have no control over what was done with the text – to see it played with, connected with, enjoying how the form the *play*-text was presented in, coloured and shaped the form of the playing of it.

The *play*-text was liberated in the playing of it, 'manifesting' and 'soliciting' it into a presence 'that wants to dance' (Novarina, 1993: 102). Vicky highlighted how the text itself was playing games, 'some of the longer speeches. . .mislead you, you think you're getting into an angry text when actually it's quite gentle' ensuring that, 'you change, you feel the text' (23.01.2002).[14]

A disturbatory, ludic exchange was identified between the writer and the performers, and thus the performance;

> [I]f that's only language that you have, the language written down, and you're trying to make your own sense and your own narrative, you're fighting with the author as much, because you're allowing her to play with you (Paul: 23.01.2002).[15]

Thus free-play became the formula which enforced a raw, risk-taking, uncomfortable quality to the practical exploration, where the style of the writing and the form of the text enabled transgressions to be taken, disturbance to be enforced, subverting the structures within the immediate performing moment.[16] Paul referred to this as a 'wayward text' (Woodward, 2002: 1) which provided a release in the speeches so that it became 'a felt thing' with a 'charged' quality (Woodward, 2002: 2).

Following this initial session the performers identified the ways in which the experience remained with them. Paul talked of a 'sense memory of the words' (Machon, 2002e: n.pag) and the ability to recall visually the words and space on the page. In this way the spaces meant as much as the words. He was emphatic about the fact that it was a corporeal memory that he had of the performance, traces of the experience left in his body, 'in my sight, my throat, my solar plexus' (Machon, 2002e: n.pag). Alex talked of the sharpness of the visual images that had remained with her from the particular speeches that she had spoken and the enjoyment of the playing, the sense of escapism that was produced with no expectation. In particular she had a strong visual and haptic memory of the light and shade in the playing space which

remained with her as a sensation as much as a visual imprint (Machon, 2002e: n.pag).

Alex's corporeal memory confirms how the manipulation of 'spatial language'

(Artaud, 1993: 45), where the tangible, shapeshifting space, in league with the

performers and the *play*-text can instil a 'lasting effect' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 80) in the

performers' bodies.[17]

Verity also had a keen sense of the words on the page that had been etched

within her, both the lightness of words that she had delivered and the brutality of

words that others had performed and owned through that performance. She talked of

being able to relive the adrenaline and energy that was a direct response to the

relationship between eyes, paper and brain within the performance experience

(Machon, 2002e: n.pag). Paul stated that he was 'haunted' by the experience,

describing how he had not been able to shake the traces of the group's work and

moments of the performed *play*-text (Machon, 2002e: n.pag). Paul's response furthers

notions of the corporeal memory, and makes manifest the unsettling experience of

working through a challenge that stimulates the 'tentative' and 'speculative' (Barker,

1997: 135).

The next few workshops (2.2-2.6: 2002), including the rules of play, morphed,

shapeshifted and continuously evolved in response to each new performance generated

(see Fig. 6.3.1-6.6.3).[18] Spontaneous moments, driven by textual play, provided

evidence of themes and ideas embedded in the *play*-text, fusing and echoing without

the need for conventional modes of rehearsal and analysis to achieve this so that

connections and traces within the text collided within the live performance moment.

Sarah talked of each new workshop being a 'discovery' in terms of her own movement

vocabulary that was generated in response to the 'writing aloud' (Barthes, 1975: 66) of

the verbal text by others in the performance space (Sarah: 23.10.02). The immediacy

and vitality of these performances always retained a disturbing pleasure, stimulated by

the performers' encounter in the live moment with the 'urge that makes you want to

finish it' (Alex: 13.02.2002), ensuring 'a compulsion to do it' (Paul: 13.02.2002).[19]

The post-performance reflections tended to concentrate on the performers'

developing relationship with the writerly text, itself enforcing the, conceptual and real,

presence of the *play*-text as a living, shapeshifting entity. These also identified how

the performers were engaging in a very real sense of 'breathing in the text' and

'vigorously working it over' (Novarina, 1993: 101) in order that they (re)write the text

with their bodies.[20] The words of the *play*-text were often used as internal soundscores

for physicalised sequences that were simultaneously disturbing and lyrical, both

eloquent and disjunctive. Paul repeatedly translated moments in the *play*-text through

sign-language, whether he was speaking or (re)writing other's speeches, an eloquent

and lyrical, physical re-tracing of the text which would develop into danced sequences

(see Appendix 11: Clip 3, Clip 4, Clip 5).

A significant feature was the emphasis placed on their ownership of the *play*-

text, in particular a fierce connection with the words which compulsively produced

their idiosyncratic physical vocabulary. In particular they each discussed how certain

fragments etched themselves into their individual bodies as traces of their own

experiences, truly investing a fleshly response to the ideas, themes, images in the

words.[21] Furthermore, they talked of certain sequences 'belonging' to particular

individuals following re-traced, re-marked performances of those speeches, by chance,

by the same individuals; re-iterated performances that produced 'not sameness but

difference' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 169).

The chronology of each performance workshop was referred to as traces,

memories and hauntings in each new performance. This included the sense of a

chronology of the *play*-text taking on a Derridean iterability (see Derrida, 1976, 1978, 1981), being re-marked and (re)written each time. Like the traces of the live(d) performance moment being etched in the corporeal memory of the performers and audience within (syn)aesthetic performance, the performers described how traces of live moments from previous performances, and previous delivery of certain speeches, were etched into each new experience. In this way, the performers pursued an 'anterior immediacy' where each performance became 'distinct, abrupt, framed' whilst 'already (again always) a memory' (Barthes, 1982a: 439). This noetic and tangible experience that generated a felt 'resonance' (Nietzsche, 1994: 22) within the creative process morphed into a (syn)aesthetic presence within the final performance, where fragments of the video documentation of each workshop were silently re(p)layed within the performing space (Workshop Performance: 29.10.2002; see Appendix 11: Clip 6; Fig. 6.7.1-6.10).

Sam drew attention to the fact that he prefers to know a text, to learn it in order to speak it (19.02.2002). This raised the issue over the need to absorb and learn a *play*-text before a performer can do it justice, due to the frustrations experienced when the verbal delivery distorts the rhythms and nuances embedded in the writing. Paul counterpointed this, highlighting the transgressions available as a result, suggesting that much could be lost if the text was learnt; 'I like the concentration of the reading, the fact that it's a real task and we're real people in real time working through a task' (Paul: 19.02.2002). The question became how to fuse these two ways of working, whether it could be possible to fuse the immediate response within the re-traced response, thereby exposing their own 'mental flesh' (Novarina, 1996: 64) in the processes of the immediate corporeal interpretations in performance. In this way the performers would continue to experience the *play*-text 'moment by moment' which

allows a true 'breaking of false dramatic disciplines' via a liberation 'into imagination' (Barker, 1997: 38).[22] Regarding the play and the real-time impetus of the work, the performers identified their own need to work with further structures in order to find a more disciplined way of playing, to find a liberation within fixed rules (see Appendices 7-9).

6.4 Playing the *Play*-Text - in the *prae-sens* of an audience

> You talk of words that speak the taste of a moment / and I want them sewn into my flesh (Machon, 2002c: n.pag).

> It kind of foregrounds this whole notion of how words can exist; can they exist on paper, can they exist in your mouth, or can words somehow compel you to move, or can words just hang there in space. So it became not just about words on the page but about where else words could go (Paul qtd. in Machon, 2002d: 2)

The staging of the final performance incorporated the traces and memories of all the previous workshops undertaken – from the ideas discussed, the themes explored, the transgressive play integral to the performers' relationship with the text (workshop performance: 29.10.2002). The image and presence of flesh that had resonated linguistically, thematically and actually throughout the workshops was connoted via the colour and texture of the costumes. These translucent colours were echoed in the gauzes that were suspended in the space, onto which the video was projected (see Fig.6.7.1-6.11). The box containing the text and props to be played with was already present. Also shaping the playing space were the paper remains of a warm-up game, extracts from the *play*-text that describe different dreams. These fragments of the *play*-text later created an aural dreamscape, and were played with verbally and physically as the performers laid them out, kicked them, threw them at the audience, re-crumpled them, wrote them aloud at moments throughout the performance, overlaying the number sequences in the text with these dreams. The inclusion of the video was to provide a visual tracing of the notion of the hauntings of

the previous workshops, the previous emotions, the aural and corporeal memory of the

previous performances, providing an (im)mediate montage that adds to the

possibilities of 'other-worldliness' (Barker, 2001: 2). The music that played

throughout was Arvo Pärt's *Tabula Rasa* (Pärt, 1984), chosen because of the

connotations of an eternally blank sheet, always in the process of being ready to be

(re)written.[23]

The rules of play for this performance were more rigid due to restrictions

necessitated by technical aspects and the fact that I had imposed a specific time limit

(see Appendix 10). The performance that ensued resonated with a hushed, lyrical

quality, as had begun to occur in previous workshops (2.8, 2.9: 2002). This suggested

to me that the performers had developed a more tranquil relationship with the text;

from Paul's signing, to Verity's verbal delivery; Sarah and Sam's movement

vocabulary to Alex's tracing of the projections, Vicky's listening to my own watching

of the piece. This quality seemed to be touched by the overtones of sleep and loss and

death that the performers traced through the text more solemnly then ever they had

before (see Appendix 11: Clip 7, Clip 9).

From the moment that Verity unpacked the box filled with the objects to be

played with, an alarm clock, two cameras, two cream telephones, and a second box

that contained the *play*-text, an overwhelming sense of their committed relationship

with/to this *play*-text became clear (see Appendix 11: Clip 6). A surprising reverence

for the speeches, particularly those that contained the words, 'trace, mark, echo' and

so on, occurred throughout. The performers' literally re-tracing, re-marking their

diverse experiences throughout the workshops in those physical, tangible, audible

moments, asserting a respect for their own corporeal memories of those speeches,

those words (see Appendix 11: Clip 1, Clip 8).[24] It also defined a repetition that

produced *différance* not sameness (after Broadhurst, 1999a: 169; Derrida, 1976). It may have been this that was responsible for individuals in the audience referring to the piece as seeming like it had been directed and choreographed (in the conventional understanding of these practices).[25]

The verbal play in this performance was much less brutally transgressive then those in the earlier workshops, although the performers did allow ludic intervention to occur overturning certain word patterns in the text intentionally and through 'errors' in delivery, as well as playing off the audience response. Overall, there was a more compelling urge to disturb through playful physicality, at times playing off the laughter of the audience as occurred with the 'Hit him./ Hit him again' speech where Paul, frivolously smacked Sam, colluding in the pleasure of the audience, laughing, goading him to go further with the collective response. Yet Paul, unsettled, violated this playfulness by synthesising Vicky's urgent verbal delivery with an equivalent physical reaction forcibly striking, pushing and beating Sam to the floor, until the final order, 'Now hold him', delivered perfunctorily by Vicky. Paul subverted this unsympathetic, verbal punch, with a violently tender embrace (see Appendix 11: Clip 10; Fig. 6.10).

Following this, the traces of the disturbatory play from the earlier workshops remained etched into this and other later performances. This maturing of the 'amorous interchange' (Novarina, 1996: 108) between the *play*-text and performers was summed up by the performers; 'it took ages for us to come back to the text and then by that time the text seemed to include all the games and all the silly impulses that we had when we played with it anyway' (Paul qtd in Machon, 2002d: 2). Alex concurred;

> [T]hose initial stages, are the echoes of what we're doing now. There's
> bits of that left in here. And there are bits of other performances where
> we did concentrate on text an awful lot. And that's how it's developed
> (qtd. in Machon, 2002d: 2).

Reference to the fusion of the live performance with the video drew attention

to the presence of the previous work within the live and (im)mediate performance in

front of this audience. A certain pleasure was to be had in the way that speeches

performed and physicalised in the projected video images often fused with the newly

found live version in the performance moment (see Appendix 11: Clip 9). One

individual asserted, 'you could feel, that in so many sessions, it had been done in so

many different ways' for example, 'Paul was reacting in such a physical way to the

text and actually writhing in the text it really added another level' (Frances Quigley

qtd. in Machon, 2002d: 4; see Appendix 11: Clip 2, Clip 7).[26] A number of individuals

in the audience drew attention to the visceral response they engaged in through the

hybridised fusion of the various performance languages;

> There was one point where I was watching the video and then panned
> to someone talking and then someone moving and, I wouldn't be able
> to feel where one stopped and the next started because I was
> responding with my body. Does that make sense? It was just a
> different way of experiencing, a different way of making sense
> (Madeleine Page, qtd. in Machon., 2002d: 11).[27]

Thus, for many, the sensate appreciation that occurred came about through

their own immediate, interpretative play with the various languages of the piece. The

play with the sounds of the words in the space; the performer's physical interaction

with the words and each other; the traces and echoes of the past performances in the

projections; the fusion of all the elements within the space, itself shapeshifted by the

remains of the delivered text on the floor, which all added to this as a 'theatre of

traces' (Cody, 1998: 129; see Fig. 6.12) for performers and audience members alike.[28]

In this way, individuals within the audience identified the 'multisensory evaluation'

(Cytowic, 1994: 167) that they were making in their immediate interpretations.

Certain audience reflections demonstrated an active, experiential involvement in the meaning-matrix where the 'rights of interpretation' (Barker, 1997: 51) belonged to the audience, the meaning derived 'from the dissolution of coherent meaning' (Barker, 1997: 53). Here, as with the performers' own experience of creating the performance, the 'free association of themes rather than a linear narrative' subverts logical explanation in favour of the individual, immediate and innate, where the spectator 'is required to turn to his or her own life experiences' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 77).

6.5 (Re)tracing an Exploration – a conclusion of sorts

> [A]fter every workshop that we've had the company have talked about memories of the previous performance, or the memories of space, the experience of being in that space and the memories of previous performances being in that space. So we've been drawing on that notion of memory, colouring and shaping what you do (Machon, 2002d: 2).

> Memories and fragments and echoes and traces / trace the connections / it's all that you have (Machon, 2002c: n.pag)

The aim of the series of exploratory workshops has been to ask questions and put into practice the theory of a (syn)aesthetic style within performance; the impulse, theories, and sensibility that stimulates such work. A significant result has been the observation of how the *play*-text has developed and mutated, linguistically, formally and visually, in response to its physical exploration. This has ensured an immediate and creative interrogation of the *play*-text in its varied forms, as well as a questioning and scrutiny of the creation of that *play*-text by the performers and myself. An overall aim integral to every moment, from writing and through each performance, was to articulate the internal and external, corporeal and cerebral, experiences of working with a (syn)aesthetic style and to identify the problems encountered in intellectualising a hybridised, primarily physicalised, visceral-verbal mode of performance.

Throughout the workshops a fusion has occurred between the framework that both produces *and* analyses the performance work created. This has foregrounded the notion of (syn)aesthetics as both impulse and process of performance as well as the means by which that performance is interpreted and elucidated. By probing the theoretical foundations of (syn)aesthetics that were in place to begin with, and those elements of the theory that developed through exploration, the participants and myself endeavoured to clarify the experience of the (syn)aesthetic style from the writer and performers' perspective. The final (in terms of this thesis) performance workshop undertaken for an audience, sought to clarify and articulate the spectator's response to such work.

At no point was this exploration about new and original processes of performance but instead about the active interrogation and analysis of live performance *through* live performance. It investigated how words can reclaim their visceral, primordial roots and engage a corporeal response, can fill the performer's body, fill space with a tangible presence, and communicate to an audience. The examination of how words fuse with movement and compel performers, and audience, to respond in a fused semantic/somatic manner became a dominant feature of this research. As theory in practice it has proven invaluable in terms of interrogating the experiential, semiotised site of the live performance moment that exploits the corporeal, transgressive and intersensual in terms of production and appreciation. The final performance in the *prae-sens* of an audience was testament to the explorations and discoveries that had underpinned each previous workshop.

And the memories that remain with me are . . .[29]

Notes

[1] Due to the very nature of the interrogation and my presence at every stage of the exploration, from impulse to write to the final (in terms of this thesis) discussion of the performance presented, the framework of this chapter will draw on the participants' subjective experience in order to develop an objective examination of (syn)aesthetics as a necessary mode of analysis in contemporary performance practice. As a result of my first hand knowledge of the shapeshifting processes of production and appreciation involved, the layout will vary from the previous two case studies documenting the development of the *play*-text, exploratory workshops and subsequent performance to an audience. I discuss the process chronologically to draw attention to the development of certain key terms and concepts integral to (syn)aesthetic theory.

[2] I ensured that I had no traditional directorial role in the workshops, positioning myself as facilitator and observer. Participating with myself in the initial workshops were Rolande Beugré, a dancer and former drama student, and Sarah Ball, Erina Bass and Leone Hanman, all drama graduates of St. Mary's College, University of Surrey, with interests in dance and physical theatre. The performers in the latter workshops were; Sarah, now an MA student in Physical Theatre at Royal Holloway University; Alex Dungavel, Sam Fenton and Vicky Horner, drama undergraduands at St. Mary's; Verity Newman, a drama graduate from Exeter University and Paul Woodward, a practitioner-lecturer in contemporary performance at St. Mary's. The participants shared a particular sensibility for physical and/or vocal performance, with distinct styles and energies within that. Rolande and Sarah were trained in contemporary dance. From here on, when quoting notes, questions, reflections and observations offered by individual participants (including myself), I will refer to them by first name only and clarify with the date of the particular workshop in parenthesis.

[3] This fusion of concepts and creativity in the exploration of corporeality underpinning the *play*-text was perceived by an audience member following the final performance. He stated, 'I'm interested in whether you had the theories of, for example Kristeva, in mind when you were exploring, like, the bodily functions – whether that was choice or just happened?' (Mark Greenwood qtd. in Machon, 2002d: 5).

[4] Of course, it must be taken that this *play*-text, like the other texts I have written for performance in the past, is developed from my own urge to write, and that my own writerly style has developed throughout my writing history.

[5] As illustrative of the (syn)aesthetic impulse and appreciation process, we discussed how something as seemingly simple as 'cringing' is in fact a complex emotional negotiation. It was an internal sensation which manifested itself in an external physicality, initially stimulated by lived experience, repeated by the memory (or trace) of that experience.

[6] Leone also referred to the way that once language is written or spoken, it no longer belongs to the 'owner', (07.06.2000). In this way, Leone articulated how language becomes writerly, is part of a pleasurably deconstructive process where meaning is 'disappeared' and free-play is paramount. This highlights the connection with our active exploration and the (syn)aesthetic theories of disturbance of, in particular, Derrida (1978) and Barthes (1975).

[7] I adopted the term corporeal memory following an initial movement exercise, where Sarah reflected that she 'enjoyed the feel of Ro's movement' next to hers (a frenetic rubbing of one foot over the other) because of the contrast to her own rhythm, and because of the memory of that sensation in her own body, Sarah's (re)cognised and remembered 'feel' of performing the same action as she lay in bed, falling asleep in 'reality' (07.06.2000).

[8] 'Maybe the journey through the text, which can't help but be different each time it's performed, is the pleasure of it. And if you make it completely different each performance, where you all know each other's lines so there's an adventure to be had because there's no knowing who's going to come in with a line next, like a free dance . . . there's a disturbatory pleasure for the performer which would come through to the audience' (Jo: 10.07.2000).

[9] In terms of my own development of my *play*-text, the first of these sessions focused heavily on a discussion of 'dream worlds' and subconscious 'realities' stimulated by the text in its early form (Workshops 1.4-1.6). We questioned the translation of such into a performance language that incorporated both speech and physical texts – an early source of inspiration in considering how words can fuse the 'real' and 'imaginary' (Luria, 1969: 144).

[10] Sarah raised the difficulty of distancing the self from words in human experience; 'because of the way in this culture [words] produce meaning – and to distance yourself from the meaning is really difficult. . . . In performance - you're trying to work almost with the unconscious but then your mind logically is . . . analysing these words . . . without having got your body in tune with the unconscious first – it's too difficult to do' (Sarah: 11.08.2000). Ro agreed, 'speaking was really hard. It's like, even when I felt the banging on the floor first of all, because it builds up into a pulse and then I tried to put my breath in to the rhythm of the banging on the floor and then into the speaking. I found it really hard, I was going 'right, that's the end of that [the beating], now I start talking' (11.08.2000).

[11] Consequently, and as a playful allusion to the *Alice* stimuli (Carroll, 1968, 1985), for workshops 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 2.9 the *play*-text was presented in a variety of non-manuscript forms, in a box tagged 'play with me' – the working title of the piece. This was also referenced in the final performance.

[12] Playing with the idea that the performance space itself can inhabit 'two worlds at once, like being half awake yet still anchored in a dream' (Cytowic, 1994: 119) fusing 'the boundary between the real

and the imaginary' (Luria, 1969: 144). The importance of architectural space and its ability to affect the playing of the text became a deciding factor in the choice of theatre, rather than studio, to perform to an audience. Exploring the *play*-text in the larger space, and playing with its depth, enabled a more 'austere architecture of bodies' (Paul: 09.10.2002).

[13] Thus engaging in a ludic exchange of corporeality from writer, to performers, back to the writer.

[14] As Paul suggested, 'the structure of it and the spacing of it, they didn't say 'you must obey me', it was like you pick and choose. . . relish that which is relishable, so occasionally you picked up a line and thought, 'oh that was a good one, I want to say that again'. . . The highly alliterative pieces, the bits that created those amazing sounds in your mouth, those were the ones that made it pleasurable reading, even though it may have been an antagonistic text' (23.01.2002).

[15] Regarding the notion of the traces of the author and 'amorous interchange' (Novarina, 1996:108) between the writer, the text and the performer, leading to Paul's comment here (23.01.2002), the discussion occurred as follows:

Paul: I was aware of a real personality, there was always a remove there, because there was the author, so we could engage in dialogue amongst ourselves, but because of how we played the exercise, we had physical play, but there was only times when we broke out of our contract with the author. / Verity: But when you did that, I got chills, I felt invaded. It was like somebody else's words, and it was like, 'oh fuck someone else's voice' – / Paul: it did feel transgressive – / Verity: . . . I felt unnerved by it. . . it was somebody' else's voice which invaded it. . .creepy, in a good way, it made me feel, 'can we get back to the words please'./ Paul: But then there's that extraordinary sense of surveillance . . . [B]ecause the author was present, so there was that authorial presence, but it was also here in the words. So although there were many, many voices in the text, it was also one voice./ Verity: Exactly, that's what I'm saying so that when you break that it's like 'somebody's not playing the game'./ Paul: So you're trapped by that voice –/ Verity: it's hypnotic (Workshop 1.1: 23.01.2002).

[16] 'You ask if we felt that some of it was directing us to move – there were definite things that I saw that seemed to be giving me those signals and then I didn't want to do them. . . . There were sections that, if I were a director I'd decide that it was direction for movement, I thought no because I felt it would lead me into what I already know, rather than what I don't know' (Paul: 23.01.2002).

[17] 'The darkness with the single light made stuff happen that wouldn't have happened' (Verity: 23.01.2002). '[B]ecause we were in an aesthetic space it allowed, it facilitated bodies to push themselves beyond their own comfort zones' (Paul: 23.01.2002).

[18] The 'rules of play' often incorporated ideas from previous weeks yet always included new ways of playing. Certain briefs incorporated individual rules, sometimes in envelopes to the individuals, sometimes within a group brief (see Appendices 2-6).

[19] 'Finish it and you become, you achieve a certain pleasure' (Alex, 13.02.2002).

[20] '[T]here was a moment where we were just jumping, just in pure play. But that [*play*-text] scenario, helped me to find the [performing] identity, because when you have moments of "sense" you can filtrate that into all the other action . . . . [I]t's about testing bodies . . . feeling out everybody's bodies and the sense they make in that space' (Sarah: 08.05.2002).

[21] 'I liked my little speech. I don't attach myself to it now but maybe I attach something that I was to that, maybe a lot. . . . . I liked that speech because it reminded me of how I was and how I am now' (Vicky: 26.02.2002). Such live(d) traces ensured the performers colluded with the text in a highly visceral manner due to the 'secret thrill of being spoken to, "they're speaking my thoughts", it's explosive to come across that in performance' (Woodward, 2002: 2).

[22] In terms of engaging their 'mental flesh' (Novarina, 1996: 64), the performers also acknowledged the thematic connections they were tracing through the *play*-text, arrived at only by working with it in performance in this immediate fashion, rather than absorbing it as a manuscript by reading it; 'I feel like the numbers are the thread, and there's about five narratives and they do all link up and the child is one thread, and the death is one thread and the body is one thread and the photographs are another way in. So all that's going on and the numbers are just marching steadily on, the backbone of it' (Verity: 19.02.2002). Sam proffered 'I feel that what we're trying to do is explain where the words have come from' (19.02.2002) to which Paul responded, 'I don't think we should ever do that though. I don't think we should ever sit down and discuss what that is. . . . because it completes it, and then it's finished (19.02.2002).

[23] *Tabula rasa*, from the Latin, 'scraped tablet', where the writing has been erased and the surface is ready to be written on again. In the same way, my *play*-text was continuously erased and rewritten, destroyed and recreated in a Dionysian 'eternal recurrence' (Nietzsche, 1968: 544) by the performers' interpretations. Regarding Pärt's soundscore, ' I liked the traces of [*Tabula Rasa*] in [previous workshops] at certain moments and I wanted to see how the feel of it would completely change when different things were happening to it. Prior to that [the performers] had always had music to play around with and it had always been different. And they have also had silence and just words to play with' (Machon, 2002d: 6).

[24] In tracing Paul's first delivery of the 'Angry' speech to his final delivery in front of an audience (Appendix 11: Clip 1, Clip 8), it is possible to identify the traces and differences, the sense of connection and history, in the performance. Also interesting to note, in the group's very first experience of this speech (Appendix 11: Clip 1), is the transgressive play amongst Alex, Sam, Verity and Vicky as Paul begins the speech through to the tangible resonance of the moment where the emotion becomes

real and the dynamic changes. Verity and Alex in particular can be seen to be highly sensitive to Paul's response.

[25] In the post-performance discussion it was acknowledged that the performance was shaped by the rules of play alongside the space, the gauzes, the projections, the text. As Paul pointed out, 'you're directed by a multiplicity of things' but most resoundingly, 'every word is haunted by a memory of you doing it, possibly, but also by someone else doing it . . . . So you're being directed by memories' (qtd. in Machon, 2002d: 1).

[26] For me there was a pleasure to be had in listening to the verbal and musical soundscore of the live performance whilst watching the projection performances. Alternatively watching the dance montage created by the live performers responding to the verbal texts and physicality of other performers in the space. Both ensured a multidimensional response to the live work.

[27] Sharing individual responses to the movement and speech one audience member argued, 'the movement really showed the relationship that [the performers had] got with the text from working with it for such a long time', stressing, 'you all had such a relationship with it and I don't think that would have come through without the movement' (Lara Jones qtd. in Machon, 2002d: 4). Another member commented, that she experienced a visceral disturbance in that, 'even when the music was quite a slow tempo and even though you were saying the words, quite often, quite slowly, I felt that the pace of the piece was quick because you were giving us so much information . . . . I could feel my heart rate speeding up because of the way you were moving and the way in which you were saying the words. Even though it was slow' (Fiona Hopkins qtd. in Machon, 2002d: 6).

[28] In terms of this audience interpretative play affecting the performer's play, Paul commented, 'for us there's that sense of, oh they're reacting like that, I wonder what games with the text they're playing' (qtd. in Machon, 2002d: 7).

[29] trace the crack in the moment where the real emotion transgressed in Paul's first 'angry' mark the light in the space echo track the washing of the text shadow memory 'dangerous play and homey' vestige track souvenir Vicky jumping Sarah dancing Paul signing Verity watching Sam waving Alex drawing memento the continuum of soundscores print sign the defining moments where word image movement space and music resonated and revealed new things to me about what I'd written spoor remnant trail residue the laughter and remainder the talking remains scrap Paul rolling in the text relic Alex taking more risks fragment Vicky's playful energy shred Sam's final 'dear you' recollection Verity's voice record Sarah's stillness hint trace the text left in the space   rest

7. Conclusion: (Re)tracing (Syn)aesthetics

> Seen in a linear manner, the starting point for most creations becomes, for me, their final point (Lepage, 1997a: 178).

> The sensuous moment of knowing (Taussig, 1993: 45).

This thesis has identified and interrogated a particular (syn)aesthetic style, as illustrated in the work of Giddens' Carnesky, Churchill, and Kane, that defines an exciting mode of contemporary performance. The (syn)aesthetic style discussed has its roots in ancient and avant-garde practice, follows movements in experimental contemporary practice, and demonstrates a varied fusion of quintessential features; namely the (syn)aesthetic-hybrid, the prioritisation of the body in performance and the visceral verbal *play*-text. (Syn)aesthetics is an original interpretative device, that can be applicable to performance in general, as it combines both an artistic principle of (syn)aesthetics (literally, fused aesthetics), marrying the interdisciplinary with the intersensual in artistic terms, with characteristics of the physiological condition of synaesthesia (the neurological fusing of the senses) within the appreciation process due to its fused perceptual function.

(Syn)aesthetics, as an interpretative device applied to a specific style of contemporary performance, has its foundations in transgressive female practice from the late 1960s onwards and in the intertextual mode of intercultural, interdisciplinary ensemble practice alongside the developments of a *play*-writing aesthetic developed, in Britain in particular, throughout the 1990s.[1] Furthermore, (syn)aesthetics results from the transgressive and playful practice made possible by advances in technologies. However, it is also a mode of practice that returns to existing conventions that draw on the unique power of ritual in performance, foregrounding primordial means of communicating, in order to affect an audience in a most fundamental way. Here then (syn)aesthetic performance can (re)connect individuals

with an immediate sense of the chthonic in a highly sensate manner. This thesis maintains that the work of Giddens, Carnesky, Churchill and Kane are exemplary of current practice that employs a (syn)aesthetic style and demonstrates the diversity of its quintessential features.

(Syn)aesthetics as an interpretative device is useful to performance work *in general*, as without it, the immediate, innate and sensate response attributable to much performance work could not be fully articulated. Crucial to (syn)aesthetics as a mode of analysis is the fact that the term itself defines the ineffable, a quality of experience that is, by its very nature, indefinable. As a result, when employed within a performance discourse to analyse and discuss work that embraces a (syn)aesthetic style, the term describes the indescribable nature of the experience.

(Syn)aesthetics, is a transgressive and disturbatory performance mode which emphasises the primordial and chthonic. Fundamental to the (syn)aesthetic response is the notion that the body is the sentient conduit for the appreciation of artistic work in general, and performance in particular, which endorses arguments for embodied knowledge. The corporeal memory of the actual body has (re)cognitive capabilities which can produce and (re)cognise on an entirely physiological level – a level of appreciation that, by its very nature, challenges linguistic expression. This challenge to linguistic expression is acknowledged within the use of the term (syn)aesthetics, as a concept which engages the corporeal.

Nietzsche's thinking, particularly his insistence on the body as the primary force of analysis, is fundamental to (syn)aesthetics and its focus on the interpretative capabilities of the human body (Nietzsche, 1967a, 1994). There is a prevalence of the Dionysian impulse in (syn)aesthetic work and a discernible Dionysian drive within all the critical and performance theories of disturbance, which underpins (syn)aesthetics

as a mode of practice and analysis. Following this, Kristeva is useful in elucidating the (syn)aesthetic theory as she argues for analysis which foregrounds innate, primordial signification and the sentient interpretative capabilities of the chthonic body (Kristeva, 1999a). Kristeva's semiotic chora provides a site of signification that prioritises corporeal and transgressive linguistic communication and recognises the importance of the sensate and visceral in affecting individuals in a double-edged making-sense/*sense*-making way.

(Syn)aesthetics focuses on the body as a primary text in performance signification, as both sight and site of performance (after Schneider, 1997). It also prioritises the body as the sentient source of experience, the modality of interpretation, thereby prioritising corporeal memory within embodied knowledge. In this way the body becomes cite of performance, where the experience is cited in the bodies of the audience member which serves to affect a viscerality in the processes of recall and interpretation. Carnesky's *Jewess Tattooess* (1999a, 1999b, 2001b) illustrates this, where Carnesky etches a Star of David onto her body, which remains as a physical trace in her flesh, just as the citing of this performance moment remains as a visceral experience imprinted within the body of the audience in the processes of recall.

Such sympathetic bodily perception occurs via corporeal memory, the human faculty that enables a 'sharability of sentience' (Scarry, 1985: 326). By drawing on this, (syn)aesthetics establishes an interpretative mode that fuses somatic appreciation with semantic interpretation. One stimulates the other which ensures a crossover of sensations in the reading and appreciation of the work and implements a somatic/semantic appreciation mode. It is this that develops the making-sense/*sense*-making quality within appreciation. As a result, when manipulated to its full, the

(syn)aesthetic style encourages performance to be an experience in its purest definition - to feel, suffer, undergo. It is this corporeal disturbance within (syn)aesthetic appreciation that produces an affective reading, highlighting traits of immediacy and transgression.

The fusion of cerebral and corporeal perception in (syn)aesthetics are clarified by quintessential features of the physiological condition of synaesthesia. These are, as distinguished by Cytowic (1994) and Luria (1969); the dominance of the somatic response over the semantic; a predominance of intersensual evaluation which prioritises immediate, innate experience over intellectual thought; the breaking down of the boundary between the real and the imaginary to provide a (re)cognition of hidden states; and an insistence on verbal language as a physical, defamiliarised and sensate act. In clarifying the significance of such ludic linguistic play within the (syn)aesthetic approach to linguistic texts, the theories of Shklovsky (1965), Bakhtin (1984) and Brik (Eichenbaum, 1965) are useful.

Following the idea of slippage between the real and the imaginable, (syn)aesthetic performance, due to its sensate and disturbatory form and content and its ability to reveal hidden states, can communicate a (syn)aesthetic-sense which has this capacity to make the intangible tangible. This is evidenced in Giddens' *Not all the time . . .* (1999a) where the fused internal and external of real lives lived and recorded in ethnographic transcripts is made haptic via the fusion of aural, visual, technological, spatial and corporeal texts. Manipulating the same (syn)aesthetic-sense, Churchill reveals philosophical insight as a tangible experience through her disfiguration of verbal language in *Far Away* (2000a). Therefore, by adopting the sensate and ineffable experiences integral to the condition of synaesthesia within the term (syn)aesthetics, the ineffable within practice and interpretation is acknowledged.

Fused with the focus on corporeality, (syn)aesthetics further embraces and addresses this challenge to linguistic expression. As an interpretative device, (syn)aesthetics thus endeavours to define the inexpressible, noetic and corporeal experience of such performance work via theoretical means.

(Syn)aesthetics presents a heterogeneous mode of analysis which supports the continually morphing and mutable performance style it serves to elucidate. Like the performance style it analyses, (syn)aesthetic theory, and the terms employed therein, serve to resist definition in the very act of defining. (Syn)aesthetics is a performance theory that is open and embraces immediacy, ambiguity, disturbance and playfulness. In doing so it celebrates *any* creative work that shares these essential traits and provides a means of articulating a response to such work.

The (syn)aesthetic style is a mode of practice which is concerned with strategies rather than being categorised by genre. It focuses on the impulse and effects of performance, and the symbiotic relationship between form and content. The (syn)aesthetic performance style manipulates various combinations of performance texts to establish a special (syn)aesthetic hybrid with particular emphasis on the actual body in performance and on the visceral-verbal *play*-text. In this way it celebrates the physical image as much as the spoken word and explores the potential of verbal language to affect on a physical level. The possibilities available within these key strategies of (syn)aesthetic performance are evident in the work of Giddens, Carnesky, Churchill and Kane, and are interrogated within my own practice as documented in Chapter 6.

(Syn)aesthetics establishes a new mode of analysis firmly based in arts practice, specifically in live performance. The visceral impact of the (syn)aesthetic performance style and the disturbatory effects it has on the audience are emphasised

by the immediacy of the live experience. The (syn)aesthetic style exploits the

'presentness' or, '*prae-sens*, that which stands before the senses' (Scarry, 1985: 9,

197, emphasis original) of live performance. Live (syn)aesthetic performance differs

from any other artistic medium due to the very fact of its liveness. As the

consideration of the previous case-studies demonstrates, by liveness I refer

specifically to the particular energy created by the presence of live(d) bodies

performing and live(d) bodies perceiving in the immediacy of the shared performance

space.[2] This ensures a continuing, immediate and above all, sensate, 'interactive

exchange' between (syn)aesthetic work and the audience where the performers and

audience unite in a 'maniacally charged present' (Phelan, 1993: 146-8).

Thus 'presentness' (Scarry, 1985: 9) may be experienced through this

immediate, multisensory witnessing. Furthermore, the inclusion of technologies and

mediatised performance alongside the actual body in performance serves to emphasise

and heighten the (corpo)reality, the *prae-sens*, of the live human body and its

signifying, perceiving potential. In addition to this, for a performance to be truly

(syn)aesthetic there must be an element of disturbance and disquiet, of (re)perception

and (re)cognition within the processes of reception and interpretation, which is

instigated by this live presence, a live fusion, of performing and receiving bodies.

This feature of disturbance and (re)cognition dominates in the work of Giddens,

Carnesky, Churchill and Kane, and proved integral to the exploration by the

performers in my own research practice.

Within a visceral (syn)aesthetic hybrid, multi-media technology can be

manipulated to counterpoint and co-exist with the live performance, in order to

foreground and interrogate the live experience of the performer/audience relationship.

The fusion of the different performance languages (verbal, physical, design,

technology etc.) within the (syn)aesthetic hybrid ensures that the stage becomes 'a tangible, physical place' that speaks 'its own concrete language' (Artaud, 1993: 27).

Alongside Artaud's arguments for 'Total Theatre' (1993), Broadhurst's liminal performance is particularly useful in clarifying the (syn)aesthetic hybrid and its potential for visceral disturbance with its shapeshifting morphology and interlingual mode. With its hybridisation and emphasis on the intersemiotic; its pursuit of the chthonic; its foregrounding of the actual body and its use of Derrida's 'wide jarring metaphors' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 10), the liminal clarifies the hybridised features present in the (syn)aesthetic style and prioritises the need for an intersemiotic approach in performance analysis that is substantiated in (syn)aesthetic strategies of analysis and interpretation. The sensate potential of the (syn)aesthetic hybrid is evident in the work of Giddens, where the pre-recorded and live-recorded video, film and internet (im)mediate choreographies resonate upon and against the present (*prae-sent*) live(d) performing body. Here space – architectural and digital – becomes an experiential (omni)presence in the performance that heightens the sensate quality of the dancing body (Giddens, 2002b, Giddens & Jones 2001).

Any performance practice that executes a complex (syn)aesthetic hybrid demands much of its audience. The audience is expected to 'read' and interpret a whole stage picture which interweaves live performers, design elements, speech acts, pre-recorded aural and visual texts and so on, where divisions between form and content become perceptibly inseparable. This results in a multi-dimensional cognition that comes into play within the audience that draws on a 'multisensory evaluation' (Cytowic, 1994: 167). In this way, a (syn)aesthetic performance effect is presented which in turn demands a (syn)aesthetic response due to the nature of such a multi-layered, intertextual stimulus. Such multisensory layering is evidenced in the

hybridised work of Carnesky and Giddens. It is also written into the very substance of the *play*-text in the writing of Churchill and Kane, such as Churchill's *The Skriker* (1994a) or *The Lives of the Great Poisoners* (1998), or in the visual and physical demands in Kane's *Cleansed* (1998a).

The human body is employed within (syn)aesthetic work as the sentient source of performance signification *and* the sentient receiver. The body becomes a 'polyphonic' (Bakhtin, 1984: 17), polyvalent text that produces *and* interprets a (syn)aesthetic language of the flesh through corporeal memory which exposes the 'sharability of sentience' (Scarry, 1985: 326). This results in the body becoming both sight and site of performance, demanding a 'sensate involvement' (Schneider, 1997: 32) from the audience. In addition to this, the body also becomes the cite of performance in the immediate moment and in the subsequent processes of 'complete, visceral recall' (Bartlett, 1999: 4).

The predominance of the body in the (syn)aesthetic hybrid adds to the many types of experiential tracing prevalent in the different languages of such work. Carnesky exposes the body as site, sight and cite in her work, (re)writing its corporeality in the shapeshifting design of the performing space, in the prismatic verbal texts she delivers, in the stylised dances woven into the narrative. Her body remains an explicit presence as the stimulus, canvas, content and form throughout. (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b, 2001b). Carnesky's work examples how 'stage effects have real consequences' (Jays, 1999: 525) and produce a 'theatre of traces' (Cody, 1998: 129). Traces of her performing body are left within and upon the design of the space, just as a tattooed scar is imprinted upon her skin, just as the experience of the sensate moment is cited within and upon the corporeal memory of the audience member (Carnesky, 1999a, 1999b, 2001b).

Work that expounds the particular traits of the (syn)aesthetic performance style, such as that of Giddens and Carnesky, develops Artaud's arguments (Artaud, 1993) in embracing a hybrid mode that foregrounds the body in performance as a sight, site and cite of disturbance and *jouissance*. Artaud's demands for a 'writing of the body' (Derrida, after Artaud, 1978: 191) are actuated within (syn)aesthetic work, as demonstrated in the choreographies of Giddens. Giddens explores the potential of the performing body to communicate experience in a live(d) and sensate manner, where ethnographic transcripts are translated into a physical and experiential document, truly qualitative data that engages understanding and (re)cognisance via a very real writing of the body. This demands that the audience make-sense/*sense*-make in the processes of appreciation (Giddens, 1999a).

(Syn)aesthetic writing within live performance appeals to the imagination, in an acknowledgement that the sentient body is able to listen to, and understand, a more imagistic language at a deeper, somatic level. It is this corporeal aspect of delivered speech that feeds into, and derives out of notions of Barthes, Cixous and Irigarays' writing the body (Barthes, 1975; Cixous, 1993; Irigaray, 1985). Ultimately it is the corporeality of the word which a (syn)aesthetic writing style explores and expounds that encourages a (syn)aesthetic perception of verbal language. In doing so, such writerly practice highlights a certain antagonism between speech and physicality, whilst simultaneously foregrounding the potential for a symbiotic relationship between the two. As detailed in Chapter 6, the interrogation of such a sensate writerly style occurred within my own practice, exploring corporeality in impulse, theme and verbal texture in the writing, and via the corporeal play and performance generated by the performers in their exploration of this *play*-text.

With the (syn)aesthetic style the corporeality of the body and the corporeality of the word find an unusual and symbiotic relationship. The corporeality of the intertwined actual body and visceral-verbal language can thus produce 'a compelling imagistic language' (Jays, 1999: 524). Following, Cixous and Irigarays' *écriture féminine* (Cixous, 1993; Irigaray, 1985), (syn)aesthetic verbal texts employ a corporeal writerly practice where the transgressive, unconscious and insurgent nature of the writing stimulates *jouissance* enabling a visceral (re)cognition of verbal language within appreciation.

Fundamental to (syn)aesthetics, is Novarina's argument for the act of writing as a physical performance practice itself which collaborates with the processes of performance, highlighting the exchange of corporeality between writer and performer, 'to change bodies . . .to breathe within another's body' (Novarina, 1996: 108), emphasising how the traces of living experience, of the living body that writes, remain within the text to be interpreted by the living body that performs. This foregrounds the corporeal 'sharability of sentience' (Scarry, 1985: 326) between all participants, including the audience, within such creative practice.

This is made manifest in Churchill's *Far Away* (2000a, 2000b) and Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* (2000a, 2000b, 2001e) where the performers engage with the writers on a physical and conceptual level because the words resonate with a corporeality in writerly impulse. This ensures such a visceral exchange is carried over to the audience, where the physicalised performances allow these writerly words to enter the intellect through the body. The exploration of my own practice enabled a live(d) understanding of this exchange of corporeality alongside a multiple (re)writing of the verbal text through the body as play, as signing, as dance, as video, as an exchange of sensation from writer to performer, to performance to audience.

(Syn)aesthetic writing explores the border between language and sound. It exploits the effects of language at its most damaged and destroyed in order to reve(a)l in its sensate and physical quality. The writing of Churchill and Kane are exemplary of the (syn)aesthetic style as they explode spoken language - formal structures, linguistic patterns, 'understood' meaning - in order to reform and recreate speech (see Churchill, 1994a, 1997b; Kane, 1996, 2000a). This encourages an audience to (re)perceive spoken language as a sensate form of communication. Words within the (syn)aesthetic style become a sensual language that is received as sensation. Just as with the physiological condition of synaesthesia where words can be heard and read in a crossed sensual way, *play*-writing can manipulate verbal language so that the performance of it confronts the audience in a visceral manner.

(Syn)aesthetic *play*-texts are multi-layered (in form and content), 'polyphonic' and 'carnivalised' (Bakhtin, 1984: 107) and resistant to singular readings. They demand a 'special perception' (Shklovsky, 1965: 18) due to the disturbance of language from its usual context which communicates the experience, or idea, as it is sensually perceived and not as it is known (after Shklovsky, 1965: 12).This writerly practice expounds the Dionysian qualities of intoxication, immediacy and corporeality (Nietzsche, 1967a) and highlights *jouissance*, sensate access and sensate pleasure, as the ultimate form of appreciation (see Barthes, 1975; Kristeva, 1999a; Cixous, 1993; Irigaray, 1985). (Syn)aesthetic performance creates a space where verbal 'images are relished for them-selves, and language becomes a sensuality' in order to enhance contradiction and disturbance and extol 'the beauty of language' (Barker, 1997: 88, 114,). In this way, as Churchill's *Far Away* (2000) and Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* (2000a) prove verbal texts can evoke the ineffable, which allows for an '"a-ha" of recognition' (Cytowic, 1994: 229), transcending speech as we know it.

The (syn)aesthetic writerly style disrupts traditional modes of writing practice, in structure and form, and also conventional modes of reception. It fuses disciplines and discourses, and embraces resistance strategies, *in order to produce* a defamiliarised, immediate, visceral impact which disturb perception, activate the senses, and have the potential to allow words to touch the unconscious (see Cixous, 1993, Irigaray, 1991) as well as reveal 'polyphonic consciousnesses' (Bakhtin, 1984). Consequently, (syn)aesthetic writing becomes an opening process rather than a reductive or limiting process in terms of appreciation strategies.[3]

With (syn)aesthetic work, the audience is prioritised within the matrix of meaning-making, allowing for a multiplicity of interpretations that encompass the somatic and semantic, leaving the work open to polyvalent readings that celebrate an innate, immediate response. Barker substantiates the (syn)aesthetic mode of appreciation in his insistence on an individual's 'rights of interpretation' (1997: 51). This equates with the *prae-sens* of the (syn)aesthetic appreciation strategy where an innate, individual interpretation takes precedence due to the fact that the work has been experienced 'moment by moment' (Barker, 1997: 38).

A challenge identified throughout this thesis is the difficulties encountered with applying theory to such experiential performance work. Broadhurst rightly asserts the need for a 'new textual interpretative method' that allows for 'intersemiotic modes of signification' and provides 'appropriate explication' of 'heterosemiotic practices' (Broadhurst, 1999a: 178).[4] By employing (syn)aesthetics as an analytical approach there is the intention to answer this antagonism between performance work and critical analysis via the fact that (syn)aesthetics describes both simultaneously, and fuses the ineffable and chthonic essence of such experience within its etymology. My thesis has argued that (syn)aesthetics, as a strategy of conceiving, creating, producing

and reading performance, provides a discourse for intersemiotic, non-genre specific
work that resists closure and encompasses intellectual, physiological and sensate
appreciation strategies.

By interrogating my own writing and performance practice, alongside the work
of Giddens and Carnesky, Churchill and Kane, I have endeavoured to confront the
difficulties and pleasures encountered when accessing, negotiating, presenting and
reading (syn)aesthetic work from conception to production. In this way, with
(syn)aesthetics, practice is fundamental to theory and individual experience is
fundamental to analysis. Crucially then, (syn)aesthetics provides a foundation for the
analysis of *both* performance *and* appreciation strategies simultaneously, defining
both a creative strategy and a viewing, receiving and appraising process.

The (syn)aesthetic style denies a single accepted valuation as the nature of the
work presented strongly favours individual reaction and appreciation. It is a process of
interpretation which prioritises fused perception, engaging the senses, the
imagination, and the intellect in an alternative way. Consequently, a personal, innate
response is respected over accepted codes of aesthetic analysis and judgement.
(Syn)aesthetics goes some way to answering the antagonism between performance
work and critical analysis as the (syn)aesthetic style *is* the work itself *as well as* the
accompanying mode of analysis that describes an innate, individual and fused
response to the work. It thus denies a theoretical perspective that is seen to close the
work and to restrict interpretative freedom.

Throughout the earlier chapters I have aimed to foreground the difficulties to
be had by applying linguistic and critical discourse to the experiential and corporeal
by employing terms and concepts which define the embodied and the ineffable. My
intention is that these terms go some way to allowing *sense* to fuse with sense in these

processes of analysis. Although I have followed a theoretical style for reasons of

clarity and depth, I suggest that to do justice to the impulse and sensibility that is

quintessentially (syn)aesthetic, there is the potential for alternative modes of

theoretical documentation to play with fusion and slippage in their very form, in order

to provide a probing and pleasurable explication of (syn)aesthetic analysis in practice.

Notes

[1] Arguably, (syn)aesthetics as a performance style has arisen in answer to a socio-political climate of apathy and a cultural milieu that is saturated by a media manipulated interest in superficial experience. The (syn)aesthetic performance style exploits the potential of live performance to disturb and invigorate in order to address this alienating climate. A public that is sophisticated in its ability to read the mass-media and new technologies need exciting and daring forms and content that enliven through the experience of live performance, that engage the audience in the matrix of meaning-making in a challenging, exhilarating and viscerally disturbing manner.

[2] As I stressed in Chapter 1, this is not to argue that any other mode of performance does not exist as 'live' performance. Audio-visual, automated and digital media do allow for an experiential perception, particularly those which demand an interactive response, and can affect a sensate experience, existing as (syn)aesthetic performance in its own right. However, I am drawing particular attention here to the very real, 'special perception' (Shklovsky, 1965: 18) that exists within a live(d) performance where there is an exchange of *prae-sens* and energy between humans via the performing and perceiving bodies present in the same space at the same time going through the immediacy of the performance experience together.

[3] With this in mind, linguistic analysis as proffered by Nietzsche (1967a), the Russian Formalists (Bakhtin, 1984; Eichenbaum, 1965: Shklovsky, 1965), Barthes (1975), Kristeva (1999a), Cixous (1993) and Irigaray (1985), where the reclamation of the verbal (spoken and written) as a physical and physiological act, is crucial in supporting the (syn)aesthetic style's somatic/semantic function and its quintessential visceral-verbal feature, both in terms of *play*-writing and in its writerly analysis.

[4] Working with undergraduate students studying performance has assured me of this need for a performance discourse that provides a vocabulary to succinctly describe the sensate, transgressive and noetic impulse and response to contemporary work.

Appendices 1- 10

For Appendix 11 please refer to the CD-ROM: Clips 1-10, as detailed in the Contents.

Appendix 1: 'Rules of Play' – Workshop 2.1: 23.01 2002

Don't ever forget you're here to play.

There are no rules – you decide – do only what you perceive that the box and its contents are demanding of you.

Prioritise and discard at will.
Come to agreements – explore the disagreements.
Establish your own structures – negotiate the boundaries.
Make sense meet *sense*.

Trace connections, enjoy fragments, nurture how it makes you feel.

Explore the echoes in it and in you.

Let how you read it inspire how you move it.
Let how you move it inspire how you read it.
Remember words move when you read them as well as when you speak them as well as when you dance them as well as when you still them.

And do actions speak louder than words?

Let your body speak volumes.

Think about sensations – sniff it, lick it, chew it, swallow it, digest it, regurgitate it, caress it, fight it, move it, inspire it.

Think about words in space, your body in space, other bodies in space.

Interrogate the words with your body.
Interrogate your body with the words.
Let your voice and body respond together.
Use your body and silence.
Find a personal connection with a passage that you like.
Let the words speak through you.
Don't be afraid to be there watching.

What do you want to do with it? What does it want to do with you?

It's up to you if you show the person in the corner something towards the end - you agree what, how and when. Ignore her up until you need her.

Appendix 2: 'Rules of Play' – Workshop 2.2: 13.02.2002

Let the text speak

Respect it – as much as you want to

Take time over it – relish the words
Think about sensations – sniff it, lick it, chew it, swallow it, digest it, regurgitate it, caress it, fight it, move it, inspire it

Take on board what you're saying
Take on board what they're saying

Make sense meet *sense*.

Be tender with words that speak anger
Be angry with words that speak tenderness

Trace connections, enjoy fragments, nurture how it makes you feel
Find a personal connection with a passage that you like
Explore the echoes in it and in you
Let the words speak through you

You can dance while others speak - find moments where you want to move
Let the words be the soundscore
LetTheDancePunctuateIllustrateUndercutSilenceCounterpointConveySpeak
Let how you read it inspire how you move it
Let how you move it inspire how you read it
Let the verbal meet the physical
Interrogate the words with your body
Interrogate your body with the words

Let your voice and body respond together

Remember words move when you read them as well as when you speak them as well as when you dance them as well as when you still them

Think about words in space, your body in space, other bodies in space

Don't be afraid to be there watching

If it happens – enjoy getting words wrong

And don't ever forget you're here to play.

Appendix 3: 'Rules of Play' – Workshop 2.3: 19.02.2002

Let the text speak

Take time over it – relish it

Explore the patterns and rhythms in the words
Follow the clues in the punctuation
Find liberation in following the form

Explore the echoes of it in you
Let the words speak through you

Take on board what you're saying
Take on board what they're saying

Find echoes of your words in the piece as a whole
Trace connections, enjoy fragments, nurture how it makes you feel

Take pleasure in the moments where it all comes together

You can dance while others speak - find moments where you want to move
Let the words be the soundscore
LetTheDancePunctuateIllustrateUndercutSilenceCounterpointConveySpeak
Let how you read it inspire how you move it
Let how you move it inspire how you read it
Let the verbal meet the physical
Interrogate the words with your body
Interrogate your body with the words
Let your voice and body respond together

Make sense meet *sense*.

Don't be afraid to be there watching

Pack the words away when you're finished with them

And don't ever forget you're here to play.

[N.B. Each performer also discovered an envelope in the space containing a piece of text. Each envelope was addressed to each participant in the following manner; Alex ~ Read Me, Sam ~ Read Me, and so on.]

Appendix 4: 'Rules of Play' – Workshop 2.4: 26.02.2002

You're here to play but the play has rules – look at the clues within the form to find out what they are.

How are the rules of language, of form and content, the rules of action, of pause and silence, directing you to read. . .

How does what you're saying affect you – so what are you investing in it . . .
Explore the echoes in it and in you.
So let how you read it inspire how you move it.
And let how you move it inspire how you read it.
You know that words move when you read them as well as when you speak them as well as when you dance them as well as when you still them.
Find tenderness in what you do.

And how does bare flesh write itself.
And how does the inside you write itself.
And do actions speak louder than words?
And can words reach the eloquence of actions?

Paul can sign and you can echo his signing in your replies.
Relish **Verity**'s voice and the way it moves you and enjoy her silence when she chooses to move.
Vicky can be playful yet must find still points when she speaks and when she moves.
Sam must must must complete his piece and respond to what he reads. Find comfort in the way he moves.
Alex will be listened to when she finally decides to speak that which holds most significance for her.

You are all always you but also the persona you interpret in the text that is made yours.

Take the time to absorb and know what it is you're about to say. Take time out if you feel you need to return and rework sections.

If you are handed a piece of *play*-text by a person – read it for them – it means they want to move it.

You must listen to each other – listen to words and to movement and to images that are created. Respect the ideas with your response.

Don't ever detour verbally from the text.

Let the rules liberate you into a new way of playing. And be aware of the right moment to make it the end.

Make decisions now about the ways in which you approach this brief . . .

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Appendix 5.1: 'Rules of Play' – Workshop 2.5: 08.05.2002

trace connections
                within the fragments
                              in the live moment

                              explore the echoes in it and in you
                                     that you can return to and
                                          return to and
                                              return to

follow lives and sensations and experiences and moments

                      make sense meet *sense*

interrogate the words with your body with your breath with your feelings
interrogate your body with the words

                              Let how you read it inspire how you move it
                              Let how you move it inspire how you read it

emphasise how words move when you read them as well as when you speak them as
well as when you dance them as well as when you still them

explore the words in space, your body in space, other bodies in space

Relish that which you find Relishable

be aware of moments that need holding

                              And don't ever forget you're here to play.

Appendix 5.2: 'Rules of Play' – Workshop 2.5: 08.05.2002

[N.B. The performers also found the following individual briefs within the box that contained the text];

Jonathan

What do you think it's demanding of you?

Find the moment where it's right for you to come together with the others to lift Paul.

Decide when it's the end and, only then, leave the space.

Once you've left you cannot return.

Sam

when Paul speaks to you, respond through dance

Find the moment where it's right for you to come together with the others to lift Paul.

Decide when it's the end and, only then, leave the space.

Once you've left you cannot return.

Vicky

Try and find a narrative.

Find the moment where it's right for you to come together with the others to lift Paul.

Decide when it's the end and, only then, leave the space.

Once you've left you cannot return.

[As these 'rules' suggest, at this session only, an additional participant was present, Jonathon Lais, an undergraduand at St. Mary's College.]

Appendix 5.3: 'Rules of Play' – Workshop 2.5: 08.05.2002

Paul

Take flight.

Sarah

Interrogate it.

Find the moment where it's right for you to come together with the others to lift Paul.

Decide when it's the end and, only then, leave the space.

Once you've left you cannot return.

Alex

Nurture a narrative.

Find the moment where it's right for you to come together with the others to lift Paul.

Decide when it's the end and, only then, leave the space.

Once you've left you cannot return.

Appendix 6: 'Rules of Play' – Workshop 2.6: 14.05.2002

A performance space will be established.

Read as it is – in the order that it's in today

Read together or individually – you can read it in your head first if preferred

The quality of the verbal delivery should be stimulated by the words

Find the clues and keys in the text to what may be read, and how it should be read,

and what could be moved . . .

Once a speech has been read it can be immediately returned to by another individual

[to read in a contrasting tone, with contrasting emphasis as desired]. If you return to a

previous speech at a later point, then what proceeds should pick up from where you

left off.

If you want to find a different space to read from, do so. But always return to the

order that has been assigned to each page.

As you're reading you can run, dance, move with it so that the physical exertion

affects your response. Or you can be still and let the words do all the moving. It's up

to you.

Those that choose to can opt not to speak at all but to draw, or move as desired. This

should be on impulse, not imposed.

And it's okay to sit and listen.

Are there moments in the *play*-text that remain with you?

And does sense meet *sense*?

Analyse and reflect only after it's reached its end.

Appendix 7: 'Rules of Play' – Workshop 2.7: 08.10.2002

Find moments in the *play*-text that you want to hold on to
Talk about it
Try out ideas
Prioritise and discard at will.
Come to agreements – explore the disagreements.
Establish your own structures – negotiate the boundaries.
Make sense meet *sense*.
Don't ever forget you're here to play

Take certain sections – those that have remained with you or those that are demanding a unique physicality and work them through as an exercise

Appendix 8: 'Rules of Play' – Workshop 2.8: 23.10.2002

the *play* is omnipresent.
so is the time.
Verity play's the *play* – has to read through in sequence that it's in – deciding who
delivers which speech when by presenting them with it or calling them to her.
the only event that can overcome this is if Verity starts to deliver a part of the text that
an individual is compelled to take over – that individual then has the power of the
play and must complete it.
play continues with Verity following that.
otherwise, to Verity's playing of the *play*, performers should respond as appropriate to
their own impulse but in accordance with the omnipresence of the play through
movement, spacing, image etc.
the *play* is omnipresent – each sequence begun must be completed and returned to the
completed pile.
but be aware of time.
It will be absolutely clear when the performance must stop – even if the text has not
been completed.
When this is the case those chosen should exit the performance and turn off the lights.

Appendix 9: 'Rules of Play' – Workshop 2.9: 28.102002

follow the actions as actions – once performed the actions can be repeated within any individual's movement phrase as an **echo and trace of the living performance** within the performance

trace, mark, echo can be echoed in movement, signing, writing, within each of the three speeches that have these words as their skeleton

play with the homonyms – play with the multiple meanings, the multiple possibilities in the words. Write them on paper and in the space

hold onto the **aural memory** of the delivery of the text as well as the corporeal memory of moving it
always listen to what's being said by other's as well as by yourself

'speak please speak' to **follow rules of delivery – pauses and dashes**
telephone as trigger, clue thrown out to the other party to engage in the dialogue

don't be scared to **find the darkness** in some of the passages – in your movements and in your experience of the text

counterpoint can be played with

don't move for the sake of it always be still and observing, rather than moving without compulsion

Appendix 10: 'Rules of Play' – Performance Workshop 29.10.2002

1. Enter from your light – turning it on before you enter the space.
2. The text will always be lit first.
3. Make a moment to be still in the space collectively before any delivery of the text begins – enjoy the spatial, sculptural quality you've previously played with.
4. Always be aware of the time ticking by – you will only have an hour and fifteen minutes to perform.
5. Only interact with the gauze to trace the projections, to sleep on them, or to become a trace by standing behind them. Absolutely no play with them other than that.
6. Exit by your same light, 'turning the lights off as you leave'.
7. Exit only when the alarm clock rings – let it ring until it stops itself.

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