

#### **Abstract**

This article uses the experience of a piece of immersive theatre (Coney's *Early Days of a Better Nation*) to inform a discussion of spectatorship in works that demand performances from audience members. It asks how we value spectatorship where the spectator-participant and their actions are placed at the centre of the performance. Initially proposing that a model of body-based intersubjectivity is appropriate to understand how meaning arises in these performances, it goes on to examine how the challenge to participatory performance that is given in Jacques Rancière's 'The Emancipated Spectator' can be used to discuss the value of participation. Rancière's contention that reforms of audience-performer relationship are 'stultifying' rather than emancipatory is read as a kind of negative intersubjectivity. The importance of the independent will to the process of subjectivation is seen as key to an emancipatory participatory spectatorship.

### **Keywords**

Spectatorship; immersive theatre; participatory theatre; value.

# Theatre in the Forest of Things and Signs

The human animal learns everything in the same way as it initially learnt its mother tongue, as it learnt to venture into the forest of things and signs surrounding it, so as to take its place among human beings: by observing and comparing one thing with another, a sign with a fact, a sign with another sign. (Rancière, The Emancipated Spectator 10)

#### Early Days of a Better Nation

I'm playing as someone from The Plains. A vote has been called, and I am one of two who have abstained. All others – my fellows from The Plains along with delegates from The City and The Islands – have taken a position on whether or not to accept the proposal from the 'World Council'. They stand at either end of the room, while I stay in my seat. The groups at either end look about equal, the movement of the abstainers could be decisive.

The argument continues and the clock ticks down. People seem to care, some of them. They are looking at me.

What is 'spectatorship' in *this* theatre?

I'm asking this question about Coney's Early Days of a Better Nation, a 'piece of interactive theatre for a playing audience' (Coney) that I took part in April 2015, in a pub across the road from the fire-damaged Battersea Arts Centre<sup>i</sup>. It is a piece that gave me cause to reflect on the complexity of my spectatorship, and the way in which we value performances which put us into complex relationships with performances. As a playing audience there's a good chance that others will play alongside you, play with you, see you playing, watch how you play. Later in the performance:

We are set a task, to design the deliberative processes of our democracy. I'm nominated as one of three who will speak for 'The Plains'. I feel the responsibility, not to the fictional country, but to the group of people who sit with me. Some of them embarrass me with their full-on commitment to the story (they aren't actors, after all), others are silent, observing, others are trying to reason with the facilitating actors, wrestling with the structure and pace of the game as much as with the difficulty of the subject matter. I feel a responsibility for solving the problem, evading its traps, presenting a better solution than the dilemma ostensibly allows.

I feel the fifteen people in my group. I feel the presence the other two groups, with their conflicting given circumstances but their common desire to give a good account of themselves. I feel attention of the actors, with their scripts that seem to urge us into conflict with each other.

I have become immersed, several ways. I've gone in over my head, but perhaps I'm swimming.

## Meaning making and body-based intersubjectivity

Spectatorship, therefore, is multi-faceted. Of these facets I firstly want to concentrate on the complexity of self-consciousness in the presence of others, and I propose that this as an aspect of intersubjectivity. It is important to recognise that this kind of embarrassment, and our other affective responses to being with other people, and being visible to them, are not interferences in spectatorship nor influences on our spectating, but that they are the fundamental ground of spectating. They are the ground of how we make meaning out of experience in general, including experiences of watching, because they are fundamental to how we make meaning per se.

There is no shortage of theoretical approaches to the grounding of experience in the body and its relationship to other bodies: including continental phenomenology, American pragmatism, empirical neuroscience, and some who combine all of these – such as Mark Johnson. For Johnson mind and body are more than integrated, mind emerges as a product of the body's interactions with the world and what it encounters in it. His theory draws on the developmental studies that show how babies orient themselves physically towards other bodies, learning to identify themselves in physical and social space through interactions with others because of:

[...] an immediate, unrational, unverbalised, conceptless, totally atheoretical potential for rapport of the self with another's mind. (Johnson 39)

This continues in adult life both as a continued constant attention to other bodies, along with the importation of the primary physical phenomena that we learn about in infancy into emotion, language and concepts. His thesis is that reason, spirituality and imagination too are grounded in this physical and affective being in the world, primarily our being with other people, such that

subjectivity is distributed beyond the brain and the body – in the environment and in relation with other people. Johnson says in *The Meaning of the Body*:

[...] body-based intersubjectivity – our being with others via bodily expression, gesture, imitation and interaction [...] is the birthplace of meaning.' (51)

This intersubjectivity gives us our point of view and draws action from us. When we are with other people their presence frames our perception of ourselves and puts demands on our action and inaction. This is not primarily the matter of conscious response to other people's action or even the unconscious assessment of a social situation, but the myriad moment-by-moment adjustments and anticipations, tensions and attentions through which social space manifests itself to us. It is the social affordance that makes us ready to know other people and to know ourselves in relationship to them.

So, when in *Early Days of a Better Nation*, I feel embarrassed, or obliged, or irritated, it is nothing unusual. What is unusual is that this is called theatre, that my own affective responses to my own behaviour aren't the background to a more important conscious part of my spectatorship, but are part of the work that I am spectating. If spectating is modelled on a distanced and disembodied observer where the bodily interconnections to the situation that make us intersubjective contributors are effaced and contained, then this is a poor spectatorship. But nevertheless there it is. This is how we do theatre now. How should we value it?

# **Emancipated Spectatorship**

In Chapter 3 of *Immersive Theatres*, Josephine Machon cites Jacques Rancière as a key theoretical reference point. She suggests, quite correctly, that 'Rancière's call for an emancipated spectator who becomes an active participant in the work of art is modelled in genuinely immersive theatre practice' (120). But she makes less, in her brief account of his discussion of spectatorship in theatre, of the stridency with which he critiques experiments in the relationship between audiences and performers, or explain in detail how 'genuinely immersive practice' can model the emancipated spectator that Rancière proposes. 'The Emancipated Spectator'ii Rancière formulates the motivations of 'the reformers of theatre' in this way:

Drama means action. Theatre is the place where an action is taken to its conclusion by bodies in motion in front of living bodies that are to be mobilized. The latter might have relinquished their power. But this power is revived, reactivated in the performance of the former, in the intelligence which constructs the performance, in the energy it generates. It is on the basis of this active power that a new theatre must be built, or rather a theatre restored to its original virtue, to its true essence, of which the spectacles that take this name offer nothing but a degraded version. What is required is a theatre without spectators, where those in attendance learn from as opposed to being seduced by images; where they become active participants as opposed to passive voyeurs. (3-4)

This could be a sketch of the inspiration for immersive theatre, along with other practices such as those of Theatre of the Oppressed. It certainly has echoes of

Boal's argument in 'Aristotle's Coercive System of Tragedy'; but unfortunately for us if we want to use Rancière's words to articulate the strengths of immersive theatre, they are not part of an argument *for* experiments with audience activity and relationships, but a *caricature* of the motivations for a 'reformed' theatre, especially for reforms that involve new activities for audience members and new relationships between audiences and performers. It may be that '[f]or Rancière, active participation as audience/community allows for intellectual, autonomous emancipation' (Machon 117), but his view of what would constitute an 'active participation' of this kind is idiosyncratic, and formulated in a way that seems to exclude most participatory theatre.

The thesis of 'The Emancipated Spectator' is a stringent critique of proposals for participatory theatre: it does not merely say that participation is not always welcome, but that experiments with actor-audience relationships are *necessarily* 'stultifying', and based on a flawed, negative preconception of spectatorship, as portrayed in the passage above. The argument has many subtleties, but, in brief, it is that the manipulation of aesthetic distance – either bringing the audience into a very intimate relationship with the performance (as proposed by Artaud), or pushing them away into an artificially distant relationship with it (according to Brecht) is designed to better share with them the knowledge that belongs to the performance maker. This is the same phenomenon, to Rancière, as a traditional 'stultifying' education, premised on the mastery of the teacher and the ignorance of a learner who depends up on the teacher in order to learn, forever following their lead and forever reminded that they can never finally catch up. His proposal is that a renewed respect for the distance between the spectator and the performance is akin to an emancipatory education which allows the learner to have their own independent encounter with the world, and to learn from it on the basis of their own experience and intelligence.

Rancière identifies Brecht and Artaud's issues with the passivity of the conventional theatre spectator of their time, and the way that both their approaches find a fundamental flaw in theatre as they see it, and instead of abolishing theatre, seek to re-shape it without this flaw. He concedes that contemporary performance makers have moved on from the tendentious instruction of the spectator, but still insists that they:

[...] simply wish to produce a form of consciousness, an intensity of feeling, an energy for action. But they always assume that what will be perceived, felt, understood is what they have put into their dramatic art or performance. They always presuppose an identity between cause and effect. (*The Emancipated Spectator* 14)

Though he gives no source for his confidence in the 'always' in this account, it underpins the 'inegalitarian principle' (ibid.) which associates the reformed theatre with unreformed education: with the stultifying pedagogue he describes in his earlier text *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*. Machon's tracing of the relationship of spectator to artist intention through the 'open text' model of Umberto Eco (113-116) is less reductive, as is Erika Fischer-Lichte's argument in *The Transformative Power of Performance*, that active participation is key to an 'autopoietic' model of meaning making, as opposed to a simple transmission model.

Rancière's alternative model of emancipation is a bracing reminder of the potential of performance conceived in its simplest form: as an encounter between a reflective and independent spectator and a work of art that is itself autonomous of its creator. But it is essentially a challenge to experimental practice, because the theorists he chooses as his models of 'reformers', Brecht and Artaud, are such iconic figures to contemporary theatre makers, and because the apparent thesis of 'The Emanciated Spectator' is that *all* experiments with audience relationships are retrogressive. As a theory of how to value spectatorship it is provocatively reductive, telling us that what is valuable is the autonomy of the spectator in relation to the work and its creators.

What is in question might be exemplified in *Early Days of a Better Nation*. The vote described at the start of this article led to some frustration for me, as a participant, as I noted shortly afterwards:

The yeses win, by two votes. The country of Dacia will accept the intervention of the World Council, giving up sovereignty and allowing foreign 'peacekeepers' in. The abstentions carry it for them. My irritation at being asked to vote on scant information, quickly, becomes indignation. I also feel foolish for not knowing that my stance, my resistance to the rules of the game, would play out this way. I feel I've let the 'nos' down. But I also can't decide if I'm taking things too seriously.

A few moments later I'm in an argument with one of the performers. She seems pleased to point out my mistake, she wants to rile me. 'So it's that kind of democracy is it' I say, I'm almost shouting at her, illogically. I have to check myself. When I wasn't watching I have become carried away, unselfconscious.

This annoyance at the participatory structure of the performance arose, I believe, because I felt coerced into taking one of a limited set of options that did not allow me to engage with the complexity of the situation that was portrayed. And yet in the minutes leading up to this have allowed me to have conversations with other performers, to persuade some others of my point of view, or to change my own mind; and of course it has been possible to say and do nothing at all. The range of activity available to participants (which I have described elsewhere as a 'horizon of participation) is relatively broad, until the moment that a vote is required.

It is in the nature of voting to reduce complex questions to an either/or; and it is in the nature of simulation games to compress time and simplify issues so that they can be encompassed by a structure that carries players onwards from one problem to another. If I have a lasting criticism of the participatory procedure in this performance, it is that the 'World Council', poised to impose a peace-keeping force on a small country, escaped critique: its power became conflated with the rules of the game, conferring an omnipotence that a piece concerned with this kind of geopolitics should address. But as my notes on my own experience show, this may have been a significant factor in provoking my own emotional response to the work, and my 'immersion' in it. Problematic or not, the fictional representatives of real-world phenomena, my interactions with them and with other participants, the interventions of performers, and my body-based

intersubjective affects in response are all intertwined at this point to create the meaning, for me, of this performative moment.

However neither the relative openness or closure of a performance's interactive dramaturgy, nor the complex interactions that give rise to meaning are not the target of Rancière's critique. He argues that practices that open up such a range of potential relationships, interactions and navigations are problematic per se, as they are based on an impulse to produce intensities of feeling, energy and action, in order to bring the spectator into an intimate relationship with what the theatre makers want to share with them, and thus it stultifies.

# Nothing behind the written page

Rancière's proposition that audience experiments are designed to 'bring the audience into the knowledge of the theatre maker', is based on a correspondence between the 'reformers of the theatre' and the educational reformers that were prominent in France at the time he was writing *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*. These reformers (including Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Milner Louis and followers of Louis Althusser,) proposed either a greater dialogue between educators and learners which would take into account different backgrounds, experiences of education and dispositions to make best use of it, or a firmer assertion of the school as a protected site where the stratification of wider society could not penetrate and the status of the educator would be enhanced (see Rancière, Hatred of Democracy 24-25). Instead Rancière turned to Joseph lacotot, an obscure pedagogical radical from the early nineteenth century who had promoted a methodology in which the educator did as little as possible and applied the same methodology regardless of the ability of the learner. In Jacotot's system the lack of dialogue between learner and teacher is intended to provoke the learner into defining their own relationship with the object of study, so that they explore it without becoming dependent upon the teacher or the teacher's understanding. This 'ignorant schoolmaster' might urge them to keep to this task, but he didn't offer assistance or contribute his own insight, evading the danger of satisfying his own needs at the expense of the learner.

The students in Jacotot's pedagogy learnt from texts, and the text has an important place in the process through which their learning happens. It is the text rather than the teacher that is the interlocutor, and provides the matter which provokes learning. A text is all that is necessary for learning to happen:

There is nothing behind the written page, no false bottom that necessitates the work of an *other* intelligence, that of the explicator; no language of the master, no language of the language whose words and sentences are able to speak the reason of the words and sentences of a text. (Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* 9-10; emphasis original)

This is clearly in the tradition of post-structuralist thought concerning the independence of written texts, and other art works, from their creators. The difficulty for anyone using these concepts to think about theatre is not in the relevance or otherwise of the reasoning teacher figure, but in equating performance to text. While the idea of a 'performance text' has some currency, the sense of the term is that performances are not defined by the written texts

that they are based on, and that all of the dimensions of the performance event are to be understood as available for the audience to respond to – including the audience's live response itself (see Lehmann 2006: 85-86<sup>iii</sup>); to concur with Rancière we would have to accept the performance text as autonomous, independent of the performer and their relationship to spectators, lest they be found guilty of 'explicating' the idea of the performance.

If there is indeed 'nothing behind the written page', can theatre be thought of, properly, as if there is nothing behind the performance text? There is certainly no 'false bottom' beneath which is a single clearly explicable meaning, but the multiplicity of meanings derives also from what arises out of the interrelationship between audiences, as a whole and as collections of individuals, and the work of the performers; and from the phenomenal presence (or 'praesence', in Machon's terms (43-44)) of spectators and performers. The experience of 'immersive' performance can only be more complex, in these terms, than more conventional theatre: 'texts' will be produced and encountered in many different ways, a spectator's independent decision making will bring them into many different relationships with these texts and with other people, authorship will appear and disappear moment by moment, as will 'masters' who may appear to manage the participant's experience.

But Rancière appears to object to such encounters with other intelligences. Where other critical pedagogies see a dialogue with a human other as principle and methodology for learning and growth (Paolo Freire for exampleix), as the source of respect for and equality with the learner, in the *Ignorant Schoolmaster* pedagogic encounters are associated with a deceptive metalanguage with privileged access to the sense of the thing encountered by the learner. According to this schema the performer, along with director, designer, writer, and other collaborators, must be seen as working to explicate the text of the performance, to interpret its language for the benefit of this spectator through this strategy of audience reform and the tactic of interaction.

For a properly emancipated spectator the texts of pedagogic and aesthetic situations are encountered as if 'in the forest of things and signs' (Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator* 10), in which we learn our everyday skills and languages, from birth onwards. It is tempting to discount this theory, because the metaphor of 'things and signs' is inadequate, when considering the interpersonal and intersubjective. However it is possible, instead, to read this as a theory of a *negative intersubjectivity*, where the influence of the other as encountered by the subject is oppressive, stultifying. Seen in this way, the metaphor of the stultifying pedagogue does not have to be opposed to the idea of a body-based intersubjectivity. Meaning arise from things, signs, and people, but there is a potential for the meaning of the subject, to itself, to be negatively impacted by certain kinds of encounters with other subjects. To explore this in more detail it is necessary to consider Ranciere's theory of subjectivation.

# Subjectivation and the will

There are more positive terms offered for the kind of subject which has the apparently stark and lonely encounter with a text, unaided by another intelligence:

[...] man is a will served by an intelligence. [...] In place of the thinking subject who only knows himself by withdrawing from all the senses and from all bodies, we have a new thinking subject who is aware of himself through the actions he exerts on himself as on other bodies. (Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* 54)

This formulation is inviting. It makes the faculty of intelligence – which, though presumed equal will manifest in different ways for different people – into the secondary term, as the servant of something that is equal but entirely unquantifiable: the will. The subject who exercises his will on other bodies and thus becomes aware of himself, has the potential for subjectivation. Subjectivation has a particular status in Rancière's thought:

This is what a process of political subjectivation consists in: in the action of uncounted capacities that crack open the unity of the given and the obviousness of the visible, in order to sketch a new topography of the possible. (*The Emancipated Spectator* 49)

In this passage 'the unity of the given and the obviousness of the visible' describes the conventional 'distribution of the sensible' (2004: 20-30), the regime within which forms of life for people are defined, within which it is given who can speak and be heard, and who will be seen and under what conditions. The reference to 'uncounted capacities' recalls the divided citizenry of Plato's republic, where only the ruling classes are counted as political subjects, because they have the time for thought and debate. Rancière associates sociologists, political philosophers, educators and progressive artists with the Platonic division of society, as they assume the place of those who are equipped to do the political thinking and feeling on behalf of the poor. The attraction of this basic intuition to an analysis of the politics of participation is clear: the assumption of equality, and the irruption of expressive self-assertion sound like what the participatory impulse is all about. But just as clear is the challenge: that we place ourselves in the position of the catalyst at the peril of becoming the expert that reinforces inequality while seeking to remove it. This is a tightrope trodden by all sensitive participatory arts practitioners, but in Rancière's thinking it appears to be not the tightrope, but the abyss, an inescapable flaw in the structure of progressive practice; this is especially clear in 'The Emancipated Spectator'.

In his discussion of the 'aesthetic regime' which has holds sway in the modern world, Rancière describes the transition from a habitually heteronomous art practice to a removed-and-yet-still-connected art world, which results in contradictory positions for both artists and spectators:

The origin of art, said Hegel, resides in the act of the child who skims stones, transforming the surface of the water, that of 'natural' appearances, into a surface for the manifestation of his lone will. But this child, who skims stones, is also a child whose artistic ability is borne of the pure contingency of proximate noises, of the mixed noises of artless nature and

material life. This child cannot be conceived in both aspects without contradiction. But whoever sets out to suppress the contradiction in thought thereby suppresses art and the aesthetic sentiment that one believes one is preserving. (*Aesthetics and its Discontents* 12)

This needs a little unpacking, in relation to the issues of the reformed theatre audience. The image of the child skimming stones to shape surfaces into manifestations of his or her will is clear enough, as is the contradiction that the ability to do this is, nevertheless, undeniably derived from those surfaces themselves: he or she is in and part of the world that he or she shapes. More difficult is the 'union of the opposition between pure, voluntary activity and pure passivity': the will is a thing of autonomy, but as it engages and shapes its world, it is also of that world and shaped by it too. Artists, as well as art works, exist in this tension; and as we have learned from *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* and by extension 'The Emancipated Spectator', the will of the spectator must be acknowledged, and also seen in this situation of contradiction.

In the image of the child skimming stones we see someone simultaneously in the work, creating it *and* separated from it and responding to it: something much more helpful, at first sight, than the relationship of master, pupil, and the third term of the text. The irreconcilable but unavoidable contradictions in immersive performance belong to the participant who is both in the work and spectator of it, and the artist who is simultaneously the work's creator and the spectator to what each participant makes of it. Mixing Hegel and Rancière's metaphors, the child skimming stones is also the explorer in the forest of things and signs; throwing stones in the forest shapes those things and signs, and lets the child learn, by how they change, what they are. The spectator-participant who votes, argues, and negotiates during a performance shapes the work as it reveals itself, and exercises his or her will by doing so.

In participatory performance this is an enhanced capacity to interject in the 'feedback loop' that exists in any live performance, particularly magnified because of the structures of spatiality, temporality and interaction in the work and the spectator's navigation of it. These structures, or structured procedures that lead to specific processes in each iteration of the performance<sup>v</sup>, are shaped by the immersive theatre maker in what 'The Emancipated Spectator' would tell us is a stultifying intervention between the spectator and the performance text. But if we think of the encounter with participatory performance as the action of the will on an object, which is to say a phenomenon in the forest of things and signs, then we can see its emancipatory aspect in the attention it brings to the subject as possessing an active *will*.

Where does this leave us? The potential of immersive theatre, in these terms, lies precisely where it doesn't assume part of its potential, where it leaves us alone to respond. Otherwise it repeats the lesson of inequality. However I don't think we find this in the capacity to make independent and active choices in the work nor in being left to sit in the safety of an auditorium, but rather in the extent to which we are 'unreformed' in our relationship with the work and its situations. Despite finding new encounters and relationships we learn from them and understand them 'as we do our mother tongue', and the potential for subjectivation lies with

the spectator, rather than with the artist. Participatory performance respects the spectator when it requires the exercise of will, and thus provokes the experience of subjectivation.

I do not suggest this as the primary criteria by which to judge spectatorship in participatory performance, rather it is an alternative way of viewing the potential of the audience member's independence. And I think it is a cue to look for this independence not just in activity, but in response to that activity. Independent response to performance activity is possible whatever the manipulation of that activity: if our interactions, our active responses and even our emotions are manipulated, we will at some point have the capacity to reflect on them as objects of experience, to give them distance and treat them as part of a performance text. To imagine that emancipating a spectator necessarily requires respecting an absolute distance from a performance is to ignore the proximity and manipulation that inheres in any performer-audience relationship. When closeness is part of the theatre's text, then bringing us closer to the text is not a stultifying thing, it doesn't stand between us and the text. The assumption of intelligence in this situation is the assumption that the spectator participant can read this text – read themselves as part of the text, and read the theatre maker's manipulations too.

My experience of Early Days of a Better Nation illustrates some of these complexities. I fear that at one level the piece failed to respect the intelligence of its audience in straightforward terms to the extent that it restricted the options open for interrogation of the problems it raised. My feeling at the time, and my reflection since, was that it rushed participants into making decisions, simplifying the problems of nation-building and of democratic process in order to make a game of them. It might have replicated modern democratic politics in this way, intensifying it through the failed-state scenario over a two hour playing time. However the pressures – of self-consciousness and embarrassment as well as frustration – brought to bear by this game structure may also have been instrumental in creating the immersion that I experienced in the moment of the performance, enhancing the affective, intersubjective ground from which my own understanding of my experience arose. At a further level of consideration the challenging – and at points frustrating – nature of this participatory performance demanded that I attempt to exercise my will, and apprehend myself as a subject with a will, rather than experience the performance as a lesson through which I was guided by the performance makers. The performance did work to produce a form of consciousness, in my carried-away immersion in the event, as well as evoking intensities of feeling and energy for action, all of which as implicitly censured by Rancière; and yet its very difficulty and discomfort continues to provoke me to re-think and re-assess it, and to re-assess my wilful attempts to assert myself within its game structure.

## Works cited

Fischer-Lichte, Erica (trans Saskya Iris Jain). *The Transformative Power of Performance: A new aesthetics.* London: Routledge, 2008.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum. 2005.

Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Postdramatic Theatre*. London: Routledge. 2006.

Johnson, Mark. *The Meaning of the Body*. London: University of Chicago Press. 2007.

Machon, Josephine. *Immersive Theatres*. London: Palgrave. 2013.

Rancière, Jacques (trans Kristin Ross). *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five lessons in intellectual emancipation*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press. 1991.

- --- (trans Gabriel Rockhill). *The Politics of Aesthetics*. London: Continuum. 2004
- --- (trans Steve Corcoran). *Hatred of Democracy*. London: Verso. 2006.
- --- (trans Gregory Elliot). *The Emancipated Spectator*. London: Verso. 2009
- --- (trans Steven Corcoran). *Aesthetics and its Discontents*. London: Polity. London. 2009

White, Gareth. *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 2013

Early Days of a Better Nation was written by Tom Bowtell and directed by Annette Mees, it co-commissioned by Warwick Arts Centre, National Theatre Wales and Battersea Arts Centre in 2014; the Battersea Arts Centre run in Spring 2015 took place at the Four Thieves pub.

Throughout this article my references are to 'The Emancipated Spectator' as a single essay, originally published in *Artforum* in March 2007, which subsequently became the opening chapter of a volume of the same name. While this volume develops themes of the contradictions of artistic heteronomy, spectatorship and politics, it is only the first chapter that deals with theatre spectatorship.

iii 'The following distinction between different levels of theatrical staging has become established: the linguistic text, the text of the staging and mise en scene, and the 'performance text'. The linguistic material and the texture of the staging interact with the theatrical situation, understood comprehensively by the concept "performance text".' (Lehmann 85)

<sup>&#</sup>x27;On the other hand, dialogue cannot exist without humility. The naming of the world, through which people constantly re-create that world, cannot be an act of arrogance. Dialogue, as the encounter of those addressed to the common task of learning and acting, is broken if the parties (or one of them) lack humility. How can I dialogue if I always project ignorance onto others and never perceive my own? How can I dialogue if I regard myself as a case apart from others—mere "its" in whom I cannot recognize other "I"s?' (Freire 90)

v See my account of process and procedure in Chapter 1 of *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics or the Invitation* 2013.