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8. DEVISING THEATRE AND CONSENTING BODIES IN THE CLASSROOM

INTRODUCTION

This chapter draws the writings of Deleuze and Guattari into the field of drama and theatre education. Intersecting with MLT in various ways, the endeavour of this chapter is to think nomadically through an experience of collaboration and improvisation in classroom-based devised theatre creation. The process of this research revealed some affordances and challenges facing arts education today, but also provided a rich site from which to consider the potential of the social theory of Deleuze and Guattari to interrogate or read contemporary drama and theatre in education intensively and immanently.

The project described herein took place between 2007 and 2008 with a group of grade 9 drama students in a public secondary school in Western Canada. Over a year residency with the class, my roles shifted between that of a researcher, facilitator, teacher, and director. The qualitative methods taken up in fieldwork were carried out with both improvisational and systematic elements with a strong awareness of my own role and multiplicities in the data generation. I worked closely with the drama teacher to develop a program that introduced and explored contemporary theatre devising as an approach to inquiry, creation, and performance. The program consisted of three main parts occurring consecutively over the school year: Development of creation tools; Spectatorship; and Performance creation and production. This chapter includes a description and exploration of a structured improvisation process and surrounding discussions in the final part of this project.

Devised theatre can be considered a postmodern or “postdramatic” genre of theatre generally based on the subjectivities and circumstances of the artists/students involved, rather than an imposed fiction; the living textualities, rather than the pre-written text of a playwright (see Govan, Nicholson, & Normington, 2007; Heddon & Milling, 2006). It shares commonalities with forms of performance creation such as collective or collaborative creation, ensemble, or playbuilding. Key elements of devised theatre that differentiate it from other types of collective play creation include the commitment to multiple perspectives and subjectivities (specifically those of the creators involved), to multi-modalities (specifically lending equal weight to movement, sound and visual technologies as opposed to the traditional dominance of text), and by

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extension to performances that are not led by a “sing[ular] vision,” or an “authorial line” (Etchells, 1999, p.55).

As a general rule, devised theatre is the creation of original work or the re-imagining of traditional texts by one or more theatre artists, often in collaboration with visual art, creative technologies, and other forms of performance such as music and dance. Devised theatre is often more closely related to Live Art (Heathfield, 2004) and performance art (Goldberg, 1988, 2004, Wark, 2006) than traditional notions of theatre, and draws references from various experimental movements in the arts (eg. Futurism, Surrealism, Dadaism). Ultimately however, the maze towards definition serves devised theatre better as a metaphor in itself than a descriptive tool. A particularly useful way to approach a definition of devised theatre is proposed by Govan, Nicholson and Normington (2007) in their book on contemporary performance practices. They suggest that devising may be most accurately described in terms of a plurality of “processes of experimentation and sets of creative strategies – rather than a single methodology” (p. 7). I take up the production and performance of devised theatre as an anomalous place of learning (Ellsworth, 2005) with unique affordances in terms of its pedagogical potential (see also Perry, Wessells & Wager, in press).

THEATRE, AFFECT, AND EDUCATION IN THEORY AND RESEARCH

This work is situated within a poststructural perspective on embodied pedagogy (Davies, 2000; Ellsworth, 2005; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000), and within the theory of nomadic thought (Deleuze & Guattari 1984, 1987). Nomadic, or nomad thought is positioned in contrast to representational thinking and in this way rejects the notion of unified meaning; that is, the notion of thought that, no matter how diverse, leads back to a singular logic or reason (a tap root). Taking up pedagogy and performance in this light, I consider the student and participant as a body/mind/self in motion (Ellsworth, 2005) and focus on a non-representational perspective of analysis, understanding pedagogy to be lived and experienced by means of forces of affect, sensation and interrelation. Force is a term used carefully by Deleuze as something that exerts itself on others; in contrast to power, forces are always in relation to, and in conjunction with, other forces. This contingency means that no one force can be repeated, it is always in the process of becoming something else (Stagoll, 2005). Affect can be understood to describe the living process of change in response to force. Sensation implies the involvement of the bodily sensation *in* affect and *as* a force; it is an affect that is visceral, physical, and results in embodied change. Put in other words, “sensation is the affect, which is neither subjective nor objective; rather it is both at once: we become in sensation and at the same time something happens because of it” (Boundas, 2005, p. 131). I take up the concept of interrelation from both from an understanding of forces (mentioned above) as well as from theories of embodiment. Embodiment is a state that is always contingent upon the environment and the contexts of the body: “Continuously

and radically in relation with the world, with others, and with what we make of them” (Ellsworth, 2005, p.4).

Considering drama and theatre in education in terms of forces of affect, sensation, and interrelation, this study aligns with MLT in challenging the dominant perspective on pedagogy, as occurring and evaluated according to representational logic, reliant on semiotic systems and individualist endeavours. This is not to deny the integral representational dimension inherent in teaching and learning (that is, the aspect of semiotic, recognisable, and assessable practice through the demonstration of ideas and experience through sign systems); rather it is to give attention to equally integral but largely overlooked aspects of the pedagogical process. Models of representation are “limited to a particular mode of existence, or a particular dimension of the real (the degree to which things coincide with their own arrest)” (Massumi, 2002, p.7). This doesn’t eradicate subjectivity, or the possibility for changing positions, but it assumes or shepherds a unified experience that is based on recognised destinations, structures of movement, and pathways of thought.

A significant amount of research in the field of drama and theatre in education can be positioned broadly as concerned with the affordances of drama and theatre education for literacy and multiple literacy skills (O’Toole & O’Mara, 2007) (see Baldwin & Fleming, 2003; Laidlaw, 2005; O’Mara, 2004; Schneider, Crumpler, & Rogers, 2006 as examples). In this work, drama processes are taken up as vehicles for transmediation (Siegel, 1995), supporting the interpretation and exploration of print texts (Mages, 2006; Medina & Campano, 2006), as well as scaffolding exercises to develop print and multiple literacies (Early & Yeung, 2009; Winters, Rogers, & Schofield, 2006). In this context the tendency to interpret meaning, to translate, to code, and “over-code” drama and theatre practices in education (Webb, 2009) is prevalent. In the project discussed in this chapter, the attention to, and awareness of, multiple semiotic literacies (by students, teachers, and colleagues) that were present and tangible in the work became at best a counterbalance, at worst an obstruction, to my pragmatic and theoretical endeavour of “produc[ing] different knowledge and produc[ing] knowledge differently” (Lather, 2007, p. 13). Indeed, maintaining a focus on non-representational, sensational, and affective aspects of experience in this study became an act of resistance to the various systems, expectations, and predetermined structures of the study.

It is in this space of tension, between the representational (and semiotic) and the affective paradigms, that this study is positioned. Considering affect in relation to, and in addition to, discourse-based analyses has been demonstrated in various ways for at least the past decade (with MLT, as well as for example, Hansen, 2000; Ngai, 2002), indeed, Patricia Clough suggests that the turn to affect has allowed a consideration of experience both in terms of “what is empirically realised and in terms of the philosophical conception of the virtual” (2010, p. 208). My analytical endeavour then, takes up the interactions and encounters of my project not only in terms of their representational indicators

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(signs, texts, images, etc.), but also in terms of the affects, sensations, and relations that the indicators prompt the consideration of. This aligns with the transcendental materialism (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) that is at the foundation of MLT.

Contributing to research that is extending the reach of representational analysis (e.g. semiotic, content, discourse-based analyses) then, I describe in this chapter a practice and a methodology that maintains a focus on *how things happened* in the site of research; on the relationship between details – people, events, words, projects, accidents, instructions, and on the forces and sensations that took place. In resistance to the prevalent assumption that data, art, and indeed pedagogy, function solely under a regime of signs (Grosz, 2008), I look to the movement of bodies, discourses, and forces of affect, in space and time. In this way, I consider the performances, interactions, and participation in the data in terms of how subjectivities are being produced and how inquiry and learning is happening, rather than how they are being signified (Leander & Rowe, 2006).

GLIMPING THE TRANSCENDENTAL

Art, Elizabeth Grosz states, “is the art of affect more than representation, a system of dynamized and impacting forces rather than a system of unique images that function under the regime of signs” (2008, p.3). Concurring with this assertion, the analysis detailed below is a thought process feeding from a proposal of nomadic thought offered by Deleuze and Guattari, and is characterized by a rhizome. A rhizome describes a network of lines rather than points, within which there are multiple entryways and places of departure, and every line can connect to any other, “multiplying its own lines and establishing the plurality of unpredictable connections in the open-ended, what Deleuze called *smooth* space of its growth. In short, it lives. Rhizome does not represent, but only maps our ways, paths, and movements” (Semetsky, 2007, p.200, italics in original). Deleuze and Guattari explicate the rhizome theory in terms of six principles, the first two of which are those of connectivity and heterogeneity:

1 and 2. Principles of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything and must be... This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order....A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relevant to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 7)

Considering the rhizome in relation to a series of lines and territories provides a symbolic structure within which to unpack the pedagogical encounter. As students are put in relation to others, to ideas, and to experiences that address their surroundings and subjects, forces emerge that give rise to new action, thought, feeling, and movement. These processes can be described in terms of rhizomatic lines. The ontological and discursive resources afforded by the

rhizome allow forces of sensation, interrelation, and affect to emerge at the foreground of my analytical lens. And as noted earlier, these forces implicate the body, and accordingly the embodied aspect of performance and pedagogy becomes substantive throughout my analysis.

The following description and analysis stems from a structured (facilitated) improvisation aimed at generating performance material, and two class-based group discussions, preparing for, and reflecting on, the improvisation. In this series of events, a student proposed an idea for performance and I, in the role of facilitator, proceeded to set up an improvisation based on it. The improvisation lasted approximately ten minutes (still images have been captured from video footage for the purpose of illustrating the analysis). In the discussion immediately after the improvisation, reflection and impressions are shared. Drawing from Deleuze and Guatarri, I take up these three varying inquiries as spaces (that is, space in relation to time) and consider these spaces in terms of their relative smoothness or striation. The striated space is that which is structured and regulated by specific rules and limitations, the smooth space operates irregularly, without predetermined order, in conjunction with striation to create new possibilities of composition.

Establishing the Scene

With a public performance promised in just over a month, a sense of urgency was becoming apparent in the grade nine drama class of Lismore Secondary. Taken as a whole, the process of the year-long devising project involved the generation of performance material through explorations of self, of modalities, of themes, concepts, and texts, to name just a fragment. At times the students engaged enthusiastically; at times they were restless and impatient on this journey that was supposedly leading them to an “end-of-year show.” Oscillating between a willingness to explore new approaches to contemporary performance and a desire and drive to play with expected and familiar forms, the overall process for the students smudged the edges of recognisable structures of theatre in education. Never quite able to leave “Oklahoma” or “Twelfth Night” behind them, the students committed, to varying degrees, to try creating performance through devising.

During a pivotal session in our process a discussion took place about a new idea for our performance. In this process the students made a collaborative attempt to articulate an assemblage – an outline of the spaces and content – for the “imagined world” under construction. This process was led by the students and carried out in the form of a group discussion. The students sat relatively still, in a circle, and spoke to each other from their positions as class-mates, taking up their roles as participants in the project. In this manner, they proceeded in a process that can be considered in terms of lines of segmentarity. Deleuze and Guattari write of the segmentation of our lives in society into pathways, definitions, binaries and groupings. Segmentation allows for stratification, and

therefore, in this case, for common organising principles and recognizable structures. Accordingly, this is the primary tactic used by the students in the phase of performance planning. Diane¹ suggested: “I think if people came on from different sides ... [and] I could try to get a background for the screen where it’s like traffic....” She continued, but then faltered, saying, “I have a vision in my mind, but I can’t really describe it” (Focus Group, April 15, 2008). Here we came to an intersection in the discussion, but the drive to strengthen the lines of segmentarity was taken up by another student. Victoria stepped in to help: “it’s ...like the idea of a street, people all go somewhere....” Diane corroborated: “Exactly” (Focus Group, April 15, 2008). With every new comment in this process, the territory of the work became more and more defined, and the opportunity for movement and innovation within that became more restricted but at the same time, more likely. Two opposing consequences of territorialisation are suggested here because the tighter the definition, the shorter distance you have to go to step outside of it, but also the less freedom you are given to do so.

Early on in this emerging assemblage, processes, or perhaps possibilities, of deterritorialisation are evident. Deterritorialisation describes the attempt to depart from or disrupt a territory or organisation of ideas and actions. Adrian Parr (2005) states: “In so far as it operates as a line of flight, deterritorialisation indicates the creative potential of an assemblage” (p.67). The group explored the idea of every character possessing a bag or container of some kind and Diane, even as she began to articulate the territory of this concept, offered possibilities for departure (flight) from it: “someone might have something in it, someone might drop it and everything falls out, someone might just keep going....” Apart from these possibilities for lines of flight, however, the group discussion functioned overtly and primarily to organise, align, and striate ideas. It wasn’t until the embodied improvised performance that the space of creation became smoother and more susceptible to rupture.

This group discussion, along with many other discussions and interactions throughout the project, revealed a drive towards collaboration, cohesion, and consensus – qualities that are not necessary to, and to some extent conflicting with, the development of devised theatre. This drive however, became a central characteristic and tension within the work and the dynamics of this group: Characteristic because the students generally participated in a mutually supportive, inter-dependent mode; a tension because the devising processes engaged in encourages divergent, conflicting, and contrasting perspectives, both in terms of inquiry and representation.

Improvising in Smooth Spaces

The process that followed – the improvisation – began to offer alternatives to the consensus-driven model of inquiry demonstrated in the previous discussion. In this case, the students took up the tools of a character (and all that that allows) and a bag or container of some kind; in addition, they let go of the spoken

discourse and relied on physical and gestural modalities (their improvisation having taken place to a background of music). With these tools and adjusted hierarchy of modes, the complex web of relationships that existed within the group of students (allegiances, social and academic hierarchies, etc.) was loosened, allowing for new possibilities to emerge in terms of connections, ideas, and deterritorialisation.

The following images (figures 1 and 2) show stills taken from a video recording of the improvisation. I have selected these two moments in part for the simple reason that they are clearly visible in the recordings and the interactions have translated very well to the visually recorded mode. Other interactions involved more subtle exchanges, or exchanges that were partially concealed from the eye of the camera, etc. These two examples therefore, represent just a fraction of what occurred amongst the youth at any moment within the ten-minute improvisation.



Figure 1. Sam and Victoria (foreground)

Figure 1 portrays a moment that was immediately preceded by Sam knocking over Victoria's bucket – a bucket that she was lugging around as if very, very heavy. When knocked by Sam, the “empty bucket” jettisoned across the space, revealing its actual weight. In the still image here, Victoria is investigating the bucket as if looking or checking for its contents; Sam is meanwhile holding his hands in the air as if to plead innocence or ignorance. That is a rough context and description of what can be interpreted from the visual and gestural signifiers in the image; what this image (indicative of action) is *doing* involves another line of analysis. There are many molecular lines (those going from one line of segmentarity to another) and lines of flight (departing from segmentarity) that can be seen to be emerging within this interaction. The collision of forces (forces of people, action, intention, internal and external character movement) is a rupture in itself, seen as two lines colliding momentarily and then diverging from each other and from previous pathways of thought or action. As Sam knocked Victoria's bucket he can be seen to have been creating a rupture, dismantling the pretence of weight that Victoria had been creating with her performance. Whether intentional or not, the action breaks down the previous attempts at consensus (described in the analysis of the previous discussion) with a direct challenge to her position (that is, to the imagined world she is playing in and representing). At the same time, the collision affects both characters physically, altering or forming a physical dynamic that wasn't there previously. This dynamic, frozen in time in an image, sees Sam standing over a crouched Victoria. The sensation of this corporeal interaction, like any other, affects the experience of the performers, and the progress of the action; the sensations have influenced the journeys of those characters. In my analysis of this moment, based on the image above, I am making no claims for the particular significance of this moment over any other; it is a fleeting, responsive, embodied interaction that, like every other, contributes to the rhizomatic growth of ideas, experiences, and performance creation. It is as significant as any other in the improvisations of students within the devising process, in that improvisation in this context is a space and time of inquiry.

If we were to follow these two particular student performers closely throughout the discussions and inquiries previous and subsequent to this improvised moment, we could map points on a trajectory that led them to the nature of their roles and participation in the final performance, as well as their reflections in final interviews. Without mapping the entire process here, it is worth noting that in the final production Victoria's character was portrayed in the role of a bartender at work who was also an aspiring musician. In the same scene, Sam played the role of a performing musician. Whilst the final production came about as a result of a series of embodied and improvisational inquiries and discussion, the public performance that resulted was scripted and rehearsed. The improvised moment analysed here, however, and the infinite other moments that took place around it, resulted from an actual interaction that occurred in time and space between bodies/minds/selves in relation, and could not have been prescribed or predicted.

Within this analysed moment of inquiry, the dynamics of interrelation are explored – façade, misunderstanding, and colliding forces all play out through the affective intensities of two people, with characters, in relation.



Figure 2. Kyle and Victoria

Figure 2 is taken from an interaction that happened a few moments after that of Figure 1. In this image, Kyle, who is moving across the space, carrying a guitar case over his head, has caught Victoria's attention. Considering the assemblage created in the previous discussion, and considering the lines of segmentarity put in place (with the proposal of an imagined busy street, traffic, people coming and going, etc.), this interaction can be seen as an active deterritorialisation. Kyle chose his bag in accordance with his character (a young musician), and "played" with the affordances of this improvisational mode. He moved with the case as if floating or flying the case through the space. Perhaps he was lifting his guitar case over his head because the imaginary surge of so

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many people left no space for such a bag; perhaps his guitar case was indeed floating or flying. There are myriad interpretations of this interaction with his prop, with the space, and with the other participants. What is more interesting in terms of this analysis however, is what is happening in the moment that allows for this line of flight. The improvisational mode freed Kyle of the striations of verbal text adhered to in discussion, and perhaps as a result of this, or perhaps in part due to the interaction with a broader scope of forces (bodily, material, cosmological), his action emerged as a divergence from the objectives and consensuses established in the preparatory discussion. In this moment, music was playing, bodies moved around the space engaged in various activities, and forces of sensation swirled through the group. The inquiry facilitated by this experience was sensory, embodied, and relational. Kyle was affected by the bodies, sounds, sights, along with less tangible forces around him and in relation to that, discovered a way of being, and of contributing, to the emerging assemblage of the performance.

These interactions and the consequent affects, sensations and relations could not have happened in the striated space of the class-based group discussion. The disruption of spoken discourse, the physical movement involved in the interactions, and perhaps the less familiar territory of improvisation, afforded new relations, new arrangements, and new pathways of investigation and inquiry that were unexpected and unplanned. These interactions did not all function to confirm decisions or stabilise territories that were established in the preparatory discussion. Many of them, including the two moments analysed here, can be considered as lines of flight from the segmentary lines of expectation, convention, and consensus.

Regaining Common Ground

A process of spectatorship is taken up in the reflective discussion carried out by the students immediately after the improvisation explored above (Focus Group, April 15, 2008). Two main points of focus emerged for the students through this discussion, firstly in relation to character development, and secondly, in relation to the multiple modes of interaction and presentation. The notion of “character” remained very important for this group of students throughout the performance creation process. It provided the transitional space, or the safe context, in which to play, create, and investigate the dynamics of the group and circumstances of the work. In light of this, it is not surprising to find that one of the main foci of their spectatorship and reflection of this process was the way in which characters were explored or presented. The following comment, offered by Diane, suggests the significance of character presentation in the improvisation process, and attributes a quality to the extent that one can achieve a verisimilitude in their performance: “everybody was really really natural with it, it wasn't like *trying* to perform which is kinda nice because ...that's happened a lot, so it felt really natural, it felt like everybody was *actually* their character.” The notion of

“natural” is a pivotal and contentious point in this reflection as well as more generally throughout the creation process. From the perspective of devising practice, embodying and presenting the “natural” flows, connections, and disconnections in meaning and experience is central to the aesthetic form. The improvisation serves this objective in allowing for the natural movement of events without the imposition and striation of script or third party direction. The students took up the improvisation willingly on these terms, but with the insertion of character, which I consider in this context to function not only as an intermediary (between their own subjectivity and the world), but also as a mask – lending a metaphoric and porous barrier between themselves and their audience (of peers, teachers, researchers, communities, etc.).

Victoria refers to the character inquiry involved in the improvisation: “it helped because I know a little bit about my character but not everything...thinking about how is my character going up to other people because you wouldn’t necessarily know that...so it helped build my character.” This comment suggests the affordances of the embodied act in *relation*. In terms of inquiry, this comment implies the process of the *encounter*, which is described by Deleuze as “something in the world that forces us to think” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 139). He differentiates this from the object of recognition, which would assume that previous knowledge or experience is being confirmed. The encounter in improvisation is encouraged by the smooth space of the practice.

A number of students focused their reflections on the modality shift at work in the improvisation (that occurred to the background of music, and required no specific verbal text). Sam, for example, “liked how...you could just go up to someone else’s character and just have a conversation without even saying anything, you could just like with eye contact or something.....” Kyle adds: “because we couldn’t talk that much....we had to express ourselves with our movement and our facial expressions, so while we were still our characters we were almost overdoing them so that we could get our point across whenever we interacted with someone else.” These comments suggest, not only the significance of the unsettling of the primacy of spoken discourse, but also the notion of play. That is, the improvisation, in smoothing the event of verbal language, narrative structures, and specific objectives, allowed for a level of freedom in the students’ explorations, interactions, and presentations.

What is happening in this reflection draws on much of the same processes that occur in the first preparatory discussion. Reclaiming verbal dialogue as the primary mode of communication, bodies seated and organised in a circle, the students return to mutually supportive roles, complementing each other and “making sense” of what happened in the improvised moments. In this way, they can be seen to have been reterritorialising the work, and creating new lines of segmentarity. The instability that emerged in the improvisation, in terms of the relationships between students and the relationships between the performed and the “real,” was re-stabilised in reflection. Diane’s comment on the success of their character portrayal (quoted above) serves this function of stabilising the

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performance dynamics of the event. Later she adds: “like some people would be coming on and off and some people were actually on the entire time, just like sitting, ...some people were showing their actual character and some people were showing the feelings of their character...” By emphasising the character driven aspect of the work, the students can be seen to have been relieving themselves in part of the responsibility of their actions and interactions. In discussion, they do not take up the notion of the “real” in the performance, or the performance in the “real.”

Through the process of reflection, the students construct a revised version of their work. In recounting and describing events that occurred in the improvisation, in stabilising notions of performance, the students are identifying and reterritorialising from lines of flight that had occurred. This is not a retreating process, however, or a reversion to a state previous to the improvisation. Reterritorialisation, Leander and Rowe (2006) describe, involves a process in which “deterritorialised elements recombine and enter into new relations” (p. 433). In this way, transformations have occurred in the way the students are able to think about the assemblage of the work and therefore in the way that they are able to deterritorialise once again, in a process that is continual.

CREVICES AND CONNECTIONS

The brief episode in performance creation described in this chapter reveals no more than characteristics of the year-long youth project. In thinking through the process here with the tools provided by nomadic thought and the perspectives and insights provided by MLT, I hope to shed new light on recognizable dynamics in drama and theatre in education as well as point towards an alternative way to frame and to construct the practice. This final section comments on the tangible complexities in that construction and focuses on two particular topics, firstly relating to the body and secondly relating to consensus and collaboration.

As many scholars before me have suggested, we sense first, and intellectualise second (de Bolla, 2001; Ellsworth, 2005; Massumi, 2002; Osmond, 2007). Forces of sensation are visceral and physical, therefore, a non-representational perspective on learning demands an engagement with the body in conjunction with the mind and self (subjectivities). In the field of drama and theatre in education, the body remains largely at the edge (Perry & Medina, 2011). Considering its significant role in drama and theatre practice, research and practice that directly explores and addresses the body is sparse. In line with the MLT frame, this study has taken up literacy as inherently multiple, and has not prioritised or organised literacy into modes of communication or interaction; the practice and analysis flowed from forces encountered and not prescribed codes, themes, or types of activity. Mapping forces of affect, sensation, and interrelation though, it is not surprising that the body features as an omnipresent factor within the creation and learning experience.

As characters are explored through performance, the interrelation taking place takes on further dimension as the body is implicated differently in the event. The body as sensational as well as semiotic disrupts the signification of text, and imagined physicality (of character) is put in relation to actual physicality. The experience of the mind/body/self in the process of character development and performance is one of hybridity, synchronicity, and change. The body is revealed as a rich terrain of creation, inquiry, and representation. It is intricately related to our notions of self and the functions of our mind. This dynamic, although in many ways ineffable, begins to be articulated by the rhizomatic analysis of this study. The implications of the centrality of the body in this research extend to the way we imagine and construct embodied pedagogies, as well as the methods we take up to research and analyse learning and creative experiences. Two statements punctuate my thinking through the body in performance and education: “When I think of my body and ask what it does to earn that name, two things stand out. It *moves*. It *feels*. In fact, it does both at the same time...” (Massumi, 2002, p. 1, emphasis in original); “I am, therefore I think” (Osmond, 2007, p. 1109). Massumi proposes to find ways of putting corporeality back into the body; Osmond suggests considering the body as “knower,” “doer,” and “aesthetic medium.” Both of these endeavours call for paradigms and practices that incorporate, but reach beyond, the representational. It is my hope that this study can open some avenues of thought or glimpses of possibility to this end.

Cull has cited Deleuze as suggesting that theatre (in his articulation of it) “might be a vehicle or machine that puts us in contact with the real” (2009, p. 5). This proposition serves as an interjection, but also as a prompt towards the final topic of consensus and collaboration in performance and education. The culture of consensus in education emerges as a striation in classroom space. Devising theatre thrives on lived, embodied, and proposed difference; education typically depends on that difference being tempered and put in subordination to representational aspects of pedagogy and a learning self which can be homogenised, generalised, and grouped. I take up the idea of “difference” as proposed by Deleuze (1994) to be a fundamental aspect of our realities, rather than a relative form of sameness. The homogenising effort of schools suggested above implies the ordering and cohesiveness that is strived for in classroom management, curriculum, evaluation, along with age, gender, academic strengths and weaknesses, etc. School is structured to organise, and in this organisation, like is put with like (age groupings, curriculum content, etc.) and a general consensus of purpose and process resides. This doesn’t discount the individual struggles, conflicts, differences of opinion, perspective, and methods of practice that exist in every school, but the system is built to minimise the expression and impact of those differences. In some cases this can be illustrated with the school uniform, in others it is standardised testing, in others it is codes of behaviour. In this environment, consensus reigns as most desirous and rewarded. I speak in general and systemic terms, but it is evident in the details of every day classroom practice, as group projects culminate in a cohesive presentation of knowledge,

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and those that conform to the organisations of time, space, subject, etc. are rewarded over those that do not. This culture of consensus may seem like an ideal circumstance for theatre creation, where the practice relies on group work and forms of collaboration, but in devising in education, consensus often serves to stifle. Devising is characterised in part by explorations of difference, be it through conflict, chance, failure, or rupture. In the school site of this study, the culture of consensus became a point of resistance to the process and possibilities of devising.

The verbal negotiations described in this chapter were typical of the students' inclination to group consensus, interdependency and mutual support. In contrast, disagreement or dispute of any kind was addressed as extremely problematic. This dynamic was loosened when the primacy of verbal discourses were unsettled, and alternative modes of communication and interaction took precedence. During these times, most notably in improvisations, inquiry and interaction could be seen to function in smoother spaces, without the striations of verbal language and all of the weight that those discourses carry. Consensus levels and unifies the creative space, quickly creating segmentation around that which is agreed upon. Devising thrives on difference, dissensus, and deterritorialisation. Here is an opposition to educational structures, but more importantly, it prompts a question for further inquiry. How does education look when we consider it in terms of dissensus? How does our education system prepare us as teachers and students to live in diversity, difference, dissensus, and desire (for that which is different)?

As a researcher who is also a teacher who is also a facilitator of performance creation, the relationship between philosophy, pedagogical theory, and approaches to practice sit at the heart of my work in this field. To suggest direction rather than resolution to the self-imposed questions above, I turn reflexively to MLT. Influenced and inspired by poststructural theory, I have questioned the value and relevance of my own interpretations of events, of data. I became wary and self-conscious in a social science climate where so much time and space and resources can be drained in beautiful theoretical rhetoric that floats like clouds above the looming reality of desks and school walls. The work of Deleuze and his collaborations with Guattari provides a theoretical and philosophical landscape within the poststructural paradigm that is at once enigmatic and pragmatic. Emerging from this, MLT offers a framework that traverses, encounters, and informs the modalities, subjectivities, and movements that occur during drama and theatre practices in the context of contemporary educational settings and striations.

NOTES

¹ All names are pseudonyms.

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