
Performance Studies
Department of Human Movement, Recreation and Performance
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Melbourne

Rapture: Excursions in Little Tyrannies and Bigger Lies



A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy _____

Barry Laing

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The thesis is 60,127 words excluding footnotes, appendices and bibliography

Contents

Acknowledgements _____	vi
Abstract _____	viii
Epigraphs in Lieu of a Preface _____	ix
Introduction _____	1
Writing as Performance I _____	3
An Afterword Staged as an Entrance	3
<i>The writer goes in search of his subject and feigns failing to find it</i>	
Fascination, Discourse, and Discontent	13
<i>As a subject who identifies as a 'performer', the writer is not quite certain of theory and its uses, of discourse and its discontents</i>	
I	13
II	18
III	24
Re-Visioning Subjectivity by Means of Performance	32
<i>The writer encounters the 'sovereign ego', but is pre-occupied</i>	
I	32
II Excursion: the <i>logos</i> of Psyche	39
III	49
IV	57

Three Performance Texts	66
<i>Rapture</i>	67
Notes to the Script	68
Script	70
<i>Rapture II</i>	81
Notes to the Script	82
Script	84
<i>Rapture III</i>	106
Notes to the Script	107
Script	110
Writing as Performance II	137
Missive: A Letter from the Under Side (of Theory)	138
Writings on Performance I	149
The Knife and the Stethoscope: Pedagogy in Performance	150
Video and Seduction	156
Writings on Performance II	165
Physical Practice/Imaginal Play	165
<i>The writer attempts an exegesis, but falls into fiction</i>	
Equilogue	187
<i>The writer ferments in his own horse-shit</i>	

Appendices

Appendix I — Contextualising notes and brief biographies	189
Appendix II — List of documentation of various training and teaching	191
Appendix III — Seven States of Tension	194
Appendix IV — Guide to video materials	195
Appendix V — CV, Barry Laing	199
Bibliography —————	206

Acknowledgements

Writing, devising and performing this project across three and a half years has necessarily been a collaborative process. It would have been far less pleasurable, and anyway impossible, without the assistance and generous support of the following people, institutions and organisations:

- at Victoria University, Florence Reay, Lesley Birch, Grace Schirripa, Chris Babinskas, Elizabeth Dempster, Margaret Trail and Jude Walton. Appreciation and many thanks to my supervisor, Mark Minchinton, for all of his hard work and persistence, and for helping me through. Thanks also to my students for inspiration and laughter;
- at Dartington College of Arts, Devon, UK, Josie Sutcliffe for her welcome and engagement, and Cathy Cullinane and Atila ('Til') Mustafa, two techies/operators from techie heaven;
- all those who have contributed directly and indirectly to the development and performances of *Rapture*, *Rapture II*, and *Rapture III*, Dan Witton, Adam Broinowski, Meg White, Margaret Cameron, Liz Jones and all at La Mama; Annesophie Brabant, Peter Pilley, Gina Gascoyne, Angela Abella, Peter Fraser, Dylan Shaw, Wendy Edwards, Darren Steffen, Hope Csutoros, Maddeleine Flynn, Tim Humphrey, Michael Dulitsky, Kikkawa Motoko, Brian Raue — Goundrey Wines, Jeff Blair — B&H Aust., Gina Harris — Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre; Luke Pither, John McCormick, Nik Pajanti, David Do Santos, David Williams, Gillian Ashley, Chris Harris, Jo Spray and Emily Fuller at Dancehouse; and especially the inimitable Jacqui Tamlyn.
- my family in Perth, Maree Brown, Evol Laing and Nathan Laing;
- my friends, Peter Stafford, who allowed me to rant and ranted back; Sonnie Timlin and Geraldine Timlin, for laughs and accommodation in Blighty; Tony Connolly, a fellow traveler despite the distance; Alexander Campbell, and Paola Comis, in Paris; Rebecca Rutter, Rachel Williams, Ahmad Abbas,

Felicity Bott, Imbi Neeme, Darren Jackson, Chelsea Cruise, Murray Black, Lil Cullen, Greg Duffy, Sam Hobbs, Richard Jones, Carolyn Hanna, Ella Filar, Kate Kantor, Penny Baron, Glynis Angel, Clare Bartholomew, Shannon Bott, Clare Moleta, Mick Angus and Alice Bailey;

- I am indebted to Monika Pagneux, Philippe Gaulier, and Anzu Furukawa for huge gifts of inspiration and learning; also Simon McBurney, Annabel Arden, Lilo Baur, Hannes Flaschberger, and Catherine Reiser — Theatre de Complicite; Linda Wise and Enrique Pardo — Pantheatre; Born in a Taxi; Al Wunder; and my fellow students at École Philippe Gaulier;

- thanks going back some years to Professor Richard Bosworth, UWA, Perth, there at the beginning of my thinking; Herbert Blau for critical feedback and encouragement; Margaret Donovan; and more recently, Elizabeth O'Loughlin;

- Sarah Miller, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Perth; Dancehouse, Melbourne; Cecil Street Studio, Melbourne; Scott Kinnear, Brunswick Dance and Yoga Studio, Melbourne; Dean and Phillip at Tasman AV, Melbourne; and all of the participants in my independent performance workshops;

- I am grateful for the financial support afforded me by an Australian Postgraduate Award scholarship for the duration of my studies;

Especial thanks to a dear friend, colleague, and lifemeister, Dan Witton, for his ongoing contributions from beginning to end; Jacqui Tamlyn for just about everything, and for keeping me calm; Peter Fraser for his performances, inestimable generosity and friendship; Kim Cullen, for her performances, design work, photography, endless patience, positive support, and care; and David Williams, who knows when to batten down for a storm, and to look out for the Bos'n when he's hanging from a rail.

Abstract

This research project in performance studies is anchored around the writing, devising and performing of a series of three solo performance works entitled *Rapture*, *Rapture II*, and *Rapture III*. *Rapture III* was examined in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. This written document, including annotated scripts for each of the performances, and one three hour video tape, is submitted in further partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree. The written document, examined performance of *Rapture III*, and video documentation constitute the ‘thesis’ submitted in total fulfilment of those requirements.

This thesis draws on tropes of ‘tyrannies and lies’, ‘defying gravity’, ‘presence and absence’, ‘subjectivity’, ‘knowledge and truth’, and ‘discourse’ itself. These tropes are *heuristically derived* from the author’s professional performance training experience — with Monika Pagneux, Philippe Gaulier, Anzu Furukawa, Theatre de Complicite and Pantheatre — and from wide readings ‘around’ performance making. The thesis engages with James Hillman’s writings in imaginal psychology, the theories of Jean Baudrillard, Deleuze-Guattari, Roland Barthes, Adam Phillips, Hélène Cixous, and Italo Calvino.

The ‘movement’ of the thesis — between the inception of ideas, through writing of scripts and devising and performing the solo works, to writing as a continuation of performance, and exegeses of the solos and their processes — is conceived as ‘dialogical’. Each of the elements is seen to be in critical ‘conversation’ with the others, and not (necessarily) prescriptive or descriptive of them. The performative ‘action’ of the thesis is framed as a series of ‘excursions’ and is related within the written document to ‘dis-coursing’.

Both in the writing and performance making (including video), the thesis interrogates ‘subjectivity’ and processes of subjectification *by means of performance*. It contends that subjectivity is the ‘stuff’ of performance, and *vice versa*. Fictional, artificial, and imaginal, the language of performance re-doubles itself as the ‘real’ in the postulate that what is ‘real’, always and already — in philosophy, psychoanalysis, and discourses of ‘identity’ and the ‘self’ — is *performance itself*. More than ‘performative’, these are some of the sites, the ‘stuff’, the very phenomena of performance: the ‘thing’ of performance, what it *is*.

Epigraphs in Lieu of a Preface

One works with images that arise, not
special ones chosen by a master or a code.
— James Hillman

My images? Relations.
— Henri Michaux

Everywhere a stage disappears, and
everywhere the poles that sustained
intensity or difference are stricken with
inertia.
— Jean Baudrillard

The three I harbour within me — body, soul
and paraclete — press against the same
triplicity in you.
— Gillian Rose

One needs unbelievable willpower to pull off
a face, so accustomed is it to its man.
— Henri Michaux

Man, once dead, crawl back.
— Hijikata Tatsumi

If all enigmas are resolved, the stars go out.
— Jean Baudrillard

'I' is many other travelers whom I know and
meet.
— Hélène Cixous

In my night, I besiege my King, I get up little
by little and wring his neck.
— Henri Michaux

Horse dream: Horse, having eaten its
wagon, contemplating the horizon.
— Henri Michaux

Introduction

By way of introduction, two fictions:

I

In a film by Tarkovsky called *Andrey Rublyov*, there is — I think I remember — a boy, son of a bell-maker, who is taken by invaders after his village is burned, his father killed.

To save his life, the boy tells his tormentors that he knows the secret of the bells. They demand he make one — the largest bell ever known — to celebrate the new regime and the arrival of the new Head of State. They give him an army of workers. Through enormous toil and pain he casts the bell. The build-up to the arrival of the ‘Pontiff’ is almost unbearable. The mould is broken, the gargantuan bell is struck ... and it sounds! Massive, dry, beautiful — and perhaps full of a magnificent ‘heartland’.

The boy goes a little distance away, falls, and cries uncontrollably in the mud — rain has come. His father had never passed on the secret of the bells. The boy did not know how to make one ...

II

When any ‘body’, self, person goes into a performance studio alone — to rehearse a dance, devise a theatre work, to stage an utterance — is it ever ‘alone’? Is it ever possible to make a ‘solo’ performance? This writing’s performance attempts, in part, to stage an answer in ambiguity: yes *and* no.

I am dexterous in staging my ‘I’ in contradistinction with others, and in repeating this performance in face of the world. When you see me at our local cafe, you will recognise me. ‘I’ am always smiling. That’s *me*. That’s who I *am*. “You are always smiling”, you will say (or you might do — I made that bit up). I ‘hold my role’, as it were, interdictorily. I am *me* and not you: *I* and not an-other. *I* have a name. This is *my* body. I am *making* a solo performance work. I am at the centre of my solitude, agent of ‘*my work*’. I tell you all about it, interminably — *my work*!

'I' enter an ostensibly empty space in solitude to engage in a performance practice. But 'I' am *already performing*. Because I believe in repetition where my 'I' is concerned, successfully enacting for myself a sense of *my self* ordered around a continuity, I am disturbed, elated, rattled, eroticised, and de-stabilised when my sense of my self becomes *peopled with others*. I move my body and *something moves in me*. I traverse the space in a diagonal; a *curved* abyss opens up to one side. Vertigo. 'I' wobble. Air fills my lungs. It wasn't 'me'. I raise my voice in speechless cries; *words* come to me. Hovering above my head, they dance upon my brain. "Luv your work", they say, laughing, "No, *really*". I throw my gaze like a weapon, animating the space. The space *animates me* in turn. 'I' am pre-occupied. My god, this space is not empty!

Ahhh, but I console myself; this is 'really' *all me*. I am able to stop the locomotion of my body. Steady my gaze. Renew my 'focus' and drag my sense of my self into the foreground once more. My head is spinning (not literally — that's a metaphor!), but I can keep my balance. No problem. I will rehearse those moves again. I begin. I approximate the movements of my body. Nothing. I dance the previous diagonal. The polished floor is solid under my feet. I gargle *double forte*. A slight echo, little more. I look earnestly in all directions. The room rights itself quickly. There's a faint sensation of nausea, but *that's it*. This is pissing me off! I've been abandoned! I gather my things, put away my pre-recorded music, and just before turning off the lights, I catch a glimpse of my self in the floor-to-ceiling mirrors on one of the walls. I come into focus like a distant grey figure emerging through rain. My hair is all awry. My clothes, soaked in sweat, describe the outline of a body over-worked ('worked over?'). I can see the image in the mirror, but it isn't *me*. I do not recognise my self. I am not smiling. The blue-green eyes of my likeness stare straight through me as if I do not exist. *I* do not exist? The cheek of me! I flick the switch ...

Writing as Performance I

An Afterword Staged as an Entrance:

Eluding is the invariable game.

— Albert Camus¹

Long after the writing, devising and staging of three performance works spanning three and a half years — Rapture, Rapture II, and Rapture III ... Darkness. Mid-day pours through glass and fly-wire. Blue light from a computer monitor strobes cigarette smoke as it curlicues its getaway. Sitting at the screen, I am irradiated with words. Ctrl + F6. Another 'window' ...

I perceive this writing as an experiment. It is an experiment that cannot answer what you are hoping to learn ...

Experiment or not, in 'hard-copy', here, now, I am bound to acknowledge my sources. Punctuation. Citation. Yes. I remember. *Ctrl + F6, Ctrl + C, Ctrl + V. Click + drag, 'writing' — Delete. Tab >*

I perceive this as an experiment. It is an experiment that cannot answer what you are hoping to learn. There isn't a better killer in the world than me, and I don't regret a thing.

Onoprienko, 'The World's Worst Serial Killer' — Ukraine

Onoprienko — I have forgotten his first name — sits in a cage in a courtroom on trial for the alleged murder of more than twenty six people. Out of turn, he speaks directly to the judge, the assembled public and media. He is smiling. (Well, he could be. I made that bit up.) The public are, nevertheless, revolted and fascinated — simultaneously. They cannot not hang upon his every word. Incredulous, they call for Onoprienko to be hung, or shot, or released into the hands of the relatives of his victims to be torn to pieces. There is no irony in these cries. At least, it is not

¹ Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (London: Penguin, 1975), p. 15.

reported, perceived, or considered by the mob. This is a 'true story'. It made the news on TV. I was terrified. And fascinated.

Via the material force of his murders, and 'worse', his gleeful lack of regret, Onoprienko takes his ghoulish 'audience' where they do not want to go. The perverse thought occurs to me that he also takes them where they *do* want to go, but 'can't' follow — in terms of a shared 'Morality', a sense of 'Justice', the 'Right' and the 'Good' that would prevail over 'Evil'. The terror in the thought, and the ironic tyranny in the discourse of the 'Good', is the notion that the audience *are already there*; that 'Onoprienko' is in all of us, or we all of us are 'in' Onoprienko.² Fascination often masks the darker face of desire. In a morbid 'Return of the Same', transfixed, for better or worse, the public call for blood. Best practice?

It is possible to see this 'event' and its players as a scenography of 'abjection', as that which:

disturbs identity, system, order. [All that which] does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite. The traitor, the liar, the criminal with a good conscience, the shameless rapist, the killer who claims he is a saviour.³

Julia Kristeva, eminent psychoanalyst, gender theorist and writer of fiction

It is unclear whether Onoprienko has read Kristeva, but he plays the role to perfection. He comes crashing through moral boundaries. He seems to require no secondary 'authority', citing only his own crimes. No translation, no punctuation is necessary — but for a lingering smile. For the public present at the trial, Onoprienko's murders and his nonchalance are obscene. For this author, at a second remove via the media, and at another, in front of this screen, Onoprienko's obscenity — that which is 'out-of-the-scene'⁴ — resides in the wedge he drives into

² This is a 'theft', an idea stolen from James Hillman and his conception of the imagination. See James Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology: A Brief Account* (Connecticut: Spring Publications, (1983) 1997), pp. 14–19.

³ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 1982, cited in Nick Mansfield, *Subjectivity: Theories of the Self from Freud to Harraway* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2000), p. 85.

⁴ See Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies* (New York: Semiotext[e], 1990), p. 50. & *passim*

those *other* scenographies; the trigger he pulls on the 'Good', the 'Right' and the 'Just'. What is out of the scene, or elided — at least until Onoprienko's unabashed intervention, and ambiguously made possible by it — are the *processes of subjectification* that would unite a public, mobilise them in the name of retaliation (called 'Justice'), find harmony in the cry for blood, and dramaturgical closure in the performance of an equally material death for Onoprienko at their own hands.

The language of 'performance' here is strategic, not innocent, or given. I am not 'clean'. I was fascinated too, remember? My fascination implicates me somehow. But in what way? Instead of calling for blood, I find myself calling on Kristeva! As if her 'authority' could separate me from obscenity. As if I have understood something. Something discrete/discreet, something independent of 'me'. If you are diligent enough to read my footnotes, you will see I have also (surreptitiously) called upon James Hillman: another psychologist and writer, though of a different variety. A double-play. The language of performance combined with Hillman's 'imaginal' perspective would allow me to ask, what is being 'staged' or enacted in me that I have introduced psychoanalysis into the scene, that I call upon its 'authorities'? Despite these citations, however, I am not sure what the intervention of this 'performative' interpretation of Onoprienko's 'scene' allows me to 'know', or proclaim with certainty, *about that scene*. Kristeva and Hillman may offer useful perspectives, but they are not the scene itself. Rather, because I am implicated, the language and metaphors of performance rattle and destabilise my sense of the 'distance' from which I look and interpret. And yet what I 'know' could be characterised as the insight that implicates me in the *staging of an idea*, the idea of the re-writing of Onoprienko's scene, *and* his audience's scene, as the 'obscene' and the 'abject'. Put more simply, and to give the reader a clue as to how this writer may be implicated, "Theory, as psychoanalysis shows, is always first and foremost local emotional politics."⁵ I am a performer. I deal in fictions. Don't trust me.

At another screen, I am watching television, channel surfing. The vertical hold is faulty. Suddenly an image falls into frame and stabilises. It is an interview with a woman who was a case psychologist for a man diagnosed with 'multiple personality

⁵ Adam Phillips, *Terrors and Experts* (London: Faber & Faber, 1997), p. 23.

disorder'. This patient raped her. She was telling the story of how she was a witness in court — for the defense! She had in fact been raped by the defendant, but it 'wasn't him' — not his 'dominant' personality. It was one of his 'other' personalities. Another 'self'. True, I swear. Cut to interview with the defendant. A voiceover is interwoven through various takes of some of his multiple personalities, apparently distinguishing them from the dominant one. Despite the authoritative, disembodied voice of the documentary-maker, I can't tell which is which, or whether 'Steve' has consciousness of 'Bob', or even if 'Bill' hadn't urged 'Dave' on in the assault. I begin to suspect that whoever the defendant/patient is, he's faking it. He must be a particularly gifted actor — perhaps the 'best in the world'? Or is that the 'worst'? (Either way, fascination turns to jealousy — an ugly confession, I know). If he wasn't faking it, I begin to wonder how the psychologist could tell who was who. How did she know? Had she read Kristeva, and 'celebrating' abjection, did she imagine she was radicalising her own subjectivity in defending the 'shameless rapist'? Less facetiously, had her own subjectivity already been radicalised by her encounter with the rapist — a radical, multiple, subject? Had *she herself* ever been anything less? And what, therefore, was she 'defending'?

I am distracted by a headline in the newspaper, "Doting Doctor was a Devil in Disguise."⁶ Despite the (pleasurably) irritating 'D' alliteration in the title (forgive me, I'm an aspirant poet), I read the body of the text. Fascination again. Jean-Claude Romand, married to Florence and father of Caroline and Antoine, murders all three. He visits his parents, shares lunch with them, then kills them both. He returns home and sets his house ablaze. Having taken pills, he lays down beside the body of his wife on a bed. He is wearing satin 'Foghorn Leghorn' boxer shorts. (Well, he could be — I made that up too). Flames and smoke all around, he is unable to breathe. He cannot bear ... what? He flings a window open. The fire brigade has arrived already. He survives.

It emerges at the inquest that Jean-Claude Romand has lived a 'double life': a grand and elaborate lie, turning on more lies, and apparently spiraling ineluctably towards

⁶ Clark Forbes, "Doting Doctor was a Devil in Disguise", *Sunday Herald Sun* (Melbourne), Feb. 18, 2001, pp. 56–57.

murder, fire and self-immolation. As you do. Jean-Claude, never having finished his medical degree, masqueraded as a doctor for the World Health Organisation (WHO). For eighteen years he fooled his wife, children, parents and friends. There were clandestine affairs, financial rorts, and complex cover-ups. Each day he would kiss his wife goodbye, drop his children off at school, and go walking in parks and local reserves until time to return home. WHO never knew him. Dr Jean-Claude Romand did not exist. This is a 'true story'. I read it in the news. Something snapped, the article reports. Dis-ease breeds disease. 'Dr Jean-Claude Romand' was a man who "found it easier to kill than confess."⁷ Words in the text begin distinguishing themselves from others: monstrous, evil, the mystery of identity, twisted logic, deception, lies, logical conclusion ... suicide, devil, damned to hell. The article probes his childhood. Touches on parental expectations, social constraints. Psychiatrists, in the end, could not be sure of any 'real' remorse. Imprisoned for life, Jean-Claude has now found Christ. The clipping concludes by citing its own secondary source as the 'last word':

He is not putting over an act, of that I am sure, but isn't the liar inside him putting one over on Jean-Claude? When Christ enters his heart, when the certainty of being loved despite everything makes tears of joy run down his cheeks, isn't the adversary deceiving him yet again?⁸

The 'last word'? I'm indignant. I'm disappointed. Emmanuel Carrere's epilogue attains something as 'poetry', but am I to accept the 'authority' of this secondary source as 'truth'? After a studious account and attempted 'explanation' of eighteen years of professional lies, how does Monsieur Carrere 'know' Dr Jean-Claude is not dissembling now? The adversary? I see, 'the Devil made him do it'. I'm beginning to understand that this panoply of teleological and 'Christian' rhetoric is endemic, that Satan himself would be put on trial — if only he'd stop skipping bail — and in the meantime we should make an excellent example of poor Onoprienko, the man with multiple personalities, and Jean-Claude Romand. Somehow this smacks of 'bad faith' or disingenuousness. But I suspect there is more to it than that.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 57. citing Emmanuel Carrere, *The Adversary, A True Story of Murder and Deception*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2000)

Something's bothering me. *'Page up'*. I scroll to the top of this document. Reading it through, aloud, my mind is racing. Any number of texts, additions, edits and elaborations play themselves out silently in counterpoint with my voice. I'm experimenting. I hold both 'texts' in mind, co-present, as one seems able to do effortlessly with two strands of music. I 'entertain' thoughts, or, it occurs to me again — they entertain me. There is pleasure in its enactment, but the 'music' also disturbs me. Somewhere in the collision of the fragments, phrases, vertical digressions and movements of each line in this experimental 'performance', a 'third thing' emerges. The reader may have perceived that philosophically, strategically, I should be happy about this. And I am. But, if I am to 'hold' *also* to what I have written (not swoon ecstatically towards the 'third thing') — having the conviction of this writing's 'arguments', its insights and terms — the 'tune' playing in my head would seem to be singing that, 'what I have written' has written, and is still writing, *'me'*. And again, this would be consistent with the form of this writing — *writing as performance* — in contradistinction to a 'thesis' that might attempt to elide the processes of subjectification at work in the figure of the 'writer as author-ity'.

So, I have claimed no 'authority', no last word. I have attempted to stage this 'me', this 'I', as a 'self-conscious' performing subject. Hillman helps me to imagine that this 'I' is an 'eye' that can see in the dark.⁹ An 'I' that perceives 'others'. Kristeva seems to be urging me to participate in the scenography of abjection, a scenography — as performance would have it — which stages boundaries as specular, as ('merely') the *idea* of a boundary.¹⁰ Taking 'my-self' seriously, I begin to imagine I can see through walls, crash through specular boundaries, ambiguously re-order order — all in 'good conscience' (see Kristeva quotation, p. 4). But how can I take my-self seriously, or otherwise, if this 'self' rattles and shakes and squirms out of the 'taking'? If this 'I/eye' can see 'others', does it necessarily follow that it can perceive itself? Whose voice is it that spoke this written text aloud? Whose that sung in silence an-other text? Who desires taking my-self *seriously* in the first place?

⁹ James Hillman in Thomas Moore ed., *The Essential James Hillman: A Blue Fire* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 26.

¹⁰ Herbert Blau, *The Eye of Prey: Subversions of the Postmodern* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 168. See also Kristeva p. 4 above.

Yes, something's bothering me. If I adhere to my own performative language, the 'me' that this writing has been performing is up for grabs, unstable, and multiple. I have been staging a scenography concerned with multiple subjectivity — all in good conscience? Why should this disturb me when I have been 'celebrating' its terms?

Ctrl + F6. Another window. Repeat, and again. I check another document that has been open, but invisible behind this one.

No language can be the key to any other language.¹¹

Another psychotherapist. Am I in trouble? While I have claimed no higher status for the languages of performance and psychology than that of 'useful perspectives', there is 'terror' in the gap between 'knowing' and 'not-knowing', in the slippage between the language of performance and performance itself, between writing and 'theatre', between discourse and its referents: the word and the thing. Useful perspectives? Useful for what? Understanding and the acquisition of knowledge? I confess I have placed my 'faith' in a complex combination of the language of performance and the language of imaginal psychology — and the third thing that emerges. But the music that comes to visit me *also* whispers of blind-spots, omissions, tyrannies and complacencies. I can't be sure that any of my 'I's' have consciousness of any of the others, or that any 'one' knows, speaks or discourses any better than another. 'Bad Faith'? For better or worse, elusion is the invariable game.

It is the 'better or worse' that bothers me. If theory is local personal politics, embracing the language of performance again, I am concerned to stage a theory of subjectivity and performance itself that enters the scene in the idea of a "self-reflectivity that not only spins its wheels, but suspects its own motives."¹² It is a 'suspicion' that invites a declaration of my 'hand' — in part at least. Both here in this writing, and in the devising of the three performance works titled *Rapture*, *Rapture II*, and *Rapture III*, I have been entertaining a philosophy and practice called 'Heurism'.

¹¹ Phillips, *Terrors and Experts*, p. 8.

¹² Herbert Blau, "Ideology and Performance", *Theatre Journal*, 35, 4 (1983), p. 459.

Heurism is, literally, the philosophy of a system of education that is based on learning by doing, or finding out for oneself. Notwithstanding the citation of my sources, I attempt to maintain this tension. Laterally, and more loosely, heurism is a notion that leans towards the concept of the 'third thing'. Heurism in these terms might be understood as a form of understanding that is born of the productive collisions of disparate and inconclusively related ideas, forms, strategies or practices: the generation of a kind of 'critical fiction' which yet addresses the 'truth' of a proposition or illuminates a previously unseen aspect of a problem in theory or in practice. Critical to heurism conceived in this way are invention and imagination: to 'see through' via the 'third thing' or the 'other', which emerges from the collision.

Questions of knowledge within this heuristic scheme can only be conceived as 'knowledges' of relations. Much of the writing above stages 'stories' whose central figures, or 'characters', represent tropes of tyrannies and terror, death and obscenity, truth and lies. Where 'character' is concerned — which may be conceived as "a cipher for secret correspondence"¹³ — shadowing the language of 'subjectivity' and the 'self' is the spectre of 'identity' and 'identification'. The shock and fascination (including my own) which jumps the gap from page to reader, or 'performance' to audience, could be situated in the disbelief which meets questions of identity in each case. Questions posed to the ambiguous *security* of identity in the figure of Onoprienko, who identifies as 'the best killer in the world', and whose utterances and acts are 'obscene', so (apparently) utterly other. Or, questions like, what form of 'identification' is taking place between case psychologist and patient with multiple personality disorder that the 'one' comes to the defence of the 'other' (which one) after the rape? How is it possible that one identity, known, and loved and trusted — 'Dr Jean-Claude Romand' — could dissolve so quickly? How is it possible that *lies* were the stuff, the glue, of the eighteen long years of his 'life'?

It is a measure of the prevailing 'popular' discourse of the 'Self' and identity — and the ways in which it is coupled with singularity, stability and 'truth' — that shock and incredulity in each scenography is possible in the first place. As hinted at in the case of Onoprienko's public, there are *other* processes of subjectification at work that

¹³ *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* [OED] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973)

stage profoundly ambiguous and ironic relationships, both discursive and 'real', where self-hood is concerned. Given the framework of the strategic heurism outlined above, it is possible to suspend disbelief so that shock might be relativised against an understanding: "Relationships constitute so-called identities, not the other way round, and this makes selves always provisional and circumstantial ..."¹⁴ There can be, therefore, terror in a smile.

Fascination is of a different order, but it too swims in the murky and often subliminal waters of identification. I observe with fascination the morbid fascination of Onoprienko's public. For a moment, somehow, I separate myself from this 'public'. I am secure in my own 'identity'. I 'trust' in the authority of my critical distance. I wager 'faith' in my dexterity with discourse. I, after all, *have* read Kristeva! My fascination is not like theirs. I'm sure. But, as I have confessed, back-stage, deeper down, I 'know' I am implicated. Fascination, *my* fascination, projects me into the scene. Haven't I secretly identified with Onoprienko and his 'beautiful', confident, unassailable identity — his 'wholeness', no less? Nostalgia somehow stages the dream of a full and unambiguous 'Presence' in me, despite the perversity and obscenity of its representation. On the other hand, don't I normally, habitually, *also* subscribe to the 'Right' and the 'Good' and the 'Just' of the public? I may not have called for blood, but I wonder if calling on the authority of Kristeva is just another way of staging the same — the 'Truth', which stands atop the three pillars of the public's rhetoric? Identification and irony seem to court each other. Like the case psychologist, haven't I been 'defending' a multiple subjectivity whose logic stages my 'I' as unable to 'know' or have consciousness of what my other 'I's' are up to? And haven't I also surreptitiously identified with her patient — Bill and Bob and Steve, all — in order that I may proclaim as he does/they do, 'Not Guilty!?' He's an actor, I thought — *just like me!* Or, what if part of my fascination and incredulity with Jean-Claude Romand resides in identifying with the dexterity and longevity of his lies — and *not* in abhorrence at his crimes? My God, I think to myself (O, my God, there's that rhetoric again [in *me*, this time]) — I *recognise* this. I am a liar! When I cannot bear ... what? My life? I lie, I perform, I act — perhaps in order to survive. I am a liar. Only ever provisionally 'me'. Don't trust me.

¹⁴ Phillips, *Terrors and Experts*, p. 84.

Ahhh, but I quickly console myself. I'm different. I have not *literally* chosen my teleological 'end' in murder, fire and suicide. I have not performed any literal murders — that I can recall. I haven't literally called for blood in answer to a smile, and I have never, ever, been hauled from an upstairs window by the fire brigade in my (oops) Foghorn Leghorn boxer shorts. Damn!

And here is what has been bothering me, 'really'. Out here, on the other side of the scene — any of the scenes — despite discourse, and perhaps because of it, it seems that *there is no 'out here' to be had*. My entanglement in the 'Scene' — whether in that of a crime, or in participation in the Rule of Law — runs deeper than the subliminal waters of identification, and even reaches beyond the confessional 'truths' which emerge from observing myself in the act of observation. Discourse and words are too clever. It is too easy to lie with words. It is not too difficult to imagine that I perform my-'self' in contradistinction with my-selves — 'as if', as it were, unambiguously. As if I was 'one'. It appears that whichever way I look at them, the processes of subjectification that I have critically engaged with above shunt, invisibly, sideways. Having staged or written 'me' one way — even as I presume to have staged and written them — they divide and multiply, splitting the repertoire of their signs. They are antinomical and interdictory in their 'performances': turning insights into tautologies, falsities into 'truths, and truths into lies. Don't trust me. Re-member me. Eluding is the invariable game.

Fascination, Discourse, and Discontent:

I

There is something unmanageable about being a person.

— Adam Phillips¹

Via what Roland Barthes might call a “cunning preterition,”² I will persist in the omission of an ‘explanation’ for my introduction of the language of psychoanalysis or psychology into this game. For now, I’m content to stage myself in the role of ‘buying time’, perhaps in order that I may discover an alternative explanation to the one I think I know.

‘The one I think I know’. Couldn’t this be a definition of the ‘Self’, of my-self? And yet the ‘I think’ betrays doubt. It addresses what Adam Phillips refers to as ‘unmanageable’ in subjectivity and its processes of self-making. The ‘one’, the singularity of ‘a person’, may be the problem and the point. It is at issue in the case of the psychologist and the rapist, in a different way with Jean-Claude Romand — ‘the one they thought they knew’ — and again with Onoprienko, the one who is unfathomable, ‘unknowable’, the ‘other’ of the scene. In each case, ‘the one’ has a lot to answer for, and fails to answer for the other — or the many. The Good and the Just cannot come to terms with Evil. They are, precisely by definition, abashed by it. If the Good and the Just, and Evil in turn are seen as ‘things’ and not as *relations*, as fixed categories of truth and not as *perspectives themselves* — staged as a complex of discursive, philosophical, moral and even ‘personal’ positions demarcated by boundaries, identities and ‘truths’ — then the question of knowing turns on a kind of re-doubled tautology. Cause and effect become identified, and yet are simultaneously staged as exclusively ‘other’, as contrary to each other. How can Good ever ‘know’ Evil as *itself* — untranslated, uninterpreted, unabashed? ‘Knowing’ would have to identify with ‘not-knowing’ *without incredulity*. Rather, it can only proclaim, ‘evil is what is evil’. And even if it were to state, ‘evil is what is not good’,

¹ Phillips, *Terrors and Experts*, p. xi.

² Roland Barthes, *A Lover’s Discourse: Fragments* (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 44.

the mirror turns and becomes, 'good is what is not evil'. 'Good is good'. In a similar way, the discourse and presumed authority of psychoanalysis also performs this tautology. "To be an expert on the unconscious is a contradiction in terms. In the mirror, one always sees oneself looking."³ How can one 'know', understand, have consciousness of the unconscious? What is being enacted when knowing identifies with not-knowing, when it claims to understand it, 'celebrate' it, postulate its virtues, or condemn its vices? What can knowing 'know' of not-knowing? I suspect that the Eulogy of the Other may sometimes elide a Return of the Same. For example, when is the 'celebration' of otherness really about understanding and knowing the other, and when is it concerned with re-asserting the authority of the discourse of knowing itself — a kind of triumphant, 'heroic' drama performed as epistemological 'realism' and truth?

Barthes says:

Having attained the end of language, where it can merely repeat *its last word* like a scratched record, I intoxicate myself upon its affirmation: is not tautology that preposterous state in which are to be found, all values being confounded, the glorious end of the logical operation, the obscenity of stupidity, and the explosion of the Nietzschean *yes*?⁴

There is something attractive in this 'affirmation', and yet I suspect this attraction may have some relationship with what I have called 'fascination' in the scenographies above. Barthes elaborates the scenography of 'Waiting' within the lover's discourse as turning on "syntactical arias": speech or utterances that stage the figure of 'Waiting' in and by the amorous subject.⁵ Waiting for the loved one — say, in a cafe — the amorous subject is situated, positioned, defined or enacted by these sentence-arias: 'All the same, its not fair ... He/she could have ... If only he/she had ...'. Barthes intimates that this is a mad, perverse syntax. These sentences "utter the affect, then break off, *their role is filled* [my italics]."⁶ In a similar way, it could be

³ Phillips, *Terrors and Experts*, p. 6.

⁴ Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse*, p. 21.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁶ *Ibid.*

posited that the utterances that constitute shock, incredulity, and disbelief gathered around and passing through the scenes of Onoprienko, the multiple-personality rapist and Jean-Claude Romand, operate as sentences of affect that exhaust themselves: 'How is it possible ... ? But we trusted him/her ... If only he could have ... I wonder at ... I can't believe she ...'. Per-version stages this exhaustion, this end-run, as tautology within the operation of knowing. But in this case, what 'figure' is being enacted? 'Waiting' is staged by these utterances of affect in the scenography of Barthes' amorous subject. Here, 'wanting' or the 'desire for knowing' form a part of the processes of subjectification both within the scenes themselves, and within this writing. That is, they determine how the self is staged. But if these figures are exhausted in the performance of their 'sentence-arias', perversion re-enters this scene in the form of an understanding that the figure that is being enacted, 'really', is '*Fascination*'. No more and no less, for better and for worse.

Elided within this figure of Fascination is what Barthes might call the terror of suspense⁷ — or more perversely, the *pleasure* of the terror of suspense. Onoprienko's public *cannot not* hang upon his words. They identify as Good in opposition to his Evil. But it is also possible that they *savour* the excruciating yet intoxicating morbidity of his crimes, and it is not beyond belief that they are *charmed* by the nonchalance of his identification as The *Best* Killer in the World. They are suspended between Good and Evil, *strung between* the world of their own identifications and the obscene world of the other. They are revolted and attracted, terrified and fascinated — both, and all. Not without horror, *so am I*. Fascinated, I am projected into the scene, and the scene infiltrates me in turn. I am one of the 'Public'. The public stage themselves — vicariously, illusively, allusively — in me. And yet, under-writing, or over-determining, the scene with the critical distance of the language of 'performativity', or with the insights provided by psychology, affords no unassailable barrier to this entanglement. Knowing, authority and truth are up for grabs precisely *by means of performance*. Identity, boundaries and the self are rendered as provisional, semantically unstable, 'critically' fictional — as ideas, or rather, as an '*image-repertoire*' of identities, boundaries and selves.

⁷ *Ibid.*

Barthes asks, “is it not on the level of the sentence that the subject seeks his place — and fails to find it — or finds a false place imposed on him by language?”⁸

However, the grammatical subject — the ‘I’ of the sentence — is only one of many ways of conceiving subjectivity. I have attempted to intertwine many others in the folds or weave of this ‘performative’ text. There are theories of the politico-legal subject, the philosophical subject and the subject of human experience.⁹ Many theories, and many ‘real’ lives, are also touched by the influence of the discourse of psychoanalysis. Consciously, or unconsciously, these and other theories are often staged in the language of ‘performativity’, often where gender is concerned.¹⁰ There is a discursive loop involved — a complex of interrelationships enacted in theory, ‘life’ and practice. As a subject who identifies as a ‘performer’, and not quite certain of theory and its uses, of discourse and its discontents, I have been attempting to stage some of these theories as *scenographies of performative truths and lies*, even as they might ‘lie’ against the ‘me’ that stages them, and is staged by them in turn. In performative terms, this is exactly what ‘risk’ may mean. Sometimes I play the politico-legal subject — implicated in the scene of a crime. At other times, the philosophical subject — uncertain of the way ‘I’ might be objectified by questions of truth and knowledge. Yet again, sliding between roles, I play the subject of experience — ‘subject’ to a bombardment of media, interrelationships with other subjects, to the experience of writing, and performing in turn. Who, then, is the ‘me’ that writes, the ‘I’ that is written or staged in this paper’s performance, when my own subjectivity and identifications are not quite ‘my own’? Isn’t this ‘I/eye — *this way of seeing* — strung between the one and the many in relationship with my disbelief or incredulity at the case psychologist’s defence of the rapist? Where does this place me in relationship with the *literal* rape itself as the chosen test-case, the focal point, of the conundrum? What can I be sure of where my self is concerned when this self,

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Nick Mansfield, *Subjectivity: Theories of the Self from Freud to Haraway* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2000), pp. 3–4 & *passim*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, see Mansfield on Judith Butler and Luce Irigaray pp. 66–78.

here in this writing, is staged in relationships constituting identifications with Jean-Claude Romand's *lies*, with fictions, and even — terribly — also with the abominable 'real': the very material murders perpetrated at his hands? In fascination, I cannot escape this identification with morbidity. This morbidity begins as the 'self' starts to rattle, break up, and multiply — suffering numerous little deaths — even as its own language attempts to restrain, contain and stage it as singular and 'whole': as *an* 'identity', knowable, and reliable. Re-member me. I was once the same man. No, *really*.

II

F5 — ‘Search’ > “morbidity/death”. Baudrillard. A hyperlink transports me to another window, closed this time — having dis-appeared, until now ...

The real ... has never interested anyone. It is a place of disenchantment, a simulacrum of accumulation against death. And there is nothing more tiresome. What sometimes renders the real fascinating — and the truth as well — is the imaginary catastrophe that lies behind it. Do you think that power, sex, economics — all these real, really big things — would have held up for a single moment unless sustained by fascination, a fascination that comes precisely from the mirror image in which they are reflected, from their continuous reversion, the palpable pleasure born of their imminent catastrophe?¹

I am dis-appointed (deprived of the illusion of my performative authority and ‘originality’). Baudrillard has been here before me! Many theories and theorists both sides of the hyphen of post-modernism — and caught within its play — address themselves to questions and problems turning upon the concept of ‘the real’ and its representations, illusion and ‘fictions’, the sign and its referent. Of the many, this side of the hyphen, Baudrillard often appears as the one most likely to be ... ‘mad’. ‘Madness’ has shadowed or haunted this writing’s performance from the inception of the moment that the ‘I’ of the writer performs itself in contradistinction with it-self, losing its referent in the play of appearance and disappearance that is axiomatic of the play of performance in theory and in practice. Other theorists, like Derrida, have suggested that this may be ‘always already’ the condition of subjectivity. The writing or speaking subject, the grammatical subject’s ‘I’, he argues, is always already subject to a kind of “specular dispossession of the self”² because of the play of representation in the appearances and disappearances of *language*. I disappear to myself even as I stage myself in language. Re-member me.

Baudrillard’s ‘madness’ achieves a kind of lucid, abominable counter-culture of ‘mind’ and of the self — and it is not one that draws upon the concepts of the ‘unconscious’ or the *logos* of psyche — as I have done. It is almost as if his writing could obliterate

¹ Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1990), p. 46.

² Jacques Derrida, “That Dangerous Supplement”, in *Of Grammatology*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 141.

these concepts along with the edifice of disjunctive polarities intricately interwoven in, for example, 'being and appearances', 'self and other', 'truth and lies', 'the real and its concept'. In his writing, words shimmering like stars merge and interleave (one must look a little to the side, indirectly, in order to see them clearly). He stages in words something of the "sidereal space" of terror that he claims "everywhere now hovers over our own."³ Sentences and paragraphs accumulate a kind of elusive material density that would nevertheless enact some of the instability and irreferentiality of the 'real' he seeks to invoke and dissolve. It is as if he wages a sustained assault upon the grammatical subject — the 'I' of the reader. Against "all of metaphysics"⁴ — the received 'eye' of the Western Episteme; and upon the 'I' of the subject of experience — the 'Self' that would ground itself in the 'truth' of the 'real'. He performs himself in his writings as the eye of a new storm, disturbingly calm within its own vortices, but an eye nevertheless. One which may provide a way of seeing, and seeing through, the tyranny of lies *and* 'truths' which he positions in what he calls an 'order of simulacra and simulation.'⁵

In speaking of the 'real' (see p. 18 above) as a kind of staging of a series of supplementary illusions 'against death', Baudrillard simultaneously 'blows the gaff' on the real while exposing the under-belly of fascination as morbidity. If fascination forms part of the apparatus which conspires in the making of what we take to be 'the real world', then it also under-stands, lies beneath, the discursive pillars upon which the real stands. Despite themselves, fascination brings these discourses into relationship with their own 'death' and dissolution. It is as if what Barthes refers to above as the 'perverse syntax' and tautology of the *last word* is, here, really a madness that stages itself as a fatality. A madness that rehearses the teleological end-run of knowledge as a measure of truth, and truth as a stop-gap against lies: all the while 'knowing' that this is an illusion.

³ Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, p. 38.

⁴ Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations" in Mark Poster ed. *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1988), p. 167.

⁵ *Ibid.*, *passim*

The pleasure of the terror of suspense at work in fascination (posited above, p. 15) begins to enter into relationship with the '*pleasure of destruction*' and annihilation, of disappearance into death. This is a particular kind of 'pleasure'. We 'know' this figure in our daily lives (I am pre-figuring — perversely — an optimism here), in sex at the moment of orgasm, in what in French is called 'Le Petit Mort' — the little death. But we also 'know' the figure of the pleasure of destruction in the multiplicity of our contemporary moment(s) as they are beamed around the globe in a massive and intricately connected international media network. Images perpetually devour themselves. Hyper-attenuated and atrophied, they pass themselves through the bowels of the under-side of the real and find new sites of resonance in what Baudrillard calls the "hyper-real"⁶. Fascinated, we stay glued to the screen. Long after Hiroshima and long after the 'revelations' of the physical, psychological and cultural dis-memberments of the Nazi death camps, the pleasure of destruction lurking beneath the mask of fascination re-enters the scene in a different guise via media coverage of the war in Bosnia, images of the effects of sanctions and repeat bombings of Baghdad long after 'The Mother of all Battles', and of representations of 'justice' staged as deserving retaliation on both sides in the Middle East. Closer to home — or too far to 'realise'? — and imbedded in the text of this writing, this figure is staged in the scenographies of Onoprienko, multiple-personality-rapist/case-psychologist, and Jean-Claude Romand. I saw them on the news, witnessed them 'documented' in a TV 'Special', read them in the daily paper. As I have said, fascination implicates me in the scene. However, it is much more serious than I thought. Bear with me. I identify as a performer dealing in artifice and fictions — rarely as a philosopher trading in argumentative 'truths'.

Given fascination's relationships with the discourses of truth and knowledge, self and others, boundaries and lies hinted at above, this figure of 'the pleasure of destruction' is the site of a performative interdiction, and renders these discourses as interdictory themselves. While the real is performatively interdictory, as Baudrillard argues — a 'simulacrum of accumulation against death' — many 'real' murders are performed in the name of the Good, the Right, and the Just, and not least, in the name of God: the 'first and last' word. It is possible to stage the thought of this performative interdiction in the terrible disjuncture between the images — seen and unseen — of the Gulf

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

War. On the side of ‘appearances’, the wave-and-a-smile sky show (wasn’t it the fourth of July?) with which the Community of Nations ushered in a New World Order *on video* during the war. Alternatively, on the side of ‘dis-appearances’, the literal, material and agonised pulsation of the oxymoronic moment of Victory — in which more than a few, from all sides, shook hands with a *very real* death. The Mother of all Battles was a ‘happening’ on a billion TV screens around the world. I owned one of them. The order of simulacra, simulation and the hyper-real has allowed Baudrillard to argue elsewhere that ‘The Gulf War did not take place,’⁷ *really*. And yet the real re-asserts itself as that which is out of the scene, excluded and edited from the coverage on our TV screens — the ‘obscenity’ of real corpses, real survivors, and the real whiff of sulphured flesh following slowly home in the wake of the ‘happening’ on the ground.

Baudrillard might happily acquiesce in this infernal irony, even as it devours his ‘critique’ of fascination and the real within its own terms. Greater than fascination, and more dexterous with the play of appearance and disappearance, says Baudrillard, is ‘seduction’: not the more common ‘soft seduction’ of barely elided erotic play, but one residing in the power of the ‘reversibility’ of all things, including discourse:

Every discourse is threatened with this sudden reversibility, absorbed into its own signs without a trace of meaning.⁸

By definition then, Baudrillard is not exempt. Subsumed in the desert of our own discursive storm, what can he, or any of us, ‘know’? There is a pleasure, an ecstasy, in this irony — and there is agony, and terror.

Even as he seeks to stage the real as a nullity, the real comes crashing in on Baudrillard’s performative party (as it does with all theory), in the guise of a kind of epistemological ‘realism’. He makes a claim, an attempt, to show the world *as it is* — ‘*really*’. In this case, hyper-real. Ambiguously, strung between competing discourses

⁷ Jean Baudrillard, *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995)

⁸ Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p. 2.

and interleaved among them in this writing's performance, the language of performance also makes this claim. It postulates a relationship of similitude between the 'real (human) world' and the performative means of production of its 'making'. It stages itself as an 'always already' within these processes. Artificial, fictional, and imaginal, it re-doubles itself as the real in the postulate that what is 'real', always and already — in philosophy, psychoanalysis, and discourses of 'identity' and the 'self' — is *performance itself*. More than 'performative', these are the sites, the 'stuff', the very phenomena of performance: the 'thing' of performance, what it *is*. It is impossible to state this independently or outside of the ecstatic and agonistic irony outlined above. As language, discourse, and performance would have it, there is no 'out here' to be had. Performance too spirals into the madness of tautology, uttering itself in a perverse syntax which turns back in upon itself, elides its processes of production, and projects itself back out onto the world.

But if this irony is 'ecstatic' and 'agonistic', it is a *subjective* irony. It stages the immanence, the ostensible 'reality' — and the ambiguity — of the subject itself. Baudrillard says, "Subjective irony, ironic subjectivity is the essence of a world of interdiction, Law and desire."⁹ Subjectivity keeps slipping away from itself by means of its own performances, taking its 'identities', its 'selves' and its interdictory 'truths' with it. For Baudrillard, this is the end, the death, of the subject and subjectivity. But these ironic disappearances are not restricted to the language of performance and its affirmations, to theories of subjectivity and its conceits, or to discourses of knowledge, even alternative 'knowledges', enacted by means of performance. The 'world', the 'real' world, the 'objective' world (including people 'objectified' by the subjective processes of the world's making) — bites back. And this is the problem and the point. Wherever affirmations and 'celebrations' of the 'performative', ecstasies of the 'possibilities' and 'openings' of discourse, or the triumphal songs of the 'revelations' of theory take their place, the 'real world', more or less, resists with a warning — and with material force:

⁹ Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, p. 182.

What is imaginable and approachable in art, paint, light, sound, words, conceptual events [theory] ... is not so doable with the human body; or doable at the most execrable human cost, as we discovered exorbitantly this century, where the synthetic abstractions of modernism and the dismemberments of the postmodern — rupture, fracture, suture, montage — have been quite literally achieved with the body, no mixed media, by the systematic brutes and torturers and the pieties of fundamentalism as well.¹⁰

Even if Onoprienko and his public's 'scene' can be theorised as performative, as a scenography of obscenity and abjection, it is a reasonable bet that *they haven't read the theory*. Neither had Onoprienko's victims. They don't 'know' or play the role of 'victim' like an actor plays a part. Very real bullets found fleeting resistance, and final rest, in the material flesh of their bodies. It is only after their literal death that they rise again with the ascensional desire of a theory that would 'know' its subject: abducting it, and turning it into an object. Theory, in this sense, is an 'afterword' (see title to first section, p 3). Or worse, a 'rape', a 'felony', or a 'double-murder' of its own. But the literal death of the victims of Onoprienko is not equivalent with the 'death of the subject', nor of the author, nor even of god. Onoprienko is Onoprienko, seemingly content with his 'identity', and state of being. Does a performative analysis of the scene assist in an understanding of the *scene itself*? What kind of understanding or knowing might this be?

¹⁰ Herbert Blau, *The Eye of Prey*, p. 197.

III

Derrida, in theorising the 'world' as 'text' and as 'textual interplay' elaborates the full ambiguity of the *difference* between the (real) world and its representations (including theory) when he says of this 'text' that it is "a system of writing and reading which we know is ordered around its own blind spot. We know this *a priori*, but only now and with a knowledge which is not knowledge at all."¹ Derrida, like Baudrillard, would smash the whole of Western Metaphysics, which both theorise in different ways as the illusory 'seat' or foundation of the self and subjectivity. For Baudrillard the real is an illusory simulacrum staged against death. The self disappears along with the thus illusory ground under its feet. The self for Derrida is an illusory 'supplement' staged in the name of 'wholeness', Being and full presence. But the supplementarity of the self is infinitely reducible *en abyme*. Whatever the state of 'being' of the subject, the subject's 'I' is always already supplementary — a representation of itself. Whatever was the 'natural' state of the self in the world (this question itself betrays an illusion), it is not reclaimable. It has never been fully present. Or, rather, and at the same time, it has always already been absent. As soon as the first grains of the utterance 'I am' were sounded into the void, as soon as 'existence' was given a concept and a name, as soon as we represented ourselves in language — we *re-presented* ourselves. We dispossessed ourselves of our 'self'. The identity about which the utterance 'I am' speaks can never be found, according to Derrida. The identity of the self is eternally deferred.

From out of the abyss of the infinitely reducible subject, Derrida rehearses his dark vision of the 'birth of Otherness' which he names as the "species of the non-species", as "formless, mute, infant and terrifying form of monstrosity."² Alongside of this vision, Onoprienko looks like someone to take home to the family. Onoprienko, his public and his victims seem little more than pale representations of an abominable self (which does not exist), and monstrous 'others' (which stay buried, elided beneath

¹ Jacques Derrida, "That Dangerous Supplement", p. 164.

² Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" in R. Rylance ed. *Debating Texts: A Reader in Twentieth Century Literary Theory and Method*, (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987), p. 135.

the scene). And yet even if this were the case, even if they are the pale shadow of a deeper, invisible and execrable 'reality', don't they live in *this* world? Isn't this world the world that re-asserts itself, crashing through the specular boundaries of theory, and the material borders of the body? And as I have suggested above, I, and we, are implicated. We are all "the others that are us."³ And this would include the monstrous 'others' below the veil of this world, *and* the murderous others within it — even if they (we) are little more than the shallow surface of its representations.

Where, then, and under what conditions, does the 'death of the subject' and of subjectivity obtain? Like Baudrillard, and Derrida, though from very different angles of vision, Deleuze and Guattari marshal conceptual forces against subjectivity and notions of the self, particularly as they take shape in the discourse of psychoanalysis. Deleuze argues that despite having 'discovered' or invented the 'unconscious' — the concept of an-other scene where the self is concerned — in practice, psychoanalysis "diminishes, destroys and exorcises it."⁴ Deleuze positions his theories against psychoanalysis because, he says, it "breaks up all productions of desire and crushes all formations of utterances."⁵ For Deleuze, desire is pervasive. It is not 'of' or 'for' something, not constituted in 'lack' — personal or otherwise. It is not the yearnings of an alienated subject. It is a "plane of consistence, a field of immanence", and famously, borrowing from Artaud, it is a "body without organs."⁶ Deleuze argues that psychoanalysis 'splits' the subject, and that even as 'the other' of the self (the unconscious) is born, it is *interpreted*, stolen from itself in representation. The other never makes an appearance as "the-other-as-itself."⁷ For Deleuze, psychoanalysis is part of a group of languages and discourses that are territorial. The other is subjected to moralising and normalising judgements measured against the 'One' — the figures of the Mother, the Father — and, he claims, there is therefore no

³ Hélène Cixous, "From the Scene of the Unconscious to the Scene of History" in R. Cohen ed. *The Future of Literary Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 12.

⁴ Gilles Deleuze & Claire Parnet, *Dialogues* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 77.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

possibility of “deterritorialization.”⁸ Instead of the fluxes and possibilities of ‘becoming’, the subject (if it existed in these terms) is cornered into fixtures of ‘being’ — the nominal and interditory boundaries of identity and self. Instead of ‘assemblages’ and the “ensemble(s) of desire”, the human figure — and the ‘world’ — is bound in closed territories of lack, and in pale, sickly “resemblances” of itself via interpretation.⁹ Psychoanalysis apparently always stages the primacy of one term over the other. Deleuze argues for the “logic of the AND”,¹⁰ the simultaneity of the many over reduction to the one, the multiplicity of things and of persons, the radical possibility of a ‘third thing’ — a perpetual becoming.

I’m elated! Inspired. Fascinated, again. Morbidity re-enters the scene in the role of the idea of the ‘death’ of the subject. And the idea, the image of ‘becoming’, grabs me. More than this, my re-staging of Deleuze’s writings seems to mirror my own pre-disposition (?) for multiplicity and the ‘third thing’. If my writing (in cahoots with Deleuze) ‘writes’ me, I’m beginning to positively identify with the ‘me’ being written. Ahhh, but I have already suspected this ‘I’s’ motives, already cautioned against swooning ecstatically towards this third thing — or rather, falling into its rhetorics, its discourse, and not the (third) thing itself. Fascination is, after all — or before everything — trapped in the articulation of the figure of the ‘pleasure of destruction’. Death to the subject, death to my ‘I’? I wonder.

F5 — ‘Search’ > “third thing”. Hyperlink. I am delivered to a paragraph in the first section of this writing ... “Something’s bothering me ... ” (see pp. 8–9 above) My head spins (not literally — that’s a metaphor). ‘Metaphor’ — etymology = ‘transport’. It is as if I am ‘transported’, abducted, stolen to another place by my own writing. A strange loop. Strung between chapters, meanings, interpretations, representations, and performances, perhaps I am the third-thing! What is going on? I am not an analyst!

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 80, 81.

¹⁰ Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, (London: The Athlone Press Ltd., (1980) 1999), p. 25.

Deleuze and Guattari give a specific example of 'becoming' as the dynamic relationship between the wasp and the orchid:

The orchid deterritorialises by forming an image, a tracing of a wasp; but the wasp reterritorialises on that image. The wasp is nevertheless deterritorialised, becoming a piece in the orchid's reproductive apparatus. But it reterritorialises the orchid by transporting its pollen. Wasp and orchid, as heterogeneous elements, form a rhizome ... [What is going on is] a veritable becoming, a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp.¹¹

This is a beautiful image. But what if I were to confess that its resonance for me resides at least in part in the possibility of my identification with 'what's going on' at this moment in this writing's performance: a becoming-Laing of Deleuze and a becoming-Deleuze of Laing? Deleuze celebrates the possibility of this "double-theft" as an encounter of the two of us.¹² Where (at least Deleuze's version of) psychoanalysis might call this, cheaply, 'co-dependency', here it is an ecstasy of the possibilities of becoming. But what would Deleuze, *the man himself* — not 'Deleuze' as 'book', as all of his rhizomatic writings, as the 'figure' of a new philosophy — make of this theft? Haven't I interpreted his writing just as his writing has interpreted the scene of wasp and orchid? Of course, his interpretation is a 'terrorist attack' on what he considers to be precisely another tyranny in the form of (particularly) psychoanalysis's interpretations, and all analysis that would stage the wasp and the orchid as separate entities of 'being'. But his writings too are interpretive and territorial where psychoanalysis is concerned — although it is possible to argue in terms of his theory that it is simultaneously a reterritorialisation of the theories of psychoanalysis. Nevertheless, his version of psychoanalysis is curtailed, full of omissions and strategic elisions (as all theory must be in order to work). How would he handle my 'identification' with him, my theft, and my interpretation of his scene?

Just for a moment, if you will — think this thought: becoming-rapist of the case-psychologist and a becoming-case-psychologist of the rapist. Is what is going on,

¹¹ Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 10.

¹² Deleuze & Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 7.

‘really’, in the scenography outlined above — where the psychologist (not unlike Deleuze, and not unlike this writer) *defends a principle of multiplicity* — is ‘what is going on’ the same kind of becoming as the wasp and the orchid? What is at stake in identifying with *this* image, being captured by its double-theft, celebrating its contents as ‘beautiful’ under the aegis of a ‘becoming’? I am shadowed by the return of a kind of incredulity. Despite the beauty of the theory and my identification with it, the edifice of all that would interpret, understand, and know, and the network of discourses that stage boundaries, selves, identities, objects and subjects, re-enters the scene of this writing. A moral position nags at my consciousness. A (normalising) judgement would give itself a name. Moments ago I thought the subject was dead! But perhaps I only thought the *thought* of the death of the subject. This is not the same thing. My ‘self’, hyper-saturated with these discourses, comes crashing in on this party. It’s not a ‘party’, it says. Not a theoretical ecstasy. It was a rape. Didn’t the case-psychologist have a body, just one — a body *with* organs? Likewise, isn’t the rapist — despite the diagnosis of multiple personality — of the order of the ‘one’ — a body with a criminal organ? This world, the one we live in (including our bodies), stages itself in resistance to theory, just as theory stages itself in opposition to the world, even as it seeks to ‘explain’ it. But has the *psyche itself* ever completely yielded to psychoanalysis, to the theory of the *logos* of psyche? Has the body ever been fully colonised by the territorialisations of theory? Or, for that matter, liberated by its de-territorialisations?

Deleuze might argue that the return of the self here in a contrary role is merely another return of the same. It simply stages the ambiguous morality of the Just, the Right and the Good (of, for example, Onoprienko’s public) against what it sees as the abomination of Evil (the rape of the psychologist). Borrowing from Goddard — “pas une image juste, juste des images” (not ‘just’ [right, correct] images, just images) — Deleuze vicariously encourages the image of ‘becoming-rapist of the case-psychologist and a becoming-case-psychologist of the rapist’ to be seen as ‘just ideas’: “This is the encounter, the becoming, the theft ... this ‘between-two’ of solitudes.”¹³ He says that the Just and the Right are bad ideas because they ossify becomings into being. We should rather look for an encounter of the two, a “pick-

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

up”¹⁴ without passing judgement. The problem with the scene of the rape itself is that the ‘pick-up’ has already occurred and one of the two, despite her later defence, must have been screaming ‘NO’! Lacking consent, despite the strange and terrible ambiguities of the psychologist’s defence of multiplicity, are we to defer to a kind of ‘principle of evil’ in the form of a monstrous colonisation of the scene with an idea — ‘just an idea’?

Scroll up. I return to a beginning I made in complicity with Camus (see p. 3). Camus re-members the ‘me’ of this writing now, re-makes me as I approach a temporary ‘ending’.

The body’s judgement is as good as the mind’s and the body shrinks from annihilation. We get into the habit of living before acquiring the habit of thinking.¹⁵

Just as the newspaper article on Jean-Claude Roman postulated suicide as the ‘logical conclusion’ of a life of lies re-doubling themselves and falling in upon their own illusions, crumbling against the material force of the threat of the revelation of the ‘truth’, I wonder if *philosophical* ‘suicide’ is the logical conclusion for this writing’s performance. Staging this writing by means of words, thought and discursive strategies dressed up in the language of performance — critical fictions, artifice, masks and roles — must I commit suicide by proclaiming the death of the subject? Does the multiplicity I have identified with annihilate my ‘I’? What of ‘grace’, of confession, of an unabashed intimacy with you, the reader? An initiation into the grace of an *implicated* subject via the ‘fire’ of abjection, the failure of knowing, and a fall into not-knowing (see p. 180–181 below) — not the literal ‘fall’ of Jean-Claude Romand into self-immolation and murder, but an imaginal movement, downwards, towards the ‘other’. Doesn’t the word ‘subject’ anyway imply this *entanglement* with the other, subject *to* and *of* all of the others?¹⁶

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁵ Camus, *Sisyphus*, p. 15.

¹⁶ Mansfield, *Subjectivity*, p. 3, 5.

Elaborating the discourse of the 'rhizome', Deleuze argues for the concept of the *in-between*:

Between things does not designate a localisable relation going from one thing to the other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one *and* the other away, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle.¹⁷

Deleuze's writing itself is like the 'stream' it represents, names, and celebrates even as it undermines its own banks, pretending all the while that it can do away with representation and interpretation. Ironically, it often stages its theories in images, metaphors, 'poetry' and a pseudologia of 'science' and 'physics' as the means. Camus says: "You explain this world to me with an image. I realise then that you have been reduced to poetry: I shall never know. Have I the time to become indignant? You have already changed theories."¹⁸ I am not so sure that poetry constitutes a 'reduction', although I 'know' it sometimes suffers a battering where the project of 'knowing' is in play. But I live in this world of poetry and its representations, representations and their poetry. It may betray the tyranny of a deeper illusion, but it comes as no surprise to me that at least one of my selves, variously drowning and treading water, is screaming out to all my other selves: "Never get out of the boat!", as the boat (perhaps not a boat at all) swirls past in a subjective blur.

Perhaps I simply lack the courage of my philosophical convictions — a condition which seems endemic — and refuse to perform the (theoretically) inevitable death of my own subjectivity. Firmly ensconced on the poop-deck of performance, strategically failing to appear in the final scene where I walk the plank (killing my-self off), how can I know that what 'grace' represents in me is not another return of the same, another version of the lies of the 'adversary' (scorned by me in theory above) that came to visit Jean-Claude Romand in prison? But part of the problem and point of this writing's performance has been to ask, how can I know this *anyway*? When fascination brings me into relationship with my own mortality, with morbidity, with death and dissolution, how can I know that I am not being duped into a fatalistic end-

¹⁷ Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 25.

¹⁸ Camus, *Sisyphus*, p. 25.

run? My intellect, fascinated with the possibility of its own irrationalisms, and seduced by the 'ends' of its arguments, may slide surreptitiously sideways and dissolve in the performance of the smashing of its representation of itself — the image of its 'I', the vision of its 'eye'. It is an open question as to whether this would be a Melodrama or a Tragedy. But here in my body, which sits — often hunched — at this keyboard and blue screen, there is something within me that shrinks from annihilation. I 'know' something of this body, the 'reality' of the 'me' that is represented by its form and swims in its realm. I know it imperfectly, and perhaps as Derrida suggests, with a knowledge that is no 'knowledge' at all. Perhaps I must accept that where representation and interpretation are concerned, "there is with unavoidable reification, no other field (but representation)."¹⁹ We are always already 'becoming-representation'. Herbert Blau argues that "there is no point hardening representation into a one-eyed monster ... since representation may also represent the resistance."²⁰

If the figure of the 'pleasure of destruction' stages itself within the strange loop of the totalising discourses of self, truth, and knowledge but is elided by means of their representations and interpretations, representation might also be seen to stage the possibilities of its shadow, its other face: that of the figure of the 'libido of creation'. Even where discourses of subjectivity and the self — multiple or otherwise — seem to take on the form of a 'fatality', I will nevertheless proceed to stage my 'I' in this writing's performance with Artaud's conviction in mind, that "a place is left on all the stages of the still-born theatre."²¹ In the 'theatre' of this writing, still shadowed by Herbert Blau (as I have been from even before its inception), I will stage this performance "*while knowing that there is, in the field of knowing, a scrim of theatricality over our lives.*"²²

¹⁹ Herbert Blau, *The Eye of Prey*, p. 203.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

²¹ Antonin Artaud cited in Jacques Derrida, "The Theatre of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation" in *Writing and Difference* (London: Routledge, 1978), p. 233.

²² Blau, "Ideology", p. 457.

Re-Visioning Subjectivity by Means of Performance:

I

We are never one thing or another, but a miscellany.

— Adam Phillips¹

I have been dissembling. Don't trust me. I am a performer. Back there in the shadows, somewhere in the wings, and having played various roles in the light already, I have 'informants'; co-conspirators in the staging of this writing as performance. James Hillman might call these accomplices 'significant others.'² Roland Barthes, in the staging of the discourse of his 'Amorous Subject', invokes his 'others' as proper names in the 'margins' of his text. Their proper place, it seems, is on the periphery, just out of sight, though in *and* out of the scene of his writing. He says that these are "not authoritative but amical: I am not invoking guarantees, merely recalling ... what has seduced, convinced, or what has momentarily given the delight of understanding."³ This is a strategic move: "if the author here lends his 'culture' to the amorous subject, in exchange the amorous subject affords him the innocence of his image-repertoire, indifferent to the proprieties of knowledge."⁴ The 'delight of understanding' is counter-posed to the 'proprieties of knowledge', and so the 'lover', the I of the amorous subject staged in Barthes' text, is free to make utterances without the prescriptions of over-determining discourses other than its own:

Everything follows from this principle: that the lover is not to be reduced to a simple symptomatic subject, but rather that we hear in his voice what is 'unreal' i.e., intractable. Whence the choice of a 'dramatic' method ... The description of the lover's discourse has been replaced by its simulation, and to that discourse has been restored its fundamental person, the I, in order to stage an utterance, not an analysis.⁵

¹ Phillips, *Terrors and Experts*, p. 84

² James Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992), *passim*

³ Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse*, p. 9.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

At the risk of a theoretical colonisation, I have adopted this dramaturgical method — both here in this writing *and* in the three solo performances stalked by this writing in theory. But not without transposition and (sometimes) replacement of its central figure/s. In both the writing and the performances, I have attempted to stage an *utterance and not an analysis*, in order that I may discover what is being staged in me, via me, and despite me *by means of performance*. ‘My’ significant others, those that have given delight, the ‘light’ and illumination of understanding, are many. Barthes is among them. So too Deleuze and Guattari, Helene Cixous, Herbert Blau, Baudrillard, Deborah Levy, James Hillman, Italo Calvino, Adam Phillips, Jeanette Winterson, Raymond Carver, Paul Virilio ... and these only some of the *writers*. It was by no means clear at any point in the three and a half years of these performances’ gestation (and beyond) that any ‘moment’ of their coalescence in me and my participation in their inspirations would gather in me as ‘knowledge’. How and when did I find them? Or did they find me? Why? And why *these* others? I didn’t, and don’t ‘know’ what the relationship of all of these proper names is — even if there could be ‘one’. And yet they are related, to the extent that I am marked by them. They seemed to gather around and ‘pass through me’. I was and am ‘pre-occupied’ with them. Where the solo performances were concerned, strung between the influence of these others, I wanted to ‘act’, to see what might be enacted in turn. Hillman says, “to look into imagination, we need to look with imagination.”⁶ It may follow that to look into performance, we need to look via means of performance. As far as this writing is concerned, it seemed an act of bad faith to stop performing now.

Scroll up. “Where, then, and under what conditions...” (see p. 25 above) I read again my engagement with Deleuze. Something’s bothering me again. I continue into the paragraph immediately above. There seems to be a conflict. Hadn’t I initially identified with Deleuze’s ‘writing’ of me, implicating my ‘I’ in the death of subjectivity, celebrating multiplicity and the emergence of a third thing — not a knowable ‘I’ at all: no subject of knowledge, no knowable subject? Didn’t I then go on, ‘faithfully’ suspecting my own motives, invoking the return of the self in a contrary role? And here, now, immediately above, what am I doing turning back on my-self again, speaking positively of staging an utterance that may stage itself “despite me”, in spite of me? Who is doing the performing?

⁶ James Hillman, *A Blue Fire*, p. 68.

In another of his writings, *Camera Lucida*, Barthes stages the 'I' of his text (ostensibly) closer to 'himself' as referent. He laments the "uneasiness of being a subject torn between two languages, one expressive, the other critical; and at the heart of this critical language, between several discourses ..."⁷ He observed himself in the act of observation, "bearing witness to the only sure thing that was in [him] ... a desperate resistance to any reductive system."⁸ In order to stage an utterance and not an analysis, he projects himself into the scene of his enquiry (not without irony) "to try making what Nietzsche called the 'ego's ancient sovereignty' into an heuristic principle."⁹ It is his "*political* right to be a subject" that he seeks to enact.¹⁰ I confess I identified with his voice — or was that my sovereign ego? In any case, full of the gusto of attempting to become an heuristic principle (perhaps of a different kind), by the time I arrived at the end of the above section of writing, what was 'intractable' seemed to be my ego, and the task, itself. 'Never get out of the boat'? That may be appropriate for Captains going down with their ships, but

Having projected my 'I'/eye into the scenes of Onoprienko, rapist and psychologist, and Jean-Claude Romand, doubling my vision in the language of performance, passing my-self through the illusions and elusions of at least Baudrillard's 'simulations', 'machined' and 'assembled' by Deleuze's rhizomatic multiplicities, perhaps my ego began to suspect that I was *already an heuristic principle* — and had 'always already' been so. Could it be that my ego started to rattle with the perception that 'I' was not 'really' the self-sustaining principle of a centred subject, reasonably skilled in entertaining multiple and ambiguous relationships with other subjects and the world? Rather, 'I' am enacted as the heuristic principle of a 'critical fiction' — a third thing: this fiction, all of these fictions, called 'me'?¹¹ The problem with the ego, as Adam Phillips intimates, is that it too understands the language of

⁷ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (London: Vintage, 1993), p. 8.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹¹ Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, p. xi.

performance. It is “always dressing up for somewhere to go.”¹² Via a process of identifications, the sovereign ego is happy to appear to ‘entertain’ others — all of the others if necessary — as long as it remains the magnanimous ‘host’ of a multiple universe centred around its ‘self’: like Sade in the asylum, the ego enacts the role of director of the dramas in which it its-self appears. Within the performance of this writing, I can still hear the lingering tune of the re-iteration of the ‘real’ and the return of the self, despite the various eulogies of otherness and ostensible multiplicities imbibed in its music:

It is only when the multiple is effectively treated as substantive, ‘multiplicity’, that it ceases to have any relation to the One as subject or object, natural or spiritual reality, image and world ... There is no unity to serve as a pivot in the object, or to divide in the subject. There is not even the unity to abort in the object or ‘return’ in the subject.¹³

Just as I was beginning to feel, again, that the staging of a multiple subjectivity was enough, the world turns, and the ‘I’ that is doing the staging is de-substantiated. There is no possible ‘return’ for a subject that was never gathered around a unity in the first place. No ‘natural’ self, no fixed and unassailable referent for my ‘I’, no originary state of ‘being’. ‘Multiplicity’, the ‘thingness’ of the multiple, for Deleuze, calls the bluff on this territorial self — and those that would territorialise in its name — marking boundaries, plotting peripheries and pretending to ‘know’ more than what their ‘maps’ can contain. Adam Phillips says: “The map becomes the ground beneath their feet; and maps are always smaller ground.”¹⁴ Phillips asks why we are prone to fetishise boundaries, why we imagine that we ‘know’ best: “the opposite of a fetish is an adventure.”¹⁵ And here, I need to engage in the staging of what Deleuze would call a double (or triple) ‘capture’ that is axiomatic of his definition of ‘becomings’.¹⁶

¹² Phillips, *Terrors and Experts*, p. 77.

¹³ Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 8.

¹⁴ Phillips, *Terrors and Experts*, p. xvi.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

¹⁶ Deleuze & Parnet, *Dialogues*, pp. 2, 7.

Shadowing and shadowed by James Hillman, and (inescapably) anticipating his terms, what if I were to insert an alternative, or replace the term “amorous subject” with ‘the imagination’ in Roland Barthes’ statement of intent against the proprieties of knowledge quoted above? (see p. 32) Instead of lending ‘culture’ to the amorous subject:

If [this] author here lends his ‘culture’ to *the imagination*, in exchange *the imagination* affords him the innocence of [its] image-repertoire, indifferent to the proprieties of knowledge.¹⁷

This is a double-capture. I lend my significant others to the imagination, and the imagination in turn stages ‘Barthes’ and ‘Hillman’ as a third thing. It is anyway already a ‘triple-capture’ staged by imagination: a becoming-Barthes of Hillman and Laing, a becoming-Laing of Hillman and Barthes. To whom do I ascribe the citation? No matter how dexterous my ego had been in staging itself as a multiple subject, playing host to a hive of others that would demolish its ‘I’ yet all the while resisting its own philosophical death at their hands, no matter — the ‘I’ at the centre of the ego’s play is de-substantiated by the imagination. The ego, attired in boots and spurs and brandishing whips (pretending innocuously to ‘confess’ to wearing Foghorn Leghorn boxer shorts), ends up all dressed up with *nowhere to go*. Its ruse is revealed as the boundaries it fetishises turn out to be specular boundaries. Where performance is concerned, the boundaries of performance are always already specular, speculative and provisional. That the ego would start to ‘rattle’ and break up, uncertain of its singular self, is a measure of its strategy of identification: “There is no identity, however compelling the performance, without suffering.”¹⁸ The ego ‘suffers’ because it is *it which is subject* to all of the others, not the other way around. The ego thinks it ‘knows’, but it is *it* that is staged by imagination. The imagination ‘advenes’, transforming fetishes into adventures — indifferent to the proprieties of knowledge — and the ego has trouble with *not knowing* where the adventure will take it. It seems ‘I’ desire an unlimited ‘Self’, multiple, yes, but only where the ego may peer over the edge of the map, stalling as it stages ‘new’ territories before taking the next step. The

¹⁷ Barthes, *A Lover’s Discourse*, p. 9.

¹⁸ Phillips, *Terrors and Experts*, p. 81.

ego's is an ambiguous, antinomical principle of the multiple, not of multiplicity itself. Multiplicity de-substantiates the ego as multiplicity substantiates itself as a principle.

If there is no identity without suffering, O my God (there it is again), how I have suffered in staging this writing! Identifying with the morbid fascination of Onoprienko's public *and* with Onoprienko, the lies of Jean-Claude Romand *and* ambiguously with the representation of his scene, with *both* sides of the scene of the case-psychologist *and* rapist, something had been 'bothering' me — remember? Entering further into identifications with aspects of Baudrillard's critique of the real and the self, Derrida's textual 'play', Barthes' clever staging of utterances over interpretation and analysis, and Deleuze's articulation of rhizomatics and this capture of the 'AND' itself, I was continually disappointed. Indignant even. My 'I' began to feel caught by my own text, by my own staging of a multiple subjectivity, even as I variously rode the waves of theoretical ecstasy which dipped into troughs of morbid fascination and all of its elided consequences — theoretical and otherwise. In attempting to stage an utterance and not an analysis, was I duped into believing in the 'freedom' that such a performative move might engender? My ego suffered, not 'free' at all. Perhaps at best, putting a positive spin on my 'I's' de-substantiation in face of the wave (Tsunami, no less) of 'multiplicity', I might affirm a certain kind of *liberty*; that is, *freedom with limits*. Otherwise, I might find that what has been going on, 'really', is an enactment of what Jung referred to in Hitler (and his public) as *pseudologia fantastica*: "that form of hysteria which is characterised by a peculiar talent for *believing one's own lies* [my italics]." ¹⁹ Lopez-Pedraza says:

In any inner imaginative process — any image-making — a conflict is present. Our psyche, be it in waking states or in dreams, is constantly involved in controversy; it is perhaps out of this tension between our images and our iconoclasm that the creative process comes. ²⁰

Yes. But where the imagination is concerned, if this writing's performance has staged in me anything like what might be called an insight, it is the insight that imaginative

¹⁹ Raphael Lopez-Pedraza, *Anselm Kiefer: After the Catastrophe* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996), p. 11.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

processes are not necessarily 'inner'. Our 'psyche' is not necessarily 'ours' (the ego's) to have, and the libido of creation, in conflict with the pleasure of destruction, is *staged in me by imagination*. The imagination is full of insights, revelations, and epiphanies. But it is also possessed of morbid fascinations, death, dis-ease and innumerable monstrosities. Both the ecstasies and agonies of the imagination *disappoint the ego*, dethrone the 'self', and stage it as just another figure among multitudes swimming in the imagination's realm.

II

Excursion: the *logos* of Psyche:

Alchemy begins before we enter the mine, the forge, or laboratory. It begins in the blue vault, the seas, in the mind's thinking in images, imagining ideationally, speculatively, silveredly, in words that are both images and ideas, in words that turn things into flashing ideas and ideas into little things that crawl ...

— James Hillman¹

Just as James Hillman is one of my co-conspirators, his emergence from the shadows brings with it the supposition that the shadows are 'peopled' with significant others. In the case of 'my' shadows, he comes invited. In the case of the shadows elaborated in Hillman's 'phenomenology' of psyche, invitation seems little more than professional decorum — and is not a requirement. For Hillman, it is the numinous 'persons' of *the psyche itself* that live in the shadows and, invited or not, under-lie, under-mine, and under-stand 'persons' in the human world. *They* are 'all of the others that are us' (see Cixous quotation, p. 25 above).

Hillman's psychology is a radical revision, a re-visioning, of what has been referred to (strategically) in this writing's performance as variously, and interchangeably, 'psychoanalysis', 'psychotherapy' and/or 'psychology'. If I have introduced him benignly, dressed up poorly in the robes of 'psychologist and writer', it is as part of the heuristic and performative strategy of this writing that would stage 'Hillman' (surreptitiously) against or along side of all of the other significant others. He is not alone — but this is no fraternity. Adam Phillips might identify as a 'psychotherapist', although the 'subject' of his book is 'psychoanalysts' and 'psychoanalysis'. Kristeva too could be considered a 'psychoanalytic feminist'. Raphael Lopez-Pedraza is an exponent of 'analytical psychology'. Any notion of a singular identity or united front under the aegis of 'psychoanalysis' splinters, shatters and breaks apart within the historiographical blur that shadows each of these proper names with those of a multiplicity of others: Freud, Ferenczi, Jung, Lacan, Irigaray, Winnicott, Klein. From

¹ Hillman, *A Blue Fire*, p. 35.

this perspective, Deleuze's demolition of 'psychoanalysis' is the abrogation of a straw target; an assault on a representation of a singular, unified psychoanalysis which does not exist. Hillman and Phillips, particularly, represent a difficult and ambiguous resistance to the normalising judgements Deleuze relies on where 'psychoanalysis' is concerned. Despite these resistances, which stage themselves through 'me' in this writing's performance, in a strange way, I am on Deleuze's 'side'. However, for a theory that would undermine its own banks, this is a difficult place to be. And anyway, taking a Laing-becoming of Deleuze ingenuously, 'I' am becoming my own rhizomatic stream, and must keep flowing:

Our categories should always be treated as questions — temporary groupings in which every element is nomadic — rather than as answers; as comforters, but not as fetishes.²

This is not the first time in this writing's performance that Phillips begins to sound something like Deleuze in his critique of psychoanalysis, but here it is a critique from within his own field. What? A psychotherapist celebrating the 'miscellany' over the 'one'? Phillips is a revisionist where 'expertise' concerning psyche and knowledge of self take on the appearance of authority. He says:

we should be speaking of paradoxes and spectrums, not contradictions and mutual exclusion (and a world of paradox is a world without revenge: retaliation is a false cure for contradiction).³

Phillips argues against the notion of the self as an object of knowledge, and against the indulgence of a self as the centred subject of knowing. And what, anyway, is 'subject' to expertise? Does learning verse forms and reading poetry make you a poet?⁴ Does reading performance theory and studying spatial diagrammatics make you a performer? Does acquiring knowledge via the study of phenomenology, existentialism, and Deleuzian rhizomatics make you a 'person'. If not, what does? Phillips challenges theorists and theory in any field with the spectre of 'the

² Phillips, *Terrors and Experts*, p. 91.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

unconscious' which he considers an "inner revisionist"⁵, a "new agon and a new collaborator; and of course, a new source of terror."⁶

Adam Phillips stages 'Freud' as at least two figures within the one 'person' — as the 'Enlightenment Freud', and as the 'post-Freudian Freud'.⁷ These figures emerge from the paradoxes of Freud's enquiry into psyche itself, his writings, correspondences and experimental 'conclusions'. Having invented his version of the unconscious, the unconscious sets about a revision of the Enlightenment values, morals, ethics and philosophies which sustained Freud in his 'expertise' and ostensible 'knowings' where the self and psyche are concerned. Once the unconscious is about, as I have attempted to stage above in the voice of an incredulous 'I' under pressure from elsewhere, "how can we believe in the part of ourself that is doing the knowing?"⁸ The Enlightenment Freud becomes re-visioned by what he himself put in the 'post'.

Phillips says:

with the post-Freudian description of the unconscious, the idea of human completeness disappears. We are not in search of wholeness — the satisfaction, amelioration, progress, or self-knowledge of the Enlightenment Freud; we are in search of good ways of bearing our incompleteness (tragedy is when we are ruined by our insufficiency, comedy is when we can relish it).⁹

For Phillips, psychoanalysis, swimming in the language of the unconscious (which by definition can not be 'known' in conventional ways), must be a practice and question of not knowing what one is doing and "how to go on doing it."¹⁰ Psychoanalysis "teaches us the meaning — the sublimity — of our ignorance; it teaches us that we don't often know what we are saying (which is another way of describing the

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xii.

⁷ *Ibid.*, *passim*

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

demonic: my word is my bond despite me, I always say more than I have agreed to.)”¹¹ And this is where Hillman’s re-visioning of psychology departs from Phillips’ as a *re-visioning of psyche*, as well as of the language of ‘psychoanalysis’. Hillman would argue that it is not psychoanalysis but *the psyche itself* that teaches (for example) the ego the sublimity of its ignorance, the subjectivity of its ‘knowing’, the instability of its ‘self’. The ‘demonic’ is not the ambiguities of language, nor is it Satan. It is the ‘daimons’ of the psyche *speaking out of turn* (cf. Onoprienko, p. 3).

Hillman’s ‘imaginal’ psychology is a psychology of the radical relativisation and de-substantiation of the ego. He not only challenges professional psychoanalysis and its proponents, but also seeks to:

dispossess the ‘inner analyst’ who has an armchair in our mind. For he too is but one more fantasy called up by an ego who has needed his support to keep the inherent peculiarities necessary to individuality from threatening the ego’s rule.¹²

Far from representing Deleuze’s characterization of a psychology that would ‘really’ repress and diminish the unconscious, both Phillips and Hillman would re-stage the unconscious in the role of a phenomenal ‘field of immanence’, not unlike Deleuze’s ‘desire’. Deleuze says, “Desire never needs interpreting, it is it which experiments.”¹³ Hillman would bring an end to analysis, its more repressive interpretations and representations in saying, ‘The *psyche* doesn’t need interpreting, it is it which experiments’. Hillman identifies the ego — or rather, the ego performs its own identifications — with the ‘heroic’ myth enacted by Western metaphysics, science and philosophy. He argues that the language of psychoanalysis has developed as “the enlightened egoisation of the psyche which learned to cope with its darkness by means of diagnosis and which replaced the imaginal power of the psyche with the concept of the unconscious.”¹⁴

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. xvi.

¹² James Hillman, *The Myth of Analysis* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992), p. 5.

¹³ Deleuze & Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 95.

¹⁴ Hillman, *Myth of Analysis*, p. 7.

Analysis here is little more than a “late manifestation of the Western, Protestant, scientific, Apollonic ego.”¹⁵ Importantly, too, the concept of ‘the unconscious’ is revised against the ‘imaginal power’ of the psyche. Hillman would replace the heroic, Apollonic myth of analysis with the Dionysian, multiplicitous myths of the psyche itself:

If, with insights, we penetrate analysis through to its mythical foundations, it collapses upon its three fallen pillars — transference, the unconscious, and neurosis — which we prefer to call, in accordance with the mythical perspective, the erotic, the imaginal, and the Dionysian.¹⁶

James Hillman is one of a number of figures who have revised psychology in terms of mythology; particularly Greek mythology. In seeking to elaborate what has come to be known as ‘Archetypal’ or ‘Depth’ psychology, Hillman did not go ‘East’ into the esotericism and spiritualism of many Eastern religions, but mined the Western tradition itself for the *logos* of psyche. It is a ‘Southern’, Mediterranean perspective within the culture of the West which he prefers over ‘Northern’ Germanic philosophical and metaphysical traditions.¹⁷

Following a lead from Jung — “image is psyche”¹⁸ — and plumbing the etymological roots of *psyche* in Greek and *anima* in Latin, Hillman uses the words ‘psyche’ and ‘soul’ interchangeably. He also transposes psyche with ‘anima’ and ‘image’, and sometimes ‘heart’:¹⁹ “Psychology (logos of psyche) etymologically means reason or speech or intelligible account of soul.”²⁰ If image is psyche, then “the soul is constituted of images ... is primarily an imagining activity.”²¹ ‘Archetypal’ too, in this

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, pp. 67–70., Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, p. 40., see also <http://www.springpub.com/hillman.htm> Access date: 01/02/01

¹⁸ Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, p. 14.

¹⁹ Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, p. xvi.

²⁰ Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, p. 24.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14

context, means “fundamentally imaginal.”²² Hillman’s is a psychology which invokes a “*poetic basis of mind*”²³ and trades in metaphors, the stuff of imagination, fictions, dreams, and fantasy as the “self-generative activity of soul.”²⁴ This imaginal activity can be seen to be at work in dreams, where Hillman, in contradistinction with Freud, re-visions the role of the dreamer: “it is in the dream that the dreamer performs as one image among others ... the dreamer is in the image rather than the image in the dreamer.”²⁵

Hillman draws on the metaphor of the ‘bridge’ which Freud used in his description of the dream as the *via regia*, the royal road, to the unconscious. However, Hillman traverses this bridge between conscious and unconscious in the opposite direction to Freud. Freud, barely crossing the bridge, reaches down into the ‘underworld’ of the dream, rummages around there in its murky waters and, clutching hold of a neurosis here and a hysteria there, drags them up, screaming, into the consciousness of the ‘dayworld’. Freud then subjects the unconscious to the harsh ‘enlightenment’ of a talking cure, and the theft in broad daylight of an interpretation.²⁶ Hillman says that psychotherapy since Freud “has become a straight one-way street of all morning traffic, moving out of the unconscious towards the ego’s city.”²⁷ Alternatively, Hillman would grab the ego by the hair, screaming if necessary, and drag it across the bridge and down into the ‘underworld’; into the imaginal and mythical realm of Hades, the black waters of Lethe. Holding the ego’s head under the fictional stream, Hillman would keep it there, maintaining the tension, in order to teach the ego how to dream, “to teach it about itself, *that it too is an image* [my italics].”²⁸

²² Thomas Moore, *The Essential James Hillman: A Blue Fire*, p. 16.

²³ Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, p. xvii.

²⁴ Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, p. 14.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ James Hillman, *The Dream and the Underworld* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1979), pp. 1–13 *passim*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

'Anima', for Hillman, is a broader term than Jung's use of the word to represent the repressed 'feminine' principal in men. Anima is an imaginal perspective that is part of 'unconsciousness': "As mediatrix to the eternally unknowable she is the bridge *both* over the river into the trees *and* into the sludge and quicksand, making the known ever more unknown."²⁹ And there in the black waters below lurks the mythical crocodile to death-roll the ancient ego. Hillman's 'both/and' here would stage the anima at work in Deleuze's philosophy of the 'double capture', the 'in-between' and the realm of the 'third thing'. Hillman understands 'anima' as the 'animation' of the world, the appearances and disappearances of 'otherness', as altarity, the not-said, and the otherwise voiceless — even when these emerge in theory. It is a notion that addresses a kind of 'yearning', 'loss', the archetypal conflicts between Eros and Psyche, the inarticulacy of love, that sense of *something from elsewhere* at the edge of the impulse of creation (and destruction). Anima is an 'animation' of the world, its persons and animals as always already *imaginal*. On this account, the polytheistic 'gods' of Greek mythology that archetypal psychology draws upon for its 'listening' to soul and responding to images, are not literal or metaphysical, but imaginal and metaphorical.³⁰ They are images, perspectives enacted by the psyche itself, the soul's own "imaginative visibility"³¹:

By soul I mean, first of all, a perspective rather than a substance, a viewpoint towards things rather than a thing itself ... First, 'soul' refers to the *deepening* of events into experiences; second, the significance soul makes possible, whether in love or in religious concern, derives from its special *relation with death*. And third, by 'soul' I mean the imaginative possibility in our natures, the experiencing through reflective speculation, dream, image and *fantasy* — that mode which recognises all realities as primarily symbolic or metaphorical.³²

Psyche, or soul, is a "*tertium* between the perspectives of body (matter, nature, empirics) and of mind (spirit, logic, idea)."³³ It is in this 'in-between' that soul stages

²⁹ Hillman, *A Blue Fire*, p. 88.

³⁰ Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, p. 46.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³² Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, pxvi.

³³ Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, p. 13.

its imaginal tensions. If, as Deleuze says, we are always in the middle of things,³⁴ then we are always *in* the imaginal realm of psyche: “The mind is in the imagination, rather than the imagination in the mind.”³⁵ We are in soul, as much as it is in us. Hillman’s project is to participate in the *logos* of psyche — the speech of this soul — without the ego’s pre-determination of the desire for ‘cure’ of that which threatens from elsewhere, or the over-determining interpretations of ‘analysis’ that would ‘re-ground’ the ego in the known. The speech of soul is a movement from the known to the unknown (see p. 167 below). In this sense, Hillman would align himself with the arguments of Phillips, and even Deleuze, against interpretation and reduction of the ‘other’ or of psyche into pale representations of themselves. These representations are too clever. They make ‘knowing’ stupid or obscene (out of the scene) as seen from the perspective of psyche.

Phillips points out that one of the problems with Freud and psychoanalysis is that the unconscious was never allowed to be its own ‘nation’: “it had to be assimilated.”³⁶ As Deleuze laments, no ‘other-as-itself’ is allowed to make an appearance. But Hillman’s position ambiguously postulates that the other (in the form of psyche or soul) *never* quite makes an appearance *as itself*, ‘allowed’ to or not. It is dressed up in the masks or guises of archetypal images which pervade all cultures, persons, arts and theories as well. If soul is a ‘perspective’ rather than a substance, perspectives for Hillman are nevertheless “*forms* of vision, rhetoric, values, epistemology, and lived styles that perdure independently of empirical reality. For archetypal psychology, pluralism and multiplicity and relativism are not enough: these are merely philosophical generalities.”³⁷ A bad wrap for Deleuze! Derrida, too, suffers with his own generalities. He could not conceive the ‘birth of otherness’ as anything more than ‘formless, mute, infant and terrifying form of monstrosity’ (see p. 24 above). Hillman posits that the other is not formless or faceless, but that its ‘faces’ are masks in the form of its archetypal imaginings. He defers to the specificity of

³⁴ Deleuze & Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 111.

³⁵ Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, p. 15.

³⁶ Phillips, *Terrors and Experts*, p. 30.

³⁷ Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, p. 43.

mythology and a 'limiting' (imaginal) phenomenology of the 'gods'. This is an ambiguous vocabulary, but here, the gods are "not believed in, not taken literally", but *imagined*.³⁸ Hillman argues that the speech of soul or psyche is of the order of images or the imagination, of fictions and of 'metaphor', and says:

Soul-as-metaphor also describes how the soul acts. It performs as does a metaphor, transposing meaning and releasing interior, buried significance ... But this metaphorical perspective also kills; it brings about the death of naive realism, naturalism, and literal understanding ... The metaphorical mode does not speak in declarative statements or explain in clear contrasts. It delivers all things to their shadows. So its perspective defeats heroic attempts to gain a grip on phenomena.³⁹

It is clear that Hillman stages his psychology against the ego and the hero myth but, in the massive proliferation of his writings, the detail of his learning where the 'gods' are concerned sometimes re-enters the scene in the form of the problem of 'expertise'. In its more complicated passages and elaborations, the mythological vocabulary of the speech of soul would seem to require that the 'student' was already a mythological expert. Not being one, perhaps I am prone to linger over the other vocabularies that make an appearance in his writings along the way. The language of 'performance' plays no minor part in what enables Hillman's 'logos of psyche' to work as an utterance or as discourse in the first place. The soul *acts*. It *performs* as metaphor does. It is allusive and illusive in the staging of its images.

And it is here that Hillman returns this excursion on the *logos* of psyche to the point of its departure: an enquiry into processes of subjectification *via means of performance*. What Hillman's re-visioning of psychology and its critique of 'analysis' shows, however, is that 'performance' is axiomatic of the language of psyche, and therefore the language of psyche is difficult to leave out of or omit from an enquiry into performance and subjectivity. The 'means' of performance are bound up with these 'processes' of subjectification. Performance, too, draws on the language, the *logos* of psyche: in Hillman's terms, it takes place in the 'in-between', in the space of *the imagination*. Hillman's perspective also re-iterates Phillips' position that where

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

discourse and the special languages of theory make an appearance, there are terrors and tyrannies, fictions and lies that stage themselves, elusively, in other guises. Where performance is concerned, a little tyranny may need a bigger lie, a greater 'critical' fiction with which to re-stage the spectre of the first tyranny (and there are many) as precisely that — a spectre, another image among many; another little thing that crawls.

III

The self is not contained in any moment or any place, but it is only in the intersection of moment and place that the self might, for a moment, be seen vanishing through a door, which disappears at once ...

— Jeanette Winterson¹

F5 — 'Search' >. 'Bibliography'. "Self/moment/place". Hyperlink. A window opens on to 'Winterson'. I am transported to a moment long since past; passed into my history. The moment of an encounter with 'Winterson'. 'Winterson' re-members me now. The 'me' that she re-members remembers that I have sometimes lived a clandestine life inside all of my others, a life staged by the idea of a 'window' somewhere. A life lived as if 'opening' was some kind of promised 'passage'. Something in me imagines a window somewhere, and when I pass through, I will be bigger than myself. I will 'realise' my 'Self'. This window no longer an imaginal porthole, but a medium for identification; for self-growth, self-realisation and self-knowledge. But the window perpetually disappears. Here, now, in another moment, I catch a glimpse of myself reflected in this screen. The eyes of my likeness run me through like blue veins in an Autumn leaf ... falling.

The image at this screen — a 'mirror' rather than a window — reminds me that, in Hillman's terms, the soul or psyche requires a site for reflection. Soul, as imagination, 'sees through' (or *via*) itself by means of its reflection in images.² But it also stages itself in ideas. Hillman argues against the fallacy of the separation of images from thought, ideas, and intellect. Soul considers all of these as its 'material'. All have 'body' and 'weight', and all 'matter' in an imaginal universe. Images are ideational, fictional as a measure of the collisions of the intellect and the emergence of a multiplicity of 'third things'. Images 'lie' against the tyrannies of thought, but swim in its realm. Hillman cites the meaning of the word 'idea' as it was used by the

¹ Jeanette Winterson, *Sexing the Cherry* (London: Vintage, 1989), p. 80.

² Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, p. 115–129 *passim*

Greeks: “both that which one sees ... and by means of which one sees. We see them, and by means of them.”³ This process of ‘seeing through’ is what he calls ‘psychologising’; returning images, things, persons and events to the *metaxy* — the middle-ground — of soul:

*Through psychologising I change the idea of any literal action at all — political, scientific, personal — into a metaphorical enactment. I see the act and scene and stance I am in, and not only the action I am into. I recognise that through my ideas I apprehend and am apprehended by my inmost subjectivity, entering all actions in the role of an idea.*⁴

To ‘excur’, to participate in an excursion, might habitually mean to wander, digress, run off and escape from bounds. To linger upon a deviation from a clear and definite path. It can be thought of as a journey for pleasure or health; a journey made from any place with the intention of returning to it.⁵ But if I have entered into the action of this writing in the role of the ideas of performance and of imaginal psychology, these ideas themselves stage the ‘clear and definite path’ as always already provisional. Likewise, ‘pleasure and health’ are not necessarily the project of an imaginal psychology that would stage the psyche or imagination as ‘having me’ (‘I’ have been ‘had’, infiltrated by imagination) as much as I might ‘have’ it.

To excur in imaginal and performative terms is not only a lateral, horizontal movement to and fro, but also a vertical movement simultaneously down and ‘in’, up and ‘out’. Hillman’s psychology projects one’s ‘I’ down into the ‘underworld’ of soul and image, and returns that ‘I’ to the world and persons, animals, and things with an ‘eye’ attuned to metaphorical and poetic imagination. Performance brings this ‘I’ into relationship with an ‘outside’ as well as with an ‘inner’ subjectivity; subject to other subjectivities, to other performers, to readers, to an audience, strung between self and other, imagination and so-called ‘empirical reality’. Imaginal psychology stages an ‘escape from bounds’ as the enactment of *seeing through* specular boundaries. Performance problematises the ‘intention of returning’ to a particular place in staging

³ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁵ OED.

a sense of 'place' as constituted of fictions, metaphor and fantasy as much as material 'settings'. If this writing is to be an 'adventure' and not a 'fetish' (see Phillips, p. 35 above), an excursion without a return to bounds, I must keep performing my 'I', *subject to imagination*. This was a constant and strategic move — an imaginal, not philosophical, *raison d'être* — in devising and performing the three solo works which are shadowed by this writing's performance.

When James Hillman speaks of saturating the Apollonic ego in Dionysian imagination, he is also making a strategic, performative move. Dionysus is the god of theatre. "Dionysian consciousness understands the conflicts in our stories through dramatic tensions and not through conceptual opposites; we are composed of agonies, not polarities."⁶ Hillman contends that human lives — conflicts, passions, epiphanies and depressions — are better understood through *theatrical poetics*, mimesis, and genres than treated as 'case histories' of neuroses plotted with clinical categories and plausible explanations by so much of professional psychology and psychoanalysis. 'Understanding' implies that Dionysus 'stands under', lies beneath the enactment of lives. Hillman says that to be "psychological" means to see myself in the masks of this particular fiction that is my fate to enact."⁷ However, there is no unassailable and fixed self beneath these masks. Rather, the self or selves, where they appear, are reflections, images, roles enacted by and in the dramas of soul. The window disappears. The door vanishes.

As theory begins to catch up with this writing's performance, the reader may remember its enactments around questions of subjectivity and my 'I', self and 'knowledge', performativity and fixed categories of being, illusion and 'reality' as *staged in the masks* of 'agonies', 'ecstasies', and 'incredulities'. Obscenity, perversion, madness and death in the scenes of Onoprienko, rapist and psychologist, and Jean-Claude Romand all met with theatrical 'fascination', 'real' and faux 'terror', critical fictions and strategic 'lies'. Re-member me. Dionysus is the god of remembering. He is also god of suffering, and madness. He transgresses boundaries, bridges reality and illusion, and cross-dresses where gender is

⁶ Hillman, *A Blue Fire*, p. 82.

⁷ *Ibid.*

concerned (see *Rapture II*, p 102 below, also *Stairsequence* on video). He is a vegetative god, of the earth, the god of wine and song, theatre, games, play and revelry. Sometimes an animal god, he is associated with the Bull, the Centaur, the Lion and the Dolphin. An earth god, he is a creator, but he is also a destroyer. Where this writing's performances are concerned, his theatrical poetics stage themselves in the foreground of the mix in the guise of the god of 're-membering' and of theatre. Don't trust me, re-member me — I am a liar, a performer.

Dionysus was twice-born. As a child he was torn to pieces, dis-membered, by the Titans (pre-human, excessive, psychopathic beings) and cooked on a fire and eaten. His heart, however, escaped and remained hidden. Dionysus is first re-membered by the god Zeus who inseminated his essence, heart, and being into Semele, having slept with her — a mortal. Zeus's immortal wife, Hera, jealous of Semele, tricks Semele into inviting Zeus to appear to her as he does Hera — as a god, divine. He comes as a thunderbolt, all fire and light and Semele, pregnant with Dionysus, is burned to death. Zeus saves the unborn foetus and sews it into his thigh until ready to be born a second time. First dis-membered and then 'born' of fire, Dionysus is re-membered again and becomes the half mortal, half immortal 'god' of many faces outlined above.⁸

Hillman's perspective would protect these myths of Dionysus from literalism, seeing them as enactments of the archetypal imagination at work. Dionysus, as god of theatre, performance, and illusion is an imaginal figure, a 'perspective' constituted of images, that would immerse the ego's literalism in the intoxication of imagination. A philosopher like Deleuze might argue that this mythological perspective 'over-determines' understandings of the psyche, of persons and of what he would prefer to call 'assemblages of desire'. Hillman might reply that the imaginal perspective undermines habitual, literal, scientific and philosophical processes of thought. Even as Deleuze engages with a critique of psychoanalysis and the unconscious, Hillman's perspective would see Dionysus making a reflective appearance in the images he employs. Deleuze says:

⁸ Hillman, *A Blue Fire*, *passim*. George Howe & G.A. Harrer, *A Handbook of Classical Mythology* (Royston: Oracle, 1996), pp. 83–85. See also www.greekmythology.com/Mythology/Ancient_Theatre/dionysos.htm. Access date: 01/02/01

you can never 'get hold' of the unconscious ... it's not an 'it was' in place of which the 'I' must come ... You have to produce the unconscious. [A person does this not with the 'egg' from which he emerged] but with the scrap of placenta which he has hidden, and which is always contemporary with him, as raw material to experiment with.⁹

Deleuze's 'scrap of placenta' is close to the image of the foetus of Dionysus, inseminated as 'heart', and twice-born via the thigh of Zeus. As god of theatre, where performance is concerned, Dionysus is always contemporary with us. Hillman may empathise with Deleuze's argument, except that a question of human 'agency' remains. It is perhaps not us that 'produces' the unconscious, but the unconscious or imaginal that produces *us*. Soul, psyche, imagination 'has', stages, *and imagines* us — like the dreamer in the dream. Hillman's perspective situates the image of the scrap of placenta in the liminal realm of the psyche. Deleuze is 'imagined' by psyche or soul, reflected in the guise of one of the myths of Dionysus, even as he imagines himself to have 'produced' an idea. I might say that 'Deleuze' is '*pre-occupied*', infiltrated, possessed of images that in Hillman's terms are archetypal — or fundamentally imaginal. Given the form of this writing as performance, I can only say this while 'knowing' that my 'I' is also pre-occupied; not least with 'Deleuze', or in his terms, a becoming-Deleuze of Laing.

In 1969, Anselm Kiefer, a German painter, sculptor and performance artist, traveled throughout Europe posing in various locations — Kusnacht, Rome, Pompeii, Montpellier — photographing himself with an hysterical, stiff arm aloft in the 'Seig Heil' of the Hitler salute. The series of photographs taken during these excursions were called *Occupations*.¹⁰ Kiefer said, "I do not identify with Nero or Hitler, but I have to re-enact what they did just a little bit in order to understand their madness."¹¹ Kiefer was born in 1945, after the Holocaust, but was part of the generation that lived with its immediate effects and affects. Raphael Lopez-Pedraza focuses on the performative and psychological aspects of the *Occupations*, on Kiefer's 'personifying' Hitler and 'evil':

⁹ Deleuze & Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 78.

¹⁰ Lopez-Pedraza, *Anselm Kiefer*, pp. 13–20.

¹¹ Anselm Kiefer cited in Lopez-Pedraza, *Anselm Kiefer*, p. 16.

He is contained and protected in this personification by Dionysus, the god of theatre and, paradoxically, of madness. We can view the figure in these photographs as an actor making an acquaintance with evil through the technique of his acting, and challenging the viewer to contemplate the implications.¹²

In his *Occupations*, not only is Kiefer 'pre-occupied' with German history, but his performative strategy stages in him a reflection, an imaginal 'pre-occupation', of Dionysus. Something of the hysteria, stupidity and the *banality* of evil¹³ in Nazism surfaces in his performances as a kind of Dionysian 'revel'. Dionysus is not straight-jacketed with the moral opposites 'Good' and 'Evil'; he is 'unabashed' (cf. Onoprienko, p. 5, also p. 13 above). Kiefer, pre-occupied with Dionysus, can transgress boundaries by occupying this liminal, imaginal space; Kiefer is staged in turn by Dionysian imagination. Kiefer's 'occupations' are *and* are not like Hitler's, his 'madness' is *and* is not the same, and yet we may *see through* Hitler's evil to its underside of banality and stupidity by means of Kiefer's performance.

This account (above) attains something of the *process* of psychologising that Hillman calls 'analogising' as opposed to analysing or interpreting. He urges a perspective that asks not what something *is*, what it *means* in a sealed, authoritative way, not even always what it *does* — but what is it *like*, imaginally? Interpretation and analysis become imbibed in imagination. We are to "stick to the image",¹⁴ stay close, sense, smell, sniff out its analogous relations rather than defer to a distinct discursive perspective beyond the image itself. If Kiefer's performance helps us to see through Nazism as the banality of evil, Hillman proposes a way of 'entering into' the 'madness' of the world, its culture of perverse, tautologous and obscene affects. Where theory is concerned, as part of this 'culture', analogising may assist in staging *theory* and its interpretations as what it sometimes looks like: the 'evil' of banality. Hillman argues:

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ A phrase coined by philosopher & historian Hannah Arendt.

¹⁴ Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, p. 18.

the question of evil ... refers primarily to the anesthetised heart, the heart that has no reaction to what it faces, thereby turning the variegated sensuous face of the world into monotony, sameness, oneness.¹⁵

Deleuze savages psychoanalysis because it trades in 'likenesses' and 'resemblances' and that these are tied to interpretation,¹⁶ diminishing and stealing from the other its 'otherness'. Hillman's analogising also plays with likenesses, but it too is a strategy used against interpretation. Analogising is not 'allegory', not fixed, literal applications of myths as authoritative narratives over-determining a scene. It is a process of *participating in imagination*, staying close to the image as it appears, but deepening and amplifying images with other images. It is a process of working 'imagistically', not interpretatively. Hillman argues that the discipline of analogising lies in holding the ego in face of the image/s and *maintaining the tension*. Not deferring to a final meaning, or rushing in with a cure. The likenesses are in "function but not in *origin*."¹⁷ In Deleuzian language, Kiefer's *Occupations* could be seen as a becoming-Kiefer of Hitler, a becoming-Hitler of Kiefer. In Hillman's terms, analogising would also stage this tension. Kiefer's *likeness* with Hitler is not to be tipped over into saying the image of Kiefer in Hitler salute *is* an image of Hitler — this supposes 'origins', and *interprets* the image. It could be argued that even in Deleuzian rhizomatics 'interpretation' makes an appearance. In attempting to articulate what 'machinic assemblages' of 'Desire' *are*, Deleuze does not escape representing Desire as a wasp-becoming of the orchid and vice versa. As has been noted above, this may be anyway always already unavoidable. But analogising, just as Deleuze attempts to do, would stage the images in multiplicity. It keeps *all* of the likenesses in *play*, imaginally present, and adds 'weight', 'matter' to the image by means of extension.¹⁸ If 'evil' stages itself via the 'anesthetised heart', Hillman would 'assemble' desire as something to be staged: "To desire, and to see through desire — this is the courage that the heart requires."¹⁹

¹⁵ Hillman, *A Blue Fire*, p. 304.

¹⁶ Deleuze & Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 80.

¹⁷ Hillman, *A Blue fire*, p. 244.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ James Hillman, *The Thought of the Heart & the Soul of the World* (Woodstock, Connecticut: Spring Publications, 1997), p. 15.

The 'performance' lies in *seeing through* — that is, *via*, by means of desire, *and* seeing through desire to its analogous, fictive, and imaginal enactments. Deleuze has argued that multiplicity shatters subjectivity. It may break up a subjectivity conceived in 'selfhood' and singularity. But a multiplicitous subjectivity conceived in analogous terms would stage human 'selves' as the third thing *and* its two parts: all hyphenated, attenuated and expanded (both) by each other — a miscellany of terms, a swarm of words, a tribe of metaphors, a hive of images, and a 'desert' of heart (see 'Missive', pp. 138–148 below. *passim*).

IV

When you work you are necessarily in absolute solitude ... The only work is moonlighting and clandestine. But it is an extremely populous solitude. Populated ... with encounters.

— Deleuze & Parnet¹

When any 'body', self, person goes into a performance studio alone — to rehearse a dance, devise a theatre work, to stage an utterance — is it ever 'alone'? Is it ever possible to make a 'solo' performance? This writing's performance has so far attempted to stage an answer in ambiguity: yes *and* no. I am dexterous in staging my 'I' in contradistinction with others, and in repeating this performance in face of the world. When you see me at our local cafe, you will recognise me. 'I' am always smiling. That's *me*. That's who I *am*. "You are always smiling", you will say (or you might do — I made that bit up). I 'hold my role', as it were, interdictorily. I am *me* and not you: *I* and not an-other. *I* have a name. This is *my* body. I am *making* a solo performance work. I am at the centre of my solitude, agent of '*my work*'. I tell you all about it, interminably — *my work*!

'I' enter an ostensibly empty space in solitude to engage in a performance practice. But 'I' am *already performing*. Because I believe in repetition where my 'I' is concerned, successfully enacting for myself a sense of *my self* ordered around a continuity, I am disturbed, elated, rattled, eroticised, and de-stabilised when my sense of my self becomes *peopled with others*. I move my body and *something moves in me*. I traverse the space in a diagonal; a *curved* abyss opens up to one side. Vertigo. 'I' wobble. Air fills my lungs. It wasn't 'me'. I raise my voice in speechless cries; *words* come to me. Hovering above my head, they dance upon my brain. "Luv your work", they say, laughing, "No, *really*". I throw my gaze like a weapon, animating the space. The space *animates me* in turn. 'I' am pre-occupied. My god, this space is not empty!

¹ Deleuze & Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 6.

Ahhh, but I console myself; this is 'really' *all me*. I am able to stop the locomotion of my body. Steady my gaze. Renew my 'focus' and drag my sense of my self into the foreground once more. My head is spinning (not literally — that's a metaphor!), but I can keep my balance. No problem. I will rehearse those moves again. I begin. I approximate the movements of my body. Nothing. I dance the previous diagonal. The polished floor is solid under my feet. I gargle *double forte*. A slight echo, little more. I look earnestly in all directions. The room rights itself quickly. There's a faint sensation of nausea, but *that's it*. This is pissing me off! I've been abandoned! I gather my things, put away my pre-recorded music, and just before turning off the lights, I catch a glimpse of my self in the floor-to-ceiling mirrors on one of the walls. I come into focus like a distant grey figure emerging through rain (see *Brollyrain* on video). My hair is all awry. My clothes, soaked in sweat, describe the outline of a body over-worked ('worked over?'). My Foghorn Leghorn boxer shorts have ridden up; wedged in the only 'abyss' they could find. I can see the image in the mirror, but it isn't *me*. I do not recognise my self. I am not smiling. The blue-green eyes of my likeness stare straight through me as if I do not exist. *I do not exist?* The cheek of me! I flick the switch ...

Darkness. Mid-night prowls outside glass and fly-wire. Blue light from a computer monitor strobes cigarette smoke as it curlicues its getaway. Sitting at the screen, I am unable to forget the terrible eyes in the mirror, the weighty gaze of an other; but I remember the populous state of my solitude — or it re-members me. Ctrl + F6. Another 'window' ...

The ego, forever a skeptic (or worse, a cynic), might ask, 'But who are you when you are "not you"?' (Who am I when I am not *me*?). There is always the possibility that someone from out of the darkness may answer with another question: 'Who are you when you *are* "you"?' How do we know who we are? What do we edit out or omit? How? By what means? What image do we have of ourselves that we construct our 'selves' as an unambiguous 'whole'? Do we suspect that we are 'empty', or that, conversely, we are 'full' of others and that these are alien, fearful, and unfamiliar to us? This writing has approached the 'how?' of omissions and constructions where subjectivity is concerned with the provisional 'answer': *by means of performance*. But it would follow that this then is all we can 'know' of ourselves — performance,

fictions, and strategic illusions. Where these fictions might take on the shape of the enactment of 'lies' in the face of the ostensible 'truths' that hold us together, these 'lies' mark the site of enquiry into subjectivity that I attempted to stage in the three 'solo' performance works entitled *Rapture*, *Rapture II* and *Rapture III*. These performances, represented by performance texts in the next section of this writing, comprise 'things from me' and 'things from beyond me'. I attempted to maintain the tension with a sense of *things from elsewhere* and not to 'edit' them out ahead of time. I tried to stage images, words, and 'other persons' not in contradistinction with my (ostensibly true) 'I', but as *part of its enactment*.

The problem with things from elsewhere, with the imagination (read 'psyche', soul), is that their own performances are not necessarily commensurate with 'mine'. The figures of the imagination often stage themselves in perversity, obscenity, pornography, and violence and in what we often call, interdictorily, 'evil'. We stage ourselves against these figures, but these figures, *also dexterous with performance*, stage themselves despite us, through us, and 'spitefully' against us. They do not necessarily subscribe to our sense of Morality, the Right and the Good. 'I' am staged by imagination and, *subject* to imagination, I am never identical with my selves.²

In the solo performances, the speaking subject, the 'I' who speaks, could be seen to suffer multiplicitous 'little deaths' at the hands of the 'persons' staged by 'acts' of the imagination. In relation to the sexual metaphor of 'Le Petit Mort', it is possible that these are epiphanies. 'Death' to the singularity of the 'self' and a merging with the multiplicity of the imagination. A dying to and releasing from 'Selfhood' in order to enter into a 'becoming'. A release from fear and from desire, or better, from the *idea* of desire as 'lack'.³ But if performance takes place in the space of desire,⁴ seeing himself and staging himself as *also* a 'desiring subject', the 'self' who acts in the solos will often have it another way. This self resists: "I'm not very happy!" (see *Rapture III*, p. 119 below) The ego of the 'Man in a Suit' literalises these 'deaths' and

² Phillips, *Terrors and Experts*, p. 74.

³ Deleuze & Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 89.

⁴ See Blau, "Ideology", p. 447. And Josette Feral, "Performance and Theatricality: The Subject Demystified", *Modern Drama*, 25, 1, (1982), pp. 171–172.

confuses them with actual fatality. Likewise, in this writing's performances, I have staged my 'I' as 'dis-appointed'. Where there may be epiphanies, there are also terrors. In the context of performance, James Hillman has said that wherever there is resistance there is 'body'.⁵ Body as in a good red wine. Body in the sense of the substantiation and materialisation of the imaginal. Raphael Lopez-Pedraza posits that "Dionysus is always the body".⁶ This perspective would return the ego of the 'Man in a Suit' to its theatrical foundations, its Dionysian enactments, teaching it to see itself as *also* an act of imagination — as also an image.

In each of the solos, where the self is concerned, I attempted to stage this tension between epiphany and terror as 'Rapture'. In Christian rhetoric, 'The Rapture' sometimes refers to the ecstatic moment of Christ's return where those who are 'saved' will ascend towards the heavens and meet him halfway. More generally, rapture is a state of ecstasy, a paroxysm of joy, up-lifting excitement, and ascensional delight. But etymologically, rapture is also close to 'rape'. It connotes being stolen from, seized, snatched, ravished, and taken by force. In an older English, one who was raped was 'carried off', or 'taken down'. In both its ecstatic and agonistic forms 'rapture' involves a movement 'away', being conveyed elsewhere, transported. In Hillman's terms, the imagination is an 'underworld'. The movements of psyche and soul take us *down*. 'Rapture' in the solo performances is staged in the figure of the 'Man in a Suit' who is *strung between* high and low, earth and sky, fear and desire, present, future and possible pasts. I sought to *maintain this tension*, situating the figure of 'The Man' in this middle-ground, not releasing him into the tyrannies of fixed provinces of 'being', identity and identification. These wear out, becoming 'used', 'borrowed personalities', and need to be re-bought. Rather, 'rapture' was conceived as *transportation, abduction and transformation*; a self stolen from its-self, from the ego's house, by images and the imagination. Dionysus, as god of theatre born of fire, would abduct the ego and transport its 'I' into his own realm. He would initiate the ego with theatrical fire into the realm of the imagination, the

⁵ Enrique Pardo, "The Angel's Hideout: Between Dance and Theatre", *Performance Research*, 3, 2, (1998), p. 23.

⁶ Lopez-Pedraza, *Kiefer*, p. 17.

cosmological 'blue vault', where the ego might be re-staged and re-membered as little more than "a janitor of the planetary houses."⁷

Deleuze says, "there is no method for finding other than a long preparation."⁸ In terms of discovering what the making and performing of the solos was 'about', this writing is still part of the process of 'finding'. I did not know their 'subject' *then* in the way that this writing would *appear* to indicate *now*. I attempted to stave off this kind of 'knowing' with the heuristic and analogous strategies outlined above (see p. 9–10). Just as Barthes says of his amorous subject, the one who utters the discourse does not in the moment of its enunciation 'know' it like a book.⁹ However, he may know that he is trapped in the articulation of a 'code', that he is 'marked'. I sensed that I was 'pre-occupied' with figures that staged themselves in the guises of 'tyrannies', 'lies', and ambiguous 'truths', and that the images that 'stuck' to me, the words that visited as 'persons', the movements that temporarily gave the delight of understanding, all had something to do with performance: a 'theatre' of imagination. Likewise, I did not at the time attempt to master the grammatics of 'soul', the *logos* of psyche, but to swim in its realm. I was perhaps more enraptured with the *sensuous* possibility of this perspective than I was concerned to 'know' anything of its 'empirics' (if these could be 'known').

In writing, devising, and performing the solo works, 'tyrannies' and 'lies' took on the form of provocations and propositions for looking at ways of devising performance which might straddle both form and content, but also engage with the *process* of devising itself. Tyranny has many faces. In performance, there are discursive tyrannies, like the capital 'R' Real in certain kinds of theatre (for example, contemporary forms of 'Naturalism'). But unilaterally, there are 'tyrannies' of all kinds: musical tyrannies, spatial tyrannies, self explanatory narrative, linear time, personal resistances/blind spots/repetitive stories, political correctness, habit, entrenched dance vocabularies, technical prostheses, 'hip', 'Democracy', Physical Theatre even, the *words* 'my work'. 'Lies' were understood as fictions, illusions, image, and artifice:

⁷ Hillman, *A Blue Fire*, p. 32.

⁸ Deleuze & Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 7.

⁹ Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse*, p. 4.

as contrary, for example, to the little tyranny of capital 'T' Truth in certain kinds of theatre, dance and psychological discourse. I attempted to practice 'lies' as fictional transgressions, pretense, pretension, insolence, stupidity and clandestine representations. 'Analogising' in this context involves shunting meanings, narratives and fixed or ostensibly unassailable interpretive positions sideways. It is a proposition for opening the sometimes closed loops of discursive epistemological strategies to the slippage of imaginal and metaphorical meaning. As such, 'analogising' might be seen to threaten the boundaries of what may be termed a 'thesis' (and is not necessarily concerned with antithesis). This writing is an heuristic continuation of these strategies. Both here, and in making the performances, I have indulged myself in playing the role of a kind of Dionysian 'ruminant'; chewing on and turning over again and again the figures that pre-occupy me. Strategically, 'ruminating' becomes 'roominating' — creating 'room' and slippage around 'the one' (for example, my 'I'), subjecting it to the space of imagination, so that an 'other' might emerge. In this writing's performance and in the scripts of *Rapture*, *Rapture II*, and *Rapture III*, this involves tactical moves with *words*: tempting inadequacy, the not-said, the otherwise voiceless to reveal itself, to stage what 'lies' against definition — what resists.

What image do we have of ourselves that we speak so urgently of 'Truth'? Hillman argues that we long for a *logos* of truth in order to stave off our *own* treachery and ambivalence (see also p. 83).¹⁰ 'I' divide myself in order to 'lie', to 'act', to perform 'truths' in the face of my own betrayals, my own fragility and mortality, my own inevitable death (cf. Jean-Claude Romand, p. 11). In performance, whether in the shadowy places of these privacies, or in the custom-made spaces of audiences and light, it is possible to *subject the 'I' to psyche* (soul, imagination) as opposed to 'facilitating' psyche (lest it become facile) from the armchair of the ego's securities — or insecurities. This possibility is the productive remainder of all performance — the space left on all the stages of the 'still-born' theatre (cf. Artaud, p. 31) — where performance is also understood as the means by which these so-called 'truths' are staged. Knowledge of one's 'self' becomes impossible as 'knowledge' dissolves along with 'truths' seen through as fictions, as performances among many. Hillman

¹⁰ Hillman, *A Blue Fire*, p. 277.

argues that 'enlightened' self-knowledge and self-growth are merely fictional aggrandisement of the self via the ego's performances. He counter's 'enlightenment' with 'transparency':

not Enlightened Man, the seer, who sees, but Transparent Man, who is seen and seen through, foolish, who has nothing left to hide, who has become transparent through self-acceptance ... [freed] from the knowledge of his secrets and his secret knowledge.¹¹

I attempted in the solo performances to 'see through' my self — via my many selves — as foolish, frail, flawed and already fallen. I 'acted' in order to find out what my 'other' selves might stage in me. By admitting the 'obscene' — all that which is out of the scene — and staging one's self as *subject* to these secret performances, it is possible to see that *all is staged*. Hillman says, "How can we know ourselves by ourselves? We can be known to ourselves through another, but we cannot go it alone."¹² I have been assisted in this process of 'seeing through' by all of my significant others — among them, the writers I have cited in this writing's performance, the people with whom I engaged over three and a half years of performance-making, and many others, not yet spoken of (see 'Writings on Performance II', pp. 165–186 below) with whom I trained in movement, voice, and acting.

Even where performances of the imagination, of psyche, and soul, would stage themselves in the guise of what we quickly stage in pejorative terms as 'Evil', the tyranny may be in banishing these images at the behest of the 'Good' to the 'desert' of what Hillman calls the "anesthetised heart."¹³ But even here, the performances of the imagination which we call perverse, obscene, tasteless, bad, violent and ugly, crash through the specular boundaries of the 'Good' with the renewed enchantments of the imaginal Lion: "This desert is not heartless, because the desert is where the lion lives."¹⁴ The Lion is also Dionysus, all blue hair and spitting fire, full of dramatic

¹¹ Hillman, *Myth of Analysis*, p. 92.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Hillman, *Thought of the Heart*, p. 64.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

rage and theatrical roaring. Dionysus would protect the self from an ambiguous suicide in the literalisms and personalisms of its own singular visions: mirages in a shimmering desert of the “leonine passions of the soul.”¹⁵

Where am ‘I’ now? It seems that this writing’s performance commenced not at the beginning, but at the end of something, after the devising and staging of three solo performance works across as many years. And yet this writing is still in the middle of things as it anticipates the presentation of the performance texts positioned in the middle of this writing. Reader, beware. While Dionysus might act as a god of theatrical clarity and illumination, he is also something of a ‘blind’ god. His dismembering always contemporary with him, his own shadow may take the form of a tendency towards a unifying principle, blinded by his own ‘grabbing’ and theatrical fusion. He gathers his band of revelers around him, re-membered by them, and himself partakes of the pleasure of destruction when someone or something resists the gusto of his play. It is important to remember the shadow of an imaginal god or goddess lest one become a groupie.¹⁶ A little Apollonic ‘distance’ may temper these unifying principles, and protect a performer, a writer or reader from being burnt on the fire of a ‘new’ propriety of knowledge. Adam Phillips, citing Winnicot, reminds us that the mind, imbibed in the blue vault of the imagination or not, always “turns up when it is too late.”¹⁷ If Dionysus is the god of theatre and the reflection of images, he is only one of many in a pantheon that stage themselves in the performances of the imagination. In the performance texts (esp. *Rapture II* and *III*), the reader may notice the regular appearance of a palette of blue rendered on video in parallel with an orange ‘fire’, both emerging naked male and female bodies in their melancholies and their passions. Fire is associated with Dionysus, but also with Eros. The ‘blue’ may touch upon the imagination of the blue vault as ‘soul’, but the figure of the Greek goddess Psyche also lives there, embroiled in relationship and struggles with Eros. In *Rapture III*, a large antique chair — which serves as a focal point for the staging of the figure of the ‘Man in a Suit’ — might be conceived as a ‘throne’. It is dragged in

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Enrique Pardo, “Mythological Gossip”, *Human Potential*, Spring, (1993), p. 6.

¹⁷ Winnicot in Phillips, *Terrors and Experts*, p. 111.

on snow skis upon which it remains, and is perpetually framed by a large beach umbrella attached to its 'back'. It is only now, here, on the other side of the staging of the solos and as part of this writing's performance, that the image seems to speak to me of the necessity for the ego, and for the unifying Dionysus too, to *take a holiday*.

As a final caution against my 'I' re-grouping and identifying with the theatrical and imaginal clarities that Dionysus may afford, I will subject the insights of my imaginal 'eye' to a temporary 'last word' from James Hillman:

We are always behind with our reflections — too late, after the event, or we are in the midst, where we see through a glass darkly.¹⁸

¹⁸ Hillman, *Myth of Analysis*, p. 92.

Three Performance Texts

Rapture

Rapture II

Rapture III

Rapture



Devised and performed by **Barry Laing**
La Mama, December, 1997 as part of *Soloscopy* —
a season of three solos with Dan Witton and Adam Broinowski.
(35-40 mins)

Notes to the Script

Rapture

Devised and Performed by Barry Laing
La Mama, Melbourne, 4–7 December, 1997

Rapture was part of a season of three solo performances entitled *Soloscopy: Gherkin* by Adam Broinowski, *Rapture* by Barry Laing, and *Boat Pose* by Dan Witton.

I would strike out my own eyes to unsee what
my mind glimpses ahead of time, what my
ears whisper, my tongue speaks, despite me,
to spite me ... I am nowhere gathered together
... but I would burn, rather than last ...

— *Rapture*

This project was devised in collaboration with:

Adam Broinowski — Lighting Operation
Dan Witton — Sound Design/Operation and dramaturgical assistance
David Williams — Dramaturgical assistance

Texts by: Barry Laing, and adapted from and utilising texts by Deborah Levy, Tom
Waits, Roland Barthes, and Ivan Goll

Music by: Dan Witton, Leonard Cohen, Charlie Haden/Pat Metheny, Peggy Lee,
Marlene Deitrich

Many thanks to: Liz Jones and all at La Mama, Meg White, Margaret Cameron,
Peter Fraser, David Williams, and Dan Witton

Rapture was the first in the series of three performances. The process was collaborative in a more direct and dependent way than with *Rapture II & III*. I offered direction and dramaturgical assistance to Dan Witton for *Boat Pose*. Dan Witton provided sound design, composition and, together with David Williams, dramaturgical assistance for *Rapture*. Dan Witton provided dramaturgical assistance for Adam Broinowski's *Gherkin*. During performances, Dan, Adam and myself rotated responsibilities for each other's sound and lighting operation.

Rapture did not employ any video projection. The design was spare, comprising a simple chair and table, no more than five or six lights, and fortuitously, walls painted a rustic, sepia tone (part of the design of another show at La Mama running concurrently with *Soloscopy*). The performance was an exercise in working with the extreme intimacy afforded by La Mama. I was concerned to experiment with multiple 'voices' or 'roles', and to maintain the tension of weaving an ambiguous representation of 'me' through the whole: an initial enquiry into subjectivity and performance, and a playful experiment in 'truth' and 'lies' — attempting to position myself between both, and the audience. There was little, if any 'explanation' or contextualisation of the 'project' of the performance. The audience was not privy to any of the working titles of the 'episodes'.

Texts are a combination of original compositions by Barry Laing, and extracts from, and adaptations of, texts by others listed on the previous page. I have not attempted to 'footnote' these adaptations and extracts in any of the scripts. Disentangling the weave of adaptations in collision with my own writings would in most cases be a difficult, if not impossible, task. The works from which various writings have been drawn are all included in the Bibliography, and authors listed in notes to each of the scripts.

No video documentation is provided for *Rapture* due to the poor quality of the video, but stills lifted from a video of the final night of the performance are included as part of the layout of this script.

Design and layout of each of the three scripts is by Kim Cullen and Barry Laing. Photography is by Kim Cullen, Cullen Designs.

Opening:

Darkness ...

FX — Rain, merging into **Cohen's One Minute Prologue** ... rain lingering ...

[**Lyrics** — “I bin listenin’ to all the dissention. I bin listenin’ to all the pain. And I feel that no matter what I do for you, its gonna come back again. But I think that I can heal it. I think that I can heal it. I’m a fool, but I think that I can heal it – with this song ...”]

LX — One light above, one from floor in front. Floor light casts shadow of Man on back wall. Walls a sepia, muddy, rustic brown ...

Up slowly on Man in old black suit, polished black shoes, perfect antique red tie, computer/brief-case, fold up umbrella ... A table, a chair, a silver dictaphone sits on the table ... Man in fixed-point emerging from darkness/in ‘rain’ for a time, then ‘small dance’ with briefcase and umbrella ...

Physical/imaginal worlds for the dance: young/old, crowd, circus — passive figure to things that visit him, bent figure to one side, imbalance, ‘1000 policeman’s “no”’, moving, a ‘grey figure emerging through rain’, little shocks/shots, receiving the ‘bullet’, stones on the shoulders, hailing a bus, holding a woman ... horse/Spanish dancer ... moving, breaking up the suppositions of gesture — leading/pointing/dividing/undoing ... A breeze ... fire, letting the face travel ... ‘the silo’, big space, soft light, the ‘rat’s hole’ ... the centaur ... ‘premonitions’ of the various ‘figures’ that will appear as the performance moves on ...

Dance continues while text spoken ...

A Complete Stranger: *Boy/man/lover/unloved ...*

“ ... I went to visit my Mum the other day, first time in months ... She was playing chess with her next-door-neighbour and when I walked in, dressed specially in a new shirt, she said ‘Son, you’re a prat. Look after your Queen Mrs R.’ One day I’ll shoot her, and it’ll break my heart. Dunno how she expected her son to grow up. Dunno what she wants of me. Sometimes I catch her looking at me as if I’m a complete stranger. Her eyes settle on my suit like a half-starved fly. I feel stripped in front of her large, stupid body. I shuffle about the house trying to find words that will make her *like me* ... She makes me feel weird under my suntan ... She gave me some runner beans from the garden ... Well, I threw them out of the window on the way home ... ”

While text is spoken — umbrella like a ‘windscreen wiper’, forms a ‘moustache’, then bar to the throat, water rising/sinking/swimming, tension ... ‘one day I’ll shoot her’, teeth/tongue to the umbrella clip — undo, then umbrella held higher, half open, a ‘bird’. Subjugation ... equity and hierarchies in movement ... ‘shuffle about the house trying to find words that will make her like me’ ... Then tense, forward position with umbrella and case ... continually moving, mapping, visited/moved by the ‘figures’ of this ‘dance’ as above ... breaking ‘Self/Selves’ up ... raised case to the shoulder ...

Shiftin' Sands:

Abrupt change of space, fixed point in movement before continuing, slightly larger 'scale'. American accent ...

"Yeah, I'll tell ya ... now I'm gonna be around a little bit more often, so you gonna have to play by *my* rules ... "



"There ain't no use ploughin' that field, Boy! Them sands gonna keep shiftin', shiftin' ... There ain't no use ploughin' that field, Boy! There's a hot wind blowin' ... shiftin', shiftin' ... Yer Daddy, an' his daddy afore him, and his daddy afore him, and his brother's uncle's second cousin's daddy afore him all tried to plough that field, Boy, an' they all failed ... Look at yer horse, Boy. He's lame ... his back's broke, ribs hangin' out, got no teeth, Boy ... He's lame! ... There's a hot wind blowin' ... shiftin', shiftin' ... "

No accent, fixed point

"May the weeds in my garden blossom as flowers in yours, old man ... "

Inhalation, placing case on table ... huge exhalation, 'slide' sound, hand left hovering in fixed point, umbrella raised, pause for this change of 'space' ...

FX — **Dan Witton**, **Spooky** [fluttering wings, piercing electronic sounds] continues under/merges with **Charlie Haden/Pat Metheny**, **Spiritual** [guitar, double bass, gentle walking pace]

LX — add blue light, floor side front, elongating shadow on wall

Man flicks umbrella open ... suggestion of the Crow ... down, twirling umbrella ... a 'younger' place ... 'Spatialisation of memory' ... using gaze outer/inner, and through audience as text is spoken ... faster, hiding behind umbrella, emerging ... lighter, softer, into ...

Crow Shooting:

“I was eleven or twelve and sent out to shoot crows that were threatening and killing newborn lambs.”



(Twirlings ... emerging ... hiding again - 'good shot')

“SQUEEZE, DON'T PULL. GOOD SHOT!”

“I lined up a bird in a tree, closed my eyes, squeezed — hoping I'd miss. The bird leaped from the branch, and flew ... (*Off to the side – fixed point ... 'Umbrella-copter', above, looking down*) and in the long silence after the explosion there was a moment when I came close to vicarious flight. Hope, relief and all of life in an instant ... But the wings of the bird buckled. I caught A SINGLE BLACK FEATHER between my fingers as it fell ... (*Reaching, low, stretched between earth and sky ... a suggestion of this*) a single black feather.

(Silent, still — reaching across body for umbrella, a wind, big extension looking past and through 'railings' ...) Then, through the railings, I saw the flurry of ragged wings for the first time. Blue-metal-glint of the morning sun on his angry bloody feathers. Hangin' there. Waiting. Beating in slow motion against the sky. Just disappeared ... !”

(Umbrella breaks down/folds — 'old man', umbrella as a 'widow's veil', a tender embrace ...)

“Sometimes I see that bird, hangin' there, hovering, except behind my eyelids now.”

(Full of breath/change in the voice/animal whisper)

“UNWANTED ANIMAL OCCUPANCY!”



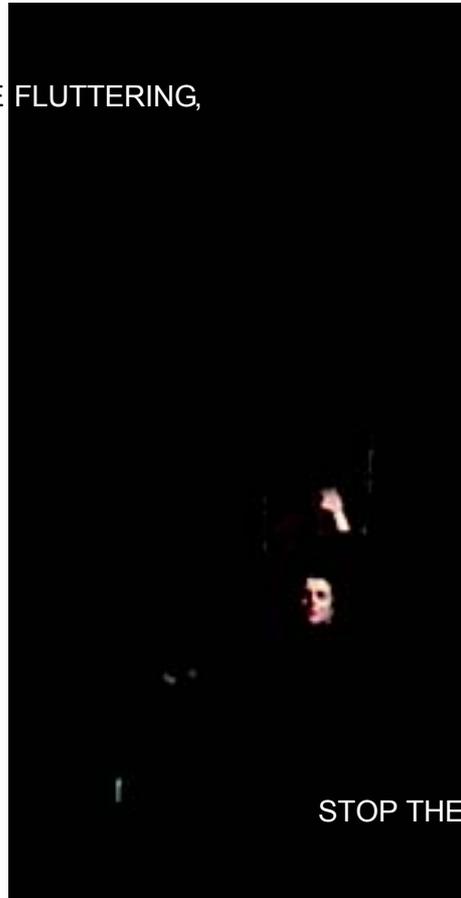
FX — *Spiritual* fades, *Spooky* continues

LX — Blue light fades

(Blink — animal pause ... transform to 'man-with-a-gun' persona — rolling up the umbrella ... 'taller' ... ambiguous genre with the words ...)

"I can see in all its pallid hope a life that was never quite my own ... But, I have glimpsed another world, and I have not yet come to terms with my grief ..."

"STOP THE FLUTTERING,



STOP THE FLICKERING LIGHT ..."

Shoots and receives 'bullet' to the head ... rips head to the side with other hand ... an exclamation ... 'fall' and return. Long slow distended 'blink' — physicalised in whole body ...

FX — *Spooky* out



... from crouched position, to audience member, assigning them this role ...

I'm a Nation that Mourns:

"Mum, what are you doing here ... ?" (*Happy, quizzical — then turning, emerging as the 'other' ...*)

"You're not my son, you killed my son, Coward ... I'm Greiving, Crying, Mourning, I'm a Relative, a Victim, I'm a Mother ... fuck it, I'm a NATION — I'M A NATION THAT MOURNS!" (*Big suspension, expansion, strange epiphany*)

(*Middle-European accent*) "Oh, come on you Mother-fuckers, what am I running here, a kindergarten ... ?" — *Techies saying in weak chorus, "We're a Nation that Mourns! ..."*



Gee-Up Horsey (a love song):

A slow crescendo throughout, opening the voice and body ...

Low voice, softer, American accent ...

"I feel like an old horse who keeps stopping at the places its been stopped before — and having stopped, what was there, what happened, doesn't happen anymore ... and I'm surprised, astonished."

"I'm the horse at the imaginary fenceline ... Gee-up, horsey ... ain't nothin' there no more ...

Just a wide open plain ... mountains on either side."

"I'm takin' you up to the high pastures ... Its not a milk-cart you're hauling no more, just this little ol' buggy ... Gee-up horsey ... don't worry. Its just me in this little ol' buggy. I'm taking you up to the mountains. You'll have plenty of time there for dreaming and fictions. There ain't no imaginary fencelines there, nothin' to fence you in. I'll take you up there and leave you there, and you can imagine I'm there with you ... talkin' ... sayin, 'Gee-up horsey' ... So, Gee-up now, horsey ... "

Circling ... then turning in space, rocking, amplifying the space ... with umbrella ...

“ ... My horse, he keeps comin’ to an imaginary fenceline, stopping ... gotta turn him round, goin’ ta head South. He comes to another ... gotta turn again, we’re goin’ in circles ... Gonna rewind you, horsey, Gee-up ... ain’t no fences anymore ... Imagine me there, where we’re goin, sayin, ‘Gee-up horsey’ ... So, Gee-up now, horsey ... ”

FX — gunshots, loud, sharp, repeated. Then, engaged signal merging into chopper/wing-beats in distance coming closer through ...

... final circle in the space, hanging umbrella on chair, forward to audience, an ambiguous raised arm as if hanging from a cliff, slightly crouched position, retreat and attack, suspended between ...

FX — continues ...

LX — changing through blue, then harsher light overhead front

Distract Me from Myself:



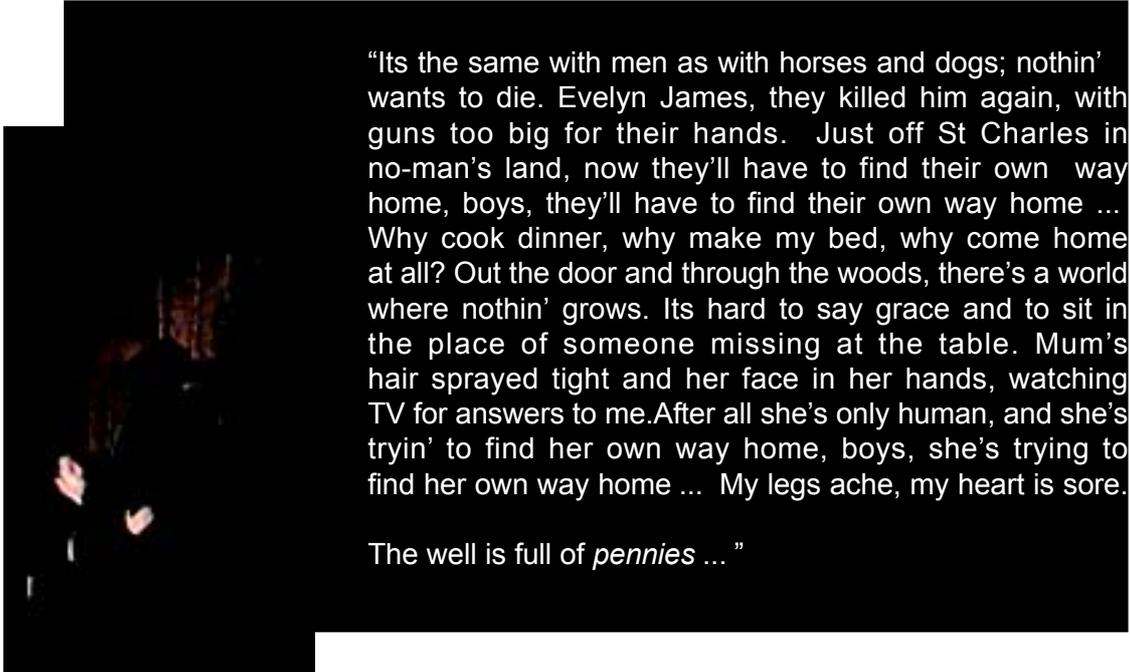
“ ... I would shoot guns and thrust bayonets through flesh to distract me from myself. I would whip, torture, wrestle, drive cars over cliffs to distract me from myself; jump from helicopters, throw hand-grenades, to distract me from myself. I would march right, left, right screaming orders in my throat, *obeying* orders in my throat, to distract me from myself ... I would fire live rounds ... into a fleeing crowd, to distract me from myself ... I ... would strike out my own eyes to distract me from myself; strike out my eyes to ‘unsee’ what my mind glimpses ahead of time, what my ears whisper, my tongue speaks, despite me, to spite me ... *I am nowhere gathered together ... but I would burn, rather than last ...* ”

A series of heavy exhalations carry Man to chair and table, sitting ...

Wait's, Fall of Troy:

Singing, unaccompanied, sprawled at the table, half on the chair, continued 'small dance here' — hints of opening/a kind of 'refrain' ... part or whole ... Techies join vocals at end on harmony for "pennies" ...

LX — single low light front, long shadow



I am the Unicorn (a Unicorn’s Grace):

Sitting forward, spoken simply to audience ...

LX — changing through blue, soft front overhead

“There was a stampede in heaven —
Or was it Hades — and the sixteen hooves of
The Horses of the Horsemen of an apocalypse,
A domestic one, weak, and sad, in a tiny room with a pane onto a
grey wall ... These sixteen hooves I met with my four, in time. Call
them; Love, Faith, Honour, Forgiveness.

My four hooves, and me my only defender; and the only Betrayal my
own if I fail to meet the others at the gates of my heart. To turn them
away.

And I am the Unicorn.
You are here inside the walls — not out there where the night
approaches — cracking fire, flintstone under foot.
Me my defender. You my heart. The night ablaze all around.
Me my defender. You my heart. As the flickering shadows keep time
with destruction ...

Me my defender. You my heart. And Grace between us. Grace.

You inside the walls? Here? Already here?

Awake. It is the sweet smell of me feathered and ghosted on your thighs.

I will visit you there, again and again, sleeping safe in my heart.”

Is That All There Is?:

FX — Peggy Lee, *Is That All There Is?*

[**Lyrics** — “I remember, when I was a little girl, our house caught on fire. I’ll never forget the look on my Father’s face as he gathered me up in his arms and raced through the burning building out onto the pavement. I stood there, shivering in my pyjamas, and watched the whole world go up in flames. And when it was all over, I said to myself, ‘Is that all there is to a fire?’. Is that all there is? Is that all there is? If that’s all there is, my friends, then lets keep dancing. Lets bring out the booze and have a ball, if that’s all there is. When I was twelve years old, my Daddy took me to the circus. The Greatest Show on Earth. There were clowns and elephants and dancing bears, and a beautiful lady in pink tights flew high above our heads. As I sat there watching, I had the feeling that something was missing. And when it was all over, I said to myself, ‘Is that all there is to the circus?’ Is that all there is? ... And then I fell in love ...”]



Pleasure dance/small dance ... a strange received pleasure of the genre of cabaret/circus/etc ... Female voice/story supplanted with male figure, ‘as if’ it is him ...

From sitting ... to ‘see’ the burning house in the song ... then, music takes the male figure, from inside/outside, ‘makes’ him bow, or he bows from within the image ... drawing him into focus/foreground of the story, perhaps blurring his identity ... He is ‘danced’ — a ‘bow’, to standing ... an uncomfortable shuffling waltz, bouffon, holding and not holding a woman (here is ‘loss’/love/memory/dis-membering/re-memembering etc as ‘figures’ who visit) ... Rich vocabulary of gesture eg. ‘helicopter’, Tango, crack of a neck broken in a fall ... Then into ‘Circus section’ ... strange ringmaster/clown/US guy persona ... ‘clown’ inserted here, but the ‘stench’ of the circus, piss, the smell of drenched hay, circling, looking over shoulder at audience, the thing ‘has’ the Man ... a version of the ‘lady in pink’ ... Then in the refrain, he’s on horseback/Christ/ego/sexual epiphany dreamed of — ‘deviant end’ — mixing them in. He ‘rides’ the horse/it rides him ... “and then I fell in love” ... a release from the image ... out to text, simple, to the audience ...

Policewoman:

“ ... I once fell in love with a policewoman. She was a suburban personality with pretensions. I liked the glint in her eye and the streaks in her hair. And she was bloody brave. Last time I saw her, before she got engaged to someone else, she said they were training her up to drive a tank. I said, ‘Is there going to be a coup then?’ She gave me a mean look that made my penis stir, but I think it put her off me ... ”

“I wake up in the mornings afraid, and there’s no-one there to tell.”

A gregarious change ...

River walk:

“BUT... I have a vision ... I see a city, tall buildings, lights on every street corner. Bright lights! Industry, factories ... *billowing smoke* ... I see prodigious machinery ... Coal and Iron and Steel ... O, I have a vision, a Beautiful City...and for you!(*To audience member*) — a *white* house, with *white* carved verandah posts, and you (*Gathering speed*) — a blue boat, tied with a rope to the white house, a blue boat, tied with a rope, to the little, white post ...(*Drops, grotesque, comical*) But, *there are natives in the bushes*, squinting, peering from the darkness, all around ! Playing didgeridoos! You, scout around in front, I’ll come up behind. *Drive them into the river!!!* O, the river ... here, at the bend, your little white house, and a white fence, your blue boat, tied with a rope, and ... ” *Man clicks fingers ... still/fixed point, suspended ...*



Slow release ... quiet change

Words from Lovers:

“I have memories ... I remember the rhythms of work, and play, and the smell of my leather satchel, and the words of poets sent from lovers before they ever loved me. I remember — when the warm winds come swirling in — I remember a place with a heart. People, and images, and words that were blessings.”

Sitting, forward/upright on the chair ... playing at the edge of the melodrama ...

LX — cooler, blue, soft overhead

Ivan Goll Poem: *(filtered through memory and two translations)*

“On the fifth thousandth evening of our love
I’m still as shy as in the beginning,
Clumsily crumpling the lark that I brought for you in my pocket.
Staining my white gloves with the blue of the two early-picked
Bell-flowers.

Up to now, I don’t know how to smile at you to hide the
Sadness of my happiness ...
But, when I unfold you,
The sun is falling down ...”

My Cowgirl’s Got a Theory:

Picking up dictaphone which has been a silent presence on the table throughout, a ‘witness’, perhaps recording ... Man slowly sits on the table ... speaking into the dictaphone while looking at the audience, accusingly, incredulous ... American accent ...

LX — blue + floor, front ... casting shadow on rear wall



“My cowgirl said to me ... she said she’s goin’ down South. Gonna take a dip in the ocean ... ‘That’ll help my face’ ... I said, gonna take more’n a dip in the ocean to save your face, sweetheart. ‘Not funny’ ... She’s got this theory, that if she cries and then sleeps her face puffs up like a blowfish. So, she figures she’s gonna take that blowfish down to the ocean, set it free. She’s gonna save her face. She gonna come outta the ocean with a face like a Princess. Go into the sea with a face like a blowfish, and come out like Princess ... She gotta theory. *My Cowgirl’s got a theory!* ... She’s goin’ down South. She don’t know I’m gonna miss her ... We gonna have a solitary weekend. In fact, she says we’re *in* solitary. When we first got together an’ fell in love she was talkin’ about losin’ face; said she wasn’t gonna worry about losin’ face with me. Gonna have to talk to her about that. She’s tryin’ to save her face, but she told me she was gonna lose face ... So, I’m gonna go down South and catch me a blowfish, and I’m gonna bring it right back on land ... She’s gonna have to live with it ...”

An Eye in the Tongue of my Lover:

*... then pressing the button on dictaphone: a pre-recorded tape plays — Deitrich's **Fallink in Love Again** (Live recording)*

English accent ... market-seller/car-salesman/pimp ... talking to audience and the dictaphone ...

“ ... My lover's got a big toofy grin, there's one on a big angle — on the right as you look on, or on the left if you were in her mouf — as her tongue is ... So, imagine yourself, Mr Silver Box, an eye in the tongue of my lover as you look out through her toofy mouth as I talk about her weeping, babbling heart: her lips break open, her teef part a little, and the light comes in — striking the pupil of your eye in her tongue, and just to the left you'd see a little angled toof, both wrecking her smile, making her grin, and ruining my heart ... ”

FX — laughter, faded up and amplified ...

Man holds dictaphone aloft, reclines on chair and table, a strange exuberance, fading into darkness ...

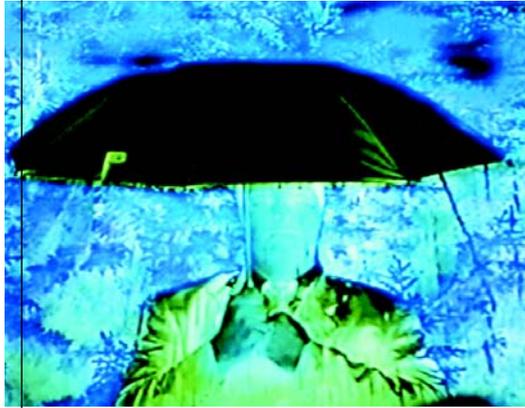
LX — slow fade to black

FX — laughter looped/'goodnight you filthy bastard ... '

“Goodnight you filthy Bastard” ...

Blackout ... End

Rapture II



Devised and performed by **Barry Laing**
La Mama, Melbourne, November 1999
(55mins)

Notes to the Script

Rapture II

***Devised & Performed by Barry Laing
La Mama, Melbourne, 17–28 November, 1999***

Rapture II was the second in the series of solo performances. A version of *Rapture II* was also performed at Dartington College of Arts, Devon, UK, January 2000.

A collocation of texts, image, music and movement.

Rapture. Abduction. Transportation.

Ring the bell that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There's a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in...

— Leonard Cohen, *The Future*

This project was developed in collaboration with:

Gina Gascoyne — Lighting design	Performers on video:
Peter Pilley — Projections/video	Angela Abella
Darren Steffen — Sound design & operation	Kim Cullen
Jacqui Tamlyn — Production manager	Peter Fraser
Dan Witton — Production & dramaturgical assistance	Barry Laing
Wendy Edwards — Lighting Operation	
Dylan Shaw — Video Operation	
Video by Barry Laing & Peter Pilley	

At Dartington: Cathy Cullinane — Tech/sound & lighting operation
Atila ('Til') Mustafa — Tech/video operation

Texts by: Barry Laing, and adapted from and utilising texts by Deborah Levy, Tom Waits, Henri Michaux, Roland Barthes, Ivan Goll, and Raymond Carver

Music by: Dan Witton, Darren Steffen, Charlie Haden/Pat Metheny, Peggy Lee & Hope Csutoros

Rapture II was generously supported by:

La Mama VUT MSAC B&H Australia Goundrey Wines

Special Thanks to: Liz Jones & all at La Mama, Jeff Blair — B&H Australia, Brian Raue — Goundrey Wines, Gina Harris & all at MSAC, Mark Minchinton, Annesophie Brabant, Maddeleine Flynn & Tim Humphrey, Kikkawa Motoko, Michael Dulitsky, Jacqui Tamlyn, Dan Witton, Kim Cullen, Peter Fraser, Angela Abella, Darren Steffen, Peter Pilley, Gina Gascoyne, Josie Sutcliffe, Cathy Cullinane & Atila ('Til') Mustafa

Rapture II saw the introduction of video projection at two sites — a sliding screen at the rear of the space, and a large television. My interest in video in this context was in further splitting, mirroring and re-presenting the figure of the performer — a kind of amplification and ambiguous multiplication of the performer's subjectivity by technical means of prostheses. Two projection sites were chosen, and the relationship of the live performer to his representations (and others) on video was conceived as one of 'triangulation'. James Hillman's writings on 'trust' and 'betrayal', the seed of each residing in the other, and the enchantments of a 'third thing' made possible by an imaginal consciousness of the two, was the idea lurking behind this form. The television might be seen to sit at the 'centre' of the more 'domestic', mundane and pedestrian aspects of the performance, and the screen and its 'projections' might otherwise be seen to operate imaginally beyond the 'literality' of this space. The combination and collision of the images made possible by both, and the presence of the live performer strung between projections, constituted the main development of this performance emerging out of the work on *Rapture* (see 'Video and Seduction', pp. 156–164).

The video also provided the opportunity for working with the specificity of the site of La Mama itself. *Carltonrun* (see Appendix IV, p. 195) 'frames' the performance as self-consciously 'staged' within La Mama, and 'beyond' La Mama out into the streetscapes of Carlton. The live performer is situated in a direct (and illusory) relationship with the space, and representations of the street and La Mama from an external point of view, as he follows his own image down the internal stairs at the end of *Stairsequence*. This kind of ambiguous imaginal possibility, and the use of the double doors and sliding projection screen — allowing the figure of the 'Man in the Suit' to leave the space and re-emerge 'through' his own projected image in *Brollyrain* — were part of the integration of video, space, and performance that was not possible in the same way at Dancehouse for *Rapture III*.

Major additions to the script, and a re-organisation of the playing order of 'episodes', included the three 'Interludes' — 'Peace', 'Confessions', and 'Power', 'I've Bought Myself a New Toy', 'Therapy/Psychopathological Test', 'Tremor — My Own Butcher', 'The Revenger — I Prefer the Car', 'Master of My Own Fuck-ups', and 'You Know What I'm Saying'. 'I am the Unicorn' and 'An Eye in the Tongue of my Lover' from *Rapture* did not re-appear here in *Rapture II*. The audience were provided with episode titles as part of their free program.

Texts are a combination of original compositions by Barry Laing, and extracts from, and adaptations of, texts by others listed on the previous page.

Video documentation of the performance of *Rapture II*, together with all of the video sequences projected within the show, is provided on the accompanying VHS tape. See Appendix IV for a guide to the video materials and time codes for specific episodes and sequences.

Opening:

An antique smoking chair, microphone on a boom stand, a 'moon lamp' next to chair on the floor. Keys on the ledge of a window, large TV on a coffee table, a large, moveable screen over double doorway centre rear. Stairs descending into space upstage left. A door. Darkness. Video comes up on screen ...

Video — Carltonrun — Screen

FX — On video

[**Carltonrun** – Fast fade up from black on feet walking. Black shiny shoes. Black suit. POV eye level of the Man who walks, looking down. Lifts to montage of streetscape – Lygon Street, Carlton — back to feet. Up again – traffic lights, sound of the 'walk' signal, buildings, cafes, people on the footpath. Turns corner. A run. Footfall, hard breathing. Swerving through people ... arrives at flexi-teller. Fills screen. Fast pin entry, withdrawal request — \$2000. "Sorry. There are insufficient funds for that transaction. Please contact your bank." A gun held to the flexi-teller. Still POV of man. Now hand and gun always in the frame. Rain on the lens. Runs, crosses street avoiding traffic. Continues down opposite footpath, laughter, turns corner, turns again ... into La Mama theatre: across carpark, yard, up outside steps. A hand opens door to Office, enters, continues down inner stairs. Montage/repetition of feet descending ... creaking boards ...]

Video — xfades into — Stairsequence — Screen

FX — On video, plus breathing for merge

[**Stairsequence** — Jump to POV from inside space, as 'Man in a Suit', wearing sunglasses, with umbrella and laptop case enters down stairs in La Mama ... Repetition of his descent in various guises: same, with pratfalls tripping and smashing head on wall. Next — in blue silk boxer shorts. Then, black slip, fishnet stockings and high heels ... blonde wig and a gun. Red fishnets on his head and a gun ... waiting for his own next arrival. On each occasion, the figure moves to open door at bottom of stairs, fades, and vanishes as next version of 'himself' begins down stairs. Finally, 'Man in a Suit' again, pauses bottom of stairs, vanishes ... followed by Man in a Suit on the stairs in La Mama, realtime...]

Video Fades to black as *Man in a Suit, wearing sunglasses, with umbrella and laptop case enters down stairs – following, shadowing, his own image ...*

LX — Stairs, bottom of stairs

Man pauses at bottom of stairs, peers over sunglasses, exits door.

LX — out.

Video — Wallmovie — Screen

FX — wind

[**Wallmovie** — Fast strobing/working camera against the strobe of external La Mama brick wall. Diagonal across the frame. Heavy texture in and out of blurring. Blue. Negative effect + strobe.]

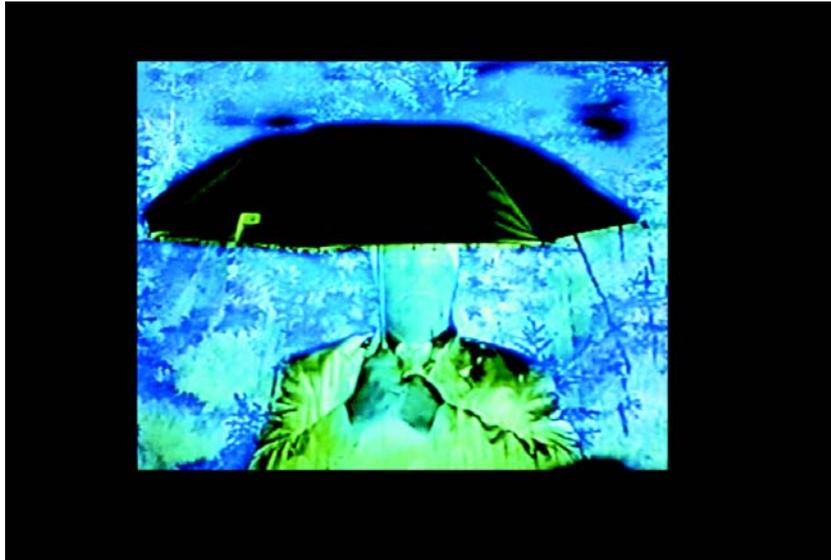
Man outside, crashes over bottle bins etc. Curses. Pause. Fist comes through fake window pane. Searches for keys on ledge, knocks them off ... "Shit".

LX — window/stairs

Video — *Wallmovie* xfades with *Brollyrain* — **Screen**

FX — rain

[*Brollyrain* — Negative/inverted image of Man in a Suit under an open umbrella. Blue mottled background (trees). 'Gold' suit. It is raining only from beneath the umbrella. He is his own rainstorm ...]



*Man enters through double doors behind screen. Pause - pulls large screen across. Steps 'out' of the image, stands in front of **Brollyrain**, projection over his body ...*

FX — rain fading, a heavy door grinds 'closed', bird wing flutters ... continues ...

Video — *Brollyrain* xfades with *Houselights* — **Screen**

LX — 'moon lamp' on and off in sync with lights on Screen ...

[*Houselights* — City of Melbourne Skyline emerges through/against the black of the umbrella in *Brollyrain*. Slow pan down and into the foreground over residential house rooftop. A tangle of tree branches. A light flicks on from the back verandah — yellow web of the branches ... Pan continues past, then returns ... the light flicks off. Back over the roof of the house. Fade to black. Solarising effect. A painterly, 'cartoon', quality.]

Man lights a cigarette lighter, peers into space, moves to chair, sits, places case, umbrella, and a gun ...

Video — *Houselights* fades on Screen ...

LX — on Man around chair

Pause ... Man sitting, looking directly at the audience ...

I Was Once the Same Man / Lullaby Dance:

FX — hum, static glitches, Dan Witton, **Spooky** [fluttering wings, piercing electronic sounds] merging with massive descending doors, alarm ...

Video — **Pool 1** — **TV** parallel, then crossing over with ... **Video** — **Pool 2** — **Screen**

Video projected/played simultaneously

[**Pool 1** — An older man, glasses, suit and tie, half his face in shadow, appears on the TV screen. Head and shoulders in the frame. Blue background. Stares calmly, directly to camera/POV of the audience. 'Opposite' the Man in a Suit in the Space. They sit, staring at the audience. The older man appears to 'see' the computer screens on the Screen opposite (see below), reads them, reacts with a gulp of air — as if to speak/answer — when the computer screen glitches. After the second glitch, his image xfades with an explosion of white-water, as an image of a Man in dark pyjamas — the same man as the Man in a Suit in the space — plunges into water, a pool. He tumbles, slowly, half-time through white-water and bubbles, approaching camera/POV of audience. Fade to black. *Image on the large Screen continues.]



[**Pool 2** — Blue computer screen. Text: "This device has been set to deliver a lethal injection. To proceed to the next step, you must press YES. If you understand this and wish to proceed, press YES. Do you wish to proceed? YES/NO." Abrupt static/glitch. Second screen. Text: "If you press YES, you will cause a lethal injection to be given within 30 seconds, and will die. Do you wish to proceed? YES/NO." Static/Glitch. A man in light pyjamas plunges into the blue of the screen as it xfades with water, a pool. The same older man as seen on TV opposite. Montage sequence of him underwater. Tumbling in white-water. Rolling. Suspended at the bottom. Struggling with a plastic bag over his head. Rising to the top. Xfades with image of Man — the same man as the Man in a Suit in the space — in dark pyjamas. *He is slowly swimming underwater towards the camera/audience POV. It appears he will swim through the screen, but knocks his head on a glass window (from behind which the scene was shot, under the pool) — holds his head, rises in the water. Fade to black.]

FX — x/fades with Hope Csutoros, **Lullaby** [piano], **Spooky** continues underneath

Man rising from chair with 'alarm' sound (above) — a 'small dance' with laptop case and umbrella ... video on large screen above partially projected over him ...

Physical/imaginal worlds for the dance — young/old, crowd, circus — passive figure to things that visit him, bent figure to one side, imbalance, 1000 policeman's 'no', moving, a 'grey figure emerging through rain', little shocks/shots, receiving the 'bullet', stones on the shoulders, hailing a bus, holding a woman ... horse/Spanish dancer ... moving, breaking up the suppositions of gesture/leading/pointing/dividing/undoing ... a breeze ... fire, letting the face travel, 'the silo', big open space, small scale movement, soft light, the 'rat's hole' ... the centaur ... (the dance continues while text spoken) ... Image on screen knocks head ... fade to black ...

A Complete Stranger:

LX — on Man forward of chair

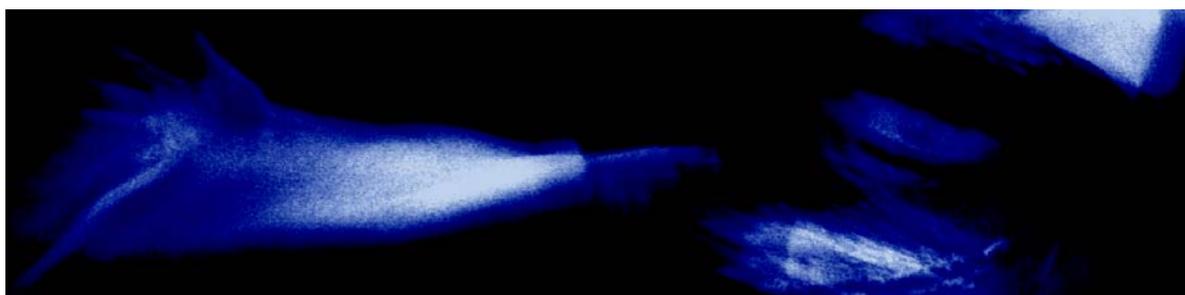
Video/FX — out

(Movement continues...) "I went to visit my Mum the other day, first time in months. She was playing chess with her next-door-neighbour and when I walked in, dressed specially in a new shirt, she said 'Son, you're a prat. Look after your queen Mrs R'. One day I'll shoot her, and it'll break my heart. Dunno how she expected her son to grow up. Dunno what she wants of me. Sometimes I catch her looking at me as if I'm a complete stranger. Her eyes settle on my suit like a half-starved fly. I feel stripped in front of her large, stupid body. I shuffle about the house trying to find words that will make her *like me* ... She makes me feel weird under my suntan ... She gave me some runner beans from the garden. Well, I threw them out of the window on the way home ... I'm going to give my mum a razor and shaving cream for her birthday. The poor old dear is growing a beard."

Umbrella as 'windscreen wiper' to 'moustache', then bar to the throat, water rising/sinking/swimming, tension ... 'one day I'll shoot her', teeth/tongue to the umbrella clip — undo, then umbrella held higher, half open, a 'bird', subjugation ... equity and hierarchies in movement ... 'shuffle about the house trying to find words that will make her like me' ...

Then tense, forward position with umbrella and case ... continually moving, mapping, visited/moved by the 'figures' of this 'dance' as above ... breaking 'Self/selves/'Revenger' persona [see later] up ...

Raised case to the shoulder ... then in front of chest below face ...



Shiftin' Sands:

Abrupt change, American accent ... movement continues

"Yeah, yeah, I'll tell ya ... now I'm gonna be around a little bit more often, so you gonna have to play by *my* rules ..."

Softer, distant, reaching with the voice ...

"There ain't no use ploughin' that field, Boy! Them sands gonna keep shiftin', shiftin', shiftin' ... There, ain't no use ploughin' that field, Boy ... Yer Daddy, an' his daddy afore him, an' his daddy's brother's uncle's cousin's daddy afore him all tried to plough that field, Boy. An' they all failed ... Look at yer horse, Boy! He's lame! His back's broke, ribs hangin' out, got no teeth, Boy ... He's lame! ... Them sands gonna keep shiftin', shiftin', shiftin' ..."

(Drops accent) "May the weeds in my garden blossom as flowers in yours, old man ..."

Crow Shooting:

Placing case down ... breath ... hand left hovering in fixed point, broly raised, pause for this change of 'space' ...

FX — Dan Witton, **Spooky**, [fluttering wings, piercing electronic sounds] — continues, merges with Charlie Haden/Pat Metheny, **Spiritual** [guitar, double bass. Gentle walking pace]



Man stands, flicks umbrella open ... down, twirl ... a 'younger' place ... 'spatialisation of memory' ... using gaze outer/inner, and through audience as he speaks the story ... Twirling umbrella, gently rocking, slow, hiding behind, emerging ... lighter, softer, into ...

Video — Sky on Screen

LX — tight on Man from low front ... projection over Man and umbrella

[**Sky** — Huge pink, mauve, blue and orange sky with light clouds. Sunset/twilight. Montage sequence, clouds merging, sky moving right to left on screen.]

“I was eleven or twelve and sent out to shoot crows that were threatening and killing newborn lambs.

SQUEEZE, DON'T PULL. GOOD SHOT!” (*twirling umbrella ... emerging ... hiding again 'good shot'*)

“I lined up a bird in a tree, closed my eyes, squeezed — hoping I'd miss. The bird leaped from the branch, and flew ... (*off to the side – fixed point ... 'brolly copter', above, looking down*) and in the long silence after the explosion there was a moment when I came close to vicarious flight. Hope, relief and all of life in an instant — but the wings of the bird buckled. I caught A SINGLE BLACK FEATHER between my fingers as it fell ... (*reaching forward with umbrella ... a suggestion of this*). A single black feather.”

(*Silent, still — reaching across body for umbrella, a wind, big extension looking past and through 'railings' ...*) Then, through the railings, I saw the flurry of ragged wings for the first time. Blue-metal-glint of the morning sun on his angry bloody feathers. Hangin' there. Waiting. Beating in slow motion against the sky. Just disappeared ... !” (*Umbrella breaks down/folds — 'old man', umbrella as 'widow's veil' ... Man holds umbrella close*) “Sometimes I see that bird, hangin' there, hovering, except behind my eyelids now.”

(*A change in breath, stretching the voice*) “UNWANTED ANIMAL OCCUPANCY!”

(*Blink — animal pause, abrupt change, transform — rolling up the umbrella ... 'taller' ... ambiguous genre with the words ...*) I can see, in all its pallid hope, a life that was never quite my own. But I have glimpsed another world, and I have not yet come to terms with my grief ...

“STOP THE FLUTTERING, STOP THE FLICKERING LIGHT ... ”

FX — gunshot

Shoots and receives 'bullet' to the head ... rips head with other hand ... 'falls' and returns ...



I'm a Nation that Mourns:

LX — low front, rear overheads, blue, red

From crouched position ...

“Mum, what are you doing here ... ?” (*Happy, quizzical — then turning, emerging as the ‘other’ ...*)

“You’re not my son, you killed my son, Coward ... (*Crescendo*) I’m Grieving, Crying, Mourning, I’m a Relative, a Victim, a Child, I’m a Mother ... Fuck it, I’m a NATION — I’M A NATION THAT MOURNS ... ” (*Long pause, suspended, open mouth, huge*)

(*Middle-European accent*) Oh, come on you Mother-fuckers, what am I running here, a kindergarten ... ?” (*Techies replying, saying in weak chorus ... “We’re a Nation that Mourns!”*)

Gee - Up Horsey (a love song):

LX — overhead, side lights, rear overheads

Circling ... then turning in space, rocking, amplifying the space ... with umbrella ... American accent, low voice, descriptive, then ‘personal’ but at a distance ... crescendo throughout

“I feel like an old horse who keeps stopping at the places its been stopped before — and having stopped, what was there before, what happened, doesn’t happen anymore ...

I’m just the horse at the imaginary fenceline ... Gee-up, horsey ... ain’t nothin’ there no more ...

Just a wide open plain ... mountains on either side.

I’m takin’ you up to the high pastures ... Its not a milk-cart you’re hauling no more, just this little ol’ buggy ... Gee-up horsey ... don’t worry. Its just me in this little ol’ buggy. I’m taking you up to the mountains. You’ll have plenty of time there for dreaming and fictions. There ain’t no imaginary fencelines there, nothin’ to fence you in ... I’ll take you up there and leave you there, and you can imagine I’m there with you ... talkin ... sayin, ‘Gee-up horsey’ ... So, Gee-up now, horsey ...”

“... My horse, he keeps comin’ to an imaginary fenceline, stopping ... gotta turn him round, goin’ ta head South. He comes to another ... gotta turn again, we’re goin’ in circles ... Gonna have to rewind you, horsey, Gee-up ... ain’t no fences anymore ... Imagine me there, where we’re goin, sayin, ‘Gee-up horsey’ ... so, Gee-up now horsey ...”

(*Low again*) “I would really like to know why I always follow the horse whose bridle I am holding.”

FX — piano and bar, water drips, laughter, gunshots, loud, sharp, repeated ... Then, engaged signal ... merging into chopper/wing-beats in distance coming closer through ...

Distract Me from Myself:

Passing behind chair, placing umbrella, emerging in front of screen ... forward to audience, an ambiguous raised arm as if hanging from a cliff, slightly crouched position, retreat and attack, suspended between ...

Video — *Choppertraffic* projected over Man — **Screen**

FX — continues, plus cars/traffic ... etc

LX — light from video, side light

[*Choppertraffic* — A helicopter hovers and circles in a clear sky, superimposed/merged with traffic — a Melbourne Tram, cars, headlights. Negative/inverse effects. Xfades with close up of rotor blades of the Chopper spinning. An apparently 'giant' finger and hand enters frame from top. Bears down on the centre of the rotors, stopping them (a model helicopter — playing with this illusion). Fade to black]

“ ... and I would shoot guns and thrust bayonets through flesh to distract me from myself. I would whip, torture, wrestle, drive cars over cliffs to distract me from myself; jump from helicopters, throw hand-grenades, to distract me from myself. I would march right left right screaming orders in my throat, *obeying* orders in my throat, to distract me from myself ... I would fire live rounds ... into a fleeing crowd, to distract me from myself ... I ... would strike out my own eyes to distract me from myself; strike out my eyes to 'unsee' what my mind glimpses ahead of time, what my ears whisper, my tongue speaks, despite me, to spite me ... *I am nowhere gathered together ... but I would burn, rather than last ...* ”



The Fall of Troy:

Man goes to chair, sings, unaccompanied, sprawled on chair — continued 'small dance here', hints of opening, focus on hands ... part or whole ... techies for a harmony at end ... "Pennies"

LX — moonlamp, single overhead

"Its the same with men as with horses and dogs; nothin' wants to die. Evelyn James, they killed him again, with guns too big for their hands. Just off St Charles in no-man's land, now they'll have to find their own way home, boys, they'll have to find their own way home (...) Why cook dinner, why make my bed, why come home at all? Out the door and through the woods, there's a world where nothin' grows. Its hard to say Grace and to sit in the place of someone missing at the table. Mum's hair sprayed tight and her face in her hands, watching TV for answers to me. After all she's only human, and she's tryin' to find her own way home, boys, she's trying to find her own way home ... My legs ache, my heart is sore. The well is full of pennies ..." (*chorus from techies*)

Interlude – Peace:

Spoken into microphone on a boom stand, close, intimate, sitting partly hidden in low light, moonlamp ... Spoken against ...

Video — Woman1peace — TV

Video — Woman2peace — Screen

[**Woman1peace** — A naked woman reclining. No effects. Shot with projection over her body. Open lens, blue light, close to the body. Tight lines from the projector traverse her body horizontally, wrapping around the contours of her form. A kind of 'cartographic' overlay. Montage/xfades of various slow pans the length of her body. Partial views of neck, shoulder, breasts and hands. Navel and pubis merge. Lingering at the belly, crease of the groin, breasts. Breath. Lines/contours bend and shift. The map, never equivalent with the 'ground', is fluid ... fade to black]

[**Woman2peace** — A naked, pregnant woman. Sitting. Negative/inverted effects. Blue-green. Texture of the skin and body something like 'stone', a 'statue', a solid form ...Gentle strobing at first. Camera/POV hunts out the folds of the skin, creases between belly and thigh, partial views of the breasts, collar bone, armpit. Faster camera movements, working with and against the strobe: the armpit is a groin, breast a belly, point of the shoulder a 'mountain', a moonscape ... Mother, child, statue, stone ... in time ... fade to black.]

“Opening the door inside you, I have entered
I am here
I support you
You are no longer abandoned
You are no longer in difficulty
Their strings untied, your difficulties fall
The nightmare that left you haggard is no more
I am shouldering you
With me you place
Your foot on the first step of the endless stairway
Which carries you
Which brings you up
Which fulfils you

I appease you
I am spreading out sheets of peace in you
I am soothing the child of your dream
Surge

To act, I come
Your thoughts of thrust are supported
Your thoughts of failure, weakened
My strength is in your body, slipped inside
... and your face, losing its wrinkles, is refreshed
Sickness no longer makes its way in you
Fever leaves you

The peace of vaults
The peace of flowering (fields)
Peace comes back into you
The wicked heads around you
Venomous observers of the miseries of the weak
Can see you no longer
Exist no longer
I am a crew of reinforcements
In mystery and a deep line
Like an undersea wake
Like a bass chant
I have come
This chant takes you
This chant raises you up
This chant is animated by many streams
This chant is entirely for you

No more pincers
No more dark shadows
No more fears
There is no more trace of them
There is no need to have them
Where pain was, is cotton
Where scattering was, is solder
Where infection was, is new blood
Where locks were, is open sea
The carrying sea and the fullness of you
Intact, like an egg of Ivory

... I have bathed the face of your future”

Is That All There Is?:



FX — Peggy Lee, *Is That All There Is?*

[Lyrics — “I remember, when I was a little girl, our house caught on fire. I’ll never forget the look on my Father’s face as he gathered me up in his arms and raced through the burning building out onto the pavement. I stood there, shivering in my pyjamas, and watched the whole world go up in flames. And when it was all over, I said to myself, ‘Is that all there is to a fire?’. Is that all there is? Is that all there is? If that’s all there is, my friends, then lets keep dancing. Lets bring out the booze and have a ball, if that’s all there is. When I was twelve years old, my Daddy took me to the circus. The Greatest Show on Earth. There were clowns and elephants and dancing bears, and a beautiful lady in pink tights flew high above our heads. As I sat there watching, I had the feeling that something was missing. And when it was all over, I said to myself, ‘Is that all there is to the circus?’ Is that all there is? ... And then I fell in love ...”]

LX — moonlamp, light from projection

Video — Live camera on Man — Screen

[Live Video — Man positioned between live camera, and screen. Projector positioned along this sight line. An ‘infinite mirroring’ effect is produced. A projection loop which staggers movement in time (like a ‘Mexican Wave’) — each alternative figure/repetition is ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ respectively. Negative effects, strobe.]

Man rises to dance, dreaming into the world of the song ...



Pleasure dance/small dance ... strange received pleasure of the genre of Cabaret/circus/etc ... Dance ... from sitting ... to 'see' the burning house. Then, music takes him, from inside/outside, 'makes' him bow, or he bows from within the image ... drawing him into focus/perhaps blurring the 'me' ... 'I' am 'danced' — a 'bow', to standing ... An uncomfortable shuffling waltz, bouffon, holding and not holding a woman, she is 30 feet tall (here is 'loss'/love/memory/dis-membering/re-membering etc as 'figures' who visit ...) eg. crack of a neck broken, a Tango ... then into 'Circus section' ... Strange, imperfect ringmaster/clown — 'clown' inserted here, but — the 'stench' of the circus, circling, looking over shoulder at audience, the thing has him, a version of the 'lady in pink' from the song ... Then in the refrain, he's on horseback/Christ/ego/sexual epiphany dreamed of (pre-figuring Revenger — this 'deviant end' ... mixing them in ...) rider and ridden, love ... out to text ... click fingers to stop, music continues ...



Policewoman:

“And then I fell in love ...” — Releasing himself from the song, breath ... to audience

LX — centre overhead

“ ... I once fell in love with a policewoman. She was a suburban personality with pretensions. I liked the glint in her eye and the streaks in her hair. The last time I saw her, before she got engaged to someone else, she said they were training her up to drive a tank. I said, ‘Is there going to be a coup then?’ She gave me a mean look that made my penis stir, but I think it put her off me ...

No woman has ever fallen in love with me. I wake up in the mornings afraid, and there’s no-one there to tell ... ”

I Have A Vision:

A gregarious change

LX — growing brighter

“But ... I have a vision ... I see a city, tall buildings, lights on every street corner, *bright lights*, towers and beacons, pathways and factories ... *billowing smoke* ... Industry ... Coal and Iron and Steel ... Prodigious machinery ... Yes, we'll build a city, here! ... But, *there are natives in the bushes*, eyes peering from the darkness, all around, sniggering, playing didgeridoos ... You, scout around in front, I'll come up behind, round them up, *drive them into the river!!!* O, the river ... here, at the bend, we'll build a Great City, and for you, a *white* house, with *white*, carved posts at the verandah overlooking the water, and there, a blue boat tied with a rope to a jetty, a *bright blue boat*, tugging at its rope ... Here at the bend ... *drive them into the river!!* ... We'll build a City, together. A City, a State, a Great Nation ... and ... Oh, yes, there'll be joy and laughter like a babbling brook, and tea and biscuits for everyone before bedtime ... You, take the oars, I'll stand at the prow, we'll course this great river ... Row on, I say, onward ... Here a mill, there a store-house ... Row on ... Luv your work !”

“O, yes, I'm positive! I'm a yes-sayer. YES, YES, YES, YES, YES!!! Positive. Never said no in my life except to say, ‘Yes, *no, really* — I luv your work!”

“I'm positive. Positive. I'm HIV positive.”

Man falls

FX — ‘walking’ piano

Words from Lovers:

Rising to his feet, slowly, awkwardly, effort in the voice ...

FX — continues ...

“ ... Ohhh, I have memories of the *CIRCUS!* where, rushed by a clown with a bucket full of water, I fell through the wooden seating in terror only to open my eyes to spiraling confetti in colours I had not yet imagined. I remember the rhythms of work and the smell of my leather satchel, and I remember play, and the words of poets sent from lovers before they ever loved me. I remember — when the warm winds come swirling in — I remember a place with a heart. People, and images, and words that were blessings.”

Coughing/hypochondria — Man goes to chair ...

(*Miraculous recovery*) “Maybe its the music coming in through the window — someone playing the piano — but I feel a bit down tonight. No, really. I've been feeling like this for some time ... its fucking unfair. I don't think patriots should get depressed.”

Interlude II – Confessions:

**Video — *Manconfessions* — TV
Screen**

Video — *Womanconfessions* —

Video projected/played simultaneously

FX — wind underneath

[*Manconfessions* — A naked man on a bed of crumpled sheets. It is the Man in a Suit in the space. Negative/inverted effects. Blue-green. Gentle strobing. Camera/POV hovers over a hand, behind a back, the buttocks, thigh, a bent knee. Close-up on face, closed eyes, 'elephant-like' texture of the skin. A white eye opens. Folds in the flesh of the neck ... a 'ghosted', open, full frontal view of the man ... fade to black.]

[*Womanconfessions* — A naked woman on a bed of crumpled sheets. Negative/inverted effects. Blue. Strobing. Camera/POV spirals, turning upside down, returning. Whole body fills the frame, then legs, feet, silver hair, sharp shadow along the lines of the body pass over into the folds in the sheets ... turning again ... rattling her sleep ... fade to black]

Spoken into microphone, sitting on chair in low light ...

"I try to dream about women who have loved me, but they refuse to appear ... "

"I attempt to draw the other towards me, all the while standing firm in my own contradictory discourse of 'opening', not really knowing what it is to love, to be in love ... I've been looking for Her, waiting for her, as if when she arrived, so would I. But, really, I've been waiting for 'me' — and I simply haven't known what would shake the foundations of my solitude, the fixed, lonely foot in me: the clenched jaw, the taught buttocks, the tight chest ... the masks with which I have divided myself. Ohhh, I've been crying and crying and crying as if to give voice to my pain would somehow bring compassion down upon me. From where, I don't know ... "

"I carry the scent of so many women in my armpits, my tears are the jewels they put on, or took off, for me. I want to repent for the times I kicked them in their soft stomach — metaphorically you understand — I'm not a brute in that sort of way."

"I have desires I don't understand ... I want women to be strong and brave and beautiful but I also want to crush them. Want them to be wild and spontaneous and free, but I also want to domesticate them. I want them to want me, but I don't want them ... "

I'm shaking. Shaking. I am breaking down ... "

"More than repair, everything is in need of mercy ... "

Staining My White Gloves:

Simply, sitting forward on chair, defying the obvious melodrama, trying to 'exist' within this tension, though not 'enacting' it ...

LX — moonlamp, overhead

“On the fifth thousandth evening of our love
I'm still as shy as in the beginning,
Clumsily crumpling the lark that I brought for you in my pocket.
Staining my white gloves with the blue of the two early-picked
Bell-flowers.

Up to now, I don't know how to smile at you to hide the
Sadness of my happiness ...
But, when I unfold you,
The sun is falling down ... ”

My Cowgirl's Got a Theory:

Abruptly picking up Gun ... slowly sitting on side of chair, walking around ... gun to his own chin ... 'unconsciously' to the temple ... waving it at the audience ... American accent ...

LX — front, overhead

“Yep, my cowgirl said to me ... she said she's goin' down South. Gonna take a dip in the ocean ... 'that'll help my face' ... I said, 'its gonna take more'n a dip in the ocean to save your face, sweetheart' ... 'Not funny' ... She's got this theory, that if she cries and then sleeps her face puffs up like a blowfish. So she figures she gonna take that blowfish down to the ocean, an' set it free ... She's gonna save her face ... She gonna come outta the ocean with a face like a Princess ... Go into the sea with a face like a blowfish, and come out like Princess. She gotta theory ... *My Cowgirl's got a theory!* ... She's goin down South ... She don't know I'm gonna miss her. We gonna have a solitary weekend. In fact, she says we're *in* solitary ... When we first got together an fell in love she was talkin about losin' face, said she wasn't gonna worry about losin' face with me ... Gonna have to talk to her about that. She's tryin' to save her face, but she told me she was gonna lose face! ... So, I'm gonna go down South an' catch me a blowfish, an' I'm gonna bring it right back on land! ... She's gonna have to live with it ... ”

Crosses to chair, pauses with gun, sits ...

Interlude III — Power:

Video — *Manfirepower* — TV **Video — *Womanfirepower* — Screen**
FX — crackling fire underneath

LX — moonlamp, low floor front

[*Manfirepower* — A naked man reclining. It is the Man in a Suit in the space. His body, the bed, on 'fire'. Orange, red, yellow and white. Negative effects. Shot with projections over his body. Not fire at all — La Mama wall, water, tree bark and traffic — transformation of fragments from other video sequences within the show. The inferno turns through cooler colours, blues, greens, the spectrum of the rainbow. He raises his body, writhing, a marbled 'beast', abstracted into a rainbowed mass, 'tempered', then sprawled ... fade to black.]

[*Womanfirepower* — A naked woman reclining. Negative effects. Shot with projections over her body. Her back and buttocks — indistinguishable — marked with a 'blizzard', a snowstorm. A breast, the face of a 'statue' bleed through, and she is visible. Contours/lines (as in *Woman1peace*) mask her body. 'Ice' turns to 'fire'. Not fire at all — projections of La Mama wall, water, tree bark and traffic — transformation of fragments from other video sequences within the show. She sits, changes position, 'staggering' movements. Immolation, an abstracted mass. Repose, and the full spectrum of the rainbow is her back, her body ... fade to black]

Video projected/played simultaneously

Spoken at the microphone, sitting ...

"I have cursed your forehead your belly your life

I have cursed the streets your steps plod through
The things your hands pick up
I have cursed the inside of your dreams

I have frozen you in the soul of your body
Iced you in the depths of your life

Your skin is damp all over
Your skin sweats out waters of the great fear
Your armpits reek far and wide of the crypt

Animals stop dead as you pass
Dogs howl at night, their heads raised towards your house
You can't run away
You can't muster the strength
Your fatigue makes a lead stump in your body
Your fatigue is a long caravan
Your fatigue stretches out into the desert
Your fatigue is inexpressible
Someone has slobbered on your descendants
Someone has slobbered on the laugh of your child
Someone has walked slobbering on the face of your domain

The world moves away from you
Yours is the stench of Otherness

I am rowing
I am rowing
I am rowing against your life
I am rowing
I split into countless rowers
To row more strongly against you

You fall into blurriness
You are out of breath
You get tired before the slightest effort

I row
I row
I row

You go off drunk, tied to the tail of a mule
Drunkenness like a huge umbrella that darkens the sky
And assembles the flies
Drunkenness no longer leaves you
Lays you out to the left
Lays you out to the right
Lays you out on the stony ground of the path
I row
I row
I am rowing against your days

You enter the house of suffering

I row
I row
On a black blindfold your actions are recorded
On the great white eye of a one-eyed horse your future is
rolling

I AM ROWING”

I've bought Myself a New Toy:

FX — Machine gun fire, fading down under text ...

LX — floor front

*Man stands, walks, runs, puts red fishnet tights on head ... he's 'The Revenger'
... dives and rolls into the space ...*

“I've bought myself a new toy. Its called 'The Revenger' — a compact disc that I slip into the dashboard of my Mazda 626 when ever I feel like...*relaxing*. Press the button and you hear the sound of machine gun fire as you crawl from *red light to red light*. The other day, I had the gun belting out when I saw a prostitute waiting on the curb. (*Lifts tights above forehead, legs trail like a Jester*) Red fish-net tights, blond pony

tail. She made me tremble. So I wound down the window. She looked beautifully shocked. It wiped the smile off her Max Factor lips. O, I wanted her lips. She ran away. Did she really think I'd fill her lovely soft belly with bullets. I followed her for half a mile down the road and when I caught up with her fishy legs I said, 'What's your name?' Tremor. "Well Tremor you make me tremble. How about a 'massage'?" Ohhh, the thought of a massage during a massacre appealed ... like perfume in the trenches, or pristine peach satin under the rags of a whore in Tokyo — where I sometimes go to do business. We had great sex on the back seat — with the engine running so I could keep the machine gun firing. Her red tights lay like a puddle of blood on the floor. She said I hurt her. I said I pay to hurt her. (*Removing the tights, stretching them across his chest*) And I'll tell ya another thing — I don't like em with stretch marks on their stomachs — you know what I'm sayin' — its a turn-off, isn't it, to think of tarts as Mothers ..."

(*Incredulous*) "The next morning, her hair was all over my seat covers ... "

Therapy/Psychopathological Test:

Man brings boom stand and microphone centre stage

FX — microphone on – wide, some reverb

Text partly improvised ... Speaking at mic, hint of a game show host, seminar leader etc.

"(To Techies — they answer 'no', mumbblings, complaint ...) We right to go? Good. Welcome, ladies and gentleman. Thanks for ... um ... *volunteering* this evening. Look, I'd like to allay any anxieties you may have about proceedings tonight by saying that we have conducted the experiment previously on, um ... numerous occasions and I can assure you, you will experience no pain, or ... (*mumble/cough*) ... or side effects whatsoever. On the television screen in front of you will appear a number of words in sequence punctuated by the word 'blink'. I'd like you to consider each word carefully and take the opportunity to blink slowly when directed. This allows for a relaxation of the mind and emotional responses, and assures accurate monitoring — which, by the way, is being done quite unobtrusively by sensors in the seat of your chair. We've found this far more comfortable, and frankly, considerably cheaper than cumbersome head-gear and CAT scan apparatus. Before the sequence appears — in fact we can do this now, can't we? (*techies again*) — good. I'd like you to take your right hand and place it gently but firmly just above the knee of the left leg of person sitting to your right. Confusing, isn't it. Good. Now, take your left hand, if you will, and place it in the same manner above the right knee of the person sitting to the left.

When you observe a word on the television which you consider to have *positive* associations, I'd like you use your *right* hand to squeeze — again, gently but firmly — the thigh of the person to your right. When you observe a word you consider to have *negative* associations, I'd like you to use your *left* hand to squeeze the thigh of the person to your left."

Now, during the sequence, I'll be preparing for the next stage of the experiment — which, by the way, is called 'Predicting Dangerousness'. We'll be happy to discuss your results with you at the end of the evening. Please focus on each word and make clear responses where possible. Thankyou."

Video — Therapytexts — TV Therapist — Screen

projected/played simultaneously

[**Therapytexts** — single words, white on a black background, framed in a white border, changing in sequence. Punctuated with the word 'Blink' in Blue. A version of a clinical test used to determine psychopathological traits in people, called 'Predicting Dangerousness'. A list of words are shown to 'patients' wired up to brain-scan technology which monitors brain activity in specific regions according to their responses to the words. Here, the list was: "chair/smile/raid/lemon/blood — Blink — seed/raft/table/La Mama — Blink — rape/poor/knife/bath/carrot/death — Blink — 20% off/flood/cut/gun/B&H Aust. — Blink — woman/tree/sink/feel — Blink — rain/slut/run/money/light — Blink — shame/sing/pig/hair/pill/MSAC — Blink — man/fly/cake/lose/sex/Goundrey — Blink — land/arse/dog/cry/VUT — Blink — horse/god/bird/dance — Blink "]

[**Therapist** — Fade up on hands of a man clasped in front of a black suit, red tie ... Xfade to the 'older man' seen in previous sections: glasses, half his face in shadow, against a blue background. Head, shoulders and hand to chin in the frame. POV audience/camera. He smiles, turns his head to the side in thought, 'listens', nods quietly, looks 'troubled', quizzical ... fade to black.]

Man changes costume through above projections — black slip, black fishnet stockings, blonde wig ... some banter with audience while changing ...

Tremor – My Own Butcher:

LX — front chair, overheads behind, red, blue, moonlamp

Finally sitting on back of chair — as 'Tremor' — legs together, hands on knees ... no change in voice, just disposition ... quietly, simply ...

"I am paid by men to let them put a part of their body into a part of my body. What they don't know is they are fucking a ghost. They are fucking a ghost because my soul is elsewhere. You could say I have lost my self, which poses an interesting philosophical question. If I have lost my self, how can I sell my self? The answer is I sell my body in parts, some more expensive than others. I am my own butcher. Most of my customers are businessmen with wives at home; they spill a day's worth of wheeling and dealing into me and I receive it like sewage dumped at the bottom of the sea. Some want to beat me, some want me to pretend to love them, others to be violent with me in a way that would be unacceptable anywhere else. Most want me to pretend to be someone I'm not. Most people spend the whole of their lives pretending to be someone they're not ...

My most recent customer brought his terrier dog with him — it whimpered under the bed for the ten minutes it took. After he had finished he said, 'Are you alright then Duke?'. I don't know why he doesn't fuck his dog for free. Sometimes he pays me extra to fuck in his car to the sound of rattling guns — but I survive all the wars they rage on me. And I have never gone gently into those long nights of aftershave, tears, spunk, sweat, beer and skin ... ”

“One always feels great embarrassment at being ‘loved’.”

The Revenger — I Prefer the Car:

LX — front chair, overheads behind, moonlamp

Man simply removes wig, opens his legs ...

“I like it better in the car — we've fucked through three massacres together, the city pulsing outside, rain, the wipers going backwards and forwards — like myself — and the guns setting up a nice rhythm, her face squashed into the seat, knickers on my briefcase, doner kebab and a thousand cigarettes afterwards to set me up for the day to come, and the days after that ... Ahhh, but tomorrow's always another day ... know what I'm sayin'? ... because you can always *buy* something. (*Picking up a mobile, standing ...*) Recently, I bought myself a teleansafaxaphone ... all on the mobile! When I made the message, I got Duke — that's my dog — to bark three times by standing on his tail. Peter from the office called and said something clever like, 'My wife never sounds like that when I do it to her!' ... I like to fuck or wank to the sound of the answering machine playing back all my messages: Its better if they are coming live down the line — I put em on PA — sends a real jolt up my spine: Know what I'm saying? I'm saying, never let it be said I'm not inventive with my relationships ...

Sometimes days, weeks, go by and there are no messages at all. I thought it would change my life, that it would be full of people trying to contact me. And nobody drops round any more. I've done this all wrong ... (*Sitting again*) Needing things is like being tortured. You are open to suggestion and your resistance is low. So the torturer beats you senseless and says, 'You need gold taps on your bath don't you? And you say Yes, Yes, and then he says, 'What you really need is a Cornish Pasty right up your arse, isn't that right?' Yes, yes, I need a Cornish pasty right up my arse.

I'm a yes-sayer.

I am more needy now than I have ever been ... ”

Master of My Own Fuck-ups:

Video — *Fishylegsdance* — TV
Saturdaynightdeathdaddy – Screen

Video projected/played simultaneously

[*Fishylegsdance* — Close-up on feet in black fishnet stockings in high heels. Tiny movements ripple through the feet and toes. Cross fade to legs, dancing Salsa, lit from the side. Black slip, thighs, knees, calves and feet in frame. Black background. Montage of sequences, stepping, turning, twirling and kneeling to reveal the full leg and tops of the stockings. The ‘female’ part is danced. The legs are those of the Man in a Suit as seen in the guise of the blonde wig, slip and gun in *Stairsequence* or as ‘Tremor’(above)]

[*Saturdaynightdeathdaddy* — The ‘older man’. Negative effect. White suit, green tie, glasses hollowing his eyes out to white. Black background. He ‘dances’ – swaying, swaggering, falling to the floor. Image xfades with a blurred version of him at a distance — fades to a slither, then black. He ‘disappears’. And returns. A strange ‘Travolta-like’ pose, falls. POV from floor — his feet/shoes, looking up the length of his body. His head peers out over the bottom of the frame. Struggles to stay in shot, and falls, slowly out of frame. Black.]

“But, I want to be Master of my own Fuck-Ups. I mean, look at my Dad (that’s him over there). A welder. Bust his gut eleven hours a day in the dark with fire and metal. (*Stands, walks slowly around back of chair, collects his belongings, bit by bit, a ‘wreck’ ...*) Dreaming up songs about his life, stories about people he knew, thoughts and feelings that went through his head while he sweated and ached. Sang em in the pub dressed in a suit the colour of granite. He was buried in that suit. Well I don’t want to be a stone. There’s too much fucking hurt in it, too many late night tearful conversations about how to get by in it. *Thoughts and feelings and songs* won’t buy me a future. I prefer a faster life. In the City, as long as you are bringing in the money, you can be a ... a hamburger and nobody will blink. Its what you’re *worth* that matters ... ”

“O, yeah, I get plenty of invitations. I got an invite to a charity ball. Tonight. They are raffling off a helicopter. If I win, I might just walk right into the blades of its propeller. If I don’t, I’ll just get rat-arsed on champagne, and watch the puffed chiffon of shimmering blondes ooze small clues to men in bow ties. And all for babies with bone disease!”

Man collects clothes etc.

You Know What I'm Saying:



Video — as above, continues

LX — video light, projection partly over Man, moonlamp

“Oh, *you* know what I'm saying ... I mean, have you ever wanted to run a fifty cent piece down the side of a gold Bentley? ... eh? ... Have you ever wanted to stick a pin in your teacher's apple while everyone was at — recess ? Heyyyy? Yeh ... (*inhales through his teeth*) ... Have you ever seen someone approaching on the street and wanted to dive head first into their sweaty, shadowy, hidden parts: the pleats in their skirt, the creases in their shirt, the tiny folds in their not-too-much-but-just-enough bristling bare skin? Know what I'm saying? I'm saying, have you ever wanted to climb up, swing a leg over and play the Horsey Game!? Yeeeeeeehaaaaa!!! I'm talkin' Agrarian Pleasures!! I'm talking Equestrian fucking Delights!!! I'm talking jamming the lurid finger up the bums of Housewives and Bank Executives and Real Estate Agents and Promotions Girls and Social Workers and Jammy Fucking Stock Brokers and getting a whole lotta schtonkin' NAKED BEAUTY goin' on!!!! Know what I'm saying?!!! Course you do ...

I'm talkin' crisco and black plastic. I'm talkin' naked jelly twister. I'm talkin' bollocks in peanut butter and honey with banana porridge for breakfast!!! DO YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING? (*pathetic*) Yeah, course you do ... ”

(*Picking up the gun*) “I feel frightened and I don't know why.”

“Last night, I dreamed I got sucked into the telly ... ”

Video — returns to reverse sequence of *Houselights/Brollyrain* (see above — *Opening*)

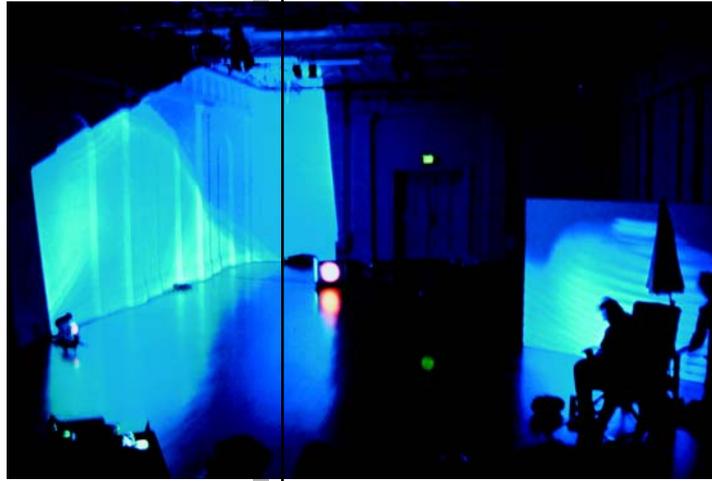
FX — wingflutters, **Spooky**

LX — moonlamp goes out with *Houselights* on video

Man slides Screen open, leaves, closes it behind, video and FX continue + rain ... fades to ...

BLACK OUT — End

Rapture III



Devised and performed by **Barry Laing**
Dancehouse, Melbourne, January, 2001 (1 hour)

Notes to the Script

Rapture III

Devised and Performed by Barry Laing
Dancehouse, Melbourne, 26–28 January, 2001

Rapture III was the third in the series of solo performances, and was examined on 28 January, 2001 as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

A collocation of texts, image, music and movement.

Rapture. Abduction. Transportation.

Ring the bell that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There's a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in ...

— Leonard Cohen, *The Future*

This project was developed in collaboration with:

Nik Pajanti — Lighting design
Jacqui Tamlyn — Lighting operation
Darren Steffen — Sound design
Dan Witton — Sound processing/design
David Do Santos — Sound operation
Barry Laing — Video design/editing
David Williams — Video operation
Dan Witton — Dramaturgical assistance
Jacqui Tamlyn — Production manager

'The Techies':
David Do Santos
Jacqui Tamlyn
David Williams

Performers on video:
Angela Abella
Kim Cullen
Peter Fraser
Barry Laing

Texts by: Barry Laing, and adapted from and utilising texts by Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, Raymond Carver, H el ene Cixous, Deborah Levy, Ivan Goll, Henri Michaux, Tom Waits and Italo Calvino

Music by: Moreschi, Leonard Cohen, Dan Witton, Darren Steffen, Charlie Haden/
Pat Metheny, Peggy Lee, Unknown Artist (*La Mer*) & Afrocuban Allstars

Rapture III was generously supported by:

B&H Australia VUT MSAC Organic Wholefoods Brunswick Dancehouse

Special Thanks to: Jeff Blair — B&H Australia, Liz Jones & all at La Mama, Gina Harris & all at MSAC, Mark Minchinton — VUT, Emily and Jo — Dancehouse, Angela Abella, Kim Cullen, Peter Fraser, Chris Harris, Scott Kinnear — Organic Wholefoods, John McCormick, Luke Pither, Darren Steffen, Jacqui Tamlyn, Dan Witton, Costa's Mitre 10, Tasman AV, David Do Santos & David Williams

The major changes and developments of the work in devising *Rapture III* were further substantial additions and adaptations of the script, changing the performance venue to Dancehouse, Melbourne, and the inclusion of three projection sites for video (there were two in *Rapture II*).

The move to Dancehouse arose over a concern to work with the video projections in a larger space. Issues of scale and the potential domination of the video projections over the live performer, spoken text, and the possibility for the audience to 'see' or 'take in' images as a 'whole' induced the move. I was also concerned to see what impact a larger space might have on some of the movement vocabulary for certain episodes, and to explore different 'measures of scale' and 'amplification' in relationship with some of the (faux) 'epic' aspects of the performance. Being always 'inside' the process of devising and performing the work, it is difficult to weigh the outcomes of this 'experiment' from an audience's point of view. As a performer, I lamented the loss of the intimacy of La Mama, but enjoyed the gains in complexity and space for interaction with three-way video projections, particularly in 'Interlude — Power'. Although the space was foreshortened, mostly for technical reasons — the 'throw' of the projectors, sight lines, and lighting requirements — a certain amount of 'depth of field' was possible by positioning the television deep in the space, and projecting the new video source along a side wall and overlapping the rear wall.

Entering from the double doors into the space — with double doors open onto the street and heavy traffic behind them — occasional retreats into the darkness behind the screen, and two main uses of live video, all constituted a strategy to work with the depth and scale of the space in literal and imaginal terms. From the beginning through to the end of the performance there was a kind of 'form' or movement from an 'outside' to an 'inside' and variously across this threshold. The 'infinite regress' produced by the live video loop in 'Is That All There Is?', and the final 'fall' inwards conjured by the live video section called 'Sucked Into the Telly', were part of an attempt to situate the figure of the 'Man in a Suit' as 'strung between worlds'.

An 'Opening' in two parts in *Rapture III* replaced the opening sequence at La Mama for *Rapture II*. *Carltonrun*, *Stairsequence* and *Wallmovie* (see Appendix IV, p. 197) were re-edited and re-positioned (the latter two combined) as a way of bringing them forward into *Rapture III* and keeping the development of the project close to its 'shadows'. Substantial re-structuring of the episodes placed the pool sequences on video towards the end of the performance framed by different text. New sections called 'Memories' and 'Coroner' were added, while 'I've Bought Myself a New Toy', 'Therapy/Psychopathological Test', 'Tremor — My Own Butcher', and 'Revenger — I Prefer the Car' were omitted.

The audience were provided with episode titles as part of their free program.

Texts are a combination of original compositions by Barry Laing, and extracts from, and adaptations of, texts by others listed on p. 107.

Video documentation of the performance of *Rapture III*, together with all of the video sequences projected within the show, is provided on the accompanying VHS tape. See Appendix IV for a guide to the video materials and time codes for specific episodes and sequences.

See also 'Writings on Performance II: Physical Practice/Imaginal Play', pp. 165–186, for further examples and elaborations of considerations in devising and performing each of the three solos.

Opening I — Je Suis Acteur:

Darkness ...

Large TV on floor upstage left, large screen standing right of centre downstage ... double doors back wall centre. Blue walls. Video projected on Screen, left Wall of space, and TV

Video — Wall — Transport

FX — on video — Train horn + Leaf-blower and Traffic (outside)

[**Transport** — A montage of trains, negative effects, strobed, blasts the length of the side wall — left. Blue, purple, black and orange. POV head-on/right. Crossing-bells, train horn distended, blast of sound as train passes. Looped wheel rattles trail off as video fades to black. Train: transportation. ‘Metaphor’ — etymology = ‘transport’.]

As image & FX fade, double doors open. Man in a suit (with another underneath), sunglasses, silhouetted/backlit, standing, legs spread, holding huge leaf-blower. It’s running. Blows shredded paper into space from double doorway. Doors are open behind onto the street/traffic. In the hallway, antique chair on skis with beach umbrella attached is obscured at this point. Man begins to enter ... all framed in the hallway ...

Man trips, falls, wrestles ridiculously with leaf-blower ... a fuck-up ... tangled on the floor ...

“Shit!!!”

A pause. Techies double take, go running to assist ... as they run, one dons a medical cap or mask, one a white coat, one’s wearing white sneakers/hospital shoes ...

“Um, help me!”

Helped up by techies after pleading ... then abuse ... leaf-blower goes on again, chord tangled ... farce ...

“Don’t touch me!!!”

Man plays the ‘shitty guy’ as techies bustle, organise, fix, clean up ...

“(To techies, to audience, and to himself, ridiculous French accent) Merde! What? Oh, you can laugh. Its alright for you, you have humour! I can’t laugh ... No, its no joke ... I can’t laugh ... (pathetic) I have no humour. What? You fink you know somefing? Imbeciles! Take this. Go on, oui, laugh at me!!! Bon! OK, you can laugh. Get off! Its no joke. No. I can’t laugh!!! Shitty life. Ou et la Music? L’Opera? Ma Reverie? Merde ... ! Ou et le cafe? Ou et la mer? Ou et l’ Horizon? Shitty life ... you have no vision! I have a vision!! ... Ou et le Theatre?!!!! (a tantrum) JE SUIS ACTEUR!!!” etc.

A techie slaps him.

As Man speaks this text, techies 'assist', scrambling, get rid of leaf-blower, close rear doors, chair and ropes into position, tape player in place. Finally almost puppeting him into position, costume, disposition towards 'bouffon' for Second 'Opening' ... He gives one techie a VHS tape, smiles, "Play this", pays him — they resume positions ... commence ...

Opening II — Everywhere a Stage Disappears:

FX — Ave Maria, on CD player

Man, now in hunched position, hump, limp, claw foot, dragging chair on skis on long rope with large beach umbrella attached. CD player, briefcase & small umbrella on chair, other props ... Enters, walks in a way, feigning difficulty, pausing to cough, hypochondria, falling down ... a bad leg, swearing — "shit", effort, pain, faux smiles for the audience ...

Video — TV — Adapted montage from previous show, Rapture II ... Carltonrun



[**Carltonrun** – Sequence from *Rapture II* sped up 150%. Text added. FX – grabs of audience laughter from previous season edited/looped and overlaid. Fast fade up from black on feet walking. Text: "*Rapture I*". Black shiny shoes. Black suit. POV eye level of the Man who walks, looking down. Lifts to montage of streetscape – Lygon Street, Carlton — back to feet. Up again – traffic lights, sound of the 'walk' signal, buildings, cafes, people on the footpath. Turns corner. A run. Footfall, hard breathing. Swerving through people...arrives at flexi-teller. Fills screen. Fast pin entry, withdrawal request — \$2000. "Sorry. There are insufficient funds for that transaction. Please contact your bank." A gun held to the flexi-teller. Still POV of man. Now hand and gun always in the frame. Rain on the lens. Text: "*I*". Man runs, crosses street, avoiding traffic. Continues down opposite footpath, laughter, turns corner, turns again ... into La Mama: across carpark, yard – an Ambulance blasts through frame — up outside steps. A hand reaches for door to Office ...Text: "*III*"... fades to black.]

FX — on video, Ave Maria on CD player continues ...

As he passes, Man pauses to watch the TV — pops some pills — the rope goes slack — his back to the audience, smiles and complicity with them over his shoulder, mocking both the images, and them — “Ooooooh!. Oooooow, lovely, LUVELY. Mmm ... uuugh! Uuh, ooo, that got me! ... Move me, move me ... Oooooo” etc

... continues journey into space. A gun appears in his hand. Held to his own chin. A hostage to himself ... playing it, mocking ‘Self’ and audience ... punctuated with hypochondria ... moving forward ...

“Help me, help me ... help me ... don’t hurt me, Ooooh, hurt me, hurrrtt me! ... Hold me, hold me, please hold me ... Fix me, Ohhh, fix me ... Save me, save me, saaave meeee ... Fuck me, fuck me ... Love me, love me, love me ... ”

Smiles at audience. Pauses.

Man finishes journey into space, dragging chair and screen; unties each, places screen in position, then chair and umbrella ... through ...

FX — Grinding door, closing as screen slides into place ... into wingbeats

Video — **Screen** — **Wallstairs**

FX — Wingbeats merge with big wind



[Wallstairs — A composite of *Wallmovie* and *Stairsequence* from *Rapture II*. *Wallmovie* — (Fast strobing/working camera against the strobe of La Mama brick wall. Diagonal across the frame. Heavy texture in and out of blurring. Blue. Negative effect + strobe.) is overlaid/superimposed on *Stairsequence* — (‘Man in a Suit’, wearing sunglasses, with umbrella and laptop case enters down stairs (in La Mama) ... Repetition of his descent in various guises: same, with pratfalls tripping and smashing head on wall ... Then, black slip, fishnet stockings and high heels, blonde wig and a gun. Red fishnets on his head and a gun ... waiting for his own next arrival. On each occasion, the figure moves to open door at bottom of stairs, fades, and vanishes as next version of him begins down stairs. Finally, ‘Man in a Suit’ again, pauses bottom of stairs, vanishes ...) Text added at intervals throughout: “Tonight ... I am an actor. Don’t trust me. I am a liar. Don’t trust me. Re-member me.”]

Finishing placing things, emerging from darkness, looking at the empty stage behind audience

(Standing upright, ruefully) “Ahhhh, everywhere a stage disappears ...”

(An outburst, citing “Opening I”) “JE SUIS ACTEUR!”

He slaps himself ...

The Fatigue of One Self:

(Recovering) “I can rarely glimpse another of my selves without slapping him down. No, really. Some people have interior monologues. I prefer slapping.

(Dabbing his lip with his kerchief) “But perhaps we are not made for just one self. We are wrong to cling to it. This prejudice in favour of unity, identity. We want too much to be someone. *(Dropping his shoulders, a change in voice)* Oh, the fatigue, the terrible fatigue of a day or life lived in the effort, the tension, necessary to keep the same Self through the continual temptations to change it !”

“But I am never consistent with my selves.”

“I must, therefore, tell you my tale in many ways — not one — for I contain multitudes ...

(A hint of Melodrama) The demon is plural. My name is Legion.”

Unpacking image of Bouffon, peeling off outer suit revealing pin-stripe suit beneath, turning off Ave Maria, placing CD player, padding face down with white kerchief, little visitations of hypochondria, bouffon ... etc small falling, struggling movements, straining, fixed positions, undressing ... as he speaks ...

“In the beginning, there were ten fold
Two of me: confused, deranged, fighting
Strange battles inside the fortress.
Tiny feet paddled multiple Selves
Down a corridor: a mouth older than time
Formed lips whispering, ‘Not Happy’.

But time is for Dead Men.
The second ten of me poured
Tiny stones down on the roof of a
Mind brighter than the
Night from which they fell *(pops some pills)*: my
Heart hopeful, in waiting for
Imagination;
A place where it rains.

The first ten of me,
Fearful of the light, retired to their
Long night so dark they lost
Themselves in retreat.
Ten of me remain:
Garrulous and laughing, we are
Gathered around the empty hole
Where a key was, now lost.
One sleeps while another dreams:
Another sings, another
Dances Tango. Yet another
Howls mercy, another rides
Desire. Seven is a Mystery,
Eight carries with Anger, Nine
Mirrors our delight, and
Ten ... ten travels between
Worlds of infinite wonder:
There are bridges, stairways, and wings.”

(*Aside*) “Forgive me, I’m an aspirant poet”

“Even now, there is a crowd inside me screaming, ‘There is not one Self. There are not ten, or twenty. There is no Self. ‘Me’ is only a position in equilibrium. I am never anything but provisional ...”

A Place Where it Rains:

FX — CD player — rain, then desk — rain, continues/x fades with rain on CD player ... **On video** — Leonard Cohen, *One Minute Prologue*

[**Lyrics** — “I bin listenin’ to all the dissention. I bin listenin’ to all the pain. And I feel that no matter what I do for you, its gonna come back again. But I think that I can heal it. I think that I can heal it. I’m a fool, but I think that I can heal it — with this song ...”]

Video — *Brollyrain* — Screen
projected simultaneously

Video — *Brollyrain* — Wall

[**Brollyrain** — Negative/inverted image of Man in a Suit under an open umbrella. Blue mottled background (trees). ‘Gold’ suit. It is raining only from beneath the umbrella. He is his own rainstorm ...]

Man rising from chair a ‘small dance’ with Suit jacket on a hanger and fold-up umbrella ... video on flat screen partially projected over him.

Physical/imaginal worlds for the dance — young/old, crowd, circus — passive figure to things that visit him, bent figure to one side, imbalance, 1000 policeman's 'no', moving, a 'grey figure emerging through rain', little shocks/shots, receiving the 'bullet', stones on the shoulders, hailing a bus, holding a woman ... horse/Spanish dancer ... moving, breaking up the suppositions of gesture/leading/pointing/dividing/undoing ... a breeze ... fire, letting the face travel ... the silo, space, light, the 'rat's hole' ... the centaur ... (the dance continues while text spoken) ...

FX — Cohen's *One minute Prologue* ends, x fade with rain from desk ... continues

Video — *Brollyrain* ends

(To audience, still moving) "What do I do now? Tell me? ... Trouble is, I do not know what it is I am allowed to do. I do not know what it is that I want, that you want. Hold me. I do not know what it is I am allowed to be. Oh, Hold me. Hold me ... *(sighing for bodily presence)*"



"I guess I could shuffle about this space trying to find words that would make you *like* me ... *(cough, cough)* Oh yeah, I can see your eyes settling on my suit like a bunch of half starved flies. If I was in less than a good mood, you know, you'd make me feel weird under my suntan *(pathetic, pouting)* ... You — because you desire something — you have loss and separation in you. You are loss. And yet you are silent witness. Answer me now, re-member me; how can one stand in the light? Ahhh, but fulfilments and answers are rarely spoken. We should take care our relationship is not reduced to one long complaint."

FX — Rain, slowly fading

(Moving stage left, placing coat, returning centre) Think of my language as a skin: I rub my language against you. It is as if I had words instead of fingers, or fingers at the tips of my words. But perhaps you wait for me where I do not want to go: you love me where I do not exist. So let us become a little detached, let us undertake the apprenticeship of a little distance ... call it, '*coitus reservatus*', and if I relinquish my anxiety? — pretending all the while

that I am not a responsible subject ... ? I am inviting you to suffer pain or epiphanies with me, but *without pressure* ... that is exactly what *delicacy* is.”

FX — Rain out

“Sometimes we need the rain.”

Clicks fingers, falls, blinks ... holds partially crouched position — an ‘old man’ ...

Shiftin’ Sands:



Moving to chair, sitting ... older ... American accent ...

“Yeah, yeah, I’ll tell ya ... now I’m gonna be around a little bit more often, so you gonna have to play by *my* rules ... ”

LX — light overhead, darkness all around ...

Video — *Daddy’s Dead* — TV

[*Daddy’s Dead* — An ‘older man’. Negative effect. White suit, green tie, glasses hollowing his eyes out to white. Black background. POV from floor — his feet/shoes, looking up the length of his body. A head peers out over the bottom of the frame. Struggles to stay in shot, and falls, slowly out of frame. Black.]

(Sitting ... softer, voice from a distance) “There ain’t no use ploughin’ that field, Boy! Them sands gonna keep shiftin’, shiftin’, shiftin’ ... Ain’t no use ploughin’ that field, Boy ... Yer Daddy, an his daddy before him, and his daddy’s cousins’ uncles’ brothers’ daddy before him all tried to plough that field, Boy, an they all failed ... Look at yer horse, Boy! He’s lame ... His back’s broke, ribs hangin’ out,

got no teeth, Boy ... He's lame! ... There's a hot wind blowin'... Them sands gonna keep shiftin, shiftin', shiftin ... ”

(Drops accent) “May the weeds in my garden blossom as flowers in yours, Old Man ... ”

Crow Shooting:

Rising with fold-up umbrella ... breath ... hand left hovering in fixed point, umbrella raised, pause for this change of 'space' ...

FX — Dan Witton, **Spooky**, [fluttering wings, piercing electronic sounds] — continues/merges/fade up Charlie Haden/Pat Metheny, **Spiritual** [Guitar, double bass. Gentle walking pace]

Man stands, flicks umbrella open ...

Video — Sky on Screen

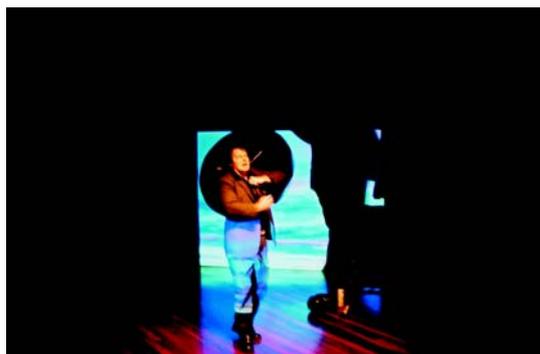
[**Sky** — Huge pink, mauve, blue and orange sky with light clouds above Melbourne. Sunset/twilight. Montage sequence, clouds merging, sky moving right to left on screen.]

...down, twirling umbrella, twisting body, gently rocking ... a 'younger' place ... 'spatialisation of memory' ... using gaze outer/inner, and through audience as he speaks the story ... twirling broolly, slow, hiding behind, emerging ... lighter, softer ... into ...

“I was eleven or twelve and sent out to shoot crows that were threatening and killing newborn lambs.

SQUEEZE, DON'T PULL. GOOD SHOT. *(twirlings ... emerging, hiding again 'good shot')*

I lined up a bird in a tree, closed my eyes, squeezed — hoping I'd miss. The bird leaped from the branch, and flew ... *(off to the side, fixed point ... 'broolly copter', above, looking down) ...* and in the long silence after the explosion there was a moment when I came close to vicarious flight. Hope, relief and all of life in an instant. But the wings of the bird buckled. I caught A SINGLE BLACK FEATHER between my fingers as it fell ... *(reaching forward with broolly ... a suggestion of this) ...* A single, black, feather ...



(Silent, still — reaching across body for broly, a wind, big extension looking past and through ‘railings’ ...) Then, through the railings, I saw the flurry of ragged wings for the first time. Blue-metal-glint of the morning sun on his angry bloody feathers. Hangin’ there. Waiting. Beating in slow motion against the sky. Just disappeared ... !

(Broly breaks down — ‘old man’, broly as ‘widows/veil’ ...) Sometimes I see that bird, hangin’ there, hovering, except behind my eyelids now. (Breath, stretching the voice to a whisper) UNWANTED ANIMAL OCCUPANCY!”

Video — out
FX — fade out



(Blink — animal pause ... transform — rolling up the umbrella ... ‘taller’ ... ambiguous genre with the words ...) “I can see, in all its pallid hope, a life that was never quite my own ... but I have glimpsed another world, and I have not yet come to terms with my grief ...”

“STOP THE FLUTTERING, STOP THE FLICKERING LIGHT ... ”

FX — gunshot

Shoots and receives bullet to the head ... rips head with other hand ... ‘falls’ and return ...



I'm a Nation that Mourns:

“My eyes wide open, and it is day, but within me it is the darkest night. Within me? Perhaps no. I open the windows of my eyes, a breeze passes through, each way, undecided. I am drawn in, and out, over the threshold. Day and Night duelling over me, for me, seducing me. I am little but the frontier: neither void nor full presence; I cast the palest of shadows, I have no substance. But, I am moved: staged by demons (and even bad jokes). I stumble, melt, ebb, flow, and fall, and, rising again, I am re-membered with each climatic change. *Rapture*. Strung-between. ‘Subject’ to Everything, or to No-one and to Nothing ... “

(Pouting, pathetic, on the point of tears) “I’m not very happy ... ”

“I’m Crying, I’m Grieving, I’m Mourning. I’m a Relative, I’m a Victim, I’m a Mother ... O, fuck it, I’m a NATION — *I’M A NATION THAT MOURNS!!!*” ... *(Huge expansion, suspension, happy with himself)*

(Non-descript Middle European accent) “Oh, come on you Motherfuckers, what am I running here, a kindergarten ... ?” *(Techies replying, saying in weak chorus ... “We’re a Nation that Mourns!”)*

Gee - Up Horsey (a love song):

LX — overhead, darkness around ...

Simple circling ... then turning in space, rocking, amplifying the space ... with umbrella ... American accent, low voice, then softer, ‘personal’, but conjuring distance/space ... crescendo throughout ...

“You know, I feel like an old horse who keeps stopping at the places its been stopped before — and having stopped, what was there before, what happened, doesn’t happen anymore ...

I’m just the horse at the imaginary fenceline ... Gee-up, horsey ... ain’t nothin’ there no more ...

Just a wide open plain ... mountains on either side.”

“I’m takin’ you up to the high pastures ... Its not a milk-cart you’re hauling no more, just this little ol’ buggy ... Gee-up horsey ... don’t worry. Its just me in this little ol’ buggy. I’m taking you up to the mountains. You’ll have plenty of time there for dreaming and fictions. There ain’t no imaginary fencelines there, nothin’ to fence you in ... I’ll take you up there and leave you there, and you can imagine I’m there with you ... talkin ... sayin, ‘Gee-up horsey’ ... So, Gee-up now, horsey ... ”

“... My horse, he keeps comin’ to an imaginary fenceline, stopping ... gotta turn him round, goin’ ta head South. He comes to another ... gotta turn him again, we’re goin’ in circles ... Gonna have to rewind you, horsey, Gee-up ... ain’t no fences anymore ... Imagine me there, where we’re goin, sayin, ‘Gee-up horsey’ ... so, Gee-up now horsey ... ”

(Low again) “I would really like to know why I always follow the horse whose bridle I am holding.”

FX — **Goodbye Horsey** — piano and bar, dripping water, laughter, gunshots, loud, sharp, repeated ... then, engaged signal ...

Distract Me from Myself:

FX — continues ... engaged signal ...

... moving around space, placing umbrella on chair, back in front of screen ...

“I see myself. I feel the tension, the terror of being strung here between earth and sky. The chord breaks. Wherever there is resistance, there is ‘body’. Gravity kicks in. How to defy it? At the same time, how to fall ... and gain the world?”

“Nope, too hard.”

Video — **Choppertraffic** projected over Man — **Screen** — up sharply after ‘Nope, too hard’

FX — Whirling rotors of a helicopter, traffic, a tram bell, cars

LX — light from video, side light ...

[Choppertraffic — A helicopter hovers and circles in a clear sky, superimposed/merged with traffic — a Melbourne Tram, cars, headlights. Negative/inverse effects. Xfades with close up of rotor blades of the Chopper spinning. An apparently ‘giant’ finger and hand enters frame from top. Bears down on the centre of the rotors, stopping them (... a model helicopter — playing with this illusion of scale). Fade to black]

“ ... I would rather shoot guns and thrust bayonets through flesh to distract me from myself. I would whip, torture, wrestle, drive cars over cliffs to distract me from myself; jump from helicopters, throw hand-grenades, to distract me from myself. I would march right left right screaming orders in my throat, *obeying* orders in my throat, to distract me from myself ... I would fire live rounds ... into a fleeing crowd, to distract me from myself ... I ... would strike out my own eyes to distract me from myself; strike out my eyes to ‘unsee’ what my mind glimpses ahead of time, what my ears whisper, my tongue speaks, despite me, to spite me ... *I am nowhere gathered together*; opposite, neither you nor me, nor death, nor anything else to *talk* to ... But Ohhh, *I would burn, rather than last ...* ”

The Well is Full of Pennies:

Man goes to chair — covers face in white powder, pauses — sings, unaccompanied (from Waits' 'Fall of Troy'), sprawled on chair — techies for a harmony at end ... "Pennies"

"Its the same with men as with horses and dogs; nothin' wants to die. Evelyn James, they killed him again, with guns too big for their hands. Just off St Charles in no-man's land, now they'll have to find their own way home, boys, they'll have to find their own way home ... Why cook dinner, why make my bed, why come home at all? Out the door and through the woods, there's a world where nothin' grows. Its hard to say grace and to sit in the place of someone missing at the table. Mum's hair sprayed tight and her face in her hands, watching TV for answers to me. After all she's only human, and she's tryin' to find her own way home, boys, she's trying to find her own way home ... My legs ache, my heart is sore. The well is full of pennies ..." (chorus from techies)



Interlude — 'Peace':

Abruptly stands, takes box of nectarines, passes out to audience and to techies. Man takes one, eats it, then sitting on chair slowly passes out, falls asleep sprawled in chair, as voiceover speaks the following against the video ...

**Video — Woman2peace — Wall
TV — Moonlamp**

Video — Woman1peace — Screen

Videos projected/played simultaneously

FX — voiceover, pre-recorded + distant water

[Woman2peace — A naked, pregnant woman. Sitting. Negative/inverted effects. Blue-green. Texture of the skin and body something like 'stone', a 'statue', a solid form ... Gentle strobing at first. Camera/POV hunts out the folds of the skin, creases between belly and thigh, partial views of the breasts, collar bone, armpit. Faster camera movements, working with and against the strobe: the armpit is a groin, breast a belly, point of the shoulder a 'mountain', a moonscape ... Mother, child, statue, stone ... in time ... fade to black.]

[Woman1peace — A 'title' fades up top left of frame, white text: "Peace". Fades. A naked woman reclining. No effects. Shot with projection over her body. Open lens, blue light, close to the body. Tight lines from the projector traverse her body horizontally, wrapping around the contours of her form. A kind of 'cartographic' overlay. Montage/xfades of various slow pans the length of her body. Partial views of neck, shoulder, breast and hands. Navel and pubis merge. Linger at the belly, crease of the groin, breasts. Breath. Lines/contours bend and shift. The map, never equivalent with the 'ground', is fluid.]

[Moonlamp — Still of a spherical '70's plastic lamp cover, lit within. Opaque glow through 'string' plastic moulding. Yellow, gold, orange. An artificial 'moon'. Fades in/out]

"Opening the door inside you, I have entered
I am here
I support you
You are no longer abandoned
You are no longer in difficulty
Their strings untied, your difficulties fall
The nightmare that left you haggard is no more
I am shouldering you
With me you place
Your foot on the first step of the endless stairway
Which carries you
Which brings you up
Which fulfils you

I appease you
I am spreading out sheets of peace in you
I am soothing the child of your dream
Surge
To act, I come
Your thoughts of thrust are supported
Your thoughts of failure, weakened
My strength is in your body, slipped inside
... and your face, losing its wrinkles, is refreshed
Sickness no longer makes its way in you
Fever leaves you

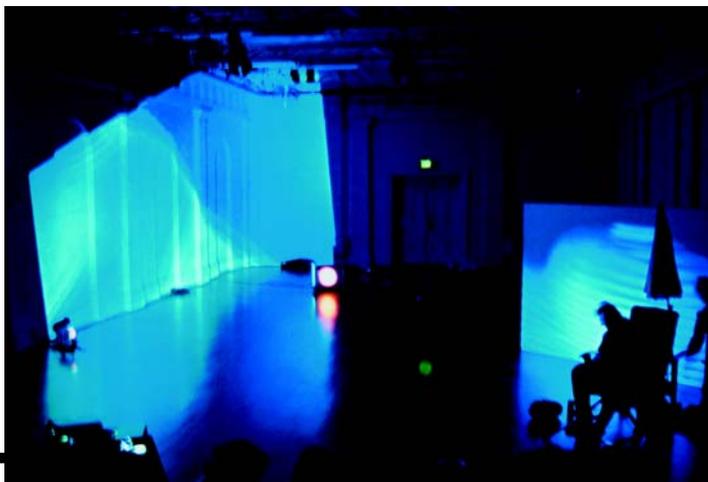
The peace of vaults
The peace of flowering (fields)
Peace comes back into you
The wicked heads around you
Venomous observers of the miseries of the weak
Can see you no longer
Exist no longer

I am a crew of reinforcements
In mystery and a deep line
Like an undersea wake
Like a bass chant
I have come
This chant takes you
This chant raises you up
This chant is animated by many streams
This chant is entirely for you

No more pincers
No more dark shadows
No more fears
There is no more trace of them
There is no need to have them

Where pain was, is cotton
Where scattering was, is solder
Where infection was, is new blood
Where locks were, is open sea ...
The carrying sea and the fullness of you
Intact, like an egg of Ivory

I have bathed the face of your future"



Is That All There Is?:

FX — Peggy Lee — *Is That All There Is?*

[**Lyrics** — “I remember, when I was a little girl, our house caught on fire. I’ll never forget the look on my Father’s face as he gathered me up in his arms and raced through the burning building out onto the pavement. I stood there, shivering in my pyjamas, and watched the whole world go up in flames. And when it was all over, I said to myself, ‘Is that all there is to a fire?’. Is that all there is? Is that all there is? If that’s all there is, my friends, then lets keep dancing. Lets bring out the booze and have a ball, if that’s all there is. When I was twelve years old, my Daddy took me to the circus. The Greatest Show on Earth. There were clowns and elephants and dancing bears, and a beautiful lady in pink tights flew high above our heads. As I sat there watching, I had the feeling that something was missing. And when it was all over, I said to myself, ‘Is that all there is to the circus?’ Is that all there is?... And then I fell in love ...”]

LX — overhead, tight, brighter state

Video — Live camera on Man — Screen

[**Live Video** — Man positioned between live camera, and screen. Projector positioned along this sight line. An 'infinite mirroring' effect is produced. A projection loop which staggers movement in time (like a 'Mexican Wave') — each alternative figure/repetition is 'positive' or 'negative' respectively. Negative effects, strobe. Mauve, white and black.]

Waking, Man rises to dance, dreaming into the world of the song ...



Pleasure dance/small dance ... strange received pleasure of the genre of Cabaret/circus/etc ... so, dance ... from sitting ... to 'see' the burning house ... then, music takes him, from inside/outside, 'makes' him bow, or he bows from within the image ... drawing him into focus/perhaps blurring the 'me' ... 'I am 'danced' — a 'bow', to standing ... a strange shuffling waltz, bouffon, holding and not holding a ten foot woman (here is 'loss'/love/memory/dis-membering/re-membering etc as 'figures' who visit ...) eg. crack of a neck broken ... then into 'Circus section' ... strange imperfect ringmaster/clown — 'clown' inserted here, but — the 'stench' of the circus, circling, looking over shoulder at audience, the thing has him, a strange version of the 'lady in pink' ... then in the refrain, he's on horseback/Christ/ego/sexual epiphany dreamed of ... rider and ridden, love ... out to text ... click fingers to stop, music continues ...

Falling in Love:

Man uses his handkerchief to clean face of white powder ...

“ ... I once fell in love with a policewoman. She was a suburban personality with pretensions. I liked the glint in her eye and the streaks in her hair. She made me feel dumb and lovely. And she was bloody brave. The last time I saw her, before she got engaged to someone else, she said they were training her up in the use of heavy weapons. I said, 'Is there going to be a coup then?' She gave me a mean look that made my penis stir, but I think it put her off me ...

I wake up in the mornings afraid, and there's no-one there to tell ... ”

FX — “ ... and then I fell in love ... ” — out

I Have A Vision:

LX — Single light above, one front, side, blue rear, darkness all around ...

Abrupt change ... swelling, rising ...

“BUT ... I have a *vision* ... I see a City, tall buildings, lights on every street corner — *bright lights* — towers and beacons, pathways and factories ... *billowing smoke!* ... Industry, coal and iron and steel. Prodigious machinery ... Yes, we’ll build a City ... here! ... But, *there are natives in the bushes*, eyes peering from the darkness, all around; sniggering, playing didgeridoos ... You!, scout around in front, I’ll come up behind, round them up. *Drive them into the river!!!* O, the river ... here, at the bend ... We’ll build a Great City; and for you, a *white* house, with *white*, carved posts at the verandah, overlooking the water, and there, a blue boat tied with a rope to a jetty, a *bright blue boat*, tugging at its rope ... Here at the bend ... *Drive them into the river!!* ... We’ll build a City, a State, a Great Nation ... (*Softly, singing, with restrained force*) Ohhh, RULE BRITANNIA!!! ... Do not doubt it! YES, there’ll be joy and laughter aplenty — like a ... *babbling brook*, and tea and biscuits for everyone before bedtime.”

“You!, take the oars, I’ll stand at the prow, we’ll course this Great River ... Row on, I say, onward. Here a mill, there a store-house ... row on ... Luv your work! ... ”

“O, yes, I’m positive! I’m a yes-sayer. YES, YES, YES, YES, YES!!! Positive. Never said no in my life except to say, ‘Yes, *no, really* I luv your work!’”

“I’m positive. Positive. I’m HIV positive.”

Man falls

Memories:

Video — *La Mer* — Screen

FX — on video

[*La Mer* — Popular French ‘variety’ song — *La Mer*. ‘Nostalgia’. Intro with black video. Fast fade up on white sand. A beach. Pan up to feet, legs, full body of two women in sun hats and full-piece bathers walking along the beach in time with the music. POV from behind. Negative effect, strobing, short movements of camera. Pull back to reveal a tourist catamaran, other people on the beach. Change in music/new verse. Fast strobing of boats on the water. Blurring the ‘scene’. Working camera with/against the strobe. Pink water, orange, red boats. Black. Blue. Occasionally overlapping the beach. Fast ‘stills’ of people on the sand interwoven. Final chorus/refrain — a return / xfade to the two women on the beach ... fade to black as epilogue to song concludes.]



Rising to his feet, a cough, a bad leg ... Man limps to the chair, where, sitting, he clicks his fingers and a techie in a Hawaiiin shirt brings him a drink with an Umbrella in it. Techie puts an orange hat on for him. He pays her.

As the music rises, techie stays, opens the beach umbrella, spins it overhead ...



“ ... O, I have memories of the seaside! Swimming and sailing and picnics and parties and young girls in polka dot skirts with ice-creams and knowing smiles. Ohhh, yes, there’s a crowd cheering from the pavilion, everyone’s happy, a brass band is playing in my mind, and I’m twirling the thingy at the front of the Parade!!! ...

Ohhh, and I have memories of the *CIRCUS!* where, rushed by a clown with a bucket full of water, I fell through the wooden seating in terror only to open my eyes to spiraling confetti in colours I had not yet imagined. I remember the rhythms of work and the smell of my leather satchel, and I remember play, and the words of poets sent from lovers before they ever loved me. I remember — when the warm winds come swirling in — I remember a place with a heart. People, and images, and words that were blessings.”

Coughing/hyperchondria, milking it ... Umbrella twirling ceases ... techie leaves

Video/FX — fades

Cough, cough ... cough

(Miraculous recovery) “Maybe its the music coming in through the window ... but I feel a bit down tonight. No, really. I’ve been feeling like this for some time ...

(A change, sitting forward, removing his hat, simply) “No matter what time you get home, no matter ... Come to see me ... If you do, then I’ll know what is happening ... ”



Interlude II — ‘Confessions’:

Video — *Womanconfessions* — Wall Screen Video — *Manconfessions* — Screen

TV — *Slowmoon*

Video projected/played simultaneously

FX — scratched record — CD Player, + low level wind — desk



[Womanconfessions — A naked woman on a bed of crumpled sheets. Negative/inverted effects. Blue. Strobing. Camera/POV spirals, turning upside down, returning. Whole body fills the frame, then legs, feet, silver hair, sharp shadow along the lines of the body pass over into the folds in the sheets ... turning again ... fade to black.]

[Manconfessions — A title fades up top left of frame, white text: “Confessions”. Fades. A naked man on a bed of crumpled sheets. It is the Man in a Suit in the space. Negative/inverted effects. Blue-green. Gentle strobing. Camera/POV hovers over a hand, behind a back, the buttocks, thigh, a bent knee. Close-up on face, closed eyes, ‘elephant-like’ texture of the skin. A white eye opens. Folds in the flesh of the neck ... a ‘ghosted’, open, full frontal view of the man ... fade to black.]

[Slowmoon — Footage of a ‘harvest moon’ shot with a fixed tripod. Fades up quickly to centre frame. Moon traverses black sky and exits frame top left across duration of this sequence.]

A techie delivers mic on a boom stand — Man pays her — Man sits simply delivering text intimately over mic, soft, ‘new’, previously unheard ‘voice’ ...

“I try to dream about women who have loved me, but they refuse to appear ...”



“I attempt to draw the other towards me, all the while standing firm in my own contradictory discourse of ‘opening’, not really knowing what it is to love, to be in love ... I’ve been looking for Her, waiting for her, as if when she arrived, so would I. It seems we wait for someone else to change things for us. To sacrifice their life for us, to somehow voice our most secret desires, our hopes and yearnings for us. We wait to be made brave by someone else’s courage. We wait and wait. But, really, perhaps I’ve been waiting for ‘me’ — and I simply haven’t known what would shake the foundations of my solitude, the fixed, lonely foot in me: the clenched jaw, the taut buttocks, the tight chest ... the masks with which I have divided myself. It occurs to me that I have *already* died, *already* lost love, *already* been abandoned, *already* felt the pain of annihilation, already forgotten my own dreamings ... Ohhh, I’ve been crying and crying and crying as if to give voice to my pain would somehow bring compassion down upon me. From where, I don’t know ...”

“I carry the scent of so many women in my armpits, my tears are the jewels they put on, or took off, for me. I want to repent for the times I kicked them in their soft stomach — metaphorically you understand — I’m not a brute in that sort of way.”

“I have desires I don’t understand ... I want women to be strong and brave and beautiful but I also want to crush them. I want them to be wild and spontaneous and free, but I also want to domesticate them. I want them to want me, but I don’t want them ...”

“I’m shaking. Shaking. I am breaking down ...”

“More than repair, everything is in need of mercy ... ”



Video/FX — fade/out

Staining my White Gloves:

Simply, sitting forward on chair, on the edge of the obvious melodrama, trying to ‘exist’ within this tension, though not ‘enacting’ it ...

“On the fifth thousandth evening of our love
I’m still as shy as in the beginning,
Clumsily crumpling the lark that I brought for you in my pocket.
Staining my white gloves with the blue of the two early-picked
Bell-flowers.

Up to now, I don’t know how to smile at you to hide the
Sadness of my happiness ...
But, when I unfold you,
The sun is falling down ...”

My Cowgirl's Got a Theory:

Abruptly picking up Gun ... gun to his own chin ... waving it casually at the audience ... centre of space in front of audience

"My cowgirl said to me ... she said she's goin' down South, gonna take a dip in the ocean ... 'That'll help my face' ... I said, 'Its gonna take more'n a dip in the ocean to save your face, sweetheart' ... 'Not funny' ... She's got this theory, that if she cries and then sleeps, her face puffs up like a blowfish ... So she figures she gonna take that blowfish down the ocean, set it free ... She's gonna save her face ... She gonna come outta the ocean with a face like a Princess ... Go into the sea with a face like a blowfish, and come out like Princess ... She gotta theory ... *My Cowgirl's got a theory!* She's goin' down south ... She don't know I'm gonna miss her. We gonna have a solitary weekend ... In fact, she says we're *in* solitary. When we first got together an' fell in love she was talkin' about losin' face, she said she wasn't gonna worry about losin' face with me ... Gonna have to talk to her about that. She's tryin' to save her face, but she told me she was gonna lose face ... So, I'm gonna haul my own ass down South'n catch me a blowfish, and I'm gonna bring it right back on land! ... She's gonna have to live with it ... "

Moving back to chair ... pausing with gun ... sitting

Who Can Do No Better Than Their Life?:

(A techie comes on with cigarette for Man, lights it, he pays them) "I spit on my life. Sometimes, I want nothing to do with it. Who can do no better than their life? How much less hateful people would be if every one of us did not wear a face ... or a mask. Perhaps I am nothing but a cauldron of thoughts, of discourse, of words, mistaking myself for a man. Yet I would rather stage for you the demons that visit me than bore you to death with my angels."

Interlude III — 'Power' :

Video — *Womanfirepower* — Wall *Manfirepower* — Screen

TV — *Mouthcloseup* / text ... (pre-recorded)

Videos projected/played simultaneously

FX — Firecrackle + Sound/text from Stereo TV ... loud, from back — dog barking on CD player ... Man presses play ...

[Womanfirepower — A naked woman reclining. Negative effects. Shot with projections over her body. Her back and buttocks — indistinguishable — marked with a 'blizzard', a snowstorm. A breast, the face of a 'statue' bleed through, and she is visible. Contours/lines (as in *Woman1peace*) mask her body. 'Ice' turns to 'fire'. Not fire at all — projections of La Mama wall, water, tree bark and traffic — transformation of fragments from other video sequences within the show. She sits, changes position, 'staggering' movements. Immolation, an abstracted mass. Repose, and the full spectrum of the rainbow is her back, her body ... fade to black.]

[Manfirepower — A title fades up top left of frame, white text: "*Power*". Fades. A naked man reclining. It is the Man in a Suit in the space. His body, the bed, on 'fire'. Orange, red, yellow and white. Negative effects. Shot with projections over his body. Not fire at all — La Mama wall, water, tree bark and traffic — transformation of fragments from other video sequences within the show. The inferno turns through cooler colours, blues, greens, the spectrum of the rainbow. He raises his body, writhing, a marbled 'beast', abstracted into a rainbowed mass, 'tempered', then sprawled ... fade to black.]

[Mouthcloseup — Close-up on mouth, lips, teeth (of Man in a Suit — pre-recorded) speaking the following text. Voice treated/dropped a tone, clip sped up to match other videos in duration.]

Sitting simply in Chair, smoking, holding the CD player like a dog ... dreaming through the smoke

I have cursed your forehead your belly your life
I have cursed the streets your steps plod through
The things your hands pick up
I have cursed the inside of your dreams

I have frozen you in the soul of your body
Iced you in the depths of your life

Your skin is damp all over
Your skin sweats out waters of the great fear
Your armpits reek far and wide of the crypt

Animals stop dead as you pass
Dogs howl at night, their heads raised towards your house
You can't run away
You can't muster the strength
Your fatigue makes a lead stump in your body
Your fatigue is a long caravan
Your fatigue stretches out into the desert
Your fatigue is inexpressible
Someone has slobbered on your descendants
Someone has slobbered on the laugh of your child
Someone has walked slobbering on the face of your domain

The world moves away from you
Yours is the stench of Otherness

I am rowing
I am rowing
I am rowing against your life
I am rowing

I split into countless rowers
To row more strongly against you

You fall into blurriness
You are out of breath
You get tired before the slightest effort

I row, I row, I row

You go off drunk, tied to the tail of a mule
Drunkenness like a huge umbrella that darkens the sky
And assembles the flies
Drunkenness no longer leaves you
Lays you out to the left
Lays you out to the right
Lays you out on the stony ground of the path
I row
I row
I am rowing against your days

You enter the house of suffering

I row
I row
On a black blindfold your actions are recorded
On the great white eye of a one-eyed horse your future is
rolling

I AM ROWING”



Coroner:

LX — Tight overhead

Video — *Blueface* — TV

[*Blueface* — Close-up on face of the 'older man'. Blue. Still. Watching ...]

Stands, moves into space with umbrella and briefcase ... plants feet, simple, still ...

"He has arrived before me. A dapper man with a tensile little grin and a line of pens protruding from his filofax; four red pens with pocket clips. I think of the horsemen of the Apocalypse.

I'm hanging there in a cold, dark room, swinging, aeronautically gleeful as the rope creaks its accompaniment and the garlic in my pores grows mushrooms of complaint at his *notetaking!*

Perhaps he thinks I'm faking it, but I'm not. Seems like I've been defying gravity for hours, forever, when the person behind my stiffening eyelids says, 'Let it come'. I drop a little, willfully. Goosebumps amble along my spine.

I'm disappointed. Negligence hardly describes his *lack of inquiry*: important questions, like — and what did you see in your final hour? Whom do you love? Where lies your heart? But he asks nothing; a smudge of grease precedes the line of ink which reads, 'Cause Unknown'.

He leaves, and I am released to Oblivion where winged beasts howl hymns of gluttony over my soul."

(*Aside*) "I know, I know — I am no poet."... (*moving to chair*) ...

Unknown Ancestors:

Sitting ...

"I am proud only of those days that pass in undivided tenderness.

I will not defend my rage as though it was reasonable ... I will not pretend I am righteous, when, an actor by day, my failings rattle and disturb the night of my sleep (and yours, my love) ... I know there are parts of me I do not love. I will try not to see them in the faces of others, nor on the face of the world ...

I have spent long years all at sea, haunted by visions, looking for my Land. (*Donning his orange hat*) Humiliated and lonely, you could insult me as much as you liked at times like that.

More than once, I have felt ‘passages’ of my Father and Mother in me ... I have lived ‘against’ them ... by doing this, what unknown ancestors have I allowed to live in me?”

(Excessive, melodramatic!) “But what if the future is now, and I am already done for?!!! Having all the signs of life, *though not actually living?! (Strangely incredulous)* “I’m taking this rather badly!!!”

Water — Dying to One-self:

LX — on Man on chair, floor, side, casting shadow on wall. Blue glow from video

Video — Pool 1 — Wall

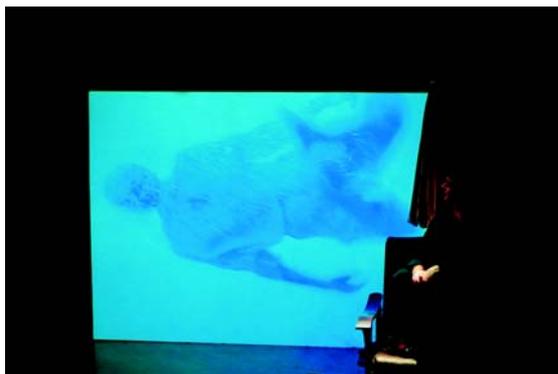
Video — Pool 2 — Screen

FX — Spooky — on video

*[Pool 1 — An older man, glasses, suit and tie, half his face in shadow appears on the TV screen. Head and shoulders in the frame. Blue background. Stares calmly directly to camera/POV of the audience. ‘Opposite’ the Man in a Suit in the Space. They sit, staring at the audience. The older man appears to ‘see’ the computer screens on the Screen opposite, reads them, reacts with a gulp of air — as if to speak/answer — when the computer screen glitches. After the second glitch, his image xfades with an explosion of white-water, as an image of a Man in dark pyjamas — the same as the Man in a Suit in the space — plunges into water, a pool. He tumbles, slowly, half-time through white-water and bubbles approaching camera/POV of audience. Fade to black. *Image on the large Screen continues.]*

*[Pool 2 — Blue computer screen. Text: “This device has been set to deliver a lethal injection. To proceed to the next step, you must press YES. If you understand this and wish to proceed, press YES. Do you wish to proceed? YES/NO.” Abrupt static/glitch. Second screen. Text: “If you press YES, you will cause a lethal injection to be given within 30 seconds, and will die. Do you wish to proceed? YES/NO.” Static/Glitch. A man in light pyjamas plunges into the blue of the screen as it xfades with water, a pool. The same older man as seen on TV opposite. Montaged sequence of him underwater. Tumbling in white-water. Rolling. Suspended at the bottom. Struggling with a plastic bag over his head. Rising to the top. *Xfades with image of Man — the same Man in a Suit in the space — in dark pyjamas, slowly swimming underwater towards the camera/ audience POV. It appears he will swim through the screen, but knocks his head on a glass window (from behind which the scene was shot, under the pool) — holds his head, rises in the water. Fade to black.]*

Man has turned to watch the video with the audience, up, leaning on back of chair



Stuffed into a Role:

FX — Afrocuban All Stars

Video — Saturdaynightdeathdaddy — Screen

Video — Fishylegsdance — Wall

Video projected/played simultaneously

[**Saturdaynightdeathdaddy** — The 'older man'. Negative effect. White suit, green tie, glasses hollowing his eyes out to white. Black background. He 'dances' — swaying, swaggering, falling to the floor. Image xfades with a blurred version of him at a distance — fades to a slither, then black. He disappears. And returns. A strange 'Travolta-like' pose. He falls ... fade to black.]

[**Fishylegsdance** — Close-up on feet in black fishnet stockings in high heels. Tiny movements ripple through the feet and toes. Cross fade to legs, dancing Salsa, lit from the side. Black slip, thighs, knees, calves and feet in frame. Black background. Montage of sequences, stepping, turning, twirling and kneeling to reveal the full leg and tops of the stockings. The 'female' part is danced. The legs are those of the Man in a Suit as seen in the guise of the blonde wig, slip and gun in *Stairsequence* (above)]

Man moving slowly towards the proscenium stage, up stairs at side ... FX comes down underneath voice ...

"I feel like, don't you sometimes feel like ... you've been stuffed into a role? Just one, and it hangs off you like an ill-fitting suit? Days pass you by like some discarded package in a railway station. You end up beside yourself ... with worry, anxiety, unfulfilled aspirations and desires ... "

"O, *desire* !!! (*sighs*) I encounter millions of bodies in my life; of these millions I may desire some hundreds; but of these hundreds I supposedly love only one ... Ridiculous! Specialisation. I become a specialist of desire. Why? Who says I have to? Who made me singular in this way? The One is getting plenty, but all my other selves are celibate! That's perverse, that's *obscene!!!*" (*cough, cough*) ...

Sucked into the Telly:

Video — Live — Screen

[**Live Video** — Techie with camera moves into the dark space in front of audience. POV directly at Man on proscenium stage. Image comes up abruptly, framing Man and stage. Techie moves in slowly without zooming. Eventually passing camera to Man who holds it close-up to his own face.]

Man on the proscenium stage, centre ... plays to camera ... image projected on screen

"Oh, *you* know what I'm saying ... I mean, have you never wanted to run a fifty cent piece down the side of a gold Bentley? ... eh? ... Have you ever wanted to stick a pin in your teacher's apple while everyone else was at — *recess* ? Heyyyy? Yeh ... (*inhales through his teeth*) ... "

... techie, having moved in slowly, passes him the camera, he holds it to his own face ...

“Have you ever seen someone approaching on the street and wanted to dive head first into their sweaty, shadowy, hidden parts: the pleats in their skirt, the creases in their shirt, the tiny folds in their not-too-much-but-just-enough bristling bare skin? Know what I’m saying? I’m saying, have you ever wanted to climb up, swing a leg over and play the Horsey Game!? Yeeeeeeehaaaaa!!! I’m talkin’ Agrarian Pleasures!! I’m talking Equestrian fucking Delights!!! I’m talking jamming the lurid finger up the bums of Housewives and Bank Executives and Real Estate Agents and Promotions Girls and Social Workers and Jammy Fucking Stock Brokers and getting a whole lotta schtonkin’ *NAKED BEAUTY* goin’ on!!!! Know what I’m saying?!!! Course you do ... I’m talkin’ crisco and black plastic. I’m talkin’ naked jelly twister with orange and lime jelly. I’m talkin’ bollocks in peanut butter and honey with banana porridge for breakfast!!! DO YOU KNOW WHAT I’M SAYING? ... (*A change, pathetic*) Yeah, *course* you do ...”

“I feel frightened and I don’t know why.”

“Last night, I dreamed I got sucked into the telly ... ”



Image on screen, stage, whole space abruptly to black

BLACKOUT — End

Writing as Performance II

Another excursion (see Abstract, p. viii). The following writing entitled 'Missive: A Letter from the Underside (of Theory)' was published in an earlier version as 'Little Tyrannies, Bigger Lies: A Letter from the Other Side', *Performance Research*, 3, 2, Summer (1998), pp. 27–31. It was presented as 'prepared pages', where the writing, images, and the formatting of the page are conceived as 'performative' in themselves and act in 'dialogical' relationships of 'meaning'. It has been revised and re-presented here as an example of the earliest writing I undertook in a different format to the creative work on the script of *Rapture*, which I was writing and devising at the same time (1997). It is an attempted experiment in 'writing as performance'. Some of the texts from episodes of the *Rapture* script merge and interleave with more discursive writing. The layout of the pages suggests shifts in multiple 'voices' as a kind of 'narrative' situating 'myself' in time and place is woven through the fragments or 'episodes'. This was a first attempt to write towards ideas concerning multiple subjectivity, processes of subjectification, and the 'making' of the first solo performance. In this version, images from *Rapture* are included (*Rapture* had not been performed at the time of writing in 1997), and the text and layout has been revised, in an attempt to keep the 'missive' alive.

Notes to 'Missive' are endnotes (p. 148), not footnotes, in order to preserve layout continuity.

A 'missive' is a letter. A communication: a lament, a plea, a directive, or an order. It is a message. But it can also be the messenger. A missile. A weapon, something hurled or thrown: abuse, for example, or an epiphany concentrated in a gift. A letter can become a lesion, or a blissful concatenation of memory, time and place. In a missive there is the material force of a trajectory or 'promise', and yet it may 'miss', lost hopelessly in its own absences until we are shocked into the present with its 'arrival', or abandoned by its 'return'. But it is equally possible that we are shocked into the past, or future, or across cultures: for the first time seeing through the eyes of an-other. The promise of the metaphor of the 'missive' in these terms lies in its potential for the transmigration and transgression of forms, images, time and place. Personal histories, multiple voices, cultures, continents and the-as-yet-unknown may collide. How might one induce the 'invisible', the 'unspeakable' and the 'unknowable' to make an appearance in another form? Send a 'missive', *be one*, or find a way (many ways) to be open to 'receipt' ...

Missive: A Letter from the Underside (of Theory)



Don't trust me.
Re-member me.

Indented Head
Port Philip Bay
Victoria 3223
AUSTRALIA

January, 1998

I'm sitting here at a tiny blue screen framed by a broad window in a flat-roofed fifties bungalow. A dusty curved road strolls down to the giggling green sea. There's a wooden boat with a red sail on the water. A salty man and a woman in thongs walked it past on a trailer moments, or was it days, ago. It's bobbing its answer to their encumbered gait, now; not too late for the passage of a smile. A triumvirate of middle-aged Greek women float in the channel like cloves of garlic cackling oily Christmas tales between swells. Caravans huddle together in the park on the foreshore. A pelican on the bridge of a tanker steers the hulk through the heads, its own wings too soon less sure of flight. There are whale bones on the beach; ribs, a wreck of breath, splitting the breeze with howling, pushing, breaking the waves. A boat. My heart. This cage of ... memory where the whale has swum. Me in the belly of the whale – unseeing, unknowing – and yet I swim: memory in me treading water, beached, bleached, like a daguerreotype.

Dear E,

Hello. I'm hoping you may re-member me – I went missing, dis-appeared, for a while – from a series of encounters in 1993 and 1994. London, Paris, and the south of France. You introduced me to Philippe Gaulier, Monika Pagneux, Theatre de Complicite, Pantheatre and Anzu Furukawa. You spoke, whispered to me, casually. I found myself asking the 'Does a Little Tyranny need a Bigger Lie' question – whining sometimes, persistent – but not before you suggested, heuristically, cumulatively, that 'Lies' might be understood as critical fictions, illusion, artifice, transgression, pretence, pretension, insolence, stupidity, and re-presentations. Contrary, for example, to the 'Little Tyranny' of capital T 'Truth' and capital E 'Emotion' in certain kinds of theatre, dance and psychological discourse. You sung of discursive tyrannies – capital R 'Real' in performance – but unilaterally, depending on the angle of vision or the 'place' from which one looks, 'tyrannies' of all kinds: 'musical' tyrannies, spatial ones, political correctness, habitude, prostheses, 'hip', Democracy, Physical Theatre even, diplomacy, the *words* 'I love you', politeness, surface, psychological depth, and anxiety.

The whale belches the vagaries of Hijikata's claim that anxiety is like the kid who pisses his pants before the race has begun ...

I was a tourist. Now I am a missive ...

There was a stampede in heaven – or was it Hades – and the sixteen hooves of the horses of the horsemen of an apocalypse, a domestic one, weak, and sad, in a tiny room with a pane onto a grey wall ... these sixteen hooves I met with my four, in time. Call them; Love, Faith, Honour, Forgiveness. My four hooves, and me my only defender, and the only betrayal my own if I fail to meet the others at the gates of my heart; to turn them away. And I am the Unicorn. You are here inside the walls – not out there where night approaches – cracking fire, flintstone under foot. Me my defender. You my heart. The night ablaze all around. Me my defender. You my heart. As the flickering shadows keep time with destruction. Me my defender. You my heart. And Grace between us. Grace.

Love. Faith. Honour. Forgiveness. You inside the walls? Here? Already here? Awake. It is the sweet smell of me feathered and ghosted on your thighs. I will visit you there, again and again, sleeping safe in my heart.

Gaulier grumbled, 'You can't cheat with your humanity'. It is a question of liberty: we glimpsed it as freedom with limits. I say 'we', but I'm covering for you.

Terra Incognita – land unknown.

Terra Nullius – empty land.

Terra Australis

... poems on a Melbourne Tram, 1995

Dreaming place ...
You can't change it.
No matter you rich man,
No matter you king.
You can't change it.

– Bill Niedege

More than repair,
Everything is in need of mercy ...

– Peter Bukowski

Warm regards

B

Dear B,

To travel from Australia to Europe full of the illusions and critical fictions of the willful force of a desire which would announce Europe as *the* site of learning and inquiry whiffs of a very familiar 'Cultural Cringe'. Where's your culture?

E

In sepia tones I remember how in Western Australia in 1990 I learned that South African Nationalists sent a working party to WA in 1947 to study State legislation. They borrowed half a dozen or so of our laws enacting the good will of a white supremacist Australia and promptly returned to include them in draft legislation for an Apartheid South African State in 1948. Apartheid's 'un-Australian'. We wave the flag for sanctions. But don't trust me. I'm a liar.

E,

... I have a vision! I see a City: tall buildings, lights on every street corner – bright lights – towers and beacons, pathways and factories. Billowing smoke! Industry. Coal and iron and steel. Prodigious machinery ... Yes, we'll build a city ... here! ... But, *there are natives in the bushes*, eyes peering from the darkness, all around – sniggering, playing didgeridoos! You! Scout around in front, I'll come up behind. Round them up. *Drive them into the river!!!* The river ... ahhh, here, at the bend, we'll build a Great City ... and for you, a white house, with white, carved posts at the verandah overlooking the water. And there, a blue boat tied with a rope to a jetty. A bright blue boat, tugging at its rope...here at the bend ... *drive them into the river!!!* We'll build a city, a Great Nation and ... Oh, yes, there'll be joy and laughter like a ...babbling brook. And tea and biscuits for everybody before bedtime. You! Take the oars. I'll stand at the prow. We'll course this great river ... row on, I say, onward! Here a mill, there a store-house. Row on ... love your work!

I'm a yes-sayer. Positive. Never said no in my life except to say, 'Yes. No, *really* – I love your work'. I'm positive.

I'm HIV positive. Trust me.



B

Dearest E,

You have taken me from this 'site' – my experience of Australia – to London, Paris and back again. There is in this movement a 'circle', a collocatory set of encounters in ignorance, inspiration (*the whale breathes in*), revelation, and insights ruptured by time and questioning place. I am in-formed by this circle. The circle is de-scribed by me, inscribed in me. The question of 'place', the site from which one looks, sees or enquires and the site/s by and via which the travelling 'Self' is interrogated in turn, is enacted in the pedagogy and dramaturgy that flows from this experience – and this writing which constitutes part of its praxis.

'Selves' conspire – *multiple*. The world dances, turns. There is movement. Monika Pagneux sang, 'Everything is music'. I believed her. Gaulier complained, 'Belief is not necessary. Believe nothing'.

In the studio I've been walking, walking, walking. Breaking up the 'I' that walks.

A tale breaks the surface, the bulb flashes. Burns. Smoke clears revealing a murder of crows throat singing in protest on the opposite shore.

... Lllllllllrrrrrrraaaaaaaarrrrrrrrrrrrrk ... Ohhhhhh, I have memories of the CIRCUS! where, rushed by a clown with a bucket full of water, I fell through the wooden seating in terror only to open my eyes to spiraling confetti in colours I had not yet imagined. I remember the rhythms of work and the smell of my leather satchel, and I remember play, and the words of poets sent from lovers before they ever loved me. I remember – when the warm winds come swirling in – I remember a place with a heart. People, and images, and words that were blessings ...

E, you were already here! I've been trying to 'take place', 'make an appearance': conjuring concepts of 'Presence' and its shadow, 'Absence' – positions mirrored in the Occidental/Oriental divide. I've been marking marginalities, plotting peripheries and diagnosing dis-appearances as if you were *elsewhere*. As if you were *other*.

The eulogy of 'The Other'. The Return of the Same.

Flash. I strike a match in the putrid darkness. Flames – initiation by fire. Understanding comes.

I attempt to draw the *other* towards me, all the while holding firm in my own contradictory discourse of 'opening', and yet not knowing really what it is to stand in relationship with another:¹ to love, to be in love. I've been waiting for you, as if when you arrived, so would I. But, really, I've been waiting for 'me' – and I simply haven't known what would shake the foundations of my solitude: the fixed, lonely foot in me; the clenched jaw, the tight chest, the taut buttocks – the 'masks' with which I have divided myself. Ohhh, I've been crying and crying and crying as if to give voice to my pain would somehow bring compassion down upon me. From where, I don't know ... *More than repair everything is in need of mercy*. But you are here, already here.

B

Melbourne, Victoria, AUSTRALIA.

Dear B,

I've seen you walking in a landscape with tears. *Anzu*

Burn this page

18 May 1996

Dear E,

I'm angry. Full of rage. I want to scream into the empty space.

In the darkness we roll against a swell and I hear thunder. It is the feet of the son of the father on the open stage of the Palais Royale in Paris. It's very hot. July, 1994. Kazuo Ohno teeters – funny, pathetic. But there is terror in a smile, and the imaginal skies threaten retribution. He is danced by an extraordinary fragility, and the simultaneous presence of a very young woman and the love of an old man: the span of a life in a gesture of yearning; an endless moment of loss. He speaks to me. I have forgotten when and from where. I hear his voice like a wind blowing, everything is music ... "I discovered I could dance when I learned that the space is not empty."

We turn away, risking melanoma, sun on our backs.

'Outback', the interior.

We turn away.

The reality and the metaphor of 'The Desert' here is potent: the immensity of the place, the site itself; the 'desert' in others, in oneself; the struggle between 'Selves'; aloneness, loneliness; 'homelessness' (or 'home', for those not passing through); the imperishable place of 'memory'; independence; the potential desolation of the mind in 'time'; the 'glue' of the ego and a 'desert' of heart; and the sometimes terrible white-noise of rage. I have thought a lot about this 'rage' in me – in extremes while in India in 1989, while travelling up through the centre from Melbourne to Darwin, and in my weaker moments – as my 'Self' against all 'Others'.

James Hillman is a lion roaring. It's a question of the 'anaesthetised heart':

What is passive, immobile asleep in the heart creates a desert ... The more our desert the more we must rage, which rage is love. The passions of the soul make the desert habitable ... The desert is not [outback]; it is anywhere once we desert the heart.²

On a trip last year up through the Red Centre – Uluru, the Olgas, Alice, then Darwin – pretty much on the highway and only touching the edges of the 'real' desert, I became palpably aware of the desert I had swirling around my mind-wheels, encroaching on my soft, hidden, sleeping heart. The road sent my own

'music' back to me, which was tricky at times and, it seemed, at every oasis or plunge-pool of my imagination there lurked the crocodile to death-roll the little ego: questioning my desires, dragging me out of complacencies, demanding that I deal with all I encountered on its own terms. I 'taught' performance in some schools and communities for Aboriginal kids on the way – the experience leveled me. I found myself dancing in a 'schoolyard' as the moon came up over the desert, music blaring, playing soccer and frisbe – simultaneously – and sharing a kind of intimacy and understanding that's defined by what's gone before here, wrongly, and by the 'chance' of us finding a way through it.

There were mornings of 'teaching' more than seventy 'kids' – some as young as six, some initiated men, women who couldn't hold my gaze or do certain things in front of the men, and where anyway 'performance' for some was a "*shame job*". They taught me what can't be learned about what's going on out there from the sanitised and expertly counter-politicised place of these cities here, which hug the coastline as if it was their own 'hearts' they're most afraid of. But as Hillman wails, defying the infarct, the desert is not heartless because the desert is where the lion lives, and the lion sleeps in our heart, and we in the heart of the lion:

Our way through the desert of life or any moment in life is the awakening to it as a desert, the awakening of the beast, that vigil of desire, its greedy paw, hot and sleepless as the sun, fulminating as sulphur, setting the soul on fire ...³

On the flip-side of desire lurks the shadow of the 'Self', and accompanying rage is the possibility of silence. There's a kind of a crippling silence of the heart which comes of excessive noise. But there's another kind of silence where time seems to spread out like a fan, spinning on itself, and where we don't measure its passing in violence to ourselves or others, or fill the present with the collisions of the shadows of future hopes and past sorrows. But the 'Self' will often have it another way.

In the studio I've been falling down. Falling to 'defy gravity'; greeting the lion's breath, and the howl of the world.

During a rare pause in the mad rage, frustration, and anger I found propelling me around India in 1989 – failing dismally at pretending not to be a tourist on my first trip anywhere (more rage!) – I sat mesmerised by a huge crow on the windowsill of an 'India Coffee House' ...

There is a flurry of ragged wings and the glint of a sharp morning sun on angry bloody feathers. He's hanging there. Waiting. Beating in slow-motion against the sky. Just dis-appeared ...

... on a farm near a little town called Denmark in Western Australia. I'd been sent out, aged eleven or twelve, to shoot crows that were threatening and killing newborn lambs. Squeeze, don't pull. Good shot! I lined up a bird in a tree, closed my eyes, squeezed – hoping I'd miss. The bird leaped from the branch, and flew ... and in that long silence after the explosion was a moment when I came close to vicarious flight. Hope, relief and all of life in an instant – but the wings of the bird buckled. I caught a single black feather between my fingers as it fell ...

Sometimes I see that bird, hanging there, hovering, except behind my eyelids now ...

UNWANTED ANIMAL OCCUPANCY!

From where I sit, I can see in all its pallid hope a life that was never quite my own ... but I have glimpsed another world, and I have not yet come to terms with my grief.

STOP THE FLUTTERING! STOP THE FLICKERING LIGHT ...



This 'grief' has been the shape of my experience sometimes, ahead of time. In my rage, and struggle to be in life, to 'take place', against fear, there is something of this kind of 'death' and 'dis-appearance' in the equation. But if such grief is part of the bargain, it augurs an insight of another kind:

It is not our life we need to weep for. Inside us there is some secret. We are following a narrow ledge around a mountain, we are sailing on skeletal eerie craft over the buoyant ocean ...⁴

Best wishes

B

E,

As the great sherpa Philippe Gaulier once said to me at the foot of the mountain:
“If you’re heavy, just ... you die!”

No-one ever drops in. I’ve done this all wrong.

I have *already* died, *already* lost love, *already* been abandoned, *already* felt the pain of annihilation, *already* forgotten my own dreamings, *already* suppressed my cry in the repression of the very moment I begin to take place – to live.

*The receiver dangles on a taut chord in a phone box in Avignon, June 1993. The dial-tone follows me now into the belly of the whale, amplifies, and transforms itself: it is the sound of the distended wing-beats of the crow, now the blades of a police helicopter in slow-motion overhead. And now, it is the voice of an old man who has loved – gravelly, dissident, calm ... “I am nowhere gathered together ... but I would burn rather than last.”*⁵

Oh *E*, I digress. Unravelling the knots of disaffection in me: subjecting myself to muddles of multiplicity, cartographies of possible selves, geographies of possible sites; not trapped in a naturalist fallacy, ‘caught’ by a singular text, or lost in little tyrannies of any kind. You snatched me from a foreign shore, carried me away. *Rapture. Abduction. Transportation.* And in the circle of my ‘return’ there is the question of subjectification – how one might ‘act’ to convulse the imaginal field we inhabit, sometimes congregated too close to the centre where there’s little room to move, even less for critical distance, and where life is stifled.

I was a tourist. Now I’m a missive ... Re-member me.



B

Notes:

¹ On the question of power, attention and mercy in the face of the *other*, see Gillian Rose, *Love's Work: a Reckoning with Life* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), *passim*

² Hillman, *A Blue Fire*, p. 304.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Robert Bly, 'November Day at McClure's Beach' in *What Have I ever Lost by Dying* (London: Weatherlight Press, 1994), p. 3.

⁵ See Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse*, p. 11.



Writings On Performance I

The following writing entitled 'The Knife and the Stethoscope: Pedagogy in Performance' was first published in an earlier version under the same title in *Realtime*, 38, 2000, p 10. It is included here with revised and expanded text as an account of my teaching practice in two workshops — *Little Tyrannies, Bigger Lies* and *Dissent/Descent and Desire* — conducted at Dancehouse, Melbourne, June 2000. These workshops took place after the performance of *Rapture II* in 1999, and before the final performance of *Rapture III* in 2001.

Pedagogy has been an important part of the development of all three *Rapture* performances and of this research project as a whole. In the first instance, my own pedagogy is drawn from the work of Monika Pagneux, Philippe Gaulier, Anzu Furukawa, Pantheatre and Theatre de Complicite (See Appendix I, p. 189). I have adapted and improvised with these various ways-in to performance since 1995.

The proposition that 'teaching' performance may also operate as 'learning' for the pedagogue is elaborated in the writing that follows. Lacking a director for my own solo performances, the various independent workshops I have directed and courses in text, composition and special projects I have taught at Victoria University, have afforded a kind of 'fold-back' of insight, strategy and new practice for my own performance research. Gaulier and Pagneux's pedagogies, in particular, offered me a 'way of seeing' as much as a collection of 'exercises' and strategies for generating performance: working principles with sufficient 'slippage' addressed to the peculiarity of the performer and the gratuitous specificity of a particular task or scene — 'ways-in' rather than 'methods'. 'Excursions' in the tropes of 'defying gravity', 'tyrannies and lies', 'presence and absence', 'subjectivity and processes of subjectification', 'knowledge and truth', and 'discourse' itself — elaborated throughout this writing — were initially *heuristically derived* from my training experience with the individuals and groups named immediately above. In my own teaching, I sought to subject these themes — and the practices that had raised them to the level of 'questions' — to alternative enquiries and strategies, with consciousness of the tropes themselves, in order to discover what may be induced in turn. By going 'back in' and subjecting my own 'understandings' to a re-doubled enquiry, I attempted to transform some of my pedagogy into performance practice for the development of the solo shows.

The Knife and the Stethoscope: Pedagogy in Performance

The word ‘pedagogue’ was at one time taken to refer to the person who escorted or accompanied a child to and from a place of instruction — a guide — though later, and contemporaneously, to mean the one who instructs. And yet there is something in the former image which ‘moves’ — guided travel between ‘home’ and ‘school’ — reflecting the metaphorical, figurative and practical possibilities for a pedagogy positioned in this liminal ‘space between’. A pedagogy which is aware of its place between the ‘Academy’ and discourse on the one hand (even when performed within the walls of the Academy), and professional and non-professional praxis on the other. Potentially, also a place between forms: for example, theatre and dance.

In two recent performance workshops at Dancehouse, Melbourne — *Little Tyrannies*, *Bigger Lies* and *Dissent/Descent and Desire* — I attempted to structure the work in such a way as to confront the demands of a skills base (‘technique’), and also to engage articulately with the *play of appearances* in performance — with what might be called ‘imaginal’ practice. In general, the work was drawn from combinations of theatre and dance strategies, and the performances that ensued may be described as between these forms in varying degrees.

I was concerned to ‘stage’ a pedagogy that was audacious in its resistance to resolution into one set of formal or aesthetic pre-occupations, defying the tendency to harden into its own discursive position. The idea of ‘staging a pedagogy’ derives from the performative metaphor, which confronts any inquiry into ‘pedagogy in performance’ with the conundrum of the *performance/s in pedagogy*. The work proceeded under the provocative shadow of an attempt to ‘teach’ and practice performance making “while knowing that there is, in the field of knowing, *a scrim of theatricality over our lives*.”¹

In the context of performance, psychologist and writer James Hillman has said that wherever there is resistance, there is body.² ‘Body’, as in a good red wine. Body in

¹ Blau, “Ideology”, p. 457.

² Pardo, “The Angel’s Hideout”, p. 23.

the sense of the *materialisation* of images and the imagination. Body that *realises* the invisible and makes it visible. Such ‘resistance’ was adopted as a working principle in practical, physical and imaginal strategies engaged by the performers in the workshops. However, the danger where pedagogy itself is concerned, if lacking articulation and depth in such resistance, is in the slide towards merely ‘enacting’ discourses ratified by the Academy, the demands and needs of a performance ‘Industry’, or the fantasies of a particular pedagogue. When such is the case, the ‘body’ is often dead on arrival.

The second major working principle concerned the notion of embracing a kind of ‘violence’. Not the staging of a representation of the pornography of violence but, rather, participation in a pedagogical or dramaturgical practice that “would not [necessarily] originate in a good nature and a good will, but which would come from a *violence suffered by thought*.”³ Antonin Artaud suggested a similar kind of violence which he imbibed in the notion of a ‘Theatre of Cruelty’. He defined ‘cruelty’ as first and foremost cruelty to ourselves.⁴

The titles of the workshops suggest these working principles of ‘resistance’ and ‘violence’ in a kind of affective, imaginal and metaphorical guise — performative ruses that help focus the work and offer a site for reflection. In the first workshop, the notion that ‘a little tyranny needs a bigger lie’ was tested in practical terms via these working principles. ‘Tyrannies’ may be understood as discursive, like the discourse of the ‘Real’, of ‘Truth’ and ‘Emotion’ in certain kinds of theatre and performance discourse. Metaphorically, the scope is wide: musical tyrannies, spatial tyrannies, linear time, political correctness, entrenched dance vocabularies, or anxiety.

‘Lies’ can be conceived as fictions, illusions, image, and artifice, and practised as fictional transgressions, pretence, insolence, stupidity, laughter and re-presentations. In the second workshop, *Dissent/Descent and Desire*, the group worked with ‘gravity’ in all of its material and metaphorical richness — literally, with weight, the body, resistance and momentum, and metaphorically, with defiance, betrayal, scandal,

³ Deleuze & Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 24.

⁴ Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and its Double* (New York: Grove Press, 1958), *passim*. See esp. pp. 84–88, 101–104, on ‘rigour’ and ‘consciousness’.

insolence and weightlessness. In defying gravity — when ‘gravity’ is, say, anxiety — is it possible to *fall into fiction*, resisting gravity and the weight of the world by going with its flow? In this regard, the two workshops were not discrete in focus. There was also a large overlap of participants in the two workshops, drawn from many backgrounds — actors, dancers, musicians, sound engineers, librarians and teachers — challenging the terms of the pedagogy, and keeping the work strung between forms.

A major part of the practical, physical work in both workshops was a series of layered variations on a body of work I have developed over a number of years called *The Knife and the Stethoscope*. The preparations for this involved group and individual work with combinations of movement, text and music. In the first instance, the performers were introduced to a physical ‘architecture’ for the body that was called, variously, ‘Mr’ or ‘Ms New’. The architecture is a simple, though detailed combination of physical propositions drawn from Feldenkrais, Alexander technique, martial arts and neutral mask work. ‘New’ because non-habitual. ‘Mr’ or ‘Ms’ to suggest (playfully, ironically even) ‘matter’, import and ‘bearing’ — though neither ‘happy’ nor ‘sad’, a kind of non-expressive physical ‘mask’. An important part of the architecture is the demand of physical work and attention in the body simultaneously drawing up, resisting gravity, and reaching down, in line with its influence. A kind of constant inner ‘play’ founded on physical organisation. With the performer strung between, maintaining this tension, this ‘new’ body is subjected to various physical tasks — walking, running, turning, falling, speaking text — first, with a kind of ‘closed’ attention going ‘in and down’, and subsequently and simultaneously turning ‘up and out’. The performer is then subject in turn to the influence of the physical space, interactions with other performers, and finally imaginal space. Detailed work on variations of the gaze of the performer, which also animates space and is animated in turn, is woven into this architecture.

In *The Knife and the Stethoscope*, the proposition is for this new ‘body’/‘persona’ to enact the various roles of the structure — both ‘major’ and ‘minor’, protagonist and antagonist. To somehow be sinful, and not guilty: ‘It wasn’t me who did it, it was Ms New’ or ‘I’m not responsible, I was Knifed’. Again, this is performative, imaginal strategy or ruse — founded in the conviction of a physical form — which adds

'weight' or resistance, hence 'body', to the task. Four performers work in a group: a 'Text-speaker' (with learned text), a 'Receiver', a 'Knife', and a 'Stethoscope'. The Text-speaker moves freely in the space, though impacted upon physically and verbally by the Knife and the Stethoscope. The Knife attempts to disrupt, scandalise, betray and 'steal' from the flow of text. The Stethoscope is on the text speaker's side, 'resuscitating', encouraging, and supporting the work of the Text speaker. The Text speaker speaks to the Receiver, who is limited to a particular location in the space, anchoring the overall choreography and image, and 'showing' in movement 'receipt' of the text (though resisting interpreting or enacting it directly). The interventions of the Knife and the Stethoscope are to be 'taken on' by the Text speaker. These are the 'engine', the only possible 'body' for the Text speaker. The Text speaker is encouraged to 'submit' to the Knife, accepting to 'fall', descending into the physical and verbal imagination of the 'knifing'. Likewise, 'rising' with the imagination of the Stethoscope, defying the gravity of the Knife, and yet strung ambiguously between worlds.

The work is taken through many variations, with the Knife and Stethoscope removed from the play of the improvisation. The Text speaker is left to work alone in the space, harvesting from the memory of the physical, verbal and imaginal interventions of the others, and continues to speak the text and move under these conditions. The Receiver is supplanted by the audience, positioned disparately around the fringes of the space. The Text Speaker is then encouraged to experiment with different 'measures of scale' — amplifications and contractions of the body and movement, the 'volume' of the voice, and the use of physical space, all within the ambit of the 'body' they have been 'given' by the Knife and the Stethoscope.

Given these starting points and practical applications, a number of questions surfaced from within the work. Where pedagogy or 'teaching' is concerned, how might the assumption of, and desire for, the security of 'knowing' (by both teacher and student) be met with an equally powerful and yet passive 'fall' into *learning*? When is the 'knife' needed? At the same time, how might the performer's 'genius', the particular and peculiar quality each performer brings, be preserved? Whence the 'stethoscope'? Where the act of performance is concerned, there are infinite fictional worlds, forms, styles, genres, and discourses to swim in. How to keep swimming?

How to diffuse the desire to 'be' (real), for example, with the pleasure of *pretending to be*? How to play *and* be played upon, subject to internal and external influences? How to be in this place as a performer — *strung between* — maintaining the tension with another/others? Ambiguously cruel questions.

When we perform, where and upon what do we 'perform'? In my field of interest, which has its roots between theatre, contemporary dance and image-based practices, it is possible to answer that we are 'acting' on the *space between* the observer and the observed — between the stage world and the audience. With what will we imbue *this* space? What signposts for the imagination, defying the tyrannies of a particular discourse? What temptations beyond the familiarity and control of the observers? What seductions, what convulsions of complacencies via the imaginal field we share? And the players? How to radicalise the performer's *subjectivity*, resisting the provision of an easy objectivity under the weighty gaze of the audience? For if audiences know how to 'act', it is often precisely under the influence of a metaphorical gravity: to act or perform an operation of 'closure', foreclosing the play of appearances and the radical *instability* of the performer and the fictional worlds he or she engenders. At least, this seems to mark a constant state of desire which an 'informed' performance practice of itself does not necessarily disrupt and which, to the contrary, it often seems to re-enact. This is a kind of necrophiliac, morbid loop which is as much cultural and ideological as it may be 'performative'. And yet, all of this may be exchanged within an array of popularised and acceptable discourses that *appear* to 'open' the space of this closure.

The workshops *Little Tyrannies*, *Bigger Lies* and *Dissent/Descent and Desire* were an attempt to explore a performance practice in which both the teacher *and* the student, the director *and* the performer, might 'suffer' the initiations of the problems of knowing, being, and doing in performance via means of a pedagogy which casts an eye over its own shoulder — both watching its back, and remaining curious and critical of its own assumptions. This is not a simple matter of inversion where dominant norms of, say, theatre and dance practice are concerned, nor one of merely pitting academic and intellectual 'critique' against more popular, professional, 'industrial' forms of performance. It is not a straightforward matter of denunciation. This tends to ossify quickly and occupy an equally dead place in 'reaction' — as if

some sort of coup can be 'enacted' by 'opposing' this or that 'conventional' performance space with discursive 'openings', an alternative angle of incidence for positioning an audience, or an elaborate articulation of 'ideas' and 'intent' in a program note. All of these may constitute no violence whatsoever to those elusive forces that would 'centre' us, 'ground' us in (new) habit, rehearsing an ambiguous agreement and satisfaction in archly politically correct positions, and ostensibly 'radical' critique or practice. 'The Same' returns in many guises, and this little tyranny may just need, in the name of resistance and liberty, a bigger performative lie.

Video and Seduction:

Ring the bell that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There's a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in ...

— Leonard Cohen, *The Future*

In *Seduction*, Jean Baudrillard discusses the idea of the vertigo of inversion of the substantial, 'actual' sexual order, and binary oppositions and dispositions that mark contemporary discourse: "the transubstantiation of sex into signs which is the secret of all seduction."¹ Images or 'the imaginal' are, like 'the real', hunted and shadowed by discourse and its interpretations and explanations. Baudrillard's position would imply that the opposite is also the case. Images, as transubstantiated signs, *seduce*. Hence, then, all images, sexual or otherwise, may be vertiginous — which is consistent with James Hillman's 'underworld' perspective. Images may seduce and invert the order of the 'dayworld' or the 'real'.

However, in Hillman's terms, 'images' are phenomenal presences, performing or enacting themselves with material, affective force via the imagination. Inversion is not their only prerogative or preferred option. Images 'act' or perform their imaginal manoeuvres often in disregard for the intentions of those who participate in their making. But even where an image is reified in the form of a 'picture' rendered on video, realised in the physical scene of a performance, or captured in a choreographic moment of a dance, the *phenomenon* of the image splinters into innumerable manifestations across the gap between performers and audience. It is no longer in the possession of the maker (if ever it was), but part of the scene in and by which an audience is 'possessed', and by which the performer is re-made or re-membered in turn. Acts of imagination stage images as 'here and not here', simultaneously present *and* absent, visible *and* invisible, though nevertheless 'seen'.

¹ Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p. 13.

As Hillman points out, images do not have to be 'perceived' (literally) to be 'seen' or imagined.²

I sit in a darkened theatre. A man crosses the stage in low light. A video image of the man in real-time shot live, but 'flipped' horizontally, is projected from a different angle on a screen at another location deeper in the space. The man walks away from the audience, and simultaneously away from 'himself' on video. The doubling and amplification of his image and movement stages 'other' images that include both, and surpass each. They have their own 'movements' and seem to move me, in me. I 'see' roads and pathways walked and never walked, times and places beyond the bounds of the physical space of the scene in the theatre. I see other men, many, walking mountain slopes and high passes. Suddenly the man is a boy. Now his shadow is an ape. My heart races. Vertigo. Other children play with the animal. I see my self among them, dancing along the path. There are bridges, stairways and wings. But the ape turns around, moving towards me on the path. It transforms into an image of the man in the theatre. He produces a gun, points it at me, and pulls the trigger. There is a huge, dry, shocking explosion as a flash pulses from the barrel of the gun and the sound shocks me into the present. *I am sitting in a darkened row of seats in a theatre.* I jump in my seat in unison with audience members either side of me. The man on the stage has put a gun to his head and pulled the trigger. He lies motionless on the floor as the lights go down and his mirror image on video fades signaling the end of Act I.

Did I see these images in the darkened depths of the space behind the translucent video screen? No. But if they appeared in my mind, it seemed that it wasn't 'my mind' to have. If I conjured these images myself, I was nevertheless unable to control them. For a moment, I was a boy again, innocent of any prescriptions or acts of will that might tear me from the scene. And it was the scene in the theatre, and the splitting and doubling of the performing subject on video, at least in part, which conjured the scene in my mind. Bang! O, my god, I've been 'had'! I have been seduced. Who knows what images came to visit the others beside me in the

² Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, p. 15.

moments before they too jumped from their seats. I have no time to travel those imaginal paths before the lights come up again for Act II.

Out here, beyond the site of this performance in the theatre, it is possible to see this imaginal scene as a 'subjective history', a *doubled subject's* history. I am in the physical space of the theatre, but 'I' also make an appearance in the images that coalesce in the imagination of the performance. I am in the performance, dancing with the ape, but the performance is also in 'me'. The man on the stage 'makes' the performance — he walks away from me in the space — but he also makes an appearance in 'my' performance as multiple others, as an ape on the path, a shadow in the drama. When I fall — 'vertigo' — *I fall into fiction*. But the idea that *both* of our 'histories' ('me' and the man) particular to this night in the theatre could be 'seen' as doubled subjects' histories is difficult to state without confessing that this material site is 'really' the sight of imagination. There is no 'out here' to be had. The night in the theatre never (actually) happened. It is a scene staged in this writing towards a performative 'end'.

But now that the 'night in the theatre' has made an appearance, what if we assign the effects/affects of its scene the same status as we habitually do the effects of 'actual' events: that is, the status of the materiality of the 'real'? If, in the theatre, I have been seduced (out of my seat and into the paths of the imagination), then in Baudrillard's terms, the order of the real is subsumed, inverted and subverted by the performance, and the 'imaginal' is what obtains, what is (also, now) 'real'. I am simultaneously in the (real) theatre *and* in the (material) realm of imagination (this would also constitute what Deleuze has called a 'double-capture'). But this is not *always* necessarily the case (as anyone who attends performance on a regular basis could attest). Seduction may stalk and perpetually threaten the real and its panoply of supporting discourses, but it seems that seduction needs to be provoked, called into action by an act of the imagination. Hillman argues, "an image is given by the imagining perspective and can only be perceived by an act of imagining."³

³ *Ibid.*

In the *Theatre and its Double*, Antonin Artaud says, “Everything that acts is cruelty”:⁴ cruelty in the sense of rigour, cruelty in the sense of the antinomical and interdictory nature of anything that stages itself (acts) in contradistinction with another. That which seduces *acts*. That which is imagined is *enacted*. Both are ‘cruel’ where my ‘I’ and the network of discourses that would stage it unambiguously are concerned. The imaginal perspective lifts this cruelty into consciousness and sets it loose on the so-called substantial and actual order of the real:

There is no cruelty without consciousness and without the application of consciousness. It is consciousness that gives to the exercise of every act of life its blood-red colour, its cruel nuance, since it is understood that life is always someone’s death.⁵

Hillman argues that the imaginal perspective — *imaginal* consciousness — keeps things close to their shadows, and that images, soul and psyche are inextricably bound up with ‘death’ (see p. 45 above). This is not a literal death, but the threat of a ‘death’ to the heroic ego, transforming it via a (cruel) act of the imagination into an *imaginal* ego. In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes, too, situates ‘death’ close to the essence of the image in his discussion of the advent of photography and the phenomenon of the photograph. In describing the experience of standing in front of the lens, Barthes speaks of a “sensation of inauthenticity ...I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object: I then experience a micro-version of death (of parenthesis): I am truly becoming a spectre.”⁶

In the scene of a ‘night in the theatre’ staged above, what is the role of video and its ‘projections’ in the imaginal possibilities staged in turn? The video ‘doubles’ the image of the man in the space and provokes the imagination towards the possibility that a man can ‘walk through walls’ and down roads and highways of the imagination. Where the ‘real’ man in the space may reach the limit of the literal wall towards which he walks, his image on the screen positioned deeper in the literal

⁴ Artaud, *Theatre and its Double*, p. 85.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁶ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, pp. 13–14.

space may simultaneously project his walk (perspectively, imaginally) beyond this limit.

Performance would often stage itself as an 'always already' where this is concerned: performance always already enacts the transgression of these literal boundaries and reveals their specular nature. It always already 'doubles' the performer. But the real wall remains, and these literalisms often conspire (with their own banal cruelties) against the appearances of the imagination. In this case, video serves as a provocation, a lifting into consciousness of the possibilities of the imaginal realm. Of course, video too is subject to the tyrannies of literalism and the habits of the 'real'. There are no guarantees, but video *may* in this context amplify the space, the imaginal space, of performance as one possible strategic move in provoking the figures of the imagination to make an appearance. In this sense, it is no different from any other scenic or dramaturgical strategy — light, sound, the grain of the voice, time, spatial demarcations, and the human body in movement: though it may combine all of these in its representations, and comes with its own 'scenography' and technical prostheses.

Video is already transparently a medium of simulations — pixilated, digital signs often simulating the real — a technological and aestheticised 'play of appearances'. It ambiguously 'performs' itself in contra-distinction with the real. But, like cinema (film), and photography in a different way, it is also the site of 'dis-appearances'. It is manifestly a medium of the 'here-and-not-here'. Video is usually composed of twenty-five frames of still images per second, and as many absences. As a medium that conspires around 'appearances' and representation, video may be seen to be a part of the apparatuses that would suppress uncertainty, re-presenting the real, and eliding the technical means of prostheses employed.⁷ However, *also* born of dis-appearances, video may be seen as an art of resistance and radical instability where totalising discourses would stage their appearances unambiguously.

⁷ See Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance* (New York: Semiotext[e], 1991), p.15. and *passim*

Seduction is of the order of appearances and disappearances. It also enters into a special relationship with morbidity and 'death' as prefigured by Artaud and elaborated by Baudrillard (see pp. 20–21 above). The 'little deaths' (concerning the performer's subjectivity) that I attempted to stage in the solo performances including video (*Rapture II & Rapture III*), could be seen to take their place or enact themselves within the field of seduction. As a performance maker who shot and edited the video, and took a place in the live performances alongside of these projected video images, it is possible to situate myself within this field as 'seduced by video'. I was keen to explore the possibilities of the ambiguous power of reversibility and subversion where video is concerned when placed opposite, alongside of, and parallel with the live performer in the space. An unabashed declaration 'yes, I have been seduced (by video)' and its inferred confession that I accede to seduction, implies that I may seduce in turn. *Rapture II* and *III* seduce as part of the processes of video making and projection inside of which I attempt, accept even, to de-stabilise my own subjectivity and that of the audience.

The problem for the performer is that they are always already 'inside the image'. I attempted to experiment with and explore this dilemma in the solo performances by transposing some of the 'graphics', 'text' or 'weave' of the performances onto and between video (finally in the form of three projection sites). I conceived the place of the live performer as ambiguously in the 'centre' of, or strung between, these articulate and animated video projections. The question of subjectification is immediately posed in a radically different way than in conventional live performance or performance on film alone. How is it possible to 'hold one's role/roles' through, against, and in relationship with this animation of the 'imaginal' and the 'real' when both are materially represented? How to be a protagonist — one who 'acts' — and yet be subject to the multiple antagonisms of the imaginal 'missives' flying all around as projections? These were the formal, conceptual and strategic concerns of my engagement with video in *Rapture II* and *III*.

In terms of the content of images produced, and the 'effects' by which they are rendered in the solo performances, I was close to Baudrillard's thinking in terms of the male/female conundrum and the reducibility of both terms via sexual discourse and the discourses which 'produce' the reduction; Psychoanalysis and Feminism, for

example. I was also shadowing Barthes' and Hillman's thinking on the illusive essences of images and their relationship with 'death'. On video in *Rapture II* and *III*, particularly the series of three 'interludes' — entitled 'Peace', 'Confessions', and 'Power' respectively (see Appendix IV, p. 195) — the images are comprised of naked figures; two female (one pregnant) and one male running concurrently and in 'opposition'. My status as performer, my 'identity' and 'character' are problematised. The naked male figure on video is ostensibly 'me' — but under these conditions, 'who'? There is no easy similitude to be had between the live performer, the Man in a Suit, and the male figure represented on video. It is important to consider that the 'image' is not merely the projected video image in each case, but the entire stage world, including the performer in real-time, the particularity of the configuration of the space, and the lighting and sound which conspire in the rendering of any section of the projections. The image then is at the interstices of movement, music, text and space — a kind of sensual, undecideable, syntax of its own. There are hence layerings of multiple significations in respect of my own figure, some of which are deepened by those of the female figures on video (woman as *anima*?), and therefore not separate but part of a rendering of a complex subjectivity. This rendering is also a 'rending' — a tearing or dragging down, a 'cruelty' to my 'self' that would otherwise act to preserve the illusion of its wholeness. Shadowed by Artaud, I attempted and accepted to have my self stolen from myself in representation on video: a performative 'death' to my 'I', and 'life' to the imaginal subject (cf. quotation from Artaud, p. 159 above).

The nakedness of the figures on video, simultaneously 'alone' and 'partnered' by the video in opposition and the clothed figure in the space, is part of the 'erotisation' of the image *and* the audience. The question of seduction is extremely relevant here. If, as Baudrillard argues, seduction is often inevitably (and pejoratively) reduced to an 'evil', to artifice, and play, then here where aestheticised beauty is most, the devil can play hardest. The nakedness, implications of sex and intimacy, and the erotic tension staged across the gap in opposition between the videos, are all rendered in inverted colour (the *inversion* is strategically positioned). The beautification of the 'pornographic' scene with 'effects' lifts the image away from a 'flat', banal, 'reality' and into an imaginal realm. However, far from satisfied with the 'seduction' of effects, I was concerned with 'affects' and what is *staged by seduction*.

If seduction's realm is the 'play of appearances', then yes, where I go to work on video, and where video goes to work on 'me', "I fall, I flow, I melt" within its play.⁸ Yes, I am seduced. I am inverted, destabilised, called into question as a subject. I may then enquire into questions of identity, identification, and processes of subjectification which may otherwise ossify and stabilise 'the self' both in perception and 'reality'. This is the 'fatality' that courts the image when confronted with the already stricken gaze of the audience which attempts to 'capture' it.⁹ Yes, I accede to the audience's seduction in turn and I attempt to play *between*, string my-selves between, this play of appearances.

Rapture. Abduction. Transportation. Transformation.

According to Baudrillard, the extent to which this play is 'pure', the extent to which I have participated in the "mastery of the strategy of appearances, against the force of being and reality,"¹⁰ marks the quotient of seduction.

If seduction is of the order of destruction and 'death-dealing' analysis and practice, of the order of inversion and reversibility with the power to "deny things their 'truth' and turn (them) into a game,"¹¹ then it is apparent that certain discourses — Performance, Feminism, Psychoanalysis, for example — may conspire to banish seduction as an evil, or even as insubstantial whimsy. Baudrillard says, "all disciplines which have as an axiom the coherence and finality of their own discourse, must try to exorcise it."¹² However, as a performer and video-maker, I answered 'yes, I have been seduced', and let seduction do its work in turn at the site from which this little tyranny emanates. This is a strategic position. I was not essentially concerned with a 'thesis' in this respect, with testing and defending a discursive position, or 'theorising' video as such. Rather, I was experimenting with the gaps, slippages,

⁸ Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse*, p.10.

⁹ See Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, *passim*, on the notion of 'death' for the subject in this degree.

¹⁰ Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p.10.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

illusive and elusive nature of discourse itself and with the phenomenological and imaginal aspects of performance making.

I attempted to stage a *persona*, or *personae*, which would not yield to any simplified notions of ‘character’ or the comfortable fallacies and fatalities of fixed discursive and epistemological positions on ‘the real’. I chose to participate in an ‘affective’ imaginal practice via James Hillman’s perspectives which might, by resisting the gravity of these fallacies — and the weighty gaze of the audience who know how to ‘act’ to preserve them — convulse the fields which govern how we perceive subjectivity, identity and our *selves*. Hillman speaks of ‘sticking with the image’ and not reducing it in discursive terms to things outside its field of play (see p. 54 above). By implication, we might strategically subject discourse, the desire for coherence, and ‘ego’, *to the image*, all of the images, and not the other way around.

Baudrillard argues that seduction annuls the masculine ‘production’ of power, including the ratified discourse of The Feminine which produces ‘woman as female’. Following this ‘logic’ via a kind of heuristic imaginal practice, in *Rapture II* and *III*, I attempted to subject my status as ‘man’/masculine to processes which may elucidate my “transparency as an imaginary subject.”¹³ This kind of subjectivity is constituted in the playful apparency of signs which are no more fixed and unassailable than the ‘crack’ in the dominant systems of production: a crack opened by the power of inversion, reversibility and annulation: the power of seduction staged by means of performance, which included, here, the art of video.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Writings on Performance II

Physical Practice/Imaginal Play:

Human beings have greater capacities for rote learning than horses do, a feature of the situation that, coupled with the generosity of horses, makes a lot of inadequate riding possible.

— Vicki Hearne¹



The video artist Bill Viola has said that everything he has created as an artist comes from his notebooks, a collection spanning more than twenty five years.² My own stash of little black books covers a period between 1993 and the present (May, 2001). I began documenting, making expansive notes, drawing diagrams and scrawling ruminations in these books in 1993 during a professional movement training workshop lead by Monika Pagneux³ in Adelaide, Australia. I have continued this documentation of professional training, my own work as a performer, independent and institutional teaching, and work as a director since that time. It is both true and untrue that everything I have participated in where performance is

¹ Vicki Hearne, *Tracking Dogs, Sensitive Horses, and the Traces of Speech*, cited in Phillips, *Terrors and Experts*, p. 8.

² Bill Viola, *Reasons for Knocking at an Empty House: Writings 1973–1994*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1995), p. 7.

³ See Appendix I p. 189 for a brief outline of the work/context of Monika Pagneux, Philippe Gaulier, Theatre de Complicite, Pantheatre and Anzu Furukawa — 'significant others' mentioned in this section of writing.

concerned comes from these books. Perhaps it comes *through* these books, via their insights (or lack thereof), and in many cases it comes from the inspirations of Monika Pagneux, Philippe Gaulier, Theatre de Complicite, Pantheatre and Anzu Furukawa with whom I have worked and trained.

I have spent long hours re-viewing, re-vising, and re-making performance work from/via these books. It has been an act of re-membering (recalling, reconstructing, and making anew). But these books are not ‘works’. Individually and collectively they constitute no ‘whole’, no single, authoritative perspective from which to position myself as a performance maker. Rather, they are fragments, ghostings, and shadows of a repertoire of ‘voices’, personae and practices (often) represented in a scrawl that is almost indecipherable now. The ‘me’ that emerges in their pages (or the ‘Monika’ or ‘Anzu’), is undecideable, mercurial, and sometimes radically unfamiliar. The notebooks are full of contradictions — personal, imaginal, practical and otherwise. And yet, they constitute some kind of ‘history’: perhaps a ‘dramaturgical history’. More than anything, when addressing the insights they have offered to the making of the series of solo works entitled *Rapture*, *Rapture II*, and *Rapture III*, these books seem to have functioned as a provocative subjective history, a ‘doubled-subject’s’ history (cf. p. 161). ‘I’ appear in the scenes of their writing and ruminations across many years. But if the ‘I’ that is doing the reading or perusing of their pages now is ‘me’ (hunched, sitting at this screen), then this me has been ‘doubled’, has undergone subjective transformations that resist being rendered into a ‘work’, a ‘whole’ or a singular ‘explanation’. As I have suggested (see p. 150 above), such resistance may constitute ‘body’: ‘substance’, the materialisation or realisation of imaginal, invisible and undecideable ‘things’ — that is, in the pages of the notebooks, in ‘me’, and in the series of works called *Rapture*, *Rapture II*, and *Rapture III*.

Adam Phillips laments the “mystique of expertise” that contributes to the belief that:

because a person has done a recognised or legitimated official training they are then qualified to claim something more than that they have done the training (doing something properly is a way of not doing it differently).⁴

⁴ Phillips, *Terrors and Experts*, p. xiv.

Far from claiming the ‘more’ that expertise seems to imply, my notebooks serve as documents that remind me that at many, if not most, moments in the history of this training and performance making, *I did not ‘know’ what I was doing*. Of course, I *thought* I did, and indulged in a *desire* to know — often, for example, performing a mask of ‘authority’ when confronted with the task of ‘teaching’ — but these are not the same thing. It would seem an act of disingenuousness to claim that I did know (what I was doing) now. Where the devising of the *Rapture* performances is concerned, at best, I had strategies — heurism and analogising, for example — albeit reinforced by practices drawn from my books and training. These seem to have allowed me to not know what I was doing and to continue doing it. It occurs to me long after the event that the methods and practices developed by the people with whom I trained are all in some way conceived with precisely this understanding in mind: that performance often stages itself as a practice of moving from the (ostensibly) ‘known’ to the ‘unknown’ — not the other way around (see p. 46 above). The question, problem and possibility of maintaining the tension, or anxiety, or epiphany induced by this movement became a central figure in the research I have undertaken for this post-graduate program.

Who are we, who is each one of us, if not a combinatoria of experiences, information, books we have read, things imagined? Each life is an encyclopedia, a library, an inventory of objects, a series of styles, and everything can be constantly shuffled and re-ordered in every way conceivable.⁵

I first read Calvino’s *Six Memos for the Next Millenium* in 1996 while preparing to teach one of my first few independent performance workshop for actors and dancers. My black books spread all over the desk and floor in front of me, Calvino’s notion of a ‘combinatoria of experiences’ seemed to gather their sprawl into a promise of possibility. The possibility that a re-ordering, shuffling, re-visioning and re-imagining of their contents might emerge as a ‘remembering/re-remembering’ of performance practice that was *not only ‘mine’* — nor Monika Pagneux’s, nor Gaulier’s — but a ‘third thing’. Calvino also helped me remember something I had read in 1993 before

⁵ Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millenium*, (London: Vintage, 1996), p.124.

undertaking any professional training of any kind — Paul Virilio's *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*. In it, he cites Baudelaire:

Countless layers of ideas, images, feelings have fallen successively on your brain as softly as light. It seems that each has buried the preceding, but none has really perished.⁶

The workshops that ensued were a series of three that I developed, re-made and transformed over a number of years following: *Pleasure & Presence*, *Defying Gravity*, and *Little Tyrannies, Bigger Lies*. Each turned on 'tropes' or themes that Virilio and Calvino had helped me re-think in relationship with the vast bodies of work I had glimpsed and experienced directly in training and working with Gaulier, Pagneux, Complicite, Pantheatre and Anzu Furukawa. That this re-thinking allowed me to re-make my training experiences, and myself play the role of 'teacher' in turn, invokes the reason for Virilio and Calvino's appearance in this writing at this point. *I did not understand that training then — as I entered and exited the studio each day — in the ways I imagine I do now*. I will attempt to give examples of some of these understandings here in relationship with the making of the *Rapture* performances. I have chosen to approach specific examples of practical work derived from Pagneux, Gaulier *et. al.* via Calvino and Virilio not least because Calvino's notion of "indirect vision"⁷ allowed me to see, and 'see through', training experiences that were perhaps too 'close' and opaque at the time. 'Indirect vision' as a strategy and principle is close to the work of Philippe Gaulier, Theatre de Complicite, and also Pantheatre. Similarly, Virilio's ideas on speed, gravity and the 'fall' wind their way through my understanding of the practices I inherited from Anzu Furukawa and Monika Pagneux. My teaching has also allowed me a certain 'distance' on my own subjectivity in the face of performative tasks which has provided a renewed facility in 'folding back' these understandings into my own performance practice. Hence, the inclusion of an account of my recent pedagogical practice detailed above (see 'The Knife and the Stethoscope', pp. 150–155).

⁶ Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, (New York: Semiotext[e], 1991), p. 29.

⁷ Calvino, *Six Memos*, p. 4. & *passim*

Rapture, *Rapture II* and *Rapture III* might be seen as ‘excursions’ in the tropes of ‘defying gravity’, ‘tyrannies and lies’, ‘presence and absence’, ‘subjectivity’, ‘knowledge and truth’, and ‘discourse’ itself. These tropes are *heuristically derived* from my training experience and from wide readings ‘around’ performance making. Calvino and Virilio, and all of the ‘significant others’ touched upon in earlier sections of this writing, often provided the conceptual framework, while Gaulier, Furukawa and others provided the ‘physical ground’ and practical applications necessary for devising the solo works. I say “works” now, but one of the problems and the point of the research was to investigate in what ways, by what means, and what processes subjectivity is ‘made’, rendered, or realised — if it ever is in these terms. Borrowing from Barthes, I might otherwise say that the *Rapture* performances are not ‘works’ at all. Like the fragments of Barthes’ amorous discourse, the solo performances are discursive in the sense of their ‘runnings here and there’. ‘Discourse’ is not only of the order of what is written, or ‘spoken’. The eye, and therefore my ‘I’, may discourse where the mouth and words ‘say nothing’. Hence, the body may discourse. Imagination ‘discourses’. *Rapture*, *Rapture II*, and *Rapture III* were initially conceived as structures (not works) with and in which to test and experiment with the tropes mentioned above. In this sense, it was hoped they might constitute the intersection of many ‘syntactical’ collisions, or image repertoires — a kind of choreography of multiple voices, ‘persons’ and affects.

In the same way that it is possible to think of the contents of my black books as “distributional but not integrative”⁸ (as is possible with the life of any subjectivity), the solo performances might be seen as a series of syntactical arias — ‘sign-tactical’ arias: a collection of utterances, and not (necessarily) progressive analyses. The image-repertoires for *Rapture*, *Rapture II* and *Rapture III* are extensive and interwoven. In one way, derived from my own ‘doubled’, subjective history — and strategically passing that history through practices and conceptual positions aimed at de-substantiating the ego (read singular ‘Self’) — each one is like an elegy: a kind of ‘serious’, sometimes (faux) solemn meditation on subjectivity, and an ambiguous, (comical) lament for the passing of a unitary self. The solos, and this writing in turn, playfully entertain lots of ‘little deaths’. There is epiphany in this — and there is also

⁸ Barthes, *A Lover’s Discourse*, pp. 6–7. See also p. 32 above.

vertigo and fear. The central figure of the solo performances might be understood as a kind of releasing from/dying to ‘Selfhood’, in order to enter into a ‘becoming’ — a ‘rapture’ — strung between high and low, fear and desire, present and future, and possible pasts. My aim as a writer, deviser and performer in the solos was to *maintain these tensions*, and resist resolving them into the tyrannies of fixed provinces of ‘being’, ‘identity’ and borrowed identifications. I attempted to devise a multiplicitous, affective and yet limited performative ‘culture’ — a kind of ‘song of my selves’.

Calvino’s six memos are only five — he died before completing the sixth. They are entitled: Lightness, Quickness, Exactitude, Visibility and Multiplicity. The sixth was to be called Consistency. In a disciplined way, I first attempted to practice Hillman’s notion of analogising from, against, and through (via) these memos back towards my various training experiences, and then forward again, transforming these ruminations into practical work and ‘exercises’ that may open up the materials I had gathered for my own teaching — and eventually each of the *Rapture* performances. I will address only Lightness, Quickness and Multiplicity directly here.

Calvino proclaims ‘lightness’, in literature and in life, as a principle and a virtue. His strategy is the removal of ‘weight’ — from language, the structures of stories, and the world of literalisms and rationalisations. His method, which he outlines via the Medusa myth, is the application of a precise but *indirect vision*.⁹ The virtue of this relationship with the world is in traversing the gap between ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ lives and staging this gap as the potential of *desire as lightness*. Calvino opposes what he calls this “lightness of thoughtfulness”¹⁰ to the weight, inertia, noise, and opacity of the world. Such lightness, and a refusal to look directly, is not a refusal of the world, or our place in it. Rather, our ‘fate’ is this reality with all its weight — we are terrestrial beings — and our relationship to it is carried with us and must be *accepted*. This is a ‘Tragic’ vision of the world (though not a hapless one) — not dissimilar to Hillman’s, and very close to the work of Philippe Gaulier and Pantheatre.¹¹

⁹ Calvino, *Six Memos*, pp. 4–5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹¹ See Appendix I, p. 189.

Philippe Gaulier, principally concerned with the pleasure of the performer, stages his pedagogy as an articulately playful series of layerings and developments of 'games' and improvisations that in the first instance hold the performer 'off' or away from rushing directly to the performative task. His teaching tactic, and a common 'rule' for the performer within an improvisation, is to *move around the thing* — scene, task — and not go directly to it, to 'character' or text, because the character or text is too 'heavy' of itself and will 'kill' the performer. Gaulier does not 'explain' or theorise this strategy, though he sometimes 'names' it in setting up a particular improvisation. This is part of his stringent refusal and deprecation of the performer 'knowing too much'. Reading backwards and forwards via Hillman, it might be possible to say that Gaulier's assumption could be that the performer's 'self/ego' — that part of their subjectivity that would always 'stand up', achieve, succeed and 'do well' — too often 'identifies' with the task or text, with all of its received associations and traces of 'normalising' assumptions and judgements. These carry 'weight'. The ego literalises, trapped in a conventional 'reality', and strives for a kind of 'knowing' which in performance often appears heavy and amounts to a kind of banal double-guessing which curtails the 'play' of possibilities. Gaulier's strategy to defy such mass and 'gravity' is to invoke, provoke, and address the task first via the *pleasure of the performer*. This, he says, does not exist in the text itself, nor in the scene, nor in the assumptions and conventions of a particular genre — Naturalism, for example, or even Tragedy. The pleasure of the *performer* — as distinct from, though not opposed to, the 'character' — contains all of the lightness of tactics and game playing. It is, Gaulier intimates, almost a contradiction in terms to be unhappy with your own tactic. It is this lightness and pleasure that is then addressed to text, character, and the 'choreography' of a scene.

In devising the *Rapture* performances, the weight of association and identification was redoubled, partly because I was often working with texts I had written, and partly because the content and materials I had otherwise chosen (already identified with) concerned subjectivity itself. To create 'distance', slippage, and 'play' between my self as a writer/deviser of the materials and the 'roles' and voices I sought to enact, I set up structures that 'held me off', or forced me to approach text, or movement, or transitions between episodes *indirectly*. For example, early in the process of working on 'Gee-up Horsey' (see p. 119 above), an episode that appeared in all three solos, I

set physical and imaginal limits and games that would string me between worlds. Physically, I attempted to play a horse with a man's legs (an inversion of the image of the Centaur) — first four, then two, then mixing it up. My game was to never fully arrive at the 'gravity' of one physical world over another. In this, there is a little fight, struggle, a resistance, oscillation, and new and non-habitual rhythms and forms. This was a strategy to participate in an act of transformation, dissolving the solidity of my preconceptions, and defying the sometimes singular weight of my identifications. This 'singularity' might otherwise be understood as a 'tyranny'. I focussed first on the movement and physical tasks, and gradually introduced the speaking of the text. Similarly here, I played first with resisting the influence of the movement — 'speaking through' its efforts, strains and dynamics. Gradually I allowed the movement to impact upon my speaking voice, disrupting order, tone, 'sense' and the rhythmical flow of the text. I played in and out of these variations, hunting out pleasure and the lightness that could otherwise sustain what was written as a kind of 'dirge'. In stages, I re-incorporated fragments, qualities, tones and even new words that came out of the improvisations back into much simpler and less 'dynamic' (in the sense of locomotion) versions of the scene/episode. I finally played this episode during the performances with a simple rocking and circling motion, and with two distinct voices. One deep and immediate, the other strangely high, lilting and reaching for distance. These decisions derived from another strategy — that of 'reducing the scale' of the movement, the voice, space, and scene (see p. 177 below). I was concerned not to imitate or caricature horses, for example, but to 'contain', compact and 'bury' some of these physical and imaginal worlds, their pleasure, 'libido', and play in the performance of the scene.

'Horses' make an appearance in a number of the episodes in each of the performances. Some of the physical vocabulary of the 'inverted Centaur' I had worked with in the improvisations above found its way into the 'small dance' of the 'Opening' of *Rapture*, the 'Lullaby Dance' in *Rapture II*, and 'A Place Where it Rains' in *Rapture III* (see pp. 70, 86, 114 respectively). In this way, I sought to 'lace' or 'seed' these physical and imaginal worlds throughout each performance — though not necessarily at the site where horses were explicitly mentioned in the texts. Perhaps, in this way, some of the 'strangeness', the fictions lurking behind the scene, the unexplained and barely visible 'engines' for some of the episodes might be

understood as 'lies'. I attempted to meet 'little tyrannies' (singular identifications, literalisms, egoisations, for example) with 'bigger lies': the slippage, playfulness, undecideability and pleasure of physical, fictional and imaginal strategies that might break up the weight, banality and inertia of the 'tyranny' in question.

Italo Calvino speaks of "the search for lightness as a reaction to the weight of living"¹² as an existential project. He situates this project firmly within terrestrial limitations, eschews the lightness of 'frivolity' (banality) for its own sake, and would draw, if he ventured into these terrains, a comparison between his "sudden agile leap of the poet-philosopher"¹³ and dancers, actors, singers, teachers and directors. His 'memo', image, or desire for the next millennium would be for them to raise themselves "above the weight of the world, showing that with all [their] gravity [they have] the secret of lightness."¹⁴

Monika Pagneux (see Appendix I, p. 189) situates this 'secret' close to the conundrum of 'presence' and 'absence' in performance. Her 'New Position', or 'Up/Down' — which I have adapted and developed further combining tactical moves from Gaulier and refinements from Anzu Furukawa, now called 'Mr or Ms New' (see p. 152 above) — is a detailed combination of physical strategies and positions aimed at transforming physical lightness into imaginal 'illuminations'. But Pagneux is aware of the ascensional desire in Western dance — most notably represented by ballet — and the *downward* movement within the position or structure is simultaneously entertained in equal measure with the work of 'levitation'. The resulting movement vocabulary is radically different from ballet, and even some forms of Modern dance. Imaginally, when this 'up/down' movement (conceived as physical 'work', and 'inner attention') is given a trajectory, locomoted, or 'thrown' back up and 'out', what was a dynamism in stasis becomes a kind of sine or sound wave in literal and imaginal space. This account may approach something of what Pagneux means when speaking of 'presence' as a 'song inside' — but it is not her language, and she does not approach her own work in theory in this way.

¹² Calvino, *Six Memos*, p. 26.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

As preparation for physical work for the *Rapture* performances, I subjected my body to the (seemingly impossible) simultaneity of the work of this ‘up/down’ — and, by extension, three hundred and sixty degrees of literal (and imaginal?) space. Sometimes I would ‘divide’ the body, assigning different quotients of physical work to different parts, and attempted to move this ‘new’ body into the space. I was concerned to experiment with a form that might approach the ‘phenomenon’ of a ‘rapture’ in physical terms, and to discover what might emerge from this work imaginally and in terms of speaking text. In *Rapture III*, when ‘taking a position’ physically to deliver text unadorned with large, graphical movement (for example, ‘Distract Me from Myself’, or ‘Coroner’, pp. 120, 133 respectively), I consciously exercised this ‘inner’ attention to physical work drawing up, and simultaneously projecting itself down — but also ‘into’ or towards the darkened space behind me (which operated as a kind of ‘vertigo’), and forward towards the audience via my gaze. This ‘work’ can best be described (though inadequately) as a ‘quality of attention’ which is non-habitual, and ‘detached’ from the task of speaking text while ‘radiating’ from the same physical place, say, rather than ‘relaxed’ as a place from which to speak. Monika Pagneux conceives of this attention as part of the principle (and virtue) of the performer undertaking the seeming ‘impossibility’ of simultaneously being ‘near and far’ — from the text, ‘character’, emotion, and the full dynamics of movement. It is strategically positioned as a ‘platform’, a physical ‘way in’ to maintaining distance and ‘slippage’ at the site of the performer, and not ‘holding too close’ to the identifications of text, emotion, or even the movement itself. It defies indulgence in projecting itself from ‘inside’ to ‘out’ and resists ‘personalism’ and the ‘grabbing’ identifications of the ego. In this way, Pagneux approaches directly in physical terms what Gaulier attempts by stringing the performer between the ‘rules of the game’.

Paul Virilio says, “movement is nothing other than an imbalance fostered and entertained.”¹⁵ As terrestrial beings bound by perception, human persons and bodies are dependent on the ‘fall’. Virilio argues that this is not a metaphor. It is inscribed in our perspectival structures, but also in our physical condition in the world. Human

¹⁵ Laurence Louppe & Daniel Dobbels — an interview with Paul Virilio. Trans. David Williams, “Falling into the World: Gravitational Space”, unpublished translation, p. 7. See also Laurence Louppe ed. *Traces of Dance*, (Paris: Editions Dis Voir, 1994), pp. 35–59.

vision and 'being' is dependent on weight and gravity: walking — falling from one foot to the other. Perspectively, 'falling' into the horizon. In this sense, 'falling' is not limited by the perspective of up to down. A fall can also be from down to up. If we transform our perspective, a jump becomes a fall, 'flight' can be seen as an inverted 'attack', and a fall into the horizon always constitutes a "rebound"¹⁶, a suspension, because, by definition, a horizon perpetually recedes, shocking us back into the world, the 'real', and our falling selves. Virilio conceives humanity as 'accident', as predicated on 'failure' and the 'fall', rather than as "glorious substance."¹⁷ Here, he is close in his thinking to Enrique Pardo (Pantheatre — see Appendix I, p. 189) and James Hillman, who both embrace a kind of theatrical poetics of 'failure' in opposition to the clay-footed banality of the Titanic ego's rationalisation and literalisation of the image, performer and text. Their work, and in different ways Pagneux's and Gaulier's, is pitted against the Heroic ego who would always 'stand up' in the dayworld light.

Butoh performer and choreographer Anzu Furukawa (see Appendix I, p. 189) also engages in 'anti-gravity' techniques in terms of her physical practice. Philosophically, these techniques are also an assault on the ego and the heroic myth of the Occident. The starting point is to lower the physical centre of gravity of the body a little by spreading the feet and legs slightly wider than the span of the shoulders, and 'softening' or bending behind the knees in order to tilt and lower the pelvis. The spine naturally lengthens, particularly in the lumbar region — a part of the work of Monika Pagneux's 'New Position' designated as 'opening the lumbar'. The overall position is less 'upright' than Pagneux's, and is closer to a second stage of development of the 'New Position' Pagneux calls the 'Monkey Position' — a bending and 'folding' of the



'New Position' as the first stage of 'animating' it and subjecting it to multiple trajectories. In Furukawa's position, the knee bend determines the height of the navel from the ground and acts upon different quotients of work and attention which spread throughout the body in differing degrees that Furukawa calls 'readiness'. It is a 'protective' position that can equally 'attack' or 'defend', but also offers a measure of 'lightness' if

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

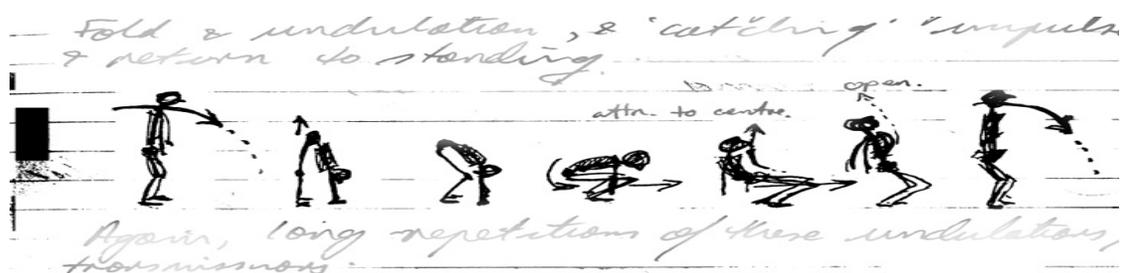
¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

the centre of gravity is a little higher, or 'heaviness' if lower. The intention is to experiment with carrying and *transmitting* weight (a *passive* position for the ego or 'self' of the performer is implied) from these positions. The strategy is conceived as a physical structure that can accommodate multiple choices. It is not enough just to be 'light', but to have the physical organisation and *choice* to be 'heavy', closer to the earth, allowing defiance of 'gravity' in two ways, including *going with its flow*. The work invokes the possibility of being 'faster' and 'heavier' than we normally are, and 'gravity' here is conceived as 'habitude' as much as the literal terrestrial force the body is always already subject to.

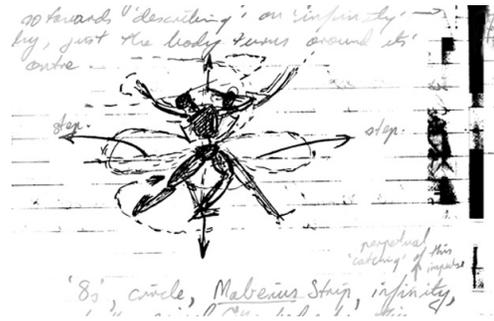
Furukawa then subjects this position and the work and attention of the performer to an imaginal, affective strategy — a



perspectival inversion which re-doubles itself. The performer is to proceed, with all of this physical work in play, as if 'hanging' upside down from the earth — not standing on top of the earth and pushed into the ground by gravity, but suspended, falling away from the earth, caught in its centrifugal force. Furukawa introduces the concept of 'homeostasis' (here elaborated as the principle that each point in the vertical line of the body suspended under conditions of gravity will attempt to 'return' or 'right' itself after a force has been laterally applied). 'Acrobatic' movements, practising 'figure eights' in feet, legs, pelvis, torso, arms and head, and folds and undulations of the spine in positions parallel with the floor are all part of a training in movement which attempts a vocabulary that can 'catch' the physical 'intelligence', necessity, dynamic and momentum of the body and its parts. Furukawa proposes that under these conditions our 'I' doesn't have to 'do' so much. In this way, the performer can defy the 'weight' of the centering tendencies of the ego by not 'making' and 'doing' and inhabiting all movements as '*mine*'. We can play, set forces in motion, and *be played upon* by their 'rebound' and 'return' in the body.



Furukawa's work involves passing these principles and practices through many different affective directions addressed to perspective, speed and 'scale' — for example, 'Expand/Shrink', 'Meltdown', 'Accumulation/Cut'. Simple walking and falling constitute the physical action or structure within which many of these strategies are undertaken. (See 'Missive', pp. 142, 145). All of these are gathered around a pre-occupation or working principle which Furukawa considers close to the heart of Butoh: rapid movement, the retention and release of energy, and the possibility of *decreasing the scale of the world in the body* can give way to new 'geographies' and cartographies of the body, and hence new imaginal worlds.



Interpolating my experience of this training with a theatrical and 'imaginal' poetics close to Hillman's, it is a strategic move to think that these imaginal worlds are made possible because when the ego 'falls' under these conditions, *it falls into fiction*. In working on *Rapture* and *Rapture II*, particularly, where the confined and intimate space of La Mama theatre has the audience a matter of feet away, I was concerned to engage in a physical practice that would afford the detail and precision of movement that might draw an audience in to the work of the operative metaphors of the performance without 'spelling them out' in spoken text. I often rehearsed in the studio beginning with the strategies from Anzu Furukawa's work outlined above, though it was necessary to adapt and modify them when introducing text. This was partly due to the sheer physical demands of the movement practices and the task of sustaining text simultaneously. The main tactic was to 'soften' my 'attack' or the level of physical effort and attention I put into the movement in order to leave space or 'slippage' to play with text and voice. From this emerged a strategy of playing with 'measures of scale' in all aspects of the performance: music, rhythm, space, dynamics, the grain (or quality) and 'volume' of my voice. I did not attempt to dance or move in a style that might be identified as 'Butoh', though it was perhaps most possible to see this work in play in the 'Opening' small dance of *Rapture*, and also in 'Is That all There Is?' (see pp. 70, 77 respectively). In *Rapture II* and *III* I continued to play with measures of scale in explicitly physical and vocal ways in different episodes, but also began to displace and transpose elements of Furukawa's work

into the making and projection of some of the video materials. For example, in the video projected in the episodes called ‘I Was Once the Same Man: Lullaby Dance’ in *Rapture II*, and ‘Water: Dying to One-Self’ in *Rapture III* (see Appendix IV, p. 195), I combined Virilio’s concept of the ‘rebound’ (see p. 181 below) with elements of Furukawa’s practice. The male figures in the water — a substance between earth and sky within which the effects of gravity are modified — repeatedly rise and fall in different configurations. Aided by the POV of the camera and its movements, and also the montage in the editing, the male figures merge and ‘fall away’, and rebound from the bottom of the pool/frame. Finally, one of them ‘rebounds’ off the glass with his head — having ‘fallen’ into the (false?) horizon of the screen (the ‘underwater’ footage was shot through a glass pane beneath the surface of a swimming pool). The bonk on the head is a sight gag made possible by Virilio’s contention that a ‘fall’ into the horizon (imaginal or otherwise) always shocks us back into the world, and the earth-bound gravity of our falling selves.

Rapture, *Rapture II*, and *Rapture III* might be seen as ‘exercises’ and excursions in learning how to fall — falling in the broadest of senses outlined so far. When asked by an audience member after a performance of *Rapture II* what it was all ‘about’, I found myself stuttering in my own discourse. My sound designer and operator for that show intervened — “It’s about falling.” I was relieved, but wondered how he’d ‘got it’ when I myself was still ‘lost’ in it. In a way, I could better understand his perceptions in relationship with *Rapture* (I had not yet devised *Rapture III*). This intervention of ‘understanding’ found its way into *Rapture III* in different ways than ‘falling’ had perhaps obtained in *Rapture* and *Rapture II*. I began to think of and see my own subjectivity within the work differently, and as Hillman says, “by seeing differently, we do differently.”¹⁸ Perhaps I had been caught in some of the literalisms of ‘falling’ in *Rapture* — the physical work — and could not see through to its metaphorical and imaginal relations with my own subjectivity as a performer devising the performances. A ‘little tyranny’ fixed that!

¹⁸ Hillman, *Re-visioning Psychology*, p. 122. & pp.115 –123 *passim*

Having chosen to expand and develop the technical aspects of the show for *Rapture III* (though lacking resources — particularly a director!), I found myself subject to a network of complex editing and projection issues associated with video, and a plethora of difficult problems to resolve around sound, light, and space considerations (*Rapture III* was performed at Dancehouse, a much bigger venue than La Mama.) In many ways, I did not ‘resolve’ them, but found — perhaps after the event — that I had managed a ‘bigger lie’ in the face of some of these difficulties. I simply could not sustain work in all areas of devising and rehearsing the performance. I found myself in the process of being ‘eaten’ and ‘objectified’ by the technical machine I had set in motion. I chose to ‘fall’ in respect of rehearsing and re-making (to points of precision and imitation) sections of the work that were brought forward from *Rapture* and *Rapture II*. Some sections remained unrehearsed up to and during all three performances of *Rapture III*. I was literally strung between ghosts and shadows of forms, roles, and episodes from previous works and the new structure and technical set-up of *Rapture III*. During performances, this contributed to a certain quality of attention (that at least I was conscious of) that might be described as ‘still looking for the show’. One of the most difficult performative tasks was to ‘hold my role’ through anxiety (and surprise) associated with this tension, and to *keep looking*. ‘Holding one’s role through anxiety’ approaches something of a definition of ‘presence’ as practiced in Monika Pagneux’s work.

Being always already ‘inside’ the performance, it is difficult to testify as to how this may have impacted upon the work in general. However, one person close to the work and familiar with *Rapture II*, reported a marked ‘elegiac’ quality to *Rapture III* (see ‘elegy’ p. 169 above). Here, now, it is possible for me to interpolate that the ‘softening’ of my stance to some aspects of the previous work may have opened up a slippage in which I could play ‘mournfully’, ‘reaching’ a little (I hope with a touch of self deprecation), and still *continue to play* — perhaps with a different ‘sensuality’ (read sensibility). In this degree, I intensified attention to work on my ‘gaze’, playing games between ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ space, and between the audience and the imaginal space beyond and behind their heads. The gaze of the performer mobilises and animates space, giving direction, ‘volume’ and ‘suggestion’ to the performance world and beyond. I consciously attempted to assign the audience ‘roles’ via the

quality of this gaze (again, call it the work of ‘sensuality’?) and the immediacy of my physical presence — roles beyond the singular role of ‘voyeur’.

Fragility, frailty and the fall are often bound together pejoratively when measured against the Heroic myth and its trumpeting of strength, progress and success. But Calvino, Virilio, Gaulier, Pagneux, Furukawa, and Pantheatre all conceive of fragility and the fall as bound up with a place of lightness which can defy weightiness. In performance, to ‘stay with’, or ‘entertain’, this fragility, delicacy and lightness is not to be ‘frail’, frivolous or without ‘body’ — but to play at the site which constitutes the shadow and full ‘reality’ which is ‘us’. If we abandon this in the name of ‘strength’, ‘ground’, certainty, and centrality, it is often the case (ambiguously) that gravity will ‘win’. Calvino suggests we need “a profession of faith in the persistence of what seems most fated to perish”¹⁹, and which, despite this ‘seeming’, often flips over and ‘flies’, sings, dances, speaks — and survives.

Paul Virilio’s notion of a ‘new’ perspective of a fall into the horizon, not the ground, contains within its ambit the idea of a freedom bound within limits. The ‘horizon’ of which he speaks is not only the literal horizon where earth or ocean meets sky, but a horizon that can be wherever there is a limit lurking, perpetually unseen, beyond reach — physical, personal, unconscious, metaphorical and imaginal. He says:

This touches on elements to which we lack answers — in other words, questions of liberty; one can choose assault, one can choose suicide, one can choose grace, but it is a choice.²⁰

We can defy gravity, but we exist perpetually, as bodies with weight, within its realm. From a ‘tragic’ perspective, we are here to remain — and then the question of what to choose arises. And also the question of how to ‘resist’ — suspecting all the while that resistance gives ‘body’, and with it weight, but that this ‘new’ body may be versed in the art of levitation *and* the fall. Such choices and ‘resistance’ might be part of a practice that can overcome the perpetuity of this force of ‘gravity’ which comes from outside, but also *from within* (see p. 29 above).

¹⁹ Calvino, *Six Memos*, p. 6.

²⁰ Louppe & Dobbels, Trans. Williams, “Gravitational space”, p. 10.

The 'fall', fragility, and to 'fail' may surprise the performer as a choice, and the performer may then discover how to pass through to the other side, *transforming habitual perspectives*, and fly a little, defying gravity, before setting down, only to rebound again. Virilio calls this 'grace': "falling into the world with modesty, dropping into the world with humility."²¹ It is almost a manifesto against arrogance, pride, and against the titanic contemporary 'self' — in dance, in theatre, and everywhere. In Philippe Gaulier's practice, his entire teaching in the genre of 'Clown' revolves around this kind of grace. To this end, he has invented a pedagogical companion called 'Mr Flop' whom he invokes, provokes and induces in various calamitous meetings and encounters with the performer. In his practice, and for the performer, 'Mr Flop' is 'real'. Gaulier's teaching resides in the means via which the performer may also conceive of 'Mr Flop' as imaginal, and as a place from which to play. When 'Mr Flop' comes, the performer has a choice: one can commit suicide — and the 'play' is over — or one can attempt to 'dance' with 'Mr Flop'. 'Mr Flop' does not like to dance, and so disappears for a while. Liberty — freedom with limits,²² and grace. Gaulier's 'method' always turns upon the pleasure of the performer. His 'genius' resides in understanding that there is a pleasure of destruction,²³ of failure, and of the fall — in this case, a fall into ridiculousness. To approach the world of the Clown, the performer must *accept to be ridiculous*, learn to 'dance' at the site of their *own* ridiculousness, and on the grave of their heroic 'self'. This dance might be understood as what Virilio calls a "fall into transparence".²⁴ In Hillman's terms (see p. 63 above), the Clown is not 'enlightened', knowing, seeing all, but 'transparent', unknowing, ridiculous, fallen, frail, and seen.

I did not attempt any of the *Rapture* performances as a 'Clown Show', but this perspective, the practice of the fall, and Gaulier's methods and insights informed the overall dramaturgy of the performances. Despite some 'successes', I learned enough

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²² See 'Missive' — "Gaulier grumbled ..." p. 140 above.

²³ See p. 20 above

²⁴ Louppe & Dobbels, Trans. Williams, "Gravitational Space", p. 16.

via my training with Gaulier to understand that ‘pure’ Clowning was not ‘my’ genre (rather, Tragedy, Melodrama and even the epic styles applied to Shakespeare given Gaulier’s ‘treatment’ were more my thing — bup be de bup buup baaah!!!!). The central figure of the ‘Man in a Suit’ in each version of *Rapture* would understand these genres (though perhaps he has not done the training). He tries to live here crawling between earth and sky, swimming sometimes, mostly treading water, but burning with the struggle to turn his ‘drownings’ into dreams. More than this, he begins to understand that his subjectivity — strung between, subject to ‘gravitational’ forces of many kinds — is not of the order of the ‘one’, but of the many. He is no Clown, and he struggles with his own ridiculousness(es). Between these poles is where this aspect of the creative development, writing and devising of the performances began. My own sensibility as a performer lead me to attempt something closer to a merging of a (fatally flawed) ‘Epic’ style, with Melodrama (including faux ‘Naturalism’), reduced to a ‘scale’ and ‘pitch’ that was ‘domestic’ and pedestrian, as well as comically expansive. I remember, only now, Calvino’s inspiration from many years before. He speaks of his appreciation for Shakespearean characters who, he says, are able via a “particular and existential inflection ... [to] distance themselves from their own drama, thus dissolving it into melancholy and irony.”²⁵ He says:

As melancholy is sadness that has taken on lightness, so humour is comedy that has lost its bodily weight ... It casts doubt on the self, on the world, and on the whole network of relationships that are at stake.²⁶

Anyone who has entered a studio alone to devise a performance work — or who has ‘done the training’, returning later to the studio or the site of a live performance to stage the show — will ‘know’ that it is not like riding a bike: more like falling off a horse. There is a complex of dual/duel relations.²⁷ There is vertigo and fear, and the seeming impossibility of dexterous and precise repetition despite the investment of

²⁵ Calvino, *Six memos*, p. 19.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ One of Baudrillard’s favourite puns. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, *passim*

time.²⁸ The 'horse' has a mind of its own, and does not pay heed to human 'studio time', 'down time', 'real time' or any other.

Virilio, discussing dance and invoking Husserl, speaks of the enigma of a "living present."²⁹ For Virilio, dance offers the possibility of participating in this 'living present'. But because we exist in time, looking on to a human universe determined by the perspective of the fall, we fear death. The 'self' of the performer literalises, trapped in a (naturalised) 'reality', and fears the spectre of a fatality of its own invention. Tyranny. Flop. Calvino understands the problem:

Death is hidden in clocks, as Belli said; and the unhappiness of individual life, of this fragment, of this divided, disunited thing, devoid of wholeness: death, which is time, the time of individuation, of separation, the abstract time that rolls toward its end.³⁰

Calvino intimates that the fear and vertigo we normally associate with the void (often conflated with an understanding of the term 'universe'), is rather the fear of the enigma of the 'existent', the 'world', and *living in it* (this would include the 'world' of the studio, the theatre, and its attendant imaginal realms). It is fear constituted in, and vertigo induced by, the *tension and uncertainty* of this enigma. Virilio conceives a 'living present', the 'nowness' of things, as just such an enigma:

It is not the present of the past, or of the future; the living present has neither past nor future; it's in the 'quick' of life, it exists in the speed of being in the world — in the speed of falling into the world.³¹

Dance, and performance in general, is engaged in a practice, an attempt, to bring into 'being' what it desires — imaginally and otherwise. It is in this sense that I understand performance 'taking place' in the space of desire (see p. 59 above).

²⁸ The bulk of my professional training was undertaken in a concentrated period between 1993 & 1996. I commenced work on my Phd & *Rapture* in 1997. I performed *Rapture II* in 1999, & *Rapture III* in 2001.

²⁹ Louppe & Dobbels, trans. Williams, "Gravitational space", p. 6.

³⁰ Calvino, *Six Memos*, p. 47.

³¹ Louppe & Dobbels, trans. Williams, "Gravitational space", p. 6.

Borrowing from Calvino, and appropriating his insights from the context of literature, this practice requires a particular and peculiar “subjective gift,” and an adaptation to, and acceptance of, the “gratuitous pleasure”³² attached to this ‘gift’. There is a pleasure of creation, and a pleasure of destruction. The horse shunts sideways, shys, knows itself only as desire (as its own desire), and will not be ridden at a different canter without a fight. The face of each of these pleasures — of creation and destruction — also masks their shadow: anxiety and the pain of the propulsion of the ‘self’ into life (and performance). Hence, also, fear and vertigo in the face of the ‘void’ (unknown imaginal and performative space). As the performer steps forward to fly — there are winged horses — and enter into relationships with the world that the ‘world’ *also* defines and reconfigures (other performers, an audience), the performer risks a fall. It is the fall of the ‘self’, and a wager on the loss of the ‘contained’ egoist subjectivity that perhaps we habitually begin with (a subjectivity which is at the core of this anyway false separation of the ‘self’ from the world). Re-membering James Hillman and Herbert Blau (see p. 9 above), the performer requires a subjectivity that can set this ‘flight’ in motion but suspect its own motives in doing so. A ‘living present’, and the *gratuitous pleasure of the fall*, would cast these motives *also* into the lap of the gods (of the audience) and the soul of the world, at the point or moment (always ‘now’) of departure. The dream of ‘flight’ here is *also* to fall, ‘defying gravity’ is *also* to ‘go down’.

If I have lingered on the notion of the fall, it is because in the making of the three solo performances, I ‘suffered’ the pleasures both of its insights and of its shadows. *Rapture*. The pleasure of destruction, and the pleasure of creation. The pleasure of a fall into multiplicitous fictions. Gratuitous — and still uncertain.

If a ‘living present’ resides in the *quick of life* (see Virilio, p. 183 above), Calvino’s memo on ‘Quickness’ offers a promise of possibility in thinking about and practising ‘presence’ as a performer. Presence here is not conceived as an egoist ‘taking place’, or filling the scene with a unitary and unambiguous ‘self’. This might be understood as a ‘tyranny’. The ‘bigger lie’ may otherwise come from a discipline of thought and physical and imaginal practice that includes in part the possibility of

³² Calvino, *Six Memos*, p. 114.

'absenting' one's 'self' (one self): creating space and slippage that 'others' may show themselves. Calvino says imagination and speed are linked to the ineluctable.³³ He offers the figure of the 'horse' as emblematic of this relationship, and says it can be traced through the entire history of literature. Calvino is principally concerned with the horse as representative of the relationship between physical speed and speed of mind. He relates 'discoursing' to 'coursing'. James Hillman would go further, arguing that the horse is an archetypal image — that is, fundamentally imaginal. I have been using the image of the horse above as an analogous, imaginal strategy to 'come between' the idea and the act where performance practice is concerned. Hillman's perspective would position the 'horse' as *already there*. Monika Pagneux's work is also informed by the image of the horse. One must ride and be ridden, particularly in the area of the emotions — psychological daimons — holding the reins, but allowing enough 'slack' to catch the ride from below. Anzu Furukawa's work, too, approaches something of this 'riding and being ridden', playing and being *played upon*, in her disciplined work around 'catching' the momentum of the body under conditions of gravity — being 'had', *doing* less, and playing back. In each case, there is a quickness, a speed of attention, and agility required to go for the ride.

In a body of work called 'Seven States of Tension' which I first encountered in working with Theatre de Complicite (see Appendix I, p. 189, & Appendix III, p. 194 for the 'Seven States'), the metaphorical and imaginal horse is everywhere. The seven states are called (ambiguously and inconsistently): Catatonic, Californian, Neutral, Alert, Suspension, Passion, and Tragedy. Each state is a specific provocation to 'take on' or practice different qualities, levels and quotients of 'tension' or work in the body. Catatonic is the 'minimum' amount of tension or work in the body necessary for movement ... Tragedy is the maximum amount possible, with no further recourse. It is a graded scale in between. The disciplined focus in the training is to stay with the physical forms and quotients of work, and not rush too quickly to imaginal and theatrical 'representations' which hover close to the titles of the states. For example, Tragedy is a theatrical genre, Californian may conjure cowboys and the West. The task is not to 'enact' these dramatic situations, but perhaps to 'find' or discover them via physical means. The assumption is that it takes a precise,

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

particular and very specific exercise of tension or work in the body to ‘catch’ the inflection of the inception of the dramatic situation.

Apart from a training in physical dexterity providing a huge palette of possibilities for movement, the Seven States of Tension are an exercise in riding and being ridden. There is a minimum amount of effort in each state, an economy of movement, agility, mobility and ease. But some ‘work’ is necessary. This approaches and attains the specific ‘poetics’ of articulate theatrical worlds. In devising *Rapture*, *Rapture II*, and *Rapture III* I played with these Seven States as preparations and foundations for inventing the movement vocabularies for specific episodes. They were particularly useful when mixed and matched, applying different measures of scale sometimes to two or more different ‘states’ that I had combined. I also played with ‘flicking the switch’ between the two states and inverting the measures of scale. Refinements and re-workings brought extra vocabulary and detail to ‘Is that All There Is?’ (p. 123) in each of the performances, for example. However, some of this work also informed the specific movement criteria for physical work shot and projected on video — the underwater sequences in ‘Pool 1’ and ‘Pool 2’, ‘Saturdaynightdeathdaddy’ in *Rapture II* and *III*, and the ‘Stairsequence’ in *Rapture II* (see Appendix IV, p 195).

The crucible of the work and attention in each of the Seven States holds the performer at a little ‘distance’ from the dramatic situation, and perhaps allows the ‘horse’ to visit the ‘you’ that may hold too tight — on its own terms. Where performance and the performer is concerned, ‘holding too tight’ often leads to an entropic malaise. And yet, in the face of entropy, portions of the ‘existent’ tend towards a form.³⁴ In the face of the ‘flop’, I can still hear Monika Pagneux exclaiming, “You must have the *conviction of the form*.”

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

Equilogue

Horses figure at many points in each of the *Rapture* performances. In the first instance, I wrote sections and gathered materials from other writers without any particular consciousness of their inclusion. They found their own way into the corral. Hillman's perspective helps me to imagine that they then set to work on their own liberation. There is the plough horse — lame, a broken back, ribs hanging out, with no teeth ('Shifftin' Sands', p. 116); the horse that baulks at imaginary fencelines ('Gee-up Horsey', p. 119); horses named in the unaccompanied song adapted from Tom Waits, the Trojan horse imbibed in its title ('The Fall of Troy', p. 92); Unicorns ('I am the Unicorn [a Unicorn's Grace]', p. 76); Centaurs and circus horses ('Is That All There Is?', p. 123); and Henri Michaux's imaginal one-eyed horse of a cursed future ('Interlude — Power', p. 132).

Archetypal or imaginal psychology would situate horses most powerfully within the Hero myth — with "headstrong extroversion and noble courage."³⁵ The horse carries life, strength, and force — but it also speeds death. Black horses draw the chariot *down*, into Hades. Winged horses fly close to the perils of the sun. And so Hillman, re-membering the horse's 'delicacy' and 'gentility' enquires, "What of its mystery, the horse that asks to be relieved of carrying the hero on its back?"³⁶ In one way, Hillman's entire project in imaginal psychology might be understood as the separation of the horse from the hero, and the hero from 'his' horse:

Rather than slaying the horse, [or whipping it on], or letting it go to be free of its force, alchemy suggests getting inside the horse, like Jonah in the whale. We interiorise and contemplate the urge to press forward, to run wild, to panic, to win. Instead of free-ranging conquest, you on top of the horse with reins of control in hand, you climb down and stay inside your animal drive, enveloped and cooked by its heat.³⁷

This imaginal inversion is not conceived as loss of power (nor as 'suffering' in the belly of the whale — see 'Missive' p. 138 & *passim*), but as initiation by 'fire' in the

³⁵ James Hillman and Margot McLean, *Dream Animals: Writings by James Hillman, Paintings by Margot McLean*, (San Francisco: Chronicle books, 1997), p. 48.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

ways of the soul. The alchemists buried closed glass vessels used for ‘processing’ psychological substances in horse dung. The warm and steady heat imbibed a long and slow focus on one’s soul life:

Stashing your soul stuff in a pile of manure means paying attention to the residues of your horse-driven urges and actions. You become conscious of the horse-shit component of your drivenness, the consequences of the life you have sped through and ridden over. As you stew in this fermentation, another kind of awareness begins to form.³⁸

If such an awareness was fermenting in me with the inclusion of horses in *Rapture*, *Rapture II*, and *Rapture III*, I was not conscious of it at the time. Few of ‘my’ horses, anyway, could have carried me into battle, and only the Unicorn seemed to whisper to me directly of ‘heart’. Perhaps I have missed the point. What is going on? I am not an analyst!

Reader beware. Don’t trust me. I deal in fictions.

I *did* try and ‘get inside’ these horses. When writing the texts, and hunting out these physical and imaginal worlds, my strategy was to ask not ‘What can I see?’ — but ‘*What does the horse dream?*’

Climbing inside my horse, and seeing through the dark eye rolled back to white, I thought I dreamt a vision — as if in slow-motion — of a horse throwing its rider ...

This is not a conclusion.

Re-member me.

This is a process-ional exit.



³⁸ *Ibid.*

Appendix I

Contextualising notes and brief biographies for principle teachers, directors and companies with whom I have worked and trained, 1993–1996. See also Appendices II & V.

Monika Pagneux is one of the foremost teachers of movement for performance in the world. Her techniques draw on an extensive and eclectic range of movement practices drawn from martial arts, classical and contemporary dance, and other movement training methods such as Alexander technique (developed by an Australian actor). Monika trained and taught at École Jacques Lecoq before co-founding a studio with Philippe Gaulier in Paris. Her work draws heavily on the work of Moshe Feldenkrais with whom she worked extensively. She has worked as movement director/consultant for Peter Brook, Annabel Arden (Complicite and Opera North), and many others. She is principally concerned with breaking down habitual movement patterns and opening the performer's body to the articulation and organisation available to them in a broader range of applications in dance and theatre. Her work is closely related to that of Philippe Gaulier from the perspective of movement and physical training.

Philippe Gaulier is an internationally renowned teacher and runs his own studio school in London. He is also a writer and director. Gaulier trained and taught at École Jacques Lecoq in Paris. Subsequently, he ran a studio in Paris with Monika Pagneux for ten years. He has developed his own unique methods in actor training and applies them broadly across many genres including, most famously, clown and bouffon, melodrama, tragedy and the writings of Shakespeare. His strategies are based on 'Le Jeu', or 'play', the 'rules of the game', and are principally concerned with the pleasure of the performer, the relationships between actors (as distinct from, though not opposed to, 'characters'), and 'liberty'. As such, his concerns and methods overlap with, inform, and address themselves to the question of 'presence/absence', a pedagogy of 'dissidence', and strategies for devising performance which challenge conventionally received forms and methods — particularly Naturalism.

Anzu Furukawa is a Butoh performer, choreographer and teacher based in Germany. She runs the Dance Anzu School in Berlin. Anzu was a founder of Butoh dance companies Dance Love Machine and Dance Butter Tokyo which toured throughout Europe, Japan and Africa. Butoh is a contemporary form of Japanese dance originating in the work of Tatsumi Hijikata in the late fifties and sixties and coming out of the post-war Japanese experience. Philosophically and strategically it falls on the 'absence' side of the 'presence/absence' relationship as far as the performer is concerned, although this binary opposition is precisely one of the things at stake in Butoh. It is a form of dance and rigorous physical training which is often contrary in its precepts to some of the conventional foundations of Western dance practices. And yet Butoh has merged and redefined itself in many variations, with European dance particularly. Anzu Furukawa's practice is uniquely 'theatrical' and comical in intent and outcomes.

Theatre de Complicite (spelt throughout the document with English characters, not French, as in the company's own publications) are an English theatre company with whom I have trained and participated in devising processes for their shows. Founded in 1983 by **Simon McBurney, Annabel Arden** and **Marcello Magni**, Theatre de Complicite have created more than 27 productions and performed in 180 cities in 41 countries on four continents around the world. They share a similar vocabulary with Gaulier and Pagneux, and their own training is in many cases based on their work. They have developed a style and way of working based on strategies for group performance and 'chorus' work and applied them to pre-existing texts as well as devising original material. Pagneux, Gaulier and Complicite all share a background and performance practice with the work of **Jacques Lecoq**. École Jacques Lecoq in Paris has operated since the late fifties incorporating Commedia dell'Arte, acrobatics, clown, bouffon, and strategies for performance based on architectural/spatial and musical inquiry.

Pantheatre, founded in 1981, are a theatre company based in Paris who emerged out of the research work, training and performance of the Roy Hart Theatre which was a ground-breaking voice-theatre in the sixties and seventies (based at Maleragues, Provence). The Roy Hart Theatre developed strategies for research into the relationship between movement and the voice for performance. Pantheatre's current artistic directors — **Linda Wise** and **Enrique Pardo** — draw extensively on a mythological perspective (particularly the writings of James Hillman) and apply them to movement and voice work which emerges as a form of 'choreographic theatre'.

This eclectic range of performance practices informed the strategies which I employed in devising the solo performances — *Rapture*, *Rapture II* & *Rapture III*. Each of them is related to and shares concerns in critical ways with the central tropes of my overall project — 'defying gravity', 'tyrannies and lies' 'presence and absence', and 'subjectivity'. As a proposition for research, the 'thesis' grew out of their pedagogy and critical and imaginal re-workings of it. I improvised with various combinations of these strategies in some cases to generate text, in others to test physical methods against conceptual material, and also to research the structures, forms and 'musicality' of the performance outcomes.

I have developed my own versions of these methods and techniques via my teaching in which I improvise with these forms in order to open them up to different areas of inquiry and to different 'ends' in performance. For example, I have developed some of the Butoh dance work of Anzu Furukawa towards speaking text and character work. I also developed these improvisational and cross-form and hybrid strategies towards my own performance in relationship with video and sound technology in the *Rapture* performances.

Appendix II

Journals ('Black Books')/documentation of various training and teaching, 1993–1998:

This list is not exhaustive of training undertaken but does represent the training for which I have kept detailed written and graphic records on a daily basis. These documents were crucial for the development of the practical work for the *Rapture* performances and also explicitly informed the theoretical and conceptual aspects of this written research.

Monika Pagneux — movement training (Adelaide)	April, 1993
Frankie Armstrong — voice training (Adelaide)	April, 1993
Simon McBurney — Theatre de Complicite Chorus/ensemble workshop (London)	Aug., 1993
Development work — Theatre de Complicite <i>Three Lives of Lucie Cabrol</i> (London)	Aug., 1993
Enrique Pardo/Linda Wise — Pantheatre Choreographic theatre, voice training (Paris)	Oct., 1993
Enrique Pardo — Pantheatre Choreographic theatre, voice training (London)	Nov., 1993
Philippe Gaulier — One year program (London) Le Jeu, Neutral Mask, Tragedy, Bouffons, Melodrama, Clown, Shakespeare/Chekhov, Writing and Devising, Direction.	1993–1994
Lilo Baur/Marcello Magni — Theatre de Complicite <i>Theatre Beyond Words</i> Workshop (London)	March, 1994
Monika Pagneaux — movement training (London)	May, 1994
Jos Houben/Simon Mc Burney — Theatre de Complicite Development work — <i>Out of a House Walked a Man ...</i> (London)	June, 1994
Monika Pagneux — pedagogy/movement training (Paris)	July, 1994
Liza Mayer — Pantheatre Voice training, choreographic theatre (London)	Sept., 1994

Anzu Furukawa — Butoh Training (Adelaide)	April, 1995
Simon McBurney — Theatre de Complicite 'Memory' workshop (Sydney)	Nov., 1995
Al Wunder Improvisation training and performances (Melbourne)	1997
Enrique Pardo/Linda Wise — Pantheatre Choeographic Theatre workshop & creative development (Maleragues, France)	May, 1998

Journals ('Black Books')/Documentation of independent performance workshops and projects, 1995–2001(Teacher/Director):

I have been developing my own pedagogy influenced by the training/sources above. I have documented in detail each of the workshops and projects listed below. The workshops constituted invaluable research running both ways into performance outcomes for *Rapture*, *Rapture II*, and *Rapture III*, and for this written work. The documentation for each served as primary sources for the overall project.

<i>Pleasure and Presence</i> — Performance workshop (Perth)	Jan., 1995
Performance workshops with Aboriginal and non-aboriginal Students Ti tree, Newcastle Waters, Matarranka schools, and Barunga Community School — Northern Territory)	July/Aug., 1995
<i>Little Tyrannies, Bigger Lies</i> — Performance workshop (Perth)	Feb., 1996
<i>Defying Gravity</i> — Performance workshop (Perth)	Feb., 1997
<i>Choreographic Theatre Project</i> Director with Deborah Hay (choreographer), facilitated by Margaret Cameron, supported by Arts Victoria (Bellarine Peninsula, VIC)	Nov., 1998
<i>Pleasure and Presence/Defying Gravity/ Little Tyrannies, Bigger Lies</i> A series of three professional performance workshops (Melbourne)	Nov./Dec., 1998

<p><i>Choreography & Characterisation</i> Professional development workshop for actors, dancers, directors facilitated by choreographer Shannon Bott, funded by the Australia Council for the Arts (Melbourne)</p>	Oct., 1999
<p><i>Defying Gravity 1 & 2</i> Guest director/teacher, two parallel performance workshops, Dartington College of Arts, (Devon, UK)</p>	Jan., 2000
<p><i>Strategies in Physical Theatre</i> Guest director/teacher, performance workshop, Royal Holloway College (London)</p>	Jan., 2000
<p><i>Little Tyrannies, Bigger Lies & Dissent/Descent & Desire</i> Two professional performance workshops for actors, dancers, musicians etc. (Melbourne)</p>	June, 2000
<p><i>Physical Practice/Imaginal Play</i> Professional performance workshop for actors, dancers, directors etc. (Melbourne)</p>	Feb., 2001

Appendix III

Seven States of Tension:

These Seven States of Tension are listed here as I encountered them in the work of Theatre de Complicite. Other groups and individuals train and devise performance work using this sliding scale. There are many variations and alternative 'definitions' of each state.

Catatonic	Minimum amount of 'tension' or 'work' in the body necessary for movement.
Californian	Relaxed, 'effortless' and even (potentially) languorous physical state.
Neutral	Sufficient 'work' or 'tension' necessary for the task. Economical movement. No 'excess'.
Alert	Quality of physical 'tension' associated with 'readiness', responsiveness, and curiosity.
Suspension	Work and tension in the body to maintain a 'held', upward inflection.
Passion	A state of physical tension 'held' and 'released'. High energy. Towards 'emotional' expression.
Tragedy	No further movement possible. Extreme stretching or contraction of the body and amplification of movement. No further recourse.

In general, each state is explored individually by the performer, often moving from a lying position, through sitting to standing. Specific attention to points of increased effort and the organisation necessary to sit, then stand, is encouraged. Moving 'freely' in the space, the performer is then encouraged to move between physical vocabularies drawn from, say, three different states. A huge variety of theatrical structures and forms are introduced to bring performers into 'play'/relationship with each other, and can be employed towards the generation of 'character' from physical starting points, or towards dance and 'choreographic' vocabularies which may then be refined and developed.

Appendix IV

Guide to Video Materials:

One three-hour VHS tape is supplied with the written document. Rewind the tape if necessary and reset the counter on the VCR player to 00h 00m 00s. In-points are given in hours, minutes, and seconds.

Contents:

<i>Video Materials Rapture II & III</i>	0h 00m 30s
<i>Rapture II Projected Video Sequences</i>	0h 00m 40s

Video footage is presented in a simple split screen format where images were projected simultaneously. The larger image is material projected on the Screen. The smaller image is material that appeared on the TV. Video is otherwise displayed full-screen.

<i>Caltonrun</i>	0h 00m 48s
<i>Stairsequence</i>	0h 02m 48s
<i>Wallmovie</i>	0h 06m 33s
<i>Brollyrain</i>	0h 07m 38s
<i>Houselights</i>	0h 08m 43s
<i>Pool1 & Pool2</i>	0h 09m 32s
<i>Sky</i>	0h 12m 11s
<i>Choppertraffic</i>	0h 14m 28s
<i>Woman1peace & Woman2peace</i>	0h 15m 40s
<i>Manconfessions & Womanconfessions</i>	0h 18m 08s
<i>Womanfirepower & Manfirepower</i>	0h 20m 44s
<i>Therapytexts & Therapist</i>	0h 23m 23s
<i>Fishylegsdance & Saturdaynightdeathdaddy</i>	0h 26m 06s
<i>Houselights</i>	0h 29m 29s
<i>Brollyrain</i>	0h 30m 05s

Rapture II**0h 31m 07s**

Documentation of the performance. La Mama, Melbourne, November 1999 — Approx. 1 hour

Opening	0h 31m 22s
I Was Once the Same Man/Lullaby Dance	0h 40m 10s
A Complete Stranger	0h 42m 41s
Shifftin' Sands	0h 43m 55s
Crow Shooting	0h 45m 36s
I'm a Nation That Mourns	0h 48m 17s
Gee-up Horsey (A Love Song)	0h 49m 10s
Distract Me From Myself	0h 51m 31s
The Fall of Troy	0h 52m 50s
Interlude — Peace	0h 55m 16s
Is That All There Is?	0h 58m 11s
Policewoman	1h 00m 49s
I Have a Vision	1h 01m 34s
Words From Lovers	1h 03m 47s
Interlude II — Confessions	1h 05m 37s
Staining My White Gloves	1h 08m 10s
My Cowgirl's Got a Theory	1h 08m 48s
Interlude III — Power	1h 10m 35s
I've Bought Myself a New Toy	1h 13m 10s
Therapy/Psychopathological Test	1h 15m 15s
Tremor — My Own Butcher	1h 20m 59s
The Revenger — I Prefer the Car	1h 22m 59s
Master of My Own Fuck-ups	1h 25m 30s
You Know What I'm Saying	1h 27m 08s

Rapture III Projected Video Sequences**1h 30m 56s**

Video footage is presented in a simple 3-way split screen format where images were projected simultaneously. The large image on the right is material projected on the Screen. The medium sized image top left is material that was projected on the Wall. The smaller image bottom left is material that appeared on the TV. Video is otherwise displayed full-screen.

<i>Transport</i>	1h 31m 05s
<i>Carltonrun</i>	1h 31m 50s
<i>Wallstairs</i>	1h 32m 52s
<i>Brollyrain & Brollyrain</i>	1h 35m 11s
<i>Daddy's Dead</i>	1h 36m 32s
<i>Sky</i>	1h 37m 33s
<i>Choppertraffic</i>	1h 39m 51s
<i>Woman2peace, Woman1peace & Moonlamp</i>	1h 41m 03s
<i>La Mer</i>	1h 43m 31s
<i>Womanconfessions, Manconfessions & Slowmoon</i>	1h 46m 25s
<i>Womanfirepower, Manfirepower, Mouthcloseup</i>	1h 49m 04s
<i>Blueface</i>	1h 51m 43s
<i>Pool1 & Pool2</i>	1h 53m 12s
<i>Fishylegsdance & Saturdaynightdeathdaddy</i>	1h 55m 31s

Rapture III**1h 57m 45s**

Documentation of the performance. Dancehouse, Melbourne, January 2001— Approx. 1 hour

Opening I — Je Suis Acteur	1h 57m 57s
Opening II — Everywhere a Stage Disappears	2h 00m 00s
The Fatigue of One Self	2h 04m 36s

A Place Where it Rains	2h 07m 40s
Shiftin' Sands	2h 11m 21s
Crow Shooting	2h 12m 52s
I'm A Nation That Mourns	2h 15m 56s
Gee-up Horsey (a love song)	2h 17m 29s
Distract Me From Myself	2h 19m 27s
The Well is Full of Pennies	2h 21m 09s
Interlude — Peace	2h 24m 05s
Is That All There Is?	2h 27m 27s
Falling in Love	2h 29m 58s
I Have a Vision	2h 30m 51s
Memories	2h 33m 09s
Interlude II — Confessions	2h 36m 32s
Staining My White Gloves	2h 39m 13s
My Cowgirl's Got a Theory	2h 39m 56s
Who Can Do No Better Than Their Life?	2h 41m 49s
Interlude III — Power	2h 42m 50s
Coroner	2h 45m 27s
Unknown Ancestors	2h 47m 10s
Water — Dying to One-Self	2h 48m 17s
Stuffed Into a Role	2h 50m 32s
Sucked Into The Telly	2h 53m 00s
End Tape	2h 56m 15s

Appendix V

Curriculum Vitae — Barry Laing:

Professional Training & Development Work:

1993–94 — One year program at **École Philippe Gaulier** — Aberdeen Studios, London
Le Jeu, Neutral Mask, Tragedy, Bouffons, Melodrama, Clowns, Shakespeare & Chekhov,
Writing & Devising, Direction

1998 — Research, creative development and writing for performance with Margaret Cameron in collaboration with **Pantheatre** (Paris-based voice/theatre/dance company) — Malerargues, France, & Spain — **Gloria Payten/Gloria Dawn Travelling Fellowship** and Arts Victoria Cultural Exchange Fund

1997 — Improvisation training and performances — three series — with **Al Wunder**, Cubitt St Studio, Melbourne, VIC

1995 — 'Memory' workshop with **Simon McBurney, Theatre de Complicite**, by invitation — St Laurence Arts Centre, Sydney, NSW

1995 — Butoh dance training with **Anzu Furukawa** — International Workshop Festival, Adelaide, SA

1994 — Voice training with **Liza Mayer, Pantheatre** (ex Roy Hart theatre) — International Workshop Festival, London

1994 — Pedagogical workshop in movement/physical training for the actor with **Monika Pagneux**, by invitation — Studio l'Ermitage, Paris

1994 — Development workshop for **Theatre de Complicite's** *Out of a House Walked a Man* with **Simon McBurney** and **Jos Houben**, by invitation — United Workspace, London

1994 — Workshop in movement/physical training for the actor with **Monika Pagneux** — Aberdeen Studios, London

1994 — *Theatre Beyond Words* workshop — professional/advanced. **Theatre de Complicite** with **Marcello Magni** and **Lilo Baur** — Creative Block, London

1993 — Development workshop for **Theatre de Complicite's** *The Three Lives of Lucie Cabrol* with **Simon McBurney**, by invitation — Creative Block, London

1993 — Chorus/ensemble workshop with **Simon McBurney, Theatre de Complicite** — International Workshop Festival — Creative Block, London

1993 — Dance/theatre workshop with **Enrique Pardo, Pantheatre** (ex Roy Hart Theatre) — Turtle Key Arts Centre, London

1993 — Dance/theatre and voice training with **Linda Wise** and **Enrique Pardo, Pantheatre** (ex Roy Hart Theatre) — Studio Danse Beaux Arts, Paris

Professional Training (cont):

1993–94 — Feldenkrais awareness through movement classes with **Barbara McCrae** — Open Centre, London

1993 — Movement training with **Monika Pagneux** — Voice training with **Frankie Armstrong** — International Workshop Festival, Adelaide, SA

1992 — Contact improvisation workshops with **Alice Cummins** — The Space, Perth, WA

1991 — Contact improvisation workshops with **Jenny Newman-Preston** — **Chrissie Parrott Dance Collective** — The Space, Perth, WA

Productions / Projects:

Co-founder Ex-stasis Theatre Collective (Inc.) — Performer, co-director — Perth, 1992
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2001 — Director, creative development for ***Magic Bike Project*** with Darren Steffen and Hope Csutoros, funded by Arts Victoria, Australia Council for the Arts and MIFA (forthcoming for Melbourne International Festival of Arts — 2001)

2001 — Director, ***Sub-Missionary Positions***, creative re-development & performance (of *Bellgrave: Baby Be Brave*), with **Corpora** — Felicity Bott, Paul Wakelam & David Fussel, funded by the WA Department for the Arts — Jacksue Gallery, Perth, WA

2001 — Writer/deviser/performer and video artist — solo performance work, ***Rapture III*** — Dancehouse, Melbourne, VIC

2000 — Direction/dramatugical assistance for Adelaide Festival Season of **desoxy Theatre's 98.4% DNA — *Being Human*** (Subsequent UK & European Tour)

2000 — Writer/deviser/performer and video artist — solo performance work, ***Rapture II*** — **Dartington**, Devon, UK

1999 — Writer/deviser/performer and video artist — solo performance work, ***Rapture II*** — La Mama Theatre, Melbourne, VIC

1999 — Director of ***Choreography & Characterization*** — professional development workshop for actors, dancers, directors — facilitated by choreographer **Shannon Bott**, funded by the Australia Council for the Arts — Cecil Street Studio, Melbourne, VIC

1999 — Director with **The Business** — creative development of new work/anti-clown show, ***Pandemonium*** — Brunswick Yoga & Dance Studio, Melbourne, VIC

1999 — Direction/dramatugical assistance for Melbourne season of **desoxy Theatre's 98.4% DNA — *Being Human***, David Williamson Theatre, Swinburne, Prahran, VIC

1999 — Director with **Born in a Taxi** — creative development & performance, ***There Is No Tomorrow***, funded by Arts Victoria theatre Fund — Theatreworks, Melbourne, VIC

Productions (cont):

1998 — Director with **desoxy Theatre** — **Dan Witton & Adam Broinowski** performers, for ***Chernobyl/Ballistic*** — creative development and performance — Brunswick Yoga & Dance Studio, Melbourne

1998 — Director with **Deborah Hay** (choreographer) for residential ***Choreographic Theatre Project***, facilitated by **Margaret Cameron**, supported by Arts Victoria — Indented Head, Bellarine Peninsula, VIC

1998 — Direction for ***The Business, The Business*** — clown show (with **Glynis Angell, Penny Baron, Clare Bartholomew, Kate Kantor**) — La Mama/Carlton Courthouse, Melbourne, VIC

1998 — Direction/dramaturgical assistance with **Daniel Witton** for ***Concert, desoxy Theatre*** (with eight musicians/actors) for R&D Cubed — Theatreworks, Melbourne, VIC

1997 — Writer/performer/deviser of solo performance work ***Rapture***, in ***Soloscopy*** — a season of three solos (with **Daniel Witton & Adam Broinowski**) — La Mama Theatre, Melbourne, VIC

1996 — Direction/dramaturgical assistance for **desoxy Theatre's *98.4% DNA — Being Human***, (St Martins) — creative development (for Green Mill Dance project) and 'showing'

1996 — Direction/dramaturgical assistance and recorded voice for **Peter Stafford's *Message Sticks (Punto di Fuga: an Afterword)***, performance and exhibition, Festival of Perth, WA

1995 — Directed ***Animatours***, devised performance project with third year Animateur students — School of Drama, Victorian College of the Arts (VCA), VIC

1994 — Script development for **Peter Stafford's *Beyond the Curve***, exhibition and performance — Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Festival of Perth, WA

1993 — 'The Revenger' in an adaptation and world premiere of **Deborah Levy's novel *Beautiful Mutants*** — **Ex-Stasis Theatre Collective** — New Fortune Theatre, Festival of Perth, WA, 1993: also co-director, co-adaptor

1992 — Directed **Peter Stafford's *Below the Vertical Hold***, exhibition and performance — Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Artrage Festival, Perth, WA

1992 — Directed ***Fathom*** by Jeff Ould, and ***Penicilan*** by Peter Stewart — The Studio, Hole in the Wall Theatre, Shrunken Heads Theatre Collective, Artrage Festival, Perth, WA

1992 — 'John' in ***EscapAIDS***, theatre in education project with Umbrella Theatre (Metropolitan schools, Longmore and Riverbank detention centres): directed by Ross Coli

1991 — ***Macbeth*** in an adaptation from **Shakespeare, *Macbeth a Modern Ecstasy*** (Dolphin Theatre), also co-adaptor/writer with David Williams. This script further developed by the Everyman Theatre, Liverpool, for workshops in Eastern Europe, 1992

1990 — 'Paul' in an adaptation of **Caryl Churchill and David Lan's *A Mouthful of Birds*** — Octagon Theatre & York Theatre Festival, also assistant director; directed by David Williams

1989 — 'The Father' (Captain) in August Strindberg's ***The Father*** — Dolphin Theatre, Perth, WA; directed by Bill Dunstone

Productions (cont):

1989 — 'Count Almaviva' in Beaumarchais' *The Marriage of Figaro* — Dolphin Theatre, Perth, WA; directed by David George and Bill Dunstone

1988 — Chorus in Dorothy Hewett's *The Rising of Pete Marsh* — New Fortune Theatre, Perth, WA; directed by Aarne Neeme

1988 — 'Hatch' in Edward Bond's *The Sea* — Dolphin Theatre, Perth, WA; directed by Brian Crowe

1988 — Directed and designed *Everyman* — Dolphin Theatre, and York Theatre Festival, WA; UDS

1988 — 'Orlando' in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* — Dolphin Theatre, Perth, WA; UDS, directed by Chris Edmund

TV / Film / Video:

1997 — 'Stan' — *Supa Dupa Santa* — VCA Post-grad. film — Adam McCullough, director

1996 — 'Duffy' — *The Last of the Ryans* — Telemovie — George Ogilvie, director

1996 — 'Tobias' — *State Coroner* — T.V series, ep. 4, *Coming to Grief* — Chris Thomson, director

1996 — 'Graham Cook' — *Blue Heelers* — T.V series, ep.113, *A Gift from God* — Kevin Carlin, director

Teaching / Direction/ Independent Workshops:

2001 — *Imaginal Practice* — teacher in Performance Studies project, **Victoria University (VU)**, Melbourne

2001 — *Physical Practice/Imaginal Play* — director/teacher, professional performance workshop for actors, dancers, directors etc. — **Dancehouse**, Melbourne VIC

2000 — **Composition Course** — teacher in Performance Studies, **Victoria University (VU)**, Melbourne

2000 — *Little Tyrannies, Bigger Lies & Dissent/Descent & Desire* — two professional performance workshops for actors, dancers, musicians etc. — director/teacher — **Dancehouse**, Melbourne, VIC

2000 — *Defying Gravity: Presence and the Performer* — guest speaker/international forum — **Studio Graal, BAW**, Paris, France

Teaching/Workshops cont.

2000 — ***Strategies in Physical Theatre*** — guest director/teacher, performance workshop — **Royal Holloway College**, University of London, UK

2000 — ***Adapting Narrative*** — guest director/teacher, performance workshop — **Royal Holloway College**, University of London, UK

2000 — ***Defying Gravity 1 & 2*** — guest director/teacher, two parallel performance workshops — **Dartington College of Arts**, Devon, UK

1999 — **Composition Course** — teacher in Performance Studies, **Victoria University (VU)**, Melbourne

1999 — ***Self, Selves and Others*** — teacher/director for text-based project and performance, **Victoria University (VU)**, Melbourne

1999 — ***Movement for Actors*** — teacher, **Victorian College of the Arts (VCA)**, Foundation Year

1998 — ***Pleasure and Presence — Defying Gravity — Little Tyrannies, Bigger Lies*** — a series of three professional performance workshops for actors/dancers/directors etc. — director/teacher — **Cecil Street Studio**, Melbourne, VIC

1998 — **Composition course** — teacher in performance, **Victoria University (VU)**, Melbourne

1998 — Guest teacher in **Storytelling and Performance Making** — **Victorian College of the Arts (VCA)**, Foundation Year

1998 — ***Ecstasy, Possession, Transformation*** — text-based course — teacher/director in performance, **Victoria University of Technology (VU)**, VIC

1997 — ***Texturosis*** — text-based course in performance making — teacher/director in performance, **Victoria University of Technology (VU)**, VIC

1997 — ***Defying Gravity***, performance workshop for actors, dancers, directors etc — Hellenic Gallery, **Western Australian Museum**, Perth, WA

1996 — Guest teacher in **performance/mask work** at the **Victoria University of Technology**, (VU)

1996 — ***Little Tyrannies, Bigger Lies***, performance workshop for actors, dancers directors etc. — The Performance Space, **Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA)**, Perth, WA

1995 — **Performance workshops** with Aboriginal and non-aboriginal students at Ti tree, Newcastle Waters and Matarranka schools, and Barunga Community School — **Northern Territory**

1995 — ***Animatours***, guest director/teacher at the **Victorian College of the Arts (VCA)** — devising and performance project with third year Animateurs, VIC

1995 — ***Pleasure and Presence***, performance workshop for actors and dancers — The Performance Space, **Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA)**, Perth, WA

Grants/Fellowships:

1997 — **Cultural Exchange funding** from Arts Victoria to develop a new performance work in France in 1998 (performer/writer)

1997 — Co-recipient of the **Gloria Payten and Gloria Dawn Foundations Travelling Fellowship** (performer) — travel/writing/research in France and Spain, 1998

1993 — Received funding support from the Festival of Perth for Ex-stasis Theatre's **Beautiful Mutants**, Festival of Perth — 1993 (performer/director)

1992 — Received **Individual Development Grant** (Study/Training) from the Western Australian Department for the Arts to train at **École Philippe Gaulier** in London for one year — 1993/94 season (performer)

1992 — Received project funding from the **Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council** for Ex-Stasis Theatre's **Beautiful Mutants**, Festival of Perth — 1993 (Performer/director)

1992 — Received **project funding** from the **Western Australian Department for the Arts** for Ex-Stasis Theatre's **Beautiful Mutants**, Festival of Perth — 1993 (Performer/director)

Publications:

'The Knife and the Stethoscope: Pedagogy in Performance', *Realtime*, Issue 38, 2000

'Beautiful Mutants' with David Williams in R. Allen & K. Pearlman eds. **Performing the Unnameable: An Anthology of Australian Performance Texts**, Sydney: Currency Press, 1999

'Little Tyrannies, Bigger Lies: a Letter from the Other Side' in 'On Place', *Performance Research*, 3, 2 Summer 1998

Education:

Australian Postgraduate Award Scholarship, 1997–2001

BA (Hons) — First Class, with Majors in **Theatre Studies** and **History**, **University of Western Australia (UWA)**, Perth — Completed 1991

Awards — UWA

Inaugural Guild and Convocation Cultural Award for Theatre (1991)
Katherine Moss Prize in English/Theatre Studies — Dissertation (1991)
Gladys Wade Prize in English/Theatre Studies — Honours (1991)
HECS Honours Scholarship — Theatre Studies (1991)
James Bourke Memorial Prize in English/Theatre Studies (1989)
Convocation Medal in Arts (1988)

French 1A — Perth College of TAFE — 1992

French 2 — Council of Adult Education, Melbourne, VIC, 1999

Related Skills/other:

Play drums/percussion — read music

1989/90 — Two month trip to **India** — Observer at workshops and forums with **Peter Brook** and company in Bangalore, also Kathakali and Kalaripayatt in Trivandrum, percussion forms in southern and northern India etc.

Bibliography

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