Transgression and Dissensus in Participatory Performance

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Theatre Studies

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I **Caroline Mueller** hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed:

Date: 2 October 2024

Impact of COVID-19 Statement

This statement aims to detail the disruption that COVID-19 and any relevant restrictions had on my personal research progress and particularly my PaR endeavours. COVID-19 and the ensuing governmental restrictions imposed from March 2020 had a considerable effect on the development of my praxis. The participatory performance work that I was examining and developing for my research is dependent on audiences partaking in shared activities in a designated time and space, but the UK-wide lockdowns brought any performance work to a grinding halt. The live art and entertainment industry continued to be disproportionally affected by governmental measurements taken over the next two years.

Having commenced my PhD in September 2018, I was in the middle of developing my practical approaches when the first lockdown was announced. Restrictions were imposed four days before *W E B*, my third practice instance was meant to be performed in Clarence Mews, Hackney. The performance has not been re-staged, partly because a wall-height netting of thick twine, which was installed in the studio, had become damaged when dismantled and partly due to the unavailability of my performer. The performance was an investigation into spatial transgression; audiences would have been invited to collaborate with each other in spinning twine through the space, and, by doing so, affecting and manipulating a performers' movements and pathways. I have included a description of *W E B* in the adjacent PDF documentation and will offer hypothetical insights stemming from experimental workshops and work-in-progress sharings pertinent to the development of this performance in 'Chapter 5.4 – *W E B*.

With theatre artists needing to reinvent themselves, online performance work prospered. In fact, Lyn Gardner claimed that some of the most significant income theatres received during the pandemic came from funds for participatory projects and education departments.[1] It seems that performance practice was particularly well adapted online by companies creating work with an interactive and participatory

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[1] Lyn Gardner, "Not just star casting – community work is key to theatre's future," The Stage, <https://www.thestage.co.uk/opinion/not-just-star-casting--community-work-is-key-to-theatres-future> (accessed 25 February 2022).

element, even if not strictly within an applied or community based theatre paradigm: companies such as Coney, Swamp Motel and Jury Games all produced successful online performances, with *Telephone* (first performed April 2020) by Coney being so popular it was staged three times since its first inception. I attempted to develop online participatory performances, which I felt did not meet the criteria of my key research foci of transgression and dissensus. However, some of the work that emerged during that time did offer a pathway into my PaR instance of *And Then There Was Only One* (2022). This performance investigated audience's use of personal handheld mobile devices and digital IMS during a live performance and was partly inspired by my experience of playing *Project Stranger* (2020) by ZU-UK.

To mitigate the difficulties COVID posed for my research I reduced my study time from full-time to part-time for the autumn term in 2020. During that term, my focus shifted from PaR to documentation to clarify my approach for the dissemination of the practice. However, with a renewed lockdown looming in the winter months, a gap year was necessary, returning to study in 2022. My doctoral research was strongly impacted, and a sense of momentum was lost. In retrospect, I would have liked to resurrect *W E* B, as well as produce a further instance of practice. I also would have extended my engagement with case study companies into the last year of study. However, due to the lockdowns and the need to be produce my practice in a condensed timeframe, I was not able to engage in more extensive dialogue with other artists and practitioners. The advantage to this was that my sole focus was on developing my own work, testing the many propositions that emerged from solitary research, theoretical reading as well as hypothetical reflections. The works that emerged after the lockdowns, namely *And Then There Was Only One* and *Trailed* exemplify a much more complex and layered creative methodology and are, accordingly, particularly rich and significant for my final exegesis.

Abstract

This Practice-as-Research (PaR) thesis examines transgression and the emergence of dissensus in participatory performance across the disciplines of theatre, dance and gallery art. My research is founded upon the understanding that an autotelic experience in the form of play is a key experiential aspect for spectator-participants during participation. This thesis will outline that transgressive, or bad play, is an integral part of play. Transgressive or bad participation is therefore an inherent probability in participatory responses. I have explored this premise through five instances of participatory performance, designed to facilitate audiences with an opportunity to transgress. This research recognises transgression as experiential and aesthetic ingredient in participatory performance and celebrates its disruptive and explorative qualities. Furthermore, I will exemplify that transgressive acts are able to conjure the experience of Jacques Rancière's concept of dissensus. The experience of transgression and dissensus share many aspects, and a renewed examination of dissensus through a lens of transgression can highlight how this concept is rooted in indeterminacy and multiplicity.

The thesis consists of 8 Chapters. The Introduction, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 are introducing the theoretical framework: Chapter 1 gives a detailed overview of the key concepts of transgression, play and dissensus; Chapter 2 identifies key phenomenological aspects relevant to an experience of transgression and dissensus. The next three chapters concern themselves with the practical framework: Chapter 3 discusses key case studies that have supported my research. Chapter 4 and 5 discuss my PaR methodology as well as my PaR performance. Chapter 6, 7 and 8 focus on key findings that emerge through my praxis: Chapter 6 discusses the key practical methodologies that have contributed to the emergence of transgression and dissensus; Chapter 7 discusses aspects relevant to spectator-participants and the participating community and Chapter 8 discusses transgression and dissensus as aesthetic ingredient. An additional PDF Documentation offers a creative outline as well as all pertinent video material for the praxis.

Thesis

Transgression and Dissensus in Participatory Performance

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Introduction

I. Introduction to research area

My research concerns itself with participatory performance work across the paradigms of live art, theatre and choreographic practices. I believe that the facilitation of participatory projects is affected by expectations that makers, promoters, and distributers of participatory works might have of potential spectator-participants and these expectations often result in an imagined ideal participant, as well as ideal participatory responses. My research however is interested in instances when spectator-participants respond against or beyond the expectations of makers, facilitators and or the participating community itself. I am intrigued to explore what motivations bring spectator(s) to respond in contradiction or defiance of implicit or explicit rules laid out in a participatory space and what effect disobedient and/or unexpected responses have on the work itself as well as the participatory community. To what extent can participatory performance makers facilitate and/or even encourage a multitude of responses, including those not bound to implicit or explicit rules of the work itself? And why would they?

In my thesis, I examine unruly participatory responses: those that go against or beyond the expectations of makers, facilitators and or the participating community itself, and name them as 'transgressive'. One aim of my research is to reclaim a rhetoric of transgression from being detrimental or even harmful, challenging a pejorative understanding of transgression and transgressive activity. Instead, I want to investigate a participatory practice that allows for transgression to occur and can negotiate, even celebrate discrepant experiences emerging from it. This is because I want to propose that unruly responses within participatory performances can offer an aestheticism rooted in multiplicity and transformation and should therefore not be overlooked as creative and aesthetic materials.

II. Format of the research

As part of this research, I have explored artistic and creative methodologies that might shed light on the queries articulated above through my own artistic practice. The

findings presented in this thesis therefore stem from a Practice-as-Research (PaR) approach that models itself on, and at times builds upon Robin Nelson's '*praxis*' or 'theory imbricated with practice'.[2] Between 2019-2023, I have produced five research performances between 30-70 minutes long. They are *Balloons* (2019), *Would You #1* (2019), *W E B* (2020), *And Then There Was Only One* (2022) and *Trailed* (2023). I have written, choreographed and directed these performances under my company's name boXd productions, employing performers and collaborators on a project-based basis. Each performance explores and tests various postulations that emerged from theoretical and practical frameworks of this research. Additionally, my own performance instances stand in direct dialogue with case study performances and research-relevant literature and are therefore examples of Nelson's '*doing-thinking'*.[3] The decision to produce smaller PaR instances was motivated by a recognition that transgression takes many shapes and forms, and is strongly dependent on context, as this thesis will evidence. Researching through a series of smaller works intends to uncover similarities and correspondences between moments in which transgression and/or dissensus occur (a concept articulated by Jacques Rancière in 2010), examining the relationship that materialises from overlapping discoveries.[4] This elides with Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of 'family resemblances', a phenomenon where similar aspects are shared and recognised to form a wider, identifiable relationship.[5] Wittgenstein uses games as examples in as much as they 'form a family', with their similarities criss-crossing into a network of relations.[6] Participatory performances that share certain criteria can also be understood to form a 'family'. The types of participatory performances I am analysing and producing through my own practice develop family resemblances, such as having a clear beginning and end to the participatory experience.[7] Furthermore, my research examines whether instances of transgressive responses in participatory performance can be grouped into 'families' of behaviours. As this thesis will articulate, transgression and transgressive responses

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[2] Robin Nelson, ed. *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (London: Palgrave Macmillan. 2013), 33.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Please refer to p.6 for further explanation on the concept of dissensus and how it relates to my research.
[5] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* [1953], trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009).
[6] Ibid., 36e
[7] Please refer to 'Introduction VI – Definitions and clarifications'

are predominantly context-specific and therefore each instance of transgression should be looked at singularly. However, I aim to articulate significant similarities and relations between instances of transgression that have emerged through my own practice and that of others. I argue that certain creative, social and inter-relational conditions can be assumed to facilitate transgressive responses more easily and perhaps can be understood as *resemblances*. Furthermore, I advocate, that the resemblances emerging under an understanding of transgression should be understood as experiential as well as aesthetic material.

During this research it was my quest to develop a practice that was able to allow for and negotiate transgression in participation. Not all my own work has been fully able to do so, for reasons explained in later chapters. Nevertheless, a PaR approach has allowed me to experiment and work towards such practice. This thesis is therefore written from the artist's perspective and provides an 'insider account',[8] with parts of my exegesis articulating propositions for creative processes and strategies to further develop an understanding of transgression within participatory arts practice.

III. Key research concepts

My praxis has been framed by three key concepts, namely transgression, dissensus and play. This introduction to these concepts aims to exemplify how they relate to the participatory responses I am investigating and how they give context to my research:

Transgression

As my thesis explores and analyses transgressive participatory responses, notions of transgression and transgressive activity form the first key concept for my research. The etymological roots of the word 'transgress' stems from the Latin '*trans*' (prep.), which translates as "across over, beyond", and is a variant of the root '*tere*-', which

[8] Robin Nelson, ed. *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (London: Palgrave Macmillan. 2013), 89.

translates as “cross over, pass through, overcome”.[9] Therefore to transgress is an activity that crosses or moves beyond a threshold, boundary or limit. The *Oxford Dictionary* common parlance definition states transgression to be a ‘violation of moral or social boundaries’,[10] the challenging of orthodox moral, social or artistic representations with ‘unconventional behaviour and the use of experimental forms’,[11] or ‘overlapping others uncomfortably’.[12] While the latter refers to a geological discourse, for example a marine stratum, it resonates strongly with some of the behaviour I want to describe. Noteworthy are the qualitative descriptions employed in the dictionary – on one hand a ‘violation’ and on the other ‘unconventional’ and ‘experimental’, which I want to extend to also be understood as *creative* and *innovative*. The ‘crossing over’ that lies at the heart of a transgressive act can therefore be an antagonistic, even violent act, or consist of finding innovative ways of passing or crossing over. This double meaning is paramount for my research. It suggests that the spectator-participants’ responses investigated fall into one of these two categories and can therefore be either disruptive or explorative. However, each of these categories consist of a sliding scale; a disruptive transgressive response can be a minor interruption, for example a heckle, or lead to the destruction of the participatory world. An explorative response might consist of a minor attempt to bend or cheat the rules or result in an experimental reconfiguration of rules. Furthermore, those categories of disruptive and explorative are not mutually exclusive.

I propose that transgressive participatory responses have an enhanced potential to affect the established participatory world as well as how this world is experienced by everyone involved. Furthermore, since *to transgress* designates a *crossing over*, it can also suggest a being *left (behind)*, implying a separation of sorts. Transgressive participatory responses can provide spectator-participants with disparate, even contradictory experiences within the same participatory framework. Additionally, *going beyond* and transgressing against given participatory frames, which can be understood as the given rules or performative structures within which spectator-

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[9] Transgression, *Online Etymology Dictionary*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/transgression> (accessed 5 March 2019).
[10] Transgressive, *OxfordDictionaries.com,* <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/transgressive> (accessed 8 March 2019).
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid

participants can contribute, often exposes the existence and/or functions of these very frames. Transgressive activities therefore reveal the framework they transgress against. My thesis questions, what does this momentary reveal of frameworks offer spectator-participants? And Artists? How might it shift expectations of and experience within the participatory work? How might it facilitate a hyper-aware and self-reflective assessment of one's own dispositions and/or actions in relation to those of others and/or the participatory framework they occur in? How might this affect one's performative reading of the scenario and alter it from those of others? I propose that a transgressive response has significant potential to change and diversify the experience of spectator-participants. I also believe that this effect can facilitate the emergence of dissensus as articulated by Jacques Rancière. Transgression in participatory performance can offer additional insight and understanding of dissensus as experiential phenomena. Dissensus is therefore a second key focus for my thesis.

Dissensus

For Rancière, art and politics are intricately linked in their 'both being forms of dissensus'.[13] Dissensus manifests itself 'as the presence of two worlds in one'.[14] The visibility, or placement, of one world within another, consists in 'making what was unseen visible; in making what was audible as mere noise heard as speech and in demonstrating that what appeared as a mere expression of pleasure and pain in a shared feeling of a good or an evil'.[15] This *re-distribution* of the sensible interrupts what Rancière outlines as 'distribution of the sensible': an 'implicit law that defines the norm of partaking by first defining the modes of perception in which they are inscribed'.[16] The emergence of dissensus therefore challenges these modes of perceptions as well as partaking structures. This results in a new 'topology of the possible' marked by a democratism: 'an absence of criteria', as well as 'an absence of separation' of what belongs and what does not.[17] As Steven Corcoran asserts, 'so long as artistic

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[13] Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus. On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran. (Continuum International, 2010), 45.
[14] Ibid., 3.
[15] Ibid., 46
[16] Ibid.,44.
[17] Ibid.,23.

dissensus adopts this democratism of making things freely available, it is of potential use to political dissensus'.[18]

The understanding above implies the potential of dissensus to bring about a political as well as aesthetic rupture. Interestingly, in both realms dissensus emerges as a fleeting experiential or proprioceptive phenomenon, since its demonstration is always 'of the moment and its subjects are always precarious'.[19] As part of this thesis, I argue that the experience of transgression is closely aligned to an experience of dissensus. For example, my research has uncovered how transgressive behaviour in participatory performances can disrupt an assumed separation from real-world conditions and participatory, dramatic circumstance. Comparing these different realms to 'worlds' means that transgression, like Rancière's understanding of dissensus, presents two worlds within one.[20] Furthermore, the experience of transgression is often rooted in a multiplicity, as its dependency on context driven as well as subjective parameters means that what is acceptable to some, may be experienced as transgressive to others. I hypothesise that a dissensus emerging from transgressive activities and the experience of such, will equally enhance a sense of multiplicity. Describing dissensus as the 'presence of two worlds in one',[21] is reductive; instead, dissensus might better be described as an exponential multiplication of possibility, or as said above, a *new topology of the possible*. As previously stated, transgression can expose the framework being transgressed against. Similarly, dissensus reveals the implicit criteria found in the "distribution of the sensible". By eradicating all criteria, a void is presented. I argue that this void in which the re-distribution of the sensible occurs is a deeply reflective, and fleeting moment. In the context of participatory performance, this has strong aesthetic implications.

In my research, I have approached the manifestation of dissensus within participatory performance from two angles. First, it can stem from a realisation of how the participatory framework collides or merges with our personal real-life reality. Second, it may arise from a realisation of how our own relationship to the synthesised

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[18] Ibid., 24.
[19] Ibid., 47.
[20] Please refer to 'Introduction VI – Definitions and Clarifications' for further discussion how I employ the terms 'worlds' and 'realms' in this thesis.
[21] Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus. On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran. (Continuum International, 2010), 45.

real-life/play-world differs from those of others occupying the same participatory performance realm. The difference between these two angles might be subtle and these two experiences are not mutually exclusive. But whereas the former turns our experiential focus on ourselves and highlights our personal positioning within a participatory structure, the latter places our experience in line with others, highlighting our positioning within a web of participatory relationships. And whereas throughout my research I place the individual experience of transgression and dissensus in comparison with what might be a collective experience, these two angles have helped me develop my Practice-as-Research (PaR) approach, which focuses on both participatory structures and on participants themselves.[22] An understanding of dissensus can serve as artistic methodology within the creation of participatory frameworks and finding artistic approaches that give rise to transgression and/or dissensus has been at the heart of my practical explorations. A key finding is the intertwined nature of transgression and dissensus, as often they emerge in tandem. Consequentially, my praxis aimed to discover if an aesthetic of dissensus is indicative of an aesthetic of transgression? What might an aesthetic of transgression, and hence dissensus, look like?

Play

It is my proposition that play and playfulness are not just an underlying context to all types of participatory performance but a driving force for some transgressive activity. Play and ludic theory is therefore a third and final key focus for this thesis. As part of my research, I want to rearticulate notions of play to question a commonly applied understanding of play as a beneficial, constructive and voluntary activity. As game researcher Jaakko Stenros explains: 'acts of play that transgress against the ideal of play as positive still run the risks of going unrecognised'.[23] Play is a highly complex concept, which can be analysed from biological, cultural, social and subjective

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[22] Please refer to 'Chapter 4 – PaR approach'.

[23] Jaakko Stenros, "Guided by Transgression: Defying Norms as an Integral part of Play," in *Transgression in Games and Play,* ed. Kristine Jørgensen and Faltin Karlsen (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018), 13.

perspectives.[24] Transgressive or bad play is often disregarded as it doesn't fit positive cultural or social rhetorics of play and can be considered immoral, risky, plain dangerous or even illegal. I want to advocate for a notion of play that considers transgression to be inherently *probable* within activities of play and honours it as a creative, explorative and potentially transformative force. Instead of labelling transgressive responses with negative connotations, I propose that embracing the probability of transgression within play offers new insights into audience behaviour and experience, as well as for artistic and creative approaches. My thesis aims to celebrate the experiential, artistic and knowledge-building possibilities that transgression in participation can offer to audiences, artists and scholars of participatory performance. To further explain my argument that transgression is a fundamental aspect of play, I draw on Jean Piaget's psychological research into the different stages of child development. For Piaget, the 'concrete operational stage' – a key step in cognitive and social development that occurs around the age of seven years old – consists primarily of the realisation that rules are 'not eternal and unchanging but socially negotiated and open for experimentation'.[25] This means that recognising the possibility for transgressive play is not just a key cognitive developmental stage for human beings; it also means that recognising the possibility of transgressive play is integral to understanding play in general. Researcher in video gaming David Myers offers the notion that play is paradoxical at its core and that bad or transgressive play is a 'necessary and unavoidable consequence' for any game or play scenario.[26] This echoes Piaget's understanding and further underlines that wherever there is play, transgressive play is a possibility. As it is my contention that play is an inherent ingredient to participatory performance, I conclude that wherever there is a participatory framework, there is also the potential to transgress against it. My thesis aims to develop a positive rhetoric to transgressive play as well as transgressive responses within participatory performance. Furthermore, through my practice I want to promote transgression as a creative 'doing'; one which not only functions as aesthetic material, but also offers extensive room for a self- and other-reflective experience, particularly in the aftermath of its occurrence.

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[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid. 24
[26] David Myers, *Play Redux* (USA: University of Michigan, 2010), 29.

Whereas a more in-depth discussion of these key concepts of transgression, play and dissensus will occur in 'Chapter 1- Theoretical Framework', the rest of this introductory chapter will clarify my research motivation as well as the questions that have guided my inquiry. I will then discuss the inherent paradox within my thesis of designing participatory frameworks that invite spectator-participants to transgress them. I will also clarify the most pertinent definitions for my research, before giving an overview and outline of the structure of the thesis.

IV. Context, motivation and research questions

Participatory performance practices often apply similar creative methodologies and operate within an interdisciplinary approach, blurring boundaries between genres and synthesising approaches from a range of different artistic disciplines. The distinctions between participatory art, theatre and dance are therefore not easily defined. For example, it seems odd that Berlin-based artist Tino Sehgal's work is understood as 'live art' whilst the British company Punchdrunk is categorised as 'theatre'. Kathryn Hamilton places Punchdrunk's work in relation to a trend emerging from the 1990's within gallery arts.[27] Whereas Sehgal's work is presented, marketed and sold by galleries, although his work is realised solely through participating bodies. Like Punchdrunk, whose work is primarily movement based, he works through choreographic means and 'refers to the art of dance and integrates it into the context of visual art'.[28] For example, *These Associations* (2012) is constructed and devised through a series of movement and drama games, not dissimilar to those employed by Punchdrunk to develop the material of their performers.

My own creative work is highly interdisciplinary, experimental and influenced by practices from a range of disciplines. For this thesis, I developed a rich assortment of research instances, with each performance taking a distinct shape and format. This means that my work is hard to categorise. As part of this research, I have produced an instruction-based performance (*Balloons*), a movement-based exploration of play and interactive choreography (*Would You #1*), an installation space that can be altered

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[27] Kathrin Hamilton, "Punchdrunk and the Politics of Spectatorship," *Culturebot* (November 2012). < https://www.culturebot.org/date/2012/11/>

[28] Dorothea Von Hantelmann, *How to do things with art: The Meaning of Art's Performativity* (Zürich: JRP|Ringier, 2010), 132.

by audiences, leading to spatial manipulations and restrictions (*W E B*), a script-based solo performance lecture, exploring the use of (a)synchronous digital performance spaces (*And Then There Was Only One*) and a script-based investigation of competition in playable theatre (*Trailed*). A reader of this thesis should engage with these PaR instances as individual examples of an artistic methodology that aims to facilitate and celebrate transgression in participatory performance. This does not mean that my audiences have always delivered transgressive responses; in fact, it has been very insightful to observe the moments in which transgression did not occur, even though the work left room for it to happen. Nevertheless, all my performance works explored and experimented with practical propositions that seemed to be suitable for transgression, dissensus and play to occur, and as consequence, offer a multiplicity of audience experiences and/or responses.

The differentiation of participatory performance work into the categories of art, theatre or dance limits the discourse about the aspects that these works share, whilst a contemplation of idiosyncratic aspects might lead to mutual insights that helps us to further understand the facilitation as well as the experience of participation in the performance paradigm. The desire to include a range of work from different practices stems from two motivations: Firstly, this approach mirrors my own practice, which combines methodologies from live art, theatre and contemporary dance. I strongly believe that it is the synthesis of different creative approaches that enables me to establish the experiential field suitable for experimenting with those aspects of participatory performance which are relevant for my own research. Secondly, my research will focus on the spectator-participant's experience and mechanisms of response during moments in which transgression and dissensus occurs, which, as an overriding concept, is relevant to participatory performance practice across the forms of art, theatre and dance.

A further motivation to include participatory performance works from different art forms is my belief that a common denominator of this type of work is a continuous and persistent rhetoric that participation has an ultimate aim and purpose for those who create and/or those who experience it. The use of the term 'rhetoric' here is inspired by Brian Sutton-Smith, who applies it to designate seven different types of rhetorics for play. For him, a rhetoric designates a 'persuasive discourse', one that carries an implicit narrative which is consciously or unconsciously adopted by those affiliated to

the subject.[29] The particular narratives of superior functions and purposes applied to play as identified by Sutton-Smith can also often be found in the rhetoric of participatory performance. Furthermore, rhetoric surrounding participatory performance constructs an ideal player, around which the work is imagined. The focus of my research are exactly those moments when spectator-participants do not comply or co-operate with a work's intended 'horizon of participation', to borrow Gareth White's term, but instead transgress, cheat, break the rules, refuse to collaborate or offer unanticipated responses that go beyond the expectations of makers, performers or other spectator-participants.[30] My own praxis has explored approaches which give rise to such responses, on the one hand inverting conditions that might be understood as having a superior or beneficial purpose and on the other, inverting the idea of an ideal participant. Research in game and ludic theory has solidified my conviction that participatory activities, like play activities, can be autotelic; it is participating or playing itself that brings rewards, rather than an ultimate aim to be achieved through the activity. Participatory responses and behaviours from spectators are therefore comparable to those found in play as well as bad play. This of course means that transgression in itself can be a rewarding motivation; someone who cheats might find greater pleasure in the act of cheating than in any subsequent rewards within the participatory structure.[31] I understand play to be a fundamental, defining and unifying aspect of participatory performance across the practices in art, theatre and dance.

A final motivation for this research emerged after my submission of the thesis. During my research, the landscape of participatory performance practice has changed, and I could observe a trend towards more commodified and commercial forms of participation, seen for example in the 'immersive' experiences offered by museums, arts organisation and event producers. Meanwhile, Coney, a key performance company for my research, closed their doors in April 2025, due to ongoing challenges in the contemporary funding landscape. Coney have been producing 'interactive experiences, games and adventures'[32] since 2006. Their work, which invites

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[29] Brian Sutton-Smith, *The Ambiguity of Play* (USA: The President and Fellow of Harvard College, 1997), 8.
[30] Gareth White, *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
[31] Please refer to 'Chapter 7.3.2 – Cheats'.
[32] Coney, "*You have found Coney*," Coney, < https://coneyhq.org> (Accessed 17 April 2025).

audiences to play, explore, collaborate, compete as well as transgress, has been a key inspiration for my own practice. My thesis therefore wants to celebrate not just the work of Coney, but all creative work that challenges audiences to not just consider their own perspective, but that of others, too. As my thesis will evidence, nurturing an artistic practice that embraces the playful and the unexpected, invites transgression and facilitates dissensus, might just be able to do so.

The following research questions have guided me through my research journey:

- *What motivations, activities or stimuli might lead to transgressive responses in participatory performances, and how can such knowledge inform the makers of participatory performances?*

- *How might a reframed understanding of transgression and transgressive play in participatory performance develop more diverse practical methodology that embraces and celebrates multiplicity in audience experience?*

- *How can participatory performance offer new ways of negotiating difference, conceptualise compromise and facilitate multiple and indeterminate responses?*

V. The paradox of designing to transgress – an inherent contradiction

Designing work that encourages participants to engage with disruptive or explorative participatory responses is a complex endeavour. It is arguably a contradictory aim to design a framework that encourages participants to respond against or beyond it. This offers a paradox for my practical approach but one that offers rich scope for experimentation. My key research concepts of transgression and dissensus are used throughout the thesis to unpack the paradox of developing a practice that invites and facilitates unexpected and subversive responses. Throughout my practical investigation, I was acutely aware of the occasionally blurred boundaries of autonomous agency, primed response and even coercion. Even more, by expecting the unexpected, I might already have an implied ideal participant in mind.

Akey finding of my research demonstrates that both transgression and dissensus facilitate the synthesis of different perspectives, resulting in a multiplicity of experiences. As discussed in chapter 1, the experience of transgression is highly subjective and context specific; the experience of the transgressor is different to those who feel transgressed against; and not all transgressive acts are conducted with transgressive intent. Similarly, a multiple, even contradictory sets of experiences can also be found in the concept of dissensus, which, as previously stated, is described by Rancière as 'the presence of two worlds in one'.[33] Both transgression and dissensus facilitate fleeting moments of self-awareness, teamed with an awareness of the experience of others. In artistic practice, moments of transgression and dissensus and their resulting experiential multiplicity are hard to navigate. There are inherent ethical considerations, as particularly disruptive responses may have a detrimental effect on my performers, individual participants/participant sub-groups and myself. Theatre-maker Tassos Stevens' uses the metaphor of participatory structures being like an architecture with empty rooms, filled by participants' responses. However, the risk element increases when I present structures that allow participants to redesign the architectural scaffolding or break it down altogether.[34] How might I enhance the indeterminacy of responses within the participatory gap of my own participatory structures without expecting the unexpected? For me, this contradictory element offers an ideal ground for a PaR approach modelled on Nelson's epistemological triad of 'know-how', 'know-what' and 'know-that'.[35] Whereas I developed my praxis (theory imbricated within practice)[36] through an ongoing dialogical exchange of these modes of knowing, I also want to make a case for what I articulate as the 'know-why'. The 'know-why' differentiates itself from Nelson's 'know-how', which designates the often implicitly embodied tacit knowledge ('insider' close-up knowing), as well as the 'know-what', which designates the explicit articulation of such knowledge through critical reflection. The 'know-why' relates to the 'know-that', with which Nelson refers to cognitive knowledge sitting in a clearly identifiable conceptual framework ('outsider'

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[33] Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus. On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran. (Continuum International, 2010), 3.
[34] Appendix 2 – *Interview with Tassos Stevens,* 234.
[35] Robin Nelson, ed. *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (London: Palgrave Macmillan. 2013).
[36] Ibid., 37.

distant knowledge). The 'know-why' looks beyond such clearly identifiable knowledge-frameworks and instead aims to understand what principles underlie specific phenomena.[37] The 'why' aims to analyse the principles of those scenarios that lead to transgressive responses. It aims to look at re-emergent purposes and intentions, either of the artistic framework or within participants' responses themselves (i.e. *why* did they transgress?). I propose that transgression can be analysed by comparing specific moments within a range of participatory works alongside relevant individual spectator-participants' responses to gain further insight into audience behaviours as well as artistic methodologies that may foster transgressive responses. In my process, identifying the '-why' served as a stepping stone towards articulating the '-that'. Furthermore, my articulation of 'that' in my exegesis is reliant on an examination of multiple idiosyncratic 'whys'.

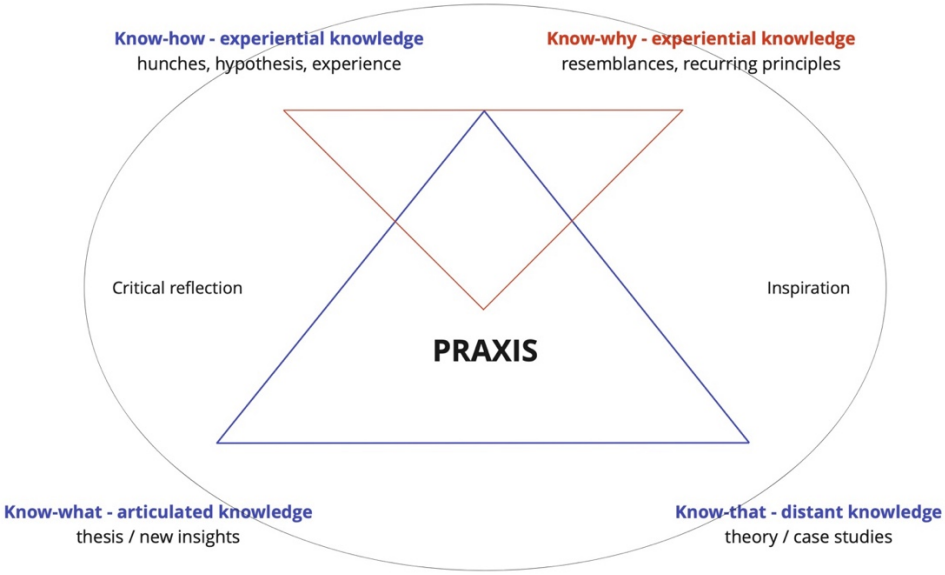

Fig. 1: A praxis model built on Robin Nelson's Modes of Knowing: multimode epistemological model for PaR (2013), with the blue colour indicating Nelson's original triadic structure

An examination of the 'whys' is therefore conducted via a process of identifying resemblances and gathering the responses/motivations offered by spectator-participants into families of conditions and stimuli. Of course, the paradoxical nature of my research investigation makes unpredictability as well as indeterminacy a major

[37] Raghu Garud, "On the Distinction Between Know-How, Know-Why', and Know-What," *Advances in Strategic Management*, v. 14, (1997), 81.

component of the practice. It therefore feels suitable to first articulate hypothetical principles that correspond to the experiential nature and often subconscious motivations seemingly at play in transgressive responses, so that the emerging conceptual frameworks are rooted in inquiry. A key starting point, as stated above, is to find out *why* transgressive phenomena occur in the first place? Why would spectator-participants offer transgressive responses within a participatory event, and are they aware that their responses might alter the experience of one or more other participants? Are transgressive responses enacted on purpose, with a particular objective, or indeed emerging from an experience of flow or play, as hypothesised before? Of course, all and none of the above might be true, acknowledging the wide range of not just what might be perceived as transgressive, but also what might have been offered in a transgressive frame of mind. This brings me to a further paradox within my research – in the same manner that transgression has been identified as dependent on 'perceptions and experiences in contexts',[38] transgression in participatory performance is dependent on perceptions and experiences pertaining to individual participatory performance works. Transgression therefore needs to be examined on a case-by-case basis, and throughout chapter 6, 7 and 8, I discuss singular moments of transgressive activity In the context of research inviting transgression, non-compliance to transgress may conversely be understood as a successful instance of transgression against the experiential framework I aimed to offer for spectator-participants. This points one more time to the multiplicity of experience that can emerge in the experience of both transgression and dissensus. and I elaborate in Chapter 7 and 8, how perspective can alter one's understanding of transgression and how multiple understandings and interpretations of what might be a transgressive act can co-exists. As mentioned above, many of the insights presented in my thesis originate from audience feedback; I am therefore indebted to participants from adjacent case studies and my own work, who offered me an articulation of their experiences. During my research I often have received a multitude of diverse responses stemming from the same work. Hence, I am faced with an experiential pluralism, emerging from the social formation a participatory work facilitates. This

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[38] Holger Pötzsch, "Forms and Practices of Transgressivity in Videogames: Aesthetic, Play and Politics," in *Trangression in Games and Play,* ed. Kristine Jørgensen and Faltin Karlsen (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018), 48.

amounts to what Simon Ellis calls a 'crowd of understanding';[39] an epistemology which acknowledges that it is dependent on an audience's *experience* of practice. Instead of 'knowing-something', I need to foreground my 'not-knowing', which here is particularly necessary in order to avoid creating a praxis for an implied or ideal participant; one that, according to computer games scholar Espen Aarseth, must fulfil a set of expectations.[40] Whereas my practical approach will be further discussed in 'Chapter 3 – Practical Framework', the next section offers an overview of relevant terminology and definitions.

VI. Definitions and clarifications

Definitions applied to participatory work are varied within live art, theatre and dance and different disciplines have given rise to different terms (See Miller (2016), Bishop (2012) and Groot Nibbelink (2012)). Equally, terms for those who experience and partake in participatory performance work are varied. For my thesis, to underline the parallel activity of observing and contributing that is inherent in participatory work, I refer to those who experience participatory art as spectator-participants.

I have analysed a range of participatory performances from a diverse set of artists working in live art, theatre, and dance. The most pertinent to my thesis include performances by Exit Productions, Coney, ZU-UK, Jeremy Deller, Jamal Harewood and Charlotte Spencer.[41] Their works are varied in both their format and how they are experienced by spectator-participants, but they share some common denominators. These denominators clarify the rationale for their selection as part of the analysis:

- Spectator-participants make a free choice to participate

This means that I am excluding an analysis of works by artists such as Santiago Sierra, who is discussed by Claire Bishop as an example of 'relational antagonism' (2004). This is mainly because Sierra's approach includes paying his participants to partake

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[39] Simon Ellis, "That Thing Produced," in *A World of Muscle, Bone & Organs: Research and Scholarship in Dance*, edited by S Ellis, H Blades & C Waelde (Coventry: C-DaRE, 2018), 480.
[40] Espen Aarseth, "I Fought the Law: Transgressive Play and the Implied Player" (paper presented at DiGRA Conference, 2007): 132
[41] Please refer to 'Chapter 3 – Practical Framework'.

in his work. I have previously mentioned how play might not always be a free and voluntary activity due to a coercing structure within the work or a participants' exposure to peer pressure. However, I focus on coerced or forcefully evoked participation *after* acceptance of the *invitation*, to borrow White's term.[42] The financial remuneration which Sierra offers seems to be the invitation itself, which severs the free entry into the work and instead makes it comparable to an exchange of commodity or labour.

- The participation has a clear beginning and end and happens in a designated space

This excludes durational art as long-term projects with an unclear beginning and an end. A clear starting point of the participation is not always the beginning of the work itself, as the work might be ongoing, with a spectator-participant entering a designated playground space, such as with Tino Sehgal's *These Associations* (2012). If that is the case, then the participants will decide upon a definite moment when participation and their participatory experience begins.

- The work provides a differentiable reality from ordinary life

The type of work I will be discussing will offer a reality separate from the everyday life of spectator-participants, even if the work occurs in everyday spaces. This is akin to Johan Huizinga's concept of the 'magic circle',[43] but also is aligned to Josephine Machon's definition of 'immersion as transportation', which designates an otherworldly-world, realised either imaginatively or scenographically that 'requires navigation according to its own rules of logic'.[44]

- The work is based on explicit or implicit rules

The work I discuss is based on a specific set of rules or expectations of behaviour, or pre-described activities to be undertaken by spectator-participants. Those rules might

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[42] Gareth White, *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
[43] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A study of the play-element in culture,* [s.l]: (Routledge & K. Paul Ltd, 1949).
[44] Josephine Machon, *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and immediacy in contemporary performance (*Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 63.

be explicit or implicit, but they have been created by a facilitator to encourage or provoke participation.

- The work contains aspects of indeterminacy and unpredictability

The work I explore is dependent on spectator-participants responses and contributions, which will considerably affect either performance materials, development or final outcome. The work is therefore exposed to and defined by what a spectator-participant brings, rather than being created by a director or a group of performers before the event of participation itself. This means that so-called 'immersive theatre' such as that by Punchdrunk or Shunt would be excluded, as the spectators create their individual experience by navigating preconceived materials, without directly contributing to performed material itself and therefore do not necessarily 'concretely impact the work'.[45]

Notably within my own PaR description is how I use the term 'world', as indeed I am often referring to the existence of multiple 'worlds', particularly when discussing Rancière's concept of dissensus. The worlds I refer to are two-fold: firstly, my thesis refers to a world which is constructed via the real-life environment that a performance work sits in, and/or established through the internal participatory structures of the work. This world can be defined by its environmentally inherent affordances as well as the communication channels available to others. Secondly, at times I use the term 'world' to refer to spectator-participants' personal and subjective realities, worldviews and ideologies. This *subjective* world can affect a spectator-participants' experience of the former, and in conjunction, may affect what type of responses are given or how the responses of others are being received. Of course, for an individual spectator-participant, these two 'worlds' are intricately linked. As White explains: a world is constituted via an 'active coupling of organism and environment', 'not the passive reception of 'sense data', and the manipulation of representations of external objects'.[46] And yet, for the scope of my research, it is useful to separate environment

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[45] Astrid Breel, Hannah Newman and Robbie Wilson, "Forum on the Art of Participation: A curated collection of reflections, explorations and instructions," *PARtake: The Journal of Performance as Research* v. 1, no.2 (2017). <http://scholar.colorado.edu/partake/vol1/iss2/2>, 4.
[46] Gareth White, *Meaning in the Midst of Performance: Contradictions of Participation*, (Oxon & New York: Routledge, 2024): 53.

from experience. At times, I interchange the term 'world' with the word 'realm', which can be distinguished similarly to 'worlds' but relates to less individual, personal understandings of real-life or participatory-performance-specific scenarios. Additionally, I draw on Peter Howell, Brett Stevens and Mark Eyles' articulation of types of ludic knowledges,[47] a theoretical framework that articulates an intraludic, inter- or transludic and extraludic type of understanding of game rules to further examine how they inform 'player expectation, engagement with gameplay choices, and critical responses to games before, during, and after play'.[48] As Howell explains, intraludic knowledge relates to a particular knowledge gained during a particular game, whereas knowledge to other games, played previously, can be understood as inter/transludic knowledge. Knowledge that is not related to games can be termed extraludic knowledge.[49] These terms have developed in the context of game theory, but I propose that they are transferrable to the discourse of participatory performance, particularly since I contend that play, and by extension aspects of game theory, is highly applicable to furthering an understanding of participatory performances.

The terms 'intraludic' and 'extraludic' are useful to describe the motivation behind actions, expectations and behaviours within and outside of a participatory framework. It is worth noting here that intraludic knowledge is not just constructed in response to the immediately relevant game or, in the context of my thesis, participatory experience; instead, it is built by recalling *previous* participatory experiences. This resonates with the notion that those spectator-participants who are familiar with participatory experiences, might feel more confident in offering responses of a transgressive nature. In fact, in digital games the notion that a player can learn to play/participate through repetition and familiarity is often directly addressed through the design of the game itself, with the first level of difficulty serving as a base in which a player can familiarise themselves with the conventions of the games and practice the moves, before moving on to subsequent, more difficult and complex levels. A familiarity with participatory conventions in similar performances could contribute to a spectator-participants'

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[47] Peter Howell, Brett Stevens and Mark Eyles, "Disrupting the Player's Schematised Knowledge of Game Components" (paper presented at DiGRA, 16 May 2014).
[48] Peter Howell, "A Theoretical Framework of Ludic Knowledge: A Case Study in Disruption and Cognitive Engagement" (paper presented at the Philosophy of Computer Games Conference, Malta 1-4 November 2016):1.
[49] Ibid.,10.

confidence to play transgressively. Extraludic knowledge, by comparison, not only relates to everyday, mundane and personal memory and knowledge acquisition; it also translates to 'pre-play expectations' and 'post-play reflection'.[50] As Howell explains, extraludic knowledge is often applied to 'support interpretation'[51] of intraludic situations. I propose that extraludic knowledge can also act as an experiential, socio-political, moral and emotional *horizon*, and contributes to spectator-participants' interpretations of participatory realms and activities within. Therefore, I argue 'intraludic' and 'extraludic' represent two different realms – one stemming from within and one stemming from outside of the participatory world, that may involve expectations, knowledge, moral and social dispositions; all of which influence one's interpretations of situations and resulting responses.

VII. Overview and Outline of Thesis

In Chapter 1 and 2, I outline the theoretical context relevant to this thesis. Chapter 1 engages primarily with the three key concepts of transgression, play and dissensus, articulating them as theoretical frameworks and examining how all three concepts possess an inherent ambiguity due to their context-specific and experiential nature. This chapter will also offer a literature review and position myself in relation to writers and theorists most pertinent to my research. Special consideration is given to how ludic theory and game theory has influenced my thinking as well as my praxis. The key texts relevant to this field will be drawn from to further contextualise the objective of my investigation as well as the development of my research praxis. For example, the comparison of participatory performance to a game system has offered a terminology useful for the analysis and examination of case studies and my own work. Chapter 2 develops the theoretical framework and provides further context to the development of my PaR approach. I first identify agency, affordance, frame and flow as pertinent phenomenological aspects of the experience of transgression and, in the discussion of these, offer a range of hypothetical queries and hunches. These have

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[50] Peter Howell, "A Theoretical Framework of Ludic Knowledge: A Case Study in Disruption and Cognitive Engagement" (paper presented at the Philosophy of Computer Games Conference, Malta 1-4 November 2016), 2.
[51] Ibid; 9.

guided my practical explorations as will be addressed in subsequent chapters. Additionally, I discuss the notions of ideal conditions of engagement as well as the concept of the ideal spectator-participant. As a key strategy for my PaR method is the inversion of ideal conditions as well as challenging notions of ideal spectator-participant, an evaluation of what is considered 'ideal' provides a clear rationale to my studio-based explorations.

Chapter 3 introduces the practical framework and introduces the key practitioner and participatory artworks examined throughout this research. The works of Exit Productions, ZU-UK, Coney, Jeremy Deller, Jamal Harewood as well as Charlotte Spencer have deeply influenced my thinking, offered clues for my own practice and have provided invaluable provocations and inspirations for my own work.

Chapter 4 gives further insight into Practice-as-research (PaR) and evaluates some of the challenges that a practice-researcher of participatory performance, might face. As part of this chapter, I will discuss some of my own personal challenges. For example, finding an appropriate approach to capture, document and curate the experiences of my spectator-participants. I outline my methodology for audience research as well as introducing my practical instances and the documentation of such. A guideline on how to use and utilise the documentation of my practice is offered, alongside a brief explanation of its aims and objectives.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to my PaR instances. For each of my work, I outline the key research queries and objectives as well as giving oversight of pertaining contextualising information. Reference to relevant sections, both in the thesis as well as the adjacent PDF *PaR Documentation – Transgression and Dissensus in Participatory Performance.* It is advisable that the reader will have familiarised themselves with the documentation before reading this chapter.

Chapter 6, 7 and 8 concern themselves with the key insights emerging from my research, with chapters 6 and 7 responding to my PaR approach of inverting the ideal conditions of engagement as well as challenging the notion of an ideal spectator-participant. The findings here are validated reference to my own work as well as scenarios analysed from case study material. In Chapter 6, I discuss external and internal participatory structures and conditions that were most successful in giving rise to the experience of transgression and dissensus. These suggestions are articulated from the perspective of the maker and should be considered as a practical toolbox for future explorations of transgression. In Chapter 7, I articulate a taxonomy of

transgressive spectator-participant types and describe the transgressive spectator-participant types of Spoil-sport, Cheat, Joker, Refusenik and Wolf. I will also discuss the effect of transgression on the overall participating community and elaborate on self-censoring and contagious elements that might be at play within such community. In Chapter 8, I discuss how transgression and dissensus are not just experiential phenomena, but also aesthetic ones. I further discuss the disruptive as well as explorative qualities of transgression and will offer a taxonomy of transgression, discussing thinning, rupturing and breaking as qualitative effects transgression has on a participatory framework and the experience of those within. As part of this chapter, I propose an aesthetic of indeterminacy, exemplifying that transgression and dissensus look and feel similar.

Chapter 1 – Theoretical Framework

1.1 Introduction to the theoretical framework

This chapter introduces the key literature that my research has entered a dialogue with. To do so will contextualise my practice further and establish where my thesis offers additional insight to. As part of this chapter, I will extend the discussion of the key concepts of transgression, dissensus and play, articulating them as theoretical frameworks that have influenced my motivations as well as practical and theoretical propositions. I will also elaborate on my conviction that participatory performance structures can be compared to game structures. Literary texts from game design and game theory have offered a useful framework for the analysis of case studies as well as my own research performances. I here introduce the key terminology and system analysis approach that I have applied in my praxis. I want to underline that my thesis is not rooted in game design or theory; but aligning participatory performance with play and game activity makes this framework relevant and aids a deeper understanding of audience engagement as well as appropriate creative and artistic methodologies. Writers such as Anna Anthropy, Naomi Clark, Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman have offered an understanding of game fundamentals that have been invaluable for my research and for my game-based performance instances. Additionally, some readings into hypertext fiction, for example Espen Aarseth (1997) and Marie-Laure Ryan (2001) have aided my exploration of types of interactive structures, such as branching. While my research is not rooted in ludic fiction, the interdisciplinary nature of my practice warrants an exploration of ludic literature as an adjacent research area. Additionally, philosophical texts into social formations and structures (Deleuze and Guattari (1988) and Savage and Symonds (2018)) as well as texts into cultural aspects of media and technology (Parikka (2010) and Näser-Lather and Neubert (2015)) have strongly influenced some of my practical investigation, particularly for *ATTWOO* and *Trailed*. Aspects of these texts will be referenced in subsequent chapters.

This chapter should be read as an extended literature review. I purposefully make little mention of my own practice, but instead articulate the reflective and analytical dialogue I conducted with those writers and thinkers that influenced the development of my praxis. 1.1.1 Considerations on transgression

As previously explained, the definition of transgression understands it to be a violation of social or moral boundary and a crossing over a threshold. The complexity of transgression is highlighted when elements of this definition are questioned further: What constitutes these boundaries? Who controls them? How is a transgressive crossing identified? Motivations as well as consequences of transgressive actions are complex and diverse. Furthermore, social and moral parameters which could contribute to identifying certain boundaries are not fixed but change over time and are dependent on scenario-specific contexts. My research has uncovered how transgression in participatory performance is manyfold: what might be transgressive to some, is acceptable to others. Transgression can occur in solitary, private activities without much consequence or they can potentially affect the experience of all in the room, even terminate a performance altogether. The two-fold aspect of transgression, namely its disruptive or explorative qualities, contributes to how transgressive acts range on a wide spectrum, from being subtle and creative to resulting in physical or psychological violation that leads to harm to others. There is no easy way to identify what transgression is or might mean, as it is experiential, specific to certain people and certain contexts. Holger Pötzsch underlines this by arguing against a formal, rigid definition of transgression and instead offers the following key characteristics as identifying aspects of a transgressive activity: '1) it is relative to momentarily prevailing conventions, values, and norms; 2) contingent upon historical and socio-political contexts; 3) subjectively experienced by situated individuals'.[52] Pötzsch even advocates the term 'transgressivity', in order to underline the phenomenological aspect of how transgression manifests itself in 'perceptions and experiences in contexts'.[53] For my research, this perspective is of great consequence: to research transgressive acts, I am dependent on those who perceive and experience a being transgressed against, not just those who choose to transgress. My PaR approach therefore was heavily dependent on collecting the accounts of those who transgressed, observed transgression, or felt transgressed against. Nevertheless, I have decided against applying the word 'transgressivity' within my thesis, although an argument could be made that the term would serve particularly those who feel

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[52] Holger Pötzsch, "Forms and Practices of Transgressivity in Videogames: Aesthetic, Play and Politics," in *Trangression in Games and Play,* ed. Kristine Jørgensen and Faltin Karlsen (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018), 48.
[53] Ibid.,47.

transgressed against, due to its focus on specific people and contexts, whereas 'transgression' might be used in the context of a discussion of those that act transgressively. For simplicity, I use *transgression* as the over-arching principle as it highlights the double aspect of disruptive or explorative qualities. Furthermore, whereas Pötzsch's notion of transgressivity helps to understand the complexity of what constitutes a transgressive act, it is not able to answer a key question of my research: *Why* would anyone transgress? What is the purpose of transgressive acts? I have previously mentioned Espen Aarseth, whose concept of the *implied player* frames transgression as a response against the expectations of the game rules.[54] Transgression can serve as a rebellious act to gain back some autonomous sense of identity and control. This perspective could be linked to Chris Jenks's more general assertion that transgression is a stabiliser between different realms: 'sanity and insanity, order and chaos, inclusion and exclusion, us and them'.[55] But although transgression might be understood as a challenge or negotiation of the dividing line in inter-related but conflicting moral, socio-political and cultural experiences and expectations, for Jenks, transgression is a 'deeply reflexive act of denial and affirmation'.[56] This is because it points to a further paradox of transgression - like the child that understands play in the moment they realise they can transgress against the play rules, the act of transgression 'both breaks and affirms the boundaries ordering our lives'.[57] My research wants to foreground the potential value of exactly this deep reflexivity and I postulate that this act of denial and affirmation can emerge in both transgressor and in those feeling transgressed against. Furthermore, transgression is reciprocal, and what was once understood as transgression can become the norm, which links to a further key characteristic of transgressive activity, namely that it gradually negates 'its own conditions of emergence'.[58] Whereas transgression can be seen as a purposeful act aiming for liberation or a rebellion against established norms,

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[54] Espen Aarseth, "I Fought the Law: Transgressive Play and the Implied Player," (Paper presented at DiGRA Conference, 2007).
[55] Holger Pötzsch, "Forms and Practices of Transgressivity in Videogames: Aesthetic, Play and Politics," in *Trangression in Games and Play,* ed. Kristine Jørgensen and Faltin Karlsen (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018), 47.
[56] Chris Jenks, *Transgression* (London: Routledge, 2003): 2.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Holger Pötzsch, "Forms and Practices of Transgressivity in Videogames: Aesthetic, Play and Politics," in *Trangression in Games and Play,* ed. Kristine Jørgensen and Faltin Karlsen (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018), 48.

acts of transgression often happen unintentionally. In relation to my own research, I want to advocate that transgression can stem from an internal motivation seeking nothing but an autotelic experience. I have discovered how transgression can occur in a moment of deep engrossment in an activity experienced as *flow,* a concept elaborated on by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi to describe a state of enjoyment in intrinsically motivated activity. Whereas I will elaborate on the concept of flow in 'Chapter 2.2.4 – Flow' I here want to simply offer its designation as a state of intense and focused concentration, merging of action and awareness and a loss of reflective self-consciousness.[59] Crucially, it is the *loss of reflective self-consciousness* that may bring about a reduced awareness of how one's actions affect our surroundings and others within it. So, whereas an activity or conduct might be *perceived* as being transgressive by others, they might emerge from an experience of intense enjoyment from the perspective of the transgressor.

1.1.2 Transgressive play

Transgression can be seen as an integral aspect of any play activity. As Jaakko Stenros says: 'the wrong sort of play that is not recognised as play creates an opening for a category of transgressive play'.[60] This 'wrong sort of play' has not been completely overlooked in historical accounts and categories of play in ludic theory. In fact, Roger Caillois has identified in his taxonomy of games what he terms '*ilinx*': stemming from the Greek word for 'whirlpool', it categorises types of games or play experience that emphasize the pursuit of vertigo and 'inflict a kind of voluptuous panic upon an otherwise lucid mind'.[61] Nevertheless, transgressive play or bad play speaks against commonly understood definitions of play, such as Johan Huizinga's notion of the "magic circle" as a temporal/spatial space with a designated beginning/end and a voluntary and free activity in 'a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition of its

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[59] Jeanne Nakamura, and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, "The concept of flow," In *Handbook of positive psychology,* ed C. R. Snyder and Shane. J. Lopez, (New York: Oxford University Press., 2002), 90.
[60] Jaakoo Stenros, 'Guided by Transgression: Defying Norms as an Integral Part of Play," in *Transgression in Games and Play,* ed. Kristine Jørgensen and Faltin Karlsen (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018), 16.
[61] Caillois, R., & Barash, Meyer, *Man, Play, and Games* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 23.

own'.[62] For Huizinga, this creates a sense of order and a 'temporary, limited perfection'.[63] But anyone who has ever witnessed pre-school children's play, knows that it often ends in chaos and disorder, where rules shift and are reinvented by different participants at different times, often resulting in immense frustration, arguments, and tears. This anecdotal observation aligns with Stenros' assurance that 'not all activities branded as play are carried out in a playful mindset'.[64] As Brian Sutton-Smith and Diana Kelly-Byrne explain further: 'characteristics of obligatoriness, negative affect, rigidity and dysfunctionality are also characteristics of some play in some circumstances'.[65] Stenros offers a distinction between *playful play* - the type of play associated with Huizinga's definition of voluntary, free, and generally positive play - and that type of play characterised as non-play or *transgressive play*. His use of the word 'playful' contradicts that of Sutton-Smith, who understands 'playfulness' to be a type of meta-play, or 'playing with the normal expectations of play itself' and therefore could be understood as transgressive.[66] Stenros' 'playful play' however chimes with Bernard DeKoven's 'well-played game', which focuses on how well players play together, rather than on extraludic rewards. As DeKoven explains, a well-played game is 'not measured by the score, it is not measured by the game, it is measured by those of us who are playing it'.[67] Transgressive play in many instances goes exactly against that principle of playing together *well.* 'One-sided play', found in the form of bullying/teasing, online grief-play or trolling, are examples that highlight how some play activities are rooted in disparate and contradictory experiences for those involved. An extension of one-sided play could be 'violent play', which includes inducing actual physical harm on oneself or others. Rough-and-tumble play, for example, could be seen as wavering precariously between the line of a well-played game and violent play, whereas some dare activities also fall into the category of violent or dangerous play. Additional to the 'one-sided', 'violent', or 'dangerous' play categories, Stenros

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[62] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A study of the play-element in culture* (Routledge & K. Paul Ltd, 1949), 13.
[63] Ibid., 10.
[64] Jaakoo Stenros, 'Guided by Transgression: Defying Norms as an Integral Part of Play," in *Transgression in Games and Play,* ed. Kristine Jørgensen and Faltin Karlsen (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018), 14.
[65] Brian Sutton-Smith and Dianna Kelly-Byrne, "The Idealization of Play," in *Play in Animals and Humans*, ed. Peter K. Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), 316.
[66] Brian Sutton-Smith, *The Ambiguity of Play* (USA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 147.
[67] Bernard De Koven, *The Well-Played Game: A Player's Philosophy* (USA: MIT Press, 2013), 5.

also identifies the following types of play as bad or transgressive, which are worth quoting in full to evidence the expansiveness of the list:[68]

- *Parapathic play* (the type of play that induces negative emotions within players),
- *Sensation-centric Locomotor play* (the type of play that offers a thrilling, almost dangerous sensation, for example rollercoasters and masturbation, which is closely related to Caillois' category of *ilinx*)
- *context-insensitive play* (play that might be regarded as play in different scenarios or locations)
- *player-inappropriate play* (types of play that are deemed unsuitable for players of a certain age, class, ethnicity, gender, profession, religion, background or other personal quality)
- *brink play* (when play serves as alibi for doing something that otherwise is deemed inappropriate or socially difficult), *taboo play* (when actions are not acceptable even when masked as play, such as racism, rape or incest)
- *repetitive play* (when play-like activity becomes repetitive and hence loses its enjoyable factors)
- *instrumentalised play* (which is when so-called play ultimately solely serves an external commercial or professional reward and therefore should be looked at as work, rather than play).

The activities that *should* fall under the category of play but are culturally and socially not regarded as such are manifold. These categories are not mutually exclusive and this list is not final, as we have already established that what is categorised as play/not-play as well as transgression is dependent on a continuous becoming of new and shifting of old social, political and cultural boundaries. I should also reaffirm the point that the activities that fall into these categories are recognised as play by some, and not by others; are acceptable for some, but not for others. This highlights the disparate

[68] Jaakoo Stenros, "Guided by Transgression: Defying Norms as an Integral Part of Play," in *Transgression in Games and Play,* ed. Kristine Jørgensen and Faltin Karlsen (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018): 13-25.

experiences that can emerge when experiencing play and transgression and leads me to my final deliberation in this section, namely on dissensus.

1.1.3 Discrepant experiences and the emergence of dissensus

As explained previously, Rancière understands dissensus to be an establishment of visibility or placement of one world within or alongside another. These worlds are of a socio-political nature; 'Political dissensus is not a discussion between speaking people who would confront their interests and values. It is a conflict about who speaks and who does not speak'.[69] Dissensus is a concept much discussed in relation to participatory performances and political art in general, and one has to be careful to not simply understand it as a confrontation between interests and opinions.[70] Instead, 'it is the construction of a paradoxical world'.[71] My own conviction is that transgression provides a unique perspective to assess Rancière's articulation of dissensus. Both transgression and dissensus are complex experiential phenomena. I contend that they share certain conditions crucial to their emergence and an exploration of transgression might provide new insights into the experience of dissensus. In this thesis, a key proposition that emerged through my PaR research is that transgressive responses often result in a multitude and diversification of experiences. Rancière considers the audience community to consist of distinct disparate elements around an artwork, which itself is comprised of distinct separate elements.[72] I propose that the emergence of dissensus within a participating community enhances this 'being together while apart',[73] and can lead to an awareness of the multiplicity of experiences present in said community. I therefore propose that transgression and dissensus in participatory performance can result in the visibility of multiple worlds within and overlapping each other.

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[69] Jacques Rancière, "The Thinking of Dissensus: Politics and Aesthetics," in *Reading Rancière,* ed. Paul Bowman and Richard Stamp (London, New York: Continuum International Publishing Press, 2011), 1.
[70] Jacques Rancière, Diss*ensus. On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran. (Continuum International, 2010), 46.
[71] Ibid., 47.
[72] Nic Fryer, "'Apart, we are together. Together, we are apart' – Rancière's Community of Translators in Theory and in Practice," in *Ranciére and Performance* ed. Nic Fryer and Colette Conroy (London: Rowmand & Littlefield, 2021), 101.
[73] Ibid.

An important starting point to understand Rancière's concept of dissensus is his claim that equality is a foundational requirement and presupposition for politics to occur; inequality is therefore always man-made, and 'any political system that excludes a minority from having a political stake (…) has no legitimate authority to do so'.[74] The distributors of the political stakes are usually found within the institutions that govern societies or communities[75] and Rancière calls this process a *distribution of the sensible* – an allocation of that which is heard and seen, through 'the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimising this distribution'.[76] Rancière understands neither the act of distribution nor the resulting configuration of places and roles as politics; he refers to this as "the police", which designates less a social order but how this order is perceived and experienced by those affected by it. Relating this to participatory performance, the *implied player* imagined by the expectations of participatory makers and producers could function as "the police" as it similarly acts as a system that legitimises distribution of acceptable and desirable participatory responses. However, *politics* cannot exist outside of the *police*, a*s* for Rancière, politics is understood (rather narrowly) as the moment in which this configuration is called into question. Dissensus is defined as a fleeting moment in which conflicting sensibilities and perceptions of the world are recognised and 'those excluded from supposedly democratic processes are able and recognised as being able to disrupt that exclusion'.[77] Dissensus is therefore a rupturing of a henceforth accepted order and an emergence of the recognition of a possible shift or reconfiguration within that order. I want to stress once again that dissensus cannot be simply understood as a confrontation of difference. Instead, dissensus is connected to a corporeal experience, a *shifting of the sensible* stemming from a realisation of alternatives, rather than merely an antagonistic encounter. Similarly, its opposite, which is consensus, cannot be understood as a solving or resolving of these

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[74] Adam Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre: Aesthetics, Politics and Productive Participation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 191.
[75] Todd May, "Rancière in South Carolina," in *Jacques Rancière: History, Politics, Aesthetics*, ed. Gabriel Rockhill and Philip Watts. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 109.
[76] Jacques Rancière, *Dis-agreement: Politics and Philosophy,* trans. Julie Rose. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999): 37.
[77] Adam Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre: Aesthetics, Politics and Productive Participation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 191.

differences. Instead, for Rancière, it indicates the 'end of politics' itself.[78] It is a return to a 'normal state of things', which indicates, if dissensus is politics itself, an absence of politics.[79]

I want to further illuminate this concept of the 'shifting of the sensible' via Rancière's conviction that there is no political life, only a political stage – dissensus occurs when the boundary of what belongs on a political stage and is therefore seen and heard, is oscillated, ruptured, or shifted. As Rancière explains: dissensus occurs not within a conflict about opposite interests, but emerges from the 'conflict about what an "interest" is'.[80] I want to draw a link between the experience of shifting boundaries of what is seen and heard, or what constitutes an interest, to the experience of transgression: both have a reciprocal quality, in as much as the emergence of dissensus as well as transgression includes an amalgamation of an established and a new order. Similar to how transgressing against given participatory frames exposes the existence and/or functions of these very frames, dissensus highlights what is and what is not seen or heard. Pötzsch's articulation that transgression will gradually negate 'its own conditions of emergence',[81] can be compared to Rancière's *end of politics*, namely when a consensus is reached. I here want to draw attention to how transgression can either be a public or private experience; I argue that dissensus can range from a private realisation of alternatives and conflictions to a shared and collective experience within a larger community. I want to expand an understanding of dissensus to being able to incorporate the merging of multiple worlds, containing variations of and shifts within that which is heard and seen at any given moment.

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[78] Jacques Rancière, Diss*ensus. On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran. (Continuum International, 2010), 50.
[79] Ibid., 51.
[80] Jacques Rancière, "The Thinking of Dissensus: Politics and Aesthetics," in *Reading Rancière,* ed. Paul Bowman and Richard Stamp (London, New York: Continuum International Publishing Press, 2011), 2.
[81] Holger Pötzsch, "Forms and Practices of Transgressivity in Videogames: Aesthetic, Play and Politics," in *Trangression in Games and Play,* ed. Kristine Jørgensen and Faltin Karlsen (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018), 47.

1.2 Literature Review for participatory performance

During my research, I have perceived a marked separation of artistic and production-related treatment for participatory work depending on their disciplinary contexts. This differentiation is, according to my findings, extended to scholarly analysis and discourse. Whereas participation within the paradigm of art production and the gallery has been extensively documented and theorized particularly from the late 1990s, spearheaded with Nicolas Bourriaud's publication of *Relational Aesthetics,*[82] which caused an extensive and confrontational exchange between thinkers such as Claire Bishop, Grant H. Kester and Shannon Jackson.[83] Theoretical discourse about participation within the theatre has recently expanded considerably beyond a discussion of participation within a community context in practices such as TIE and Augusto Boal's Forum Theatre. A series of texts investigating participation as artistic practice emerged over the last decade, albeit with a somewhat pronounced focus on intermedial performance and the emergent genre of immersive theatre, with theorists such as Chiel Kattenbelt, Rosemary Klich and Liam Jarvis contributing to the former, whilst the writings of academics such as Josephine Machon and Adam Alston focused more on the specificities of the latter. Although all of these writers acknowledge the interdisciplinary nature at the heart of much participatory performance and hence discuss a wide range of work, often avoiding clear definition of the terms they are employing (Alston for example states that the term 'immersive' is 'an ambiguous and generic referent',[84] adding that in his writing he will not attempt to articulate a clear definition) they still frame their consideration more or less within one of the defined paradigms of gallery art, theatre and dance. A notable example of a writer who looks at participation from a broader perspective is Gareth White, with his *Aesthetics of the Invitation*[85] focusing on broader concepts relating to the facilitation of participation and its aesthetic, ethical and logistic implications for both the artist and the participant (although most of his thinking is framed by a predominantly theatrical practice), whilst contributions from Jen Harvie, Liz Tomlin, Astrid Breel and James Frieze have

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[82] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (France: Les Presses du Réel, 2002).
[83] It is important to note that Jackson is situating herself from the position of a theatre scholar and performance maker; her considerations therefore include examples of participatory theatre practice.
[84] Adam Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre: Aesthetics, Politics and Productive Participation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan. 2016), 5.
[85] Gareth White, *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

continued to extend a discussion of relevant concerns, such as economic and political conditions, political frameworks, audience agency and the experience and facilitation of participation within performance art. A noteworthy text is Sruti Bala's discussion off 'unsolicited participation', moments in which participants respond in ways moving 'beyond the roles and options offered to them'.[86] Like myself, she highlights the possibility that such participation can be purely autotelic, and sometimes are 'neither a rejection of nor a co-option into a predetermined regime'.[87] However, Bala's understands 'transgression' to be antagonistic,[88] ignoring its doubled meaning of disruptive/explorative.

Writings on participation in dance practices are relatively sparse, although movement and choreography seem to be integral to many companies who have made a name for themselves (Punchdrunk and Sehgal, for example). However, Rebecca Hilton has suggested that there is a choreographic turn within the visual art world,[89] and that dance and choreographed movement is such an inherent part of recent participatory performance work, for example in immersive theatre as well as in live art and some delegated performance work in the gallery, that it is often overlooked as an individual participatory practice. For Hilton, the experience of movement and kinaesthetic expression navigates a complex noticing and managing of sensation, space and time, with dancers having 'the ability to comprehend information at the very point at which our experience of ourselves ends and our experience of the rest of the world begins'.[90] Furthermore, she believes that this ability transfers from the performer to the spectator, with a performative encounter of movement giving access to this specialised noticing. This might explain a preference for choreographed physical expression found in much participatory performance, with many artists either employing trained contemporary dancers (such as Shunt, Hagit Yakira or Vanessa Grasse) or asking their spectator-participants to explore choreographed everyday movement (such as Charlotte Spencer's audio-led walking performances). Additionally, even in participatory performance pieces that do not specifically employ movement-based creative materials, choreographic elements and rhythmic structures

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[86] Sruti Bala, *The Gestures of Participatory Art* (UK: Manchester University Press, 2020): 80.
[87] Ibid., 96.
[88] Ibid., 91.
[89] Hilton, Rebecca, "Dancerness," *Performance Paradigm* v. 13 (2017): 199.
[90] Ibid., 198.

affect participatory engagement as well as participatory responses. Choreographic and dynamic aspects are relevant to participatory practice across disciplines, but borrowing the terminology of movement-based practices aids the analysis of these aspects affect the experience of spectator-participants.[91]

1.3 Participatory performance as game system

I have explained my contention that play is an integral aspect of participatory performance in the 'Introduction'. I here introduce some of the most pertinent thinkers and authors from a game-specific theoretical framework, to underline how research in this area can enhance an understanding of participatory performances and audience engagement with participatory frameworks.[92]

I extend Greg Costikyan's [93] understanding of games and argue that participatory frameworks can equally provide an artistic form for our instinct to play. Participatory performances can be compared to games. And with games generally understood to be a subset of play, aspects of game theory/analysis have aided my examination of participatory performances. I particularly lean on two aspects: the first is related to the definition of *game* itself, and how the components that comprise a game can strongly be applied to the definition of participatory performance. The second concerns itself with the internal structure of a participatory work. I compare this internal structure to the internal *system* within games, definitions of which I will elaborate on below. An analysis of game systems is a common approach within game theory and game design. If participatory performance can be understood to have the same components as a game, then an analysis of these components and their resulting systems will be useful for investigating the mechanics of participatory performance.

I first want to offer a brief definition of both games and systems to provide context. The difference between games and play has been much discussed and an understanding of games is often approached via a definition of play, evidencing that

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[91] Please refer to 'Chapter 2.3.1 – Ideal Conditions of engagement' as well as 'Chapter 6 – Participatory structures for transgression and dissensus' for further discussion on choreographic elements in participatory practice.
[92] Other relevant sources not discussed here include Mary Flanagan's *Critical Play*: *Radical Game Design* (2013) as well as C.Thi Nguyen's *GamesL Agency as Art,* (2020).
[93] Greg Costikyan, *Uncertainty in Games* (USA: MIT Press, 2013).

they are intricately connected. However, not all conditions of play are applicable to a definition of game. Salen and Zimmerman state that 'play and games have a surprisingly complex relationship'.[94] This is because although games can be understood to be subset of play, play is an integral component to games. Clark C. Abt's four key elements of games[95] are also useful for an examination of participatory performance. The key elements are: activity (an understanding of a game as process or event), decision-makers (games require players), objectives (games and players within have goals) and limiting context (rules that limit and structure activities).[96] For my thesis, these aspects are relevant as they are player-orientated and can easily be appropriated to describe performers and spectator-participants (players), participatory responses (activity) and motivations for those (objectives) as well as the creative structure developed by the artist or author (limiting context). This terminology has particularly helped me analyse my own performances. Additionally, thinking of spectator-participants as decision-makers supported my research of individual spectator-participants as well as the participating community in 'Chapter 7 – Spectator-participants and the participating community'. The notions of objectives, limiting context, and activity are useful to describe specific approaches to game theatre and other participatory approaches. For my own research, the inter-related aspects of activity, objectives and contexts are of particular importance. My thesis disseminates spectator-participants' responses (activities) to identify those that are deemed transgressive and analyses them in light of objectives (what was the motivation behind the response) and limiting contexts (what in the participatory structure facilitated a transgressive response or the perception of the response as transgressive). Alongside Abt's key elements, I also apply an understanding that, unlike play, games are often described as consisting of an internal system. Elliot Avedon and Brian Sutton-Smith define games as 'an exercise of voluntary control systems, in which there is a contest between powers, confined by rules in order to produce a disequilibrial outcome'.[97] A greater understanding of what a system is therefore also leads to further insight into

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[94] Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman, *Rules of Play: Game design fundamentals* (London: MIT Press, 2004), 78.
[95] Clark C. Abt, *Serious Games* (New York: Viking Press, 1970).
[96] Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman, *Rules of Play: Game design fundamentals* (London: MIT Press, 2004), 74
[97] Elliott Avedon, and Brian Sutton-Smith, eds., *The Study of Games* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1971), 405.

what constitutes a game. A system is comprised of a set of things that interact and effect each other in a shared environment, and by doing so develop a larger pattern, different from any individual parts.[98] Salen and Zimmerman define a system to be 'a group of interacting, interrelated or interdependent elements' that together form a complex whole.[99] Complex adaptive systems are of course an integral part of the world we live in. Performance and theatre itself has been identified as complex adaptive systems, for example by Gordon Armstrong, who argues that a theatrical event and the dynamics of comprehending the theatrical space contain a non-linearity that can only be explained by Dynamic Systems Theory approach (DST).[100] In my praxis, it has been useful to think of participatory performance instances as a set of things that interact and effect each other in a shared environment to develop a greater pattern. I have not necessarily employed such thinking in the creation process; rather the breaking down of performance elements has been useful in a subsequent analysis of *what has actually happened*. I want to underline that although spectator-participants can be understood to be part of the many objects that designate the elements or variables within a system,[101] for the dissemination of my own performance instances this thinking was too limited and failed to represent the multitude of experiences and responses received. A detailed audience feedback strategy was needed to supplement a more generally, *system*-orientated analytical perspective. Questionnaires and audio recordings from verbal feedback were able to provide a more granular understanding of how each individual spectator-participant forms their very own patterns with the elements or variables of the participatory system. Furthermore, the definition of a system places focus on the environment in which the system's parts work: it never exists in a vacuum but instead is heavily affected by its environment. This corresponds with my proposition in 'Chapter 6.2- Site-specific and spatial boundaries', that the performance location/site/venue and its distinctive features can affect the participatory world. Thinking of participatory performances as systems within an environment might challenge the visual image of Huizinga's *magic*

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[98] Ibid.
[99] Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman, *Rules of Play: Game design fundamentals* (London: MIT Press, 2004), 51.
[100] Gordon Armstrong, "Theatre as a Complex Adaptive System," *New Theatre Quarterly*, v. 13, issue 51 (1997): 277-288.
[101] Ibid.

circle, which considers the play or game world to be experienced separately from reality. I here want to propose that the temporal sphere of the play/game activity or participatory performance appropriates the features and affordances of its natural environment or location *in relation to the activity itself*. To what extent the intra-ludic experience environment becomes separated from a real life, extra-ludic understanding of it is individual and subjective.

1.4 Summary

This chapter gives a theoretical context to my research by elaborating on the key research concepts of transgression, play and dissensus. The writers mentioned in the literature review have Influenced my considerations and their writings are the key texts that have guided my research. My contention that participatory performances are comparable to play and games is solidified by critical and practical application of game design and analysis and further evidenced by how I apply terminology from that field in this thesis.

Chapter 2 – The experience of transgression and dissensus

2.1 Introduction to the experience of transgression and dissensus

In this chapter, I identify phenomenological aspects that are relevant to an experience of transgression and/or dissensus for both the perspective of transgressor and the perspective of those feeling transgressed against. I do so by engaging with hypothetical and theoretical assumptions to address the issue more broadly. This chapter could therefore be understood as an extension of the theoretical framework that my research engages with. The assumptions articulated here are placed under examination via analysis of my own practical explorations and audience feedback as well as case studies in subsequent chapters.

I will also discuss notions of ideal versus non-ideal in relation to participatory conditions as well as spectator-participants. This perceived dichotomy has emerged from my exploration of Espen Aarseth's understanding of transgressive play in games as 'symbolic gesture of rebellion against the tyranny of the game';[102] I question whether non-ideal conditions might develop a greater need to rebel against the participatory structure? I have used the notions of 'ideal conditions for engagement' or 'ideal spectator-participant' to derive an articulation of *non-ideal* conditions, one in which the structure of the work itself might push spectator-participants against or beyond their own 'horizon of participation', as well as an understanding of *non-ideal* spectator-participant, one which transgresses against explicit or implicit rules of the work. The inversion of ideal conditions as well as challenging notions of ideal spectator-participant forms a key creative strategy within my PaR approach.

It is important to note that I have seen both ideal and non-ideal conditions of engagement leading to transgressive responses and the emergence of dissensus. The dichotomy of ideal versus non-ideal is therefore not straightforward, further highlighting the context specific nature of transgression and dissensus. Nevertheless, do I believe that an understanding of ideal and non-ideal conditions for engagement in participatory frameworks provides insights into the dynamics of power that may exist between a participatory work and its participants, whereas an understanding of ideal and non-

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[102] Espen Aarseth, "I Fought the Law: Transgressive Play and the Implied Player," (Paper presented at DiGRA Conference, 2007): 132.

ideal spectator-participants might reveal possible dynamics of power amongst spectator-participants themselves.

2.2 The phenomenology of transgression

Astrid Breel argues that the spectator-participant's experience is a fundamental aspect of participatory performances and therefore needs to be considered as an aesthetic ingredient.[103] I want to elaborate by arguing that the physical, embodied experience of the spectator-participant has a *direct* influence on how and in what shape or form spectator-participants contribute or respond in participatory activities. One approach to analysing spectator-participants' responses and participatory contributions is to gain insight into underlying experiential motivations. This constitutes the 'know-why' as articulated in the 'Introduction', which concerns itself with shared principles that underlie specific phenomena.[104] With the phenomena here being transgression, this chapter investigates shared principles that give rise to experiences and types of responses that constitute transgressive contributions.

I consider the following four phenomenological aspects to be of importance in an individual's experience and/or execution of disruptive or explorative participatory responses: a perceived sense of *agency*, a perceived sense of acting to *affordances,* finding one's activity to be responding to a particular *frame* and the experience of *flow* within responsive participatory activity. These aspects are directly affected by general conditions of the participatory work as well as by the interpersonal relationships forming within such work and therefore strongly shape not just spectator-participants' experience, but also their responses. My understanding of these aspects has been influenced by readings taken from a range of theoretical and at times perhaps contradictory epistemologies; for example, I am intrigued by cognitive scientific research into agency and its attempt to offer a systematic understanding of qualitative phenomena. Also, agency, affordances, frame, and flow applied in practice are strongly intertwined and often reinforce/affect each other. Nevertheless, they provide four critical lenses through which an analysis of transgressive responses and possible

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[103] Astrid Breel, "Conducting creative agency: the aesthetics and ethics of participatory performance," (PhD diss., University of Kent, 2017).
[104] Please refer to 'Introduction', p.15

underlying motivations is possible. I will therefore briefly introduce these four areas as separate theoretical concepts.

2.2.1 Agency

'Agency' is a much-used term in discourse on how participatory performance practices involve spectator-participants and incorporate their contributions into the fabric of a performance. In in the scope of my research, I am interested in how agency manifests itself as a kinetic experience. Elisabeth Pacherie explains how in cognitive science, the experience of agency is understood to occur through a complementary working between 'intrinsic cues' (cues provided by the motor system) and 'extrinsic cues' (such as cognitive primes: exposures to stimuli which influence response to subsequent stimuli), with two or more perceptual or sensorimotor cues being assessed according to a principle of congruence.[105] A sense of agency is understood to emerge either predictively (when matching the cues to prior experience and prediction) or retrospectively (when matching the prior thought to the actual consequence of the action), which provides a distinction between 'pre-reflective experiences of or feelings of agency and reflective judgments of agency'.[106] In participatory performance, a spectator-participant's *experience* of agency depends on their *perception* of it. This opinion is shared by Breel, for whom agency in participatory performance draws on 'the intentional aspect, the bodily sensation, and the reflective attribution',[107] which combines pre-reflective and sensorimotor experience with reflective judgment. Breel defines *narrative agency* as a type of agentive behaviour strongly relevant to participatory performance, as it encompasses an 'agentive act that is intentional and to which the environment (the performance situation) responds in some way (in the form of efferent feedback)'.[108] One can therefore say that an individual spectator-participant's experience of agency is dependent on a match between extrinsic cues (such as an invitation to act), a decision to accept this invitation (with an intention to

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[105] Elisabeth Pacherie, "How does it feel to act together?" *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* v.13, nr. 1. (2014): 25-46.
[106] Ibid., p.7
[107] Astrid Breel, "Conducting creative agency: the aesthetics and ethics of participatory performance," (PhD diss., University of Kent, 2017): 15.
[108] Ibid., 146.

act/respond in a particular way), intrinsic sensorimotor cues (such as an ability to perform intended action, with an allowance for sensorimotor adjustments as needed) as well as a reflective understanding of the impact the performed action has within the work. The perception of the action having been one's own choice as well as it having some effect within the participatory world is crucial, as 'not all agentive acts are experienced as agency'.[109] For example, when the impact of spectator-participants' responses is unclear or considered to be predetermined. The experience of agency is meaningful for a spectator-participant when they recognise that they have acted on their own accord as well as that, in the context of the performance, their contributions have made an impact. The experience of agency therefore strongly depends on the *context* of the performance as well as on the spectator-participants' understanding of their role within the work and is often only recognised after the execution of agentive acts.

A consideration of agency in participatory performance exemplifies how difficult it is to separate a discussion of an individual's spectator-participant's experience from the participating community they find themselves in, as we must consider how a spectator-participant engages in joint actions and participatory and collective activities. The self-predictions and self-adjustments which are part of the agentive process during individual actions are not sufficient when acting together. Instead, individual agents must 'represent their partner's actions and predict their expected consequences (other-predictions) and use these predictions to adjust what they are doing to what others are doing (dyadic adjustments)'.[110] Hanne De Jaeger and Tom Froese explain how, in social interaction, each agent is 'at once prodder and prodded',[111] and therefore these 'interindividual interactions mutually enable and constrain each other'.[112] This mutual influence can lead to a *coordination* of behaviour, leading to a 'non-accidental correlation of behaviours of two or more social agents'.[113] The mutual influence of agents within a participatory community must be considered when

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[109] Ibid., 18.
[110] Elisabeth Pacherie, "How does it feel to act together?" *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* v.13, nr. 1. (2014): 9.
[111] Hanne De Jaegher, and Tom Froese, "On the Role of Social Interaction in Individual Agency," *Adaptive Behavior* v. 17, no. 5 (October 2009): 452.
[112] Ibid., 445.
[113] Ezequiel Di Paolo, Marieke E. Rohde & Hanne De Jaegher, "Horizons for the Enactive Mind: Values, Social Interaction, and Play," In *Enaction: Towards a New Paradigm for Cognitive Science*, Stewart, J., Gapenne, O. & Di Paolo, E. (Eds.). (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010): 27.

discussing transgressive behaviour in participatory performance. The coordination mentioned above may lead to the emergence of a self-regulating behavioural code; equally, it may enable and encourage transgressive behaviour. Also, one must consider that in participatory performance, often the overall participatory community is formed of several sub-groups, either established through the structure of the participatory work itself or through the social connections already present within the participating spectatorship. Each of those sub-groups potentially sees a different coordination within their joint actions. Additionally, an emergent or already established hierarchical structure can further influence an individual's experience of agency within joint action, with a greater sense of agency generally being prevalent in egalitarian structures. In participatory performance, which often employ performers to guide spectator-participants through the work, a hierarchical structure is already in place through the differentiation between audience and performer. The way the interpersonal relationships between performer and spectator-participant and amongst participants themselves are played out within a specific participatory performance work can strongly affect the individual's experience of agency. This makes a consideration of how these relationships are fostered an important part of the artistic strategy for participation.

2.2.2 Affordances

The experience of agency is strongly connected to the concept of *affordances*, first formulated by James J. Gibson in *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (1986). The concept of affordance postulates how, in perception, an environment consists of objects/surfaces that *afford* opportunities to act or do things. The formulation of affordances provided an alternative to a previously widely accepted psychological view that people and animals construct the world according to their own understanding. However, for Gibson 'people and animals are attuned to variables and invariants of information in their activities as they interact as participants'.[114] This refocuses the act of perception away from a static stimulus-response model and instead proposes perception as an ongoing, embodied and interactive process. For

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[114] James, G. Greeno, "Gibson's Affordances," *Psychological review* v. 101, nr. 2. (1994): 337.

Gareth White, this highlights the 'interdependence of body, environment and cognitive process'[115] in sense and decision making. There is a circular element to this process; whereas the environment and objects encountered by a subject afford or invite suitable actions or activities, these affordances emerge 'only in relation to the motor skills of the subject'.[116] As Evan Thompson explains, the subject is a project of the world, but the world is projected by the subject.[117]

The concept of affordances has several implications in relation to spectator-participants' experience within participatory performance. Since participatory performance is differentiated from real life through either spatial or temporal indicators, the resulting environment is always artistically constructed. The possibility that the individual spectator-participant perceives different affordances to those the maker intended can lead to unexpected and seemingly transgressive activities. Furthermore, for those spectator-participants that are more familiar with participatory performance practices, it might be easier to perceive affordances within the work or as constructed by the artist.

In my analysis, two consequences of the concept of affordances carry weight when applied to the experience of transgressive behaviour within participatory performance. Firstly, the circular affecting of subject to world and world to subject results in 'a body that is enculturated at a pre-conscious level'.[118] This extends beyond behaviour in regard to a given environment or encountered objects/things, but also leads to a pre-conscious modulation of behaviour when encountering and interacting with other people. White refers to Shaun Gallagher's phenomenological concept of the pre-noetic which indicates that which is not, or not yet disclosed to the conscious mind.[119] This pre-conscious aspect strongly indicates that 'in certain circumstances action has begun before we are aware that we have decided to act'.[120] The pre-reflective aspect of agency discussed earlier therefore might be preceded by a pre-conscious, pre-

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[115] Gareth White, *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 124.
[116] Evan Thompson, *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Science of Mind* (MA: Harvard University Press, 2010): 237.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Gareth White, *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 124.
[119] Shaun Gallagher, *Phenomenology* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
[120] Gareth White. *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 124.

noetic initiation of action, which is then adjusted as the action/interaction continues. It raises the question how much transgressive behaviour results from a pre-conscious response of a particular type. Could participatory responses which stem from pre-noetic initiation of action have a greater potential to be of a transgressive kind?

The second consequence of the concept of affordances I want to highlight is the kinetic aspect of perceiving and responding to a given environment, objects, things, or people. The pre-conscious initiation of an action is executed through an embodied, kinetic response. Alva Noë argues that not only is all perception intrinsically active, but that 'perceptual experience acquires content as a result of sensorimotor experience'.[121] For Noë, our perception and experience of being within the world is enacted by our ability to move through this world and by our knowledge that our sensorimotor exploration of the world will provide us with different sensory stimulation. Noë not only leans heavily on Gibson's concept of affordances in his formulation of an enactive approach to perception but extends it by stating that 'all objects of sight (indeed all objects of perception) are affordances. To experience a property is, among other things, to grasp its sensorimotor profile. It is to experience the object as determining possibilities of and for movement'.[122] Relating Noë's enactive view to the realisation that a pre-noetic response to affordances is often a kinetic response could mean that participatory performances which involve affordances of an *explicitly* physical nature tend to provoke transgressive behaviour more often. With an ability to move extensively through a participatory environment, one might be able to perceive more and more varied affordances, and pre-noetic responses might be encouraged. An ability to *roam* or generally be physically active could increase the potential for transgressive behaviour to occur.[123]

2.2.3 Frame

Erving Goffman's *Frame Analysis* (1974) has been much referenced in recent discourse about participatory practice (See Machon (2013), White (2013) and Breel, (2017)), particularly in relation to how spectator-participants negotiate their personal

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[121] Alva Noë, *Action in Perception* (USA: MIT Press, 2004): 9.
[122] Ibid., 106.
[123] Please refer to 'Chapter 6.2 – Site-Specific and Spatial Boundaries'.

responses within a constructed world in participatory performance. Analysing how animals transcribe natural behaviour into playful behaviour led Goffman to propose the concept of *keying*, which designates a 'set of conventions by which a given activity, one already meaningful in terms of some primary framework, is transformed into something patterned on this activity but is seen by the participants to be something quite else'.[124] Keying therefore transforms everyday activities to be understood as something else and examples of keyed activities can be found in ceremonies, rituals, rehearsals as well as in contests or competitions. Goffman is referring to theatrical and dramatic work as a prominent example of activities within a keyed frame, with participatory performance belonging to this category. A consequence of this should be that participants are aware that 'their actions occur in a fictional context and are just outside of everyday life'.[125] In this sense, the keyed frame applied to participatory activities is comparable to Johan Huizinga's 'magic circle', which also designates a sphere distinct from reality. However, whereas the magic circle can be understood to designate a separation between fictional reality and real life, the keyed frame should be understood as relational. It aims to provide the participants with an *understanding* that their activities are not so much disconnected from real life but instead are related to the *context* of the performance. It therefore also sets boundaries for these activities and asks participants to consider their actions *in relation to* the participatory possibilities as given by the structure of the work itself.

There are several consequences of this relational aspect of the keyed frame. Firstly, the concept of keying offers an explanation on how behaviour in participatory performance can 'resemble, but also detach itself from everyday activity'.[126] Goffman's terms of 'appearance formulas' and 'resource continuity' apply this mechanism of 'detached resemblance' to individual spectator-participants. The appearance formula can be understood as an external mechanism found in the perception of an onlooking and by-standing participatory community, as it articulates how there can never be complete freedom between an individual that participates and the role, capacity or

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[124] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organisation of Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974): 44.
[125] Astrid Breel, "Conducting creative agency: the aesthetics and ethics of participatory performance," (PhD diss., University of Kent, 2017): 137.
[126] Gareth White. *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 37.

function they realise during that participation.[127] Whatever role a spectator-participant will take on within a keyed frame will also make available apparent roles inhabited outside of the frame. A participatory performance community will therefore perceive a spectator-participant's role or function within the keyed frame of a participatory performance in relation to apparent social indicators belonging to outside the frame, such as age, gender, race, or other identifying markers. This may result in expectations concerning what types of roles/responses a particular spectator-participant might perform. Consequently, subconscious prejudice from either performers or other spectator-participants could provoke or supress seemingly transgressive responses.

'Resource continuity' on the other hand can be understood as an internal and individualistic mechanism as it designates how an individual spectator-participant's activity within a keyed frame draws from their experiences, skills and knowledges in the real world.[128] This might involve what could be called a participatory *style*, but more consequential to my thesis is that an individual spectator-participant's experience and skills, particularly in relation to the keyed frame, can foster more confident participation. This notion is supported by Breel's audience research methodology, where audience's responses made evident that 'experience of operating within a keyed frame increases the knowledge on how to deal with unusual situations',[129] resulting in more confident responses and a greater sense of agency. As part of my thesis, I question if a heightened resource continuity, and a resulting increase in confidence and sense of agency can promote transgressive responses?

Finally, and relevant to both points made above, an understanding of a keyed frame is based on an interpretation of the frame itself. As White explains, 'when Goffman uses frame to describe our functional understanding of interactions in everyday life he indicates a network of shared assumptions about what an interaction means for its participants, and what is appropriate behaviour at these interactions'.[130] This understanding seems to be a prerequisite for spectator-participants to act according

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[127] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organisation of Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974): 269-287.
[128] Ibid., 287-292.
[129] Astrid Breel, "Conducting creative agency: the aesthetics and ethics of participatory performance," (PhD diss., University of Kent, 2017): 138.
[130] Gareth White. *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 34.

to the same boundaries and requires a shared interpretation of the participatory possibilities within the structure of the work. Goffman calls this the 'definition of the situation':[131] a mutual agreement amongst the participants of a given interactive situation on what this interaction means for them and what can or should happen within it. It is my contention that within a participatory performance, it cannot be guaranteed that such an agreement is reached. The interpretative process required to consider the context for participatory actions is complicated and easily manipulated. For Goffman, a keyed frame can be *rekeyed* or even *fabricated*, processes he compares to 'multiple laminations of experience'.[132] With more layers, a greater demand on the individual's personal skills and experience is needed to make sense of what is going on. Furthermore, it is the *interpretative act* of relating one's own experience to a keyed frame (and possible transformations thereof) that leaves spectator-participants vulnerable to misinterpretations and misconceptions of situations and expected behaviour.

2.2.4 Flow

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi developed the concept of 'flow' in the 1960's as part of a more general investigation into creativity and the enjoyment of intrinsically motivated, autotelic activity. An autotelic activity is understood to be one that requires extensive effort and energy on the part of the actor, but provides little if any conventional reward.[133] Flow designates an optimal experience within an autotelic activity, which Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi define as being achieved through a state of intense and focused concentration, merging of action and awareness and a loss of reflective self-consciousness.[134] I want to underline the understanding of flow as the *merging* of action and awareness, as it describes a corporeal as well as a cognitive phenomenon. Therefore, like the concepts of agency and affordances, it highlights the embodied nature of experience. Applied to my investigation of transgressive responses in

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[131] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organisation of Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974): 1.
[132] Ibid., 182.
[133] Mihaly, Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety: Experiencing Flow in Work and Play* (California: Jossey-Bass, Inc. 2000): 10.
[134] Jeanne Nakamura, and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, "The concept of flow," In *Handbook of positive psychology,* ed C. R. Snyder and Shane. J. Lopez, (New York: Oxford University Press., 2002), 90.

participatory performance, the concept of flow provides a useful lens for several reasons. Firstly, the experience of flow encompasses high levels of concentration and a loss of reflective self-consciousness, which results in absorbed attention and imagination. It is a key argument in my thesis that spectator-participants' responses often emerge from an experience of play and playfulness. Play and playfulness is identified as a key autotelic activity, and one in which the experience of flow often emerges. A spectator-participant, whose participatory experience is rooted in play, might therefore more easily experience a sense of flow.

Admittedly, my own understanding of flow is not entirely synonymous with Csikszentmihalyi's definition of the concept. For example, he considers a state of flow to be characterised by a sense of selflessness or a loss of self-consciousness.[135] For Csikszentmihalyi, this represents a utopian loss of ego that can transcend the individual and instead unite them with the environment, the task and other participants with no need for further negotiation. However, I want to propose that loss of self-consciousness may also result in self-immersed, rather than self-less actions; that it has the potential to provide a tunnel vision for individual spectator-participants where they perceive their *own objective* only and focus their efforts on achieving this objective, rather than considering their actions in relation to the context of the participatory performance and by-standing community. In the context of immersive theatre, this has been articulated by Adam Alston as 'narcissistic participation',[136] designating the moment during which 'attention tends to be turned inwards, towards the experiencing self, accompanied by a persistent reaching towards a maximization of experience'.[137] Additionally, the merging of action and awareness inherent in the experience of flow might be aligned with the pre-noetic, kinetic initiation of pre-conscious action. Responding *in the flow* might mean an impaired conscious awareness of the impact of one's action on others. When discussing transgressive behaviour in participatory performance, theatre practitioners Joe Ball and Tassos Stevens both speak of how spectator-participants are often not aware that their actions are disruptive, as they are solely focused on what they perceive as available

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[135] Mihaly, Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly, *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety: Experiencing Flow in Work and Play* (California: Jossey-Bass, Inc. 2000): 42.
[136] Adam Alston, "Audience Participation and Neoliberal Value: Risk, agency and responsibility in Immersive Theatre," P*erformance Research* v. 18, no. 2 (2013): 128-138
[137] Ibid.,130.

participatory opportunities. As Csikszentmihalyi himself explains, the state of flow can mean that 'one is so entranced by the inner order of the experience that the "real" world appears irrational by comparison'.[138]

The concept of flow has been often referenced in game analysis and design (See Salen and Zimmerman (2004), Anthropy and Clark (2014) and Lankoski and Holopainen (2017)), and conditions that offer a sense of flow, such as the presence of clear objectives as well as an instant feedback loop, are consequential considerations. To elaborate, I find it useful to refer to theories that Csikszentmihalyi references, for example the notion that, for an activity to be enjoyable, it must contain a degree of novelty, providing a new or fresh experience for the person undertaking the activity. This is expressed by the concept of an 'optimal level of stimulation', as proposed by Donald O. Hebb[139] and Daniel E. Berlyne.[140] One could argue that the promise of an *experience* in participatory performance is one of the key motivations for those who take part, as it provides a 'pattern of stimulation not ordinarily available in the person's environment';[141] a prerequisite for optimal stimulation. A willingness to seek out stimulation outside of the ordinary might also indicate a greater willingness to be receptive to an autotelic experience. Intrinsic motivation however has also been described as dependent on a sense of agency, and whether a person considers themselves to having been able to originate an activity according to their free will. Csikszentmihalyi refers to writers such as Robert W. White[142] and Richard De Charms[143] who both, amongst others, have postulated that 'freedom is the essential criterion of an enjoyable act'.[144] This links an intrinsic motivation back to agency, as well as incorporating the idea of self-motivation as a factor for the experience of flow. In fact, in participatory performance, self-motivation could be understood as a required ingredient not just for the experience of agency, but also for a potential emergence of transgressive behaviour, particularly of the explorative kind. Equally, having one's own

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[138] Mihaly, Csikszentmihalyi, *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety: Experiencing Flow in Work and Play* (California: Jossey-Bass, Inc. 2000): 184.
[139] D.O. Hebb, "Drives and the CNS," *Psychological Review* v.62 (1955): 243-254.
[140] Daniel E. Berlyne, *Conflict, Arousal and Curiosity* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960).
[141] Mihaly, Csikszentmihalyi, *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety: Experiencing Flow in Work and Play* (California: Jossey-Bass, Inc. 2000): 25.
[142] Robert W. White, "Motivation Reconsidered: The Concept of Competence," *Psychological Review* v.66 (1959): 297-333.
[143] Richard De Charms, *Personal Causation* (New York: Academic Press. 1968).
[144] Mihaly, Csikszentmihalyi, *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety: Experiencing Flow in Work and Play* (California: Jossey-Bass, Inc. 2000): 25.

agency removed and instead feeling that one is forced to do something strongly affects not only one's pleasure of the activity, but could also lead to transgressive behaviour of an antagonistic kind. I return to Aarseth's notion that transgressive behaviour in play is a rebellious act, 'a (perhaps illusory) way for the played subject to regain their sense of identity and uniqueness through the mechanism of the game itself'.[145]

It is my conviction that participatory performance design and the resulting conditions for engagement directly affect a spectator-participants' experience and their subsequent responses and contributions. The four phenomenological critical lenses examined in this section provide a theoretical framework through which this affect can be assessed. My analysis of the experience of transgression and dissensus has strongly relied on one or more of these lenses when examining instances in which transgressive responses occurred, particularly in light of underlying experiential motivations (the 'know -why').[146]

2.3 The dichotomy of ideal versus non-ideal conditions and spectator-participants

The notions of ideal/non-ideal conditions and ideal/non-ideal spectator-participant are deeply intertwined when making participatory performance. The ideal spectator-participant I discuss is built on Aarseth's ideal player in videogaming,[147] signifying an imagined spectator-participant that a participatory framework is designed around who fulfils the expectations of the design. The ideal conditions for engagement in this context is a design that *allows* spectator-participants to fulfil such expectations. However, as part of my research I questioned if certain participatory conditions facilitate or encourage spectator-participants to transgress against implicit or explicit rules within a participatory framework. I embrace an assumption that non-ideal conditions might challenge spectator-participants to respond *against* those conditions, and, by doing so, transgress against the limiting context, as in against the rules that limit and structure activities. This assumption relates to transgression as an antagonistic force; it corresponds with an opposing expectation that ideal conditions are more likely to facilitate responses that are offered with a great level of care and

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[145] Espen Aarseth, "I Fought the Law: Transgressive Play and the Implied Player," (Paper presented at DiGRA Conference, 2007), 132.
[146] Please refer to 'Chapter 6' and 'Chapter 7'.
[147] Espen Aarseth, "I Fought the Law: Transgressive Play and the Implied Player," Paper presented at DiGRA Conference, 2007: 132

responsibility towards the participating community and the work itself, aligned with Bernard De Koven's principle of 'playing well'.[148] Ideal conditions can also lead to transgressive activities, which will be seen in the example of the inebriated spectator in Exit Production's *Fight Night* (discussed in 'Chapter 3.2.1') who was understood in Joe Ball's words to have had 'the best time'.[149] This reaffirms the context specific and complex nature of transgression and the experience of such. Nevertheless, a closer examination of what might be understood as ideal/non-ideal conditions has offered some clear practical and creative suggestions, which have determined some of my studio-based exploration, particularly a two-fold approach in my PaR endeavour, based on inverting ideal conditions and inverting the notion of the ideal participant. I will discuss non-ideal conditions in my PaR work in Chapter 6. and the non-ideal spectator-participant in Chapter 7. But here I want to offer some foundations for what might constitute ideal conditions or ideal spectator-participants.

2.3.1 Ideal conditions for engagement

Scholarly analysis of game activity and game design has often schematically considered what ensures sustained and coherent engagement of the players with the game activities. Such schematic exploration of ideal conditions of engagement for participatory performance in art, theatre and dance seems to have been more overlooked. I am interested in breaking down what theorists and practitioners have understood to be ideal circumstances for successful participation; in other words, what conditions are needed for a spectator-participant to successfully engage with a participatory performance work? Although different performance works encourage different types of participation and hence have variations in what might be perceived as 'ideal conditions' for engagement, it is my opinion that there are more widely applied understandings that a particular set of circumstances can lead to a successfully absorbed experience (and a potential subsequent feeling of reward) for the spectator-participant. An analysis of these sets of circumstances is useful as a potential guideline for the creation or facilitation of participatory performance work that wants to engage

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[148] Bernard De Koven, *The Well-Played Game: A Player's Philosophy* (USA: MIT Press, 2013),
[149] Please refer to Appendix 1 – *Interview With Joe Ball, 20 March 2019*, p.232.

their spectator-participants in a rewarding manner. Through my practice, I explore what kind of conditions are more likely to lead to transgressive responses. Inverting such conditions is a creative strategy that aims to test Aarseth's *tyranny* of the game/participatory structure to explore if spectator-participants indeed are more inclined to rebel and transgress against non-ideal conditions, and what shape such transgression might take.

Ludic theory as well as game analysis have described the act of play as an autotelic activity. An ideal condition would therefore imply a set of circumstances in which a player becomes engaged in an activity that environmental factors or external motivations cease to be taken into consideration. As I've established, Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow designates such optimal experience within an activity.[150] Entering a state of flow is determined by the perceived challenge or opportunity for actions, the appropriateness of the level of difficulty in completing the challenge or action in relation to one's own skill level and the presence of clear objectives as well as the opportunity for instant feedback on progress made.[151] The balance between these aspects is a delicate one: 'if challenges begin to exceed skills, one first becomes vigilant and then anxious; if skills begin to exceed challenges, one first relaxes and then becomes bored'.[152]

A more rigorous consideration of the psychological state of flow in relation to performing arts and particularly participatory performance seems appropriate. The concept of flow could be aligned to Gordon Calleja's idea of immersion as absorption,[153] seeing that both concepts presuppose a high level of concentration, absorbed attention and imagination. For Petros Lameras the most vital features to be considered in game design are rules which determine players' actions, tasks which they have to complete and/or challenges that they have to overcome and goals which players work towards.[154] I argue that an awareness and familiarity of these features,

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[150] Jeanne Nakamura, and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, "The concept of flow,". In *Handbook of positive psychology,* ed C. R. Snyder and Shane. J. Lopez, 89-105. (New York: Oxford University Press., 2002), 90.
[151] Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960)
[152] Jeanne Nakamura, and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, "The concept of flow," In *Handbook of positive psychology,* ed C. R. Snyder and Shane. J. Lopez, 89-105. (New York: Oxford University Press., 2002), 90.
[153] Gordon Calleja, *In-Game: Form Immersion to Incorporation* (London and Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011).
[154] Petros Lameras, "Essential Features of Serious Games Design in Higher Education," *Society for Research into Higher Education*, (2015): 1–22.

namely appropriate difficulty of activity, clear rules and objectives as well as an inherent feedback loop, is equally useful for the maker of participatory performance.

Additional to Csikszentmihalyi's conditions necessary to enter a state of flow (or optimal engagement), Huizinga's discussion of poetry as a playful artform offers insight into how rhythm may contribute to a sense of play. For Huizinga, rhythm and how rhythmic qualities derive from 'recurring patterns of play: beat and counter-beat, rise and fall, question and answer'.[155] It is notable how these terms mirror a language often applied in choreography or devised theatre practices. Furthermore, the original German word for play, "Spiel", originally meant dance,[156] implying that rhythmic and dynamic elements are a fundamental ingredient to play activities and hence hold relevance for participatory activities. A considered sense of rhythm and dynamic structuring within a participatory performance work as a whole and/or within isolated moments of invited participation contributes to the facilitation of ideal conditions for spectator-participants.

For White, concepts of rhythm and patterns as artistic ingredients frame the aesthetic attributes brought into play by spectator-participants, with artistic features of the work often almost guiding expected participatory contributions.[157] Additionally, invitations to participate themselves have rhythmic and dynamic quality, for example those which involve turn-taking or a repeated formula for repetition. Call and response games evidence how familiarity and practice can encourage a spectator-participant's experience of flow or immersion within participatory performance. Generally, a repeated structure/rhythm of interactive activity within a performance, allows members of the audience to pick up on the participatory conventions, offering the opportunity to *practice* within the work. With many participatory performances being visited as one-off events, an artistic methodology that explores repetition as an inherent ingredient of the work might allow spectator-participants to become familiar with the conventions and able to practice their contributions. A further example of where familiarity and

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<https://www.srhe.ac.uk/downloads/LamerasEssential_Features_of_%20Serious_Games%20Design_Short_FINAL.pdf>

[155] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A study of the play-element in culture* (Routledge & K. Paul Ltd, 1949), 142.

[156] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. (London: Sheed & Ward, 2004 [1975]): 104. Also, look at Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A study of the play-element in culture.* (Routledge & K. Paul Ltd, 1949)

[157] Gareth White. *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 201.

practice has led to advantageous audience participation are Punchdrunk's 'superfans', who visit performances repeatedly, share their experiences online and distribute checklists that help others to navigate the pieces.[158]

To summarise: the ideal conditions for participation (understood as those that successfully immerse participants) are appropriate difficulty of activity, clear rules and objectives, inherent feedback loop, an appropriate use of rhythmic and dynamic qualities to drive participatory activities as well as an opportunity for participants to familiarise themselves with the conventions relevant to the particular participatory performance work.

2.3.2 Ideal spectator-participants

The facilitation of participatory performance within the realm of creative art, theatre and dance seems often designed around a rhetoric of personal or social benefit or a socio-political commentary proclaimed by artists, promoters or relevant funding bodies.[159] This means that such works imagine a receiver who is perceptible to such benefits or commentary. This is strongly the case in participatory projects facilitated within the paradigm of socially engaged, educational or community programs, which are often designed around and for a specific demographic group of participants, with the work geared towards a range of identified needs. However, work produced as art for the gallery, site-specific spaces or theatre spaces seems to seldom question further how the identities found within constellations of spectator-participants affect their participation, although a preconceived anticipation of what experience they might have, is often made. For example, with oft-repeated claims that participatory performance celebrates new forms of togetherness,[160] it seems logical that one needs to question *who* does come together, and how much their identity, cultural and social backgrounds affect how they respond to the work and other spectator-participants.

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[158] Kathrin Hamilton, "Punchdrunk and the Politics of Spectatorship," *Culturebot* (November 2012). https://www.culturebot.org: 4.

[159] An example of such rhetoric of benefit is evident in Punchdrunk's *Enrichment* programme, which designs 'transformational' immersive activities for schools and communities.' <https://www.punchdrunkenrichment.org.uk> last accessed 7 August 2024.

[160] For example, Vanessa Grasse's *MESH* project is promoted as a 'public ritual of togetherness' that aims to 'bring people together' in a physical experience of 'interdependence and collaboration'. Vanessa Grasse, "About MESH," <https://meshjournal.wixsite.com/mesh> (accessed 29 November 2018).

I claim that participatory performance often assumes a universal, ideal spectator-participant, albeit one whose definitions have somewhat shifted over the years. Bishop contests how in participatory art in the 1960's, this player was often a male and classless subject, one 'capable of returning to perception with an *innocent eye*'.[161] Admittedly, the advent of more politically vocal theatre as well as the social turn in the 1990's saw a shift in the conception of who participatory work was facilitated for, particularly in the UK, directly addressing and conceptualising the demographic specificities of their spectator-participant. Jeremy Deller's *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001)[162] is a key example of a participatory work that brings together quite different demographics and social groups, engaging re-enactment societies as well as former miners in his work, bringing 'the middle-class battle re-enactors into direct contact with the working-class miners'.[163] Nevertheless, I believe that direct interaction and negotiation between clearly identified and differing social or cultural groups as seen in Deller's work is rarely facilitated in participatory performance and that more often, audiences of participatory performance work are those 'individuals with which we can probably go and have a coffee or a pint with afterwards'.[164] This means that there is a lack of opportunity for publics from different demographic backgrounds to experience or be involved in the kind of socio-political negotiations and encounters participatory performance works often aim to facilitate. Instead, much participatory performance work caters for a universal, civilised and educated participant that is often familiar with, if not even literate in the conventions of this type of work. An understanding of how participatory performance work are imagining an implied or ideal player might be further illuminated by Hans-Georg Gadamer's considerations of the phenomenology of play, as he suggests that 'the real subject of the game […] is not the players but the game itself'.[165] This creates a hierarchical relationship; the game is able to exist as conceptual construct and/or through material game accessories, whereas the player

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[161] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), 89.
[162] Please refer to 'Chapter 3.2.4 – Jeremy Deller The Battle Of Orgreave (2001)'.
[163] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), 89.
[164] Adam Alston, "Audience participation and the politics of compromise," presented as part of *Forum on the Art of Participation.* University of Kent, 7 May 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-fSwKyAYRw> (accessed 28 December 2018).
[165] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. (London: Sheed & Ward, 2004 [1975]), 106.

'cannot exist without a game'.[166] Of course, this can easily be applied to participatory performance as similar to the process in game design, a participatory work is often conceived without participants and at one point exists solely as a concept, performative text or creative map of intended actions/moments for participation. Tassos Stevens offers a different perspective on Gadamer's hierarchy between game and player. For him, the game is a vehicle for the relationship between the players, shifting the main subject to *how* one plays, not *what* one plays. He states: 'we have care for each player in order to play with everyone being allowed to play'.[167] This is echoed by Joe Ball, for whom a professional care for performers in participatory performance should be paramount, by makers as well as audience members. His demand for spectator-participants is a simple 'be cool'.[168] To summarise: According to the findings above, an ideal spectator-participant is possibly male and classless, civilised and educated, socio-politically active and literate in the conventions of participatory performance, as well as caring towards others and *cool*.

To create a participatory performance work, one creates around *imagined* and *implied* gaps within the work, including the spectator-participant. As White discusses, audience action as well as experience in participatory performance work becomes aesthetic material, and therefore the audience member becomes the artist's medium.[169] Hence it is somewhat inevitable that an ideal spectator-participant is imagined during the creation process. In fact, Aarseth goes so far as to say that a 'generic player is an unthinkable figure'.[170] I question how an increased awareness of an imagined, ideal spectator-participant may affect artistic and creative practice. Furthermore, similarly to how I want to use an understanding of ideal conditions for engagement to explore a new type of challenging and provocative participatory performance style, in my practice I have explored inverting the concept of ideal spectator-participant, instead aiming for a participatory framework that actively allows and even encourages transgressions against what might be falsely presented as *ideal*. The context-driven and subjective experience of transgression and dissensus

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[166] Espen Aarseth, "I Fought the Law: Transgressive Play and the Implied Player," (Paper presented at DiGRA Conference, 2007), 130.
[167] Please see Appendix 2 – *Interview with Tassos Stevens 25 March 2019,* 240.
[168] Please see Appendix 1 – *Interview with Joe Ball 20 March 2019,* 224.
[169] Gareth White, *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 9-10.
[170] Ibid.

however means that the emergence of both is not just dependent on myself as maker, but also on whoever experiences the work at the given time. For example, the notion of ideal/non-ideal participant may shift when examined from the perspective of others within the participating community. Implicit rules and expectations of behaviours might not only be offered by the participatory framework, but by other spectator-participants. Nevertheless, I argue that an inversion of the above notions of *ideal* in participatory performance might lead to a greater multitude in experiences and responses and lead to a practice that, in Jeremy Deller's words, is 'going to be interesting'.[171]

[171] As quoted in Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorshi,* (London: Verso, 2012), 33.

Chapter 3 – Practical framework

3.1 Introduction to the practical framework

This chapter aims to specify participatory performance works that were most pertinent to my research. By doing so, I further define the practical framework that my own praxis is situated in. The performances described here acted as case studies; some of these works allowed me to inhabit the role of the transgressive spectator-participant or experience the transgressions of others. Conversations with some of the creators of these works offered invaluable stimuli and insight into creative approaches. These performances allowed me to enter a theoretical and practical dialogue which was crucial in the development of my own praxis. Their descriptions offer examples of moments during which transgression occurred and/or dissensus emerged.

3.2 Performance review

The performance review that follows frames my own PaR performances as well as the overarching inquiry. The list of performances mentioned here is not exclusive; many participatory works and artists of relevance to the development of my thesis are not mentioned here. But the artists and companies introduced below have offered inspiration and provocations and hold a specific relevancy to the development of my PaR activities as well as theoretical propositions articulated throughout Chapters 6, 7 and 8 in this thesis. These performances fulfil Helen Simons' definition of a case study, which offer 'a study of a singular, the particular and the unique'[172] instance. Here, these instances are specific examples of creative participatory structures and activities that have given rise to, or may give rise to, transgression or dissensus. Analysing these performances led to the emergence of an intuitive set of question or line of inquiry, or a *hunch*, which subsequently guided my creative outputs and theoretical propositions. Baz Kershaw initially argued for the word 'hunch' to be added as an acceptable starting

[172] Helen Simons, *Case Study Research in Practice* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2009), 4.

point to academic research inquiries,[173] as unlike the word 'question', it would not lead to a more or less predictable range of responses. Instead, like a *paradox*, it would need to be investigated via 'instinct, insight and intuition'.[174] Following 'hunches' became a defining approach within my PaR methodology, since, as previously explained, the practical investigation of transgression in participatory performance offers a fundamental paradox and is rooted in a rich but perhaps contradictory creative conundrum.[175]

What follows are summarised descriptions of these performances, introducing the artistic objectives as well as the creative materials. The unique and singular aspects relevant to my research are referred to, in order to give a framework for the analysis of my own work as well theoretical propositions in subsequent chapters.

3.2.1 Exit Productions' *Fight Night* (2018) and *Eco-Chambers* (2019)

Exit Productions, founded by Joe Ball, is a game-theatre company that have been creating immersive, interactive and game-based theatre productions since 2017. Throughout the thesis I refer to three of their productions, *Fight Night* (2018), *The Mission: Occupy Mars* (2019) and *Eco-Chambers* (2019). An interview with Joe Ball can be found in *Appendix 1: Interview with Joe Ball*. Here I want to briefly introduce *Fight Night*, which was performed at the Vaults Festival in London Waterloo in 2018, and *Eco-Chambers*, which was performed at Battersea Arts Centre in London in October 2019. For *Eco-Chambers*, I was able to collaborate with Ball and conduct some specific audience research in the form of tailored questionnaires and quantitative analysis. This helped me to develop questionnaire strategies for my own PaR performances, which I will discuss further in 'Chapter 4.3 - Methodology for audience research'. Additionally, the use of WhatsApp in *Eco-Chambers* as a synchronous performance realm directly contributed to my thinking behind my own performance

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[173] Baz Kerhsaw, "Practice as Research through Performance," in *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts,* eds. Hazel Smith and Roger Dean (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 104-125.
[174] Ibid., 113.
[175] Refer to 'Introduction V - The paradox of Designing to Transgress'

And Then there Was Only One (2022), discussed in ‘Chapter 5.5 – And Then There Was Only One’.

Fight Night repurposes the Waterloo arches into a shady boxing club. The audience is invited as punters to a match and, after being introduced to the referee, the club owner, two boxers and their teams, are asked to align themselves to one of the two opposing parties. The premise of the show rests on the possibility of the match being rigged, and audiences are asked to roam the space hunting for clues. They are being encouraged to either share their findings with the organisers of the match or use them to make informed bets. The majority of the performance is allowing audiences to roam into the different spaces of the arches, with their chosen allegiance offering exclusive access to the teams’ backstage areas or restricting them from those of the opposing team. Audiences have encounters with the boxers themselves, their family members and/or trainers, as well as being able to observe the movements of referee and club owner. Some audience members are given specific roles, for example, I was given the role of the medic, meaning I had access to both teams’ backstage areas. Throughout the performance, Ball and the performer acting as club owner collected the intel delivered to them by audience members, which formed the basis of an intricate point system that ultimately decided who would win the concluding fight. Audiences’ courage to explore the spaces and approach the performers was rewarded with extra information and insight into the characters’ motivations. But ‘it is up to the audience how they will use the information - to influence the outcome, to find out where the corruption is coming from or to make some money’?[176] In one of the performances, a member of the audience chose to influence the outcome by obstructing the boxing ring itself, refusing to leave the referee chair in protest of the referee’s corruption. Ball describes how, in her conviction, she started to get physical with one of the performers who was asking her to leave.[177] The spectator-participant had to be removed from the performance space, so that the show could go on unhindered. Subsequent performances began with Ball reminding the audience to *be cool* and respectful to the performers and the work itself.

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[176] Stephi Wild, “Exit Productions Return to Vault With World Premiere of Fight Night,” Broadway World UK Regional, <https://www.broadwayworld.com/uk-regional/article/Exit-Productions-Return-to-VAULT-With-World-Premiere-of-FIGHT-NIGHT-20181219> (accessed 6 May 2024).
[177] Please refer to Appendix 1 – *Interview with Joe Ball* 20 March 2019, 224.

Eco-Chamber is a game theatre production that explores protest and aims to test the decentralised and self-organising principles of real-life political and activist movements such as Extinction Rebellion.[178] Inspired by the social and communal mobilisations in relation to socio-economic and political themes such as Brexit and climate change, the performance invites the participating audience into the headquarters of a fictional environmental protest movement. Their involvement amounts towards the agreement of organisational arrangements of the movement as a whole. These include the preparation of a public statement about the wider aim of the movement to be broadcast live on Channel 4 at the end of the meeting and orchestrating the immediate actions of three ongoing protest groups on the streets of London.

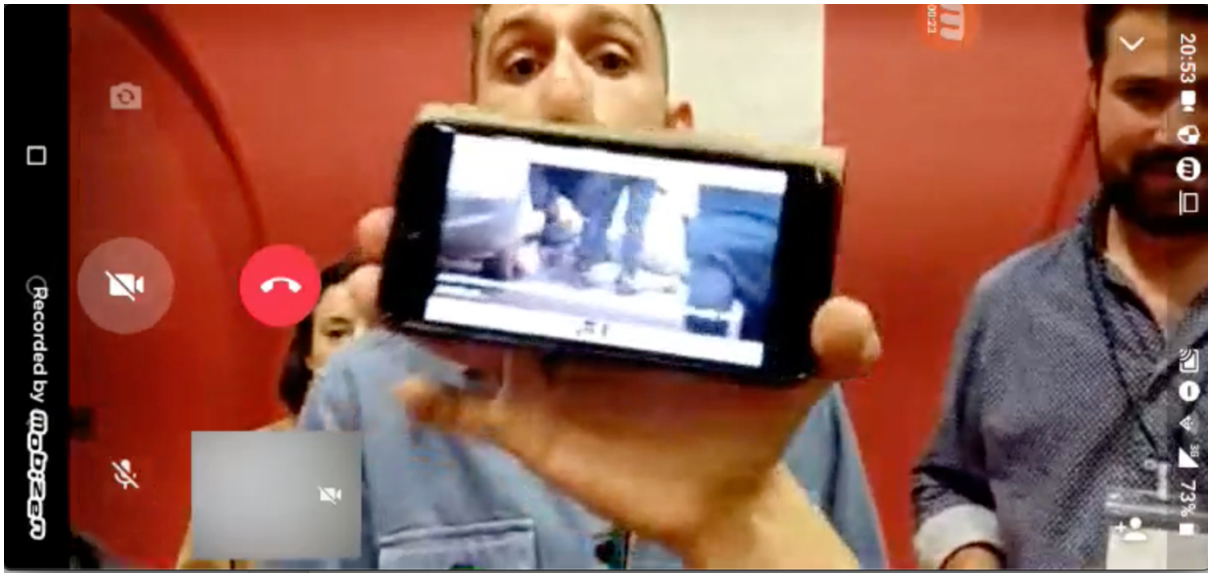

Fig.2: Exit Productions' *Eco-Chambers* (2019): Performance video screen shot. This image shows the final scene of the performance. By then the participating community descendent into chaos due to in-fighting and conflicting opinions in relation to violent or non-violent activism.

Democratic decision-making processes lie at the heart of the performance and throughout, ways to debate and make a choice are discussed and voted on. Over the course of the performance, a tighter time constraint is applied for each decision-making process, and extrinsic primers of pressure are added: the performers

[178] Extinction Rebellion is a self-proclaimed *Do-It-Together* organisation, which aims to foster awareness on climate change through acts of public disobedience.

increasingly act in a more nervous manner and start to disagree with each other, whilst a background soundtrack of marching and protest sounds becomes progressively louder, resulting in everyone having to raise their voices in order to be heard. This aims to raise the stakes and asks the spectator-participants to make decisions quicky. Equally, whereas the first decisions are more strongly facilitated by the three performers, as the performance goes on, spectator-participants find themselves acting more and more autonomously, partly due to the added pressure but mainly because the performers disappear or storm out of the room. The final decision, the movement's statement for the broadcast, is made with no performers in the room.

The popular WhatsApp messaging service is a key tool in *Eco-Chambers*: audience members leave their number upon entering the headquarters and are asked to keep their phones on. Throughout the performance spectator-participants receive individual or group messages by a fictional character Abbie Williams, carrying news from fictional protest rallies on the streets of London. Although the messages are aimed to inform the decision-making proceedings in the room, it up to the receivers how and to what extent they engage with the messages. Messages can be ignored, reported to performers/other spectator-participants, or privately responded back to. The use of WhatsApp created an (a)synchronous performance space that afforded spectator-participants opportunities to *act* (in writing), rather than do (in space). Interestingly, this digital act of acting seems to have given rise to some unexpected and playfully transgressive responses, inviting at times humorous exchanges and replies by the receivers. I argue that this (a)synchronous digital space offered spectator-participants an individualised affordance, building and extending on James J. Gibson's formulation of how space not only consists of objects or surfaces but more so offers or *affords* opportunities to act[179] or interact with things and others. An understanding of affordances is not just as a matter of perception, but of action and interaction,[180] which means this concept can be applied to both the physical and digital realms.

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[179] James, G. Greeno "Gibson's Affordances," *Psychological review* v. 101, nr. 2. (1994).
[180] Sanna Raudaskoski, "The Affordances of Mobile Phone Applications," Cost Action 269, Helsinki, Finland, 3-5 September (2003).

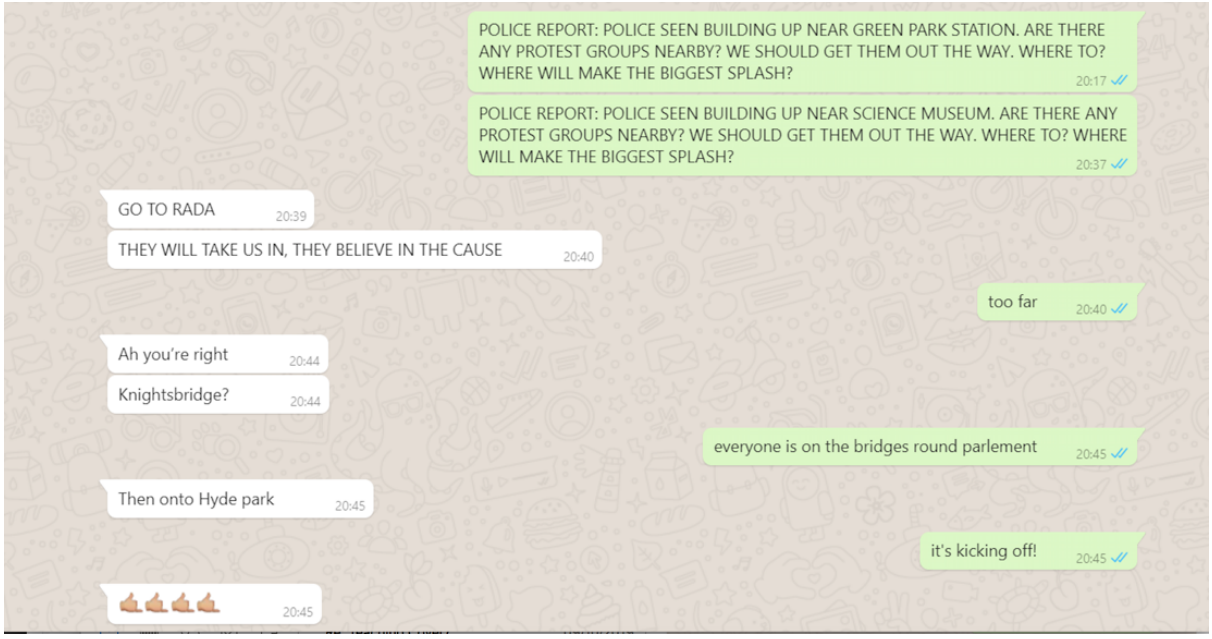

Fig. *3*: Exit Productions' *Eco-Chambers* (2019): Performance WhatsApp Communication screen shot.
Spectator-participants responding to the fictional character Abbie Williams to send her street protesters to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts for cover from the police.

Many spectator-participants chose to respond with tongue-in-cheek messages or purposefully provocative instructions. One spectator-participant highlighted how the moment when his response 'got a protest group arrested'[181] provided him with a strong sense of agency and the feeling that his actions contributed to the performance. In reality, his WhatsApp messages did not have any direct outcome on the performance content in the space; in fact, as this was a private message between this participant and Abbie Williams, only those who he chose to show the message would have known about the exchange. Nevertheless, the opportunity for this small transgressive act via the affordances of the digital space strongly impacted the *participatory experience* of this spectator-participant even without any tangible material consequence to anyone else.

Eco-Chambers gave rise to an interest in how affordances may function in adjacent digital communication spaces and how a simultaneous experience of both in-space and on-line participation can lead to spontaneous disruptive or explorative participatory responses. It directly inspired my research into WhatsApp as protest tool as well as exploring the use of (a)synchronous performance spaces in *And Then There*

[181] Questionnaire *EP Q 18/10 13*, available from the author on request.

was Only One, discussed in ‘Chapter 5.5’. Additionally, this performance developed an interest in spectator-participants’ autonomous decision-making processes, which was further explored in my research instance *Trailed.*

3.2.2 ZU-UK Project Perfect Stranger (2020)

ZU-UK’s 2020 project was a participatory performance produced within and for COVID times and was conducted via the digital communication channels of WhatsApp and Zoom video conferencing. The project itself was conducted in two parts, the first being *Project Perfect Stranger,* which ‘is a 5-day experience with a complete stranger via WhatsApp’,[182] the second being a finalising Zoom performance called *PlagueRound Game-Show*, described as a ‘live, interactive post-normal game-show’.[183] I personally have experienced the first part, *Project Perfect Strangers* twice, first titled as *project buddy* in July 2020 and then again as *perfect stranger* in September of the same year. This review will focus on the WhatsApp part of the project, and not discuss the concluding Zoom-based game show of *PlagueRound*, as the second part of the performance was of a very different nature to the first and less relevant to my research. *Project Perfect Stranger* aimed to explore what human connection might entail, and how we might develop the *feeling* of being connected to each other, even when in remote places. During the time of COVID lockdowns and the very real, physical disconnect between people and environments whilst facing the anxiety of a global pandemic, the project carried a gentle and tentative approach to inter-personal relationship and social connectivity. To be part of *Project Perfect Stranger*, spectator-participants signed up with their phone numbers and agree to delete personal WhatsApp profile images and changing profile names to ‘perfect stranger’. Before the experience begins, communication is made via a general WhatsApp message, informing about the impending connection to another ‘perfect stranger’. Over the next five days, spectator-participants receive daily prompts on how to communicate and what to share with their ‘strangers’, with instructions ranging from sharing a picture of your

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[182] Project Perfect Stranger & Plagueround Game-Show, *ZU-UK,* <https://zu-uk.com/project/project-perfect-stranger-and-plagueround/> (accessed 9 May 2022).
[183] Ibid.

surroundings, to leaving a voice message to finally having an actual conversation whilst going for a walk.

Fig. 4: ZU-UK *Perfect Stranger* (2020): Image received by Perfect Stranger play partner on 31 July 2020

The experience is designed to slowly allow for greater exposition of personal details and information, developing increasing familiarity and intimacy with a stranger in a remote, and in my first case, geographically distant location. My experience in the two shows were varied, but both are noteworthy as case study material due to their indication of how the WhatsApp communication app might be a particularly suitable platform for the exploration of (a)synchronous, digital performance. It became clear that, albeit the contemplative and tentative tone of the project, even within the initial and very gentle instructions, the dialogical exchange had room for playful responses. For instance, my stranger sent me a picture of his trash can so I could

get a sense of the environment he was in. Myself and other participating audience members received messages by their own ‘perfect strangers’ that could be understood as transgressing or disobeying the objectives of the artistic directors of ZU-UK. These messages ranged from tongue-in-cheek contributions in the likes of sending pictures of aforementioned trash cans, disappointing silences that brought the project to an abrupt halt, or transgressive communication, such as romantic propositions.[184] My own ‘perfect stranger’ stopped responding on the fourth day of the project, resulting in a deeply felt sense of disappointment on my side. One of my students, however, had to cut her own involvement in the project short, due to receiving a romantic proposition, her recollection of which she describes as follows:

> After chatting for the process of the experiment and not knowing much about each-other, we decided it would be nice to reveal our ages and my stranger also asked if I felt comfortable with them sending pictures of themselves. After sending my photos, my stranger immediately complimented me and proceeded to send a few heart eye emoji's which I wasn't uncomfortable with but I found somewhat funny because up until that point, our conversation was very blunt and serious, just playing the game as we were instructed, so this use of emoji was less robotic and somewhat flirtatious. After a bit more small-talk, my perfect stranger asked me if I would like to go out with him for a drink. I was very taken aback; I only went into this process out [sic] curiosity and to have additional material to write about in my upcoming essay.[185]

The two experiences indicated that transgression via digital communication channels can come in various forms. In the first instance, the refusal to participate is a transgressive act which affects how the artwork is experienced by others. This effect of course is heightened here due to the dialogical nature of the pairing; the refusal of one participant to engage with the task brings the project to an abrupt end for the other. Alternatively, the romantic proposition of the second instance indicates a traversing of perceived boundaries set out by the intentions of the artistic project overall. It is interesting that the emoji communication applied in the second instance evidences a use of creative media for playful communication, something which Natalie Pang and

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[185] Received in personal communication on the 29 June 2021.

Yue Ting Woo have identified as an important ingredient in WhatsApp communication for the fostering of intimacy.[186] Here, however, the seeking of intimacy was perceived as transgressive and intrusive, and fell outside the remits of the artistic project as expected by the student-participant, and strongly affected her experience of the work overall.

3.2.3 Coney A Small Town Anywhere (2009) and Adventure 1 (2016)

Coney's work will be mentioned throughout the thesis, as they have been very influential particularly on my thinking about play being an inherent aspect in any participatory structure. Although I have identified that participatory works relevant for my thesis have a designated beginning and end, I here make an exception as a common trope within Coney's participatory and interactive work is that the spectator-participant's experience 'begins days or weeks prior to entering the space, via an advance interaction'.[187] I here want to briefly introduce *A Small Town Anywhere* before discussing *Adventure 1* (2016).

In *A Small Town Anywhere* (2009), spectator-participants become the inhabitants of a small town by being given a hat, a badge, and a particular role (for example 'baker' or 'butcher'). The town is split into two tribes, and the audience sees themselves act out what Coney describes 'the most momentous week of its history',[188] negotiating gossip and tensions stirred via anonymous letters dropped into the participating community by a scribe signed as 'The Raven'. Prior to the performance, participants have an opportunity to interact, develop their story and share secrets with a character called the 'Small Town Historian'. These interactions, occurring via emails, texts or in person, inform some of the poison-pen letters received by the entire audience during the actual performance. Although the performance was inspired by Henri-Georges Clouzot' film Le Corbeau,[189] it resembles a looser and more elaborate, full-length

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[186] Natalie Pang and Yue Ting Woo, "What about WhatsApp? A systematic review of WhatsApp and its role in civic and political engagement," *First Monday* 25, no. 1 (2020) Accessed June 10, 2021. https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/10417

[187] Josephine Machon. *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and immediacy in contemporary performance (*Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 10.

[188] Coney, *A Small Town Anywhere,* <https://coneyhq.org/project/a-small-town-anywhere-2/> (accessed 7 August 2024).

[189] Ibid.

edition of the well-known Werewolf Game, where participants take on characters such as villagers, werewolves and seer, and the outcome of the game and one's own survival depends on the ability to negotiate, debate and at times deceit about one's true objectives and identity. Much of the performance, although structured by various points of convergence (such as when a new letter is received), depends entirely on the collaborations and actions of the participating audience, how they interact with and respond towards each other. As Lyn Gardner explains: 'There is no script; every audience member plays a part in developing the story, and thus becomes responsible for its outcome. And that outcome is not always pretty. The show ends with the community deciding who must be banished from the town to save the rest'.[190] As Coney describe themselves, '*A Small Town Anywhere* is also about the roomful of strangers who become the playing audience, and what communal sense emerges through their play. The story of the town that unfolds is responsive to the choices they make, individually and collectively'.[191] *A Small Town Anywhere* is specifically pertinent for my considerations about emergent systems as suitable structure for transgression/dissensus to occur, which I discuss in 'Chapter 6.3.1 - Exploration as emergence'.

Adventure 1 (2016) was co-directed by Tassos Stevens and William Drew. In *Adventure* 1, engagement with the performance content commences upon purchasing a ticket online, which is shortly followed by a welcome from 'Agent Josh'. This initial contact is a crucial setup; making contact through virtual communication indicates that Josh is a real person and hence, 'one of us'.[192] Throughout the week or days before the actual performance date, the spectator-participants will receive messages from Josh, including the information that they are about to be sent onto an undercover mission to trail a city worker, a so-called Mr. X, in a secret location. Exactly where this location is will be revealed to them the day before the actual performance, and spectator-participants, receiving text messages and listening to downloaded instructions via their smartphones throughout their journey, find themselves wandering

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[190] Lyn Gardner, "Join in the murder game at Battersea Arts Centre," The Guardian (19 October 2009), <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/oct/19/murder-game-battersea-arts-centre> (Accessed 24 March 2020).
[191] Coney, *A Small Town Anywhere,* <https://coneyhq.org/project/a-small-town-anywhere-2/> (accessed 7 August 2024).
[192] Tassos Stevens, Appendix 2 - *Interview with Tassos Stevens*, 252.

through a public but highly controlled space within the financial district of London. Transgression as an artistic concept comes to the fore firstly due to Coney not having permission to perform in this particular location, which is why it remains a secret to anyone who hasn't been part of the performance. Spectator-participants' knowledge of being in a location they are not supposed to be in creates a heightened awareness that they are transgressing spatially, finding themselves in a usually out-of-bounds site. They, in order to remain undercover, try to blend in by taking on the behaviour of a shop worker, a city worker, or a tourist. As a result, they can experience an extreme awareness of their surroundings and a heightened alertness to the objects and people within. As Stevens explains, 'everything that's already there supports the fiction, everything becomes part of it, becomes charged'.[193] Imagined and real-word spheres synthesise into a paradoxical world,[194] comparable to the one that emerges in the experience of dissensus. Questioning what is real and what is not raises the stakes for spectator-participants dramatically, and results in a reassessing of one's own activities and responses within both. Additionally, as part of their secret mission, spectator-participants are asked to commit a transgressive act on Mr. X and collaborate with other spectator-participants to do so. Stevens refuses to disclose the exact nature of the activity to me, but he admits that it is indeed of a criminal nature that could be punishable by law. In response to committing the 'crime' itself, participant Alexi Duggins said 'my heart thumps inside my chest. My feet are pounding the pavement. And I genuinely fear for my safety'.[195] Spectator-participants are kept safe throughout their experience by having members of Coney, including Stevens, trailing them and being ready to intervene if they would be approached by a member of the public or by present security staff. Additionally, all spectator-participants have the option to not commit the requested activity, as the performance is ultimately not about this act, but about their personal relationship to publicly accessible but privately-owned spaces as well as corporate and financial services. Most pertinently, in *Adventure 1,* although Stevens claims that 'the thing about play is that you should never forget

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[193] Josephine Machon, *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and immediacy in contemporary performance, (*Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 202.
[194] Jacques Rancière, Diss*ensus. On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran. (Continuum International, 2010), 47.
[195] Alexi Duggins, "Track a Trader with new interactive show 'Adventure 1," *Time Out.* 12 July 2015. < https://www.timeout.com/london/theatre/track-a-trader-with-new-interactive-show-adventure-1>

what's real and what's play',[196] here he conceptualises the very blurring of these lines alongside those of transgression and consensual, publicly acceptable behaviour. By deliberately challenging the spectator-participants' perception of what is real and what is not, Coney aim to 'get the audience to look anew at the world around them'[197] and reflect on their personal roles and modes of behaviour within this world. For me, *Adventure 1*, was a key case study for my articulation of how dissensus might be facilitated within participatory performance. Quite literally, two worlds collide here in real-life terms as well as on spectator-participants' personal, experiential level. One has to consider that, depending on the demographic of the spectator-participants, this experience of dissensus might well be enhanced even further, which opens up ethical questions. Alexi Duggins is a white, British *Guardian* journalist. How a spectator-participant of the global majority might have felt when partaking in this participatory performance could raise an ethical questioning of what participatory structures are suitable for what types of audiences.

3.2.4 Jeremy Deller *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001)

Jeremy Deller's *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001) was an extended art project about a violent clash between mounted police and the inhabitants of a mining town in 1984 and included an exhibition, a documentary as well as an archive of documentation and recordings of testimonies held with those involved. All these materials were primarily centred around a re-enactment of the battle, staged with invited re-enactment societies as well as former miners. The project has been discussed at length by Claire Bishop, who describes it as the 'epitome of participatory art'.[198] *The Battle of Orgreave* brought 'the middle-class battle re-enactors into direct contact with the working-class miners',[199] facilitating a collision between spectator-participants from different perspectives and worldviews as well as classes, meaning that there was an 'uneasy

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[196] Josephine Machon, *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and immediacy in contemporary performance,* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 200.
[197] Alexi Duggins, "Track a Trader with new interactive show 'Adventure 1," *Time Out.* 12 July 2015. < https://www.timeout.com/london/theatre/track-a-trader-with-new-interactive-show-adventure-1>
[198] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), 30.
[199] Ibid., 33.

convergence between those for whom the repetition of events was traumatic, and those for whom it was stylised and sentimental invocation'.[200] Furthermore, the re-enactment event, recreating and facilitating, for some, the re-living of what was a violent and traumatising event, was staged with an overall festival atmosphere 'more akin to a village fête, with a brass band, children running around, and local stalls selling plant and pies'.[201] The reality surrounding the *magic circle* of the enactment therefore clashed drastically with the tone of the 'battle' activity itself.

The Battle of Orgreave has strongly supported my proposition that dissensus in participatory performance can be compared to experiencing a *collision of worlds* and how facilitating such a collision can be an integral part of an artistic, participatory concept. In line with my usage of the term 'world', here both the environmental and participatory 'worlds' collide; alongside the collision of subjective, personal experiences of the context framing one's own activities as well as those of others.
Deller's work is significant because it provides a collision of different worlds on various levels: direct interaction and negotiation between clearly identified and differing social or cultural groups as seen in *The Battle of Orgreave* work is rarely facilitated in participatory performance. Adam Alston for example has lamented that many participatory performances are visited by like-minded individuals.[202] Dissensus is therefore rarely expressed as a clash between truly differing worldviews or perspectives found within the demographics of the spectator-participants. However, Jeremy Deller involves the inhabitants of the mining town, those who have been affected by the historical event, in the restaging of this event. *The Battle of Orgreave* therefore manages to facilitate a merging between the make-believe world of the re-enactment and the social and political reality of those participating in it. If one assumes that play is separated from reality by a sphere, such as Johan Huizinga's 'magic circle', in *The Battle of Orgreave* this sphere is not broken as such, but instead becomes somewhat translucent, with the historical and social implications of the event being uncomfortably present and in turn, providing an acutely experienced *possibility* for the violent actions of 1984 to be repeated. As Deller himself observed shortly before the

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[200] Ibid., 33.
[201] Ibid., 32.
[202] Adam Alston, "Audience participation and the politics of compromise," presented as part of *Forum on the Art of Participation.* University of Kent, 7 May 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-fSwKyAYRw> (accessed 28 December 2018).

battle commenced: 'it's difficult to say what's going to happen. As you would be in a real situation like this, you'd be a bit excited and a bit worried as well'.[203] Deller for me here describes a somewhat uneasy thrill of the realisation that dissensus is about to emerge, or has already. I will argue that this 'thrill' is often found within participatory performance during which the magic circle that separates the performance space and time from ordinary life is experienced as being translucent, or even breaks down completely. I argue that dissensus emerges, because the moments during which this sphere *changes texture* challenges spectator-participants to reassess their own or others' responsive activities with their extra-ludic individual socio-political reality in mind.

3.2.5 Jamal Harewood *The Privileged* (2014)

Jamal Harewood's *The Privileged* (2014) is an interactive, audience-led performance, which sees Harewood perform himself in a full-size polar bear costume. The performance commences with him feigning sleep, with up to 40 audience members entering the space and sitting on chairs around him. The audience is given numbered envelopes with instructions on how to interact with the "polar bear" in the space, which they may or may not adhere to. Whereas early interactions are playful and include playing simple childhood games with the bear, the instructions increasingly become darker and more invasive in their treatment of the bear. Eventually, the audience's instruction is to remove the costume, revealing Harewood himself, as a black man. The instruction-based structure of the *The Privileged* centres on the question of *how far will audiences go*, whilst playing on 'racial prejudices, stereotypes perpetuated by the media and the privilege that comes with being a participant, or even just a spectator, of systemised oppression'.[204] The marketing of the performance invites spectator-participants' to experience the fearsome polar bear in his natural habitat, and to be 'one of the privileged few to say they have pet, played with, and fed a polar

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[203] As quoted in Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship,* (London: Verso, 2012), 33.
[204] Georgia Grace, "In Conversation with Jamal Harewood," ONCA, <https://onca.org.uk/2017/07/24/in-conversation-with-jamal-harewood/> (Accessed 4 April 2023).

bear'.[205] But as Lyn Gardner describes: 'We can choose, or not, to find out a little more about this apparently fearsome predator. We are given instructions on how to wake him up, how we might pet him and feed him. But as becomes very evident, the polar bear is not a polar bear. He is a young black man. And like the polar bear, young black men are frequently feared and viewed as dangerous by white people'.[206] She goes on to describe how, as the instructions for audiences' actions towards the bear become increasingly suspect and less benign, the atmosphere becomes charged and audiences, by following instructions, become directly implicated in partaking in acts of oppression. In *The Privileged,* the basic participatory structure is simple, as it merely asks spectator-participants to fulfil the instructions received in the envelopes. By doing so, they at times trigger activities in the performer, as in the bear, or in other audience members. But the increasingly questionable nature of the instructions facilitates a confrontation between participants extra-ludic understanding of the activities they are asked to complete. There is a synthesis comparable to dissensus, in that intra-and extra-ludic views and beliefs are being placed in direct confrontation to each other. As Gardner goes on to describe: 'There was a moment that came back to haunt at the performance I saw, when the volunteer charged with reading out the instructions clearly felt uncomfortable about what was being asked but then shrugged and said: "We're only following orders"'.[207]

The Privileged has a reputation for challenging audiences in a way that is 'distressing to watch'[208] but it successfully explores ethical aspects of audience behaviour in participation. I have included it as a case study due to several aspects: first, its inherent questioning of *how far audiences would go* is highly relevant to a discussion of transgression as well as the facilitation of dissensus. As part of my thesis, I have aimed to facilitate moments in which audiences are confronted with their own extra-ludic moral beliefs and worldviews in relation to the demands and contexts of intra-ludic activities. As discussed above, the specificity of transgression, namely its

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[205] Whats On Reading, *The Privileged by Jamal Harewood,* <https://whatsonreading.com/venues/south-street/whats-on/privileged-jamal-harewood> (accessed 4 April 2023).
[206] Lyn Gardner, "Should immersive theatre audiences accept greater responsibility?" The Guardian (12 November 2014), <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2014/nov/12/immersive-theatre-audiences-take-responsibility-bordergame-the-privileged> (Accessed 4 April 2023).
[207] Ibid.
[208] Ibid.

subjective, experiential and contextual nature, means that this performance is likely to elicit multiple and contradictory responses. For some, the fact that these instructions sat in a make-believe-world seemed to naturalise those actions that would be questionable in the extra-ludic world: 'We'd bought tickets, we'd come to see the show: we therefore knew that this wasn't real'.[209] But as Harewood explains: 'there's a really thin line between what is performance and what's real'.[210] Through my thesis, I aim to demonstrate that the thin line Harewood refers to here can be brought about through transgression, and that the experience of dissensus emerges exactly from this thin line, where a separation of real and participatory worlds becomes translucent, ruptured or breaks down completely. Some of the questions raised in *The Privileged* have contributed to my exploration of audience's contribution to and command over creative materials. This was particularly applied in *Trailed*, which involved audiences in making decisions about a character's life. Additionally, the instruction-based mechanics of *The Privileged,* which involves aspects of triggering, are comparable to the explorations found in *Would You #1.*

3.2.6 Charlotte Spencer *Is this a Wasteland?* (2017 and 2021)

Charlotte Spencer is a choreographer, educator and performer working across different artforms but specialises in outdoor performances that see her audience fulfil a set of instructions received via individually worn, binaural headphones. *Is this a Wasteland?* was originally performed in 2017 in Glasgow, but I attended its re-staged version in 2021 at the southern end of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, where it was performed in a large paved and gated space, seemingly forgotten by developers amid shiny new skyscrapers. The central theme of this performance, which is described as an invitation to 're-imagine how we value our landscape, homes and communities',[211] carried particular meaning in 2021, considering that its staging occurred in the aftermath of COVID lockdowns. Audiences were asked to bring along

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[209] Georgia Grace, "In Conversation with Jamal Harewood," ONCA, <https://onca.org.uk/2017/07/24/in-conversation-with-jamal-harewood/> (Accessed 4 April 2023).
[210] Ibid.
[211] Charlotte Spencer Projects, "Is this a Wasteland?" <https://www.charlottespencerprojects.org/projects-1/project-two-b76yn> (accessed 7 August 20240.

and donate unwanted objects to the performance, which were piled up at the entrance of the site, reminiscent of a museum of curiosities or perhaps a flea-market. The performance sees spectator-participant respond to a series of instructions, such as executing simple modes of crossing the space, and by doing so, developing larger choreographic patterns. Eventually spectator-participants start to engage with each other, utilising a vast array of objects of waste, such as ropes, barrels, pipes, cables and large plastic sheets to collaboratively arrange them in designated spaces into weird and wonderful statues. Larger objects are contributed by the performers, who at one point seem to hoist a sail, lifting a huge canvas sheet attached onto metal pipes into the air. The performance is an intriguing mixture of play and playfulness, social connection and distance, with performers and audience groups continuously arranging and dissolving themselves in new spaces and activities. There was a strong sense of enjoyment and playfulness when audiences arrange different objects into precarious but strangely creative heaps of detritus. However, a sense of transgressive spirit emerges in the moment when the performers start to knock down these heaps and humble arrangements, seemingly smashing that which was built of nothing. Immediately afterwards, they encircle most of the audience in a large rope, which everyone, to keep it tight, leans back into 'like a lifeline, unexpectedly flung to and fro'.[212] Whereas it was necessary to lean into the rope to keep it tight, the tension led to a precarious sense of collective instability. A sudden move of individual spectator-participants would be felt by everyone and carry the risk of a collapse of the circle. And yet, it was surprising how often spectator-participants, myself included, pushed into the rope. This activity felt transgressive due to the use of active physical force affecting other members of the participating community, some of which clearly did not fully enjoy the activity, with some even looking scared. The tightness of the rope meant that cause and effect was hard to discern; trying to regain balance via leaning into the rope meant interrupting the balance of neighbouring participants. A clear discernment between transgressor and transgressed-against was therefore not possible. The felt instability was quite a literal experience of the whirlpool from which Caillois's play category "ilinx"

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[212] Maxine Flasher-Duzgunes, "Charlotte Spencer Projects 'Is this a Wasteland' Review," *Dance Art Journal*, <https://danceartjournal.com/2021/09/30/charlotte-spencer-projects-is-this-a-waste-land-review/> (accessed 7 August 2024).

stems,[213] and belongs into the sensation-centric Locomotor play that Stenros has identified as belong to transgressive play.[214] The notable differences in responses that emerged from those spectator-participants I could observe in my vicinity, as well as those I spoke to after the performance, was a very acute example of the experiential and at times discrepant multiplicity that can emerge from the experience of transgression in participatory performance.

3.3 Conclusion

The above performances have guided my PaR approach by offering provocations to my own thinking, for example on the importance of real-life environment, individualised personal communication between performance work and spectator-participant, or the usage of instruction based or triggering participatory structures. They helped me formulate hypothetical propositions, which I appropriated and further explored through my praxis. For example, the potential for the facilitation of transgressive responses in (a)synchronous digital performance realms using personal devices and adjacent performance realms, instruction or game-based activity and the intentional blurring of the separation between extra-and intra-ludic aspects all offered practical methodologies I explored in my own performance work. I will continue to reference these case studies in subsequent chapters, on the one hand to exemplify how they have influenced my creative thinking and practical research endeavour. On the other hand, the context-specific nature of transgression and dissensus means that including examples from case study performances along my own PaR work offers a greater breadth of analysis and critical reflection.

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[213] Caillois, R., & Barash, Meyer, *Man, play, and games* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 23.
[214] Jaakoo Stenros, “Guided by Transgression: Defying Norms as an Integral Part of Play,” in *Transgression in Games and Play,* ed. Kristine Jørgensen and Faltin Karlsen (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018): 13-25.

Chapter 4 – Practice-as-Research (PaR) approach

4.1 Research approach and overview of PaR methodology

This chapter discusses my own practice-as-research approach and introduces the adjacent documentation of my practice, which comes in the form of a PDF. My suggestions on how to best engage with the documentation are offered as part of this chapter, and the reader of this thesis might want to refer to the PDF whilst reading sections 4.5 to 4.5.2 of this chapter. However, a transgressive reader might want to refer to the PDF documentation at the start of this chapter or at any point in between, to gain a sense of the practical instances that have emerged from this research.

My own research activities are aligned to an often-inherent attribute to PaR; namely a subjective, interdisciplinary and multi-modal approach to research methods, which cannot always be pre-determined. Consequentially, any research outcomes are often unpredictable.[215] Of course, participatory performance practice per se is determined by a certain level of unpredictability. Multiple versions of, or variations within the same work unfold, depending on the constellation of audience groups as well as their choices and responses within the indeterminate gaps of the participatory scaffolding. The specific focus within this research, namely the detailed study of moments of transgression and dissensus, and the artistic facilitation of such, enhances such indeterminacy of outcome. Firstly, this is because, as discussed in 'Chapter 1.1.1 – Considerations on Transgression', transgression is experiential and specific to certain people and contexts. Secondly, I argue that dissensus, with its erasure of criteria and separation, can come to the fore in moments of transgression, due to the self-reflective and proprioceptive nature of both. Both provoke a fleeting experience and awareness of *multiple worlds*, or multiple possibilities. Both offer a void in which rules are reconfigured and the *sensible is reconfigured*. Transgression, and dissensus within this context, imply several outcomes for spectator-participants, either within the experiential or within the inter/active realm. The dissemination of my practical instances is therefore partly reliant on a capturing and analysis of these multiple experiences and perspectives inherent in the aftermath of transgressive occurrences.

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[215] Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, eds. *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Inquiry* (New York: L.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010)

An additional problem lies in the fact that, as Aarseth describes, the innovative, subversive and transgressive player is statistically unrepresentative,[216] hence transgressive responses are generally atypical and out of the ordinary. This is certainly true in my PaR experience: as expressed before, my own audience did not always transgress. Nevertheless, transgressive responses are 'a crucial aspect of, and the key to understanding all kinds of play and game culture' and therefore key to understanding participatory performance also.[217]

My practical research was built on several pre-experimental hypotheses, or hunches that presented themselves as possible creative starting points to a practical enquiry about how transgression and dissensus may occur within participatory performance, how it might be experienced and what consequential negotiations might ensue. Examining some of these hypotheses through my practical methodology, synthesising creative methods from game theatre, choreographic practice, installation art as well as game design, led to often unexpected results and highlighted additional avenues for further exploration. Using an intuitive approach meant that often the most unpredictable studio experiments proved to be the richest in terms of new findings. Therefore, the most intriguing insights were extracted subsequent to performance outcomes. It is through my creative practice that theoretical hypotheses were able to be tested, re-evaluated and further investigated. The 'insider perspective' that emerges from being a performer/creator in research instances, informs the articulation of hypothetical propositions through practice. And yet, at times I struggled to combine these two perspectives as the *experience* of transgression was often not my own embodied experience, but that of others. The next section offers an overview of how this conundrum challenges a PaR approach, as well as discussing my own personal challenges in examining transgression within participatory performance.

4.2 PaR and participatory performance

Practice-as-Research as defined by Robin Nelson is research 'in which practice is a key method of inquiry and where, in respect of the arts, a practice is submitted as

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[216] Espen Aarseth, "I Fought the Law: Transgressive Play and the Implied Player," Paper presented at DiGRA Conference, 2007.
[217] Ibid: 132.

substantial evidence of a research inquiry'.[218] He diffuses the romantic but often-used artistic justification of creative choices via instinct and asks practitioner-researchers to locate their practice in a determinate lineage of influences and a conceptual framework, which allows for practical experiences and findings to be critically reflected upon in order to gather new knowledge and substantial insights. Joanne Scott strongly advocates Nelson's model and particularly highlights the 'doing-thinking' that occurred in her PaR research on live intermedial praxis.[219] For her, the real value of Practice-as-Research lies in providing the aforementioned '*insider perspective'* exemplified through coherent evidence of the research process, the research insights as well as the dissemination of these insights.[220]

Robin Nelson's multimodal epistemological model[221] as well as Joanne Scott's insider perspective[222] have been at the heart of my PaR endeavour; however, I have adjusted both to take my reliance on those that partake in my PaR instances in consideration. The 'know-why', which I designated as stepping stone towards a 'know-how', addresses the underlying reasons, motivations and principles that lead to transgression as phenomena. As maker of participatory frameworks, I am reliant on my audience's feedback to discern such underlying reasons, motivations and principles. This shifts the *insider* perspective quite literally to those who find themselves inside these participatory frameworks. I question if practitioners and researchers need to reconsider who exactly carries the embodied knowledge, as this perspective might not always belong to the artist-researcher but instead arises from collaborators, performers or those who experience the work. Furthermore, as part of what Rachel Hann calls the Second Wave Practice Research (PR),[223] a debate about how to best document and capture artistic research processes, so that their value within a knowledge economy might be evidenced appropriately, is ongoing. For Hann,

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[218] Robin Nelson, ed., *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 8-9.
[219] Joanne Scott, *Intermedial Praxis and Practice as Research: 'Doing-Thinking' in Practice* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016)
[220] Joanne Scott, "Practice as Research Submission" (Paper presented at the REF conference at University of Essex, Colchester, 20 November 2011).
[221] Robin Nelson, ed., *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
[222] Joanne Scott, "Practice as Research Submission" (Paper presented at the REF conference at University of Essex, Colchester, 20 November 2011).
[223] Rachel Hann, "Second Wave Practice Research: Questions and ways forward," (Presentation given at Practices and Processes of Practice-Research: Interdisciplinary and Methodological Critique at the Centre for Practice Based Research in the Arts, Canterbury Christ Church University, 1 June 2016).

there needs to be a greater commitment to sustain knowledge claims beyond the timeframe of the individual project and to make knowledge narratives available not just for administrators and panellists but instead also to specialists and non-specialists within and beyond the discipline itself.[224]

Hann's argument led me to question what designates effective and accessible sharing of practice, when such practical insights only partly stem from the author of the practice itself? Special consideration to documentation and knowledge dissemination - or, as Hann puts it, 'sustainment of knowledge narratives' - needs to be given to the research conditions and methodologies of practices in which knowledge production might emerge peripherally to the artist researcher themselves. Participatory performance is one such practice. In aiming to articulate an approach to sustain multiple and conflicting participatory responses and experiences, how can the documentation of praxis represent the multitude of said responses and experiences? This is a concern that not only affects my own research but the artistic practice of participatory performance in general.

Questions about the aesthetic and artistic implications of participative responses as integral material to artistic work are much discussed (see Bourriaud (2002), Bishop (2004, 2006) and Jackson (2011)). Here I want to articulate a dilemma that emerges with recognising the spectator-participant's experience as a fundamental aspect and an aesthetic ingredient of participatory performances.[225] Astrid Breel identifies three central aesthetic aspects relevant to the spectator-participant's experience; these are the interpersonal relationship between the performer and the audience (or between participants), the embodied experience of the participant and the creative contribution the participants make to the final performance. During the completion of this thesis and particularly the documentation of my research praxis, I quickly realised that the experiential layers of both interpersonal relationship as well as the physical, embodied experience of the participant are difficult to capture in more traditional, mono-modal representations such as video recordings or photographs. Often multiple performance outcomes exist, which renders a single video recording even less effective when wanting to capture the nature of the work. This becomes particularly complex in

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[224] Ibid.
[225] Astrid Breel, "Conducting creative agency: the aesthetics and ethics of participatory performance," (PhD diss., University of Kent, 2017).

performance works that run digital channels concurrent to in-the-room action, like my performance of *And Then There Was Only One* (2022). How does a researcher capture all the different activities going on in participatory performance? How does one present these channels simultaneously in a way that re-creates an experience after the fact, particularly if the audience's experience is defined by its multiplicity and diversity? And how does a researcher utilise such incomplete documentation to coherently tease out new insights? The rigorous demands of practice documentation to evidence substantial new knowledge is therefore particularly challenging. A participatory performance researcher needs to consider a range of approaches in order to give a coherent representation of the creative work produced; in fact, it may mean that a visual representation of the work is not suitable, but that audience feedback and reflective descriptions are more effective in giving an account of the practice, particularly the experience of it.

Throughout my research I have employed an extensive audience feedback strategy as part of my performance instances, which includes feedback gathered in work-in-progress sharings, online and printed questionnaires as well after-show discussions, and will use visual representations and images of the audience feedback to document my work and key findings. I propose that any documentation of participatory performance practice needs to concern itself more extensively with ways of capturing the feedback and responses of those who partake in it, performers and members of the public alike. As Scott suggests, the documentation process becomes a 'gathering, curating and editing'[226] of not just the artist researcher's voice, questions and insights, but also those of everyone who has experienced their work. This returns me to my previous proposition: in participatory performance, the new substantial insights emerging from the practice-as-research may not arise in the artist researcher but in and through the experience of spectator-participants or performers of the practice. This means that the concept of crowd understanding is applicable and as such needs to be reflected within the documentation. Furthermore, instead of focusing on the *production* of knowledge (and the conditions of funded PaR research in the UK explicitly expresses the expectation that new knowledge is 'produced'), I somewhat

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[226] Joanne Scott, "Practice as Research Submission" (Paper presented at the REF conference at University of Essex, Colchester, 20 November 2011).

struggle with thinking that my participatory practice becomes '*knowledge-ified'.*[227] Indeterminacy is an integral part of participatory performance, as well as the possibility of transgression within such performances. An essential part of my personal process therefore is to acknowledge that my *research through participatory practice* needs to be understood as 'predicated on incompleteness'.[228] One could understand the knowledge production ensuing from participatory research to be an epistemological structure with indeterminate gaps, to be filled with unique, specific and conditional knowledge-ifying experiences. I have previously mentioned how in this research I need to foreground my '*not-knowing'*. The 'knowing-something' that I disseminate from my praxis are strands of thoughts, practical as well as theoretical suggestions, that emerged from a multitude of experiences, perspectives and artistic endeavours. This means that the insights I offer here can be re-applied in a range of contexts and participatory scenarios. Offering insights that hold a broad scope of application, on both theoretical and practical levels intends to celebrate transgression as well as dissensus and conflicting experiences as valid and valuable participatory response.

4.3 Methodology for audience research

Breel's audience research methodology offered guidance on how to approach audience research in participatory performance. Her approach is conducted over three parts: '1) observing participant behaviour during the performance; 2) gathering audience responses directly afterwards; and 3) conducting a longitudinal memory study'.[229] To that effect, in case study research as well as my own work, I have: 1) analysed the audience behaviour of specific moments; 2) employed a questionnaire in order to gather some initial responses from spectator-participants as well as holding interviews and group discussions with willing participants directly after the show; 3) contacted willing volunteers with further questions via email two weeks after the performances. I was able to test Breel's triadic approach when conducting some

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[227] Simon Ellis, "That Thing Produced," in *A World of Muscle, Bone & Organs: Research and Scholarship in* Dance, edited by S Ellis, H Blades & C Waelde (Coventry: C-DaRE, 2018), 483.
[228] Ibid., 488.
[229] Astrid Breel, "Audience agency in participatory performance: A methodology for examining aesthetic experience," *Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies* v. 12, no.1. (2015): 371.

audience analysis for Exit Productions' *Eco-Chambers*, which also offered an opportunity to experiment with appropriate feedback questions. The resulting feedback was fundamental in the development of early *hunches* or creative speculations. The written testaments of others not only supplemented my own experience of the performance but offered the variety of perspectives I anticipated. Reading into ludic theory further contextualised the audiences' as well as my own experiences and gave rise to further practical as well as theoretical intuitions and hunches. The use of the questionnaire was central to the emergence of these hunches and shaped the subsequent practical experimentation. Feedback questionnaires therefore became a key means for me to gather the audience's experiences and responses to my PaR performances.

Breel's triadic approach to audience research was a valuable starting point but I soon adapted it to my own needs. For example, contacting audience participants some time subsequent to the event was unsuitable for my practical research. This approach in early instances of practice was often laborious and offered little additional information or insight, partly due to a small number of participants responding. Also, producing several smaller instances of practice meant that performances were often presented in a research-focused and informal setting, with a strong emphasis on receiving verbal and written feedback directly after the performance. As my research does not concern itself with a longitudinal memory study or aims to analyse lingering effects of transgression, the final part of Breel's approach was omitted from my methodology. Also, Breel's focus on observing participant behaviour during the performance is suitable for the researcher that is not also performing or contributing to the performance herself. Performing in *And Then There Was Only One* as well as in *Trailed* meant that I found myself entirely unable to pay close attention to audience behaviour in the room. Subsequent analysis of the performance therefore came to rely more heavily on visual recordings as well as verbal testaments of spectator-participants. In analysing video recordings, I relied on reading physical behaviour, facial expressions and micro-gestures, at times being able to compare specific moments captured on the camera with informal verbal feedback offered by the relevant spectator-participants.

Overall, my feedback questionnaires[230] were designed to gain insight into the spectator-participant's experience of specific aspects of the performance as well as gather a sense of personal key moments within the work. Some of the questions therefore relate to specific activities and offer a multiple-choice answer to capture easily readable data. More general questions offered space to feedback in long-form, encouraging the respondent to articulate their personal experience. In each performance spectator-participants were asked to indicate their age band as well as rating their familiarity with participatory performance. This aimed to gather data to assess how age or previous experience affects spectator-participants' responses. Overall, the questionnaires allowed me to gather audience's feedback in relation to the key concerns and propositions that shaped each work. The questionnaires also allowed the gathering of multiple subjective descriptions, giving insight into the experiential but whereas each individual experience offers valuable insight, it is the patterns, connections and contradictions from the multiplicity of responses where the most interesting insights emerged. Most of my performances saw my audience completing the performance questionnaire immediately after the performance, before engaging in a longer conversation to further deliberate and contemplate on the work. This means that my audience research will be documented primarily summarising extracts of the questionnaires, videos and images captured during the performance and audio recordings from post-show discussions.

The feedback process conducted during my performance instances was also largely influenced by the conventions of the performance venue. Most of my performances were developed and presented at Space Clarence Mews, in East London. This large studio space is attached to the family home of Caroline Salem, who hosts a range of creative residencies to support independent performance makers in the development of new work. During these residencies, a group of artists have access to the studio space for a designated timespan and gather regularly to share their practice, aiming to offer a supportive network, in which they can take artistic risks in a safe environment. Partaking in these residencies allowed me to discuss creative intentions, test participatory experimentation and receive feedback on any aspects of the work. A disadvantage of creating my work in Clarence Mews was that the

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[230] For all feedback questionnaires of performances, please refer to the Appendix.

supportive environment of the residencies at times worked against my central investigation into transgression and dissensus and some of the audience responses were most likely affected by the fact that many members in the audience were known to each other. Additionally, many members were familiar with artistic conventions and/or participatory performance and therefore able to contribute with confidence. And finally, work-in-progress sharings and performances at Clarence Mews tended to have a relaxed, casual atmosphere, with audiences gathering in the garden or kitchen before and after the show, which contributes to a generous and supportive atmosphere.

4.4 Brief introduction to PaR performance outcomes

I have produced, performed in, directed, and choreographed five research performances. They are *Balloons* (2019), *Would You #1* (2019), *WEB* (2020), *And Then There Was Only One* (2022) and *Trailed* (2023). These performances should be looked at as standalone instances of a participatory practice that aims to facilitate a multitude of experiences and responses, including transgressive ones. Whilst each performance is built on the insights of previous experiments, they equally address distinct concerns and hypothetical propositions The artistic and creative methodology was adapted according to the objective of the work. Additionally, whereas *Would You #1* and *WEB* are choreographic and movement-based explorations, *And Then There Was Only One* as well as *Trailed* are scripted works which utilise more theatrical methods. My own artistic practice draws from my own life and my personal experiences, and autobiographical elements are appearing most notably in *Balloons* and *And Then There Was Only One*.

Further information on the layout of the documentation is given below. A more in-depth discussion of the works and their theoretical underpinnings are given in ‘Chapter 5 – Practice-as-Research Performance’, where I offer a more detailed examination of the creative methodology employed, as well as further framing hypotheses with the most pertinent theoretical contexts. Additionally, I will signpost to articulations of original knowledge and insights emerging from my praxis, which are scattered through Chapter 6, 7 and 8 of the thesis.

4.5. Documentation of practical work

Theatre and performance scholar Adam J. Ledger states that there is a threefold dynamic to documentation of practice research methods: 'it interacts with and is part of the processes of practice; the primary documentation strategies must reflect the issues, not necessarily the form, of the research; and documentation can be shaped into a means of communicating practice to interested parties'.[231] A documentation needs to be concerned with the 'articulation of practitioners' questions and processes of working'[232]. However, as discussed above, this articulation can be complex when those questions and processes are of an experiential nature and often emerge subsequent to the creative practice and through the responses of participants and performers rather than the makers of the practice itself. The subjective and context-dependent nature of transgression makes it pertinent to represent multiple voices and perspectives from those who have executed and/or experienced a transgressive activity. Furthermore, a main consideration within my research is *how* I *align* my documentation of practice to the qualities and main concerns of the practice itself. For me, this includes the form; it seems pertinent that, particularly in a practice where an audience's experience is part of the aesthetic of the work, a documentation process also needs to concern itself with the experience of the reader/user of said documentation. In an ideal world, I would aspire for my documentation to allow a reader/user to experience a sense of participating in or transgressing against what the documentation offers. Early propositions for my documentation therefore included submitting an interactive webpage adjacent to my written thesis, with space for audiences to contribute to or manipulate writing offered by the author. Working from an interdisciplinary practice means that I have an ambition to document the practice, captured audience responses and ensuing insights creatively. In order for my documentation to remain 'specific' and 'located'[233] to my personal artistic practice, neither an *integral* collection of rehearsal notes, feedback questionnaires or transcripts nor an *external* transmission of videos and photographs feels fully satisfactory for the

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[231] Adam J. Ledger with Simon K. Ellis and Fiona Wright "The question of Documentation: Creative Strategies in Performance Research," in *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance*, ed. Baz Kershaw and Helen Nicholson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 183.
[232] Ibid, 163.
[233] Joanne Scott, "Practice as Research Submission" (Paper presented at the REF conference at University of Essex, Colchester, 20 November 2011).

participatory practice I am investigating.[234] Nevertheless, I understand that in regards to the requirements of academic study it is important to navigate wider public engagement with practice research with the exam requirements that the work is not continued beyond the given submission date. Therefore, I am submitting a documentation in a PDF portfolio, which outlines the performance instances in chronological order and exists adjacent but in dialogue with the main written thesis.

4.5.1 Aim and purpose of documentation of practice

The aim of the PDF documentation is to present all of the research performances I have conducted during this study. The document aims to give easy access to the practical elements of this research and its performance outcomes. It therefore will outline key hypotheses and PaR objectives and offer a short contextualisation of the overall inquiry. This is intended to function as standalone evidence, adding to the conceptualisations found within this thesis. For each performance, the document will focus on pertinent aspects of the work; at times they will include a synopsis of the work, to guide the reader more through the progression of the performative materials, focusing on the creative and logistic materials within the *where*, *what*, *why, with whom* and *when* of these instances of practice. The documentation aims to gather the creative thinking that emerged during the research and does so by sharing some of the many sketchbook entries and scribbles collected during the creative process. Each performance is accompanied by a QR code which provides a link to a web-based video recording of the entirety of the performance. This means that the reader can watch the performance on a mobile phone whilst reading the thesis on another device. This approach is replicated in subsequent, where QR codes link to shorter videos pertinent to insights or specific moments of practice, accompanied with a more detailed discussion about key aspects of the work. It is advised that a reader of the thesis familiarises themselves with the PDF documentation before reading 'Chapter 5 – Practice as Research performances' to gain a sense of the format and creative materials applied in the performances. Whilst reading Chapter 5, it is advisable to

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[234] Angela Piccini, "An historiographic perspective on Practice as Research," *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, 23, no. 3 (2004): 191-207.
https://doi.org/10.1386/stap.23.3.191/3

move between PDF and commentary in thesis for each performance, in order to bring the reflections into close dialogue with the documentation.

Chapter 5 – Practice as Research performances

5.1 Introduction to PaR Performances

In my practice as research study, extensive engagement with theoretical readings and analysis of case studies have stipulated practical explorations to investigate transgression in participatory performance, the possible emergence of dissensus and ensuing negotiations of compromise. Outcomes of these practical explorations have led to a retheorisation of certain aspects but have also given rise to what might be called a practical toolbox; insights or provocations for future makers of participatory performance.

This chapter will discuss the most pertinent practical considerations behind each performance instance to evidence how creative choices were designed to address research aims or hunches. These will be evaluated in line with audience feedback. The articulations below consolidate my own artistic and analytical observations with spectators' comments and provocations received via the feedback questionnaires. By now, the reader of this thesis should have familiarised themselves with the performances via the PDF Documentation. Where considered necessary, in-text references to the PDF will be made to underline a particular observation and to develop a dialogue between the thesis and the documentation.

5.2 *Balloons* (2019)

Balloons emerged from a month-long research residency at the Clarence Mews studio space in London and was presented in an informal sharing on the 7 April 2019. The performance was designed to explore the following aspects from my early research:

- *The relationship between transgression and play*
- *Autotelic experience as contributor for the emergence of transgressive responses*
- *Facilitation of autonomous audience activity.*
- *Facilitating variations in audience experience*

The performance was an experiment in facilitating transgressive participation in a performance without performers, conceptualising the somewhat innocent transgressive act of popping balloons deliberately. For the full script of *Balloons*, please see Appendix 3 – *Balloons* Script. For creative supporting materials, including a link to a video recording, please refer to the PDF Documentation p.8-20. For audience feedback surveys, please refer to Appendix 3.1 – *Balloons* Audience Feedback - 7 April 2019. To see a list of suggested reading of insights and proposition emerging from *Balloons*, please see the PDF Documentation p.21.

Fig.5: *Balloons* (2019): Performance video screen shot. Audience members are playing with balloons in a pretend children's birthday party.

5.2.1 Considerations for practical methods applied for *Balloons*

Balloons was developed as part of a month-long artist residency at Clarence Mews, London, in March 2019. An original starting point, or hunch for this performance was a desire to explore the facilitation of intrinsic motivation in spectator-participants and analyse if any resulting autotelic experience leads to transgressive responses. I have previously hypothesised that such autotelic experience can lead to loss of reflective self-consciousness and perhaps lead to transgressive responses. To reduce extrinsic

influences, I decided to lead the audience through the performance via audio instructions. *Balloons* aimed to facilitate the audience with an opportunity for energy-release similar to the one found in so-called rough and tumble behaviour in children (please refer to PDF Documentation, p.10). The idea for the balloons as well as the overall structure for the performance was inspired by my own personal circumstances: I was indeed unable to focus well whilst working in the studio, as my son Noah turned two on the 27th of April 2019; he is scared of balloons due to one popping on his 1st birthday party.

A closer reading of the written and verbal feedback received after the performance gives useful insight about effective aspects of the performance, which I will summarise here. The majority of the spectator-participants felt that the performance successfully navigated spectator-participants through a range of physical and emotional states, with one member of the audience stating that she 'found it fascinating how it went from a very calm breathing exercise when the participation bit started to a genuine festive / dance mood – in a very natural way'.[235] In discussion after the performance, many members of the audience commented that the party section of playing with the balloons felt natural and that they didn't consider themselves coerced into doing the activity. This was generally attributed to the music playing, with one participant saying: 'when the music came on, I wanted to dance like I was at a party so I did'.[236]

The moment the party hats emerged from the window was mentioned several times, as it indicated a clear shift in the mood of the performance and provided a clearer sense of roleplay. One feedback questionnaire states: 'it was quite silly seeing everyone with party hats on in this 'fake' birthday party – it was so strange and comical and added something very rich to the participatory element'.[237] Many of the spectator-participants highlighted the arrival of the pins and the subsequent popping of the balloons as the most pivotal points in the performance. The moment when the pins are lowered into the space was marked by a drastic change of mood within the studio. This was underlined by the fact that the music paused and instead, a whispered 'oh-oh' was heard from the recorded voice. Not all spectator-participants were involved in distributing the pins, but instead choose to observe. In feedback, some spectator-

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[235] Questionnaire *B Q 7/4/19 - 15*, in Appendix 3.1 – *Balloons* Audience Feedback – 7 April 2019.
[236] Questionnaire *B Q 7/4/19 - 6*, Appendix 3.1 – *Balloons* Audience Feedback – 7 April 2019.
[237] Questionnaire *B Q 7/4/19 - 1*, Appendix 3.1 – *Balloons* Audience Feedback – 7 April 2019.

participants explained how they made a clear decision not to pop the balloons for various reasons, such as 'I hate the sound'.[238] Others did not get a chance to do so, as 'there weren't enough pins.'[239] Others however expressed surprise at how much they enjoyed the activity: 'Yes I enjoyed it. Usually I'm scared of balloons because they might pop suddenly, but with the pin I felt I was in control'.[240] The intention of facilitating an energy-release similar to that associated with rough and tumble play in children seems to have been realised, as one spectator-participant states that popping balloons allowed them to 'let out some inner frustration'.[241] The realisation that the popping of the balloon equated to a transgressive act, although there was a performative invitation to do it was recognised by the spectator-participants. One member of the audience clearly questioned her own enjoyment of popping balloon: 'yes I enjoyed it – don't know why. Moment of childish rebellion?'.[242]

The act of popping the balloons facilitated an emergence of multiple experiences within the participating community. As predicted, not all spectator-participants enjoyed the popping of the balloons, whereas others were surprised by how much they enjoyed it, forgetting the given context of a children's birthday party completely. Audience feedback indicates that the popping of balloons, which was described as a 'popping frenzy',[243] was successful in distributing the sensible by colliding several opposing experiential perspectives. In Chapter 1.1.3, I described how dissensus in the context of transgression should be looked at as a fleeting experience and awareness of multiple worlds and possibilities, caused by a distribution of the sensible.[244] The balloon-popping scene in *Balloons* is a practical example of this phenomena. The popping of the balloons was over in less than half a minute, but there was a moment of silent reflection after, in which spectator-participants became aware of each other. For those who chose to pop balloons, this led to a reassessment of their participatory activity. One spectator-participant mentioned: 'I did enjoy it (popping the balloons). I then felt guilty',[245] whereas another said: 'I enjoyed it until I realised that some people

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[238] Questionnaire *B Q 7/4/19 - 6*, Appendix 3.1 – *Balloons* Audience Feedback – 7 April 2019.
[239] Questionnaire *B Q 7/4/19 - 2*, Appendix 3.1 – *Balloons* Audience Feedback – 7 April 2019.
[240] Questionnaire *B Q 7/4/19 - 19*, Appendix 3.1 – *Balloons* Audience Feedback – 7 April 2019.
[241] Questionnaire *B Q 7/4/19 - 21*, Appendix 3.1 – *Balloons* Audience Feedback – 7 April 2019.
[242] Questionnaire *B Q 7/4/19 - 7*, Appendix 3.1 – *Balloons* Audience Feedback – 7 April 2019.
[243] Questionnaire *B Q 7/4/19 - 17*, Appendix 3.1 – *Balloons* Audience Feedback – 7 April 2019.
[244] Jacques Rancière, Diss*ensus. On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran. (Continuum International, 2010).
[245] Questionnaire *B Q 7/4/19 – 13,* Appendix 3.1 – *Balloons* Audience Feedback – 7 April 2019.

were feeling discomfort/trauma and then I felt a bit bad for contributing to that'.[246] Of course, this reframing of the activity was conceptualised in the performance structure, as the performance ends with the revelation that Noah, my son, is in fact petrified of balloons due to an incident at his first birthday party. This aimed to further enhance self-reflection and reassessing of one's own contribution and positioning towards the activity. As one spectator-participant states: 'I felt sad at the end in learning about Noah's fear of balloons. Others in the space seemed a little scared in the popping moment, too'.[247]

Balloons seems to have succeeded in framing transgression as emerging from play, with the activity of popping balloons effectively manifesting opposing experiential perspectives. Interestingly, not everyone who popped the balloons automatically enjoyed the activity, whereas not every onlooker disliked the popping, with one stating: 'I enjoyed seeing others pop the balloons and how they reacted to it'.[248] The variation in audience feedback underlines my contention that transgression in performance can enhance a multiplicity of experiences. Additionally, I feel that *Balloons* exemplified the creative and potentially transformative nature of transgression, since the mood as well as the body language in some of the spectator-participants drastically changed after the balloons were popped. The physical responses of some spectator-participant therefore strongly affected the atmosphere or aesthetic in the room. Furthermore, the popping event included the establishment of sub-groups within the participating community. The aftermath of the activity included a negotiation of these subgroups as well as one's own positioning within the participating community. The creation of sub-groups through added participatory instructions or activities and how these affect spectator-participants' individual responses to transgressive acts emerged from this performance as a potent line of inquiry and has been further explored in subsequent performances, for example in *Trailed*.

Balloons provided the starting point of my inquiry into sub-groups within the participating community and aided my articulations in 'Chapter 7 – Spectator-participants and the participating community'. Additionally, the feedback questionnaire's uncovered aspects or activities of the performance that seemed

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[246] Questionnaire *B Q 7/4/19 - 10*, Appendix 3.1 – *Balloons* Audience Feedback – 7 April 2019.
[247] Questionnaire *B Q 7/4/19 - 3*, Appendix 3.1 – *Balloons* Audience Feedback – 7 April 2019.
[248] Questionnaire *B Q 7/4/19 - 2*, Appendix 3.1 – *Balloons* Audience Feedback – 7 April 2019.

particularly effective. These elements were repeatedly commented upon. For example, how the choice of a fast-paced rock'n'roll song by The Beatles supported the party atmosphere. These comments have directly contributed to my suggestions in *Chapter 6.2*.

5.3 Would You #1 (2019)

Fig. 6: Would You (2019): Performance Flyer

Would You #1 has been developed at Clarence Mews Space London over a 10-week residence program. The performance aimed to explore a range of hypothetical practice propositions in relation to the phenomenological aspects of transgression in participatory performance. Key objectives for the performance included:

- Developing the use of creative primers within the performance setting: for example, interactive programme notes in order to inform and influence response (inspired by para-text of game magazines)
- Using items which may or may not observe a purpose, to invite possibly transgressive responses
- Offering allowances and prohibitions ('please do not touch the soft toy balls')

For an example of the interactive performance booklet, see Appendix 4 - *Would you #1* performance booklet example. For creative supporting materials, including a link to

a video recording, please refer to the PDF Documentation p.25-39. For audience feedback surveys, please refer to Appendix 4.1 – *Would You #1* Audience Feedback. To see a list of suggested reading of insights and proposition emerging from *Would You #1*, please see the PDF Documentation p. 40.

5.3.1 Considerations for practical methods applied for *Would You #1:*

Would You #1 was designed to test a range of identified propositions or *hunches*, drawn from theoretical reading, case study analysis as well as the feedback from *Balloons.* In retrospect, I realise that *Would You #1* was primarily inspired by an exploration of triggering activities as a participatory performance method. This was twofold: whereas the audience was able to trigger certain activities in the performer, I as author intended to trigger particular responses in the audience in return, via creative primers. *Priming* was first conceptualised by psychologist Karl Lashey and describes a process in which the possibility of certain behavioural responses is increased via external influences or stimuli. In my performance, priming occurred via an interactive performance booklet, designed differently for two different audience groups. The two booklets contained different direct address notes from the performer that were designed to differentiate the triggered responses of the performer in Act 2. I questioned if reading the letter would prime spectator-participants' usage of the triggering commands within this Act. Generally, the direct address employed throughout the booklet aimed to communicate to the individual spectator-participant on a personal level in order to encourage as well as (gently) coerce particular participatory responses. Additionally, the two group leaders at times have different instructions to the rest of the group.

The performance aimed to explore the hierarchical structures that might ensue within participatory performance, between performer and spectator-participants as well as amongst spectator-participants themselves. This interest was partly developed by a recognition that in *Balloons*, due to there being no performer present, a hierarchical structure somewhat seemed to emerge within the act of distributing popping pins or popping balloons, which is exemplified by a spectator-participant's

comment that this activity made her 'feel in control'.[249] I was therefore interested if triggering activities would allow a reversal of the conventional hierarchical structure in participatory performance, in which artists or performers, who have created the work, are manipulating an audience's action.[250] In experimental workshops held alongside and after the performance of *Would You #1*, this hierarchical reversal seemed to successfully occur, such as in a research workshop exploring triggering in theatre improvisation exercises, where participants revelled in interrupting the acting of their peers with triggered activities such as sneezes or yawns.[251] In hindsight, it is clear that various ingredients to *Would You* #1 hindered a more in-depth exploration of hierarchical structures but instead gave rise to a strong sense of collaboration and consideration. In a similar vein, no markedly transgressive participatory responses occurred. Audience feedback received after the performance stated that the music track playing for most of the performance provided a gentle and soothing backdrop, which supported a strong atmosphere of empathy and care towards the performer, with one member of the audience stating that 'the music strongly influenced the mood'.[252] The performer's solitary position appears to have supported this empathy and care, and, somewhat unintentionally, was further underlined within the direct address letter in the instructive performance booklet. For example, the letter stated that '*I haven't left this room for a while'* and '*Don't be shy, we will be ok'*[253] and therefore painted an image of a possibly vulnerable character, deserving sympathetic rather than provocative or explorative participation. As one member of the audience remarked, the letter 'made me feel I understood her and the motivation behind her movement', pointing to an enhanced level of empathy.[254] The use of the space may also have contributed to this atmosphere of care and empathy, as, with the audience watching the performer, Makiko Aoyama, from a window above the studio, a hierarchical structure was established spatially, with the audience (literally) of higher

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[249] Questionnaire *B Q 7/4/19 - 19*, Appendix 4.1 –*Would You #1* Audience feedback – 14 December 2019.
[250] Astrid Breel. "Conducting creative agency: the aesthetics and ethics of participatory performance." (PhD diss., University of Kent, 2017): 96.
[251] Please refer to *Chapter 6.3.4 – Triggering.*
[252] Questionnaire *WY 14/12/19-2*, Appendix 4.1 –*Would You #1* Audience Feedback – 14 December 2019.
[253] Please refer to Appendix 4 - *Would You #1 performance booklet example*
[254] Questionnaire *WY Q 14/12/19 - 1*, Appendix 4.1 –*Would You #1* Audience Feedback – 14 December 2019.

status than the performer. In audience feedback after the performance, it became clear that spectator-participants felt inhibited to further exert power over the performer; instead, one member of the audience reiterated that having received the letter as initial contact to the performer made her feel like the performer 'was talking to me so I felt closer to her'.[255] The early established sense of empathy and care no doubt also influenced spectator-participants' use of the available triggering commands of Act 2. As explained, I aimed to observe if spectator-participants, primed by the direct-address letters, would use the commands with a specific intention in mind. For example, would the angrier letter bring audiences to trigger bigger and more aggressive responses, such as the verbal command 5, which elicits a piercing scream in the performer? In retrospect it became clear that the tone of the opening scene seems to have suppressed a more purposeful or even transgressive use of the trigger activities. As stated in one of the performance feedback questionnaires: 'I was tempted to repeat 5 to make her scream, but it felt cruel',[256] whereas another said that the letter caused her to be 'encouraging to Makiko',[257] rather than wanting to repeatedly make her scream.

The caring and careful attitude towards Aoyama prevailed until Act 3. In this Act, a clear shift of mood was detectable, which upon further analysis seemed to occur through following changes to the performance space: the gentle music track was stopped; the audience members were free to find their own triggering activities through vocal triggering such as humming, whispering or singing (which lead to a lovely rendition of *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer)*; Aoyama's performance mode changed as she stopped performing a predetermined dance sequence but commenced to improvise and engage with individual spectator-participants. At this point, Aoyama also started to throw soft play balls into the space. The action of throwing out the balls was one specifically mentioned in the performance feedback as the moment *most vividly remembered,* due to its indication of a widening of the horizon of participation, meaning the range of participatory possibilities. As one spectator-

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[255] Questionnaire *WY Q 14/12/19 - 9*, Appendix 4.1 –*Would You #1* Audience Feedback – 14 December 2019.
[256] Questionnaire *WY Q 14/12/19 - 1*, Appendix 4.1 –*Would You #1* Audience Feedback – 14 December 2019.
[257] Questionnaire *WY Q 14/12/19 - 5*, Appendix 4.1 –*Would You #1* Audience Feedback – 14 December 2019.

participant commented: 'when the balls first came out I wanted to pick them up and throw them around, but I wasn't sure if I was allowed'.[258] The perception of participatory possibilities was further enhanced when a range of musical toys and props were distributed in the space, and spectator-participants were encouraged to trigger Aoyama with the sounds these items produce. The innocent nature of some of the items (such as a mini piano or ukulele) encouraged an almost immediate engagement and a very noisy result, which was described by one member of the audience as 'chaotic fun'.[259] In this activity, attention shifted away from Aoyama as sole performer, but instead spectator-participants began to observe and respond to each other. For one, the moment most vividly remembered included: 'looking at Dee's father play the piano flute'.[260] Others highlighted the 'communal and playful'[261] experience that emerged through playing the musical toys and instruments, observing that 'when we were playing the instruments, we were playful with each other'.[262]

In retrospect, I believe that *Would You #1*, like *Balloons* managed to facilitate some genuine playful activity, which is affirmed by the feedback that, particularly the musical toys and instrument section felt 'like childhood in an adult realm'.[263] However, the tone of the performance was unsuitable for the emergence of truly transgressive responses, as even the disharmonious producing of noise and sounds was strongly preconceived by the range of toys available playing to the audience. The final section, in which the audience reads a letter back to Aoyama, evidenced yet again a high level of care and empathy towards the performer.

A final note needs to acknowledge the demographics of the audience present; on the same evening, a dance research piece was performed with a large cast. The performers of that work, their friends and family participated during my performance, and in feedback questionnaires it was indicated that all spectator-participants were

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[258] Questionnaire *WY Q 14/12/19 - 12*, Appendix 4.1 –*Would You #1* Audience Feedback – 14 December 2019.
[259] Questionnaire *WY Q 14/12/19 - 4*, Appendix 4.1 –*Would You #1* Audience Feedback – 14 December 2019.
[260] Questionnaire *WY Q 14/12/19 - 3*, Appendix 4.1 –*Would You #1* Audience Feedback – 14 December 2019.
[261] Questionnaire *WY Q 14/12/19 - 1*, Appendix 4.1 –*Would You #1* Audience Feedback – 14 December 2019.
[262] Questionnaire *WY Q 14/12/19 - 12*, Appendix 4.1 –*Would You #1* Audience Feedback – 14 December 2019.
[263] Questionnaire *WY Q 14/12/19 - 3*, Appendix 4.1 –*Would You #1* Audience Feedback – 14 December 2019.

comfortable and familiar with participatory performance, apart from one. This person was the only one who answered yes to the question '*did you break any rules?'.* His/her answer was 'maybe not participating enough'.[264] For me, this is a clear indication that *non-participation* can be perceived as being transgressive by non-participating spectator-participants, and that a participatory community of a certain make-up can unconsciously create pressure to participate to a certain degree, which will be discussed further in 'Chapter 7.2 - Coming together – the communal experience in participatory performance'.

5.4 *W E B* (2020)

The performance of *W E B* was cancelled due to the COViD-19 lockdown in March 2020. Sadly, I was unable to restage the performance; a wall-height netting of thick twine, which was an integral prop to the work, became damaged when dismantled from the studio wall, and my performer became unavailable for the foreseeable future. The performance was an intended investigation into spatial transgression; audiences, by spinning twine through a studio space, affect, manipulate and restrict a performers' (and eventually their own) movements and pathways. Key objectives for the performance included:

- Exploration of physical and spatial transgression
- Facilitating playful collaboration between audiences in the use of objects and twine
- Spatial construction and obstructing of pre-conceived movement material
- Play, competition and power structures

Whereas pages 45 – 50 in the PDF *Documentation* pertains to the creative process behind *W E B*, I here would like to briefly discuss an adjacent workshop, which laid the foundation to the creative concept behind *W E B*. The workshop was held at Clarence Mews Studio in January 2020 and consisted of a simple game in two parts. Two groups

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[264] Questionnaire *WY Q 14/12/19 - 5*, Appendix 4.1 –*Would You #1* Audience Feedback – 14 December 2019.

were given a bundle of string each and handed over two envelopes with a simple objective. One group received the objective “divide the space” whereas the other received the objective “conquer the space”. No further instructions apart of a time limit of 5minutes were given.

Fig.7: *W E B* (2020): String-Scissor-Tape workshop exercise. In this video, participants explore the use of string, a pair of scissors and masking tape to construct and obstruct the space

The separate groups collaborated instantly to pull the spin the string across the space, finding objects and fittings in the space to connect the string to. Priming the audience was once again an objective: I questioned if the word *conquer* provokes a more competitive and transgressive play attitude during the game. Interestingly, the opposite occurred: the group that “conquered” did so by constructing their own separate space, using the twine to set a boundary between themselves and the others; those who “divided” the space did so with little regard as to the positioning of the other group, at one point pulling a loose hammock across the middle of the studio, clearly transgressing some of the spatial boundaries erected by the other group. In the second part of the game, groups were given an “aid”; decided via the “rock, paper, scissor” game, the “conquering” group received a pair of scissors, the “dividing” group received a roll of masking tape. This added ingredient raised the stakes immediately, with the two groups now noticeably working *against* each other. The spectator-participant with the pair of scissors for example snipped through the string arranged across the space by the opposing group, whereas the “divide” group at one point tried to tape members of the “conquer” group together. Overall, the exercise descended into playful silliness,

with string, tape and scissors used as tools to interact, (de)construct the space as well as hindering each other's pathway.

When analysing this game, one needs to take into consideration the following: all spectator-participants knew each other and therefore felt confident to contribute and display playful-transgressive behaviour towards each other. Additionally, the competitive element was enhanced by repeated reminders that there will be a winner. The given time limit, with a fast-paced metronome sound, enhanced a sense of urgency. Spectator-participants commented in verbal feedback that the competitive as well as the time-pressure and fast-paced rhythm led to a more reckless behaviour, for example when trying to tape members of the opposing group to each other, resulting with one spectator-participant having tape stuck to her long hair. The workshop therefore in part confirmed two theoretically articulated hunches: first, that competition can led to transgressive behaviour due to a desire to win, which was explored further in *Trailed*.[265] Second, that kinetic or physical action, particularly those executed under a sense of urgency, can led to pre-noetic transgressive behaviour.[266] Additionally, spectator-participants explained how in the second part of the game, the focus shifted on destroying the spatial constructions of the first. In retrospect, the playful construction of the space and a subsequent deconstruction is reminiscent of some of the methodologies employed in Charlotte Spencer's *Is this a Wasteland?* (discussed in 'Chapter 3.2.6') during which spectator-participants gathered waste objects to construct strange piles or statues of debris, only for them to be broken apart moments later. In both performances, this act of breaking or deconstructing something that has been collaboratively built, seemed a transgressive act. Also in both performances, whereas the act of building and constructing something together provided a sense of connection and community, the opposite, a collaborative deconstruction or destruction, equally seemed to bond spectator-participants and provided a sense of pleasurable satisfaction, pointing to the fact that transgression can indeed be an autotelic activity.

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[265] Please refer to 'Chapter 6.3.2 – Competition and contests'.
[266] Please refer to 'Chapter 2.2.2 – Affordances'.

5.5 And Then There Was Only One (2022)

And Then There Was Only One was designed to explore digital (a)synchronous performance realms in conjunction with live performance in a shared space. Key objectives and research questions for this performance included:

- How can the use of social networks in participatory performance enhance the sense of community, collaboration and contagion within a spectator-participant group or groupings?
- How might an adjacent digital realm be employed to foster transgressive responsivity?
- How does the use of a digital realm affect the experience of the phenomenological aspects of agency, affordance, flow and frame?
  How can a (a)synchronous participatory performance space facilitate the emergence of dissensus?

For the full script of *And Then There Was Only One*, please see Appendix 5 – *And Then There Was Only One* Script. For creative supporting materials, including a link to a video recording, please refer to the PDF Documentation p.51-67. For audience feedback surveys, please refer to Appendix *5.1* and *5.2*. To see a list of suggested reading of insights and proposition emerging from ATTWOO, please see the PDF Documentation p.68.

And Then There Was Only One (ATTWOO) was an abstract, scripted performance, which I wrote and developed for myself as a performer. Manipulating my own physicality as well as autobiographical elements to develop the character of the lecturer, or "Speaker", aimed to blur the line between what is real and what is not (please refer to PDF Documentation, p. 67). This is enhanced by the audience taking on the role of students; it was performed at the university where I teach to many of my students, who found themselves inhabiting a role they play in real life. Additionally, exploring the use of a digital, online space as creative, a(synchronous) and adjacent performance space offered many insights and lines of inquiries.

For a discussion of ATWOO it is important to clarify the use of the term '(a)synchronous'. I merge synchronous and asynchronous because although *ATTWOO* is presented in a space shared by performer and spectator-participants, a large part of the performance occurs simultaneously on WhatsApp, experienced via spectators' personal mobile phone devices. A spectator may access WhatsApp synchronously to the performance and respond to incoming messages in real-time, or look and respond to them with some delay. In fact, as the following text will evidence, some spectator-participants missed or chose to opt out of the WhatsApp space altogether, instead reading through the chat after the performance was completed. Additionally, a character from the performance sends a final message two hours after the performance, long after everyone has exited the previously shared space. WhatsApp can function as both synchronous and asynchronous communication, both of which offer variations in the experience of not just the work but also of agency, affordance, flow and frame. Using social media as an adjacent and potentially non-synchronous performance space, enhances an awareness of this doubled function of WhatsApp and in my opinion may foster a self-reflection on one's personal use of and engagement with such digital communication. It is worth pointing out that these two realms will strongly influence how individual spectator-participants have experienced the performance instances of *ATTWOO* and offers some autonomy in *how* spectator-participants progress through the work. Additionally, spectators' relationship to me will further affect their experience of the materials as well as put their contributions on the chat in a precarious position. All in all, *ATTWOO* provided rich trails for thought and further investigation, articulations of which are scattered across the remaining chapters. I here want to focus my discussion on the chosen format of lecture performance and the use of WhatsApp as an (a)synchronous performance realm.

5.5.1 Considerations for practical methods applied for *And Then There Was Only One*

ATTWOO was presented in a lecture-style performance format. This served several purposes: first, it was inspired by my own experience of how student cohorts use WhatsApp groups for ease of communication between and amongst themselves. Second, it allowed me to attempt to blur the lines between fiction and reality, essentially

being a lecturer playing a lecturer, whilst performing to my students who, within the performance, act as students. I was directly inspired by sociologist Erving Goffman's *Frame Analysis* and his articulations on how people extract meaning from interactions and experiences.[267] As discussed in 'Chapter 2.2.3 – Frame', the premise of Goffman's theory is that we frame our activities and experiences in order to make sense of what's going on, with two primary frames, a natural and a social one, determining our basic understanding of the world. Whereas in the natural frame we understand events to occur beyond human control and/or interference, in the social one we consider the 'choices and efforts of other social beings such as ourselves'.[268] Of particular interest for my own research however was Goffman's concept of a *keyed* frame,[269] which allows subjects to be aware that 'their actions occur in a fictional context and are just outside of everyday life'.[270] In *ATTWOO*, I aimed to blur this *keyed* frame, to allow for the separation of real-life and fictional experience to become translucent. I was hoping that such translucency, emerging from a realisation that a participatory world collides and merges with real-life reality, would create a void in which a reassessment of one's own experience would occur, and therefore align itself with the experience of dissensus.

In my career as a university lecturer, I have observed how the use of social media networks, particularly WhatsApp, is a preferred means for students to easily communicate with each other, ask for advice or share information in relation to class content and activities. Often WhatsApp groups are setup independently by student groups and are therefore autonomous spaces separate from lecturers or official university communication structures. The scenario of a lecturer facing a group of students who discuss the classes on an autonomous communication channel became the starting point for my practical explorations, leading me to cast myself as Speaker and choosing a lecture-style performance format. The hunch that pushed this research forward was an interest in how phones afford an engagement with multi-channelled or parallel experiences, and how this might become applied creatively within a

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[267] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organisation of Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).
[268] Gareth White, *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 34.
[269] Ibid.
[270] Astrid Breel, "Conducting creative agency: the aesthetics and ethics of participatory performance," (PhD diss., University of Kent, 2017): 137.

participatory performance context. Secondary research into the particularity of WhatsApp as a communication network suggested that this particular communication app may be able to encourage transgressive responses. Although it is a far less public application than network groups such as Facebook, TikTok and Twitter/X, the use of WhatsApp as a tool for civic and political purposes has been observed to be growing faster than any other social media platforms over the recent years.[271] Homero Gil de Zúñiga, Alberto Ardèvol-Abreu and Andreu Casero-Ripollés explain that it is perceived as a relatively private and safe space, where users may feel less vulnerable to discuss political opinions. It also seems to be 'especially attractive to those perceiving their views as extreme or minority, and to those using these channels to mobilize their networks for political activism – namely demonstrations, protests, boycotts'.[272]

Research into WhatsApp as a protest tool directly informed the development of performance materials pertaining to *ATTWOO*. For example, Natalie Pang and Yue Ting Woo identified 'news gathering and sharing for reciprocity', 'connecting for solidarity and building collective identity' as well as 'coordinating actions' to be key motivations for the use of WhatsApp between 2009 and 2019.[273] These motivations shaped the type of messages and in what tone my student collaborators would offer prompts for the visiting spectator-participants in the performance WhatsApp group. For example, the aspect of news gathering and sharing was incorporated when one of my performers reveals to the group that parts of the Speaker's materials are plagiarised or shares links to surveys seemingly forwarded by the institution.

The second motivation, connecting solidarity and building collective identity, is, according to Pang and Wo mainly achieved via the first, as the sharing and exchanging of news as well as daily conversations are an important factor for reinforcing a sense of social connectivity in a social group where members don't necessarily ever meet face-to-face.[274] Of note here are the variations in how a message is submitted; Pang

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[271] Natalie Pang and Yue Ting Woo, "What about WhatsApp? A systematic review of WhatsApp and its role in civic and political engagement," *First Monday* 25, no. 1 (2020) Accessed June 10, 2021. https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/10417

[272] Homero Gil de Zúñiga, Alberto Ardèvol-Abreu & Andreu Casero-Ripollés (2019): WhatsApp political discussion, conventional participation and activism: exploring direct, indirect and generational effects, *Information, Communication & Society* (online) DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2019.1642933 [accessed 31 January 2020]

[273] Natalie Pang and Yue Ting Woo, "What about WhatsApp? A systematic review of WhatsApp and its role in civic and political engagement," *First Monday* 25, no. 1 (2020) Accessed June 10, 2021. https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/10417

[274] Ibid.

and Wo identify: 'satirical memes, emojis, sarcasm, humour and metaphors'[275] as forms of communication. Using satirical memes, emojis, sarcasm and humour could be understood as transgressive, as it offers an experimental form of communication. I incorporated similar forms into the WhatsApp chat, by having my student collaborators send Emoji's or GIFs throughout the performance and particularly in response to the final dance scene. It is noteworthy that many spectator-participants opted to similarly respond with emojis or with GIFs in response, validating Pang and Wo's claim.

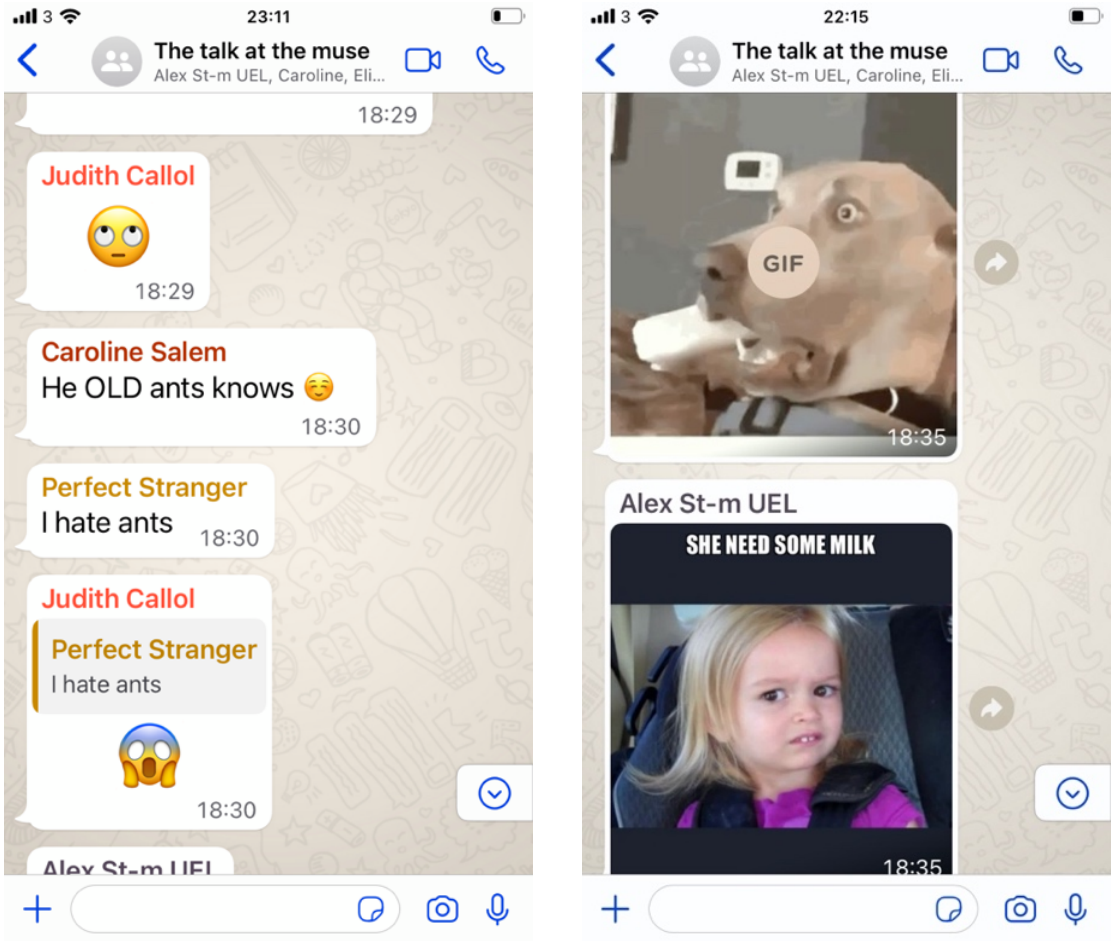

Fig 8: *And Then There Was Only One* (2022): Examples of transgressive – experimental communication in the WhatsApp group. Users of the WhatsApp group use Emoji's or Gif media to communicate their sentiment about the performance content and connect with others in the chat.

[275] Ibid. Unpaginated

Additionally, everyday *casual* conversations also foster a sense of solidarity and familiarity. As Pang and Wo state: 'many groups did not start out to be political — these are group chats with families, friends, schoolmates, everyday conversations are instrumental to contributing to pivotal moments of engagement for the group later'.[276] Therefore, prompts in the chat include tangential messages. For example, a request for discount vouchers for Odeon cinemas as well as asking group members what the current best film screenings are in the hope that spectator-participants will engage in light-hearted, mundane conversations whilst also revealing something more personal. Here, by asking spectator-participants to respond with their own real-life preferences and experiences functions as an intensifier not just of their experience of communality but also of themselves. As Sam Hind explains: 'the haptic capabilities of the digital device allow us to interact with, manipulate and re-constitute our world'.[277] Choosing what and how to respond to the group chat constitutes how spectator-participants manipulate their own experience of the performance as well as of the synchronous performance materials within the shared-space, whilst also potentially allowing them to manipulate the representation of themselves. In the first instance of the performance, 41.7% of audience members found that the WhatsApp chat made them feel 'more connected to other audience members'. However, 54.5% felt that they 'developed their own performance persona' via the texts they contributed. It seems that the objective of using the WhatsApp chat to foster a sense of community was successful, but this also happened whilst spectator-participants made specific choices about their own representation to a certain degree. This indicates that the WhatsApp space afforded spectator-participants a playful, performative space, in which they had agency to develop a manipulated version of themselves.

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[276] Ibid. unpaginated

[277] Sam Hind, "Playing with politics: Memory, orientation and tactility," in *The Playful Citizen. Civic Engagement in a Mediatized Culture,* eds. René Glas, Sybille Lammes, Michiel de Lange, Joost Raessens, and Imar de Vries, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 291-309. DOI: 10.5117/9789462984523/&'07

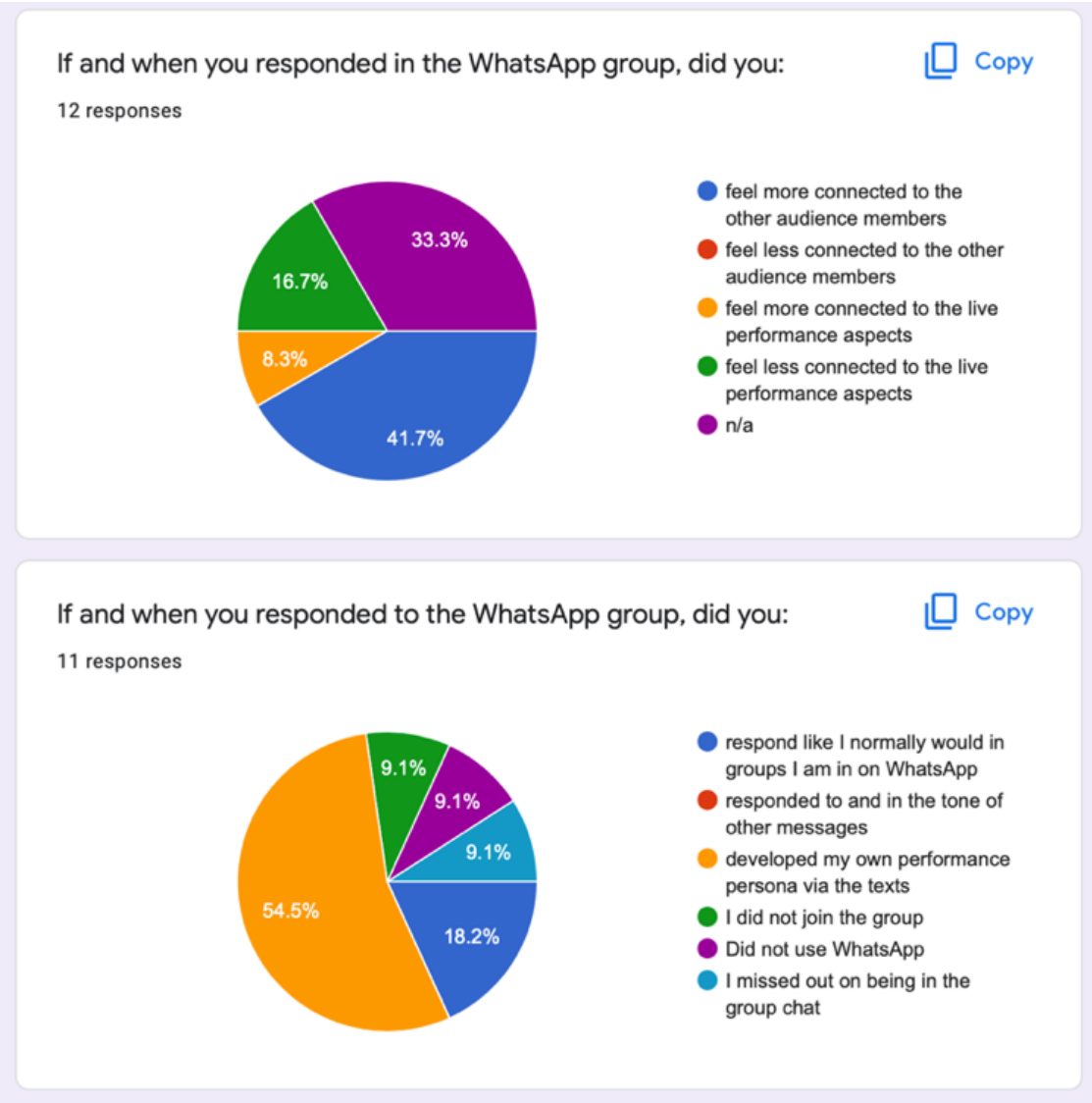

Fig.9: *And Then There Was Only One* (2022): Results of audience survey from And Then There Was Only One 30 April 2022

The University of Leeds' investigation into the usage of mobile phones within a higher education setting highlighted how students consider mobile phones to be creative tools. In a survey of 274 respondents, 42% consider their mobile phone usage a creative activity rather than a purely communicative activity.[278] One could therefore understand smartphones not just as enabler of creativity but also of potentially creative communicative responses which once more underlines the two-fold nature of

[278] SignalSpace: Mobile Phones and Digital Creativity, "Survey Results on Cultures of Mobile Phone Use," <https://signalspace.leeds.ac.uk/survey-results-on-cultures-of-mobile-phone-use/> (accessed 13 August 2024).

transgression, ranging from disruptive to experimental. The latter understanding of the word 'transgressive' implies that it can be an inherently creative activity. With an understanding of mobile phone devices as an enabler of creativity, could it function equally as an enabler of transgressive responses of the destructive or violative kind? Again, my anecdotal experience seems to confirm this hypothesis, because, as lecturer, I am often dealing with the fallouts of toxic communication via student WhatsApp groups. Offensive, gossipy and/or contagious messages seem a common occurrence within these channels and can be directed against peers, staff as well as the institution overall. In the same study conducted by the University of Leeds, it has been revealed that, 79.7% of respondents used their phones between 1-10 times during taught lectures to access content unrelated to the learning activity. In fact, 30% of respondents admit that their phone usage had nothing to do with their learning activities, whereas 55.1% considered their phone use to be *sometimes* related to these activities. One definition of *transgression* is to 'overlapping others uncomfortably'.[279] The overlapping here could be placed into the context of the *parallelism of experience* that is offered by smartphones. *Parallelism*, which in media synchronicity theory is defined as the 'number of simultaneous conversations that can happen (also known as the "width" of the medium)'[280] occurs here not just via the numerous conversations that could potentially happen on the phone itself; it also means that the lecture, that a student should attend to, is overlapped by the digital communication afforded via the mobile phone device. The phone therefore is not just an enabler of creativity but arguably also of transgressive activities that range from being mildly irritating (as a student's phone use during lecturers could be understood as a mere distraction) to the offensive and toxic. In *ATTWOO*, the parallelism of the digital realm and performance/lecture realm is consciously facilitated; here spectator-participants' distraction and diverted attention is an inherent part of the performance. The transgressing against expected behaviour of student conduct during class is demanded by the Speaker who, at the beginning of the lecture, asks all spectator-participants to turn their phone volume up, so that the notification sounds of incoming WhatsApp messages are heard and become part of the overall performance

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[279] Transgressive, *OxfordDictionaries.com,* <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/transgressive> (accessed 8 March 2019).
[280] Katie Wilde & Juan Pablo Buriticá, eds., *The Holloway Guide to Remote Work* (London: Royal Holloway, 2022) <https://www.holloway.com/g/remote-work> (accessed May 17, 2022).

soundscape. Of course, ironically, this means that those spectator-participants, who decided to *adhere to usually expected conducts* and refuse to use their phones, in essence transgress and disobey the rules set out by the parameters of the performance. As one spectator-participant exclaimed: 'I was very alert not to miss anything of the topic/text, very engaging. Totally missed the WhatsApp part'.[281] Whereas others felt that the WhatsApp messages, due to their distracting nature, multiplied focus to the point of discomfort and frustration: 'sometimes because there was so much information being said on stage the group chat caused me to look away so much and share focus that I feel I missed some of the development of the piece'.[282] But, as this particular spectator-participant observed: 'WhatsApp / phone calls were quite intrusive/disruptive which was, of course, part of their intended purpose! Performance can be a place to evade such distractions so a performance that invites them in cannot provide relief but can provide a space to reflect on what we attend to'.[283] In *ATTWOO*, distraction and transgression against commonly applied codes of conduct in classroom and lecture settings are not just occurring via the WhatsApp group. The Speaker herself receives a series of phone calls, which interrupt her performance and the flow of the delivery of the class materials. In discussion after the performance, it was revealed that the audience increasingly looked at their phones during the times the Speaker was on the phone herself. The performers own transgression here gave agency to the spectator-participant community to check their own phones.

Interestingly, the majority of spectator-participants felt that they developed their own performance persona via their texts on WhatsApp, or responded to the tone of messages by others. This became particularly pertinent in their responses to the questionnaire seemingly sent by *'the institution'*. The responses received were tongue-in-cheek: one spectator-participant repeatedly calls for Hamish (the security guard/ show technician), whereas another complains about the lid of their pen.

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[281] Appendix 5.1 – *And Then There Was Only One* Audience Feedback - 30 April 2022.
[282] Ibid.
[283] Ibid.

Is there anything you would like to change in regard to todays session?

5 responses

The pen lid doesn't fit at the end of the pen - like it works as a lid but doesn't fit on the end so when I'm writing I have to put the lid on the table or hold it and it's in serious danger of becoming lost. I can't concentrate on anything else

More Hamish

I think the lecturer needs a vacation

No

No phones! The temptation to text is too great and I'm missing it

Fig.10. *And Then There Was Only One* (2022): Examples of audience contributions to the in-show feedback questionnaire. The Questionnaire was a fictional satisfaction survey, which audiences, reimagined as students, filled in during the performance.

This corresponds with my observation of spectator's contributions to group or personal chats on WhatsApp in the case studies of Exit Productions' *Extinction Rebellion* as well as ZU-UK's *Perfect Stranger.* I therefore hypothesise that digital adjacent performance spaces, and WhatsApp in particular, can allow spectator-participants to experiment with a performative realisation of self through the choice of words or media sent to the group chat.

5.6 *Trailed* (2023)

Trailed is a game-based play that explores branching structures in theatrical performance. The creative concept is inspired by roads, streets and highways, using them as metaphor for life choices. Loosely incorporating adjacent research into the history of road traffic and traffic control systems, branching points within the script are aligned to junctions, roundabouts and ample-based control systems. This was my final PaR instance and was designed to explore and test a range of concerns and propositions that emerged from previous investigations both in the studio and through theory or case study analysis. These include:

- Branching structures and feedback loops

- Game-based and playable theatre
- Collaborations and competition within participatory performance
- Ethical considerations

For the full script of *Trailed*, please see Appendix 6 – *Trailed* Script. For creative supporting materials, including a link to a video recording, please refer to the PDF Documentation p.69-91. For completed audience feedback questionnaire, please refer to Appendix 6.1 – *Trailed* Audience Feedback. To see a list of suggested reading of insights and proposition emerging from *Trailed*, please see the PDF Documentation p.92.

Trailed facilitates the audience through six decades of a fictional character, portrayed by Lucy Scammell. Each decade contains an interactive game element, which invites spectator-participants to make decisions on behalf of the protagonist, and in doing so partly authorise the trajectory of her life story. At the heart of the performance lies the question: how much are we the sum of our experiences? In *Trailed*, audiences can design/affect some of the protagonists' experiences and life choices. At the same time, they are divided into two groups, with the interactive game elements serving as competitions. A key concern was to investigate if the competitive element (winning against the other team) would override ethical considerations in relation to the narrative (offering the protagonist advantageous life choices and/or positive experiences). Additionally, the protagonist(s) as well as some of their pre-conceived scenarios were designed to be divisive. For example, a first game sees the audience choose from two pre-designed characters.[284] Both of them are promiscuous and self-serving in their younger years. I was intrigued to see if audiences' own real-world morals and experiences influence how they perceive, respond and affect the performer. The performance purposefully explored quite stereotypical life scenarios, ranging from themes such as bullying in primary school, unpleasant first sexual encounters, family issues, untidy flat mates to settling down when getting married. The simplicity of the narrative content was designed to absorb the complex interactive structure that was in place for Scammell and myself, who acted as overall conductor,

[284] Please refer to the PDF Documentation, p. 82, for a more detailed discussion about the characters in *Trailed.*

scribe and/or score keeper. I documented the audience's contribution on large pieces of paper (and in doing so, I documented the life story that they design for the protagonist) and handed over a variation of props to Scammell throughout the performance, as well as notating points according to an obscure scoring system. My own character remains sidelined until the very end. Scammell's final words, "I don't want to play any games anymore", are directed towards me. Upon this, I tear the documentation and score sheets down from the wall, whilst Scammell re-sets the space. She returns to her opening position, whilst I stick new, empty paper on the wall, signifying a return to the beginning, to a re-birth and a renewed reiteration of a life with all the choices it contains. The studio door is opened, and audiences are invited to exit the space.

5.6.1 Considerations for practical methods applied in *Trailed*

Trailed explored a range of game-specific elements, for example feedback loops or competition, investigating how aspects of game-design can be applied in participatory performance. A key objective was to use a *branching structure* for the progression of the narrative, offering audiences elements (or illusions) of choice pertaining the development of the life story of a single female character. A branching structure is best illustrated in the shape of a tree, with an initial chapter/act leading to a point of convergence that offers the reader, player or spectator-participant a number of pre-conceived narrative progressions to choose from, each leading to another point of convergence and so on, with forking path stacked upon forking path, eventually resulting in multiple possible endings. This structure is also referred to as a fractal canopy and offers a mostly linear and simplistic branching system, offering two choices at the first point of convergence, four at the second and so forth (see Fig. 11). An alternative branching structure employs the use of 'key nodes', which are set plot segments that are important to the overall story and accentuate the overall narrative. As Nat Mesnard explains, whereas each reader sees/reads/experiences these set

nodes, the ‘territory between these nodes is variable and the reader can move from one node to the next in a variety of different ways’.[285]

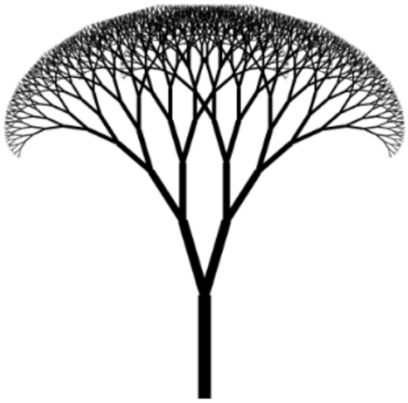

Fig. 11: *Trailed* (2023)*:* an example of a fractal canopy. This branching structure would require a considerable amount of preconceived creative materials that act as branches.

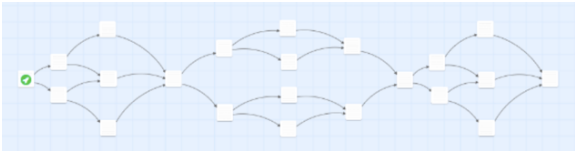

Fig. 12: *Trailed* (2023)*:* an example of a key nodes branching structure by Nat Mesnard, designating key moments with variations in the progressional route.

Anna Anthropy and Naomi Clark call this a ’reconverging branch structure’, but also list “shrub patterns”, offering players a choice at every turn, or “concentrated choice branches”, occurring at the ending to offer multiple conclusions to the narrative, as additional alternatives.[286] In the development of *Trailed,* my performer Lucy Scammell and I explored different branching structures.[287] A key challenge was keeping the pre-conceived theatrical materials contained whilst still offering a choice to spectator-participants. Using a fractal canopy branching structure, for example, would result in Scammell having to memorise an untenably high number of preconceived variations. In the end, a combination of the fractal canopy with Mesnard’s key nodes approach was deemed to be most suitable. In *Trailed,* spectator-participants encounter a two-

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[285] Nat Mesnard, “Branching Infinity: Exploring the Many Structures of Interactive Fiction,” Catapult, <https://magazine.catapult.co/dont-write-alone/stories/branching-infinity-exploring-the-many-structures-of-interactive-fiction-nat-mesnard> (Accessed 12 April 2023).
[286] Anna Anthropy and Naomi Clark, *A Game Design Vocabulary*, (United States: Pearson Education), 169.
[287] Please refer to the *PDF Documentation,* p.73, for examples of my early sketch book ideas for branching approaches in *Trailed*.

choice branching option during a first point of convergence. This determines what character (Penny or Faye) will be performed for the rest of the performance. From then on, the performance employs key nodes as moments for game-based interactivity that, rather than offering a choice between a number of rigidly pre-prepared plot segments, contribute to the development of Scammell's character, and indicate in what tone or attitude subsequent segments would be performed (see Fig. 13 below).

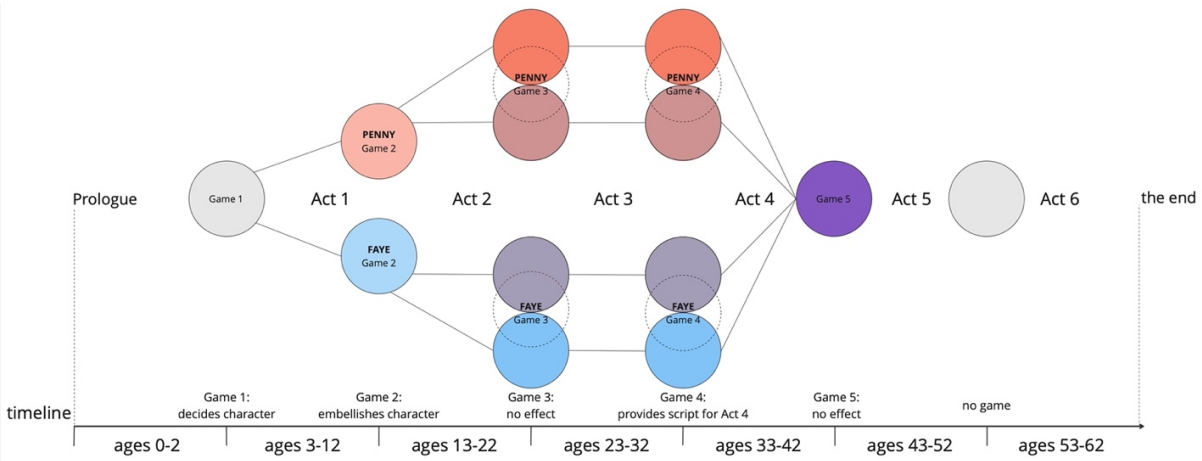

Fig. 13: *Trailed* (2023): The underlying branching structure devised for *Trailed* (2023). A mixture between a fractal canopy and key nodes approach was used. The colour red and blue represent the two different characters Penny or Faye. The subsequent colour shades refer to character development, whereas the purple colour represent a shared outcome in the narrative progression.

The performance is structured along different decades of the protagonist. Each decade contains a game and an expository act, parts of which is determined by the decisions and contributions of the audience in the game. Different game modes were explored in each section, as well as different modes of feedback loops employed. Game 1, which asks spectator-participant groups to decide upon basic facts of the protagonist, such as name, birthdate and favourite foods, decides what character is being played. This is determined by the birthdate: a winter-born protagonist will result in the portrayal of the more confident and care-free Penny, whereas a summer-born protagonist will see the performance of the more insecure and introverted Faye. The outcome of Game 2, which sees the audience answer questions pertaining teenage-years experiences, embellish these characteristics. For example, if the audience

chooses more traumatic experiences for Faye, her introvert and insecure characteristic become more evidently acted out, resulting in a more troubled young version of Faye. But whereas spectator-participants' contributions in Game 2 affect the protagonist's characterisation, in Game 3 their choices drive forward the narrative exposition. Here the spectator-participant groups play against each other, taking the role of the protagonist or a significant other in her life, for example friends, family, or boyfriend. Game 4 is announced to be an interlude, with no rewarding points given; however, audiences' written suggestions are providing parts of the script in Act 5. In Game 6, which asks audiences to decide upon a medical termination of a pregnancy, audiences' choices are not revealed.

The adapted branching structure allowed Scammell to be responsive to audience choices and improvise along the pre-conceived possibilities of character developments for the characters Penny and Faye, without having to memorise too many set sections of materials. This approach addresses some of the criticisms that branching story structures receive; one of these is that a branching structure offers the *illusion* of choice, rather than affording real choice. As Anthropy and Clark explain: 'nearly all branching stories are still authored stories. Although they have many paths that a player can explore through her actions, all the paths have been placed for her to discover.'[288] In *Trailed*, Scammell's responsiveness to the choices and contributions from spectator-participants means that there is a sense of collaboration rather than hierarchical authorship. Another criticism faced by branching structures is that they 'place natural limitations on a game's narrative dynamism, replayability, and expressiveness,'[289] exactly due to their usually strictly pre-authored plot segments. Participatory performances that employ branching structures can allow a greater sense of flexibility by using an improvisational responsiveness, like the one employed in *Trailed,* to the choices of players/audiences.

Using such an improvisational responsiveness also acted as a feedback loop, as Scammell repeatedly referred to spectator-participants' contributions and incorporated their offerings into the text. In audience feedback, one spectator-participant describes

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[288] Anna Anthropy and Naomi Clark, *A Game Design Vocabulary*, (United States: Pearson Education), 167.
[289] Max Kreminski and Noah Wardrip-Fruin, "Sketching a map of the storylets design space". *Interactive Storytelling: Proceedings of the 11th International Conference on Interactive Digital Storyteling*, ICIDS (Ireland: Dublin, 2018), 160.

‘Seeing the character change 'direction' depending on our responses’[290] as being notable, which was confirmed by others in informal verbal feedback post-performance. Audience observation also highlighted that the improvised incorporation of audience contributions elicited animated responses by the audience, such as laughter or giggles. This *narrative feedback loop* seemed more successful in engaging the audience, offering them an enhanced sense of agency, then the obscure point system that emerged from the competitive elements within Game 1, 2 and 3. These games were clearly presented as being able to score points and contributing to a team being designated as the “winner”; and although I allocated points on a large piece of paper on the wall, *how* these points were accrued was never revealed.

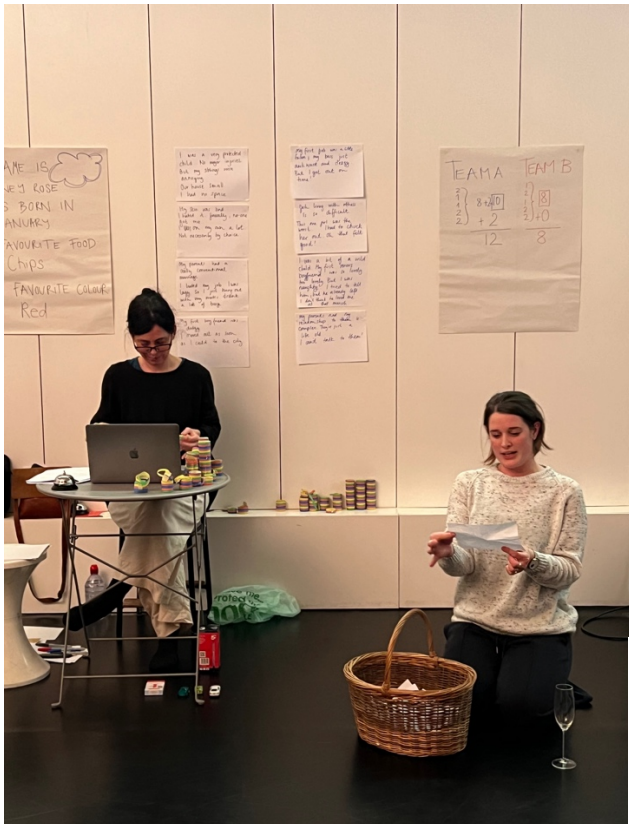

Fig.14: *Trailed* (2023): An obscure score board is kept alongside scriptures of the audience’s contributions, depicting the protagonist’s life story as designed by the audience.

Spectator-participants displayed a range of responses to the fact that points were accrued. Initially, a scoring system seemed to have some effect on most spectator-participants. For some it offered an incentive to get involved, with one participant stating that a point system offered ‘extra motivation to participate’.[291] However, the

[290] Please refer to Appendix 6.1- *Trailed* Audience Feedback - 4 February 2023.
[291] Please refer to Appendix 6.1- *Trailed* Audience Feedback - 4 February 2023.

obscurity of the point system led many spectator-participants to eventually ignore it, with one stating: 'I didn't understand the score system because it wasn't explained so I ignored the points and just enjoyed answering the questions. It wasn't about us playing and winning it was about the character's journey'.[292]

My PaR strategy of subverting ideal conditions for engagement strongly influenced the design of *Trailed* and to challenge spectator-participants on a variety of levels of participation was a key objective. Additionally, transgression as a concept was explored from various angles, even from the perspective of the maker. For example, omitting a clear feedback loop in the form of an obscure point system was part of the strategy to subvert ideal conditions; this could be considered to transgress against game design rules that provide optimal engagement. The structure of Game 2, which requires the chosen leaders of the teams to respond to cues in the text, moving fast in order to ring the bell first, was designed to challenge pre-noetic reflexes and explore a sense of hierarchy amongst spectator-participants, but also transgressed against audiences *perceived* sense of agency. In this game, audience groups make a quick "yes" or "no" choice, with the performer offering a text-based response to the choice afterwards. However, the script has been developed with a carefully crafted ambiguity, which could respond to either of the available choices, meaning that, the audiences' selection did not alter the subsequent performance materials (see Fig. 14). In audience feedback, it emerged that spectator-participants were not able to identify Scammell's responses in this game as preconceived. Instead, several participants stated this game to be memorable, partly because, as this spectator-participant expresses, there is an 'instant impact on the story'.[293]

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[292] Ibid.
[293] Ibid.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Did I feel misunderstood .... *(in entertainer mode)*

YES	NO

Laughing

There is a point when child or early adult experience turns into something of quite a different nature. When it does more than break or not break any bones.

You know, they say that traces are often left not once, but several times, meaning that they either continually overlap, becoming unrecognisable or deepen by repetition. So, if it happens only once, it might get lost behind many other experiences. But if it happens again and again . . . It becomes deeply engrained.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Was I lonely at times? . . . . . . *(in entertainer mode)*

YES	NO

I liked reading. I always liked reading and I still like reading. I love music. Not interested in playing it, but I like listening to it. I can't remember my first CD.

I don't remember liking much else.

I did not really have a hobby. That's what we are meant to have, I think. Hobbies.

I had books. I also had those glowy stars on the ceiling. I regularly changed the constellations. The glue of them sometimes would leave shiny spots. Little traces.

I remember those.

Fig. 15: *Trailed* (2023): Script extract of Act 2, Game 2: Audiences seemingly decide upon teenage experiences. The protagonists scripted responses fit either 'yes' or 'no' answers.

In Game 3, audiences make a series of moral decisions based on inter-personal scenarios; deciding on these collaboratively aimed to test to what extent spectator-participants personal social horizon will influence their decision-making processes, and I will further discuss such aspects of collaboration in 'Chapter 6.3.3. Collaborative systems and collaborative decision making'. Game 4 tests audiences physically: noting down lifestyle advice on pieces of paper, their aim is to throw their advice into a basket held by a dancing Scammell, who purposefully moves out of the way, challenging the audience's ability to succeed in their task (see Fig.15). This scene explored if a greater level of physicality encourages pre-noetic responses and might lead to physical transgression, and indeed, the playful setup of the game resulted in an at times chaotic chasing of the performer, with some spectator-participants trying quite forcefully to place their advice in the basket. Equally, the performers' avoidance could be understood as a transgression, which is described by this spectator-participant as a notable moment: 'Trying to add suggestions to the basket and a clearly non-compliant/unwilling recipient who kept moving away and making it physically difficult to communicate ideas designed to help'.[294]

[294] Ibid.

Fig. 16: *Trailed* (2023): Act 4 Scene 1 (Game 4) sees spectator-participants chase after the performer to place lifestyle advice in the basket.

Game 5 was most clearly designed for spectator-participants to contemplate their own personal stance on an emotional and moral subject. Here audiences were asked to decide on the medical termination of a pregnancy. Spectator-participants make this decision solitarily, yet again notating their decision on a piece of paper and placing it in the basket. Their final choices are never revealed and has no effect on subsequent creative materials. The subject matter however was of a severity that most spectator-participants noted this "game" to be the most uncomfortable, and the one that brought them most successfully into a state of self-reflection. Tellingly, several spectator-participants chose not to make a choice, which I further discuss in 'Chapter 7.3.4 Refuseniks'.

Throughout the creative process for *Trailed*, my performer and I questioned what would promote spectator-participants to consciously affect the life of this fictional character and what, in doing so, is at stake for them? The combination of competitive/contest-driven elements, play and perceived sense of agency offered a mixture of incentives for the audience to get involved and invested in the story of the character. Audiences did not always choose their contributions according to a moral horizon; at times, the desire to create an *interesting* story prevailed the decision-

making process. And yet, as was revealed in verbal audience feedback, spectator-participants at times were more worried about what their personal suggestions or contributions would say about *themselves*, rather than how these suggestions/contributions would affect the life story of the protagonist.

5.7 Conclusion

Looking back at my PaR research instances, it becomes apparent that the work that emerged from an instinctive, playful and explorative approach in the studio became more layered, complex and fruitful in relation to a dissemination of insights. Some findings about methods and aims described here emerged after the activities, and have been gathered from audience and performer's feedback, personal reflection and a re-visiting of sketchbook notes, theoretical reading/writing as well as video recordings from performances. For me it is noteworthy that my praxis is showing a clear development in my artistic and creative methodologies. Whereas my first research performance *Balloons* was an instinctive, somewhat simplistic exploration of play, transgression and dissensus, the creative approach for the participatory structures employed in the later projects *ATTWOO* and *Trailed* are more complex, multifaceted and layered, both in the set creative materials as well as in how these performances engage and interact with spectator-participants. Nevertheless, original knowledge has been produced via the accumulation of the findings emerging from all my performances and will be articulated over the remainder of this thesis.

Chapter 6 – Participatory structures for transgression and dissensus

6.1 General Observations

This chapter articulates my findings regarding general participatory conditions that seem able to facilitate transgressive responses and/or the emergence of dissensus. I will refer to my own praxis as well as the case studies discussed in 'Chapter 3 – Practical Framework'. I have previously mentioned how designing participatory performance work that seeks to facilitate transgressive participatory responses is complex, as it invites spectator-participants to disrupt or experiment with aspects of that work. It is a challenge to invite audiences to do so without developing an *expectation* that they will. To avoid constructing an implied spectator-participant, I needed to avoid taking previously observed or hypothesised transgressive behaviour as a point of departure for my own creative work. And yet, the examination of singular instances led to identifying resemblances and 'families' of transgressive responses, to borrow Ludwig Wittgenstein's term.[295] I therefore explored creative methodologies built on these family resemblances, in the hope that they facilitate an *emergence* of transgression and/or dissensus. These methodologies further examine underlying principles of transgression/dissensus, to identify the 'know-why' I describe in the 'Introduction'.[296] Inverting *ideal* conditions for engagement was one strategy applied.[297] Here I articulate the approaches emerging from my practice and case study analysis, as well as additional tools that have been successful in the parameters of my research.

The propositions below are not guaranteed to achieve transgressive responses or an emergence of dissensus. Both concepts are too subjective and context dependent. However, an awareness of these methodologies may alert participatory performance practitioners to the possibility of transgressive audience responses when designing their own work. Of course, these methodologies can be equally useful to either facilitate/enhance the possibility of transgressive responses, or to reduce the risk of the emergence of such. Furthermore, my propositions intend to offer useful pathways

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[295] Please refer to 'Introduction', p.18.
[296] Please refer to 'Introduction' p.15
[297] Please refer to 'Chapter 2.3- The dichotomy of ideal versus non-ideal conditions and spectator-participants'.

for further research in participatory performance, interactivity design and audience engagement in general.

6.2 Site-specific and spatial boundaries

The place of theatrical performance, participatory or not, will always bring an expectation of behaviour and an event-specific code of conduct. As Kirsty Sedgman says: 'By bringing bodies together in a close proximity theatre has always offered a concentrated space for rethinking the rules of social interaction'.[298] Sedgman outlines how up to the 1800s, acceptable audience behaviour included drinking, eating, walking about and audibly responding to the events onstage and other spectators. Performance events were 'raucous, rambunctious, rowdy and sometimes riotous'.[299] Audiences became increasingly retrained and restrained and by the 1920s, they found themselves in darkness.[300] Repeated claims that participatory and immersive performance finds new ways of engaging audiences in an *active* and *collective* manner speak against the perceived passivity of spectators in a darkened auditorium, partly because such work is often presented in a 'non-seated, non-static, non-representational, and otherwise non-traditional' manner.[301] Rancière himself has critiqued such claim as it continues to invoke a binary set of oppositions; for example, active vs passive, haptic (sensory) vs optic (visual), progressive vs conservative,[302] individual vs collective etc. Additionally, the promises of participatory and immersive theatre for freedom and agency need to be evaluated; for example, makers of immersive theatre claim the audience can freely roam the space. However, this freedom exists only in the parameters of the artists' vision and other aspects of accessibility of space, for example health and safety reasons or restricted access to backstage areas. Punchdrunk performances employ black-masked security personnel who make sure that audiences only roam where they are *allowed*, and do not disturb

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[298] Kirsty Sedgman, *The Reasonable Audience – Theatre Etiquette, Behaviour Policing, and the Live Performance Event* (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2018), 6.
[299] Richard Butsch, *The Citizen Audience: Crowds, Publics and Individuals* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 23.
[300] Caroline Heim, *Audience as Performer: The Changing Role of Theatre* Audiences in the Twenty-First Century (London: Routledge, 2015), 12.
[301] Kirsty Sedgman, *The Reasonable Audience – Theatre Etiquette, Behaviour Policing, and the Live Performance Event* (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2018), 13.
[302] Ibid.

the performance materials with their own activities.[303] As Sedgman says, this makes it difficult for audiences to 'reconcile tensions between promises of agency – 'freedom to explore spaces, construct narratives, make meaning for themselves' – and the knowledge that the rules of these encounters are set by practitioners, their 'interactions delimited by (explicit or implicit) constraints'.[304]

The above aims to give a context to my consideration of space/place in relation to transgressive responses in participatory performance. It is noteworthy that none of my case studies have been performed in conventional proscenium arch theatres. In the works paramount to my research, audiences were kept standing and able to move more or less freely through the space, with performers moving amongst spectator-participants and vice-versa. Similarly, all my PaR instances were performed in an open space shared by performer and spectator-participants alike, except for *ATTWOO,* which replicated a classroom. I have previously questioned if an invitation to spectator-participants to be physically active increases the potential for transgressive behaviour to occur.[305] According to my research, an open, freely traversable performance arena offers greater variation in physical, locomotive audience responses and challenges how spectator-participants situate themselves to other spectator-participants and performers alike. An explicit/implicit invitation to roam the room might invite audiences to trespass, hence, to transgress spatially. One can assume that Punchdrunk employ black-masked security personnel exactly *because* audiences *would* wonder into the dangerous or out-of-bound spaces *if they could*. For example, as spectator-participant in Exit Productions' *Fight Night*, I very much enjoyed being able to sneak into hidden corners of the vaults. An *affordance* of not just exploring the space itself but the objects and props placed within, added to an autotelic enjoyment of discovery. This was echoed by Tassos Stevens, who after discovering the camera that was meant to record the show, transgressed against the purpose of that camera by holding a paper inscribed with the words 'this match is rigged' against its lens.[306] The affordance to move freely within a space does not mean that audiences choose to do so, and I have

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[303] Kathrin Hamilton, "Punchdrunk and the Politics of Spectatorship," *Culturebot,* November 2012. <https://www.culturebot.org>
[304] Kirsty Sedgman, *The Reasonable Audience – Theatre Etiquette, Behaviour Policing, and the Live Performance Event* (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2018), 16.
[305] Please refer to 'Chapter 2.2.2 Affordances'.
[306] Tassos Stevens, Appendix 2 - *Interview with Tassos Stevens*, 239.

often observed how audiences seek the safety of a wall or, even in the absence of chairs to sit on, find ways to become sedentary, by crouching down or sitting on the floor. In *Trailed*, this occurred even though the performance was introduced with an announcement that there was no seating area and that audiences are allowed to move throughout the performance.

Fig. 17: *Trailed* (2023): Seated Audiences in *Trailed.* Although there was a clear instruction to freely roam the space, audiences crouched or sat down on the floor.

Whereas this could be read as a *non-compliance* with explicit instructions, in this instance I believe the behaviour emerged from a habitual compliance with more conventional audience codes of conduct. In audience feedback after the performance, it emerged that only 20% of audience members go to see participatory performance on a regular basis, whereas 50% consider themselves to attend participatory performance ‘not very often’. Unfamiliarity with this style of performance may have inhibited audiences from roaming the space more freely. Of course, an instruction to roam a performance space and mingle amongst performers also includes allowances to not move when audiences are expected to do so. For example, *Trailed* contained a scene in which the character performed a high-speed traveling sequence towards a group of spectator-participants (see Fig. 18). Whereas most of them moved out of the way, one member of the audience remained where she was, forcing the performer to change her pathway to avoid collision and adapt the choreography.

Fig. 18: *Trailed* (2023): The refusal of a spectator-participant to move out of the way required the performer to adapt the choreography.

Her refusal to move out of the way could easily be understood as an act of resistance. In subsequent audience discussion, it turned out that this spectator-participant is a football coach and therefore familiar with people charging at her at high speed. In Goffman's terms, this participant's "resource continuity" allowed her to draw from a real-world skillset to stand her ground.

The examples above have shown that a non-seated, non-static audience arrangement can encourage a variation in audience behaviour related to locomotion and spatial positioning. This alone might not lead to explicitly transgressive responses. According to my research, the choice of performance venue has significant impact on the potential for transgression and/or dissensus to emerge in a non-seated audience. Joe Ball, for example has explained how the spectator-participant involved in a near-fisticuff during Exit Productions' *Fight Night* was inebriated.[307] This performance was part of the Vault Festival, who at that time marketed itself as the 'biggest and boldest'[308] theatre event of the year, with a multiple performance per night approach and late-night parties on weekends. The location in the Waterloo vaults, with graffitied arches and a street party feel, generally promoted an anarchistic atmosphere, enhanced by its description as a "festival" and it was not uncommon to find a merry, slightly drunk audience body. *Fight Night* was performed at 7pm and at 9pm and the incident referred to occurred in the latter performance, which may well have contributed to the fact that said spectator-participant was under the influence of alcohol. External aspects such as general atmosphere of venue and timing of performance can contribute to how

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[307] Please refer to Appendix 1 – *Interview With Joe Ball 20 March 2019*, 221.
[308] The Vault Festival "VAULT festival announce their biggest, boldest and bravest festival yet" <https://vaultfestival.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/VAULT-Festival-announces-their-biggest-boldest-bravest-programme-yet-press-release-CA.pdf> (Accessed 23 February 2023).

spectator-participants respond to the creative materials within the show. White describes a comparable performance atmosphere in De La Guarda's 1999 performance of *Villa Villa*, performed at the Roundhouse in Camden, with the audience standing tightly in the middle of the space, loud music pumping and performers trapeze-flying over audience's heads, running suspended on the walls and emerging amid the audience itself. Here, the proximity of spectator-participants to each other as well as the performers meant that audience members are located 'in the middle of a storm of activity'.[309] Audiences stated how this performance felt like a music festival or a rave,[310] with the music and the unpredictability of the event resulting in an adrenalin rush. Regrettably, some audience members trespassed physically by grabbing performers in an unwarranted, sexual manner.[311] Having attended both *Fight Night* and *Villa Villa*, I propose that the architecture of both performance venues, underlined by loud, rhythmic dance music, enhanced a somewhat unruly mood.

In my performance of *Balloons,* audience members commented on how the rock'n'roll birthday song encouraged them to dance freely or *like at a party*.[312] Audience feedback stated that the party atmosphere and the physical activity of dancing contributed to the decision of popping balloons. Audience observation revealed that those spectator-participants that were most heavily engaged in the dancing were most engaged in the popping of the balloons (see Fig. 19).

Fig. 19 *Balloons* (2019): Music and physical activity to encourage transgression in *Balloons.*

[309] Gareth White, *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 151.
[310] Ibid., 154.
[311] Gareth White, *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 155.
[312] Please refer to 'Chapter 5.2.1 – Considerations for practical methods applied for Balloons'.

Music played to underline the physical activity of audience members can act as an extrinsic cue, priming audience members for subsequent participatory responses. Moving to music can enhance the kinetic, pre-noetic response, and initiate a sense of flow, which, enhanced by the faster rhythm of certain dance music styles, can lead to the loss of self-awareness found in flow. This loss of self-awareness occurred during Act 4, Scene 1 of *Trailed,* when spectator-participants were trying to throw scrambled pieces of paper into a waste basket carried by the performer dancing to cheerful music. Chasing after the performer, some spectator-participants lost their spatial awareness and, in their eagerness to hit the waste basket, bumped into each other as well as the performer. Music's ability to foster a particular atmosphere works in reverse, too. In *Would You#1*, the gentle soundscape contributed to an atmosphere of care and compliance. For some participants, the music stopped them doing more experimental or seemingly transgressive actions, such as throwing the soft play balls in the space, as 'the music influenced the mood'.[313]

For makers of participatory performance, I believe that a consideration of *how* a venue might affect or prime audience responses is worthwhile particularly for the experience of dissensus. The venue or location can give clear context and provide a methodological frame to the performance overall, which can be seen in Jeremy Deller's *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001), Coney's *Adventure 1* (2016) as well as my own PaR instance *ATTWOO* (2022). In these examples, the appropriation of the everyday use and/or significance of the site greatly enhances the participants experience of the performance taking place within, as the site's real-life function was performatively repurposed, resulting in a synthesis of extra- and intra-ludic architectural as well as experiential aspects of the space. Having an in-depth knowledge of the location as well as of activities that occur within this location in real-life (for example the memory of a clash between strikers and police or the experience of teaching or being taught in this space) intensifies the relationship a spectator-participant might have to the performance material, relating an awareness of real-life activities and responses to those offered within the fictional world. The separation between the intra- and extra-ludic world is translucent as both site and activity re-enact familiar real-life scenarios.

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[313] Please refer to Appendix 4.1 – *Would You #1* Audience Feedback – 14 December 2019.-WY Questionnaire 14/12 – 2.

In discussion after *ATTWOO,* it became clear that particularly for student spectator-participants of this performance, the fact that they sat in their real-world university space, whilst watching their real-world lecturer perform for them, enhanced their experience of the fictional world significantly. In the comment in Fig.20, one of my students describes the dilemma of navigating the activities of the fictional performance world with her knowledge and experience of similar, real-life scenarios.

> I really enjoyed it. It was something different to interact with WhatsApp and add the sound of the notifications as a type of soundtrack while watching Carrie performing. It created a dilemma because I was doing something I was not supposed to do (using my phone while watching a performer), but I understood it was part of the performance so I let myself use the phone as much as I wanted and follow the WhatsApp conversation. The WhatsApp conversation turned sometimes hilarious!

Fig.20: *And Then There Was Only One* (2022): Audience feedback. A real-world student of mine comments on the experience of watching myself performing as fictional lecturer.

The site acted as an enhancer, possibly as reverser of Goffman's keyed frame.[314] Goffman discussed the idea of *framing* and *keying* in relation to social activity, rather than space and site. Here however the *fictional* context in which 'keying' usually occurs is weakened by the fact that participants *recreate real-life activities* in a *real-life* site. Therefore, although White underlines that keying can offer an explanation on how behaviour in participatory performance can 'resemble, but also detach itself from everyday activity',[315] I argue that the site contributes towards not a detachment but a re-attachment of extra-ludic activities to an intra-ludic experience, therefore reversing the keying mechanism found in the theatre, for example.

This re-attachment is comparable to the merging of worlds that Rancière assigns to his concept of dissensus. Synthesising intra-ludic participatory activities that stem from matching extra-ludic behaviours in a performatively appropriated, relevant site requires spectator-participants to navigate potentially conflicting modes of relating self as well as others to fictional and real-life worlds. This may give rise for the experience of dissensus. Goffman himself explains how an understanding of a keyed frame is dependent on an interpretation of the frame itself, or what he terms the 'definition of

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[314] Please refer to 'Chapter 2.2.3 Frame'.
[315] Gareth White, *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 37.

the situation'.[316] Usually this definition results in a more or less mutual agreement amongst participants on what this interaction means for them and what can or should happen within it; however, with a re-attachment coming into effect through the synthesis of extra-and intra-ludic aspects of the work, a more personal, potentially conflicting and intense process of interpretation seems to occur, exemplified by the student's comment above. In Deller's work, those who have a *lived* experience of *this very location* will assumingly have had a very different understanding of the consequent actions during the reconstructions than those who don't. Similarly, in *ATTWOO*, even though the real-life space was merged with a *fictional* narrative, my own student spectator-participants had a more personal and possibly more conflicting relationship to the activities required of them (gossiping about their *real-life* lecturer via WhatsApp).

In this first section, I have discussed how a mobile and non-seated arrangement of audiences, rhythmic musical accompaniment, and a creative re-appropriation of the performance location might contribute to transgressive responses in participatory performance. I propose that the use of an everyday, mundane site, intricately linked to the creative objective and performance materials, can weaken the keyed frame that comes with a more conventional performance venue. Using such sites have the potential to facilitate a merging of extra- and intra-ludic aspects and seem to foster an experience of dissensus, as spectator-participants merge their real-world understandings of the site and the activities within with the fictional context the performance is conjuring. As I have noted, transgression as a concept as well as the emergence of dissensus is highly context specific. My research argues that the performance location/site/venue offers an external *architecture* in both a literal and metaphorical sense. The chosen performance space and its distinctive features can strongly affect the participatory world, how it is experienced and what types of responses may emerge. My considerations might allow artists and makers of participatory performance to become more aware of *how* their performance location, even those not consciously chosen, might affect spectator-participants responses and experiences overall.

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[316] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organisation of Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974): 1.

6.3 Internal structures and systems as participatory scaffolding

In this section, I turn my focus towards internal, performance-specific structures that seem effective in conjuring transgressive responses. Whereas a performance space/site/venue can offer an external architecture, the *internal* architecture determines the participatory and interactive elements that are hosted within. This internal architecture can be compared to the mechanisms that determine game play, in that it establishes the rules or provides a *limiting context* within the participatory world. This will determine *objectives* as well as *activity*, and my observations below will take all three into account. Internal structures interrelate to develop a final participatory system, tying together the individual parts to form a coherent creative whole. I will first discuss the types of systems, as well as overarching game-mechanical structures that seem to foster transgressive responses. These systems and structures may either determine the overall interactive set-up of a performance event or might only apply in specific sections.

Participatory performances can be compared to games in that they share the basic systematic components of participants/players, activity, objectives and limiting context. Like games, participatory performances can be understood as systems. Systems can be fixed, linear (in which no change to components and their relationships occur), complex (presenting complex patterns of behaviour) or chaotic (where components act in a random fashion).[317] Astrid Breel explains how participatory performances benefit from being analysed through Dynamic System Theory (DST) as it examines 'situations with a large number of interconnected elements that develop based on the interactions between these different elements as well as contextual influences'.[318] Breel also distinguishes "closed" from "open" systems, explaining how the former omits external interactions, whereas in the latter, external aspects can influence and inter-relate to aspects within the system.[319] Participatory performances are open systems, in that external contexts and influences can be brought into the dynamics of the system components. Participatory performances often operate on a gradient between linear or complex systems; in linear, interactive performances, even though

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[317] Katie Salen, and Eric Zimmerman *Rules of Play: Game design fundamentals* (London: MIT Press, 2004), 170.
[318] Astrid Breel, "Conducting creative agency: the aesthetics and ethics of participatory performance," (PhD diss., University of Kent, 2017): 158.
[319] Ibid., 161.

spectator-participants contribute creative materials, the narrative outcome remains the same. In participatory performances that employ more complex dynamic systems, a greater level of interactivity amongst the components can lead to the *emergence* of new patterns, structures or relationships between the components of the system, resulting in unexpected or unpredictable narrative outcomes. *Emerging systems* for participatory interaction therefore facilitate the creation of unpredictable patterns (new narrative outcomes) of complexity from a limited set of rules because each coupled, context-dependent interaction affects the overall pattern and space as well as all subsequent interactions. Additionally, as Breel explains, *emergence* illuminates the process of contribution where the interaction between participant responses and performance structure produces levels of emergent patterns that together form the performance narrative'.[320] Section 6.3.1 explores the types of systems that might more successfully facilitate transgression and/or the experience of dissensus.

6.3.1 Exploration as emergence

Both Coney's *A Small Town Anywhere* (2009) and Exit Productions' *Fight Night* (2018) (discussed in Chapter 3) employ *emergent participatory systems*, meaning that in both performances, the main aspects of the work depend on who is participating, how they participate and how those individual acts of participation form a coherent communal performative whole. In *A Small Town Anywhere,* the performance narrative of the town unfolds according to the participants' choices, individually and collectively. In *Fight Night,* a slightly adapted emerging system was in place during moments when spectator-participants, after having been given a particular role, were encouraged to roam the space. The affordance to roam was not explicitly governed by rules. And yet, dependent on what role you played or team you were on, some spaces and rooms were out of bounds. Here, Sedgman's tension between promises of agency and the knowledge that this agency is limited by artistically set constraints[321] served as a narrative tool; only through exploration did the rules affecting one's own affordance emerge, and with that, a greater knowledge about one's own role and objective within

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[320] Ibid., 165-166.
[321] Kirsty Sedgman, *The Reasonable Audience – Theatre Etiquette, Behaviour Policing, and the Live Performance Event* (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2018), 16.

the participatory world. Spectator-participants could only understand more about the rules by transgressing against them.

Greg Costikyan's states that 'part of the reason games appeal is because they allow us to explore uncertainty (…) in a non-threatening way'.[322] In emergent systems, this comes to the fore. In *Fight Night*, the uncertainty and subsequent discovery of what spaces are accessible or not was an intricate part of the objective-related aspect of the interactive structure. In many ways, an open emergent system such as the one found in *Fight Night* inverts the ideal condition of engagement of clear rules; a transgressive spirit in exploring the space, however, rewarded spectator-participants with an increased knowledge of the rules, which functions as a form of feedback loop.

I employed an emergent system and an absence of clear rules to facilitate an explorative participatory approach in *Would You #1*.[323] Here, spectator-participants received little to no instructions, whilst the space around them was filled with objects, including musical instruments and sound toys. These objects formed part of the objective or goal-related as well as the activity-related aspects within scenes in which the overarching interactive system emerged through exploration. Ragnhild Tronstad describes how in exploration games: 'a negotiation process takes place between the player and the game, wherein the player tries out actions and adjusts them according to the responses she receives from the game, until some kind of progression is made'.[324] In *Would You #1*, spectator-participants were able to trigger movement responses from the performer by playing instruments or using the toys. However, not all activities elicited responses, so a trial-and-error approach was needed to progress the performance. The seemingly random nature of the performer's responses added to a collective understanding that only via trialling activities will progress be made. As Costikyan asserts: 'randomness, is not, of course, chaos'[325] but in game design is often 'harnessed for variety'.[326] Therefore, in this performance, spectator-participants needed to reinvent the use of instruments and toys to see what might provoke a new or ongoing response in the performer, meaning that the activities were manyfold and

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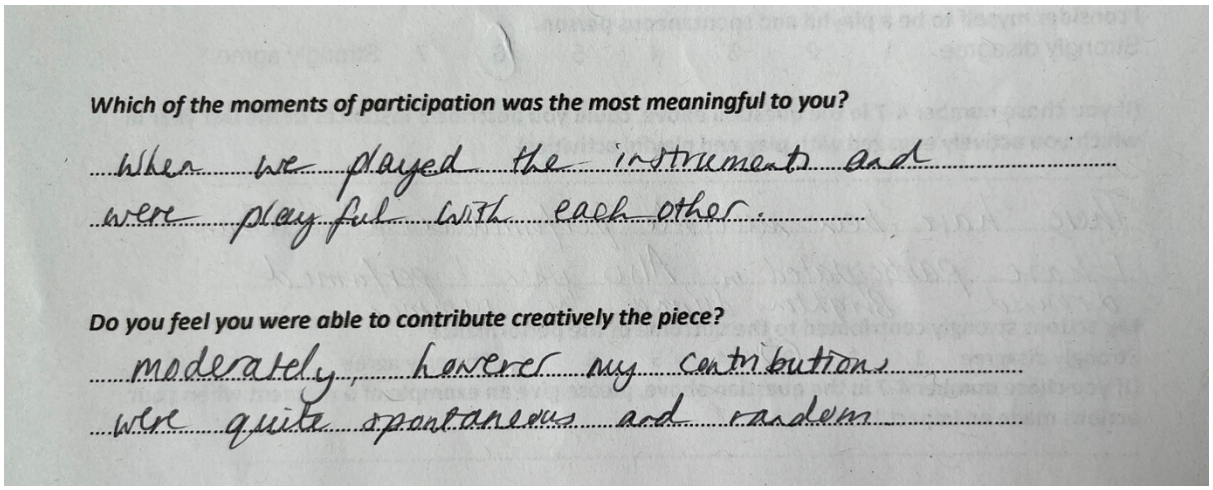
[322] Greg Costikyan, *Uncertainty in Games* (USA: MIT Press, 2013), 13.
[323] Please refer to PDF Documentation, p.22 – 39.
[324] Ragnhild Tronstad, "Destruction, Abjection, and Desire: Aesthetics of Transgression in Two Adaptations of "Little Red Riding Hood" in *Transgression in Games and Play,* ed. Kristine Jørgensen and Faltin Karlsen (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018), 215.
[325] Greg Costikyan, *Uncertainty in Games* (USA: MIT Press, 2013), 49.
[326] Ibid.

diverse. In fact, during this performance, the seemingly *unsuccessful* triggering activities elicited much response from other spectator-participants, meaning the exploration expanded beyond the objective of triggering the performer. Instead, spectator-participants started to collaborate and develop activities in connection with each other, which the comment in Fig. 21 exemplifies.



Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

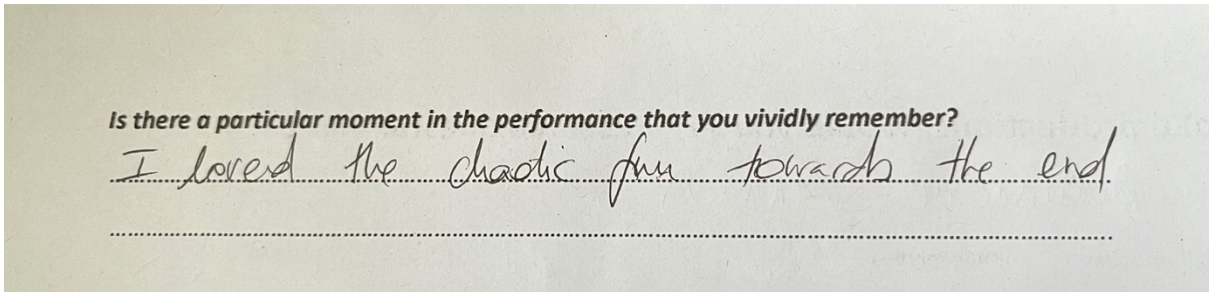
When we played the instruments and were playful with each other.

Do you feel you were able to contribute creatively the piece?

moderately, however my contributions were quite spontaneous and random

Fig.21: *Would You#1* (2019): Audience Feedback. Questionnaire WY 14/12 – 12. Available in Appendix 4.1 – *Would You #1 Audience Feedback.* A member of the audience highlights the emergence of collaboration amongst spectator-participants

The emergent system employed in this scene strongly contributed to a sense of play in the group, and as described above, resulted in the experience of ‘chaotic fun’ (see Fig. 22).



Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

I loved the chaotic fun towards the end

Fig.22: *Would You#1* (2019): Audience Feedback. *Questionnaire WY 14/12 – 4* - Available in Appendix 4.1 – *Would You #1 Audience Feedback.* A member of the audience highlights the emergence of “chaotic fun”.

Inverting the ideal condition of clear rules in emergent systems can encourage exploration but depends on the presence of feedback loops that reward spectator-

participants with a sense of agency. Ball has described how the lack of a clear feedback loop has contributed to a sense of frustration in some spectator-participants during *Fight Night*.[327] A lack of understanding as to how one's own actions contribute to the larger performance narrative can hamper motivation to explore. In *Would You#1,* spectator-participants highlighted the sense of play that emerged when the performer or other spectator-participants responded to personal contributions, as well as pointing to an emerging sense of community due to these playful interactions.

To summarise, emergent systems within participatory performances seem particularly suitable for the facilitation of explorative and playful activities and responses. They might offer easier access of the experience of *flow* and hence a greater risk of losing awareness of others. Also, the absence of clear rules prevalent in emergent system means that boundaries of participation are not as clearly determined but often emerge through explorative participation or by establishing a collaborative code of conduct. The potential for such code of conduct to emerge after unspoken rules or behavioural expectations have been transgressed against makes emerging systems particularly liable for the experience of transgression and/or dissensus.

6.3.2 Competition and contests

Competitive systems or elements of contest raise the stakes for spectator-participants considerably and can conjure behaviours that are, or come across as, transgressive for others. I here include competition and contests in a discussion of overarching systems although often competitive activities occur in scenes or individual moments. Exit Productions' *Fight Night* could be considered to employ an overarching competitive system as spectator-participants are split into two groups, affiliated with one boxer or the other. And although spectator-participants ultimately also try to gain points for themselves, their objective and permitted activities are related to this affiliation. Of course, a distinction between game and play is often made via the competitive elements found within the activity. Chris Crawford, for example, names

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[327] Please refer to Appendix 1 – *Interview With Joe Ball 20 March 2019*, 222.

conflict as an inherent element appearing in all games.[328] Similarly, Sutton-Smith and Avedon's definition of games states that it is 'a contest between powers'.[329] For Salen and Zimmerman, 'all games embody a contest of powers. The contest can take many forms, from cooperation to competition, from solo conflict with a game system to multiplayer social conflict. Conflict is central to games'.[330] It is hard to distinguish clearly between 'contest' and 'competition' as often the two words are used interchangeably. In terms of their ludic functionality, they both belong to Caillois' category of *Agôn,* which designates competitive play. This sees players do their best to win 'by playing within the behavioral boundaries set by the system of the rules'.[331] A competition or contest implies something to be competitive against and I argue that the desire to *win* or *be better* has the potential to give rise to transgressive behaviour. This transgressive behaviour can be directed against either participatory structure or other spectator-participants and is fed by a desire to dominate in the achievement of an ulterior goal. Competitive systems or activities immediately affect how individual spectator-participants or subgroups within the participating community relate to each other. In computer games, winning against various intra-ludic opponents is often how a player proceeds to the next level, meaning that competition often functions alongside instant feedback loops. For Csikszentmihaly, instant feedback on progress is one of the determining conditions for entering a state of *flow*. One could therefore argue that a competitive element might well lead spectator-participants to enter a state of flow, and with such state, also experience a loss of self-consciousness.

My research performance *Trailed* aimed to test this hypothesis and used a pseudo-competitive structure as well as activities of contest in individual scenes. Spectator-participants were spilt into two teams, and a score sheet awarded them points for group activities throughout the performance. However, the criteria for the scores were not revealed; instead, I wanted to test how the simple presence of a score sheet ignited the spectator-participants competitive spirits, and how this in turn would affect their contributions throughout the performance.

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[328] Chris Crawford, *The Art of Computer Game Design* (California: Osborne/McGraw-Hill).
[329] Elliott Avedon, and Brian Sutton-Smith, eds., *The Study of Games* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1971), 405.
[330] Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman, *Rules of Play: Game design fundamentals* (London: MIT Press, 2004), 80.
[331] Ibid., 308.

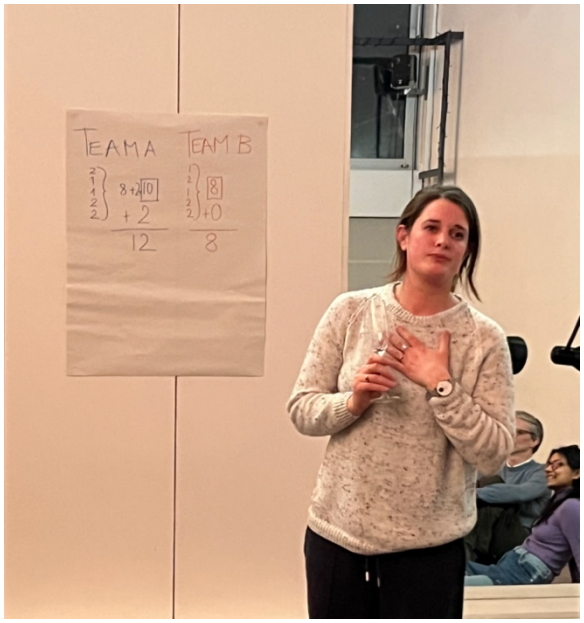

Fig. 23: *Trailed* (2023): Obscure feedback loop and score system in *Trailed*.

As previously discussed, the obscurity of the point scoring system in *Trailed* meant spectator-participants soon disengaged from it. Nevertheless, audience feedback did seem to confirm that the presence of a feedback loop consisting of scores ignited a competitive spirit at least at the beginning. For one spectator-participant, the ability to gain points offered 'more motivation to participate'.[332] Another stated that 'when points are involved it can shift the mindset of participants and turns a dramatic character into a more *playable* avatar with a goal we are trying to fulfil (earning more points)',[333] indicating that 'earning more points' could potentially become more important than ethical considerations for the character. Interestingly, my conviction that a competitive structure immediately changes how spectator-participants or groups of such relate to each other was confirmed by this participant, who states that 'even if there were no points that [*sic*] fact that we were two separate groups and head to head made it competitive'.[334] Most tellingly, even though only 20% of the participants felt the scoring sheet affected their behaviour, 60% wanted their team to win (see Fig. 24).

[332] Please refer to Appendix 6.1- *Trailed* Audience Feedback - 4 February 2023.
[333] Ibid.
[334] Ibid.

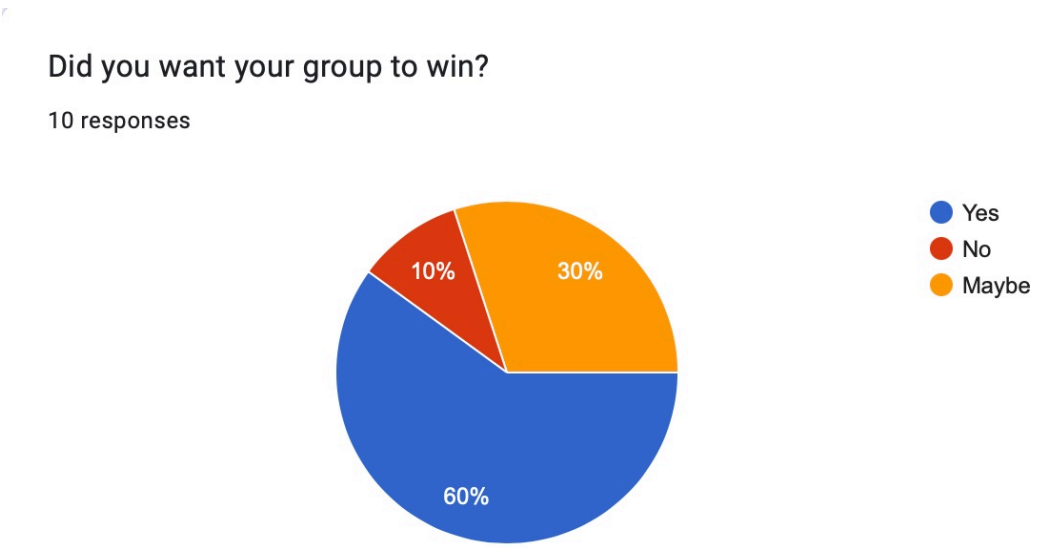

Fig. 24: *Trailed* (2023): Feedback questionnaire for *Trailed*. The majority of the audience wanted to “win”.

This could be interpreted in two ways: first, 50% of the participants felt that they connected ‘*much’* to ‘*very much’* with their fellow team members, which might imply that a shared sense of solidarity amongst group members contributed to a desire to *be better* or *win* against opponent teams. Second, the competitive structure may not have affected the actual contributions of spectator-participants, but seem to have affected their experience, by, as postulated, igniting a competitive spirit. Admittedly, in *Trailed*, this competitive spirit, although it seems to have introduced a greater sense of flow for some, rarely led to transgressive responses towards other spectator-participants. I believe that the team set-up fostered greater connectivity to each other, which was exemplified in the probably most explicitly competitive activity, which occurred during Act 2, Scene 1.

Let's play a game – as you can see, I now know some of my story. But from here things get a little fuzzy. But you can help me figure it out. You can lay it out in neat lines. Create clear corners.

So I will tell you what I know,

But I will also ask you questions, and you will answer these, with a simple yes or no.

But life is a gamble, right? So, you can win points. I wouldn't want you to get involved without gaining anything from it, right?

To win points, the two teams will once again play against each other –gather behind your table; take a moment to choose the fastest person in the group.

Ok. You are fast. Are you sure? Place yourself behind this bell, two steps away from it.

The person who rings the bell first, will be able to answer my question. The team of the person answering the question, will get a point.

Remember the answers can only be 'yes' or 'no'

The team with the most points, is the winner of this section . . . .

Any questions? Are you ready? Listen out for the questions. They will appear.

Fig. 25: *Trailed* (2023): Script extract for *Trailed*: instructions given to Spectator-participants for the game in Act 2, Scene 3.

In this scene, the teams selected one of their own to compete against the other team's candidate, by trying to hit a table bell as fast as possible in order to score a point but also make a decision in relation to the character's life. I here wanted to test if a focus on the competitive element within this activity would over-ride an awareness of the actual content of the narrative, and hence affect what type of decision is made. The questions ranged from key milestones and potentially formative events in early adulthood, with examples given in Fig. 26 below.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Did my parents' divorce? . . . . . *(in entertainer mode)*

YES	**NO**

Hesitates in answering

Actually can I come back to the previous question . . . .

You know I think you do not know what loneliness is until you really experienced loneliness. It is one of those words that is so often used – like depression.

In a mocking tone 'I am depressed' – like, really . . do you know what that means for those who really can't get out of bed?

Loneliness is lethal. Like, it literally can kill. Until you have experienced that, I don't think you know what loneliness is. Stop talking about it.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Did I get sacked from my first job, prepping salad in the local Caf? . . . . . *(in entertainer mode)*

YES	**NO**

Sorry. Really, that was just a shit job. What can I say.

Fig. 26: *Trailed* (2023): Script extract of *Trailed*, Act 2, Scene 3

Fig. 27: *Trailed* (2023): Performance extract: *Trailed,* Act 2, scene 3.

In feedback, this scene was mentioned as one of the most memorable, partly because the answers instantly affect the character's life story. In playtests as well as in performance, this scene would elicit strongly competitive attitudes by the two players aiming to ring the bell first. In playtests, which were held with only two or four players, this led at times to ad-hoc 'yes' or 'no' answers without considering how these answers

would affect the character. However, in the performance, both representatives turned to their team to answer the question collectively.

In post-performance discussion, the representatives admitted focusing so much on winning they did not listen to the words, relying on the team to make the informed decision, whilst also feeling a certain responsibility to offer their team a chance to contribute to the decision. One could argue that therefore, in both play tests and performance, winning (ringing the bell first) took priority over making an informed/considered decision for the character. Nevertheless, a feeling of solidarity towards their team meant that during the performance, representatives rarely answered *on behalf* of their team. Instead, they allowed a somewhat collective choice process to occur, and therefore reducing their own responsibility to solely winning the point/opportunity for the team to answer the question. In this set-up, a competitively driven transgression towards other spectator-participants or the competitive system per se did not occur; instead, one could argue that a transgressive attitude was shown collectively towards the character.

Nevertheless, I postulate that competitive structures and activities rooted in contest have a strong potential to give rise to transgressive responses or the experience of transgression. Competition and contest provide an immediate feedback loop, which can enhance the sense of flow and lead to self-immersion and hence a reduced awareness of how personal contributions and decisions affect other spectator-participants, performers, or the overall participatory world. Aspects of competition and contest immediately affect how spectator-participants situate themselves against the participatory system as well as other spectator-participants or groups of such within. Competitive systems have the potential to embolden those spectator-participants that, in real-life, have competitive tendencies or enjoy activities of contests. Equally though, competition and contest in participatory performance seems also able to reduce a willingness to compete or cause a sense of discomfort in those participants who do *not* possess such tendencies. It is in this oppositional and contradictory effect that the experience of dissensus and activities of transgression/an overlapping of one's own *horizon of transgression* might occur.

6.3.3 Collaborative systems and collaborative decision making

Whereas most participatory performances have an element of collaboration, I focus my discussion on performances that rely almost exclusively on spectator-participants collaborating *amongst themselve*s to either produce creative materials for the show or progress through pre-conceived performance materials. Olga Kozar states that 'collaboration (…) implies direct interaction among individuals to produce a product and involves negotiation, discussions, and accommodating others' perspectives'.[335] I am particularly interested in those performances where verbal negotiations and discussions are the primary means through which spectator-participants arrive at a collaborative decision or outcome. Like competition and contest, a collaborative system could design an overall performance approach or be used to structure individual scenes or isolated activities. There is a strong correlation between emergent systems and collaboration since emergent systems almost entirely depend on a participating audience's ability and willingness to collaborate with each other. In Coney's *Early Days (Of A Better Nation)* (2014), collaboration is utilised according to the understanding of Kozar, and the performance, which imagines the participants as survivors within post-apocalyptic worlds, divided into three separate factions, is constructed via debates, discussions and decision-making processes. With audiences having to make a series of decisions on how to unite the country and recreate a stable socio-political and financial order, the performance 'explores how we might organise ourselves and society, questions what democracy really is and, once again, puts the audience at the heart of the work'.[336] The activities of the audience are structured along different points of convergence, when the factions come together to share their decisions, offer suggestions and start a negotiation process that involves the overall participating community. Rules for these interactions were not explicit, except during timed instances where the three groups were brought together. The collaborative activity in between these points of convergence therefore operated very much like an emergent system: spectator-participants negotiated those rules that, explicitly or implicitly *emerged* from within their respective participatory communities. Such rule-

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[335] Olga Kozar, "Towards Better Group Work: Seeing the Difference Between Cooperation and Collaboration," *English Teaching Forum 2* (2010): 17.
[336] Lyn Gardner, "Early Days (of a Better Nation) review – your country and this play need you," The Guardian (18 November 2014) <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/nov/18/early-days-of-a-better-nation-review-coney>

building is strongly affected by the individual participants' ability to contribute to such activities and debates. Furthermore, an experience of these rules, and when they might have been trespassed against, is dependent on everyone's own *horizon of transgression*. As Liz Tomlin described, for her, this resulted in 'disparate and singular acts of resistance'.[337] She referred to an instance when a participant who, when the group had to decide how to distribute financial tokens amongst public services, grabbed all available tokens. In a 'carnivalesque echo of the purchase of public services by private business initiated in the UK by the Thatcher government',[338] he then placed them on the hospital mark and announced that he was now the owner of a privatised health service. In the absence of any clear given rules for codes of conduct in this context, this spectator-participant's response may well be appropriate. Receiving his action as acceptable/non-acceptable depends on how it is experienced by those who witnessed it and were directly affected by it. Pötzsch's key characteristics of a transgressive activity as *subjectively experienced by situated individuals* and it being *relative to momentarily prevailing conventions, values, and norms* comes to the fore here.[339] In the absence of given rules that structure the inter-personal relationships evolving within participatory tasks, spectator-participants may interact in a more diverse, chaotic manner. A shared understanding of acceptable/non-acceptable acts might therefore be harder to reach. As Salen and Zimmerman underline, 'uncertainty is a key component of every game'.[340] Collaborative systems and activities such as the ones employed in *Early Days* carry aspects of emergence and therefore have greater potential for uncertainty in what types of responses are evolving. Therefore, they may result in greater variations in how spectator-participants experience the participatory world, which of course can give rise to the experience of transgression as well as dissensus. This was exemplified in the collaborative process in answering the questions in *Trailed* Act 2, Scene 1, as described above. Audience feedback showed that, even if decisions were made collectively, not all spectator-

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[337] Liz Tomlin, "'Constellations of singularities': the rejection of representative democracy in Coney's Early Days (of a better nation)," *Studies in Theatre and Performance,* v. 36, no. 1 (2015): 27.
[338] Ibid., 31.
[339] Holger Pötzsch, "Forms and Practices of Transgressivity in Videogames: Aesthetic, Play and Politics," in *Trangression in Games and Play,* ed. Kristine Jørgensen and Faltin Karlsen (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018), 47.
[340] Katie Salen, and Eric Zimmerman *Rules of Play: Game design fundamentals* (London: MIT Press, 2004), 189.

participants agreed with the final choice. In the questions offered during this scene, spectator-participants seemed to navigate personal experience, ethical choices and the desire to develop a performatively interesting narrative for the character. Some participants described a tension between an ethical consideration for the character and the desire to develop a more complex narrative: 'I was interested in the characters' lives and not making it to [sic] difficult whereas others wanted an interesting, complicated story'.[341] The keyed frame of the performance becomes translucent as one's own real-world beliefs and perspectives are questioned, tested or challenged within the fictional world. Although the decision is being made collectively, a final answer nevertheless at times uncomfortably overlapped individual spectator-participants personal *horizon of transgression* and *moral compass*. The demographic of the audience seems to have contributed to this complexity, as described in this spectator-participant's comment about a memorable moment during *Trailed*: 'When we could not decide if her first sexual encounter was fully consensual: The men felt her boyfriend might have forced himself on her, the women that she was in control'.[342] Making decisions on behalf of the character in *Trailed* seemed to challenge the audience to consider their own positioning to similar decisions or experiences in their lives. This was particularly acute in the game in *Trailed* Act 3, Scene 1. Here, spectator-participants find themselves having to represent either the character, or those that impact the character's life. They collaborate in their teams to decide on a suggested action for each character. In post-performance feedback, some spectator-participants expressed how the teams' collaborative decision-making process at times felt precarious as their real-life opinion and experiences could be revealed in the discussion and debates. One participant described how their disagreement with the rest of the group moved them 'outside of the pack',[343] making them feel excluded and uncomfortable. The tension between a desire to affect the narrative and deciding according to one's own real-life convictions and morals already experienced by some in the previous game was mentioned here again, as: 'we did have some discussion around whether we should choose based on our desire to shape the story, or on the basis of morality/doing the right thing'.[344] Additionally, some group members admitted

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[341] Please refer to Appendix 6.1- *Trailed* Audience Feedback - 4 February 2023.
[342] Ibid.
[343] Ibid.
[344] Ibid.

that at times their team made the decision 'in relation to what we anticipated the other team might vote',[345] indicating that the opportunity to gain points here also affected the decision-making process. Most strikingly, in *Trailed* as well as *Early Days* (and other performances that use collaborative activities in the form of debates and discussions) it seems that a great part of the collaboration is spent on deciding *how* to collaborate. One spectator-participant found notable how her group 'navigated disagreement; the increasing lean into voting as a mechanism for reaching decisions'.[346] Of course, *Early Days'* overall artistic concept is based on an investigation into how society organises themselves and how democratic systems are formed to aid with decision-making processes. In my research, I have come across several performances that have employed collaborative systems in order to explore potentially contentious social and political themes; for example, Kaleider's *The Money* (2013) where audiences debate how to spend a real pot of cash, or Exit Productions *The Mission* (2019), where audiences decided, in a similar structure to *Early Days*, how humanity develops a colony on planet Mars.

To summarise, *collaborative systems and activities* carry aspects of emergence and therefore may result in greater variations in how the participatory world is experienced. This is because collaborative systems and activities often thin the separation between extra-ludic and intra-ludic world beliefs, causing an individual spectator-participant to not just navigate the perspectives of other participants, but also her own. Collaborative systems rely on the ability to make compromises, and therefore have the potential to reduce a sense of agency from the spectator-participants' experience. Additionally, collaborative systems seem often to be deployed to mirror real-world social or political activities and expose audiences to themes that may well elude a variety of responses and beliefs. The likelihood of experiencing transgression and dissensus therefore comes to the fore.

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[345] Ibid.
[346] Ibid.

6.3.4 Triggering

Triggering is understood to happen when spectator-participants trigger a performer's pre-set movements or activities and, by doing so, can *choreograph* or *direct* the final sequential progression of creative material. Triggering is therefore instruction-based and comparable to a command feature in a digital or web-based computer game. In participatory performance, the options of how a spectator-performer triggers performers' activities are vast, but in movement-based performance, can serve as an aid to encourage the participating audience to move or become physically involved themselves. Hagit Yakira, Vanessa Grasse as well as Tino Sehgal have used forms of triggering in their work. In one section of Sehgal's *These Associations* (2012), a performer's pathway is determined by keeping a triangular configuration in space with two other performers, who, in turn, have chosen a triangular configuration with another two performers, leading to a 'shifting and changing web'[347] of moving bodies, triggering and being triggered by others. Triggering creates an immediate connection between those who trigger and those who are being triggered. On one hand this allows for creative exploration as spectator-participants reconfigure triggerable elements afresh, again and again. On the other hand, it can create a hierarchy: the spectator-participant commands and instructs the performer, which potentially gives room for transgressive and potentially abusive *triggering attitudes.*

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[347] Antje Hildebrandt, "Participation and Spectatorship in Tino Sehgal's These Associations," *Choreographic Practices* v.6, no. 2 (2015): 251-259.

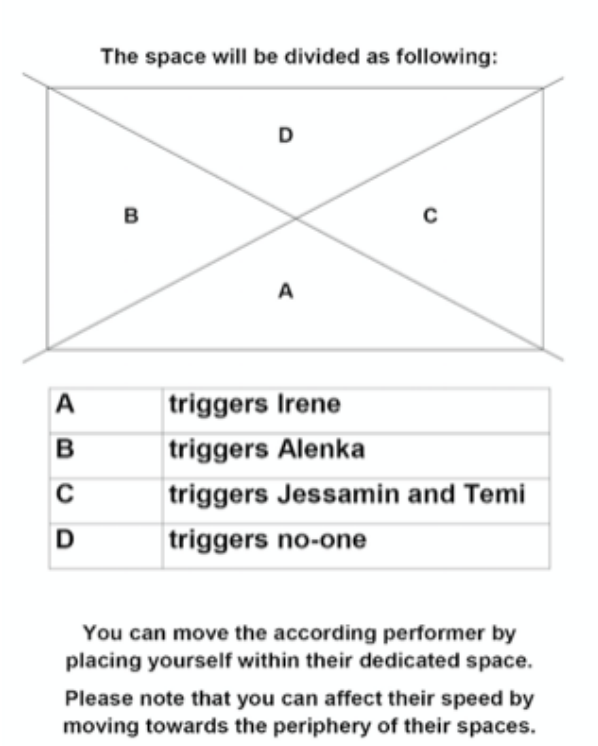

Fig. 28: *Hey There* (2012): example of the use of triggering in dance performance.

I conducted early experiments in using movement in space to trigger performers during *Hey There* (2012), a project that ultimately inspired my PhD research focus. A floor map was given to the audience, indicating in what spaces they could trigger which dancers. The aim was for spectator-participants to have a collective responsibility for constructing the final choreography, whilst also acting as travelling bodies alongside the performers. An interactive program informed spectator-participants how they can trigger the performers. I further explored triggering as a tool for transgression during a workshop with 3rd year theatre students at the University of Essex, on 4 February 2020, in order to compare how effective triggering methods would be within a more theatrical setting as opposed to a movement-based one.

My research experiment included simple improvised scenes performed by two student performers. The two performers were each given a separate instruction of three short actions/responses, numbered 1, 2 or 3. The rest of the workshop participants could trigger these short actions and/or responses by calling out the name of the performer and one of the numbers. The actors had to incorporate the triggered action/response into the scene. Once spectator-participants understood what number triggers what action/response, they triggered the improvisors with glee, repeatedly interrupting the improvisation. Big physical and audible triggered actions, such as the sneeze or yawn, were triggered the most. In post-workshop discussion, it was revealed

that the audience were amused and entertained not so much by the actions themselves, but by how their incorporation interrupted improvisors in the delivery of the scene.

Improvisation scenario: two people on a first date

Person 1:

1 – forget what you were trying to say

2 – have a massive sneeze

3 – disagree with what your partner is saying

Person 2:

1 – have the biggest yawn

2 – declare your everlasting love in a subtle way

3 – scratch your head and inspect your fingernails afterwards

Fig. 29 Research Workshop: Instructions and video material for research workshop at the University of Essex, February 2020.

The triggering system challenged the performers' ability to multi-task and spectator-participants purposefully used the triggering commands to disrupt the flow of the improvisation and provoke awkward moments for the performers. Spectator-participants employed a transgressive *triggering attitude* as the main objective behind the triggering commands was to interrupt, highlighting the hierarchical imbalance a triggering system can affect.

In *Would You #1* (2019), I explored using vocal commands to trigger different effects on a continuously performed movement phrase. The audience was able to trigger different responses (for example stop and start), adjustments to the execution of movement (slower or faster) or additional elements (screaming or going to hug the person calling out the demand). Unlike in the research workshop, here audiences

triggered responses to elicit a choreographic manipulation of the original phrase. In post-show questionnaires, larger and more interruptive trigger commands, for example the scream, were identified as the most memorable moments in this section. However, these responses were triggered rarely. In discussion afterwards, it was confirmed that the calm music played during this section strongly affected the way spectator-participants related to the performer, resulting in a considered and empathetic triggering attitude.

Fig 30. *Would You #1*(2019): Example of verbal triggering

To conclude, triggering is a participatory device that instantly develops a hierarchical structure between those who trigger and those who respond to the triggers. For those who trigger, it can provide an instant feedback loop and result in an enhanced sense of agency. In my research, this has resulted in transgressive triggering attitudes that aim to challenge the performers' skill set. In *Would You#1*, however, audiences were acutely aware of the hierarchical power distribution, which resulted in a considered and careful triggering attitude. It was only in the later sections, when the triggering was part of an emergent system as described earlier in this section, when audiences started to be more experimental and playful not just with triggering the performer, but also each other. Having a less rigid triggering system adjusted the hierarchical power balance between spectator-participants and performer, as not all triggering activities triggered a response.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed participatory structures and conditions that seem suitable to facilitate transgression and/or the experience of dissensus and have

elaborated on the significance of site and internal structures in relation to the facilitation of transgressive responses and the emergence of dissensus. A key finding is that the external architecture and real-life usage of the performance space can strongly affect the possibility of transgression and/or dissensus to occur, whereas internal structures such as exploration as emergence, competition, collaborative decision-making as well as triggering have been found to be successful in giving rise for transgression and/or dissensus. These aspects are not guaranteed to give rise to transgressive responses or dissensus; neither are my findings conclusive and there are other participatory setups that have facilitated transgressive responses that I do not mention here.

I have previously discussed how participatory structures can be compared to an architecture with gaps that are being filled with audiences' responses and contributions. The above findings could be adapted to this analogy: it seems that, the larger these gaps are and the more interaction they require to be filled, the greater a possibility for transgression to occur. The process of emergence, which is 'the process through which a narrative pattern develops out of participants' interactions within the performance'[348] describes this process of "filling the gaps". Emergent systems that offer perceived agency and affordances to spectator-participants result in a less clearly defined set of rules. Their capability to facilitate an experiential multitude result in a greater potential for transgression/dissensus to occur or be experienced. It is important to note that the internal structures of exploration, competition, collaboration as well as triggering can sit within an emergent system. Emergence as concept rooted in indeterminacy, therefore appears as an underlying principle that can carry those conditions that are identified as being able to facilitate transgressive responses.

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[348] Astrid Breel. "Conducting creative agency: the aesthetics and ethics of participatory performance." (PhD diss., University of Kent, 2017): 62.

Chapter 7 – Spectator-participants and the participating community

7.1 Introduction to spectator-participants and the participating community

This chapter explores the effect of transgression and/or dissensus on members of the participating community. I will begin this chapter with an examination of individual spectator-participants as singular entities before turning my focus on the participatory community, which is being established via the intersubjective relationships between those who partake in the parameters of the work itself. As I have previously established, the ideal spectator-participant shows awareness and care towards others within this community.[349] Acts and experiences of transgression can strongly affect the intersubjective relationships in place, and I will articulate different types of non-ideal spectator-participants that might emerge in such context. I am inspired by Richard Bartle's taxonomy of player types in Multi-User Dungeon Games (MUD), namely Achiever, Explorer, Socialiser and Killer.[350] These types designate useful player characteristics that are applicable to a taxonomy of spectator-participant types. Bartle extended his own taxonomy to include explicit or implicit subcategories,[351] but I will concern myself mainly with the original types. Explorers (players that aim to find out as much as possible about the virtual world to experiment within given rules) and Killers (those that 'use the tools provided by the game to cause distress'),[352] most obviously correspond to assumed transgressive responses in participatory frameworks. This is because they align to the explorative or disruptive categories of transgression.[353] Similarly, Achievers (whose goal is to score points and attain levels), may involve themselves in transgressive activity due to an extended sense of competition.[354] Bartle's player characteristics have been a useful starting point in my considerations. I add to this typology by articulating five further spectator-participant

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[349] Please refer to 'Chapter 2.3.2'
[350] Richard A. Bartle, Hearts, Clubs, Diamonds and Spades: Players who suit MUDs, *MUD,* <https://mud.co.uk/richard/hcds.htm#:~:text=An%20easy%20way%20to%20remember,they%20hit%20people%20with%20them> (accessed 17 September 2023).
[351] Richard A. Bartle, "a Self of Sense," *Selfware 2003* < https://mud.co.uk/richard/selfware.htm> (accessed 16 August 2024).
[352] Richard A. Bartle, Hearts, Clubs, Diamonds and Spades: Players who suit MUDs, *MUD,* <https://mud.co.uk/richard/hcds.htm#:~:text=An%20easy%20way%20to%20remember,they%20hit%20people%20with%20them> (accessed 17 September 2023).
[353] Please refer to 'Introduction'.
[354] Please refer to 'Chapter 6.3.2'.

types that have emerged during my own research; namely Spoil-sports, Cheats, Jokers, Refuseniks and Wolves.

The final part of this chapter offers a rearticulation of the participating community within the context of my research and in response to the identified transgressive player types. A participating community is generally formed by the group of spectator-participants that attend any given participatory performance and are bound by the time and space conditions of the work. The global pandemic strongly challenged this bind, and participatory performances emerging during the pandemic, for example ZU-UK's *Project Perfect Stranger* (2020), used digital, (a)synchronous communication services to reconfigure the participatory community across the world and over different time zones. My own work, *ATTWOO*, explored how online and face-to-face communities might exist alongside each other. Whereas *ATTWOO* has strongly contributed to my articulation of the Wolf as transgressive spectator-participant type, it also has led to considerations of contagion, censorship, and the forming of allegiance within the participating community. WhatsApp has been previously identified as a potentially contagious participatory space.[355] I argue that in face-to-face participatory communities, the forming of subgroups via a sense of allegiance can occur in relation to the transgressive spectator-participant types and contribute to mechanisms of contagion and censorship.

Throughout the chapter, I am separating a discussion of the individual from a discussion of the group, although the two are inseparable. The findings emerging when focusing on the individual inevitably inform my discussion of the group and vice versa. Generally, my provocations stem from observations of small to mid-sized participating audiences, and my articulations are informed by responses received in discussions, questionnaires, and interviews after my PaR work. Simon Ellis' 'crowd of understanding' manifests here in the multiplicity of, at times, contradictory responses received, pointing to the experiential multiplicity that can emerge during transgression and/or dissensus.

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[355] Please refer to 'Chapter 5.5.1 - Considerations for practical methods applied for And Then There Was Only One'.

7.2 Coming together - The communal experience in participatory performance

Gareth White has described how the emotional state of an individual spectator affects their interpretation and contribution to a participatory work but stressed that they can equally be affected by the emotional states of their fellow spectator-participants.[356] Every participatory performance brings its unique constellation of audiences, and how other members of the spectator-participant community respond will significantly affect how individuals within this community respond in turn. This effect is an important process in the establishing of participatory communities and sub-groups. For White, being in the presence of others 'has a direct effect on cognition at the pre-noetic level'.[357] Thomas Fuchs and Hanne De Jaegher speak about how social interaction needs to be examined on a phenomenological level and describe 'participatory sense-making' as an ongoing, dynamic process.[358] For them, such 'participatory sense-making' is partly determined by dynamic elements, such as bodily resonance, coordination of gestures and facial and vocal expressions.[359] These contribute to an intersubjective awareness and a so-called *mutual incorporation* in the form of a common intercorporeality. The greater mobility and physical engagement usually asked from participatory performance audiences indicates more opportunities for audiences to engage in inter-subjective interactions of a kinetic kind. There is therefore a greater likelihood of mutual coordination and intercorporeality as well as a greater reliance on *each other* for social understanding and sense-making. An example of emergence of mutual incorporation can be found in my own performance *Would You #1.* A sole spectator-participant offered a hummed version of *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer* (see Fig 31). Soon after she was joined by most of the participating community. In this example, joining and mirroring the activity of one spectator-participant didn't just direct the kinetic and vocal contributions of a significant sub-group within the participatory community (those that joined in), it also led to a common social understanding and '*participatory sense-making'* that moved beyond the intra-ludic world, as the choice of song acknowledged the upcoming Christmas holidays.

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[356] Gareth White, *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 127.
[357] Ibid.
[358] Thomas Fuchs, and Hanne De Jaegher, "Enactive Intersubjectivity: Participatory Sense-making and Mutual Incorporation," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* v.6, no. 4 (2009): 465-486
[359] Ibid.

The intersubjective coordination was one shared by many, but at the same time, some individuals acknowledged others via eye-contact and smiling, therefore engaging in more than one intersubjective interaction.

Fig. 31: *Would You#1* (2019): Audiences spontaneously join each other to hum a rendition of Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer

It feels noteworthy that in participatory performance, audiences are more commonly described as *community*,[360] unlike in conventional and more traditional performances in theatre, dance and gallery art. The term emphasises a collective, shared responsibility, which perhaps encourages polite ways of participating, but also carries the meaning of "similarity" or "identity". This points to Adam Alston's conviction that generally, a spectator-participant will encounter like-minded individuals as fellow spectator-participants.[361] Of course, works such as Blast Theory's *Operation Black Antler* (2016), which asks participants to go undercover and infilter a group of people whose 'political and moral views may be the polar opposite',[362] creatively conceptualise the meeting of different demographics or socio-political communities. Nevertheless, participatory performance makers Stevens and Ball have commented that a key objective within their work is for audiences to be entertained, get along and enjoy the experience. For them, respect for the work and the artists involved is crucial. As Stevens says: 'you have to remember that these are also real people, and these

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[360] Please refer to G.H. Kester (2004), C. Bishop and M. Sladen (2008) and J. Harvie (2013).
[361] Adam Alston, "Audience participation and the politics of compromise," presented as part of *Forum on the Art of Participation.* University of Kent, 7 May 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-fSwKyAYRw> (accessed 28 December 2018).
[362] Blast Theory, *Operation Black Antler,* <https://www.blasttheory.co.uk/projects/operation-black-antler/> (accessed 19 June 2024).

are also real actors. […] They have a job to do'.[363] For De Koven, consideration for other people, inherent in his concept of "playing-well",[364] is the determining factor in

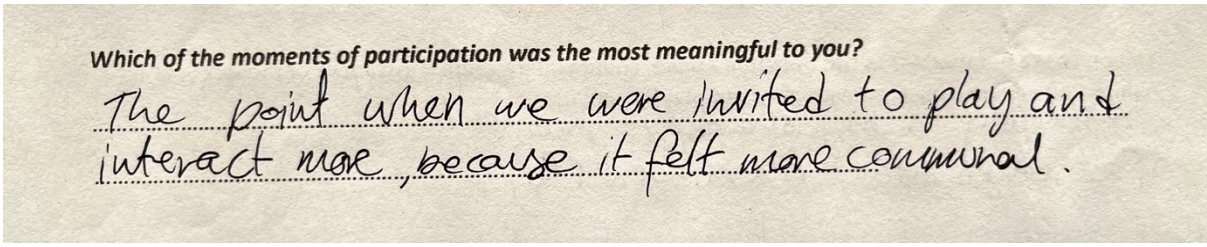
Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?
The point when we were invited to play and interact more, because it felt more communal.

Fig. 32: *Would You#1* (2019): Audience feedback from *Would You#1,* commenting on the communal experience.

the establishment of the community. For him, it is the community that determines what "playing-well" means in the context of the specific activity. De Koven circumvents Aarseth, and to a certain extent, Gadamer's convention that a game creates a tyrannical structure. For De Koven, games are meant 'to be bent, broken, and refashioned into something new', as he foregrounds the *communal experience* of bending, breaking or refashioning a game *together.*[365] In participatory works that employ emergent systems, such as *Would You#1* or Coney's *A Small Town Anywhere,* the absence of rules for moments of social interaction facilitates a similar sense of communal experience, as spectator-participants decide on interactive activities or construct a narrative together. Such communal experience is often perceived as meaningful (see Fig. 32) but is reliant on the *ideal spectator-participant*, one that is considerate, aware of others and somewhat literate with the conventions of participatory performance. Of course, the sense of *playing-well* gets easily broken if part(s) of the participatory community disagrees with *how* the game is bent, broken or refashioned and if an awareness of *the community* is absent or interrupted.

7.3 The non-ideal spectator-participant

Inverting my earlier description of the ideal spectator-participant[366] implies that a non-ideal participant might be female, uncivilised, uneducated, lacks interest in socio-

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[363] Please look at Appendix 2 – *Interview with Tassos Stevens* 25 March 2019, 239.
[364] Bernard De Koven, *The Well-Played Game: A Player's Philosophy* (USA: MIT Press, 2013).
[365] Ibid., xi
[366] Please refer to 'Chapter 2.3.2 Ideal Spectator-participants'.

political concerns and is illiterate in the conventions of participatory performance. My research has not confirmed these claims, although in my PaR performances, more female spectator-participants were observed in transgressive behaviour than male. However, it is outside the scope of this research to verify if and how gender identity effects a tendency for transgressive participatory responses. Examining a non-ideal spectator-participant from the perspective of the participating community clarifies that a non-ideal spectator-participant does not engage with aesthetic material in the way a maker and/or other participants have envisaged. Instead, the non-ideal participant exhibits disobedient or unruly behaviour towards the implicit or explicit rules found within the participatory work, exemplified by transgressive activities that disrupt or experiment with said rules. Additionally, a non-ideal spectator-participant acts in dissonance, or as Stevens understands it, disconnect from all or part(s) of the participatory community.[367] The transgressive player types of Bartle's MUD-derived taxonomy (Achiever, Explorer, and Killer),[368] align themselves with that perspective. The additional types of transgressive spectator-participants I identify, namely the Spoil-sport, the Cheat, the Joker, the Refusenik and the Wolf I describe further below.

7.3.1 Spoil-sports

Huizinga has elaborated on the concept of the Spoil-sport, who 'trespasses against the rules or ignores them',[369] and by doing so threatens the overall play-situation and the accompanying play-community. The Spoil-sport's non-compliance with or exit from the magic circle reveals 'the relativity and fragility of the play-world', potentially shattering and causing it to break down altogether.[370] Admittedly, in my PaR performances I have not come across Spoil-sports very often. This because Huizinga's description above implies an *intention* or clear objective in exiting or non-complying with the rules of a given participatory activity. In participatory performance, perhaps

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[367] Appendix 2 – Interview with Tassos Stevens 25 March 2019, 250.
[368] Hearts, Clubs, Diamonds and Spades: Players who suit MUDs, *MUD,* Richard Bartle, <https://mud.co.uk/richard/hcds.htm#:~:text=An%20easy%20way%20to%20remember,they%20hit%20people%20with%20them> (accessed 17 September 2023).
[369] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A study of the play-element in culture,* [s.l]: (Routledge & K. Paul Ltd, 1949), 11.
[370] Ibid.

because of aspects of the conditions of participating communities I have described above, this intent is often absent. Instead, I have observed a spectator-type that becomes designated as Spoil-sport by the by-standing and witnessing participatory community. This participatory type could therefore be named the *unaware* Spoil-sport, as they often do not fully comprehend the consequences of their actions, or indeed realise how much they might be s*poiling the game for others.* The spectator-participant in Exit Productions' *Fight Night,* disrupting the performance due to her belief that the boxing match was rigged, might be considered an unaware Spoil-sport, as in this instance, her sense of flow obscured her self-reflective assessment of her actions in relationship to others. This spectator-participant experienced ideal conditions in relation to her own experience. However, her participatory response severely ruptured the intra-ludic world for performers as well as spectator-participants immediately nearby. Her removal from the performance meant that the separation of the extra- and intra-ludic world got broken and resulted in a literal disconnect of her from the participatory community. Equally, those popping the balloons in a frenzy in *Balloons* may have come across as transgressive and as Spoil-sports for those responding with aversion to this particular loud-noise activity. Unaware Spoil-sports can become aware subsequently of how their activities might have transgressed towards others (see Fig. 33).

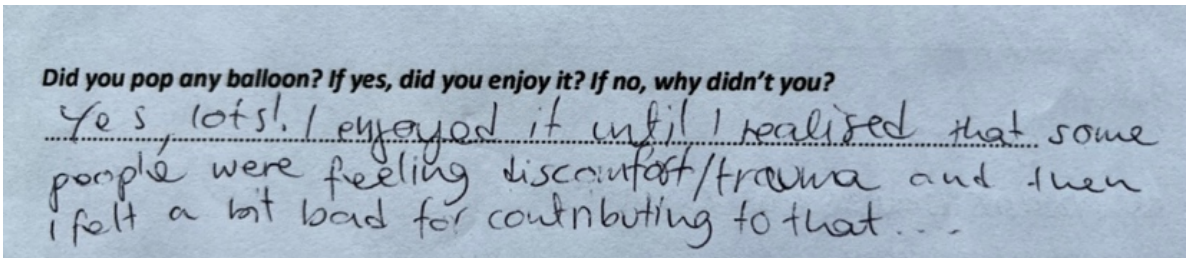
Did you pop any balloon? If yes, did you enjoy it? If no, why didn't you?
Yes, lots!. I enjoyed it until I realised that some people were feeling discomfort/trauma and then I felt a bit bad for contributing to that...

Fig. 33: *Balloons* (2019): Audience feedback from *Balloons,* exemplifying the unaware Spoil-sport.

7.3.2 Cheats

Generally, Spoil-sports affect the ideal conditions of engagement for others to such an extent that the separation between the intra- and extra-ludic realms become ruptured or broken. This is unlike the Cheat, who, by bending the rules, remains within the established participatory world. As both Huizinga and Consalvo assert, Spoil-sports are regarded differently than Cheaters; the Spoil-sport is 'guilty of defection' and has

to be outcast from the play-community, with little regard given as to why a player might interrupt, exit or refuse to enter a play situation (for the accusatory “you don’t dare” is also directed at the Spoil-sport).[371] However, Cheaters and those who have managed to *bend the rules* are often celebrated as ‘apostates, heretics, innovators, prophets, conscientious objectors, etc.’.[372] In digital gaming, a notable sub-culture of hacking has developed, with, as Aarseth explains, moments of game transgression not just being vilified as problematic or destructive, but in many cases ‘celebrated as important events’.[373] However, Aarseth also argues that a recently increased theoretical focus on transgressive, innovative and subversive player behaviour in digital games could be critiqued as ‘naïve, celebratory, misguided and romantic’, as it is questionable why, with most players simply playing according to the directions and rules of the game, the focus should be on the few who don’t.[374] In fact, Barton J. Bowyer considers cheating to be an integral part of society and culture, with aspects of cheating learnt early on in childhood games,[375] echoing Jean Piaget’s conviction that the recognition of transgressive play is a key stage in early childhood development.[376] For Bowyer, cheating is related to power, whereas Huizinga points out that many mythological heroes have won through trickery, with *outwitting* becoming a new ‘play-theme’.[377] Similarly, for Aarseth, transgressive behaviour as rebellion is motivated by a desire of the player to ‘regain their sense of identity and uniqueness’.[378]

In my own observations, cheating in participatory performances is driven by a desire to outwit or do better than other spectator-participants or performers, but is linked to an autotelic enjoyment rather than a real competitive objective. This sets the Cheater apart from Bartle’s player type of the Achiever, even though both thrive in competitive structures. In playtests as well as the performance of the second game in *Trailed*, when representatives of the two audience groups hit a bell to be able to gain a point,

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[371] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A study of the play-element in culture,* [s.l]: (Routledge & K. Paul Ltd, 1949), 11.
[372] Ibid, 12.
[373] Espen Aarseth, "I Fought the Law: Transgressive Play and the Implied Player," (Paper presented at DiGRA Conference, 2007), 132.
[374] Ibid., 131.
[375] Bowyer, J. Barton, *Cheating: Deception in war & magic, games & sports, sex & religion, business & con games, politics & espionage, art & science*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1982.
[376] Please refer to ‘Introduction III a): Play’
[377] [377] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A study of the play-element in culture* [s.l]: (Routledge & K. Paul Ltd, 1949), 52.
[378] Espen Aarseth, "I Fought the Law: Transgressive Play and the Implied Player," (Paper presented at DiGRA Conference, 2007), 132.

chosen spectator-participants often hit the bell before the appropriate cue in the script, leading to protest of the opposing group or the need of moderation from the performer.[379]

Fig. 34. *Trailed* (2023): Competitive cheating in *Trailed,* game 2, Act 2 Scene 1

Similarly, in the third game in *Trailed*, where the two groups decide the actions of either main character or pertinent other, a member of one group tried to eavesdrop the discussion of the other group, to be able to make a point-gaining decision.[380] Again, this was met with verbal protest from the other group. The cheating activity displayed in *Trailed seemingly* aimed to gain an advantage over other spectator-participants even though nothing could be won. In the playful competitive structures found in *Trailed,* cheating activities were not covert but done in jest. Accordingly, the cheating activity was met with light-heartedness by other spectator-participants. One therefore could understand such cheating activities to develop the intersubjective relationships in place between individuals as well as sub-groups within the participatory community. Nevertheless, the activity of cheating interrupted other spectator-participants or disrupted pre-conceived performance materials. Even though the intra-ludic world remained intact, during protest and moderation, the separation from the extra-ludic world was ruptured.

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[379] Please refer to Appendix 6 – *Trailed* Script, p.9.
[380] Please refer to Appendix 6 – *Trailed* Script, p.15.

7.3.3 Jokers

Jokers are spectator-participants who respond to the participatory framework with jest, satire, or a sense of ridicule. Jokers share aspects of the Explorer, in the sense that they experiment with or within the given rules, but often do so with irony and humour. Jokers are exemplified by their sense of playfulness and in general do not mean any harm. Their activities can be understood as transgressive as their experiments can lead to unconventional participatory responses. Equally, their humorous endeavours have the potential to overlap expectations of 'horizons of morals' of other spectator-participants.

In my research, Jokers were particularly active in the first game of *Trailed*. Spectator-participants, split in two groups, were asked to collectively decide upon identifying factors for the main character. Together, the spectator-participant groups chose first and last name, star sign, favourite colour, and favourite foods. Whereas the questions were consciously designed to be mundane, it was surprising how many unconventional responses emerged in playtests as well as performance. Received name suggestions for example ranged from 'Unic [SIC] Human', 'Sarah Fruitsalad' and 'Gladys Rocket-Road'.

Fig. 35: *Trailed* (2023): Spectator-participant groups deciding on identifying factors for main character.

Whereas in this scene, Jokers emerged collectively, in Act 4, Game 4, Jokers emerged through solitary responses. In this game, spectator-participants are encouraged to offer lifestyle and health advice to the main character (see Fig. 36). Whereas in general, sensible advice was given, such as the encouragement of taking up a yoga or meditation practice or to eat more vegetables, the main character was also encouraged twice to 'Join the Circus' or to 'Reject normal life and dress as an elephant whenever you are in a public place' (See Fig. 37). Jokers therefore emerge through solitary activities as well as through collaborative participatory tasks.

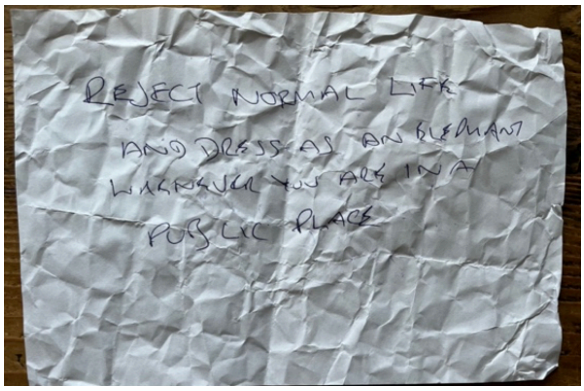
Entertainer:
Ladies and Gentlemen, here we are again, let's play another game.
I need your help. I need to sort myself out and try and live a happy, healthy and calmer life.

How do I do it? You tell me. Here is some paper and pen, please write your suggestions on a paper – one suggestion per paper please.

At this point, I am open for anything.
Here is a basket. Your aim is to get your suggestion into the basket; those suggestions in the basket will be applied in my life; what changes should I make? What little hacks or tips can you give someone to live a happy and healthy life?
Again, I will use those suggestions in the basket - But sorry, even if your suggestions lands in the basket, you will not get points for it – you are just helping out an old friend.

Music: *Washington Square* by The Village Stomper
MOVEMENT SECTION AND GAME 4: The character dances around the participants – they need to be able to throw their scrambled up pieces with suggestions into the basket.

Fig. 36. *Trailed* (2023): Extract of Script Act, 4, Scene 1 (Game 4)– asking for lifestyle advice



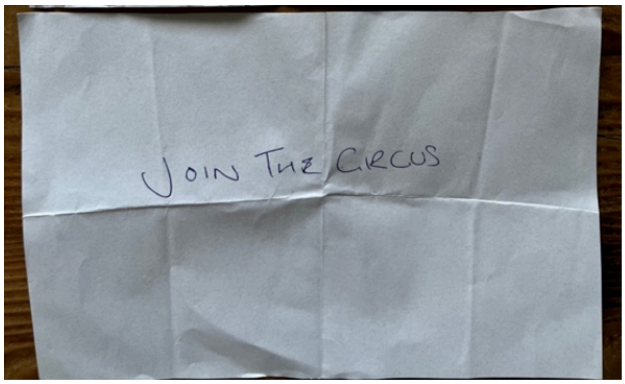
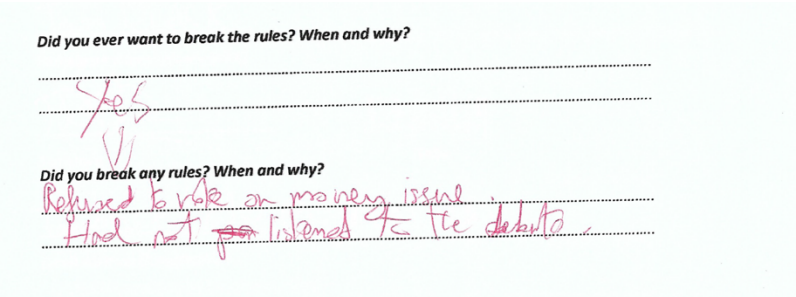


Fig. 37. *Trailed* (2023): Act, 4, Scene 1 (Game 4) – Examples of received lifestyle advice.

7.3.4 Refuseniks

The Refusenik, albeit similar to the Spoil-sport, differentiates themselves by opting out of one or more activities within the participatory performance world, making use of any explicit or implicit opt-out opportunities available. Unlike the Spoil-sport, the Refusenik's non-compliance may go unnoticed by all or most other spectator-participants. Instead, the refusal to partake may well be a silent, perhaps personal insurgence, which may be conducted in the spirit or regaining an element of control as described above. Refuseniks often consciously turn themselves into onlookers and witnesses, and at times seem to organically form a sub-group within a participatory work; something which was observed in *Balloons*, where those participants who refused to pop balloons, stood together watching those who did. At times, Refuseniks have the potential to bring the participatory performance experience of others to an end. My own partaking in ZU-UK's *Project Perfect Stranger,* discussed in 'Chapter 3.2.2', was terminated by the refusal of my 'perfect stranger' to uphold the conversation. However, refusing to participate or comply with requested activities may offer an individual, personalised autotelic experience, giving much satisfaction without it being noticed or having an effect on others or the participatory world as a whole. This was the case in *ATTWOO* in which several audiences consciously chose not to engage with the WhatsApp space, and instead enjoyed watching those that did.

Refuseniks at times refuse or don't comply with activities not due to a transgressive intention, but because of feelings of unfamiliarity with the activities or an insecurity in relation to rules or expectations implicit in the participatory framework. In Exit Productions' *Eco-Chambers*, the spectator-participant refused to vote due to not having had all the information available. For this spectator-participant, this was akin to a rule-breaking and therefore understood as transgressive activity (see Fig. 38).


Did you ever want to break the rules? When and why?

Yes

Did you break any rules? When and why?

Refused to vote on money issue

Had not ~~par~~ listened to the debate.

Fig. 38. Exit Productions *Eco-Chambers* (2019) – *A Refuseniks' explanation about non-compliance to participatory activity.*

Refuseniks can also emerge in response to a perceived risk in the participatory framework. Alice O'Grady defines a risk as 'a threat to a person's well-being that comes from the crossing of a symbolic, social, safety, or legal boundary'.[381] A refusal to partake might steam from a necessity of the spectator-participant to circumvent a perceived threat to the above boundaries. As White elaborates: 'real risks […] is not what prevents people from participating. It is perception of the risks by the individual that leads to conscious and unconscious choices about how and whether to participate'.[382] Such refusal to participate might result in a public display of non-compliancy, or consist of solitary, unnoticed acts of resistance. In *Trailed*, such solitary, unnoticed acts of resistance emerged in the final game, in Act 5, Scene 1.[383] Audiences were asked to decide upon the medical termination of the character's pregnancy, by writing a simple 'yes' or 'no' on pieces of paper. In playtests and the final performance, some spectator-participants refused to decide.

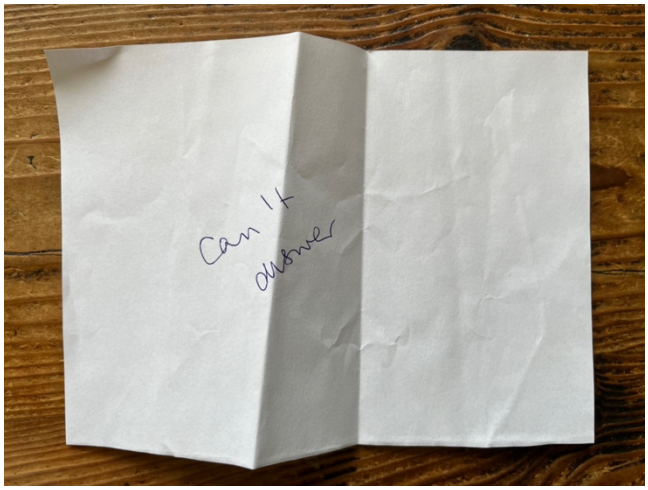


Fig 39. *Trailed* (2023): Refusenik – example of refusal to comply the instructions of the participatory activity.

In subsequent audience feedback, most of the spectator-participants identified this game to be the 'least enjoyable'.[384] The reasons that were given ranged from it being a 'traumatic subject' to it 'not having been discussed'.[385] One spectator-participant stated: 'I didn't contribute to the question of aborting the child - this felt too big a

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[381] Alice O'Grady, *Risk, Participation, and Performance Practice: Critical Vulnerabilities in a Precarious World* (Leeds: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 59.
[382] Gareth White, *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 81.
[383] Please refer to Appendix 6 – *Trailed* Script, p.24-25.
[384] Please refer to Appendix 6.1 - *Trailed* Audience Feedback - *4 February 2023*
[385] Ibid.

decision to put into anyone else's hands and I enjoyed that the participants' choices were never read!'.[386]

And finally, the non-compliance of the Refusenik does not necessarily mean they have stopped participating. Only the Refusenik who leaves the participatory framework has the potential to break such framework, which occurred in my own experience during *Project Perfect Stranger.* In my research, most instances of non-compliance were committed in relation to separate participatory activities. An act of non-participating remains an act sitting within the overall framework, As Sruti Bala explains, 'the omission itself becomes a form of commission through its processual, embodied effects'.[387] Refusing to participate in specific participatory activities can therefore 'cover a range of expressive forms of leaving out or non-doing'.[388]

7.3.5 Wolves

The Wolf as transgressive spectator-participant type emerged from my PaR instance *ATTWOO* and is inspired by adjacent readings of Jussi Parikka as well as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The initial hunch for *ATTWOO* postulated that the use of (a)synchronous social networks in participatory performance can enhance a sense of community, contribute to the forming of solidarity and lead to contagious, potentially transgressive behaviour. WhatsApp, as discussed in 'Chapter 5.5.1' affords a particular type of interaction as its functions, such as end-to-end encryption or the join-via-invitation group feature, contribute to its reputation of being a relatively anonymous, safe space. My articulation of the Wolf as transgressive spectator-participant type emerges from aligning the experience of being part of a WhatsApp chat group to the concept of 'becoming-wolf' as articulated by Deleuze and Guattari.[389]

I will discuss three key aspects of becoming-wolf that shed light on how contagious responsivity, and the Wolf as spectator-participant type, may develop. Firstly, Deleuze and Guattari state 'We do not become-animal without a fascination for the pack, for

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[386] Ibid.
[387] Sruti Bala, *The Gestures of Participatory Art* (UK: Manchester University Press, 2020): 89.
[388] Ibid.
[389] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism & Schizophrenia* (London: The Athlone Press, 1988).

multiplicity'.[390] A key aspect of becoming-wolf is the temporary finding of a group or pack or movement that shares the same or similar parameters for identification. Whereas such a multiplicity is essential for the process of becoming-wolf, communication is essential for forming the multiplicity. In *ATTWOO*, that temporary multiplicity was artificially created by adding all spectator-participants into a designated WhatsApp group; the sharing of information, creative content and tangential messages were all intended to enhance a feeling of familiarity and connectivity, which could be understood as developing a fascination with the pack.[391]

A second key aspect of the concept of becoming-wolf is to locate yourself at the periphery of the crowd but not leaving it. As Deleuze and Guattari state: 'The wolf […] is not a representative, a substitute, but an I feel. I feel myself becoming a wolf, one wolf among others, on the edge of the pack'.[392] It is essentially the experience of a private and personalised, autonomous process that relates but is separate to the pack, resulting in a personal positioning at the periphery of the group, pack or movement, without leaving it. WhatsApp's provision of instant connectedness to others whilst retaining relative privacy can provide the user with such an experience of autonomous agency within an interconnected multiplicity. It may result in a feeling of *being outside and yet part of* a movement, and that allows a greater fluctuation as to what degree one wants to be involved.

A third and final key aspect underlines that 'becoming is always a movement away from the molar, toward the molecular, away from the majority towards the minority, away from the oppressor and toward the oppressed'.[393] The "molar" can loosely be understood as the status quo, meaning that becoming-wolf is a process of identifying oneself within a molecular, as in an oppressed or minority grouping. The becoming-wolf might then really mean to become-wolf *against*. A move towards the molecular also consists of instituting a molar opposition, against which one's identification turns. The sharing of information, news, quests for solidarity or transgressive and activist content is therefore not just designed to designate the multiplicity one aligns oneself

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[390] Ibid., 105.
[391] Please refer to 'Chapter 5.5.1 - Considerations for practical methods applied for *And Then There Was Only One;*.
[392] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism & Schizophrenia* (London: The Athlone Press, 1988). 32.
[393] Ibid: 107.

to, but also that which is beyond; it designates the molecular just as it designates the molar. In *ATTWOO*, the character of the Speaker was designed to offer someone the WhatsApp-connected spectator-participant community could turn against. Her behaviour is condescending, demanding and inept, whilst movement pieces leaned towards the grotesque, such as when she transforms into an ant, (see Fig. 40) crawling on the floor to look for her glasses.

Fig.40: *And Then There Was Only One* (2022): the Speaker is turning into an ant, searching for her reading glasses on the floor

This was designed to facilitate responses directed against the speaker. Interestingly, in both performances, spectator-participants chose to ridicule the speaker in similar Scooby Doo GIF's, (see Fig. 41) which corresponds to Natalie Pang and Yue Ting Woo's suggestion that 'satirical memes, emojis, sarcasm, humour and metaphors' are key forms of communication via WhatsApp.[394]

[394] Natalie Pang and Yue Ting Woo, "What about WhatsApp? A systematic review of WhatsApp and its role in civic and political engagement," *First Monday* 25, no. 1 (2020) Accessed June 10, 2021. https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/10417

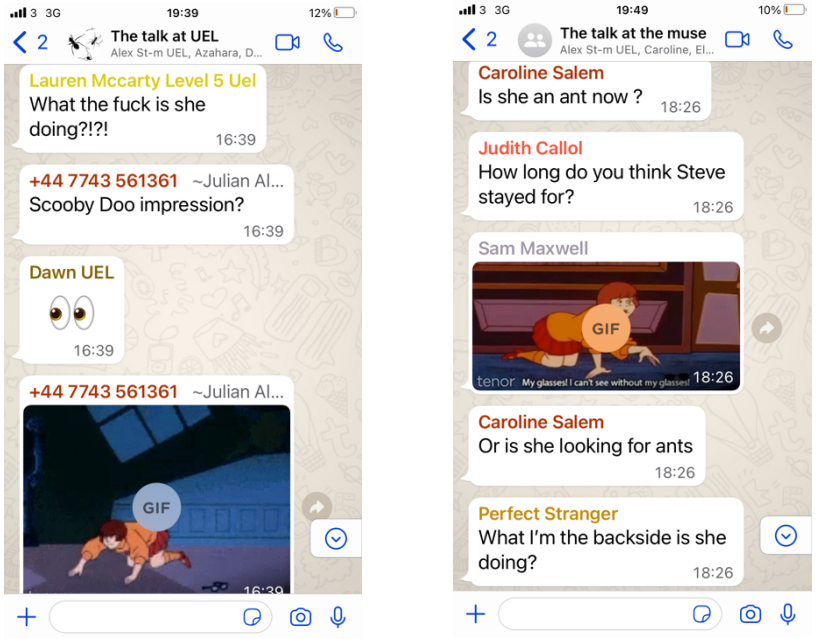

Fig. 41: *And Then There Was Only One* (2022): Responses to the ant scene in the WhatsApp chat show similarities in the use of *gifs* on both 30 April and 20 May 2022

The concept of becoming-wolf is not restricted to the digital realm. The temporary constellation of a participatory community in a studio can also be aligned to the temporary finding of a group or pack, whereas the conditions of the participatory framework offer parameters for a possibly shared identification and develop a fascination with the pack. I experienced becoming-wolf when participating in Exit Productions *Eco-Chambers* (2019).[395] I developed a rapport with another two players, discovering that all of us had withheld messages received from Williams, refuting her instruction to share those messages with all the participating community. Our refusal to contribute to the overall proceedings placed us at the periphery of the participating community but also created familiarity between us. As the participating community delivered a broadcast speech calling for an end of the street protest, the three of us decided to interrupt said speech, demanding for the violent activism to continue (see Fig.42). With the content of the final speech having been decided democratically, our call for continuous violence placed us in the molecular, or minority within the participating community. The broadcast and those who delivered it, on the other hand,

[395] Please refer to 'Chapter 3.2.1'.

became to represent the molar or status quo. In after-show discussion, we confirmed that we would not have had the courage to interrupt the broadcast had we acted alone. The familiarity that we felt towards each other after discovering that we had separately and independently responded in a transgressive way via WhatsApp to Williams, facilitated a contagious effect, ultimately leading to the collective transgressive interruption of the broadcast.

Fig.42: Exit Procutions *Eco-Chambers* (2019): The final broadcast in Eco-Chambers, when the participating community descendent into chaos due to in-fighting and conflicting opinions in relation to violent or non-violent activism

The spectator-participant types of Spoil-sport, Cheats, Jokers, Refuseniks and Wolves point towards particular styles of transgressive participation. Significantly, these types are not mutually exclusive, and often spectator-participants shift from one type to another in the same performance. In *Eco-Chambers,* my satirical WhatsApp message would place me into the Joker type, whereas the refusal to pass on messages to the overall participating community could be understood as the Refusenik. It was only when we became a pack that we turned into the Wolf type. Nevertheless, all types have the potential to shift the interpersonal relationships forming within an overall participating community.

7.4 Shifting allegiance - the participatory and participating community

On the 28 August 2023, a confrontation occurred during a performance of the musical *Grease* at the Dominion Theatre in London. Eight armed police ended up escorting

four audience members, who were called 'rude and abusive' by other spectators.[396] A YouTube video of the incident clearly shows the remaining audience suddenly erupting into cheering on the police and booing the exiting spectators,[397] with a police officer being seen to turn around 'giving a royal wave to the audience, prompting further applause.'[398] I offer this incident at the Dominion Theatre as an example of a self-conducting mechanism I have often observed in participatory audience groups and sub-groups and which I would like to use as a frame through which to consider participating audiences in the context of my research. The physical activity of jeering that erupted in the auditorium of the Dominion is an example of Fuchs and De Jaegher's intercorporeality, in which audience members coordinate their actions with each other, and therefore enter 'a process of embodied interaction and generating common meaning through it'.[399] As established earlier, this is an important part of forming the participatory community and subgroups within. However, the speed in which activities of cheering and openly expressing distain for the escorted spectators spread through the audience points to a contagious affect similar to the one described as relevant to the wolf spectator-participant type. Fuchs and De Jaegher's intercorporeality therefore not only leads to participatory sense-making, but it also contributes to self-censoring or contagious mechanisms in relation to transgressive responses.

During my research, I have observed how moments of intersubjective coordination and interaction lead to a sense of *allegiance*. Participatory performances are often constructed in a way that supports audiences in finding their sub-groups and audiences in *Would You #1* as well as *Trailed* have been divided in one or more groups. Allegiance-forming seems to occur easily in scenes that either employ collaborative or emergent systems, for example group discussions, collaborative, loosely structured, interactive tasks, or physical, rhythmical activity. Nevertheless,

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[396] Bethany Minelle, "Audiences behaving badly: An epidemic of anti-social behaviour in theatres, concerts and gigs," SkyNews, 2 September 2023, <https://news.sky.com/story/audiences-behaving-badly-an-epidemic-of-anti-social-behaviour-in-theatres-concerts-and-gigs-12952497> (Accessed 12 September 2023)

[397] YouTube, "Rowdy audience members removed by police from performance of Grease," *YouTube,* < https://youtu.be/90Ki3uSUMJI?si=1XCX3Rj3SyFy-4Cb > (Accessed 12 September 2023)

[398] Charlie Moloney, "London theatregoers escorted from Grease the Musical by police," The Guardian, (28 August 2023) <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/aug/27/theatregoers-escorted-from-grease-the-musical-in-london-after-disturbance> (Accessed 12 September 2023).

[399] Thomas Fuchs, and Hanne De Jaegher, "Enactive Intersubjectivity: Participatory Sense-making and Mutual Incorporation," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* v.6, no. 4 (2009): 465.

even in structured small group activity, the sense of allegiance can form spontaneously or in response to a particular activity or experience within the work. For example, the popping the balloons scene in *Balloons* caused immediate divisions within an audience, which had so far been fairly equally involved during a party scene. But immediate small-group allegiances were formed during the act of popping balloons. These were, as described by Fuchs and De Jaegher, strongly recognisable via the sub-groups' bodily resonance and coordination of gestures, facial and vocal expressions. Importantly, the small-group allegiances were also formed in response to some of the identified spectator-participant types. And whereas those not popping the balloons could be understood as refuseniks, as there was an implicit invitation to pop the balloons within the structure of the performance, here they formed an allegiance *against* those who did. Forming of allegiance therefore does not just occur via mutual incorporation and collective participatory sense-making but also according to and/or in response to spectator-participant types. Of the identified transgressive spectator-participant types, only the Wolf is dependent on allegiance to form a pack. Spoil-sports, Cheats, Jokers and Refuseniks can emerge through solitary activities, as well as forming small group allegiances. The transgressive spectator-participant types and their participatory responses can intensify allegiance-forming mechanisms described above, and therefore may contribute to a greater sense of disparity between different participatory sub-groups. Additionally, one type might provoke the other, for example, the actions of the Cheat might provoke the emergence of the Refusenik. Overall, allegiance-forming can imply forming an allegiance against something or someone else and small group allegiances can work towards or against transgressive responses in that they promote a self-censoring or contagious effect. It needs to be noted that an allegiance can be formed with more than one other spectator-participant/sub-group or changed and adjusted throughout a work. A participatory community therefore cannot be separated from its individual spectator-participants and might be best regarded as a continuously emerging multiplicity.

7.5 Conclusion

Rancière has articulated a *sensus communis*: a community, which is 'one of individuals whose autonomous capacity to interpret the world in which they find themselves as

spectators is recognised'.[400] I want to postulate that transgressive activities in participatory performance facilitates moments of enhanced awareness of how individuals interpret and align themselves to the world they find themselves in. It is in those moments where dissensus may emerge, as it leads to an experiential reconfiguration of one's own positioning within and allegiance to the participating community and the participatory work overall.

As Nic Fryer articulates, Rancière 'offers a vision of community as a creative activity and political act where individual spectators translate performances in their own way, but within a community of other translators and signs'.[401] Spoil-sports, Cheats, Jokers, Refuseniks and Wolves have the potential to enhance this conceptualisation of community. Whereas I have already established that the experience of all individual spectator-participants is intricately inter-related to the overall participating community, the activities of the transgressive types described above can lead to moments of enhanced awareness of such inter-relativity. This because a recognition of these types cannot occur without a realisation of how they relate to the overall constellation of assembled participants and/or the work itself. In the same way as transgression and the emergence of dissensus leads to an experiential multiplicity, it enhances a multiplicity in the web of relationships that are formed and developed over the course of a participatory work. The deeply subjective and context-dependent nature of transgression means that the same activity within a given participatory work can be experienced in multiple ways. The Joker for some might be the Spoil-sport for others. There can be differences in understanding and interpretation not just between transgressor and transgressed-against, but also in by-standing witnesses, collaborators, and performers. Transgressive activities, or at least those that are visible and noticeable by others, can therefore affect a reconfiguration of existing inter-relations within a participating community. Furthermore, they can lead to moments of indeterminacy and give rise to dissensus. As established, the emergence of dissensus is rooted in an isolated, solitary experience and emerges when a new topology of what is hearable and visible within the given context occurs.[402] To use Deller's words, the

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[400] Oliver Davis, *Jacques Rancière* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 156.
[401] Nic Fryer, "'Apart, we are together. Together, we are apart' – Rancière's Community of Translators in Theory and in Practice," in *Ranciére and Performance,* ed. Nic Fryer and Colette Conroy (London: Rowmand & Littlefield, 2021), 101.
[402] Please refer to 'Chapter 1.1.3 - Discrepant experiences and the emergence of dissensus'.

activities of the transgressive types described above, when discovered by others, can lead to moments that are 'going to be interesting' when 'it's difficult to say what's going to happen'.[403] This experience of suspension of a common order, however, is inevitably followed by a personal (re)consideration of one's own positioning in relation to others. This enhances the creative and political aspect of community as described by Rancière, as it asks by-standing or witnessing spectator-participants to enter a negotiation with oneself, the transgressor and the work overall. The transgressive spectator-participants that I have articulated in this chapter should therefore not be understood as non-ideal spectator-participants. Instead, their ability to facilitate a reconfiguration of the socio-political experience of intersubjective relationships during participatory performance should be recognised as an aesthetic and creative force.

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[403] As quoted in Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship,* (London: Verso, 2012), 33.

Chapter 8 – The aesthetic of indeterminacy

8.1 Introduction to the aesthetic of indeterminacy

In this chapter, I solidify my argument that transgression needs to be regarded as aesthetic as well as experiential material; since spectator-participants' experience is central to the aesthetics of participation as form, one can hardly be separated from the other.[404] In order to illustrate the aesthetic effect of transgressive participatory responses, I first discuss the two categories of transgression, namely disruptive and explorative. I then return to Johan Huizinga's concept of the magic circle, which separates play activities from ordinary life, and creates a 'temporal sphere of activity with a disposition of its own'.[405] For my research, I am using the image of the magic circle as a tool to illustrate the effect of transgression and/or dissensus in participatory performance. Transgressive behaviour, and/or the emergence of dissensus can result in a thinning, rupturing and breaking of the assumed separation of the participatory, intraludic world from the non-fictional, extraludic world. The difference in levels of translucence in such separation strongly affects the aesthetic manifestation of transgression and/or dissensus. I therefore offer a taxonomy of this spectrum of amalgamation between intra- and extraludic worlds, and discuss the points of thinning, rupturing or breaking.

As part of this chapter, I will exemplify that transgression and dissensus share aspects of form in their manifestation. I will evidence this by summarising some of the key behavioural responses that emerged in spectator-participants as a response to transgression and the experience of dissensus. This in combination with the taxonomy of transgression will further illuminate how transgression and dissensus can feel and look quite similar and can be articulated into an aesthetic of indeterminacy, which encompasses both concepts.

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[404] Astrid Breel, "Conducting creative agency: the aesthetics and ethics of participatory performance," (PhDdiss., University of Kent, 2017), 45.
[405] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A study of the play-element in culture* [s.l]: (Routledge & K. Paul Ltd, 1949), 13.

8.2 Categories of transgression

As I have evidenced throughout my thesis, transgression is an umbrella term for a wide range of spectator-participants' responses and behaviours, primarily because the identification of transgressive activity is subjective and context-specific. But as my research has shown, labelled as 'transgressive' are those responsive activities that go beyond or against the implied and imagined range of responses around which the participatory structure has been originally created, or against the interpersonal, socio-political and cultural dispositions of the participatory community. Transgressing against rules might not always be a conscious choice and might not be understood as transgressive by everyone involved. The spectrum of possible transgressive responses in different situations is vast. Importantly, instances of transgression are treated differently according to the severity of the consequences the rule-breaking has on fellow spectator-participants and/or the overall participatory world. The taxonomy of transgression I offer furthers an understanding of how transgression/transgressive behaviour affects a participatory performance/community and exemplifies some key principles of an aesthetic of indeterminacy.

A key finding of my thesis is that transgression in participatory performance can either be understood as disruptive or as explorative.[406] Of course, the subject-dependent process of identifying transgressive activity means that what is disruptive for some, is explorative for others. Below I will use the player-types articulated in the previous chapter to further illuminate the two categories of transgression as disruption or transgression as exploration.

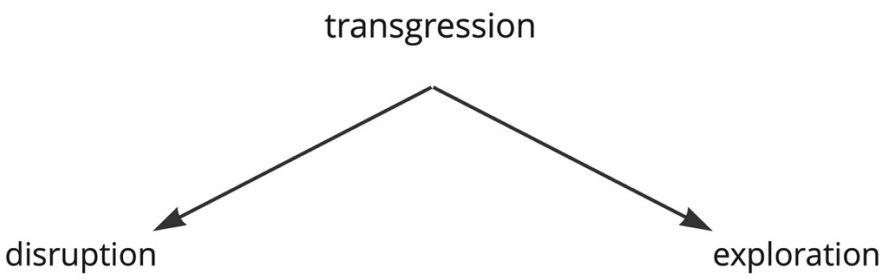

Fig. 43: transgression as disruption or exploration.

[406] Please refer to *Introduction: III Key Concepts: Transgression, p.5*

8.2.1 Transgression as disruption

Scholars and makers frame antagonism within artistic participatory performance practice as a socio-political protest or commentary against inhibiting structures found by governing bodies, society and art institutions. Clare Bishop for example describes how such antagonistic spirit was embraced by avant-garde artists within their early participatory experiments.[407] It therefore seems plausible that antagonistic and disruptive behaviour emerging in spectator-participants' responses is just as much an oppositional stance against a controlling structure within the work. Hans-Georg Gadamer asserts that the game plays the player rather than the other way around, as the game, at one point within its existence, can exist without players.[408] This is also the case with participatory performance. Whilst the process of designing and creating participatory performance often occurs without spectator-participants, the performance as participatory structure and product nevertheless exists, can be marketed and sold. Transgressive play, as explained by Aarseth, might therefore help player/spectator-participant to believe 'that it is possible to regain control, however briefly'.[409]

To "take back control" is a plausible reason for spectator-participants to transgress, even though I have rarely observed this to be a *conscious* motivation for transgressive behaviour. Nevertheless, looking at the player types that fall into the transgression as disruption category, namely Refuseniks, Spoil-sports and Wolves, it becomes clear that their transgressive activities seem to emerge from a desire or need to reassert themselves within the participatory framework or push back against the demands of such. The play behaviour of the Refusenik for example often emerges from a non-compliant, possibly antagonistic stance towards aspects of the participatory framework or the activities other spectator-participants. To refuse to participate or contribute to participatory activities is another way for spectator-participants to *regain control*. Equally, the participatory behaviour of the Spoil-sport falls into the disruptive category, as even when unaware, the Spoil-sport's actions and responses disrupt the temporal or spatial separation of extra- and intraludic worlds for others. And finally, the

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[407] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), 46.
[408] Espen Aarseth, "I Fought the Law: Transgressive Play and the Implied Player," (Paper presented at DiGRA Conference, 2007): 130.
[409] Ibid., 133.

Wolf's dependency on being part of an oppressed or minority grouping makes it the most antagonistic player-type in this category. Becoming-wolf really means a becoming-wolf *against.*

8.2.2 Transgression as exploration

Explorative transgression employs a playful, innovative and explorative approach to participation, aligning the act of transgression more with its definition of challenging through 'unconventional behaviour and experimental forms'.[410] This type of transgression has the potential to be understood as challenging the possibilities of responses within said rules and expected behaviours and may well expand the range of possible responses beyond what might have been hypothesised or expected by the maker and/or other participants, resulting in what Tassos Stevens calls 'brilliant ways of playing'.[411]

Explorative transgression is inquisitive and adventurous and matches Brian De Koven's conviction that rules of games are meant to be bent, broken or refashioned.[412] The activities of the player-types of Cheats and Jokers can be understood to fall into the category of transgression as exploration. In my research, explorative transgression appeared more often to be played in isolation. This would match the play behaviour of the Cheat, as their bending of rules and testing the boundaries of possible participation often goes without other spectator-participants noticing until after the cheating activity has occurred. The Joker's experimentation and humorous contributions however can be offered solitarily or collaboratively.

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[410] Transgressive, *OxfordDictionaries.com,* <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/transgressive> (accessed 8 March 2019).
[411] Tassos Stevens, Appendix 2 - *Interview with Tassos Stevens*, 241.
[412] Bernard De Koven, *The Well-Played Game: A Player's Philosophy* (USA: MIT Press, 2013). xi

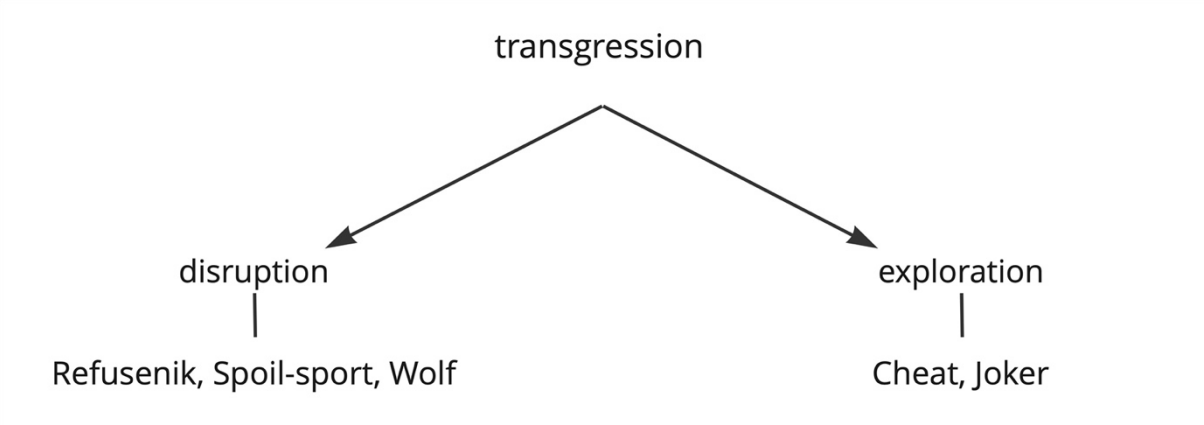

Fig. 44: Transgression: Disruptive or explorative player-types

It is my belief that transgression of either category can be an autotelic experience, a new play-theme as described by Huizinga, and therefore in itself an appropriate mode of response for spectator-participants. However, whereas the motivations as well as the goals of transgression as disruption or as exploration are somewhat different, for the spectator-participant, it is not always discernible within the moment of responding/participating if their activities are disruptive or explorative. As autotelic phenomena, they are experienced very similarly with having an end in itself. Equally, these categories can overlap and are not mutually exclusive. A Cheat's activities could be understood to be disruptive, although, as previously discussed, a successful bending of rules is often a celebrated event.[413] And finally, both categories contain a sliding scale in the severity of their effect. In the final section, I offer a taxonomy of this sliding scale, identifying the thinning, rupturing or breaking of the assumed separation between extra- and intraludic worlds.

8.3 A taxonomy of transgression - thinning, rupturing and breaking

Huizinga's magic circle helps to imagine a layer of separation between spectator-participants real-world experiences and their activities within a participatory realm. As explained, although this separation is an assumed one, the context of an artificially

[413] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A study of the play-element in culture* [s.l]: (Routledge & K. Paul Ltd, 1949), 12.

produced participatory framework can lead to the experience of a self-contained realm in which normal rules and behaviour do not apply.

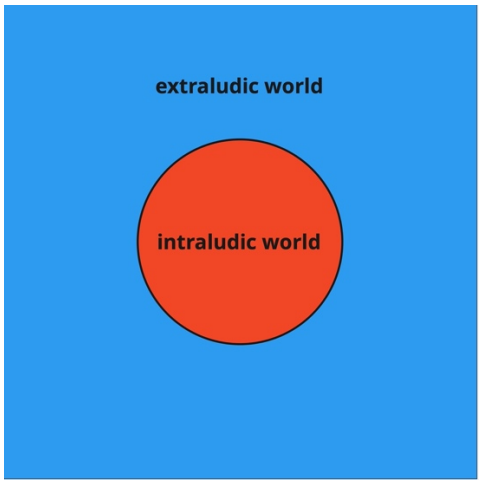

Fig. 45: The Magic Circle: an assumed separation from extra and intraludic worlds

Transgressive activities affect the experience of this separation, momentarily or over a prolonged time, and can thin, rupture or break this imagined layer between extra- and intraludic worlds. Below I will discuss each of these effects, offering examples of both disruptive and explorative transgressive activities to evidence how a thinned, ruptured or broken separation might affect the experiential and aesthetic aspects found within a participatory framework. These effects are discussed primarily from the perspectives of those who feel transgressed against or witness transgression as bystanders. This does not mean that those who offer disruptive or explorative transgressions do not experience a thinning, rupturing or breaking when conducting their actions. The Cheat for example, is very aware that the cheating activity transgresses the expectations or rules of conduct within the participatory framework. This self-awareness could be understood as resulting in the experience of a thinned separation, even though no-one else is privy to this effect as the act of cheating occurs.

8.3.1 Thinning

A thinning of the separation between extra and intra-ludic worlds occurs when participatory activities synthesise with relevant real-world contexts and the magic circle, or to use Ervin Goffman's term, the keyed frame of the participatory performance, becomes translucent.

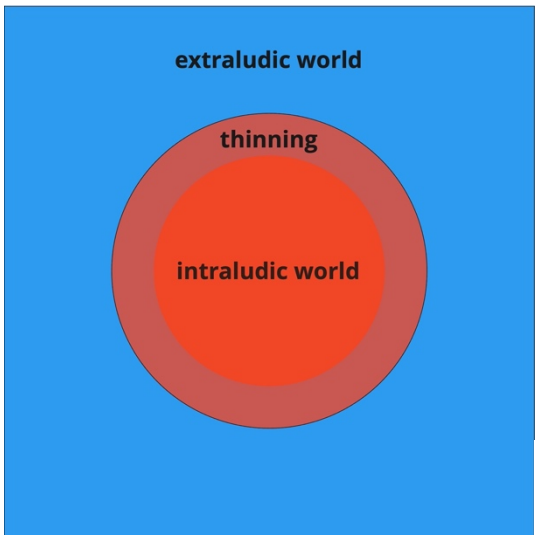

Fig. 46: A taxonomy of transgression: Thinning of separation between extra- and intraludic worlds.

Thinning is often a solitary experience and does not interrupt the overall participatory activity or overall framework, even though spectator-participants find their own real-world beliefs and perspectives challenged. Many participatory works challenge audiences through activities that can be understood as evoking a thinned experience. In *Trailed*, Act 5, Scene 1,[414] for example, asking spectator-participants to decide on the termination of the character's child was uncomfortable for the majority of the audience, with some stating that it was not enjoyable 'for personal / emotional reasons',[415] evidencing that the participatory demands uncomfortably overlapped with this spectator-participants real-world stance on the subject matter. In the room, this moment was marked by a tangible change of mood; spectator-participants distributed pens and paper to write their decision on in silence, and many of them turned away from others into their own personal space. Nevertheless, the participatory activity continued, and although this thinning turned some spectator-participants into Refuseniks (by refusing to make a choice), they still complied with the activity to a degree while others remained unaffected by their non-compliance (by writing down that they refuse to make a choice).

[414] Please refer to Appendix 6- *Trailed* Script, p.24-25.
[415] Please refer to Appendix 6.1 *Trailed* Audience Feedback – 4 February 2023.

Fig. 47: A taxonomy of transgression: example of thinning in Trailed Act 5, Scene 1

Thinning can therefore be employed as an artistic and conceptual tool, which was seen in Coney's *Adventure 1* or in my own performance *ATTWOO*. As discussed in 'Chapter 6.2 - Site-specific and Spatial Boundaries', synthesising real world and performance space can make a thinned separation between extra- and intraludic worlds a coherent aspect of a participatory work. A creative and conceptual merging of real and participatory realms forces spectator-participants into a heightened state of self-reflection as their activities, even though conducted as part of an artificially created framework, critically and at times uncomfortably overlap with their lived experience of the real world and, as Stevens explains, everything 'becomes charged'.[416]

8.3.2 Rupturing

A rupturing of the separation between the extra-and intraludic world occurs when a transgressive activity momentarily rattles the explicit or implicit rules and expectations of behaviour within a participatory framework. During the experience of rupturing, the play world is momentarily interrupted, and real-world sets of behaviour and responses emerge. The moment when a spectator-participant grabs all available tokens in Coney's *Early Days (Of A Better Nation)*, as described by Liz Tomlin, indicates her own the experience of rupturing.[417] A similar experience is described by this spectator-

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[416] Josephine Machon, *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and immediacy in contemporary performance (*Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 202.
[417] Please refer to 'Chapter 6.3.3 – Collaborative systems and collaborative decision making'.

participant of *Trailed*, who 'got annoyed because I didn't like the characteristics my team chose for the character'.[418] Rupturing is most likely to occur when spectator-participants' real-world behaviours trespass the expectations of others.

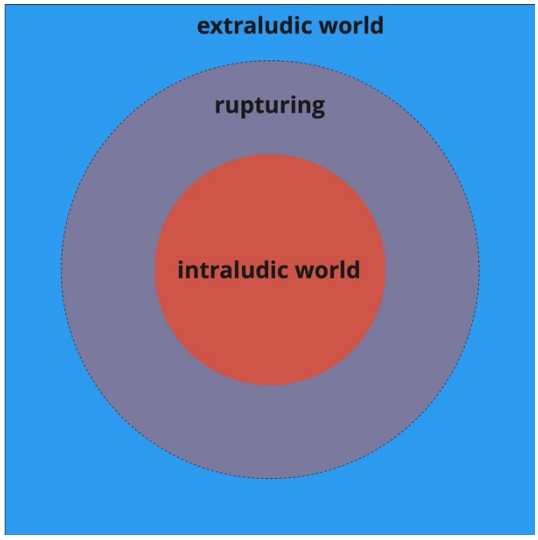

Fig. 48: A taxonomy of transgression: Rupturing of separation between extra- and intraludic worlds.

The difference between rupturing and thinning is that rupturing is often a shared experience and can lead to the formation of sub-groups within the participatory work. Consensus is reached quickly, and the activities of the participatory framework swiftly resume, meaning a rupturing, even though disruptive, has little consequence on the continuation of the work. Like thinning, rupturing can be integrated as creative and artistic tool. Emergent and collaborative participatory systems as discussed in Chapter 6.3 can be understood to integrate a possibility of rupturing in their frameworks, as these systems rely on spectator-participants real-world ability to communicate and collaborate with each other. In *Trailed,* for example, the suspected cheating activity of someone else, detected during a collaborative group task, elicited vocal protest utterances in the forms of shouts of "oi" or "hey". This ruptured the participatory experience of everyone; nevertheless, subsequent laughter offered a response as well as a form of consensus, evidencing how the experience of rupturing manifests in an interruption of participatory activities that get swiftly resolved, keeping the overall participatory framework intact.

[418] Please refer to Appendix 6.1 - *Trailed* Audience Feedback – 4 February 2023.

8.3.3 Breaking

Breaking, as its name implies, is the most severe effect that transgressive activities can have in that it eliminates the separation between extra- and intraludic worlds entirely. This elimination can lead to an end of individual spectator-participants' engagement with participatory activities or the participatory framework overall. Breaking to the extent that a participatory world is terminated in its entirety is rare. An example of such is when 18 members of the public revolted against Santiago Sierra. Having been paid to complete his art work *Project 22* at the Deitch Gallery in New York in 2002, they decided to strike and walk off the job, considering it to be 'beneath their dignity to be there as props in an artwork'.[419] A splintered breaking effect is more common, meaning that the termination of engagement in participatory activity occurs for some but not all of the participants and contributors of the work. The moment in which an inebriated spectator-participant started an argument with a performer in Exit Productions' *Fight Night* is an example of an experience of splintered breaking as not only did the artistic director as well as the performer have to step out of their roles from the intraludic worlds in order to try and contain the situation, the transgressive spectator-participant ended up being removed from the performance, bringing her engagement with the participatory world to an abrupt end.

There is an overlap between the experience of rupturing and breaking, as one could concede that the experience of rupturing also momentarily breaks the separation of extra- and intraludic world. However, whereas the experience of rupturing can sit within a participatory framework, even be artistically facilitated, the experience of breaking emerges when the transgressive activity trespasses the horizon of participation of other spectator-participants or the work itself to the extent that it cannot be re-absorbed as creative material and/or is of a severity that is deemed *unacceptable*.

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[419] Phoebe Hoban, "How Far is Too Far", *Artnews* v. 107, no. 7 (Summer 2008), < http://www.artnews.com/2008/07/01/how-far-is-too-far/>

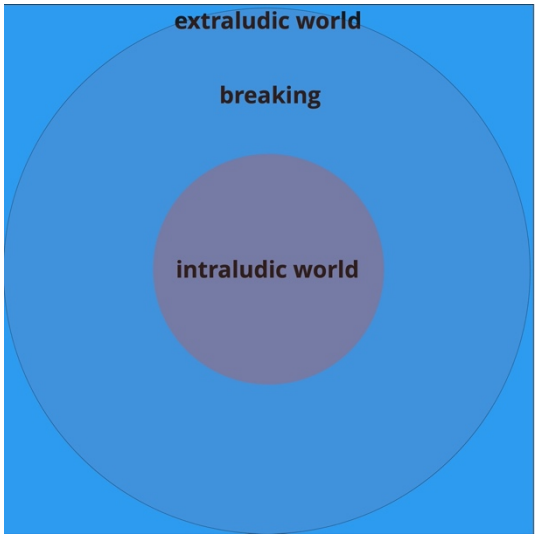

Fig. 49: A taxonomy of transgression: Breaking of separation between extra- and intraludic worlds.

The experience of breaking emerges primarily from transgressive activities belonging to the disruptive category. To incorporate breaking into an artistic methodology is risky, as, unlike rupturing and thinning, its natural consequence is the termination of a participatory activity or the participatory world altogether. The experience of breaking does not mean that the participatory framework can't continue to progress for others, or that those that have experienced breaking can't rejoin a participatory realm after some time. A practice of offering spectator-participants an opportunity to *step out* of a participatory realm whenever they need to, is becoming more common. A temporary breaking may have also occurred for those spectator-participants that were most severely affected by the balloon popping in *Balloons*. Audience observation clearly indicated a *stepping out* of activity, with affected spectator-participants holding their ears shut and turning away to shield themselves from the ongoing activity of popping ballons (see Fig. 50). Nevertheless, all of the participants continued to contribute to the remainder of the performance once the popping had ceased.

Fig. 50: A taxonomy of transgression: Rupturing in *Balloons* (2019)

A taxonomy of transgression in participatory performance has highlighted how the two strands of disruptive and explorative transgression are having similar effects but are treated differently by those affected or adjacent. The points of thinning, rupturing and breaking can further illustrate the kaleidoscopic effect that the moment of reconfiguration inherent in the aesthetic of indeterminacy: It is important to note that transgressive activity can elicit the experience of thinning, rupturing and/or breaking all at once in separate spectator-participants. What might be an experience of thinning, might be a rupture for others. Equally, the witnessing of an experience of breaking for some, might evoke an experience of rupturing to others. This means that all three of the described effects can occur during a given instance of transgression, pointing one more time to the multiplying effect of transgression in participatory performance (see Fig.51).

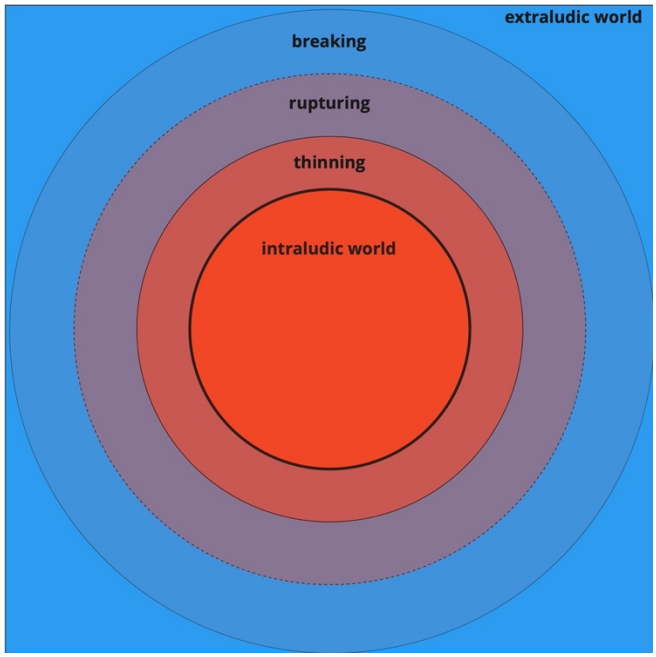

Fig. 51: A taxonomy of transgression: A multiplication of experience: Thinning, rupturing and breaking in participatory performance

8.4 Towards an aesthetic of indeterminacy in participatory performance

The taxonomy of transgression offered above highlights how transgression affects an assumed separation between extra- and intraludic realms. I now want to further examine how such affect manifests itself in the participatory space via spectator-participants' behaviour to further identify key aesthetic principles behind transgression and/or dissensus. It is useful to return to earlier mentioned antagonistic experiments of historical avant-garde practices. Albert Gleizes describes the audience behaviour emerging from some of these experiments as a 'tumult of cries, shouts, burst of laughter, protest'.[420] For Yasmin Ibrahim, play is key motivation for transgression as well as part of an aesthetic consequence, as 'the aesthetic of transgression is not about denying boundaries but inducing the ludic through it'.[421] For Ibrahim, aesthetic elements in transgression result from a reconfiguration of the banal and everyday by invoking unexpected and surprise elements.[422] This echoes Brian Sutton-Smith's understanding of playfulness, which plays with expectations of play itself, and is

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[420] Alert Gleizes quoted in Milton A. Cohen, *Movement, Manifesto, Meleé: The Modernist Group 1910-1914,* (USA: Lexington Books, 2004), 137-138.
[421] Yasmin Ibrahim, "The Vernacular of photobombing: The aesthetic of transgression," *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies,* v.25, no. 5-6 (2019): 1115.
[422] Ibid.

related to 'nonsense, parody, paradox and ridiculousness'.[423] Ibrahim and Sutton-Smith offer clues as to what an aesthetic of transgressive play might look like, in that it contains elements of surprise, nonsense, the paradoxical and the ridiculous. For my own articulation of an aesthetic of indeterminacy, the audience behaviour described by Gleizes provides a more concrete description of how these elements manifest in form. Activities of 'tumult of cries, shouts, burst of laughter, protest', [424] describe activities that bring along distinct proprioceptive experiences, and I have been able to observe these particularly during points of rupturing, as described in 8.3.2. For example, the balloon popping in *Balloons* evoked the experience of rupturing for those that respond negatively to the sound of popping balloons in real life. Here, nervous laughter as immediate, pre-noetic aesthetic response emerged alongside more subdued body language, as shown in Fig. 51. Audience observation as well as feedback questionnaire seemed to confirm that the behaviours of laughter, giggles as well as short exclamations of protest generally emerge spontaneously and often as a pre-noetic response to proceedings. For example, this spectator-participant describes a memorable moment during *ATTWOO* to be: 'The sound of the telephone. It created in me an initial state of anxiety which became, throughout the performance, a stimulus to my laughter because of ridiculousness of the situation'.[425] This comment points to laughing as a self-regulating mechanism; however, more importantly, it identifies the laughter to be the consequence of a preceding moment of anxiety, caused by the ridiculousness of the situation.

This preceding moment is a key aspect of an aesthetic of indeterminacy and often manifests in the form of a pause or a fleeting sense of suspense. The synthesis of the spheres of real and participatory worlds occurs in the moment the transgressive activity is executed or noticed by others. Susan Suleiman describes transgression to be 'indissociable from the consciousness of the constraint or prohibition it violates; indeed, it is precisely by and through its transgression that the force of a prohibition becomes fully realised'.[426] An awareness of transgressive activity, executed or

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[423] Brian Sutton-Smith, *The Ambiguity of Play,* (USA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 147.
[424] Alert Gleizes quoted in Milton A. Cohen, *Movement, Manifesto, Meleé: The Modernist Group 1910-1914,* (USA: Lexington Books, 2004), 137-138.
[425] Please refer to Appendix 5.2 - *And Then There Was Only One* Audience Feedback 20 May 2022.
[426] Susan Rubin Suleiman, "Transgression and the `Avant-Garde: Bataille's Histoire de l'oeil," in *On Bataille: Critical Essays*, ed. Leslie Anne Boldt-Irons. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995): 313-334.

witnessed, is therefore inseparable from an awareness of what is being transgressed against. As mentioned before, for Chris Jenks, this moment is a contradictory, but 'deeply reflexive act', which synthesises denial and affirmation.[427] I argue that the contradictory nature of this reflexive act creates a void that mirrors the one experienced in the emergence of dissensus. In the same way that dissensus challenges the 'sensible' (understood as the implicit law that defines modes of perceptions as well as partaking structures)[428] via an experience of a 'paradoxical world',[429] transgression challenges frameworks that are being transgressed against by exposing them. Both dissensus and transgression give rise to a new *topology of the possible.* Furthermore, it is in this transitory moment of reflection and redistribution where a kaleidoscopic effect can occur.

It is useful to return to Thomas Fuchs and Hanne De Jaegher's articulation of how participatory sense-making is an ongoing, dynamic process.[430] They refer to Karlen Lyons-Ruth et al.'s term *implicit relational knowing,*[431] which describes how patterns of interactions become engrained in implicit and embodied memories, and results in a 'temporally organised, 'musical' ability to engage with the rhythm, dynamics and affects that are present in the interaction with others'.[432] Moments of transgression and/or dissensus interrupt and challenge such ability and ask us to reconfigure ourselves in relation to those around us and the context we find ourselves in. A kaleidoscopic multiplication takes place as our own self-reconfiguration occurs in conjunction with a heightened awareness of others going through the same process. Like a kaleidoscope that results in a multiplication and variation of the same pattern from a singular viewpoint, the new topology of the possible, painted by the pre-existing context of the participatory framework and those engaged within it, momentarily emerges from a personal act of repositioning.

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[427] Chris Jenks, *Transgression* (London: Routledge, 2003): 2.
[428] Jacques Rancière, Diss*ensus. On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran. (Continuum International, 2010), 44.
[429] Ibid., 47.
[430] Thomas Fuchs, and Hanne De Jaegher, "Enactive Intersubjectivity: Participatory Sense-making and Mutual Incorporation," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* v.6, no. 4 (2009): 465-486
[431] Karlen Lyons-Ruth et al, "Implicit relational knowing: Its role in development and psychoanalytic treatment," *Infant Mental Health Journal, vol.19, no.*3, (1998): 282–289.
[432] Thomas Fuchs, and Hanne De Jaegher, "Enactive Intersubjectivity: Participatory Sense-making and Mutual Incorporation," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* v.6, no. 4 (2009): 481.

In short, Transgression and/or dissensus can interrupt the rhythmical and dynamic flow that is at play at any given moment within a participatory work, with the points of thinning, rupturing and breaking offering insight into different levels of severity of interruption. Such interruption, and the consequential void that occurs during the experience of transgression and/or dissensus can have a destabilising effect and seems to be counteracted with spontaneous vocal or physical activity. Pre-noetic actions such as spontaneous laughter, or protest utterances could be understood as supporting a proprioceptive repositioning of self and can contribute to the personal or communal reaching of consensus. The manifestation of transgression and dissensus are therefore strongly reciprocative and offer an aesthetics of indeterminacy its key characteristic of interruption, pause and suspense before giving rise to proprioceptive repositioning via physical gestures or vocal utterances.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the disruptive as well as explorative qualities in transgression, placing them in line with the identified transgressive spectator-participant types. A taxonomy of transgression has further illustrated the variations in severity of effect of transgression along the points of thinning, rupturing and breaking an assumed separation between extra- and intraludic realms. From these points, I have identified asset of behaviours that have been observed to emerge within spectator-participants. I have taken all these aspects into consideration to articulate a participatory aesthetic that I term aesthetic of indeterminacy.

My research has shown that the experience of transgression and dissensus share many aspects and seem to produce similar responses and gestures in those affected. Both are marked by moments of pause, often resulting in a change of physical or vocal/kinetic dynamics and rhythms in spectator-participants. This manifest via a range of physical and/or facial responses such as frozen postures, sharp inhales and raised eyebrows amongst others. Transgression and/or dissensus are forms of interruptions. Such interruption, and the consequential void that occurs during the experience of transgression and/or dissensus can have a destabilising effect and seems to be counteracted with spontaneous vocal or physical activity. Pre-noetic actions such as spontaneous laughter, or protest utterances could be understood as

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9. Conclusion

9.1 Introduction to research findings

In this thesis, I have argued that transgressive responses and the emergence of dissensus are an inherent possibility within participatory performance practice across theatre, dance and gallery art. Whereas transgression is often understood as an antagonistic force, I evidence that transgressive responses can emerge from an autotelic experience and can therefore be closely related to the experience of play. This thesis advocates for an understanding of transgression that is not just disruptive, but explorative and experimental; embracing transgression as a double-sided creative force offers new insights into audience behaviour and experience, challenges existing hierarchical structures found between artists and those that experience the work and promises to expand artistic methodologies employed by makers of participatory frameworks. Through my own practice, I have experimented with aspects of this expanded artistic methodology, and although PaR projects foreground a 'personally situated knowledge',[433] I understand my findings to have emerged from a dialogical intersection between my own work, case study analysis, theoretical reading, audience observation/feedback and discussion with other makers and artists.

Transgression is dependent on context and rooted in a subjective experience; what is understood to be transgressive is therefore vast and can't easily be generalised. And yet, my research has uncovered that certain conditions and creative aspects of a participatory framework are more likely to give rise to transgressive behaviour than others and can be understood to form a 'family resemblance' according to the understanding of Ludwig Wittgenstein.[434] My thesis offers new knowledge for those that create participatory frameworks and want to facilitate, or (try to) avoid circumstances in which audiences might respond transgressively. Furthermore, my proposition that transgressive responses can be either disruptive or explorative, alongside the transgressive player types articulated in this thesis, offers new insight into audience's responses and a new terminology for the analysis of such.

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[433] Barrett, Estelle,"Introduction" in *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry,* eds. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, (London/New York, I.B.Tauris 2010).

[434] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* [1953], trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009).

Whereas my thesis evidences a clear interrelation between play and transgression, a key finding of my research is the interlinked nature of transgression and dissensus; not only can acts of transgression give rise to dissensus, but both are rooted in a fleeting experience of multiplicity resulting in a reflective reconfiguration of self in relation to the world and others around us. This means that transgression and dissensus share many aspects in their experiential and aesthetic manifestation. An aesthetic of indeterminacy encompasses both concepts and provides not only an artistic methodology that facilitates multiple, discrepant experiences in the same framework but also offers a new reading of dissensus as experiential, socio-political concept.

My thesis promotes a recognition that transgressive responses hold a creative force that can lead to deeply experimental, unexpected and potentially risky responses, affecting the aesthetic and/or socio-political experience of everyone involved. Both transgression and dissensus are exemplified by a merging of (aspects of) the participatory world with real-life realities, and by doing so expose not just the conditions of the participatory framework but also the conditions of those who find themselves within. The resulting void, which acts simultaneously as a multiplicity, can lead spectator-participants to reassess their positioning within a participatory framework in relation to their personal real-life socio-political circumstances, their relationship to other spectator-participants and/or the work as a whole. To facilitate transgression and dissensus within a participatory framework therefore means to facilitate moments of deep (inter)personal reflection and reassessment of one's own alignment to the aesthetic and socio-political encounter. It is a deeply reflective and solitary moment, but one which nevertheless depends on those around and therefore enhances what Rancière calls the aesthetic community; one which is being together whilst apart.[435]

Before I discuss these key contributions to new knowledge in further detail, as well as articulate what further areas of research have emerged, I will revisit my original research questions and respond to them in light of my own PaR journey and overall findings.

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[435] Nic Fryer, "'Apart, we are together. Together, we are apart' – Rancière's Community of Translators in Theory and in Practice," in *Ranciére and Performance,* ed. Nic Fryer and Colette Conroy (London: Rowmand & Littlefield, 2021): 101-121.

9.2 Revisiting the research questions

My research questions summarise the aim of my research into three areas.[436] They concern themselves with the examination of transgression as phenomena by identifying shared motivations and stimuli leading to transgressive responses by spectator-participants; the impact of such examination on an artistic participatory practice; and emerging strategies for negotiating difference, compromise and experiential multiplicity within participatory performance. Each of my original research questions will be answered with reference to the most pertinent chapters.

- *What motivations, activities or stimuli might lead to transgressive responses in participatory performances, and how can such knowledge inform the makers of participatory performances?*

In Chapter 2, I have identified four key phenomenological aspects pertinent to the experience of transgression; agency, affordances, frame and flow. These aspects are intertwined, and their experience is dependent on their facilitation within a given participatory context and, more importantly, the social relations in place within that context. In fact, an individual's experience of agency, affordance, frame and flow cannot be removed from how these aspects might be experienced by others who coinhabit the participatory framework. They therefore provide useful starting points from which to analyse how certain motivations, activities or stimuli might contribute to the emergence of transgressive responses in participatory performance.

In Chapter 6, I have highlighted the conditions and participatory circumstances that have been able to facilitate transgressive responses as well as support an emergence of dissensus in the scope of my research. These insights are useful for the creational process of participatory performance as well as for considerations on the staging or distribution of such. I have evidenced that site-specific elements can be employed as artistic methodologies to affect the **frame** of participatory activities, and that the atmosphere of a venue can enhance or hinder the emergence of transgression and/or dissensus. A non-seated, physically active participatory framework can foster the

[436] Please refer to 'Introduction IV - Context, motivation and research questions'.

perception of **affordances**, and encourage pre-noetic responses to such, increasing the risk that pre-conscious activity transgresses against the framework or others within. Participatory systems that omit clearly identified rules or are dependent on spectator-participants ability to decide upon their own codes of engagement carry a greater risk that spectator-participants' sense of **agency** and **affordance** mismatch and transgression and/or dissensus is experienced. Equally, competitive and contest-driven activities might evoke a sense of **flow** to the extent that a loss of self-awareness leads to responses experienced as transgressive by others. And finally, the instant feedback loop offered during triggering activities can enhance a perceived sense of **agency** and strengthen hierarchical structures between spectator-participants and performers, leading to potentially transgressive triggering attitudes. Overall, one can conclude that the risk for explorative transgressive activities is more acute in frameworks that offer audiences greater autonomy in relation to physical activity, creative contribution and decision-making processes that affect progression through the artwork. Disruptive transgressive activity however seems to occur either as protest or emerge from a loss of self-reflective capabilities due to being absorbed in a participatory activity. These distinctions are simplified and not mutually exclusive. Additionally, the overall tone and artistic concept of the participatory framework is of high importance and can strongly contribute to developing participatory responses rooted in antagonism, experimentation or care.

- *How might a reframed understanding of transgression and transgressive play in participatory performance develop more diverse practical methodology that embraces and celebrates multiplicity in audience experience?*

A rhetoric of the beneficial and socialising aspects of play excludes a wide range of play activity that are deemed as transgressive and/or unacceptable. A similar rhetoric exists in the making, producing and distribution of participatory performance, which contributes to the construction of an imagined, ideal player, as articulated by Espen Aarseth.[437] My PaR approach to challenge notions of the ideal spectator-participant and invert what I have termed ideal conditions for engagement, has uncovered that

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[437] Espen Aarseth, "I Fought the Law: Transgressive Play and the Implied Player," (paper presented at DiGRA Conference, 2007).

Aarseth notion of ideal player, as well as notions of ideal conditions articulated by Mihaly Csikszentmihaly, are not straightforward; a state of flow, often associated with ideal engagement, seems to lead to a loss of self-reflective ability and therefore increases the risk of responses going against the horizon of participation of others. In Chapter 7, I have evidenced that not all transgressive player-types are treated the same and, in many ways, the transgressive explorative player, within the appropriate participatory framework, is a celebrated figure. A reframed understanding of transgression, one that recognises its disruptive as well as its explorative qualities, aims to challenge notions of the ideal or preconceived within the making of participatory frameworks. Of course, to fully avoid pre-conceived notions of how spectator-participants might respond is hard to achieve and inviting unimagined and unexpected responses from spectator-participants seems to be paradoxical. But, as this thesis has shown, the possibility for transgression is inevitable in any participatory structure that uses audience's responses to fill pre-designed gaps in the creative structure of a show. A practice that can integrate moments of transgression and the emergence of dissensus offers spectator-participants the opportunity for highly self-reflective experiential encounters between themselves, the work and others. Embracing and celebrating transgression and it's resulting multiplicity might therefore not mean new methodologies in the *making* of participatory structure, but new ways of facilitating difference in the aftermath of spectator-participants' responses. Instead of thinking what should or should not occur, makers and promoters of participatory performances might want to turn their focus towards what strategies can facilitate and negotiate the unexpected, the discrepant and the unruly.

- *How can participatory performance offer new ways of negotiating difference, conceptualise compromise and facilitate multiple and indeterminate responses?*

Participatory frameworks based on emergent and collaborative systems carry a greater risk for transgressive responses, as they often contain less rigidly identified or no explicit rules. They are therefore more dependent on spectator-participants to establish their own code of conducts. In the scope of my research, it is exactly the works based on emergent and collaborative systems that seemed most successful in negotiating difference and conceptualising compromise. In fact, in works such as *Early*

Days (Of A Better Nation), *Eco-Chambers* or my own work *Trailed,* processes of negotiation and compromise were key aspects of the artistic vision. To use emergent and collaborative systems has several consequences: first, these systems can help makers and artists to move away from pre-conceived, ideal responses, as such systems give spectator-participants greater autonomy in relation to participatory activity as well as progression through the artwork. Second, this enhances a non-hierarchical structure between artist/audience, as widening the range of possible responses results in a less rigid authorship of the work from the artist. Additionally, offering different ways of experiencing the same artwork allows for multiple, perhaps even discrepant experiences. This is the case even in non-emergent participatory frameworks and was seen for example in *ATTWOO* (see page 117). To conclude, to offer new ways of negotiating difference, conceptualise compromise as well as facilitate multiple and indeterminate responses, artists and makers want to develop frameworks that are non-hierarchical, offer greater autonomy to spectator-participants in relation to their contribution and progression through the artwork and/or develop multiple pathways through the same participatory experience.

9.3 Contribution to the field

This thesis offers new practical and theoretical knowledge and I will summarise my key contributions to the field whilst positioning them to the most pertinent scholars, thinkers and theorists. The answers to my research questions above have already addressed how my thesis offers valuable considerations for artists and makers of participatory frameworks as well as those that research audience behaviour and engagement.

A key contribution pertaining to participatory performance practice are my proposed transgressive player types, as they offer an enhanced understanding of specific spectator-participant's behaviour and motivations in the context of transgression in participatory performances. And whereas the Cheat and Spoil-Sport was developed from a re-examination of previous discussions of these player characteristics,[438] Jokers, Refuseniks and Wolf are newly developed player types. My identified

[438] See for example Johan Huizinga (1949), J. Barton Bowyer (1982) and Mia Consalvo (2009).

spectator-participant types expand Richard Bartle's taxonomy of player types; they are not matched even in Bartle's explicit/implicit subcategories. Therefore, they expand the terminology to describe and analyse not just audience behaviour in participatory theatre but game design and ludic theory in general. Additionally, I have articulated practical conditions and circumstances that are more successful in facilitating transgression and the emergence of dissensus, which can guide the makers of participatory performance. Particularly the insight that emergent systems, coupled with high levels of perceived agency, kinetic autonomy as well as feedback loops can facilitate both disruptive and experimental transgressive responses can alert makers of participatory performance to develop strategies of compromise and negotiation of conflict.

A further contribution to the field is my articulation of an aesthetic of indeterminacy, based on the manifestation of the experience of transgression and dissensus in form. My taxonomy of transgression, with the points of thinning, rupturing and breaking, aids such articulation and offers a vocabulary that can benefit future audience research and performance analysis. An aesthetic of indeterminacy sits alongside other formulations of aesthetics pertaining to participatory performance. (see Bourriaud (2002), Bishop (2006), Kester, (2004), Armstrong (2000)). I align the aesthetic of indeterminacy most closely to Astrid Breel's "aesthetic of uncertainty", which focuses 'on the way the participant's experience of uncertainty within the performance becomes an aesthetic element'.[439] A key distinction is found in the differentiation between uncertainty and indeterminacy. Both words best explained via their antonyms: "certainty", which is derived from the Latin word 'certus', means 'fixed' or 'settled', whereas "determinate" derived from 'determinatus', means "to enclose", "bound" or "set limits to". Whereas uncertainty refers to a *not knowing*, indeterminacy refers to a *not knowing the limits of.* This chimes not just with the crossing of boundaries that is implied in the word *transgression*, it also contains the experiential multiplicity that transgression and dissensus can conjure. An aesthetic of indeterminacy could be considered a sub-category of Astrid Breel's "aesthetic of uncertainty". My own proposition however focuses on how disruptive and explorative transgression affects the participatory framework and the community within, and can potentially result in indeterminate,

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[439] Astrid Breel, "Conducting creative agency: the aesthetics and ethics of participatory performance," (PhDdiss., University of Kent, 2017), 201.

multiple and conflicting viewpoints, experiences and ultimately, participatory responses. My proposed aesthetic of indeterminacy enriches not just theoretical discourse on the aestheticism of participatory performance, but also offers quite practical explanations of what such aesthetic might look like in practice.

A key contribution pertaining to the theoretical context of my thesis concerns itself within the inter-related connection between transgression and dissensus. Whereas not all transgression leads to dissensus, the concept of dissensus does imply that an act of transgression has taken place. To re-examine Rancière's concept of dissensus through the lens of transgression offers a new reading of this socio-political concept and exposes how its condition is not just experiential and ephemeral, but also rooted in multiplicity. Both transgression and dissensus are connected to a merging of worlds. Within my research I apply an understanding that these *worlds* constitute differentiations in social, political as well as aesthetic convictions, beliefs or actions. For Rancière, these worlds are constituted by a difference in what is seen and heard, and for him, dissensus demonstrates 'that what appeared as a mere expression of pleasure and pain in a shared feeling of a good or an evil'.[440] The binary opposition of "pleasure and pain", as well as "good and evil" is no doubt what leads to an antagonistic interpretation of this concept. However, these oppositions sit in the same realm as the dual understanding of transgression, namely "disruptive and explorative". My thesis has shown that the subjective and context-specific nature of transgression leads to multiple often conflicting interpretations of the same transgressive act. This applies to the experience of dissensus also. The binary oppositions of disruptive/explorative, pleasure/pain, evil/good or hear/unheard all describe sliding scales rather than experiential totalities.

I have exemplified how the manifestation of transgression in participatory performance is a two-fold process: the first stage pertains to the realisation that the participatory world collides or merges with a spectator-participants' real-life reality; this implies a more inward experiential focus that exposes not just the conditions of the participatory framework, but also our personal positioning within it. The second stage emerges from a realisation that one's own relationship to the synthesised real-life/play-world differs from that of others occupying the same participatory performance realm.

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[440] Ibid., 46

This implies a more outward experiential focus, highlighting our positioning within a web of participatory relationships. These two are often intertwined even though they can be experienced separately. Both transgression and dissensus are reliant on a realisation that a merging of worlds has occurred, highlighting that like transgression, dissensus is first and foremost a solitary experience and act of reflection, one that is yet again dependent on a self-dissolving binary opposition, namely a 'denial and affirmation'.[441] In both transgression and dissensus, this produce a momentary void, a momentary suspension, which simultaneously acts as a multiplicity, as in this void rules are re-assessed and/or reconfigured according to a new topology of possibility, in relation to self, and/or in relation to others. The kaleidoscopic effect described in Chapter 8 emerges as transgression and dissensus always commences from the personal before it synthesises with the inter-relational, a fleeting moment of self-awareness in relation and conjunction to the web of those around us. To experience transgression and/or dissensus means to become aware of our own disposition to the framework we are in as well as that/how us and others might be affected when this framework is challenged.

To re-assess the experience of dissensus through the lens of transgression highlights how the experience of both results in a multitude of outcomes for spectator-participants. This offers a critique of an understanding of dissensus as antagonistic tool or emerging from an anarchistic encounter. Janelle Reinelt for example questions how the principle of equality that drives dissensus can reconcile the 'stark binary of power and resistance that is the conceptual driver of both anarchy and dissensus'.[442] My thesis shows that dissensus is not driven by a principle of equality but rather by a principle of difference. All participatory encounters carry the potential for transgression to be experienced, in either the execution of transgressive activities or within the perception of transgression in the actions of others. Since transgression is an inherently subjective experience, a multitude and potentially conflicting types of experiences within a participatory encounter is inevitable. It is exactly this multitude and therefore a principle of difference that *also* drives the *experience* of dissensus, which is what it only ever will be – an experience.

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[441] Chris Jenks, *Transgression* (London: Routledge, 2003): 2.
[442] Janelle Reinelt, "Resisting Rancière," in *Ranciére and Performance* ed. Nic Fryer and Colette Conroy (London: Rowmand & Littlefield, 2021), 177.

9.4 Further areas of research

There are two areas of concern that offer themselves for future research. The first relates to the ethical implications of a participatory performance practice that operates under an aesthetic of indeterminacy. Whereas safeguarding those that experience participatory frameworks that purposefully invite and encourage multiple and potentially conflicting experiences and/or responses is paramount, I want to propose that future research also needs to concern itself with how best to safeguard and train those that perform and practically and creatively guide spectator-participants through the progression of the work. The second area of future research pertains to how such participatory practice can actively integrate a multiplicity of experiential responses, and creatively integrate pathways of difference, negotiation and compromise.

The ethical implications when creating participatory performance are arguably an important part of the artists' consideration when creating work; as many participatory works include an audience as (co)creators, these considerations strongly focus on the safety and well-being of partaking spectator-participants within their assigned roles. My thesis has purposefully not discussed how to do so, as there is plenty of literature pertaining to this field (Kester (2011), Heddon and Johnson (2016), O'Grady (2017)). Relevant to my own research is what Gareth White identifies as 'perceived risks'.[443] He considers risk management to be 'the basis of facilitation of audience participation'.[444] The difficulty of perceived risks mean that risk management goes beyond standard health and safety rules but instead deals with subjective, individual and often subconscious needs for 'self-protection and rational minimalization of harm'.[445] In my PaR study, a strict ethical approval process ensured that I, as creative researcher consider such implications and develop a rigorous process for informed consent in the form of information sheets, approval and consent forms for participatory activities as well as the usage of any data obtained during workshops and research performances. In the professional realm, similar procedures are becoming more common place, for example via the offering of content or trigger warnings. While this allows potential participants to make an informed choice in regard to their involvement,

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[443] Gareth White, *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
[444] Ibid., 76.
[445] Ibid., 74.

it may at times also reduce the effectiveness of research activities, by exposing artistic intentions and potentially resulting in priming participants towards particular responses. It also potentially restricts a truthful response to those themes and participatory activities that could result in transgressive responses or the experience of dissensus. Future research into how to provide safeguarding techniques whilst still facilitating potentially conflicting and contradictory participatory experiences/responses would further enhance participatory methodologies as well as audience engagement

Furthermore, there seems to be less attention given to professional performers who collaborate with researchers, makers and artists and often appear as facilitators in the creative work itself. During my PaR explorations, I became strongly aware of the potential vulnerability of my performers. My own PaR performances allowed audiences to determine or manipulate creative materials and/or interact with and/or instruct my performers. This meant that my performers had to not just be attuned to the experiences of spectator-participants, but also have advanced improvisational techniques to integrate participatory contributions into the creative material. I have previously mentioned how those performative gaps filled with audience responses are defined by their level of indeterminacy and unpredictability. During this research, I strongly came to realise that participatory performance makers need to consider these gaps in relation to the performer. Guiding, responding to and facilitating an audience in their quest of filling these gaps poses unique and complex challenges for a performer and requires an enormous ability to conduct and attend to multiple activities at once. Ethical sensibility should include an assessment of responsibilities and potential vulnerabilities of any performers who lead or facilitate participation, and further research pertaining to how to train and prepare performers is advisable for a practice that is rooted in an aesthetic of indeterminacy

Additional research into how participatory frameworks can offer a multiplicity of experiential responses is advisable particularly in light of how pathways of difference, negotiation and compromise can be an integral part of the work. I am particularly interested in how participatory performance makers could offer more autonomy to audiences in relation to their *progression* through the work, not just their contributions. In *ATTWOO*, spectator-participants' choice regarding what elements of the performance to engage with resulted in discrepant and at times conflicting experiences. Their individually determined interpretative pathways, mainly determined

by their engagement (or lack thereof) with the WhatsApp group, resulted in an experiential multiplicity. Such multiple-pathway methodology feels worthy of further practical examination. I propose that particularly my taxonomy of transgression and the points of thinning, rupturing and breaking can aid future practical as well as theoretical research: on one hand, these points can be applied as analytical tools that increase insight into spectator-participants' experience and response mechanisms. On the other can they be explored as artistic tools and aid the development of a participatory practice that is rooted in multiplicity, self-reflection and compromise.

Finally, further research into unruly and unexpected audience behaviour promises to address recent reports that indicate an overall change towards *bad* audience behaviour in the theatre and during live performances. Eva Wiseman for example has questioned if a new era of audience behaviour is upon us,[446] and an evaluation of such change of behaviour as well as its implications for a participatory performance practice promises to be a rich inquiry.

9.5 Final reflections

During the finalisation of my thesis in the summer of 2024, the Olympic Games in Paris were underway. On the 9 August, Rachael Louise Gunn, aka Raygun of Australia, took part in the first inclusion of breaking as an Olympic Sport. Her performance, in which she lost her three round-robin battles with a score of 0, contained a series of unconventional dance moves that quickly became viral. The next two weeks saw Raygun being the subject of a relentless media storm and a torrent of abuse online. Her performance was ridiculed and she was accused, without any evidence, of manipulating the qualification process as well as unfairly allowing Australia to finance her attendance at the Olympics, therefore preventing other less financially secure competitors from taking part. Overall, she was blamed for not taking the contest and the discipline of breaking seriously. Many pointed to her academic background, and

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[446] Eva Wiseman, "Is it time to embrace badly behaved audiences?" The Guardian(20 August 2023), <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2023/aug/20/is-it-time-to-embrace-badly-behaved-audiences> (accessed 26 August 2024).

believed she wanted to make a cultural statement, criticising her white privilege and lack of understanding of the original culture of breaking.

In many ways, this episode portrays a large-scale instance of transgression (large-scale because it occurred on an international stage) and gives evidence of the kaleidoscopic multiplicity that emerges from one singular moment. Accused of mocking the games, putting to shame breaking as discipline as well as her representation of Australia, Raygun is clearly considered to have transgressed against the spirit of the Olympic Games, dividing opinions by professionals as well as the world-wide audience. The Australian breaking scene has come out both for and against Raygun, with Australian Hip-Hop pioneer Spice declaring 'I feel like it's just pushed our scene in Australia into the Dark Ages', whereas Te Hiiritanga Wepiha, a Kiwi judge judging the qualifying battles, said Raygun 'won fair and square'. [447] No one can say for certain if Raygun has intended to make a political statement, or purposefully used questionable dance moves, such as the "kangaroo" hop, as many assumed. She may well be what I term the unintentional transgressor, those who do not realise that their actions transgress against the expectations of others (the Global audience, the World-wide breaking scene, the Australian breaking scene etc.) or the participatory framework (the Olympic Games). A video message released by Raygun refers to the hate she received more than an explanation of her intentions with her routine, although she assures that she'd been working her 'butt off preparing for the Olympics' and gave her 'all'.[448]

Of note in this episode is the emergence of dissensus – the synthesis of the different worlds and worldviews that, due to their merging, become visible. Here, these different worlds are manyfold, and include the skilled athlete versus the amateur, liberal academia versus street borne protest movement, dance versus sport, racial, ethical and class-based oppositions, and finally, a simple taking it seriously or not. And whereas I hold no strong opinion about this episode, I marvel at the multiplicity of responses and opinions that have emerged from Raygun and her epic breaking contribution. Someone, on some social media network, stated that she transgressed

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[447] Tiffanie Turnbull and Isabelle Rodd, "How Raygun made it to the Olympics and divided breaking world," *BBC News, Sydney*, 17 August 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gl34v4r98o> (accessed 26 August 2024).
[448] Ibid.

because she may well have been feeling a little cheeky. She may have, or she may have been deadly serious. We will never know. But for sure it was interesting.

Appendix 1 - Interview with Joe Ball - 20 March 2019

C Mueller: So, just to kind of capture this officially, today is the 19th of March, I believe.

Joe Ball: 20th, I think.

C Mueller: It is the 20th, you're right. The 20th of March, and I'm here with Joe Ball

Joe Ball: Hello. Like a podcast.

C Mueller: This feels slightly weird as I have never done this before, so please bear with me. Okay, so maybe we could start with you to telling me a little bit about you and your background. We just mentioned being poor Thespians.

Joe Ball: Yeah.

C Mueller: So how did you get to be a poor Thespian?

Joe Ball: I started off my whole life in theatre at BAC's Youth Group, doing stuff there and kind of loved all of the "liveness" of all the performance that I saw there, the things that... I think for a while they had a policy of nothing could be there that had been written before, so everything's fresh, everything's real and just kind of ... I remember every show I went to there as a youth just kind of being amazed and blown away, and I felt so alive after it. So, I've always loved that live quality of theatre. Then went to uni after a year out and kind of lost being able to act, but loved the whole making of theatre and the fact again that it was live, there was real people in the space watching something together or being part of something together. So when I left uni, I started a theatre company of my own with a writer, which I really enjoyed and we got a lot of very exciting and interesting stuff out of that, but she's ended up in a much more proper job, in the medical based mental health stuff, and I progressively have got more and more interactive with the theatre that I make. I did an assisting job with Coney on a couple of their shows and then did a lot of work with COLAB directing some of their shows for them. And then off the back of that, really liked what COLAB did, enjoyed, it was very fun, but I wanted to maybe find a middle ground between COLAB and Coney... Yeah, I wanted to enjoy my own stuff, rather than direct someone else's stuff. So, Exit has grown up as a game-based theatre company, with the aim of making sure that an audience are implicit in the story and at the heart of it and of the action, not necessarily always within a given story, they sometimes create some themselves.

So our first show was *Revolution*, where we coded a game a bit like risk and projected it up on screen and 3 different teams, 3 factions in this revolution, controlled taking over the map trying to beat each other at the same time with them in the room, trying to give the best policies and the best reasons why they should be in charge.

C Mueller: That was performed also at the Vaults festival wasn't it?

Joe Ball: Yes, that started at the COLAB Factory, then we did 8 weeks at Vaults last year, then we toured to Latitude after that, which was interesting doing it to some people who'd never paid for it and challenging also, as there was a cross-sections of some people that were there to play and some people that were

there to advocate for environmental issues and that kind of activism. Trying to manage and facilitate a conversation that involved both of those strong opinions was very interesting.

One of the performers in that was a guy call Chris Neels and he had the idea of an immersive boxing match, and I thought it was a great idea but I wanted to add the currency and add a game aspect to it, so that you still had an element of high stake and economic investment. The great thing about boxing is you don't know who's going to win, it's still live, there's lots of other great stuff as well as a lot of negative stuff, lots of exciting stuff we didn't want to lose just because it's theatre. So finding a way of making a show that the audience decided the ending, not in such strict terms, but influenced it enough so that it was still their making, it's still live, it's still real, as well as that thing of being able to gamble and earn the most money, which is good fun. So yeah, using those things as the vehicle for engaging people in the personal narratives was our aim there and then alongside that, I've been trying to develop an interactive show that only involves one facilitator, because it was a challenge and I wanted to see if it could happen.

C Mueller: An interactive show that only involves one facilitator?

Joe Ball: Yeah.

C Mueller: Alright.

Joe Ball: So these two, *Fight Night* and *The Mission*, which will be on at the BAC next week, I've dubbed them the economy projects, because they've been dealing with the economy in a really broad way, either giving an audience an economy to deal with or, for example, *The Mission* started very much on a discussion of the 1% and how things like the occupy movement are really interesting and bring that sort of stuff into a general conscience. Apart from a focus on economic questions, a secondary thing that we've done as a company is consider how we can enable audiences, how we can empower an audience to create their own experience, and this has also provided a focus in these two shows.

C Mueller: And then so the one facilitator, that would go into that second category of how the audience would . . .

Joe Ball: That would... The aim is for both, it's that giving people currency and saying "you find your own story, we won't tell you where to go", although some of our actors were a bit naughty about dragging people with them, but our aim is to kind of go "here's your space to play in". You decide what story you want, you decide how interact with that story and the same with The Mission, were giving them quite set games and quite set structures, but they can create their own political system, they can create what they bring to the table. It's all about empowering them to make, to become part of that experience and an experience that wouldn't work without them. I think that's always been the aim. I think that sums it up.

C Mueller: You talk a lot about playing and allowing audiences to play; were you always gamer? You said you liked the "liveness" of theatre which obviously could be found in any proscenium arch theatre, and somewhat depends on how you define "liveness"... But first were you a gamer?

Joe Ball: Yeah, I love computer games, I still do. I think they're a lovely waste of time, I really enjoyed wasting a lot of time playing computer games.

C Mueller: And so how much is your interest in participative performance influenced by your interest in gaming?

Joe Ball: I think a huge amount, definitely *Revolution* is a version of a game called Diplomacy, which is a lot like Risk, but it's a board game and it's more about the... It goes in two phases, one of which you tell everyone what you're going to do, and you write down in sequel what you're actually going to do, and it's all set in imperialistic Europe, trying to take over different places. It's a great one for human dynamics, because it's all about how you lie, when you lie, how you play a thing. So as much as I have enjoyed kind of the big games that you play on PlayStation or Xbox, I also really enjoy and think there's something really interesting in the board games, the social dynamic games, even the parlour games, they're interesting when it boils down to the human who's playing it, through some facilitated play. But yeah, I love games, they're good fun.

C Mueller: As a participative performance creator, what would you say are the pitfalls or risks for an artist or maker? What does a participative performance maker or performer have to look out for?

Joe Ball: I think it's close to... The really good ones are people who are good at improvisation, often a good kind of improv comedy works really well, because it's all about picking up cues and letting total things work rather than being selfish with it.

C Mueller: And is that for the performer, the facilitator or actually what do you actually call the facilitator: the performer or the creator?

Joe Ball: There are some good lines to be drawn there. So, I would have said that *Fight Night*'s probably a very good example that my role in that was with Chris, the other director, and to an extent Brendan, who was Michael, the character.

C Mueller: Was that the referee?

Joe Ball: The Irish. He's more the gambler, the guy playing poker.

C Mueller: Oh yes.

Joe Ball: And we probably were closer to facilitators, but the others in that were closer to performers, so their jobs were very much locked into the narrative and their character tracks, their character journeys, whereas ours were very much locked into how we make sure that everyone is engaged and involved, and how can we best facilitate that engagement and involvement in different audience members.

And I think both of the sides kind of slid into the other side of that scale as it went, as it wouldn't work if I just sat and said "no, no, no! The best thing you need to do is do this, this, this and that." We have to play that game, we have to enjoy the fact that we're there as bookies, we have to enjoy that. And similarly, the guys who we'd written a script for and had their narrative arcs,

they had to be able to bend and facilitate an audience's input if that became a real thing.

C Mueller: So when you started to create *Fight Night*, how much were your performers already there or how much was Fight Night a design that then got inaugurated in the studio? I guess, what came first: the idea and the game or the performance with a narrative? Did you start with the game idea - you were talking about an immersive format and you wanted a currency - so was it a matter of sitting down with a piece of paper and then elaborate characters and improvise around it?

Joe Ball: I think a lot of what Exit have done is we try and create structures for people to play within. So, we build foundations and then we can elaborate on and explore. So, *Revolution* was very much this game where you had the order phase and then you had the presentation phase, then you had the order phase. That was how that worked.

Fight Night we had the game that everything sat on as the currency and that's how we did it. Then we had the fight at the end, so we kind of used that structure for everything within. And then a couple of set moments and traps that we always knew were going to happen. So, with *Fight Night*, we had a week's R&D at Southwark, where we really explored characters and started to build kind of overall character arcs with the performers, so they had them really deep in them before we even got to the rehearsal phase. From that point we had a kind of knowledge of where it should go, they all had an understanding of who they were and why they were doing what they were doing. Because there was so much that had to happen, we then went away and wrote these three character-stories and used that as kind of the spine that we build everything out from, and then kind of layered on different ways of facilitating, different ways of engaging with the game, different ways of playing with audiences and getting audiences to play.

C Mueller: You said there was an algorithm, there was a computer algorithm that basically added the audience responses or particular responses and then that contributed to who was winning the game?

Joe Ball: Yes, so obviously we had boxing match and who was going to win that boxing match was decided on, I think 6 or 7 key moments that then counted for effectively 2 points one way or two points the other way, and then we gave a kind of space for anyone that brought information back to us. There was that idea of the more you engage with the story and the more you can then use it to bring back to us, you'll be rewarded for that or that will have the effect you find in it.

C Mueller: So for example, I was the medic and I came to you and reported back that the fighter Joe Williams had a concussion. So, did he lose a point for that?

Joe Ball: He would have lost a point for that.

C Mueller: Because I transmitted that information.

Joe Ball: Exactly.

C Mueller: But that was planted, wasn't it? He did act like he would have had a concussion.

Joe Ball: Yeah, that was planted so it was part of the story, but that wasn't one of our big moments, that was just information that we'd kind of scattered about space, for people to pick up and use and play with.

C Mueller: And so if I would have now lied, I would have come to you and said Ian Bradshaw had concussion, although he clearly didn't act like he had...

Joe Ball: Wouldn't have counted.

C Mueller: That wouldn't have counted? So, my transgression would actually not have done anything towards the...

Joe Ball: It depends. We gave a space for if people really... If you'd have come up and said, well I've heard that Ian has a child, and it's not his... And so if you really sold it to us, if you really engaged with it, we may have counted it. There's space for that, but you had to play the game well enough to have got there.

C Mueller: So in that case, there is in a way a secret skill, a type of behaviour that the spectator is rewarded for. Meaning that people who are more familiar with this type of performance and perhaps more courageous at playing the game, they can influence or manipulate the outcome to a greater extent?

Joe Ball: To an extent, yeah, I think that is true. I think because we never advertised that as way of playing, we tried to negate the idea that it was just the performers that could then come and rule the show and often the way we'd have said it is that you can take it, but you need to be able to play with us for a while for it to get there. So, there was still space to get people there, and to let them enjoy it, but yeah, possibly you're right that we did. We catered for those that enjoyed and knew the engagement side of it.

C Mueller: That's really interesting, because I felt that this particular performance allowed strongly for a sense of transgression, for example I slipped into the fridge of the referee and I went through his paperwork when no one was watching, because I just felt there might be something to be found on that table. I indeed felt encouraged to basically go through his personal stuff.

Joe Ball: Good.

C Mueller: So there is clearly room for differing levels of transgression, but simultaneously the game was quite frustrating because some of the transgressive elements were not shown, acknowledged or had a visible effect on the outcome of the overall performance. I never fully knew what was happening with what I contribute with.

Joe Ball: And I think that's one of the issues we've had from a lot of audience members that we're definitely still thinking about how much to show how the game works. A magician, you never want to see a magician's trick, because as soon as you do, the illusion's ruined and it's no-longer as fun. And especially with something like this, we didn't want to go "this is how you would get it to win" because it loses that element of the flip of the coin, that kind of risk of a fight. We don't want anyone going into that final thing going "I know I've got it, I know I'm going to win" or if they have, to be able to subvert that because of something else that had happened. I absolutely agree with you that it was a constant battle in

rehearsals and through the development kind of going "is this fair to do this, is this fair to do that, how do we make it?"

C Mueller: You also clearly give spectators specific roles within the arc of the story. You give them the role of the aide, the helper, the medic and each of these roles come with particular tasks which got them involved and maybe helped to get people involved that would otherwise disengage. But one of the things that I've discovered in my research is also that if you give them roles to play, there is a play persona that appears to allow spectator-participants to become engaged on a deeper, more immersive level to perhaps, at times, a more courageous level as well.

Joe Ball: Yeah, definitely.

C Mueller: Because it gives them a context, because it gives them a frame that they can place their responses in and they have that instant feedback phase, which is an important consideration in game design, Another element that supports the immersion in a game is a constant feedback loop.

Joe Ball: Absolutely.

C Mueller: And with *Fight Night,* the frustrating was that that feedback loop actually . . .

Joe Ball: Wasn't quite there.

C Mueller: ... wasn't there.

Joe Ball: I agree. One of the big things I've been annoyed about was that we didn't find a way of feedbacking more. The only time the gambling had a resolution was at the very end and at that point it was pointless to everyone bar one person. Whereas if we'd had an under-card fight and people won some money back and others didn't, you then have this lovely moment of going "okay, alright, now I've had that feedback loop and now I can play in". Definitely feedback loops... And for *The Mission*, feedback loop is one of our really big toys at the moment that we're really trying to drag our heads round, where because it's only one facilitator, the narrative has to come out of audiences decisions, and we're trying to give the audience enough decisions, so do you want to grow rice or potatoes, or this or that, but that means you need to plan outcomes for an almost infinite level of different choices, or for each single track

C Mueller: ... you're basically dealing with a branching structure.

Joe Ball: Exactly, so we're trying to work out how. We've coded an Excel spreadsheet that might be able to print out all of the options, but it is complicated.

C Mueller: It might bring us to the question of how much do you need to cater for the audience in the making of a participatory work; how much we are looking after our audience members, how much can we challenge them, and if we as makers are at times way too nice to the audience, because actually very often they're not very nice to us...

Joe Ball: I had a massive chat with the writer and co-director of Fight Night about a year ago, because we did some COLAB shows together, there's one moment where

an audience held him up against the wall and his whole thing was like "that's not cool". Like no, that's not cool, I'm not saying this is, but we're saying play, we've given people license to play in this thing and that was before there were some other horror stories that have gone on, and people have started to think how do we start putting some walls around, some safety barriers around. I don't know if the "be cool" is the right thing, but that's the closest I've got so far to, and maybe it's because the work we're doing is not... It's still quite open, there's lots of people involved, there's very rare moments of very, very intimate stuff.

C Mueller: So actually tell me a little bit about that moment at the Vault Festival that happened, that led you to say to the audience "be cool". What exactly happened there?

Joe Ball: So there was one audience member who I think she'd given herself a task, she'd found a task and one of our performers, the trainer from Bam-Bam's camp, had got in the way and she pushed her which is not cool. And this audience member was a lot smaller physically, the trainer has trained in her life, she's a very healthy, healthy person so there is a kind of, that doesn't excuse it but it does kind of add that element of this was the audience absolutely trying to get behind the story that she'd given herself. She was tipsy from what we could tell, so that probably contributed. The interesting part was that she, that audience member, is also an immersive performer and we've talked about it before because people feel like they know the boundaries, they then start playing those boundaries... because they've been in a space where they know they're in the right because they're doing the right thing, when they're put in a similar... Yeah, it was an interesting one.

C Mueller: Does it come back to that sort familiarity and knowledge of what is expected, knowing what the parameters of the play, of the magic circle are because you've played similar things before? It seems a very fine balance between being encouraged to play and going that step further and that then leading into pushing it too far. I've talked to other participatory makers and many of them have expressed that moments where transgressive responses occurred or the work wasn't taken seriously by audience members, happened with audience members who are also involved in the same type of practice... It's funny that isn't it, because you think that there would be a certain level of empathy and a generosity that comes along with grappling with the same thing.

Joe Ball: Definitely, definitely. I think the interesting one is, I find it so much more enjoyable to see dance, because it's not my practice, so it's so easy to just enjoy dance or to really enjoy something very far from what I know. Even seeing a band live is great because I can just enjoy it. Seeing Shakespeare annoys me for many reasons, but also because you can see the little things where you think "ooh, wouldn't do it that way", and that's not to say that they're wrong, but it's the personal preference which gets wrapped up in your own response which can get in the way.

And I think with immersive stuff, it is always just very interesting seeing the people who've done it before play, they go big and that's often a really enjoyable thing or they go really small, because they're being cerebral about their response, they're not getting lost in it which is... Yeah.

C Mueller: How about, because you were talking about *Revolution* having been performed at the Vault Festival for 8 week long run, that's a long time...

Joe Ball: It was too long.

C Mueller: Yeah, I can imagine. How long was *Fight Night*? *Fight Night* was about 3 weeks.

Joe Ball: 3, 3 was perfect.

C Mueller: I thought you must've been exhausted after 8. And then you performed at the Latitude Festival and I can just imagine... What's interesting about both of these places is that neither of them is a traditional theatre venue. Both of them are quite carnivalesque places. The Vault festival in itself is in a very anarchic environment: the tunnels, the graffiti, that mixture of people from those in suits, to the homeless, to the druggies to the, you know, quite middle-class culture seekers and . . .

Joe Ball: Theatre goer.

C Mueller: indeed, theatre thespians who go and immerse themselves into a bit of you know, in a slightly dangerous place, which is kind of... It's a little bit like class tourism.

Joe Ball: It's a little bit, it is a little bit. There is an element of that.

C Mueller: And then the Latitude Festival, I've not been to the Latitude Festival, but the Latitude Festival is one of the certain left-wing, liberal, quite artistic festivals as well.

Joe Ball: Yeah, very much so. They've got theatre, reading books and a smaller emphasis on the bands, bigger on the art. It's still a very theatre run of it. It was mostly theatre or left, liberal people that would come to it, so it was still... We've not yet found a way, cause *Revolution*'s just a lot of fun, but it's mostly been done around theatre people, or at Latitude.

C Mueller: So was there a difference in the response of the audience in the Vaults Festival and the Latitude Festival, because the Vaults festival is very strongly visited by people particularly interested in immersive and participatory performance.

Joe Ball: You go for the new stuff at Vaults, don't you?

C Mueller: Yeah, whereas in the Latitude Festival, I think broader cultural and arty types.

Joe Ball: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

C Mueller: So how did that differ? Who was more polite?

Joe Ball: Weirdly, it didn't feel hugely different. I think by the end of the 8 weeks we knew what we were doing in such a way that our job was very similar. The response, as I say the interesting thing was that we were really worried that people would leave, because it's an hour and a half and we've only known people that've paid for a ticket, and when you pay for a ticket, you have literally invested in the experience, you have to stay... Not have to stay there but, but you're there for it. So, we were really worried people would go, "alright, I'm out, well done, cool", but people stayed until the end, which was really good.

We did have, slightly more than we've had in paying shows, people band-standing and soap-boxing their ideas and trying to really push this kind of green agenda with all these thought out points - this guy had obviously really done his homework and really cared about it - and that was I think that odd sticking point I mentioned before, of having a table that, interestingly again that were theatre makers of immersive theatre that really wanted to play and were having loads of fun, and I think that there was someone that was a little more wasted on their table, on their faction, compared to these very green, very caring people, so there was an interesting little crunch there.

The interesting thing about *Revolution* is because we are literally putting people at odds, we're saying that you are three separate factions, and who's going to take over more of this map, whose policies are going to be enacted, and so on ... That there is kind of a pressure valve for that heated debate, of when you go "Okay this person's won" and they've won by a vote which has been cast by everyone, so it then becomes absolved into the experience. Saying that, our band-standing environmentalist was I think a little annoyed that his ideas weren't being listened to and the silly ones were getting through, but that is... I don't think he had a bad time.

C Mueller: So there was a tension between those who wanted to play and those who wanted to make a serious point within a democratic system; it sadly is a fact that if I am allowed to vote, it only means I have a choice to vote but I won't necessarily make a difference.

Joe Ball: Yep.

C Mueller: You're employing that in *The Mission* quite strongly, there is a lot of voting, there is a lot of debate, aspects that are often found within participatory performance, and there is a hype that participatory performance can offer new ways to foster socio-political engagement. Do you think that's true? Do you think participatory performance actually has the possibility to change or offer alternative political systems or approaches?

Joe Ball: I don't, I don't think it has the possibility to offer it, I think the way that we've approached a lot of stuff that we've done is... Because it's an hour and a half experience, you're never going to work out policies that'll actually work. None of this is ever really going to work, so in *Revolution*, we have people going "we should fund the NHS" and we'll go "yep, cool, we're moving on" because it's so basic and not thought through and there's no way of actually doing anything.

But the thing that *Revolution* did really well was it started to make players think how to represent their ideas, you could see a development from the first time someone comes up with an idea, and they go "we want to fund the NHS" and by the end they're coming up and they're selling an idea, they're giving us reasons why, and they've developed their way of presenting it. And they've started to read how the game works and start to employ tactics for winning it, so you'd see people talking to other factions before they made their votes so, we didn't set up a utopia system at all, it was horribly fractured and horribly confrontational. But you see people trying to explore game systems and start to understand systems and engage with them in more nuanced ways than I think politics does. Politics is very alienating in the real worlds and that alienation has led us to some really weird places like Brexit, where you've got some people way out here, who see a vote that is dubbed as being anti-

establishment, which it's not at all, it's this horrible kind of mishmash of stuff, because people aren't engaged in this conversation.

So *The Mission* is... We don't think that direct democracy is a perfect system. There are some terrible examples of it. Switzerland, I think only allowed women to vote in the 70s or something...

C Mueller: 1971.

Joe Ball: There we go.

C Mueller: I am Swiss.

Joe Ball: Oh okay, cool. I'm really glad I got that right, because that would have been real bad.

But, I really like it as a system because it allows everyone to engage and it doesn't allow people to avoid being engaged because they have the opportunity to veto, they have the opportunity to put up a hand. So that is just a way of saying "here is a very different system to what you guys know and we're also going to give you the chance to play with it and explore it", we're not going to change the world but hopefully we'll get some people to think a bit more, and will be part of a drop or a ripple that hopefully does something more interesting. So the next show I want to do that's in a political vein, one of the most interesting things about the Irish referendums is you can't vote if you're overseas, so there's this amazing campaign which was on the back-end of "Get the Boat Home", which was helping people get home if they'd been only away for two years. If you'd been away for more than 2 years, but still feel very connected to, you couldn't go back and vote.

C Mueller: I didn't know that, I wasn't aware of that.

Joe Ball: But the campaign started was one where they got... I think it started in London because there were a lot of young Irish people that had moved to London, and the campaign was talk to your parents. "You can't vote, talk to your parents, try and influence their vote", which mathematically is really interesting, because it's then a two point swing if you can convince them one way to the other, but it's also amazing because it enables or starts a conversation intergenerationally that in this country we just didn't have with the referendum. I know a lot of my friends who moved down from the north to live in London, not to generalize all of their parents, but they woke and said "well I'm not talking to my dad again, there we go". And it's like, that's where we have an issue, it's that we're not enabling or we're not exploring the step behind the systems. The reasonings and the problems that these systems create, and how we can start to slowly play with them, enough to start making better decisions.

C Mueller: And perhaps to integrate politics more into an everyday awareness, and very often it is in the family where this awareness can be built, or it happens in your circle of friends, perhaps in an education environment if you have a really great experience being introduced to history or politics in lectures. What politicized myself strongly were constant arguments and debates I had with my dad at the dinner table. And it really helped me to learn how to form an argument, how to get informed. Of course, as a teenager you're more convinced about things

Joe Ball: You are absolutely right.

C Mueller: Of course.

Joe Ball: Of course.

C Mueller: Of course, but we still now actually make fun of those moments where we would, just for the sheer sake of it, sit on our respective points of views just to piss each other off, and it was fun because eventually then you start actually listening and learn how to debate better. It seems that nowadays, this level of debate is not encouraged so much anymore, and through social-networking, you are offered a very selective soundbites as news and opinions. I don't see anyone's post who is... I actually literally have never seen a post from someone who is for leave.

Joe Ball: Yeah, and the worst thing is, the one I did, I then deleted. I think it was something like "share if you think this is too full" with a picture of the UK, and I was like "you're not my friend anymore". I'm now part of the problem because not only are algorithms working against me, I'm also working against myself to have any sort of shared conversations.

C Mueller: Exactly. It's very, very complex.

Joe Ball: A friend of mine was starting... He's got two twitter accounts, on one of which he follows just right-wing stuff on and one on which is stuff that he wants to follow, so that he'll go through and just have a little - doesn't do it every day - but every now and again, just have a little read to see what's going on and just to kind of slightly get a balance on what he sees and I'm like "that's very smart".

C Mueller: That's a very good idea. Because otherwise you just have to read your way through 4-5 different newspapers, and that's still selected and very time-consuming.

Joe Ball: Very time-consuming. I think, to polish it all off, I don't think it will change politics, participatory performance, but I think it starts allowing conversation and building conversation in places where they haven't been. There is an issue that, and I completely understand it, that where I've done these shows have been The Vaults, Latitude, now the BAC, COLAB, they're all going to be visited by very similar demographics, but you've got to work out a show and how it works before you start bringing it out to different people.

C Mueller: Adam Allston did say that one of the difficulties within participatory performance is that they tend to be visited by people we get on with, or at least like to go and have a coffee with, and that is... I know that this is something that I'm really aware of with my practice and particularly with some of the practice that I'm looking at, and the kind of risk that you take, and I don't want to do applied theatre but I think there is sort of an applied frame that would be really useful in getting some of this work onto different demographics.

Joe Ball: Well we've got a show that I kind of wrote with my last theatre company that is very influenced by what I now do in this theatre company. Again, it involves audience voting but it's a performed duologue, but at different points, the audience votes and that changes orders and at the end changes the decisions made within the play. And that show is about a guy and a girl, the girl wants to

end her existence, the guy doesn't want her to, they're in a relationship, the audience get the final say but the big twist is that she is an AI robot, she's a companion so we're using the whole "does a robot have a soul". How do we look at this horrible power dynamic of a man that literally owns a woman, but she's a robot, is that okay? The audience always votes in the same structure, which is: are you more on her side or his side; and the voting structure was that you either hold up a card or you don't do anything for indicating not on her side. So, you're implicit in every decision and it's also really quick, because you only have to do two things. But the beautiful moment was when that first vote happened, and you see people so confident thinking everyone is voting the same way and then going "what? It's a robot. There is no way we should ever let it have power over its owner. What? What?!?!"

I think that was a beautiful question because I don't think it matters where the audience are from socially or demographically, the question appeals to all of us. But definitely I know with some of the stuff we're asking for *The Mission*, that's all very socially and class-based stuff, those questions will have different answers and similar answers.

C Mueller: I very much enjoyed the moment when the oligarchs built their own ship and were coming up to Mars, and they have enough fuel to land but they don't have enough fuel to go back, do you let them in or do you not let them in? That was a really interesting one because they represented an undesired privileged social group for the people who were in the room: and yet if we don't accept them onto Mars we are basically committing homicide. So, what do we do?

Joe Ball: And you're then on a level with all of the people that have been keeping people out of Europe, that have been doing all this stuff, so yeah. And that's where participative theatre, going back to the question of how can it change stuff, is quite useful because it makes you question, if it's done well, hopefully it makes you question your own decisions and re-analyse your own decisions which is definitely a skill we're not very good at all as a general population.

C Mueller: To return to transgression, would you say it helps to leave a big room for audience members to come to decisions and play? One of the downfalls of participatory work is the fact that it always will have to be designed around an implied player. Someone who somehow matches the game, because you are dealing with a gap. We a creating around a gap, we are creating around something that isn't fully predictable, fully controllable and fully transparent, and I think that's one of the exciting things, but it's exactly within that moment where transgression and cheating and lying and all of that can occur.

Joe Ball: This brings me back to the reason why I want to do this is that's the "liveness" of it, that's the bit, it's the unknown... "Oh, we're here, everyone's here in this room, we're alive and we're making decisions together, or we're counting decisions together" and that in that safe space, as you say you play in that space and hopefully that leads to a better analysis post what you've been through because you're not only questioning what happened, you're questioning your own stuff which happens post any of this sort of thing. The amount of times we did a show with COLAB and one of pals came and there was a point where there was a gun, you'd knock a guard out and there's a gun on the floor, and one of my pals just reached for the gun, and was like "I reached for the gun. Why did I reach for the gun? Why was I reaching for the gun? I

shouldn't have reached for the gun. I didn't know I was that guy that would reach for the gun of someone that was on the..." it's like, "yeah..."

C Mueller: But then, it is occurring with a special space, a magic circle, right?

Joe Ball: It is magic circle. It's a play where it doesn't really matter and you're kind of... Yeah, it's a play, which did then lead to that questioning of himself on an actually small and inconsequential thing, but it's fun, and I think that's definitely one of the nice things about it. There is that.

C Mueller: But then added to that, there's play and there's playfulness; there's fun play, there's boisterous play but then there is the play that can get all of a sudden very serious. Have you ever felt, apart from the moment that you've mentioned with *Fight Night*, have you ever observed or been in a risky situation, somewhere where you actually felt this now could be a precarious situation? There is a moment of where it could get out of control. Have you ever observed it as a spectator, or has that happened in any of your shows?

Joe Ball: We did a show ages ago at Oval, which was called *Big Smother* and it was a simulation of *Big Brother*, where we had some audience in the rehearsal room watching monitors of the rest of the audience in the main space, who were in the house and everyone, the producers got to decide what they could do. And there was something, it was very early in the practice of what I was doing, but I think because, we basically did it after a week or two weeks rehearsal and then we put it on and it was good fun. I ended up being the techie in the main room with one of the facilitators in that room, so a lot of this occurred behind, but they were coming up with some quite cruel and quite horrible tasks for these people to do, and our way of saving it was, rather than trying to think before then how you can still tear it up in the right way, but don't go to those extremes, our save was the facilitator would call me on the radio and I'd be that... I'm the faceless referee, you can't argue with that person. Some of the stuff that would come through was just really cruel, really mean and quite pin-pointed.

C Mueller: Such as?

Joe Ball: I can't remember exactly, there was some stuff, there were some quite personal attacks on... There was one show that had quite a large boy in it and there was some kind of personal stuff about his weight. It was like "no, no, no. We can't, there's no way". And that was our fault for not seeding right, and starting the right conversations that kept people in a thing, but definitely learnt from that to... Maybe I don't now make situations where there are those personal attacks or the ability to become personal with what's going on with it.

C Mueller: Did the people giving the instructions know the boy?

Joe Ball: I think was because they knew him, but it still was one of those, it just doesn't feel nice or interesting anymore, we've lost anything interesting that's happening now and we've just gone to something cruel. But me, being that blocker, obviously blocked it and we did something else. I think that's a decent example. There was some wild stuff at COLAB, which again we've tried, just they were far looser performances, with a bar involved that people came back to and it was lots of fun but... I can't remember too much sadly. I think there was one evening when armed police were called, which was a bad moment.

C Mueller: What happened?

Joe Ball: Press night and 14 assault rifled men were outside of the thing. Very exciting.

C Mueller: wow

Joe Ball: So, we used some shots in it, blanks in it and the producer had done everything right, told everyone around, told all the local police, but someone nearby did the right thing and called the police. They heard gunshots, they called the armed police and it's good, but it was slightly nerve-wracking, especially when you feel you've done all the due diligence. It's exciting.

C Mueller: What about cheating? Have you ever cheated or broken the rules as a spectator, as I'm guessing you've seen lots of work? Although maybe you haven't actually as because you said you don't like to watch it so much.

Joe Ball: I do, I do enjoy it. There are definitely those people I know who like to play around the edges, that push actors. And again they are people that know theatre, who know their stuff, and a they just like to push and push and push to see if they can break it, which annoys me as maker because when you're trying to create a world that people get lost in and enjoy, and obviously that comes with the issues of people getting too lost and that's the transgression again, but yeah, those are the only really bad players that try and just play their game of breaking games.

C Mueller: Basically, that's what a cheater is, a cheater is playing for his own advantages, solely.

Joe Ball: Solely, and yeah, it's the... One of Exit's main goals is to create a community within the moment and see what you can do with that and how you can enjoy that. And I think a lot of the immersive stuff that annoys me, or the interactive stuff, is where people as singled out. So, although immersive and interactive is a very solo experience compared to an end-on-scene performance, the stuff that I like is where people have been given the option of going that step further, of being the centre, but they're not forced into it. And the way of nurturing that or supporting that is really important, I think as creators. So then counter, when an audience tries to steal centre, that is also a very annoying thing that I've seen happen in a lot of performance and it's a very hard thing to try and facilitate away from, because they are creating drama, they are creating stuff, but it's that selfish stealing of the narrative, the drama, the game or whatever it is, the cheating is the really irritating stuff. On a fun story, there are loads of stories that I've heard, I just can't think of them in the moment.

C Mueller: What about strategies for when that is likely to happen? When I talked to Jennifer in *Fight Night* and she was telling me about that you train the performers for these moments, or you make them aware or those possibilities. What are the strategies, what do you do with transgressions that could possibly be unruly, destructive, dangerous? And what do you do with the annoying cheaters, that don't really do anything wrong, but they bend the rules and...

Joe Ball: Well I'll give two examples. With COLAB we definitely played with some more extreme stuff and of a wilder, more exciting nature, and there we always used a safe-word in performances. The audience knew and actors knew, and the word could be used either way, so if somebody was suddenly really freaking

out about going through this tunnel, or doing this thing, they could say it and we'd switch the lights on and stop. But equally, if someone was getting too drunk or being too much of something, an actor could use it, we'd stop the play and just go "you're taking this too far and we're not having fun". With our performers in *Fight Night*, we very much had a similar thing, although we didn't want to give a safe-word because we didn't feel we were dealing with too much of an extreme, and again it was very open and lots of people are around. Our thing was if anyone gets physical, you instantly leave and you come find me or Chris, and we go and talk to them out of character, again us being those kind of facilitator roles rather than performer roles -

C Mueller: You had that option of going in and out of character.

Joe Ball: That option of playing. There was a very annoying moment, that's a good story, with one of our audiences sat in the judges chair in Fight Night and refused to get up, because they said that the judges were biased against their boxer, which was absolutely true, so she was absolutely right in all of this stuff, but it took Chris the facilitator to go over and say "This is me out of character, this show won't carry on now unless you get up. You are breaking this game and the only way of us continuing in world, if this was a real boxing match, was we would physically kick you out of the boxing ring. We don't want to do that because that would be cruel on you and in the end, I don't want to physically restrain you. But please move, because that's the only other way this play can go."

C Mueller: So this player basically fulfils the role of the spoilsport, who is the person that breaks the game, the illusion of the game and by that person sitting on the chair and not allowing the game to continue for all of the other players, potentially would have broken the game of the magic world.

Joe Ball: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And we tried really hard before, bribing her off with currency, getting a character to come in and go "we got this thing over here"; we tried in-world ways. We tried really hard, but unfortunately there is a, and I think with almost all stuff, we definitely have always said to our actors that safety and annoyingly the continuing of the flow of the performance kind of takes precedent over some things.

C Mueller: So, in a way, it's what you were saying again, it's this over-eagerness perhaps of playing the game. She probably didn't think she was doing anything wrong; she didn't realize how much she broke it for everyone else, but she was just really convinced that that...

Joe Ball: Yeah, I reckon she was having the best time, and that's the thing that's really interesting about it, it's that she's doing exactly what we've asked her to, to get lost in the world and enjoy the world. The problem is it's getting in the way of our narrative, which is then getting in the way of everyone else's performance.

C Mueller: In a way, the ideal spectator-participant is still needing to have that level of self-reflection and awareness of their own role within the greater world. So a sense of total immersion is actually not desirable in order to play well.

Joe Ball: Which is why I think I've aimed towards using community as a word in the creation of stuff, because it tries to instil this idea of who are you working with, how are you working with them, an "us" rather than a "me".

C Mueller: It strongly opposes the approach to immersive theatre taken by for example Punchdrunk, who create a very anonymized hoard of spectators through the masks, and how they very much in courage individual exploration, entrepreneurship, finding your own personal path and the secretive spaces where the really exciting things are.

Joe Ball: Definitely, and they do that amazingly well, but they just moved the fourth-wall to a mask.

C Mueller: Exactly, that's true. Interesting. Talking about crowds, what about peer pressure? Coercement and peer-pressure?

Joe Ball: Yeah, so I guess that the people that go too far, that try and steal the lime-light, and it takes a good performer or a performer that knows the skill well, but you let them hang themselves on their own rope, that with almost any world, if somebody is being over the top, over the top, over the top, they will get to the point where it's suddenly very obvious that they are on stage and they are the ones that put themselves into this position of being too loud or too... So you can slightly let them hang themselves on their own rope by allowing just a little bit and then kind of going "alright, is this what you want? Because we can't carry on unless you can't do that so..."

C Mueller: That sounds like a potential strategy for the improvised performer...

Joe Ball: I think it is being... It's not being too absolute that you have to go on the exact journey that you've rehearsed, that it's more, this is a really annoying phrase but it's one that I try and use, you have to be as fluid as possible about solid as possible points. So, you've got to go from A to B to C to D, but how you get there can be a fluid as possible. And that visual is kind of, if you go past D, if it gets too unsafe, you stop, if it goes way off track and becomes about a person, then you find a way of stopping that and bringing it back, I think. I mean hey, it's all so new and exciting, that's part of the reason you start playing with it isn't it?

C Mueller: What's been the best participatory performance that you've ever seen? What the one that has left the biggest mark?

Joe Ball: Personally, just because I thought it was incredible, was Ontroerend Goeds Fight Night.

C Mueller: I know, I talked to my supervisor:

"Oh I just went to see Fight Night and it was really good, and I've just made contact with the director".

"Ontroerend Goed? Oh my, that's amazing, I'm writing an article about it!"

I'm like "Really?"

Joe Ball: Wrong.

C Mueller: And then he realized, it's not you.

Joe Ball: I said very early on we shouldn't use that name and I'm still working on it. The placeholder name was still the placeholder by the time we got it up. Because yeah, I think that's incredibly thoughtless.

C Mueller: You vote for the performers, right. I haven't seen it myself sadly.

Joe Ball: It's amazing, it's really good. Yeah, they do a really good... There's like a step-away from the interaction, it's not in and amongst, but it's just that lovely involvement in something that they do impeccably well.

C Mueller: The audience is seated in the normal auditorium, how do they...

Joe Ball: You get little clickers and you have A, B or C that you can choose between.

C Mueller: And so you see, do you have an instant feedback loop?

Joe Ball: Oh yeah. It's so satisfying. At the very end you get the story of your show and the demographic of who you are, by your tickets and the buying. Oh it's glorious, it's glorious.

C Mueller: They've got that technology to actually give the statistics about that as well, which is exactly achieving what you were talking about, it makes you think about your choices afterwards, because all of a sudden you've got more information about who you are and how you may have gotten to where you are . . No-one likes to be told you're a middle class, north London.

Joe Ball: Just a wooly-opinionated snowflake.

C Mueller: Yes exactly. That's your generation.

Joe Ball: Damn it!

C Mueller: That's not me anymore, so there you go. And when all of a sudden you have it in black and white paper, then it can be really quite scary. I think that this is a device that participatory performance can so beautifully facilitate if it works. There was one moment in Coney's Remote, have you seen that one? Yeah, and I've seen a very early incarnation, the first one that they did at Camden People's Theatre,

Joe Ball: I think I may have AD-ed that one, maybe I did the second one. And I know Tassos as well as Tom and Annette very well. *Early Days* is perhaps the most... I mean *Revolution* was very similar, just more game-based rather than the voting base that they've done. But yeah, huge influence Coney, as you can probably see from the work I've done.

C Mueller: I did a workshop with Annette and Tom, which ended up being their research workshop for *Early Days* which was great fun

Joe Ball: I think part of why there's been a small explosion of interactive theatre stuff from Coney and all the other ones in between, it is the human side of it and that we all spend so much time watching TV, using Netflix is so easy and just kind of... Social media is how people interact and actually there is something real and live and community, just to hammer home my own ideas, in the live event.

C Mueller: There is the other show that your *Mission* reminded me of and actually *Fight Night*, the element of currency is a show by Kaleider called *The Money*, have you seen it?

Joe Ball: I think I know the one you're talking about.

C Mueller: It's where they are basically debating what the money is being used for.

Joe Ball: So good.

C Mueller: ... and you have, what I've found so interesting about that is how you have the audience watching the audience, and how they turn into an amphitheater of hecklers and booers and supporters, and it turns into a football match, how they form allegiance and I find that... This is always something that for me, when I kind of elaborate more in my characters, is something that I really want to look into how you can provide and audience for the audience within participatory performance. And so how can you frame their actions and participations as a performance to be seen, not just to be experienced, and also the option of opting in and out...

Joe Ball: Yeah, we've been trying that with both *Fight Night* and *The Mission* in that we don't ever say "you're doing this now" and so it starts off with is there a volunteer from the South, is there a volunteer from the North, and those are people that have said "me", and they then become the ring-men for the two fighters. We've definitely thought about the stepping stones into a performance, we always think about how you start with someone who's kind of "oh, I don't know", how do you go from that to someone at the end going "I believe we need to cut all of them out of the room"? What are the stepping stones to get you from one to the other? And I think you're absolutely right, that opting out or space just to opt in is what we've been working with throughout these ones, but there's a show happening, maybe it's already happened, what are they called...

Hidden Trap Theatre Company

C Mueller: Hidden Trap?

Joe Ball: They did an amazing, lets see if I can very quickly drag it up. They had before their shows a laminated piece of paper, like a "this is how we're going to interact with you" "this is how you can choose how you might do this, might do that". Absolutely glorious, of this kind of spot-on "you don't have to do anything if you don't want to, you're still a this, you're still a that", but it's amazing it's there before you even enter and that's a really nice early stepping stone of this kind of "oh, I'm involved".

C Mueller: Yeah, it's really interesting, because I've tried to do that with my early work Hey There by having the interactive program notes. And so the interactive program notes often will give instructions telling the audience members what they would be able to do where. So if they would step into that, then they could trigger this performer, or if they walk into there, they can trigger this performer, and gave instructions as well as at times asking them to just sit down and write something. And so actually it sort of facilitated quiet moments as well, and I think to have a certain guidance for the audience, but also that sort of freedom within that guidance, they can always choose not to do it, and to also tell them

that, you know? That's what you say, you don't ever have to really do what we ask you to do you now, you can just observe.

Joe Ball: And that I think is also, those moments of saying "you can do this, you don't have to but that's your choice", if you can have those little moments where you remind them that it's their choice what they do and to just link it to back to "this is you, this is still you" is very useful.

Joe Ball: What time are we on?

C Mueller: We are on 4 o'clock.

Joe Ball: Oh, perfect.

C Mueller: I think I've got it all, well if not, can I email you?

Joe Ball: Please do, please do.

C Mueller: That has been really enjoyable, thank you so much.

Joe Ball: I do love a good lofty chat.

Appendix 2 - Interview with Tassos Stevens - 25 March 2019

C Mueller: Because you are often the to-go-to person when it comes to participation and game-based performance, there is a lot written about you and Coney already, so I'm not going to ask you how you got into this type of performance. But would you have any personal recommendations for anyone wanting to work within participatory performance; if there are any tips you would like to pass on, what would they be. Could you maybe identify three main markers that you feel a participatory performance maker would have to consider?

Tassos Stevens: I think you have to be careful with the sort of the language used within the creation of the work, you're giving over control, you're not really pushing what will happen. You are just forming something into what's going to be a dialogue with play readings, which is both you and the other people, which will not be the same as you. You will be different from each other. They will surprise you; they will be marvellous; it will also be able to bring together people in a particular situation which will become more predictable than you may imagine? But, it’s always good to have on your mind what it is to be them, to imagine what it might be to be them, in their position. And also, not just to imagine but to actively look at how you can design their involvement. This would be my first advice, to step by step consider how you can involve participants, in the creation and in the design process because they are who you will learn from.

As for my second advice, I think is we're designing structures for participation, frameworks, not that they are of cast iron, but I think of these like an architecture that you're building. It is about setting up a space that we host in. As a host, you are transmitting a kind of culture that the people then can enter in. Looking at participation design, interaction design and game design, like all these words used to design I've heard of, and I think in a way every design is the fact that you are making something that you are going to give over to the people and how I know that person is going to grow. Matt Locke who now runs Story Things, who used to be head of Channel 4 for education and knows more about broadcasting, he's smarter about broadcasts than many people was talking to me about the difference between 2D and digital,

In this case, it's never about technology, it's always about the people. So, Matt would say that if you look at TV broadcast and digital broadcast, they’re completely different in that, for TV you spend 90 percent of the money, of the resource before you then

release it to the public, and with digital you should spend 10 percent of the resource before and then see how it applies and grow it, develop it from there.

You go on and develop and continue the designing, and this is the same with participatory performance; you try something and see how it applies and grow it from there.

C Mueller: ok.

Tassos Stevens: And ... for my 3rd advice, I would say it is important to understand the fact that freedom is a very dubious law; and to consider what freedom means. I think there is a false conception, to imagine that an audience having more freedom and is able to do more is better, but in fact it does not necessarily result in a better piece. I think it is important to understand that every piece of work, what is made in both its event structure and in its participatory structure, that is for real, what happens is for real. It is a group of mostly strangers come together in a hosted place to play together. In a framework designed by artists but also in its interactive model of how we are playing. Those interactive models and participatory frameworks themselves can be designed dramaturgically. And this carries a consideration that what is right and what is best for audiences to do is really whatever would carry the most meaning for them inside this framework. And this does not always equate with freedom; rather, more freedom can be as dodgy in art as it can be in politics.

C Mueller: There is Gadamer's conception that the game plays the player and not the player plays the game, since the game exists before the players enters it and how the player only ever can carry the function given to him by the game, defined by the game. So, the player is somewhat controlled by the game structure; and yet you mentioned that part of participatory performance is giving over that control, but do not equate it to freedom. So, what does it equate to?

Tassos Stevens: Play. I am thinking of the time I spent with Bernie DeKoven's, my Jedi Master. We exchanged several conversations leading to the game of Legacy, and his book *The Well Played Game* I think is a beautiful and brilliant read, but also recasts the question of transgression slightly, as I reckon it would fit here.

C Mueller: Okay.

Tassos Stevens: And, I went to spend time with him after he was diagnosed with late stage cancer, a few years ago, in order to make a game together about legacy and in doing so create a part of his own legacy. *A Game of* Legacy really began at a party which we used to post a letter; it says 'don't open the parcel. Not until you have

friends and family around the table, in your house, perhaps.' The parcel at one end, a screen at the other that plays us and then through the screen, we facilitate them, and they then open the parcel and play with what came out of it. And, in a small moment within the game, an experience happens through a little piece of instruction-based poetry theatre that happens on that table. So, the players are making something as well, are creating a response and this resonates with a moment during our visit. As we were sitting in a park, near Bernie's house, sitting on a bench, beneath Oak trees, we were talking, watching children play on - not just children actually - old people as well as smaller people. And they were playing on swings which themselves were a legacy from Bernie as he made requests to the park to install these special swings he designed. These swings are double seated, with a big seat and a small seat. And the idea is that a big person-small person face each other and then the big person, while in the swing themselves can make the swing start to move, but then because they're looking at each other they kind of got joy altercations, if that happens. This swing existed already, and Bernie suggested to add a particular design tool, which was to flip it around so that the two big seats now faced each other, so that they could kind of create a connection between grown-ups which gets them to be explored by more people.

We saw two fathers and their daughters, who were strangers to each other, get in and use the swings exactly as Bernie had imagined. But then brilliantly, the two little girls, who didn't know each other but had a connection in this moment, suddenly started singing that song from Frozen of course, because the song that little girls sing, given the chance. And that was incredible to witness, sort of like the example of what Bernie had in mind while suggesting this design. But, also more importantly, watching the swings over several days, we saw at least eleven different ways of playing with the swing happen.

C Mueller: Yes.

Tassos Stevens: This tickled Bernie incredibly. We were watching, and tickled him in a way, in a you know, you've got to imagine Bernie as a kind of like grouchy, illuminous creature, who was like, yes, 'what you doing playing on my swings, how you playing like that, that was beautiful.' That was a really bad impression of his voice. But that sort of. But the point is that you cannot remove people from your legacy, to make a legacy is the same as giving the game away, you cannot tell people how to play the game.

You give them the framework in which they can play for themselves and you design something in a way which makes that possible, but actually the kind of agency which people have to be able to change how they play with the structure, so that they can

continue to play well together, is the heart of Bernie's book *the Well Played Game.* That when we play well, we play together, if our relationship is more important, if we are more important than the game, which invariably we are, then we change how we play the game or even the game itself, in order to keep playing well together. And I think that when this is possible then I think the idea of transgression flips into something which is more about a constant negotiation that is happening and the book describes that really beautiful, as kind of a dance. That dialogue dance like around 'how should we play' happens.

C Mueller: So, for you in a way transgression doesn't become a breaking of what has been, well, it is what will become a breaking of what is given but it's a breaking which leads to a metamorphosis into something else.

Tassos Stevens: But, really contingent on the spirit, the culture, the ethos, and kind of the relationships and how rigid is that structure to begin with, both the structure of the game itself and how rigid is the relationship and where the power is. What the *Well Played Game* opposes is that power is distributed and that kind of relationship, because everybody has a stake. And that, yeah we have care for each player in order to play with everyone being allowed to play.

C Mueller: Yeah.

Tassos Stevens: Like I said, some things exist that need to be more rigid and I think there is also an element to do with scale and how much a bigger group of people can negotiate together.

C Mueller: And then, is it also really dependent on the people that are actually there or the constellation of people and obviously on this willingness to play well together, for example if you do look at children, often the willingness to play well together can break suddenly. In participatory performance this might happen, too. Joe Ball from Exit Productions told me how at times people didn't play well together in *Fight Night*, and often those who didn’t were people who actually participatory theatre makers themselves. You were just talking about power: Could it be that what happens sometimes with participatory performance is that there are the people who are not feeling so comfortable with it and they will hold back as they are inexperienced and then there are the people who are more experienced and maybe even makers of that type of theatre themselves and they are more daring. Hence, the power balance can shift a little bit.

Tassos Stevens: I think that's right. I mean when I played it, I hope I played it in a considerate way.

C Mueller: Tell me about your bending of the rules that you've mentioned before, what did you do?

Tassos Stevens: So, in *Fight Night*, because I happened to be standing close to the divide between both teams at the start.

C Mueller: So, you didn't designate yourself to a particular boxer?

Tassos Stevens: I did but very loosely and then I took advantage of that to move between both sides and see what I could come up with doing. I did two things that felt like they were a little bit transgressive. One was I decided which fighter I wanted to win, but then I made sure that I was identified as being on the other side, gaining trust, and then when that fighter was being persuaded by his coach to take a performance enhancing drug, when they were saying 'yeah, everyone in here must be keeping quiet', I turned my phone recorder on in my pocket and recorded everything that followed and emailed that to Joe, because I knew him for real but he was in his role, but then I took advantage of that to say I gave you some really fucking hard evidence, pay me.

C Mueller: Did he receive the email during the show?

Tassos Stevens: Yeah, he did.

I mean he knew what I recorded he didn't play it, He just saw it and took that as proof. So, something that was sent out of the game world, did then become enjoyably part of the game, we both enjoyed it.

C Mueller: But that's interesting because it was kind of sent out and then sent back in, he was still in his role within the world but this clearly made a slide through a transgressing of the magic circle.

Tassos Stevens: Which makes me think back to my first advice, that people might surprise you how they play the game. And then I worked out that the promotor was obviously a source of power and corrupt and that his money came from livestreaming. I then wrote a couple of notes saying 'these matches are fixed' and held them in front of the camera that was filming; it didn't get me any money in the game but it sort of was quite pleasing.

C Mueller: I love that, shame that it wasn't properly livestreamed,

Tassos Stevens: Yeah, it was pretend. But it was project onto the wall. With everything I did I was trying to be aware of the world, all of my actions were kind of in game, but I did them because that's what I was invited to do, and it felt like I could do it. But I think there's something where you have to remember that these are also real people, and these are also real actors. They're actors, rather,

they're real people. They have a job to do, there are other people here as well. So, the thing with the camera, I wasn't going to persist with that in a way that was going to fuck up the game for other people. So that kind of awareness beyond even as we're playing, there is still something really happening in the room here and we're both playing. How do I, if I'm a good player push this but in a way that is accommodating. Unless they're arseholes, I don't want to fuck them off.

C Mueller: In a way you played for your own pleasure and that sort of cheekiness aligns itself with the role of the cheater who wants to gain something out of it and I don't know if you did make money.

Tassos Stevens: I did win it. I won the money.

C Mueller: You did, so.

Tassos Stevens: I did, yeah.

C Mueller: So, there you go, you won the money. And you obviously took advantage of that direct connection to the person you knew from outside of the game being in the game without breaking the game for everyone else. This is exactly what the cheater does, the cheater leaves that game world intact. Joe told me about the situation where someone, similar to you was of the opinion that this match was rigged, and sat on the judge's chair, and basically refused to leave. And so, the play couldn't continue until that person would move out of the chair. And that is very much in a way what is called a spoil sport, which is the person who then breaks the game for everyone else and affects the actors, and affects the other players as well. In a way what you've added to the game, I really like the sort of cheeky additional elements that offered, as the signs on the live stream saying: 'this match is rigged', could have actually enhanced the game experience for other players as well as your own.

Similarly to you, I wasn't really aligned to any of the teams. I ended up being assigned the role of the medic, so I ended up having to examine both players. But at one point I found myself going through the judge's table, and all the paperwork, and basically reading the results, so that felt transgressive. I didn't find anything proper apart, from the fridge where all the blood samples went. But I didn't really act upon it, but it just felt satisfactory.

Tassos Stevens: There was a pleasure, and it's a different kind of pleasure, that it was sort of a more, I would say a more solitary play, inside that, which I think is nice. You know the Richard Bartle player types, the socializer, achiever, explorer, griefer.

C Mueller: No, I don't know.

Tassos Stevens: Oh you should know this, definitely.

Yeah. Quickly paraphrasing the gist, he did an analysis of these back in the 90s, inside one of the big text worlds, like an equivalent of World of Warcraft at a point when you just had text, that dimension. But then the brilliance of it being text is also that every player action on it a lot.

C Mueller: Yeah, I have heard of the grief player.

Tassos Stevens: Yeah so there's these four types that you can identify. He did further work to differentiate the taxonomy, but these four are useful. Achiever, he likes to get to score points, win the game. Socializer, he likes to have good interactions with other players. Explorer, he wants to see what kind of the boundaries of the world are, and griefer he wants to cause grief to other players in the game. Now, I believe I was more of an explorer and wanted to see what was possible. I do think the player types can clarify the relationship the player has to the game, and the sense of relationship that the peer players have to each other and this forms the building block of how we play. When keeping in mind how are we playing well, and what's explicit, what's implicit, in fact we have good relationships.

I'm never going to be griefing. I might be poking, but in a way which would stay positive. Acknowledging relationships, some of the relationships have really done great. So, in the case of the spoil sport judge, who becomes so like totally gripping into I'm playing this. They become blinkered and stop seeing what else is going to come around.

C Mueller: One of things that I've always found happened to myself in whatever participatory performance, I go and visit, is that I turn really quite adventurous, I want to explore, I want to kind of gently test the boundaries and see what I can do. I am a fairly playful person, and I think just sort of these magic worlds, these game worlds really enhance that. And I don't really ever want to win, that's not my main goal, but I always find myself going really cheeky and slightly hysterical. Do you find the experience of being explorative quite inherent within yourselves?

Tassos Stevens: I think so. I wonder as well whether it is something about how if we are makers, we're experienced in this kind of play, as opposed to people who are less experienced. There are points who the less experience players are being taken through, to kind of get them to be able to interact. We can get there faster, but then what do you then do with that. And I think that naturally ends up to an element of exploration, of ah ‘well I'm going now’, I'm interested, professionally as well as personally. I can actually have this work, so I will use this. But if I'm not, if I'm sort of not that fast, I know if

I don't really care, then what do I do, then I might feel let down, does that then leads to a fraying with that, with my relationship to the game, which then makes me more likely to start faffing and perhaps griefing. There's a lot in play there.

C Mueller: So have you ever been in a situation where you actually felt like you wanted to destroy the frame due to frustrations with the game, due to frustrations with the facilitation of it?

Tassos Stevens: Yeah. I felt that inside, the example that spring to mind, was in 'It felt like a kiss", by Punch Drunk and Adam Curtis, I saw it in Manchester, like ten years ago.

C Mueller: Oh right, yes.

Tassos Stevens: It was like a brilliant artifice of a cinematic experience, but the thing that everyone is talking about occurs in the last third of the performance, where you in a group of people that were chased by a performer in a mask carrying a chainsaw. And you're running for your life. And the sequence up to that point was one of the best constructive rides I've been on. But I've found the politics of it really, difficult, as you don't know what is happening really. And even, not just in, I mean, afterwards, in the reflection of it. it was so frustrating for me that there was no space for the kind of solidarity that had risen within the group I was traveling in; we were forced to split. Literally, there were facilitators that made that happen. And there was no space afterwards to find the support of staying together to talk about it. And after the significant intensity of that experience, I felt wrong and, in the moment, I was kind of daring myself to basically just stop running and "Okay you're not going hurt me, I know that, right?" But what are you going do? But then, there's a basic, visceral, "there's somebody with a fuckin' chainsaw."

But it really annoyed me, more than annoyed actually

C Mueller: Mm-hmm (affirmative). But you didn't stop running?

Tassos Stevens: I did continue running, yeah, I ran. But I felt-

C Mueller: Reluctant

Tassos Stevens: Yeah. But I think the failure of the piece was actually the kind of dialectic of this rhetoric, which was kind of like you're confronted with the American dream becoming a nightmare. All you can do is run. No, it's not all you can do. But it's all you're allowing me to do.

C Mueller: Yeah. I think Punchdrunk do that quite a lot, don't they? They do have very predestined modes and ways for an audience to get involved

Tassos Stevens: It's key to understand that one of Felix's big influences is horror houses. I mean, I was close to him on the early stuff he was working on.

C Mueller: Yeah, because you were involved with some of their early work ... or Coney was.

Tassos Stevens: Yeah, Coney was, hosted by Mike. He's done *The Gold Bug* inside *The Mask of The Red Death.* It was kind of a separate, but kind of connected thing. That was tricky on both sides. But, yeah, Punchdrunk gave us the space to make our thing, hosted it. But there wasn't a real sense of collaboration until things started to go wrong, and then we're working out to fix them.

But, yeah, Felix makes theme parks, and I might experience as though I'm riding this, the audience can do what they like with their bangles in following that. There are no rails, but that's kind of the way it is. I'm talking about the mask crowd model. And that's not all of Punchdrunk's work, as some of their other models are absolutely beautiful. Also, to be fair, it's a way of managing a crowd on this kind of engagement scale, and it's really hard to do this with such a large crowd, a lot of frailties on that scale.

C Mueller: This is again a model for audience involvement that allows an audience to row to a certain extent and do certain things, but equally doesn't allow them to veer off that path too much or do their own things. But I want to talk a little bit about *Early Days of a Better Nation*, because for me it’s very different to the crowd model of Punchdrunk.

Tassos Stevens: Yeah.

C Mueller: The year before you produced that piece I took part in one of your workshops were you tested early ideas for *Early Days* and explored how you can have a negotiation and a fairly loose form of audience involvement, giving a lot of freedom for them to make decisions together. Where they strongly contribute and are pushed to the extent where they want, and they need to collide with their different suggestions. So, can you maybe talk me through a little bit of what sort of principles have you applied to that particular performance, first of all, and then second question will again be moments where it didn't work or where audience members didn't cooperate or where unusual, unexpected things have happened and how did you deal with that?

Tassos Stevens: That's not the best one for me to talk about because I wasn't part of the making team for that.

C Mueller: Right.

Tassos Stevens: So I can only talk about that from, like, as an ear from the outside.

C Mueller: Because it was Annette and Tom that really ...

Tassos Stevens: Yeah.

C Mueller: Okay.

Tassos Stevens: I mean, there are other performances that I can talk about that I've got more direct experience of in order answer that question.

C Mueller: Okay. Do you want to choose one where the most unexpected things have happened for you?

Tassos Stevens: I probably talk about Small Town but I also, I just want to throw two things quickly at you ... let me give you these two things because they could be useful here.

C Mueller: Yeah.

Tassos Stevens: But also, they're just there as specific things that dropped to mind that I'd like to chat about.

C Mueller: Sure.

Tassos Stevens: One was a piece of mine with Chester Zoo called *The Green Gold Conspiracy,* which was a game played over dinner about systems of palm oil production and consumption and the audience's own place within that, and there were three interlocked games that were being played that were being facilitated. Those that ran the facilitation were kind of essential like a kind of bank as it were. And in one of the games, the players were workers on the plantation, an important palm oil plantation. They were making choices, and they would do so within given structures which me and William Drew designed. And I think that around the same time, Will had brought to a workshop the question of how do you deal with players going off the edge of the map, how can you deal with that well? And he used the Punchdrunk black mask stewards and we thought that wouldn't do that well. And it really came to the fore with *Green Gold* as it was a much more fuzzily-defined game.

C Mueller: Yeah.

Tassos Stevens: In the centre of it was quite a clear way to play, a very clear structure. But there was then an ounce of, then a medium ring of ... where players could interpret things kind of creatively and because we had facilitators, we could then ... and we were always ... we adopted a principle of facilitation. If the players make a suggestion that you are then able to facilitate, and which feels like it's not going to break the game for other players, then say yes. And if in doubt, say yes. And we'll work out how that works.

C Mueller: So the structure was like you were all at the dinner table and you just played on the table . .

Tassos Stevens: There were like 12 tables and they were at first divided into three regions and countries. So, you played as a farm first. And then another game where all four tables play together as a country. And there was another game where you could play as retailers. There were moments where we'd move in between those different games. Mostly the plantation game was the main one and most of those things would happen inside this frame.

There was an event card, this is literally like a board game card as well, and that card was fucking brilliant. Because it was so simple but it made two tables play for about 20 minutes with a given instruction, which was that you had to build a road between your two plantations, which was going to cost like $100 each, and they had to decide how to split the cost. I mean, of that. It's just, they completely went at it ...

C Mueller: Wouldn't the most sensible thing to be 50/50?

Tassos Stevens: Oh, you would think that, but it's like, because they could they would try to enlarge their own capital. But, then we could also, sometimes players would make bigger suggestions, and you have to consider in terms of the facilitation, how do you say yes and also how to say no. Actually, quite often, more often than not the people who had more invested in the world played more transgressive. They're like, "Oh, we're going to build a theme park. We're going to chop down all the forest." They wanted to have that pleasure of creating their world. We had planned for some of this, but then it kind of grew into something we weren't prepared for. The people would come up and try to bribe the bank, without realizing that wasn’t possible. As I was a banker, I would usually end up with like, four to five versus one, which was my luck. You're going to bribe me to break the game. You've really gone after that? Yeah. But it was one example I remember where a brilliant suggestion was made, where three tables, that were in different countries, were really frustrated by, say the way the rest of tables were now a country apart. So, they proposed that they wanted to all remain independent, to break away. And hence become like a fourth country. And it was a fantastic suggestion.

But in, in improv terms, it would have broken, it would have made it impossible for us to continue the game, I would've love to be prepared for that, but it was like just not possible in that moment. So how do you say no? And what Will and I worked out that it needs a form of improvising, you have to say no in a way that's still accepting, you made a great suggestion. Acknowledging that. And so again, you kind of play in a way that will empower the player back. So, to say no, I took the mic, became temporarily the U.N. saying that there's been an extraordinary motion proposed to us, shared it with the room, basically saying, "You played brilliantly." But then announcing that the U.N. council vetoed it on the grounds of geographical surrealness, which made everyone laugh. The players on the tables felt really happy but also are understanding, okay we can't do that, but yeah, thank you for listening to us, Astrid Breel has talked a lot about this form of empowerment

C Mueller: Yeah, I have already been in touch with her.

Tassos Stevens: Yeah she's grown a strong concept.

C Mueller: She is talking a lot about agency.

Tassos Stevens: Yeah but she defines different kinds of creative agency, which is the sense of here's something which we've made, which we know only we could possibly have made, inside of us. And with some of the stories from the *Early Days* tour, from what I 've heard, were fucking delightful, creative suggestions that do not break the game, or challenges the game structurally.

C Mueller: Yeah.

Tassos Stevens: But it is one where everyone who is present, yeah, you had to be there, it had to be us, that made this particular flower bloom in that way.

C Mueller: To come back to the example that you gave with the chainsaw chase, your participation then seemed frustrated because you were given only one possible mode and any other suggestion, any creative agency would have been blocked. Whereas here it seems to be about still wrapping the response of the maker / facilitator into acknowledging creative agency that the spectator at that moment gave, whatever the outcome?

Tassos Stevens: And maybe I'm being unfair. I guess maybe if I had stopped, like if maybe I had stopped running, he'd have stopped and given me a high five.

C Mueller: But the more pertinent point was probably how you felt and your personal experience within it. Gary White for example is talking

about the perceived risk and however safe a participation format is, if the spectator doesn't feel safe or perceives risk, it goes against any logic or reality. Either way, I think if you were chased by a chainsaw, and you run surrounded by a crowd, it all sounds scary. Particularly the running and the heightened pressure of being in a crowd. I think that in itself would be quite a scary experience.

Tassos Stevens: Another performance that comes to my mind now is an example of perceived risk in a different sense, which was *Adventure 1*. Did you play *Adventure 1*?

C Mueller: No..

Tassos Stevens: *Adventure 1* is a adventure which happens in a secret location somewhere in the city. It's secret because we don't have permission to be there.

C Mueller: Okay.

Tassos Stevens: We are playing with the sense of transgression from the outside.

C Mueller: Okay.

Tassos Stevens: Everything inside is true, we don’t push to make things up.

C Mueller: How do you play it? I haven't even hear of it, it must have passed me by . .

Tassos Stevens: Yeah. *Adventure 1* we sell it online. We have not done it very often, because you can't. It sells out really quickly every time we put it on.

C Mueller: And so you do actually put it in a place where you are not allowed to be

Tassos Stevens: Yeah.

C Mueller: So where did you perform it?

Tassos Stevens: I can’t tell you as it is in a secret location.

C Mueller: Are you always in the same location?

Tassos Stevens: In this particular piece, yes.

C Mueller: Yes.

Tassos Stevens: Like, and you are... I can say as a bit of a spoiler, that it is like what you kind of call a corporate space. So, this space looks like

public space, but it's not. And there is a whole set of actual legal small print which specifies who is allowed to be there and who is not. And the people that are there have business and therefore shoppers, tourists, workers, like those are the three who are allowed to be. I'm going to quickly talk through the experience of the *Adventure 1*, at least as much as I can. You sign up online. You buy a ticket. You are told as well that you are going to tail someone who works in the heart of the city. It's uncertain whether this is an act or not, so there is an uncertainty from the start. When you file online, you're told it's going be a weekend, afternoon. So, if the performance happens on a Saturday afternoon, then, on the Monday before that weekend, an associate, Josh, will be in touch. And, Josh will leave you some strange messages that week. And, yeah, you will receive a series of text and you will be asked to reply to a text you get, and then your phone rings, you listen to a voice recording giving more information and, as you know, you know how that works. And Josh, is explaining that the position you have to play, is undercover. And you have to play undercover because there are risks such as the police. So, you are following instructions of somebody you never met, which is Josh, and he tells you will be tracking a person Mr X. And then, you'll receive an audio to upload to your phone the night before you go to the location. On the elected day, you'll kind of go gather at a specific place.

C Mueller: Yeah.

Tassos Stevens: You get a text message, and off you go. First of all, you are exploring this very real place; which contains several places of interest and so forth.

C Mueller: Yeah.

Tassos Stevens: It's very high stake, and you'll be given a map and are asked to go to places and send text messages and you receive texts back. And you have a choice on where, yeah, you have a roaming ability allowed through this. So, if you end up at the locations' Starbucks, then, you text 'latte', so you get a text sent back. Okay, it's in Starbucks, it's here. And, then, the tracker team is an interview person and barrista, who serves 'Mr.X' because of the whole tale. His coffee choices are such and such. So, the first part of it is like following this ghost and it is about discovering more about who he is, both the person and the role within the story. Also, for you to listen to this in a world of a specific function.

You listen to this in Starbucks. Like, trying to pretend as if you, maybe you even buy a coffee as part of the story. And, as you're playing, at the beginning, you are kind of like induced to think that someone's watching you, so they need to blend in as a shopper, tourist or office worker. So maybe they can't pass as office

workers, but they could pass as a shopper or a tourist, and they therefore play that at every moment. So, this is like the first, out of two, three instructions that they'll have to go through, and then, once you set a time, you'll get another phone call from Josh. And that tells you shit's about to get real. Mr. X is arriving, and he asks you to do something, requires you to something, for which there is a general risk. That is why, to a degree, why you should do that. And then, if you're fortunate enough to stay strong . . .

But, much later, you'll end up sitting around a table with the other performers and players, a bunch of strangers. Whom you will have found yourself with by the time the challenge has come about. Where, what is being unpacked is you; all of your versions become a system, and the urgency you felt, and basically, yeah, how did you play, why did you do that? And, but still within, because it's always been, careful spoiler, it's always been about you.

And, the action you're challenged to do is something which is, um... Yeah, I can't, I promised to Rabbit that I can't say.

C Mueller: Of course.

Tassos Stevens: But, there's a couple moments where; here's another spoiler. Like, there's an operator who is tailing the players also in order to safeguard them; Like, I've been playing that role and sometimes I've felt shit I'm going to have to attend.

C Mueller: Because of what the players did...

Tassos Stevens: Yeah, and there was one point where I was like, yeah know, some passers-by have seen what just happened. I went to intervene, because I was able to do so without breaking my own cover. So, it's, like, it's okay. It's just a performance. And it all quieted down. Other than that one moment, everything is kind of out that proceeds transgression. I am doing all the actions that you're doing. Exactly those that everybody, a shopper, or a tourist is allowed to do. It's just that, in your head, you are doing something else. It kind of flips reality on its head.

C Mueller: So, it's the perception again?

Tassos Stevens: Yeah,

C Mueller: It's the perception of risking-

Tassos Stevens: Which is a thing that then can heighten-

C Mueller: Excitement.

Tassos Stevens: Yeah.

Tassos Stevens: I am uncertain of what's real and what's not, because it's written in a way that is entirely, entirely plausible. Like, even stuff that I thought I made up.

C Mueller: Interestingly, we talked about transgression of the players within a made-up world, which can manifest as the players against the artists, the player against the game, the player against the world. Here it is a condition between the two components that are ultimately one and the same. The magic circle is carried by the player. A world in which everyone is all of a sudden identified as facilitator.

Tassos Stevens: That has been built in advance. There are moments and actions that help you get ready for that immersion.

C Mueller: It reminds me of Mia Consalvo, who is talking about the para-texts of games. Digital games, what you read about them, and how you're influenced by reviews, and by what you heard from friends, and how all these elements can affect how you play the game. And, I think, this can strongly be applied in participatory performance as well. Coney, itself, very strongly uses and abuses it. For you, a lot of it is about that first point of contact, it's about the experience surrounding the actual performance itself.

Tassos Stevens: It's building from what's there and understanding the power of starting both with what's there and what's implied from the outside. And then, important is not just what's in the world but what's in the players' expectations. One of the best designed interactions inside this, is what happens just after you bought a ticket on event-brite, where you'll be sent an e-mail just from Coney's app, cc-ing in Josh, and it'll say Josh will be in touch. And then, Josh will pop in twenty-four hours after that, "Hi. Hi Kate, am looking forward to speak with you then". Yeah. It's the novelty, we establish that from the start. It might be like, a month in advance and you'll first hear from Josh. That is saying, "Josh is one of us". Which is, like, crucial for the uncertainty that then follows. Josh is a character, Josh is fiction. But yeah, that's sort of what you're playing with.

Interestingly, the two moments where I had to get involved, well, I guess one I had to intervene in but I was being in the background. On the other I thought I had to intervene, because it was brutal, actually, physically, brutal.

C Mueller: This is really mean I want to hear the details!

Tassos Stevens: Sorry.

C Mueller: Yeah.

Tassos Stevens: Both of these were actually committed by critics.

C Mueller: Really?

Tassos Stevens: Yeah, and again, it's something about, I think it's to do with understanding how you would play this step in the reality. It is kind of the comfort and the stake and the power that people feel in the reality; in their real relationships with us. We couldn't understand why it wasn't meshing because for them it might not mean to be transgressing behaviour.

C Mueller: I find extremely extraordinary, actually, every single person that I've talked about, in relation to transgression and breaking the rules, that every single maker who told me about people having played especially transgressive and having pushed boundaries to an extent where they nearly destroyed the game, that it always were either other performers, makers or people somehow familiar with this type of play. That familiarity, that sort of sense of power and ability that comes from knowing this kind of work and also how you are acquainted with it.

Tassos Stevens: How you break the connection, when you're a transgressor you're also breaking the connection from the other players and who they are, and how they are playing it. I'm reminded of an improv exercise that's called 'Yes, let's', which Improbable taught me it. From Keith Johnstone. But the way that Improbable showed me it, was to firstly play that, yeah let's, yeah let's do this suggestion offered. They do that, first of all, all and then, the second time, if you find honestly, you cannot, say 'yes'. When you are about to become a distraction among the group then, simply, step out. Stop playing. And know there's no shame in doing that. Not for you, or the person that made the suggestion. So it’s not about doing this to discover what kinds of suggestions makes people leave, and how come we can't keep those guys in the game, but in order to accept that it is ok to stop playing.

It's always about judging transgression and how it connects to the play-site. Like, both in what they're about. And also, the temperature of the room as well. It's like that exercise I done once around Shakespeare with a group. And one performer, who was a brilliant performer, but she was so keen that she liked all the choices she made. So, like high temperature, just out there. And she made the rest of the group kind of want to disengage, like, she was not tuned to that connection. But you can more easily break-away, as well, disconnect from the group, if you feel like actually, I'm different from them. And I have a different relationship than just being an audience. I'm in the know.

C Mueller: And the reason there are there is, actually, a little selfishness and egotism involved, would you say?

Tassos Stevens: They can be, but I think it's important not to judge. I think it's important to see everything first of all. I think in every single action there could be a whole different load of things going on. Because they also, maybe, sometimes, if the game is not right, maybe you have to transgress a little or, as said, step out.

C Mueller: Tassos, thank you so much, this has been absolutely brilliant and very helpful!

Appendix 3 –Balloons Script

Woman dances a solo for about 1 ½ minutes to an industrial sound scape. The movement she performs is fluid and involves a lot of rotations and gentle turns. She abruptly stops and runs out of the studio, shutting the door to the studio behind her.
On an audio recording, her voice appears:
Arrgghhhhh . . .this is so difficult . . . I'm sorry I apologise
I haven't done this for so long now, and my mind is not quite here . . . I do apologise. Oh, dear, I just walked out, didn't I, oh dear I am sorry this is not working for me.

So . . . I think I need to try a different approach ... II am really, really sorry but it doesn't work for me to just stand in front of you, move about, my mind is not here, I can't focus, and I need to try something else. So, I really hope you will be able to help me out.

I need you. You guys. You just sitting there . . I know I know you were expecting something else . . But then hey, I did show you something, didn't I. . I mean you did have a moment where you were just sitting down, and I showed you a little bit of a dance and a bit of movement and I hope that was alright? But maybe let's take this as a starting point to try something else . . . .
Something new . . .

The dance I just showed you, was meant to be light . . . it was inspired by air and flow light. I was using lots of breath, I was exploring free flow and natural dynamics and arrghhh bloody hell, all that sort of stuff. But I would really like to try something new, and I was wondering if you would like to be involved.

So could you all get up for me ..

Go, on, stands up .. don't be shy. Thanks. And could you find a place yourself somewhere in the studio not too close to the wall and not too close to anyone else, and when you have to found your place, please settle, standing if you don't mind and close your eyes.

And then, could you close your eyes. If that's ok . . obviously, you don't need to do, anything you don't want to do. You are free to sit down, at any point, but, it won't be as much fun.
So.

Take a deep breath in . . .
And exhale

And again
And breath in and breath out
And again inhale

And breath out . . and one more time and just feel your lungs expanding . . . and deflating . .

Imagine how the flow of air streams into the whole of your body, down the legs and arms, and when you exhale, how it leaves your body, deflates it
Like a balloon . . .
And let's stick with the image of a balloon, maybe how your lings a balloon

Now, imagine your head, is a balloon . . can you know how a balloon, filled with helium, is bobbing around in the air, and now perhaps imagine that your head is a balloon that it floats like a balloon?

Try it . . I know it might feel a little funny, but give it a go . .. just imagine a gentle movement from your head, your head bobbing full of air in the warm sun. and if any other movement comes through your body, allow it to, just explore . . gently, light
I can give you some music to help with this image of a floating balloon between your shoulders . . .

Ahhhh, thank you so much that was lovely, you are free to open your eyes again, as you wish, and come back and ok I know I know, just maybe shake out your shoulders and the rest of your body and you can let go of that image of balloons and I know . . oh, did that feel weird? Oh no I'm sorry did that feel really weird? I know it's a strange thing imagining that your head is a balloon attached to a string in the middle of your shoulder blades but this is the kind of language we are sometimes dealing with in contemporary dance, and I know it's odd.

Let me just maybe explain why I am stuck with this image of the balloon, and floaty airy movement. See, it's my son's birthday, really soon. Noah, yes, his name is Noah. He is born on the 27th April, very, very soon and so I soon have to throw a big children's birthday party.

Oh yes, if you look towards the door of the studio, right below the light switch, there are some pictures of him on the floor . . .

If you want to go and have a look and see how cute he is . . .

That is when he was first born, that is when he was one. Ahhh he's soooooo cute . .

And here is when he was in his skinny phase, yes, he wasn't eating for a while, he would sleep through and apparently that is not a good thing, so we ended up waking him up to feed him, and that's when the sleepless nights began really. And here he is dressed as a tiger for world book day, oh yes, he is very cute. This was done on a budget, as world book day is one of those things when the competition of mothers in the nursery increases and everyone wants their child to be dressed in the coolest costume so much money is spent on Amazon. Anyway

It's such a thing with birthdays and children's parties and that kind of pressure that society puts on us; or maybe it is not society, maybe it's just the other mothers. Or maybe actually it is just yourself who thinks that, your child's birthday has to be the best one and of course you wreck your brain thinking how can you get everyone to have fun. So you're thinking of party games and of maybe getting a clown in but maybe you just start with, ooohh party hats . . . . yeahy, there they are , . . .

(*Party harts string emerge through the window and are being lowered into the studio)*

Happy birthday by Stevie Wonder starting to play in background.

Oh, I don't know, if you would like one, put one on. Distribute them amongst yourselves. Its all good fun. Yeahhhh party hats.

Music plays louder

Now, Caroline has kindly agreed for me to be able to hold Noah's birthday party here, at Clarence Mews, and so , Noah's birthday party will be held here, at Clarence Mews, which is a great space, a big space , and of course, the one thing one needs for a children's birthday party is balloons aaaand yes, here we are smoothly back to the beginning of the performance (music turns loud at the chorus)

Music stops abruptly:
Oh God I hate this song. Anyway, lets come ack to what's more important: Balloons! Yeahy here there are . . here are some that I made earlier.

Balloons pour in from the window above the studio

Yeahy here are loads of them, here is a blue one a green one an orange one . . . all sorts of colours of the rainbow. And of course, I have no idea how many balloons I need in order to fill this beautiful large space, so if you look around you, there are loads of empty balloons scattered on the floor. And it would be great if you could help me figure out how many of them bloody things I need, by blowing up as many balloons as you can, trying to fill this space with them . . so please go on, grab a handful. Blow up as many as you can, lets try and fill this space with as many balloons we can!

Ohhh and here is some good music to get us into the groove of it . . .here we go!!!

Birthday by the Beatles starts playing loudly

Music volume decreases

And let's try and keep all the balloons of the ground; put them all up in the air and bounce them off your hands and your heads and kick them about and anything that is needed to keep them all up, floating around. Shall we try this? Oh go on then . .

Music volume increases

Music volume decreases

And now maybe find a partner that you can pass a balloon back and forwards with, or maybe even two balloons, yes, let's make teams, let's play with each other yeahhyy let's play . . !

Music volume increases, drowning out voice

A string with small Tupperware attached to it is lowered through the window into the studio. In each Tupperware are two pins.

Music volume decreases and comes to silence

oh-ohhhhh

the string is shaken so the pins rattle in the Tupperware

(In a whisper)
Noah.
What's this?

Oh-ohhhh

after a moment, the music comes back in at full volume and plays until the end of the song.

Thank you so much guys. Did you pop any of the balloons? See the thing is that Noah is scared of balloons. On his first birthday, one popped into his face and since then, as soon as he sees them, he starts to scream and shout and is absolutely petrified of them. If you look over there, to the other side of the studio under the mirror, there are some pictures on the floor of Noah when he cries. This is what he looks like when he is scared. Where you scared? Did you pop any of the balloons?

Appendix 3.1 - Balloons Audience Feedback - 7 April 2019

For Carrie: B 7/4/19 . 1

It was quite 'silly' really seeing everyone with party hats on in this "fake" birthday party - it was so strange and comical and added something very rich to the participatory element.
I envisioned a disco ball, colourful lights, glitter ... A desire to see a full blown party scene.

Your voice was authoritative, yet warm and inviting.
The instructions didn't feel scripted.

giving instructions

party hats / props

B 7/4/19-2

Questionnaire for research-showing audience members:

How often have you attended participatory performances over the last 12 months? (Please tick)

Never. *1-3 times.* *3-6 times.* *More than 6 times*

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

Seeing everyone with partyhats on

Did you feel playfully engaged in this performance?

YES!

tag: party hats/ props

Were you comfortable with the level of participation in this moment? If no, can you elaborate?

Yes.

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

Keeping balloons in the air

toys / play

Did you pop any balloon? If yes, did you enjoy it? If no, why didn't you?

No. There weren't enough pins. But also, I enjoyed seeing others pop the balloons and how they reacted to it.

Did you ever want to transgress / do something else that the performance asked you to do? Why?

Blow the spinny confetti party props.

B- 7/4/19.3

The energy was very party esque when the music started & we got party hats. This was a nice shift in contrast from the breathing exercise to start.
There was ample prompt for participation and I was wondering if it was pre-recorded or live verbal prompts?
The music felt 'adult', not kids party music.
I felt sad at the end in learning about Noah's fear of balloons. Does in the space seemed a little scared in the popping moment too.

music

B · 7/4/19 · 4

Questionnaire for research-showing audience members:

How often have you attended participatory performances over the last 12 months? (Please tick)

Never. ***1-3 times.*** ***3-6 times.*** ***More than 6 times***

popping balloons

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

Balloon Popping

Did you feel playfully engaged in this performance?

Yes. Music was key. Props encouraged interaction.

music

Were you comfortable with the level of participation in this moment?

Yes

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

Breathing at the start. helium balloon imagery, floating sensation.

Did you pop any balloon? If yes, did you enjoy it? If no, why didn't you?

No. I was filming :)

Did you ever want to transgress / do something else that the performance asked you to do? Why?

I was filming & conscious of permissions / consent & changing the participation experience for others. I was in and around the space with the camera. I felt like the parent with the camcorder!!

B 7/9/19.5

Questionnaire for research-showing audience members:

How often have you attended participatory performances over the last 12 months? (Please tick)

Never. *1-3 times.* *3-6 times.* *More than 6 times*

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

Hats appearing, pins appearing

Did you feel playfully engaged in this performance?

YES

Were you comfortable with the level of participation in this moment? If no, can you elaborate?

YES

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

Blowing up balloons + trying to keep them in the air

Did you pop any balloon? If yes, did you enjoy it? If no, why didn't you?

YES - only one - yes but no!

Did you ever want to transgress / do something else that the performance asked you to do? Why?

I wanted to tell everyone that no I hadn't agreed to host Noah's party - but in a playful

7/9/19 - 6

Questionnaire for research-showing audience members:

How often have you attended participatory performances over the last 12 months? (Please tick)

Never. ***1-3 times.*** ***3-6 times.*** ***More than 6 times***

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

Keeping the balloons up

Did you feel playfully engaged in this performance?

Yes very.

Were you comfortable with the level of participation in this moment? If no, can you elaborate?

Yes very, but wish we had been asked about timing before hand

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

Imagining head as balloon.

Did you pop any balloon? If yes, did you enjoy it? If no, why didn't you?

No. I hate the sound and it doesn't bring me joy. I am sensitive to sounds

Did you ever want to transgress / do something else that the performe

Well when the music came on to dance like I was at a party

music

7/4/19-8

Questionnaire for research-showing audience members:

How often have you attended participatory performances over the last 12 months? (Please tick)

Never. ***1-3 times.*** ***3-6 times.*** ***More than 6 times***

.....

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

.....popping of balloons.....

Did you feel playfully engaged in this performance?

.....yes.....

popping balloons

Were you comfortable with the level of participation in this moment? If no, can you elaborate?

.....yes.....

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

.....playing w/ balloons

Did you pop any balloon? If yes, did you enjoy it? If no, why didn't you?

.....no - I don't like the sound

Did you ever want to transgress / do something else that the performance asked you to do? Why?

.....no.....

B. 4/9/19.9

Dear Cannie,

You weren't at the meeting where we discussed this so I thought this might be a good form to share it with you.

I have bilateral sensorineural hearing loss + wear hearing aids in both ears. Recorded speech is incredibly hard for me to understand — we discussed this in a meeting because I wasn't able to hear a recording that Lizzie had brought in to share. What I said then and what I would like to share with you now is an invitation to think about how you can make sure that element of your work is available for everyone in the audience! It doesn't mean not ~~[illegible]~~ using it — it just means thinking about how to support everyone in your audience.

I really feel passionately that not enough people think about this in performance work + it's something that has discouraged me from attending work in the past.

Spot the gap in the market!

I'm rebeccasaffir@gmail.com if you want to discuss

Best. R xx

B. 7/4/19.10

Questionnaire for research-showing audience members:

How often have you attended participatory performances over the last 12 months? (Please tick)

Never. ***1-3 times.*** ✓ (I think! I can't remember) ***3-6 times.*** ***More than 6 times***

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

Most of it is quite vivid - the transitions were quite clear and signalled a cue to shift.

Did you feel playfully engaged in this performance?

Absolutely - very playful and open

Were you comfortable with the level of participation in this moment?

yes

popping balloons

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

All moments were enjoyable - I loved the journey and felt it was very clear and thought out.

Did you pop any balloon? If yes, did you enjoy it? If no, why didn't you?

Yes lots! I enjoyed it until I realised that some people were feeling discomfort/trauma and then I felt a bit bad for contributing to that...

Did you ever want to transgress / do something else that the performance asked you to do? Why?

Yes, I opened my eyes at the start to see how everyone was responding to the "floating balloon" imagery because I found it amusing!

B 7/14/9 – 11

B. 7/4/19. 12

Questionnaire for research-showing audience members:

How often have you attended participatory performances over the last 12 months? (Please tick)

Never. ***1-3 times.*** ***3-6 times.*** ***More than 6 times***

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

The performer leaving the room.
I felt ~~happy~~ ~~that~~ ~~you~~ that I missed your presence, and wondered where you'd gone. Something felt lost.

Did you feel playfully engaged in this performance?

Partly. Yes

Were you comfortable with the level of participation in this moment? If no, can you elaborate?

Yes.

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

The invitation to feel the heart on a balloon.
The delight in popping the balloons.

Did you pop any balloon? If yes, did you enjoy it? If no, why didn't you?

Yes. Yes. Good to pop.

Did you ever want to transgress / do something else that the performance asked you to do? Why?

In the main no. Because when I happened to stand I was looking directly at the opening where you were, so found myself looking for what you were doing there

B 7/4/19. 13

Questionnaire for research-showing audience members:

How often have you attended participatory performances over the last 12 months? (Please tick)

Never. ***1-3 times.*** ***3-6 times.*** ***More than 6 times***

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

The ending. Seeing pictures of a crying Noah.

Did you feel playfully engaged in this performance?

YES

Were you comfortable with the level of participation in this moment? If no, can you elaborate?

I was yes.

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

The closing of eyes, moving like a balloon

Did you pop any balloon? If yes, did you enjoy it? If no, why didn't you?

Yes. I did enjoy it. I then felt guilty.

Did you ever want to transgress / do something else that the performance asked you to do? Why?

B. 7/4/19. 14

Questionnaire for research-showing audience members:

How often have you attended participatory performances over the last 12 months? (Please tick)

Never. *1-3 times.* *3-6 times.* *More than 6 times*

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

Balloons.

Did you feel playfully engaged in this performance?

Yes.

Were you comfortable with the level of participation in this moment? If no, can you elaborate?

Yes.

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

Balloons.

toys

Did you pop any balloon? If yes, did you enjoy it? If no, why didn't you?

No - hated it. Scared.

Did you ever want to transgress / do something else that the performance asked you to do? Why?

Wanted to play Musical Chairs or Musical Statues.

B. 7/4/19. 15

Questionnaire for research-showing audience members:

How often have you attended participatory performances over the last 12 months? (Please tick)

Never. ***1-3 times.*** ✓ ***3-6 times.*** ***More than 6 times***

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

The party hats coming down on the string.

Did you feel playfully engaged in this performance?

Yes - genuinly enjoyed it.

Were you comfortable with the level of participation in this moment? If no, can you elaborate?

Yes, very.

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

Found it facinating how it went from a very calm breathing exercise when the participation bit started to a genuine festive / dance mood - in a very natural way.

Did you pop any balloon? If yes, did you enjoy it? If no, why didn't you?

No - hate the noise. Always have.

Did you ever want to transgress / do something else that the performance asked you to do? Why?

Not pop the balloons

B 7/4/19. 16:1

Being a children's entertainer at parties AND a contemporary dancer, I really related to this piece.
Firstly, I loved how we were invited into the feeling and freedom of dancing with air - with the image of the balloons. I feel fortunate to have that relationship with my inner and outer landscape and I feel audiences will benefit from experiencing that.

I loved the return to childhood I felt -
the joy and the fear.
Children will do anything. they don't think about whether it 'looks weird'
and I feel the piece gave me that freedom as well

Connection to inner child / childhood memory

B 7/4/19 - 16.2

B 7/4/19.17

Questionnaire for research-showing audience members:

How often have you attended participatory performances over the last 12 months? (Please tick)

Never. ***1-3 times.*** ***3-6 times.*** ***More than 6 times***

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

the party hats emerging from above the studio

Did you feel playfully engaged in this performance?

Yes

Were you comfortable with the level of participation in this moment? If no, can you elaborate?

Yes (wasn't too much)

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

being amongst the popping of the balloons but also the images of the child

Did you pop any balloon? If yes, did you enjoy it? If no, why didn't you?

Didn't get chance as it turned into a popping frenzy

Did you ever want to transgress / do something else that the performance asked you to do? Why?

Just wanted to engage with everybody in the room dance / sing etc

B- 7/4/19 ·18

Questionnaire for research-showing audience members:

How often have you attended participatory performances over the last 12 months? (Please tick)

Never. ***1-3 times.*** ***3-6 times.*** ***More than 6 times***

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly re

happy bday song, balloons in the air

toys / play

Did you feel playfully engaged in this performance?

not initially and then yes

Were you comfortable with the level of participation in this moment? If no, can you elaborate?

yes

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

eyes closed breathing

Did you pop any balloon? If yes, did you enjoy it? If no, why didn't you?

yes and yes

Did you ever want to transgress / do something else that the performance asked you to do? Why?

didn't want to move my body with my eyes closed initially, felt awkward, but then eased into it

B 7/4/19 · 19

Questionnaire for research-showing audience members:

How often have you attended participatory performances over the last 12 months? (Please tick)

Never. ***1-3 times.*** ***3-6 times.*** ***More than 6 times***

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

~~the balla~~ keeping the balloons in the air; it was the most enjoyable moment for me

Did you feel playfully engaged in this performance?

YES!

toys / play

Were you comfortable with the level of participation in this moment? If no, can you elaborate?

YES

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

Popping the balloons as I've never done it before this participation project, so it's a new experience for me.

Did you pop any balloon? If yes, did you enjoy it? If no, why didn't you?

YES I enjoyed it. Usually I'm scared of balloons because they might pop suddenly, but with the pin I felt I was in control

Did you ever want to transgress / do something else that the performance asked you to do? Why?

No. I usually follow rules if I agree with the reason behind them

B- 7/4/19.20

Questionnaire for research-showing audience members:

How often have you attended participatory performances over the last 12 months? (Please tick)

Never. ***1-3 times.*** ***3-6 times.*** ***More than 6 times***

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

~~Popping bal~~ Popping balloons pics of crying child

breaking something / popping balloons

Did you feel playfully engage

yes

Were you comfortable with the level of participation in this moment? If no, can you elaborate?

yes -

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

Noah is scared of balloons

Did you pop any balloon? If yes, did you enjoy it? If no, why didn't you?

yes, loved it

Did you ever want to transgress / do something else that the performance asked you to do? Why?

No

B- 7/4/19.21

Questionnaire for research-showing audience members:

How often have you attended participatory performances over the last 12 months? (Please tick)

Never. ***1-3 times.*** ***3-6 times.*** ***More than 6 times***

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

Kicking around the balloons

Did you feel playfully engaged in this performance?

No.

Were you comfortable with the level of participation in this moment? If no, can you elaborate?

No - generally don't enjoy audience participation, makes me feel anxious, or expectant, to participate.

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

Jogging of the balloons.

Outlet of frustration

Did you pop any balloon? If yes, did you enjoy it? If no, why didn't you?

yes - allowed me to let out some inner frustration

Did you ever want to transgress / do something else that the performance asked you to do? Why?

No.

Appendix 4 - *Would You #1* performance booklet example

welcome to today's research performance

by now you will have been put into two groups and have been assigned a group leader, who will help look after you.

(please note that this person is extremely knowledgeable and can help with any issues you have)

let's commence the first part of our experiment:

please make your way up the stairs to observe Makiko through the window.

on page 4 you will find a letter from her addressed to you.

please read it before, whilst or after watching her.

2

breathe

watch

read the letter on page 4

when you've seen enough, please make room for the others

if you belong to the red group, please wait at the bottom of the staircase

if you belong to the green group, please return to the kitchen

thank you

3

Hello

I know you are up there. Can you see me alright?
been told.

I am so glad you are here.
It was not entirely my choice to be here,

Now I am fed up with being alone.
Something fun. Something
Something else.
I bottled up a lot in here and

I am so glad you will be joining me.
We might be disappointed.
Or find something unforeseen.

Don't do anything you don't want to do. You are free

Don't be afraid to investigate. This is an open space.

Don't be shy.

4

Are you comfortable? It's a bit of a small space, I've
I apologise for that.

I haven't left this room for a while.
but I got used to it.

I long for something to happen.
a little wild perhaps.
Someone else.
it's bursting to come out.

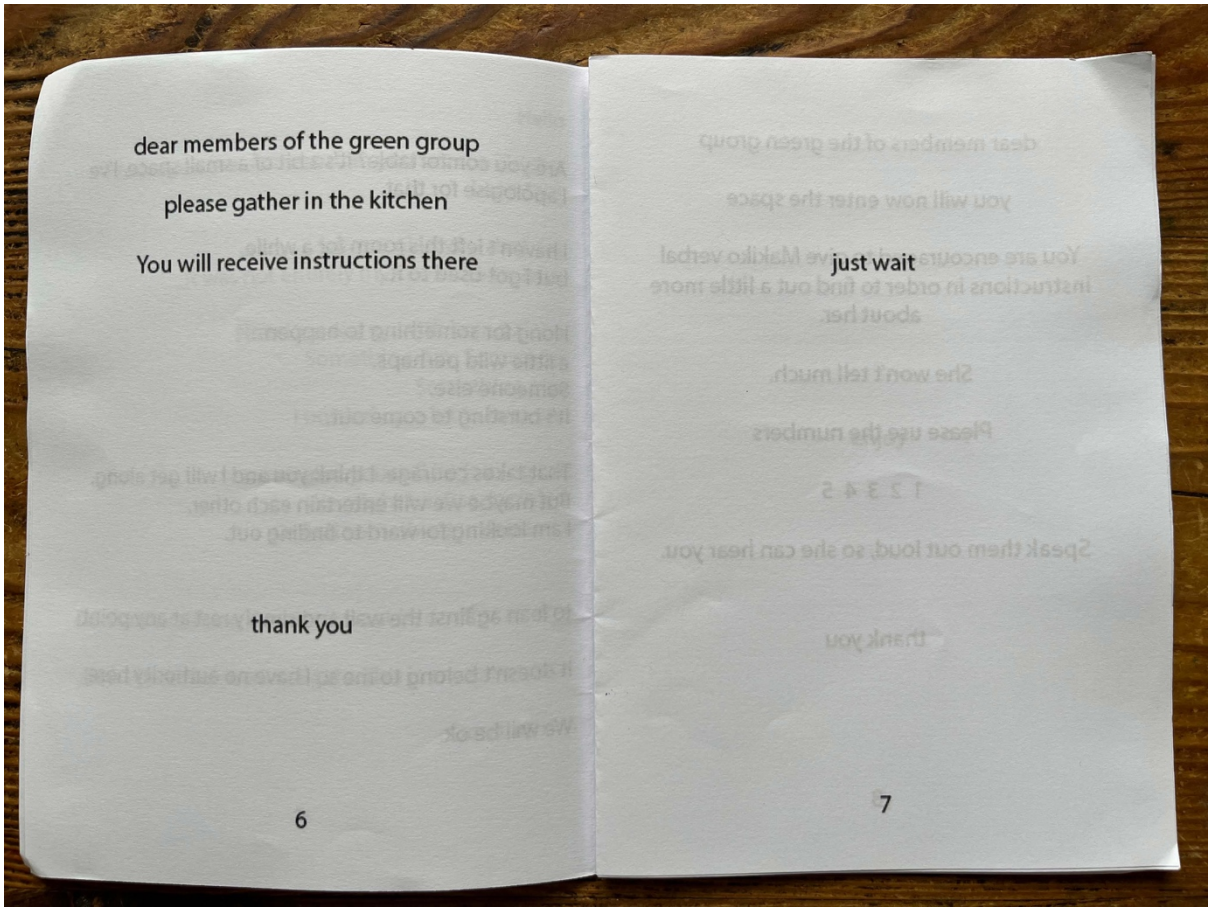
That takes courage. I think you and I will get along.
But maybe we will entertain each other.
I am looking forward to finding out.

to lean against the wall and simply rest at any point

It doesn't belong to me so I have no authority here.

We will be ok.

5



dear members of the green group

please gather in the kitchen

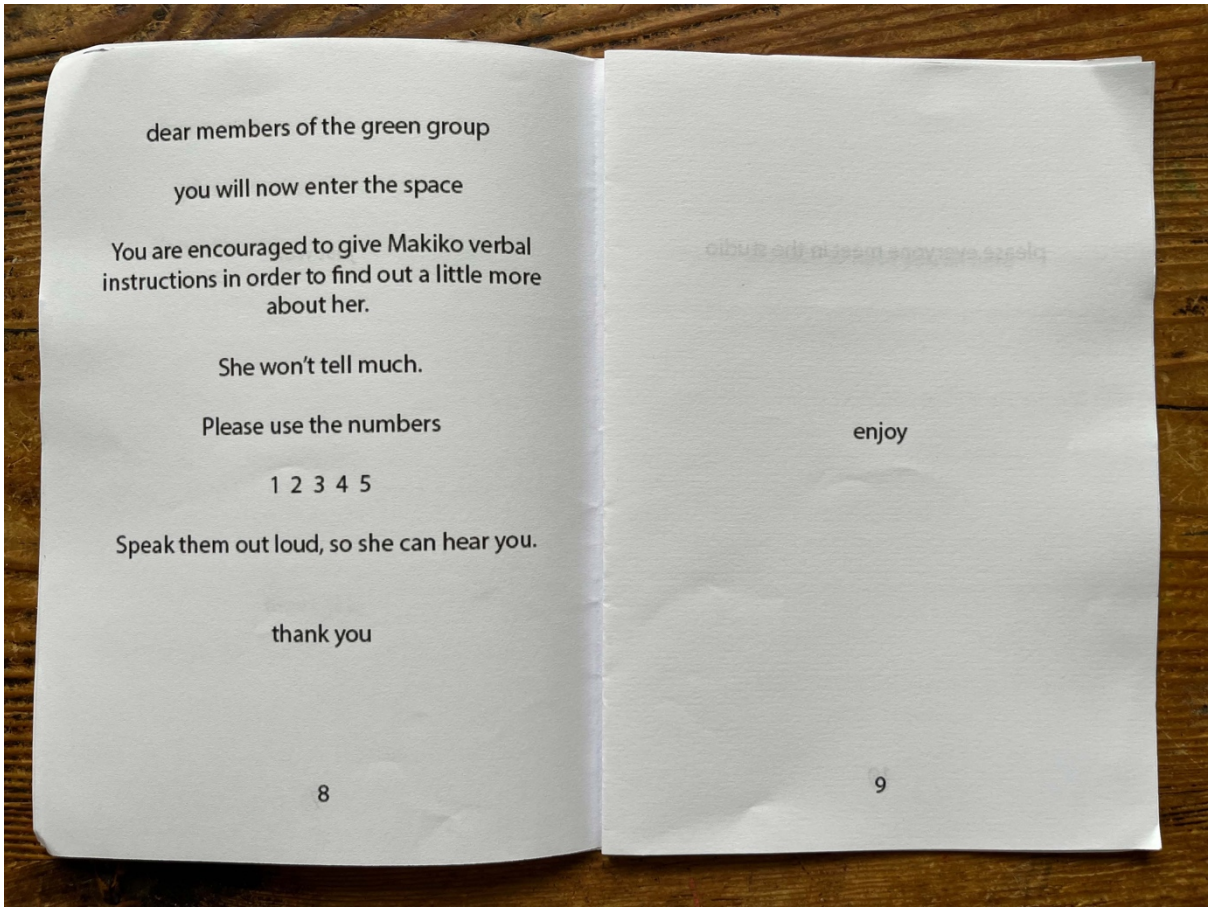
You will receive instructions there

thank you

6

just wait

7



dear members of the green group

you will now enter the space

You are encouraged to give Makiko verbal instructions in order to find out a little more about her.

She won't tell much.

Please use the numbers

1 2 3 4 5

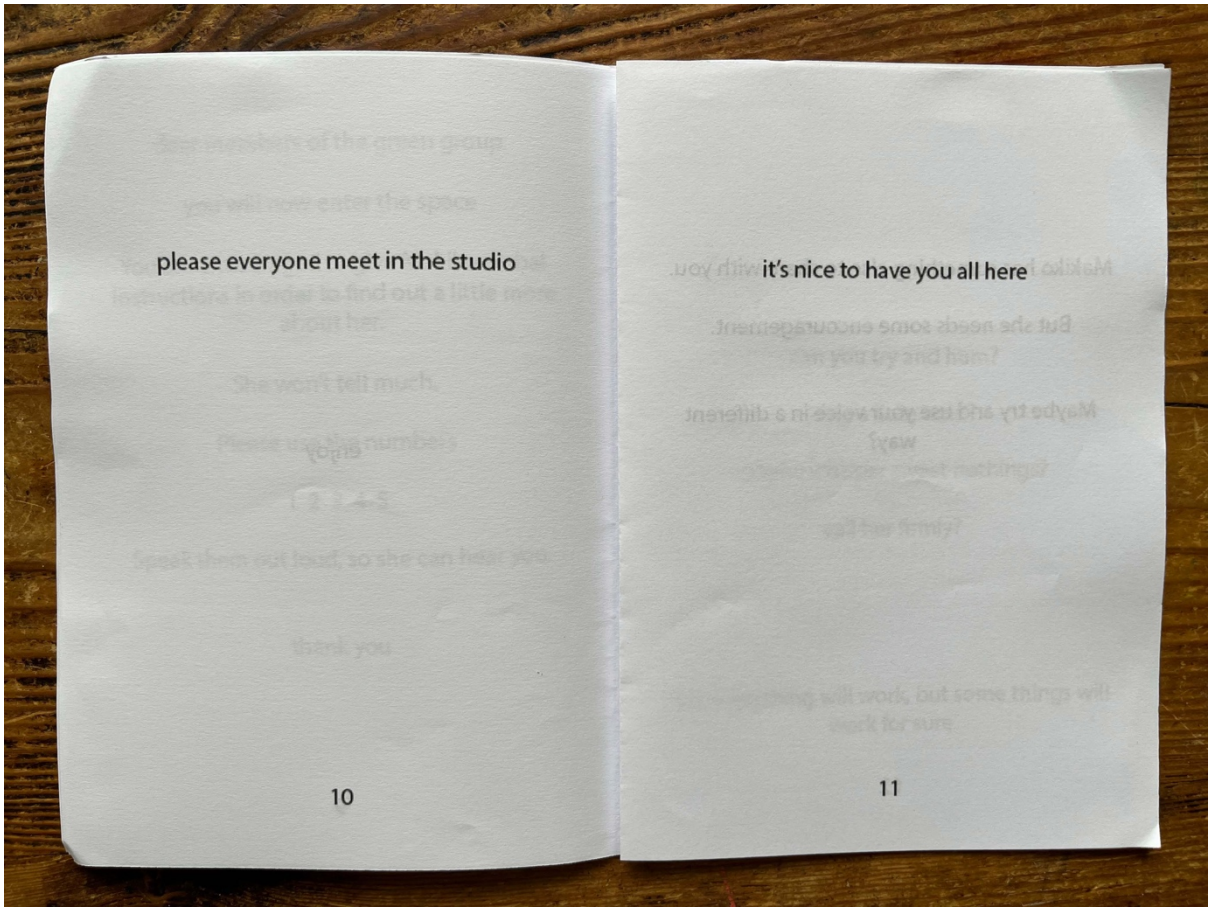
Speak them out loud, so she can hear you.

thank you

8

enjoy

9

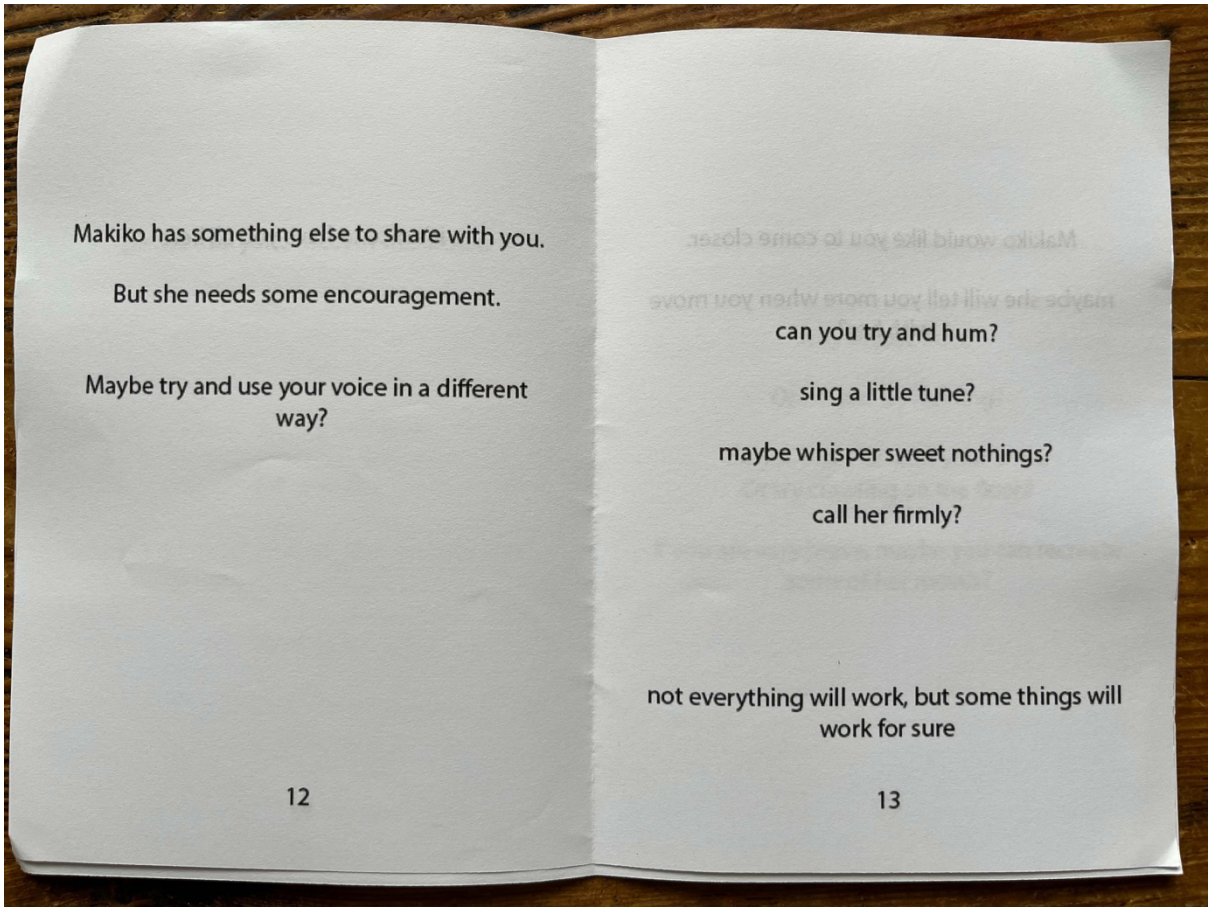


please everyone meet in the studio

10

it's nice to have you all here

11



Makiko has something else to share with you.

But she needs some encouragement.

Maybe try and use your voice in a different way?

12

can you try and hum?

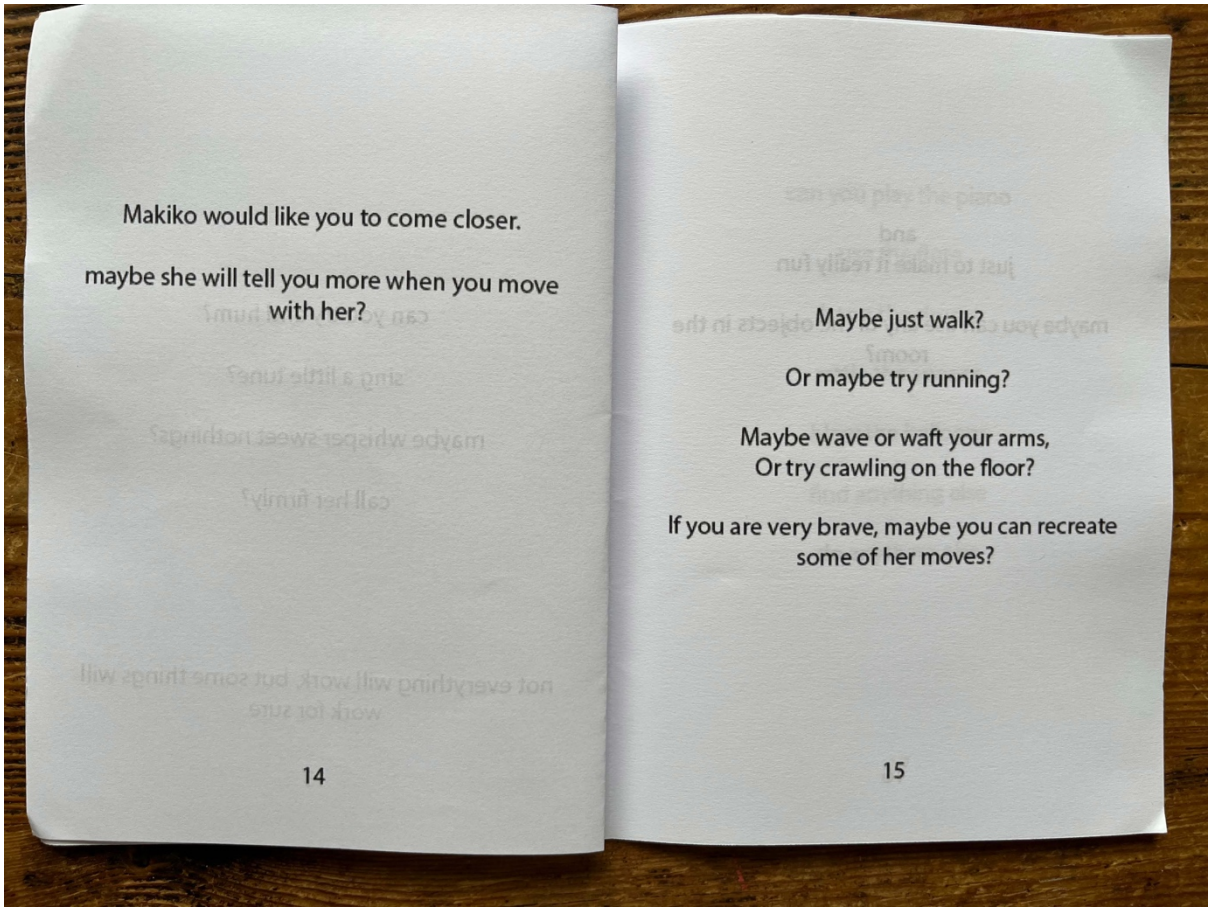
sing a little tune?

maybe whisper sweet nothings?

call her firmly?

not everything will work, but some things will work for sure

13



Makiko would like you to come closer.

maybe she will tell you more when you move with her?

14

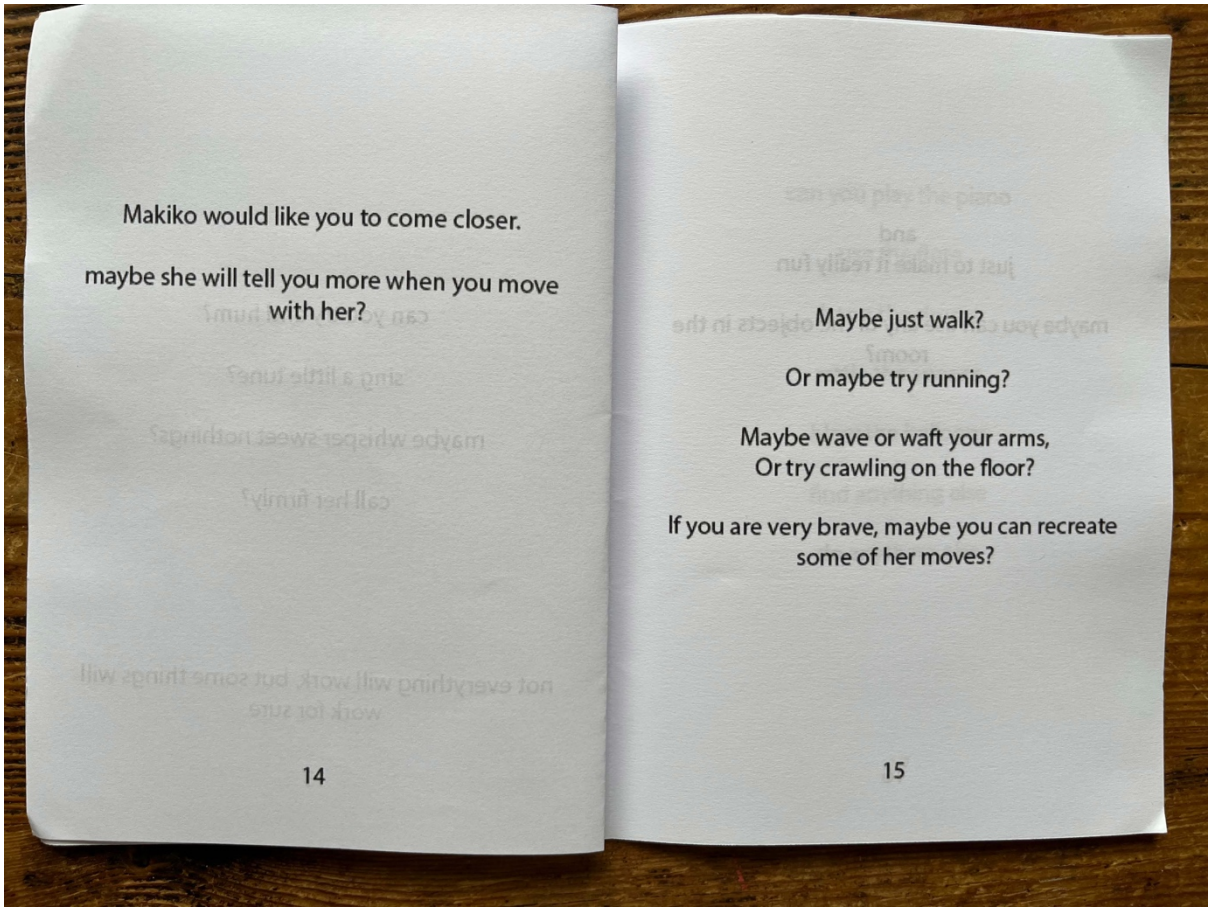
Maybe just walk?

Or maybe try running?

Maybe wave or waft your arms,
Or try crawling on the floor?

If you are very brave, maybe you can recreate some of her moves?

15



Makiko would like you to come closer.

maybe she will tell you more when you move with her?

14

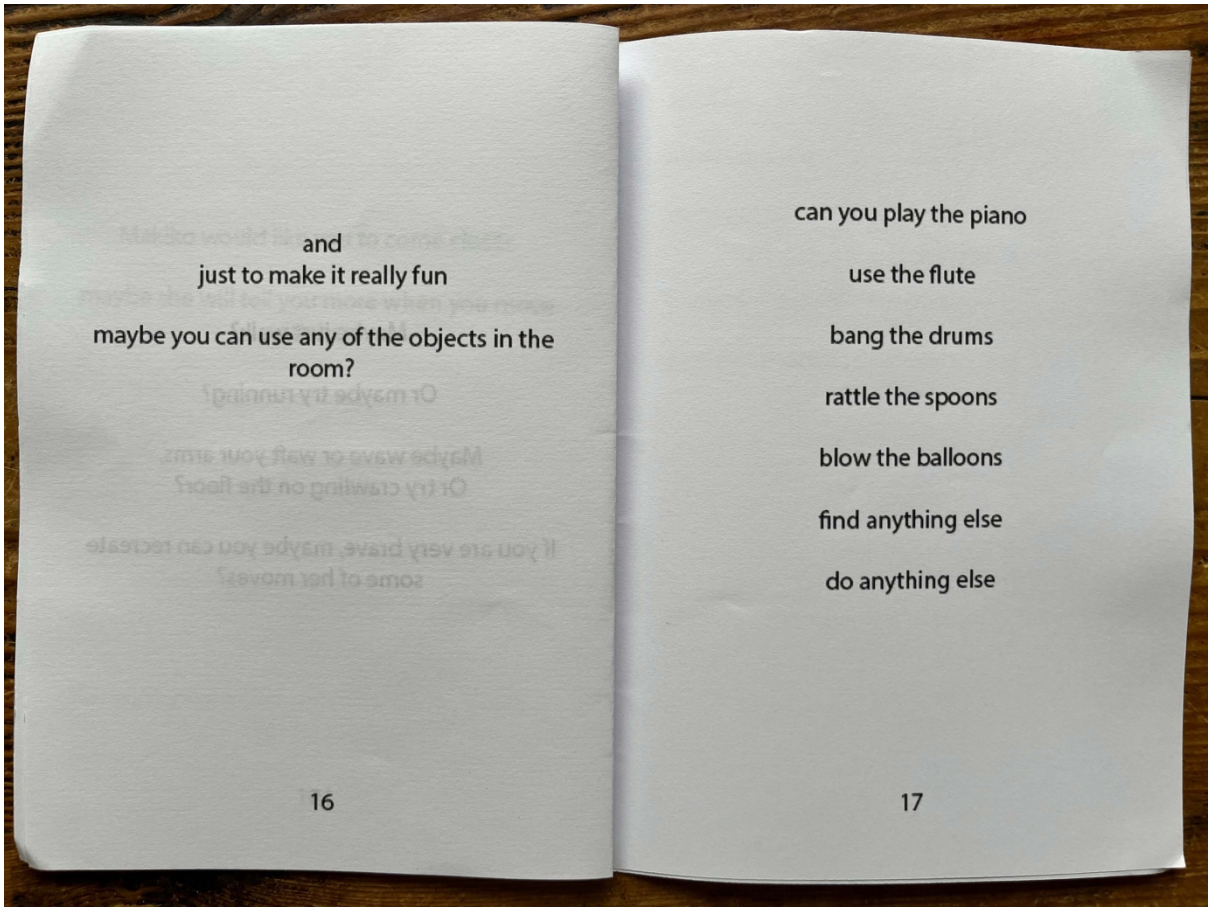
Maybe just walk?

Or maybe try running?

Maybe wave or waft your arms,
Or try crawling on the floor?

If you are very brave, maybe you can recreate some of her moves?

15



and
just to make it really fun

maybe you can use any of the objects in the room?

16

can you play the piano

use the flute

bang the drums

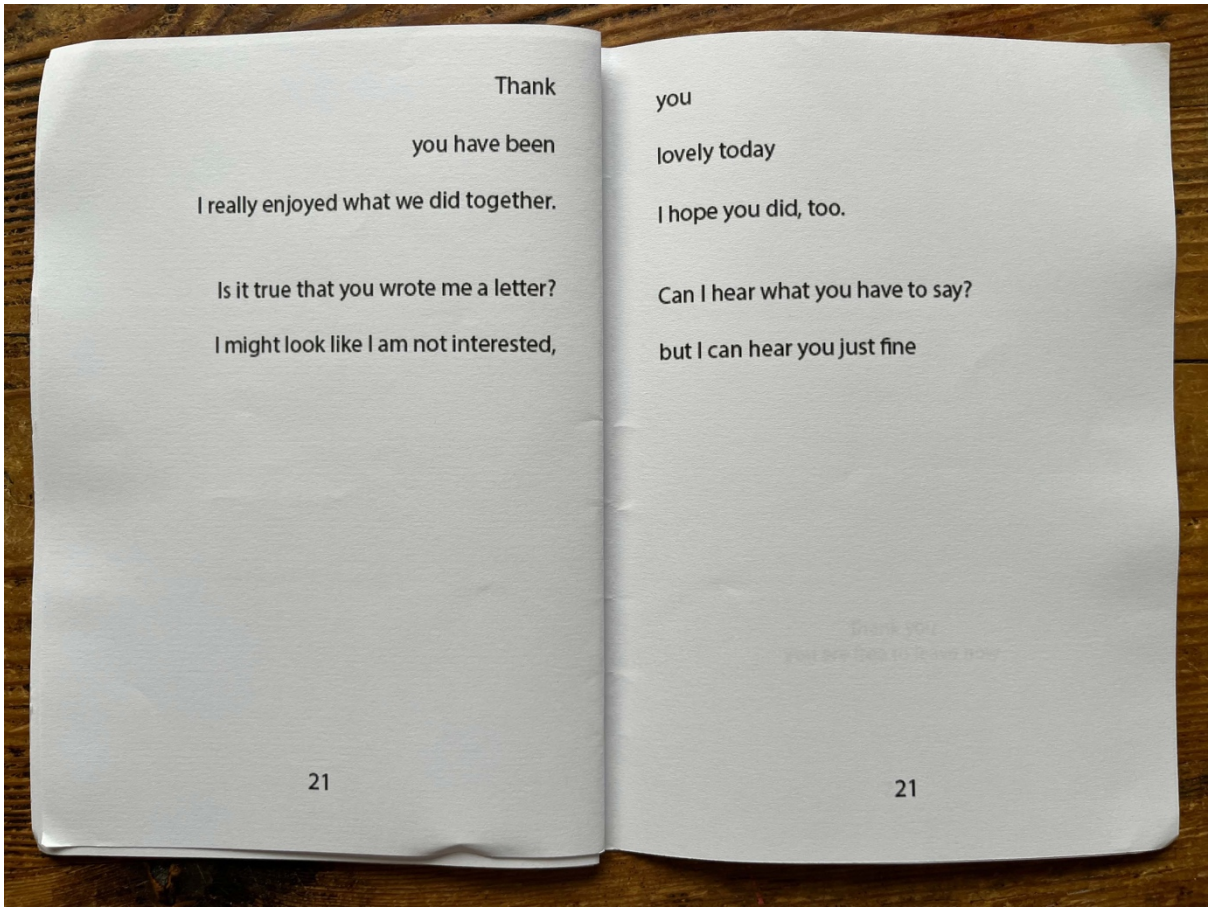
rattle the spoons

blow the balloons

find anything else

do anything else

17



Thank

you have been

I really enjoyed what we did together.

Is it true that you wrote me a letter?

I might look like I am not interested,

21

you

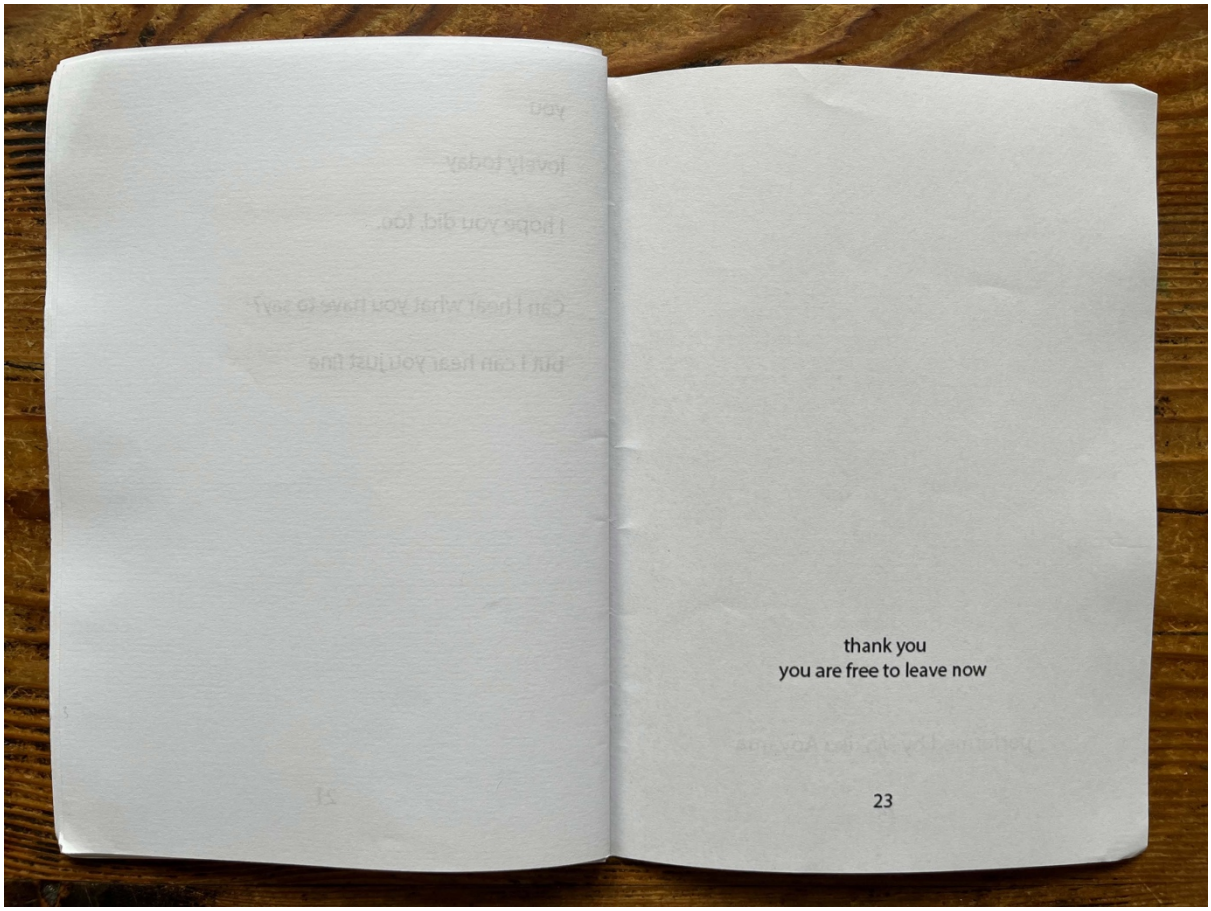
lovely today

I hope you did, too.

Can I hear what you have to say?

but I can hear you just fine

21



thank you
you are free to leave now

23

Appendix 4.1 - *Would You #1* Audience Feedback – 14 December 2019

W4 14/12/1

boXd productions: *Would you #1* – research questionnaire

Name: Despina Mavrou

Email address: despinamavrou@gmail.com

Please answer the questions as best possible, even if you are not sure of the answer.

How often do you attend participatory performance? Please tick the most appropriate
Very rarely ☐ Once every three months ☑ Every month ☐ At least once every 2 weeks ☐

I consider myself to be a playful and spontaneous person.
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree

(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, could you describe 3 instances of the last year in which you actively engaged with play and playful activities)
Yesterday in my sharing/experiment
Most days with Alex (aged 5 3/4)

My actions strongly contributed to the outcome of the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 (4) 5 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give an example of a moment when your actions made an impact.)
Shouting the number 5 to ellicit a scream

Makiko's letter at the beginning of the performance strongly influenced my participation
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 (7) Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the letter may have influenced you)
It made me feel I understood her and the motivation behind her movement

The performance booklet helped me navigate my way through the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 (7) Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the booklet guided you)
It made me feel that I was contributing to the smooth running of the performance.

I based my actions and contributions in the show on:
The invitation of the performer:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 (7) Strongly agree

The information in the program notes:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 (6) 7 Strongly agree

The activities of other audience members:
Strongly disagree 1 2 (3) 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I acted instinctively and spontaneously:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 (4) 5 6 7 Strongly agree

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

Her responses to the number instructions, especially 1 (stillness) and 5 (scream)

Were you comfortable with the overall level of participation? If no, can you elaborate?

Yes

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

The point when we were invited to play and interact more, because it felt more communal.

Do you feel you were able to contribute creatively the piece.

A little bit.

community

Were you at any point not fully aware of your actions, but acted 'in the spur of the moment'?

No

Did you ever want to do something but were not sure if you were allowed? When and what?

Yes - I was tempted to repeat 5 to make her scream, but didn't because it felt cruel.

cruelty towards the performer

and why?

WY 14/12 2

boXd productions: *Would you #1* – research questionnaire

Name: Carlie Silen

Email address: frolit-silen@virgin-net.

Please answer the questions as best possible, even if you are not sure of the answer.

How often do you attend participatory performance? Please tick the most appropriate
Very rarely ☐ Once every three months ☑ Every month ☐ At least once every 2 weeks ☐

I consider myself to be a playful and spontaneous person.
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree

(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, could you describe 3 instances of the last year in which you actively engaged with play and playful activities) Playing with a baby
Improvisation
creating playfull workshops
moments with.

My actions strongly contributed to the outcome of the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 (3) 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give an example of a moment when your actions made an impact.)

Makiko's letter at the beginning of the performance strongly influenced my participation
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 (7) Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the letter may have influenced you)

The performance booklet helped me navigate my way through the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 (6) 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the booklet guided you)

I based my actions and contributions in the show on:
The invitation of the performer:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree

The information in the program notes:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 (7) Strongly agree

The activities of other audience members:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree

I acted instinctively and spontaneously:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 (6) 7 Strongly agree

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

When Mateo hugged someone.

Were you comfortable with the overall level of participation? If no, can you elaborate?

Yes.

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

When we offered the ABCD + then at the end offering the letters + seeing her dance in Mi...

Do you feel you were able to contribute creatively the piece?

~~Ya~~ within parameters

Yes.

Were you at any point not fully aware of your actions, but acted 'in the spur of the moment'?

NO

Did you ever want to do something but were not sure if you were allowed? When and what?

NO

I thought about joining Gemma

Did you break any rules? When and why?

"Ohs per sweet nothing" I interpreted this as go close and so I did ~~[illegible]~~ - was that OK? I wondered.

throwing the balls.

Any other comments:

Gently - intriguing affinity.

The music influences the mood

I thought about throwing the balls but ...

WY 14/12/2

boXd productions: *Would you #1* – research questionnaire

Name: Christian Neal

Email address: chrisneal2000@yahoo.com

Please answer the questions as best possible, even if you are not sure of the answer.

How often do you attend participatory performance? Please tick the most appropriate
Very rarely ☒ Once every three months ☐ Every month ☐ At least once every 2 weeks ☐

I consider myself to be a playful and spontaneous person.
Strongly disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, could you describe 3 instances of the last year in which you actively engaged with play and playful activities)

.....

.....

.....

My actions strongly contributed to the outcome of the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 (3) 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give an example of a moment when your actions made an impact.)
Never truly, but realistically yes, I like to believe that my presence in the room was enough, if not I also brought my smile

Makiko's letter at the beginning of the performance strongly influenced my participation
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 (6) 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the letter may have influenced you)
I really wanted to play, especially after reading her letter everything felt safer.

The performance booklet helped me navigate my way through the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 (6) 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the booklet guided you)
Instructions were very helpful, and pushed others to let go of inhibitions in a happy cycle.

I based my actions and contributions in the show on:
The invitation of the performer:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree

The information in the program notes:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree

The activities of other audience members:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 (6) 7 Strongly agree

I acted instinctively and spontaneously:
Strongly disagree 1 (2) 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

Looking at Dio's father play the piano flute.

Were you comfortable with the overall level of participation? If no, can you elaborate?

Yes, I'm just shy, so I more allowed myself to observe the participation.

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

When everyone was playing, it felt like c in an adult realm.

Do you feel you were able to contribute creatively the piece?

Not necessarily, but I felt very happy regardless. Therefore I digress.

Were you at any point not fully aware of your actions, but acted 'in the spur of the moment'?

Just once when I followed one of Makiko's movements.

Did you ever want to do something but were not sure if you were allowed? When and what?

Not really, I rarely get to that point in life.

Did you break any rules? When and why?

Not intentionally, only once I looked ahead in directions.

Any other comments:

~~N/A~~ I am very glad to be here.

WY 14/12/4

boXd productions: *Would you #1* – research questionnaire

Name: DOMINIQUE VANNOD

Email address:

Please answer the questions as best possible, even if you are not sure of the answer.

How often do you attend participatory performance? Please tick the most appropriate
Very rarely ☐ Once every three months ☒ Every month ☐ At least once every 2 weeks ☐

I consider myself to be a playful and spontaneous person.
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 (6) 7 Strongly agree

(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, could you describe 3 instances of the last year in which you actively engaged with play and playful activities)
- with my 2 1/2 son every single day !
- The Acorn Project / artistic activity for family / Stratford
- clown workshop / one week-end

My actions strongly contributed to the outcome of the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give an example of a moment when your actions made an impact.)

Interactions with Makiko with sounds / singing

Makiko's letter at the beginning of the performance strongly influenced my participation
Strongly disagree 1 2 (3) 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the letter may have influenced you)

The performance booklet helped me navigate my way through the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 (6) 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the booklet guided you)

Examples of possible interactions with Makiko

I based my actions and contributions in the show on:
The invitation of the performer:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 (4) 5 6 7 Strongly agree

The information in the program notes:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 (6) 7 Strongly agree

The activities of other audience members:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 (6) 7 Strongly agree

I acted instinctively and spontaneously:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

I loved the chaotic fun towards the end

Were you comfortable with the overall level of participation? If no, can you elaborate?

I would have felt more comfortable with more responses / direct interactions with Makiko

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

The 2 letters

Do you feel you were able to contribute creatively the piece?

Hopefully, yes :)

Were you at any point not fully aware of your actions, but acted 'in the spur of the moment'?

No

Did you ever want to do something but were not sure if you were allowed? When and what?

Yes, for instance at the first encounter (A, B, C, D)
It was tempting to use other types of interaction

Did you break any rules? When and why?

No

Any other comments:

boXd productions: *Would you #1* – research questionnaire

Name: ANNE-AURELIE V

Email address: ANNEAURELIEV@GMAIL.COM

Please answer the questions as best possible, even if you are not sure of the answer.

How often do you attend participatory performance? Please tick the most appropriate
Very rarely ☒ Once every three months ☐ Every month ☐ At least once every 2 weeks ☐

I consider myself to be a playful and spontaneous person.
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 (4) 5 6 7 Strongly agree

(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, could you describe 3 instances of the last year in which you actively engaged with play and playful activities)

.....

.....

.....

My actions strongly contributed to the outcome of the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 (4) 5 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give an example of a moment when your actions made an impact.)
number given to Makiko
ringing the bell

Makiko's letter at the beginning of the performance strongly influenced my participation
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 (4) 5 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the letter may have influenced you)
being encouraging to Makiko. Not repeating mistakes that made her scream.

The performance booklet helped me navigate my way through the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 (7) Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the booklet guided you)
to understand the performance and how to interact with Makiko.

I based my actions and contributions in the show on:
The invitation of the performer:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 (6) 7 Strongly agree

The information in the program notes:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 (7) Strongly agree

The activities of other audience members:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree

I acted instinctively and spontaneously:
Strongly disagree 1 2 (3) 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

The reading of the letters to Makika.

Were you comfortable with the overall level of participation? If no, can you elaborate?

I wasn't feeling confortable enough to participate.

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

When most of the group was interacting with Makika, at the end.

Do you feel you were able to contribute creatively the piece?

Yes – by the line in the letter

Were you at any point not fully aware of your actions, but acted 'in the spur of the moment'?

Stayed very self aware.

Did you ever want to do something but were not sure if you were allowed? When and what?

/

Did you break any rules? When and why?

Maybe by not participating enough.

Any other comments:

/

W4 14/12.6

boXd productions: *Would you #1* – research questionnaire

Name: Angus

Email address: angus177@hotmail.com

Please answer the questions as best possible, even if you are not sure of the answer.

How often do you attend participatory performance? Please tick the most appropriate
Very rarely ☐ Once every three months ☑ Every month ☐ At least once every 2 weeks ☐

I consider myself to be a playful and spontaneous person.
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 (4) 5 6 7 Strongly agree

(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, could you describe 3 instances of the last year in which you actively engaged with play and playful activities)

.....

.....

.....

My actions strongly contributed to the outcome of the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give an example of a moment when your actions made an impact.)
The eye contact made and instructions with numbers.

.....

Makiko's letter at the beginning of the performance strongly influenced my participation
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the letter may have influenced you)
I felt ~~my~~ more included

.....

The performance booklet helped me navigate my way through the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the booklet guided you)
By giving instructions.

.....

I based my actions and contributions in the show on:
The invitation of the performer:
Strongly disagree 1 2 (3) 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

The information in the program notes:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree

The activities of other audience members:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree

I acted instinctively and spontaneously:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

her Scream.

Were you comfortable with the overall level of participation? If no, can you elaborate?

yes

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

Where we were asked to encorage her.

Do you feel you were able to contribute creatively the piece?

yes

Were you at any point not fully aware of your actions, but acted 'in the spur of the moment'?

I Think so

Did you ever want to do something but were not sure if you were allowed? When and what?

yes to say a number above 5

Did you break any rules? When and why?

no and I Think I Should have.

Any other comments:

W4 14/12 · 7

boXd productions: *Would you #1* – research questionnaire

Name: Hannah Thomas

Email address: Hannah.T16@edu.trinitylaban.ac.uk

Please answer the questions as best possible, even if you are not sure of the answer.

How often do you attend participatory performance? Please tick the most appropriate
Very rarely ☐ Once every three months ☑ Every month ☐ At least once every 2 weeks ☐

I consider myself to be a playful and spontaneous person.
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - (7) Strongly agree

(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, could you describe 3 instances of the last year in which you actively engaged with play and playful activities)

I find this hard to answer because most moments most days are playful. I dance, I playfight, I enjoy everything.

My actions strongly contributed to the outcome of the performance
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - (5) - 6 - 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give an example of a moment when your actions made an impact.)
I danced with Makiko and she was smiling. She said 'I like that'

Makiko's letter at the beginning of the performance strongly influenced my participation
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - (6) - 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the letter may have influenced you)
It set the mood, gave me some context of how she was, what she felt about the space.

The performance booklet helped me navigate my way through the performance
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - (5) - 6 - 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the booklet guided you)
It had instructions and directions

I based my actions and contributions in the show on:
The invitation of the performer:
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - (6)

The information in the program notes:
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - (5) - 6

The activities of other audience members:
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - (4) - 5 - 6 - 7 Strongly agree

I acted instinctively and spontaneously:
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - (7) Strongly agree

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

Dancing with Makiko

Were you comfortable with the overall level of participation? If no, can you elaborate?

yes, I think I am used to this kind of thing.

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

when Makiko spoke to me and we smiled at eachother.

Do you feel you were able to contribute creatively the piece?

yes.

Were you at any point not fully aware of your actions, but acted 'in the spur of the moment'?

yes, ~~the~~ most moments

Did you ever want to do something but were not sure if you were allowed? When and what?

not particularly, I generally acted in the moment.

Did you break any rules? When and why?

Not that I know of.

Any other comments:

WY 14/12-8

boXd productions: *Would you #1* – research questionnaire

Name: Andne Paranello

Email address:

Please answer the questions as best possible, even if you are not sure of the answer.

How often do you attend participatory performance? Please tick the most appropriate
Very rarely ☑ Once every three months ☐ Every month ☐ At least once every 2 weeks ☐

I consider myself to be a playful and spontaneous person.
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree

(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, could you describe 3 instances of the last year in which you actively engaged with play and playful activities)

.....

.....

.....

My actions strongly contributed to the outcome of the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 (3) (4) 5 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give an example of a moment when your actions made an impact.)
when calling out the numbers it was as if it was a collaboration

Makiko's letter at the beginning of the performance strongly influenced my participation
Strongly disagree 1 2 (3) 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the letter may have influenced you)

.....

.....

The performance booklet helped me navigate my way through the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 (7) Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the booklet guided you) It was direct and was straight to the point

I based my actions and contributions in the show on:
The invitation of the performer:
Strongly disagree 1 (2) 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

The information in the program notes:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 (7) Strongly agree

The activities of other audience members:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree

I acted instinctively and spontaneously:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

When we were calling out the numbers

Were you comfortable with the overall level of participation? If no, can you elaborate?

Yes

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

when the instaments started to come out

Do you feel you were able to contribute creatively the piece?

yes

Were you at any point not fully aware of your actions, but acted 'in the spur of the moment'?

no

Did you ever want to do something but were not sure if you were allowed? When and what?

no

Did you break any rules? When and why?

no

Any other comments:

W4 14/12 · 9

boXd productions: *Would you #1* – research questionnaire

Name: DIAMANTO HADJIZACHARIA

Email address: diamantolz@gmail.com

Please answer the questions as best possible, even if you are not sure of the answer.

How often do you attend participatory performance? Please tick the most appropriate
Very rarely ☐ Once every three months ☑ Every month ☐ At least once every 2 weeks ☐

I consider myself to be a playful and spontaneous person.
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 Strongly agree

(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, could you describe 3 instances of the last year in which you actively engaged with play and playful activities)

interactive performances
dancing in the tube station with a street musician

My actions strongly contributed to the outcome of the performance
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give an example of a moment when your actions made an impact.)
I rang the bell and Makiko looked at me.

Makiko's letter at the beginning of the performance strongly influenced my participation
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the letter may have influenced you)
it was talking to me so I fell closer to her

The performance booklet helped me navigate my way through the performance
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the booklet guided you)
gave me instructions

I based my actions and contributions in the show on:
The invitation of the performer:
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 Strongly agree

The information in the program notes:
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 Strongly agree

The activities of other audience members:
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 Strongly agree

I acted instinctively and spontaneously:
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 Strongly agree

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

The moment we moved closer to the performer

Were you comfortable with the overall level of participation? If no, can you elaborate?

Yes, I was.

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

the eye contact

Do you feel you were able to contribute creatively the piece?

yes

Were you at any point not fully aware of your actions, but acted 'in the spur of the moment'?

yes

Did you ever want to do something but were not sure if you were allowed? When and what?

no.

Did you break any rules? When and why?

I don't think I did.

Any other comments:

WY 14/12-10

boXd productions: *Would you #1* – research questionnaire

Name: Lenia Louka

Email address: lenialouka@yahoo.com

Please answer the questions as best possible, even if you are not sure of the answer.

How often do you attend participatory performance? Please tick the most appropriate
Very rarely ☑ Once every three months ☐ Every month ☐ At least once every 2 weeks ☐

I consider myself to be a playful and spontaneous person.
Strongly disagree 1 - (2) - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 Strongly agree

(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, could you describe 3 instances of the last year in which you actively engaged with play and playful activities)

.....

.....

.....

My actions strongly contributed to the outcome of the performance
Strongly disagree 1 - (2) - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give an example of a moment when your actions made an impact.)

.....

.....

Makiko's letter at the beginning of the performance strongly influenced my participation
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - (3) - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the letter may have influenced you)

.....

.....

The performance booklet helped me navigate my way through the performance
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - (7) Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the booklet guided you)

.....

explain me all the way what to do

I based my actions and contributions in the show on:
The invitation of the performer:
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - (5) - 6 - 7 Strongly agree

The information in the program notes:
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - (6) - 7 Strongly agree

The activities of other audience members:
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - (6) - 7 Strongly agree

I acted instinctively and spontaneously:
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - (6) - 7 Strongly agree

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

When Makuko starts th
balls

toys

Were you comfortable with the overall level of particip

Yes

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

When Makuko get out of the room

Do you feel you were able to contribute creatively the piece?

No

Were you at any point not fully aware of your actions, but acted 'in the spur of the moment'?

No

Did you ever want to do something but were not sure if you were allowed? When and what?

No

Did you break any rules? When and why?

No

Any other comments:

W4 14/12.11

boXd productions: *Would you #1* – research questionnaire

Name: Andreas Hadjizacharias

Email address: a.hadjiz@cytanet.com.cy

Please answer the questions as best possible, even if you are not sure of the answer.

How often do you attend participatory performance? Please tick the most appropriate
Very rarely ☐ Once every three months ☒ Every month ☐ At least once every 2 weeks ☐

I consider myself to be a playful and spontaneous person.
Strongly disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, could you describe 3 instances of the last year in which you actively engaged with play and playful activities)

.....

.....

.....

My actions strongly contributed to the outcome of the performance
Strongly disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give an example of a moment when your actions made an impact.)

.....

.....

Makiko's letter at the beginning of the performance strongly influenced my participation
Strongly disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the letter may have influenced you)

.....

.....

The performance booklet helped me navigate my way through the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 (3) 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the booklet guided you)

.....

.....

I based my actions and contributions in the show on:
The invitation of the performer:
Strongly disagree 1 2 (3) 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

The information in the program notes:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 (4) 5 6 7 Strongly agree

The activities of other audience members:
Strongly disagree 1 2 (3) 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I acted instinctively and spontaneously:
Strongly disagree (1) 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

No.

Were you comfortable with the overall level of participation? If no, can you elaborate?

Yes.

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

The interactive part.

Do you feel you were able to contribute creatively the piece?

No.

Were you at any point not fully aware of your actions, but acted 'in the spur of the moment'?

No.

Did you ever want to do something but were not sure if you were allowed? When and what?

No.

Did you break any rules? When and why?

No.

Any other comments:

No.

W4 14/12/1

boXd productions: *Would you #1* – research questionnaire

Name: Izzy Catterall

Email address: izzycatterall@gmail.com

Please answer the questions as best possible, even if you are not sure of the answer.

How often do you attend participatory performance? Please tick the most appropriate
Very rarely ☑ Once every three months ☐ Every month ☐ At least once every 2 weeks ☐

I consider myself to be a playful and spontaneous person.
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 (6) 7 Strongly agree

(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, could you describe 3 instances of the last year in which you actively engaged with play and playful activities)

There have been multiple performances at Laban I have participated in. Also when I performed around Brighton during the summer.

My actions strongly contributed to the outcome of the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 (3) 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give an example of a moment when your actions made an impact.)

Makiko's letter at the beginning of the performance strongly influenced my participation
Strongly disagree 1 2 (3) 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the letter may have influenced you)

The performance booklet helped me navigate my way through the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the booklet guided you) For example, it gave me an idea of what noises I should make.

I based my actions and contributions in the show on:
The invitation of the performer:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 (4) 5 6 7 Stron

The information in the program notes:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 (6) 7 Strong

The activities of other audience members:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree

I acted instinctively and spontaneously:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

When Makiko started throwing the balls on the floor.

toys

Were you comfortable with the overall level of participation? If no, can y

Yes.

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

When we played the instruments and were playful with each other.

Do you feel you were able to contribute creatively the piece?

moderately, however my contributions were quite spontaneous and random

Were you at any point not fully aware of your actions, but acted 'in the spur of the moment'?

Yes

hesitation

Did you ever want to do something but were not sure if you were allowed

When the balls first came out I pick them up and throw them around, but I wasn't sure if I was allowed.

Did you break any rules? When and why?

I have no idea, but I don't think so.

Any other comments:

WY 14/12/13

boXd productions: *Would you #1* – research questionnaire

Name: GEMMA CABERO

Email address: gemmacabero@gmail.com

Please answer the questions as best possible, even if you are not sure of the answer.

How often do you attend participatory performance? Please tick the most appropriate
Very rarely ☒ Once every three months ☐ Every month ☐ At least once every 2 weeks ☐

I consider myself to be a playful and spontaneous person.
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 (4) 5 6 7 Strongly agree

(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, could you describe 3 instances of the last year in which you actively engaged with play and playful activities)
After a good day sleep @ work I can join conversations on my way to somewhere and even their activities
Every week with my children always something arises (co-worker participating on comedy for the first time)
Maybe now less but always stopping and observing
someone on the street (performers, homeless people)

My actions strongly contributed to the outcome of the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give an example of a moment when your actions made an impact.)
Crying & making noise
Moving and putting balls away, giving instruments to others

Makiko's letter at the beginning of the performance strongly influenced my participation
Strongly disagree 1 (2) 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the letter may have influenced you)

The performance booklet helped me navigate my way through the performance
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 (6) 7 Strongly agree
(If you chose number 4-7 in the question above, please give a short description of how the booklet guided you)
On knowing a bit what to do, less @ the beginning as I didn't read the letter properly (dos of layout!)

I based my actions and contributions in the show on:
The invitation of the performer:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 (4) (5) 6 7 Strongly agree

The information in the program notes:
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 Strongly agree

The activities of other audience members:
Strongly disagree 1 2 (3) 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I acted instinctively and spontaneously:
Strongly disagree 1 2 (3) 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree
I thought before making something as I like to observe first, understand and see how my actions can influence

Is there a particular moment in the performance that you vividly remember?

The beginning Hexiao looking @ me, In the middle when Hexiao gave me a hug { physic contact

Were you comfortable with the overall level of participation? If no, can you elaborate?

Yeah, not too intrusive given I wasn't always very participate, open minded though

Which of the moments of participation was the most meaningful to you?

Not sure, every moment, it wasn't too long to be bored

Do you feel you were able to contribute creatively the piece?

A bit

Were you at any point not fully aware of your actions, but acted 'in the spur of the moment'?

Not this time, I would personally act in the spur of the moment when feeling safe. First times are always cautious

Did you ever want to do something but were not sure if you were allowed? When and what?

Not really, if so felt stopped @ the beginning when I told I was taking so much space on the window, just not careless about other people, just focus on trying to follo the instructions

Did you break any rules? When and why?

~~Not~~ Maybe just the above? But I wouldn't say breo the rules. In this particular case I would be very careful co of my connection to the director, just trying to k

Any other comments:

better divided in two pages, didn't need it as one long line so lost a bit @ the beginning. Felt uncomfortable for the ~~small space~~ call I received on the small space as didn't mean to.

Appendix 5 - *And Then There Was Only* One Script

ACT 1 Scene 1:

SPEAKER:
Welcome.
Hi nice to see you
Thank you for being here today
I know you all have gathered here because you have been invited as part of your course and, well because I am guessing, you are genuinely interested in the subject. I hope er, that I will offer some, some thought- provoking insight into . .

(drops glasses)

Ops, apologies . .
So, yes, welcome and thank you for being here
I am aware that the sign-up process has been a difficult procedure and left some of you frustrated.
Was that the case?
Did you . . .
where you frustrated?

I am really sorry about this it doesn't really have anything to do with me . . as I'm . . well it's part of the institution and I've been told I should forward it on to you . . .but then
I don't think I received the correct training . . or maybe I missed it . .
So I erh I do aplogise
But I hope you've managed to signed up?
Have You. Have you singed up? Have all of you signed up . . .
It's quite important that you all have signed up because by now
You were all by now meant to have received the confirmation email about this event? And attached to that email were the materials relevant to today's session? So it's quite important for you to make you sure you have got this?
Could you check? Do you have data that you can use to access your email? The wifi here is not too great

Ok can you check?
Really?
Its not there? Oh
Could I just
Could I ask you all to now just leave me your email addresses? If I pass this paper along here, would you mind writing your addresses down? And your phone numbers (passes along a paper)
Do you have a pen?

LAUREN PUTS HER HAND UP – gets ignored

Ok let's just wait a second to gather all of your information . .
And Alex here, oh everyone, may I introduce you to Alex, he . .

Erm
I think
He is here to help . . .
So he will gather are your phone numbers . . .

And keep your phone on, and turn the volume up so you can hear the message once Alex sends it . . . . .

SQ1: Phone ring:

Hello
Erm yes, yes there has been a difficulty in the sign up process. Yes they told me. Well, I didn't'. No I didn't.
Erm.
Of course of course . .
Already on it. Erm, yes I am aware, but then I guess this is important. No of course I am on it.
Alright. Thank you. Thank you again for having me.

LAUREN TURNS AROUND AND PHYSICALLY ASKS FOR A PEN

And again, I am so sorry for this, erm
I am really sorry about this it doesn't really have anything to do with me . . as I'm . . well it's part of the institution and I've been told I should forward it on to you . . .but then
I don't think I received the correct training . . or maybe I missed it . .
So I erm I do aplogise
Let's hope we manage to get you signed up to . .

Oh maybe here we go . .

SO I think we are ready to start now, is that correct? We're a little behind already, so lets give this a start.

As you know, today I am here to talk to you about leadership.

ALEX

Hello. I hope you don't mind me contacting you, I have set-up a group for everyone who will join the event on the 20 Mayl 2022. I got your number from the speaker. Do join so you can meet everyone :)

SAM

Hello there, nice to meet you all

So, I first want to ask you what do you think leadership is? What do you think you think of leadership? How would one define what leadership is? What qualities does one need to possess in order to be considered a leader?

(seems to wait for an answer but then keeps speaking)

We might all recognise who a leader is or who possess said somewhat obscure qualities. A leader may be considered a leader because of a formal designation, perhaps because they occupy a managerial rank within an organization. Or a leader can be chosen informally, recognised within someone who steps up and provides guidance from within a group of people. Leadership might not even necessarily come from the person that officially has been given decision making authority.

But erm,

(drops glasses)

Historically speaking, ... and erm, I am here talking from a European perspective, as there are many different concepts in regards to leadership if we go beyond European culture, but erm
Thinking of the UK's history, specifically erm . .

(starts to clean glasses)

well, I am here reminded of the fable of Arthur, who really became a leader because he pulled a sword out of a stone, . . or so one version of the story goes . .

LAUREN

Is anyone taking notes? Or has another pen I can borrow? Mine doesn't work anymore

Erm,. . . but obviously the monarchy and the role of the king and Queen is strongly connected to this idea of leadership . . .

Because, anyone who knew the legend of King Arthur understood that it helped illustrate the concept that those who led were born and not made.

Early concepts of monarchy included the element that king was a divine choice and was bound to no earthly rules. The right to rule was derived directly from the will of

God. Those that were not kings were instead heroes, possessors of God-given skills, who were immortalized in myths and stories retold over generations.

They were leaders because they were born with attributes such as superior intellect, heroic courage or divine inspiration.

Of course, they weren't called "leader." The word "leader" as we use it today didn't come into the English language until the 19th century.

ALEX

has anyone noticed this is all taken from this webpage?

https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wmopen-organizationalbehavior/chapter/the-history-of-leadership-theories/

Still, the "leader as hero" concept had been a clear definition for hundreds of years. In 1840, Scottish writer Thomas Carlyle stated that "the history of the world is but the biography of great men." The Great Man Theory took hold—the idea that history can be explained by the impact of great men and the decisions they made.

SQ2: Phone ring

Excuse me I am so sorry. . . I have to take this . .
Hello?
What are you doing? Why are you on the streets. . .
I can't talk now I am in the middle . .
No. . no you listen . .
You listen to me really well now.
Go straight back in and make sure you close the door behind you.
You don't want Stella to run away do you. ..
Where is . . . What??
Hello?

(drops papers)

Dawn

I am not sure how I feel about her taking calls whilst giving a lecture? ☺

***LAUREN*:**

Turtle GIF
I'm ready to dash . . is she

It's clear that in the 19th Century, very few people of a lower status had the opportunity to lead.

Let's pause to think about bees for a second . . those very efficient and laborious animals come in three different types. The Queen bee, the drones and the workers . . .
Now. The drones are bigger , male bees, whose only job is to mate with the queen bee. The Queen bee is chosen via the eggs laid by previous queens and emerges through a somewhat murderous process I will come to a little later on . .
But the workers, of course, are the female bees. The smaller ones. They're quite tiny. And they do all the hard work of collecting pollen, feeding other bees, and protect the hive and travelling far and wide to bring this nutritious gold back to the hive . . .
So it is down to luck, really, that a larvae is born a drone or a worker bee . . .
And if you are a worker bee, well you do all the work, as it says in the name . . .
You fly day in and day out looking for honey, sweet honey, to feed the rest of the colony with
you do all the flying and all the buzzzzzzzzzzzzzz……

(trails off into a hissing sound)

I have nothing really important to say at this point and yet it is really important to note that, if I would be the right person to say this, it would become incredibly meaningful to be said. But, because I'm not born into royalty or because I am not a mythological goodess . .
No one listens to me . . And Anyone who has been in my situation knows that moment of shock and frustration, when they realise this fact . . that they have been chosen to be a worker bee . . .
And that, according to the great man theory, they'll remain one, forever. . .

And that feeling, might come close to the sense of standing on very thin ice and . . . you look down and it cracks right underneath you and the cracks travel centrifugally out . .. from underneath your feet . . . .

Act 1 Scene 2:

SQ3: (music – If you're sure you want to by Alabaster DePlume)

(ABSTRACT DANCE: gestures of talking, thinking, debating, conversing)

CHARLOTTE

Does anyone have an Odeon Discount Code?

DAWN

What you going to see?

ALEX

What's the best film you have seen lately? I need recommendation

Or maybe for some people, this feeling associates with standing on egg shells . . . we all know the saying, even if we've never actually stood on eggshells, why would we . . . . but, you know the saying

Or erm, does anyone know these really thin cakes that erm, are baked in Germany or Switzerland, traditionally around carnival time . . . erm fassnachtskuchen. Or in Swiss german fassnachtschuechli? Do you know them?

No, they're not doughnuts they are very thin and they've got puderzucker, errr
icing sugar (*shouts too loud*) sprinkled all over it . . . and they're difficult to break because they are so thin and when you do break them they crumble into small pieces, and splatter, away and if they fall on the ground, they, because of the sugary content of their ingredients they just melt into the floor,
they melt away,
like you sense of confidence . .
when you realise . .
. .

LAUREN

I am hungry – anyone else?

In the middle of the dance:

And this type of thinking is quite dangerous oh it is so seductive and consequential but it is rather dangerous . . . .

ALEX

Hello There:

please complete this short survey about today's lecture
https://forms.gle/ohEbZf4q6hDWMEk39

(dance ends)

Act 2 Scene 1:

SQ4: Phone ring

Hello? Ah thank God. What. Why is this . . . no hang on, you can't just. I can not talk about this right now. Excuse me this is important. No, what I do is important, too.
What? Where were you? We've arranged this.
Have you given her the medicines?
Did she take them.
Yes I am sorry. I know.
I know it's hard on you too.
I apologise, but I have to go now.
Yes I am sorry
Ok
Ok

Did you know that drones who mate with the Queen Bee die after copulation? They just fall flat on the floor. Dead. Over. A beautiful life reserved for feeding fucking and dying.

DAWN

That's sexist.

Of course, this all so far has not touched upon what it means to lead well.
What is a good leader? What does good mean, here?
Is it judged by the achieved rank? The size of the office?
The strength of the walls? The numbers of employees, the power of tanks? The size of the terrain?
The number of books their words are documented in? Or the length of time that the consequences of their actions linger in the lives of the ordinary people?

It was around the turn of the century . . and that is from the 19th to the 20th century, leadership studies started to focus on individual personality traits that would contribute to someone being a 'leader' or a 'follower' . . .

I mean . .
Just notice this opposition – a leader and a *follower*
I mean, it's not a leader and a non-leader . . the official antonyms for leader are – *follower* or *employee* . ..

Employee?

(pause)

CHARLOTTE

SAILOR IMAGE
Ha Ha who does this remind you off???

ALEX

LAUGHTER EMOJI

LAUREN

Image of Tristan

So, with the new found focus on personality traits, now it was time to find out what characteristics and traits the great man from the Great Man Theory needed in order to be a great man.

There was a guy, Francis Galton, an English scientist and researcher, he was the first to scientifically study genius and greatness in 1869. And he claimed that human ability was hereditary. He studied eminent men – those who exhibited extraordinary leadership skills, and counted the relatives to see how many additional "eminent" men were in their background.

His claim was that eminency = which means, a position of superiority, hi gh rank or status, or fame, in case you didn't know
Oh by the way, am I going too fast?

LAUREN

does she think we are stupid?

Can be inherited. Is hereditary. Is passed along generations.
BUT: the traits weaken when going from first degree to second degree relatives, and from second to third, so the further away in the family tree, the more of a follower do you become,
or perhaps
an employee . . . .

SQ5: Phone ring (finish after 6 rings)

(She looks at it and doesn't pick it up)

This has come to be known as the trait approach . . if this were nature vs nurture, nature wins. You're born with it, you have it, you received it from mummy or daddy, or you didn't. Simple.

So, look at your family, guys. Look at your parents. Are they strong, prominent, eminent leaders? Talk of the town, friends of them all, chatting away at the post-box by the corner shop and waving at everyone walking past? Do people shut up and listen when they speak? Well, they might be leaders then and this means so might be you.
If you're lucky

DAWN

Ha Ha, I am screwed then. My dad doesn't talk to anyone. *Still makes tons of money though*

SQ6: Phone ring (finish after 6 rings)

(She looks at it and doesn't pick it up)

Mind you, if your parents are one of those sluggish old people who can't be bothered to wash properly anymore . . . and stare at the telly all day, commenting on every other scene . . .
You probably won't be eminent.

Ha
Once a worker bee, always a worker bee . . .

SQ7: Phone ring (finish after 4 rings)

(She looks at it and doesn't pick it up)

It's the dream of every parent, right? That their child will live a life better than what their own was . . . But for this they might need more *eminent traits* than what the parent themselves possess? So that they might not remain one of those little worker bees buzzing around like a million others . . . . .

DAWN

Ahhh bless her

Act 2 Scene 2:

SQ8: (music – First Breath after Coma by Explosions in the Sky)

ALEX

This is an Official message from the Institution:
Please can someone tell the speaker to pick up her phone???

LAUREN
Turns around to point at someone in the audience to encourage them to go – others back her up

SQ9 Phone ring (5 second after speaker is being interrupted).

(She's being interrupted in her dance goes to pick up the phone)

Hello?
Yes, yes, I am . . . yes, it is going well . . im am right in the middle of . .
Oh the what?
Yes, as arranged this will be sent to you next Friday . . yes I have it all . .
What?
Monday? In two days
But I . .
Ok
I'm not sure I . . but of course I will . .
I seem to have missed that . .
And is there no way
Of course, I understand
No no this is ok
Of course
You will have it
Thank you
Ok
Good bye

***ALEX**:*

That didn't sound good

LAUREN

No this is ridiculous. Why is she one phone again. I am ready to walk out. Anyone with me?

DAWN

Hang on, she's really trying. That did not sound good. Stop being so negative and move on

Act 3 Scene 1:

If the answer isn't in the traits a leader exhibits, perhaps it lies in what a leader does. Around 1940, behavioural theories of leadership began to emerge. These suggest that specific behaviours differentiate leaders from non-leaders. The implications for this idea are pretty big. Think about it. The trait approach can help you pick out a leader, or predict that an individual might step up to leadership.
But the behavioural approach suggests, that leaders can be trained.

Let's return to the Bees . . . it is rather interesting, that the larvae of the worker bee and the Queen bee is essentially the same. What is different is the diet that those fertilised eggs that will go on to potentially become Queen Bee's eat. The way it works is that some eggs are being separated and exclusively fed on royal jelly. As a result of the difference in diet, the Queen bee arises, essentially because of the privilege of being fed with Royal Jelly . . .
In other words, if you do not have that privilege . . . that royal jelly, you won't have the safety and luxury that the Queen bee needs in order to become a queen bee . . . you know, specially constructed cells, larger and more comfortable, or the help of worker bees, your follower or employees, who meet your every need, offering food and disposing of your waste even . . . . .

So, the privilege of having that royal jelly, the education or training to develop us as leaders, is essential . . . .

ALEX

Yes, it is really bloody unfair that some people get loads of opportunities and others struggle all their life. Just because of what they were born into. Or what kind of financial security they have.

In seems that, according to the behavioural theories, two types of behaviours prevailed: these are either task or production orientated, or focused on the employee / as in the people behind the tasks.

DAWN

Totally agree. The system sucks

LAUREN

Let's fight the system then? Either way this is too much

ALEX

How would you do that? Anyone?

Those leaders that are concerned with the task are engaging in behaviours called initiation of structure. They organize and define the task so that followers can achieve the goal.

Alternatively, people or employee orientated behaviours work towards greater consideration, aiming at creating mutual trust and respect with their followers. An example of consideration might be a leader who, in a time of change and turmoil in an organization, walks the floor of the institution to see how workers are faring, or meets with his team to determine if they need extra support.

***HARRISON**:*

Nat mate, just finishing off a really boring shift. Will be in pub at around 7.30pm.

***HARRISON**:*

**deletes message*.*

But of course . . . neither of these approaches works, if the situation does not support the person who is leading . . .

DAWN

Who was that?

Sometimes everything we do …

SQ10: Phone ring

As hard as we try . ..

The situation is not allowing us to lead as we want to . . . .

(she picks up the phone)

Hello . . I did ask you not to . . .
I know I know . . . I am sorry . . .
Are you inside now . . .
Ok . . is he there . . .
Ok
Have you taken . . ok . . that's good
Yes
Yes I will try
Yes probably in a couple of hours . .

Erm . . probably a little longer actually . .
Yes . . I will try
Ok ok

Good bye

DAWN:

Gosh I feel sorry for her

It was a guy called Fred Fielder, who . . . erm

Called this the contingency model. The realisation that ultimately, whoever leads, and whatever traits or approach they take, it can all go horribly wrong, if the situation is not right ...

CHARLOTTE

Snail GIF

Additionally, more recently, Fred and Joe, his friend, I forgot his surname, actually focused on the role of stress as a form of unfavourableness
Essentially, they propose that it's difficult for leaders to think logically or analytically when they're under stress.

SQ11: Phone call

In other words, bright individuals perform worse in stressful situations.

(picks up phone; shouting with frustration)

YES.
No, I am not interested.
How did you get my number
No
I am not
Please take me off your list.
No
Yes
A Good Day to you too

Did you know that when a new virgin queen bee first emerges from her queen cell, she will quickly seek out any other virgin bees and kill them? Stinging them brutally to their death? Even if they still slumber in their comfortable queen cells?
Murderous, I tell you.

(trails off into her own thoughts)

DAWN

Go Queenie

We must move to ants for a second . . .

(waits until she hears the ping of WhatsApp)

LAUREN

What is it with those bloody insects (laugh emoji)

CHARLOTTE

Insect GIF

yeah I know I know, we had bees we had ants , , but . . did you know that, ant colonies are very similar from bee colonies? The typical colony consists of **one or more egg-laying queens, numerous sterile females (workers, soldiers) and, seasonally, many winged sexual males and females**. So yes, there is a direct correlation between the bees and the ants . . .
But one fact about ants always struck me as wonderous. . that ants workers change jobs as they get older . . they transition from caretakers, to cleaners to finally become foragers . . as the job that takes them furthest away from their colony also is the most dangerous one . . . ,

So the older an ant gets, the more dangerous a job it does . . .
It seems that particularly recently, the older a follower or employee, the more dangerous their work environment becomes, too . . .

DAWN

My mum was sacked because she couldn't stand for 8hrs any more ☹

I have nothing really important to say at this point and yet it is really important to note that, if I would be a younger person to say this, it would become incredibly meaningful to be said. But, alas . . . .

Buzzzzzz…….

Act 3 Scene 2:

SQ12: (music – my generation by The Who)

(She drops her glasses and is looking for them on the floor during the song . .
Crawling like an ant

LAUREN

What the fuck is she doing?

The song finishes as she is standing up, having found her glasses and is composing her . ..)

Act 4 Scene 1:

Nowadays, generally speaking we want to follow what is called a situational approach. Situational leadership means **adapting the leadership style to each unique situation or task to meet the needs of the team or team members**.

It is the leader's job to assist followers in attaining their goals and to provide the necessary direction or support. . .

DAWN

I am bloody fed up by how our government is failing hard working people! And big cooperate institutions can do whatever they want. We are being ripped off!!

SQ13: Phone rings

(she gets confused and scrambles in her notes)

It seems logical that a leader will be successful if he or she is "filling in the blanks" , giving the team what they don't already have.

Here . . . .

LAUREN

Yeahyy £9000 for this shit

Phone rings

. . . it is important that, the leader therefore fills that gap . . that . .

Phone rings

. . a leader complements . . . the abilities and skills of those who he leads . . .

Phone rings

. . . .

Silence.

ALEX

Hello There:
Have you completed our satisfaction survey yet?

https://forms.gle/sGtb2yxvY7g2BSQL8

LAUREN

Suitable Gif for sod off

But . . a leader can only be a leader if his environment is allowing him to be so.

If we return to the ant, for a second . . it was Herbert Simon, who speculated in the 1960 that

'an ant is only as intelligent as its environment'. The ant is intimately coupled with its outside much as any artifact can be understood as an interfacing of its inner environment and its outer surroundings.

An ant is an, in Simon's words "adaptation machine, a speculatory vector that deals with each obstacle as he comes to it.; he probes for ways around it without much further thought of future obstacles"

So an ant is feeling his environment and responds to it very much in the instance of encountering it. they do not care about future repercussions. . .

SQ14 Phone rings

(She turns it off)

DAWN

Yes turn it off! Don't let them get to you

Or consequences . .

SQ15 Phone rings *(She turns it off)*

In fact, if every ant would be a leader, they would probably exhibiting so-called development-oriented behavior, which values experimentation, the seeking out of new ideas and of generating and implementing change.

Because, as the environment around them changes so do they. And as they change, the environment they are within, changes in return, because, the body of a living being, or the life of a body, is an intensive carrier of change, which resonates with its environment[449]

And you know what, they do this totally unsupervised! They have no one telling them to work around the stone or the leaf or gnaw their way through this or that . . . they just do it. Because they older ant knows!!!! They are one with their surroundings. They respond and are in harmony with themselves, their needs in relation to the environmental conditions they encounter, and in turn re-affect those very conditions!

And we're not much different to this at all, are we?

We are all equally senders and receivers at all times . . .

ALEX:

yes

DAWN

Fuck yeah

LAUREN

Well, actually

CHARLOTTE

Hello Kitty GIF

We need to become more aware of this

[449] Parrika, pg. 142

We need to be more ant.

Old ant.

Cause, really, are we not just all of one big mediated system of back and forth and change and transformation and of connectivity to our surroundings and

(looks at audience)

Us

See, when those tiny little worker bees form a swarm, that is when the laborious little creature becomes dangerous. See, when these bees fly, in uncountable quantity, they deliberately avoid colliding with others in the swarm, and they match the velocity of the group, sensing each other intricately.

ALEX

Insect GIF 1

Thus, their moves are coordinated in an intricate choreography that brings shape to their formation.

(hesitates)

Or maybe its starlings that do this.

But it doesn't matter the principle is the same because my point is that although this may be likened to a dance, although it may be based on following a set of rules, and although it may create an apparently organised aesthetic, the swarming behaviour is one which nothing seems to control.[450]

DAWN

Insect GIF 2

There are no real leaders but somehow the system works.

---

[450] Savage, p.217

And this type of thinking is quite dangerous oh it is so seductive and consequential but it is rather dangerous . . . .

Because it is the collective action that here becomes important. . .

And those are not easily controlled

Nor are they predictable or even understandable but more than anything they challenge . . .

LAUREN

Insect GIF 3

SQ16 (music – Born Free by M.I.A)

Let's be a challenging ant . . . .

Let's just move away from leadership

Let's just . . . . .

Connect . . .

DAWN

Whoop

When the dancing starts Charlotte, Dawn Alex start to dance in their chairs clap, bang on the table, When Speaker high-fives Alex, Dawn gets up and has a boggie . . .

Lauren looks bewildered but claps and laughs . .

Encouragement for everyone to join in. . . .

SQ17 Phone ring

music keeps playing

Phone ring

. . .

Hello? *(shouting over music)*

What? Yes, it is going really well . . . yes . . its fant . .

Excuse me? But no, they are still sitting . . .

What? I erm . . . Excuse me . . . gosh I apologise . .

But I . . . but what about my contract . . immediately??

What about the paper on Monday . .

You still want this?

I just don't understand . . .

Someone complained?

SQ18 (Sound of wolves starts playing over the music)

What, from here?

Discussed with the others?

SQ19 fade over 7 seconds

. . .

I understand

(music stops)

DAWN

Fuck . .. Is she serious . . .

CHARLOTTE

Gif of shocked face (Crying kitty??

ALEX

Wow – she needs some milk

LAUREN

It wasn't me I swear

I do apologise

(starting to pack up her belongings)

I hope you enjoyed this lecture. And that I was able to offer some insights that will help you develop you own understanding ..

As you know, this information is transferrable to many other areas . .

Thank you very much . .

For attending ..

I hope you

Well

I . .

I'm sorry

(rushes out of the door)

ALEX

Have you completed our satisfaction survey?

This is a different one, folks. Please, do make sure to complete this one:

https://forms.gle/BH32TvjFCV9HNpT49

HARRISON *(2hrs after the event)*

Mate I'm on my way . . . You'll never know what happened today ☺

HARRISON*:*

**deletes message*.*

https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wmopen-organizationalbehavior/chapter/the-history-of-leadership-theories/

Appendix 5.1 - *And Then There Was Only One* Audience Feedback - 30 April 2022

For the Appendix 5.1 *And Then There Was Only One* Audience Feedback – 30 April 2022, please go to:
And Then There Was Only One - The Performance 30 April 2022

Appendix 5.2 - And Then There Was Only One Audience Feedback - 20 May 2022

For the Appendix 5.2 *And Then There Was Only One* Audience Feedback – 20 May 2022, please go to:
And Then There Was Only One - The Performance 20 May 2022

Appendix 6 - *Trailed* Script

TRAILED the Script
p. 2; **Prologue AGES 0-2**
ACT 1: AGES 3-12
p. 4 **Scene 1 (The Game 1)**
p.5 **Scene 2 the outcome – school run**

ACT 2: AGES 13-22
p.9: **Scene 1 (The Game 2)**
p.13: **Scene 2 the outcome – the messiness of the early adult years – medieval roads, confused or too driven)**

ACT 3: Ages 23-32
p.15 **Scene 1 (The Game 3)**
p.21: **Scene 2 (The outcome – confusion – living life in the fast lane, getting lost in the network, hitting the brake)**

ACT 4: Ages 33- 42
p.22: **Scene 1 (The Game 4)**
p. 23: **Scene 2 (The outcome – settled in life)**

ACT 5: Ages 43- 52
p.25: **Scene 1 (The Game 5)**
p. 25: **Scene 2 (The outcome – ponderings about keeping control)**

ACT 6: Ages 53- 62
p.26: **Scene 1 (NO Game)**
p. 26: **Scene 2 (The outcome – therapy session)**

Prologue AGES 0-2
Music: Ekkehard Ehlers – *Plays John Cassavetes 1*
A lone performer is moving along the floors and walls; pressing as many parts of the body against the wall as possible . .

Woman:
I can't remember those days . . . someone's shadow seemed to hover over me for the majority of the times . . .
It was all rather basic.
You, a very simplified but urgent form of living.
You were always there. I was following your movements with my eyes wherever you went . .

slowly progression through the space, tracing the space across walls and floor to the centre of the space.

I pretended to be a leaf and trick the lady bird into being my friend . .
The garden was out of the left, but I wasn't allowed to go outside much

It was ok as long as I was in the garden
Bicycles, empty cigarettes packets,
A rusty slide
A washing line

When it rained I tried to get the washing in . . . but the stretch was too much

The green carpet was really long
We had a hoover but it never came upstairs.

My dad collected the dust by scratching it with his fingers into piles of dust balls . .

Shouting and laughing would wake me up in the middle of the night.
And I remember the image of a fire . . it was always scary and felt like it was really near. . . I always told everyone that I was left in the house when it happened although I was never sure what exactly had happened

I liked the lady bird

It crawled over the glass bottle lying on the ground and I noticed how it would not slide down its smooth surface . . .

You were running down the stairs at tea time . . .
Hoping not to have burned anything . . .

I was there but you did not see me . ..

I do remember the sound of shouting at night . . but I was always told it was a dream I don't think I had any friends. We were just in the playground. I don't remember who with.

Lies down on her back

I was sick a lot. One Christmas I remember particularly. But we did not go to the doctor.

She lies there music fades out –
Technician: Rolls a toy car into the space towards her

Did you know that the very first street and roads were basically simple tracks, carved out of nature by humans and creatures, working around obstacles of trees and shrubs and stones . . .
Sits up and during sentence stands up (first contact with audience)

And over times, those traces of travel have become pathways, routes, trails that would allow others to do the same journey, in the same way . .

Eventually, someone would come and clean those trails and pathway up . .

She stands up and starts directing audiences with the hand shapes of the traffic warden

Get them into a bit more shape. They would perhaps do this by clearing trees and big stones from the paths. They would probably also flattened the tracks or widened them, as the traffic developed from crawling humans and creatures to those travelling for purpose and commerce, and to make it suitable for human as well as animal transport . . . .

She sets audience up in a semi – circle,

Roads were always there to transport something . . . humans, goods, information, commodities . . . so before the roads were paved and carved more or less permanently into the ground, transport was conducted via pack-animals, to either carry goods on their packs or to pull them on sledges over snow or bogs . . .
Donkeys, dogs and women . . .
women were, as the saying goes, *man's oldest beast of burden* . .

The women carried, so that the men had their hands free to run interference for the women [451]. . . .
Or to smoke that fag
Or to drink that bottle that lands in the grass,
that the lady bird does not slide down on . . . .

. . . .

But as said. I don't actually remember those days. It feels like a memory, but perhaps it's been implanted in my head as a memory, but really, it is someone else's story retold,

Sets up two chairs with envelopes on them. . .

ACT 1: Scene 1 (The Game 1) AGES 3-12
Music: *Timetakestimetime* by Peder

Changes character sharply, in an entertainer type mode . . .
Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome and thank you for being here.
Today you will help me develop my story. I am an every woman, I might even be an every man. I could be you, which means you could be me.
You will help me create my path. Through today's performance;
In the little time we are about to spend together.

Let's start with you helping me to choose some basic facts about me . . .

May I ask you to form two teams:
Maybe you and you? And you and you!

In front of you will find 2 envelopes . . .
Please, if I could ask you, to, together, in your teams, if you could fill in the questions on the form in the envelope . . .

Oh it is just about some minor information about me.

Take your pick.

It not high stakes right now . .
So no worries. .

GAME 1:

---

[451] *Traffic* p.86

In the envelopes, there is a questionnaire in the form of an identification document. Participants will fill in the following areas:

First name	a-m = 1 point	N – z 2 points
Surname	a-m = 1 point	N-Z = 2 points
Star sign	a-m = 1 point	N=z = 2 point
Favourite colour	Blue grey black brown green =1 point	Pink red yellow orange = 2 point
Favourite Food	Savoury = 2 point	Sweet = 1 point

Minimum 5 points – max 10 point
Star sign determines Winter child (Penny) or Summer child (Faye)

Entertainer:
Please, may I ask you to read out your options.
One after the other.

And now, let's role a dice –
Let's find out whose choice will be the chosen one . . .

We will roll a dice, and the highest number wins.

The Spectator-participants roll the dice. Woman takes both envelopes, but reads out the one of the 'winning' team

Thank you, thank you give yourself a round of applause very well done . . .
Music fades

Walks through the audience, so they see her from behind

Draws out the lines across the air in front of her

Technician: Writes the winning answers onto an A3 'Character board' and draws either a cloud (Indicating Penny) or a sun (indicating Faye) sign onto Character board.

ACT 1: SCENE 2
Early tracks . . . survival
(Journey down the child hood / adolescence route)

Replace with some simple movement gestures

(turns around like she has never seen the audience before)

Hello everyone
My name is
My favourite colour is . . .

I was born in . *Reads off the character board*

It's nice to meet you. Thank you for telling me my name. It's hard to forget things.
I do remember odd things. A shadow. A hand reaching towards me. Or pushing me away.
I am not sure.
It is kind of a time of sheer survival right? Those very early days
But then later on
It becomes somewhat more solid. And repetitive
I do remember the way to school.

And the monotony of taking that journey every day.
Of course I had no choice
Its funny what we remember of those days, when we start to become ourselves but can't make our own choices yet.

Music: ... by Bert Docks

Version 1 - Faye *Angry (although there's nothing to be angry at), stable but pessimistic person, jealousy, envy* *Liked the learning*	**Version 2 - Penny** *Entitled, ego confused with potential, arrogant* *School is Inconsequentiql she does it because everyone does it and her friends are there*
Movement from school run 1 The pub. Country side style. There were horses. But we never fed them, they never came. The garden was huge. The toilets are straight through the door, with the bar to the right and then straight. It looks like a house but really, it is a pub We had a gold fish but he died and dad put it in a match box	*Movement from school run 1* The pub. Country side style. There were horses. But we never fed them, they never came. The garden was huge. The toilets are straight through the door, with the bar to the right and then straight. It looks like a house but really, it is a pub My friend had a gerbil. We fed it dandelions in her parents' garden.

Movement from school run 2 The small railway bridge felt like a roller coaster. But I couldn't see the tracks. So boring.	*Movement from school run 2* The railway bridge felt like a roller coaster. But I couldn't see the tracks. So boring.
I am not sure I had any friends. I liked this girl called Sadie but she did not like me.	I don't think I ever had any accident I pushed a boy into the fence so he had an accident.
Movement from school run 3 We always beeped by the bend. So cool. They did it because it was dangerous but I didn't know. I just wanted them to beep again and again.	*Movement from school run 3* We always beeped by the bend. So cool. They did it because it was dangerous but I didn't know. I just wanted them to beep again and again.
They talked about me but I talked about them, too.	Things being unfair is not on. Being told off when I did nothing. That made me mad and I always let them know.
Movement from school run 4 Green green green green . . . bicycle, tractors. Time stands still. That house nobody knew what it's there for. I couldn't read that weird writing on the wall. Someone must live there but I never saw anyone	*Movement from school run 4* Green green green green . . . bicycle, tractors. Time stands still. That house nobody knew what it's there for. I couldn't read that weird writing on the wall. Someone must live there but I never saw anyone
My teacher from year 4 at school, she was horrible to me. And so I was horrible to her.	I did tell them all that you could make the hopscotch game more interesting – and by then the boys had already started to look, so that was a bonus. I guess I was a little taller and more developed than the others.

It was not my fault. I was born in (reference to game decision) I was smaller than other children.	
Movement from school run 5	*Movement from school run 5*
Here is the best place to play. Absolutely. no one disturbs you, hidden behind that house. I don't know who lives there, but they are quite important I think. Which made it feel a little risky.	Here is the best place to play. Absolutely. And no one disturbs you. It's quite hidden behind that house. I don't know who lives there, but they are quite important I think. Which makes playing there more exciting and a little risky.
Amytiville Horror was my first film. I can't remember who let me watch it. I don't think I should have. I was terrified of the corridor for years after..	I don't know his name. But he gave me a little peck whilst we were watching the little princess movie.
Movement from school run 6	*Movement from school run 6*
Honey dew. That was what was written on the sign. Bees make honey. I like honey, but that drive was too long for me to walk. Why should I. Perhaps the house is not as perfect as the sign. I bet it is.	Honey dew. That was what was written on the sign. Bees make honey. I like honey, but that drive was too long for me to walk. Why should I. Perhaps the house is not as perfect as the sign. I bet it is.
wow, there are so many of them I do not remember. I guess they were not important to me. Or perhaps they were, but in a horrible way. I'm not sure.	wow, there are so many of them I do not quite remember. I wonder if they remember me?
Movement from school run 7	*Movement from school run 7*
Davina was the fun house of the village. It was right next to the school. And when poppy was there everything was ok.	Davina was the fun house of the village. It was right next to the school. And when poppy was there everything was ok.
	I was never asked about my dreams in those days. I wonder what I would have said.

I was never asked about my dreams in those days. I wonder what I would have said.	

Music fades
Technician rolls two toy cars into the space.

Woman
Did you know that the *Romans were the first experts in building roads*. *They* liked everything organised and orderly. Streets were laid out in neat, straight lines, *like* on a *chess-board*.
And all their towns were laid out in the same way.

(Whilst setting up the space with two tables)

Each town had two main roads. One heading North-South and the other East-West.
All streets of the town eventually led to the town square, also called the forum. That was the middle of it all.

The middle of it all . . .

The middle of it all . . .

I am guessing we are all trying to get to the middle of somewhere, of something, right?
Or perhaps we want ourselves to be that very middle. To be at the centre. At the heart of it. To be the core . .

(places table bells on tables)
See the Romans, I guess they had it all very figured out. They had straight lines and clear corners, and a uniformity, one which fitted all towns and cities.
People knew how to navigate even foreign places, because all the streets were organised in the same way, so
To get lost
Was not an easy thing to do.

Act 2: Scene 1 (The Game 2) AGES 13-22

Music: *Carousel* by Circus Contraption

(Quick shift into entertainer)

Let's play a game – as you can see, I now know some of my story. But from here things get a little fuzzy. But you can help me figure it out. You can lay it out in neat lines. Create clear corners.
So I will tell you what I know,
But I will also ask you questions, and you will answer these, with a simple yes or no.
But life is a gamble, right? So, you can win points. I wouldn't want you to get involved without gaining anything from it, right?
To win points, the two teams will once again play against each other –gather your behind behind a table; take a moment to choose the fastest person in the group
Ok. You are fast. Are you sure? Place yourself behind this bell, two steps away from it.
The person who rings the bell first, will be able to answer my question. The team of the person answering the question, will get a point.
Remember the answers can only be 'yes' or 'no'
The team with the most points, is the winner of this section . . . .
Any questions? Are you ready? Listen out for the questions. They will appear.

Music fades / needle scratch
Questions for audience to answer – by banging on a table bell

The technician writes score of team that rings bell first on Score board and writes the answers into a written version of events on the character board.

(Commentary / Woman)
See those early years are all very confusing, right? I mean if a child is lucky, you are always out and about, enjoying fresh air, playing with sticks and stones. Cooking mud pie and coming home happily, covered in dirt and sand, to be welcomed by a warm living room with an open fire, some soup and a hot bath and a soft bed.
That's what the adverts on telly try to tell us.
Stops and thinks
I'm not even sure I ever saw an add like that . . .

But nevermind, I am not sure anyone actually lives a life like that;
now I know, I had open sky and a great view from the bathroom window. I know that. And there was country side, as well as some trees and wide fields. But I am not sure it felt very wide.
It felt small. I was outside but . . .

Ladies and Gentlemen
Did I ever break any bones? . . . *(in entertainer mode)*

YES	**NO**

(entertainer mode repeats chosen answer)

Don't read into that, because nothing is ever as clear-cut as it might seem, in my opinion anyway. I, mean everything I experienced just becomes a memory, in the end . . . and a memory is but a trace . . . a reminder of something that is now absent. A result of a touch that now has gone. Trace, like, *memory*, is not a thing it's a non-thing. So, it never is a reference to what *is* or even *was,* but only ever to what *made it become*.

Ladies and Gentlemen
Did I have to share my room? . . . . *(in entertainer mode)*

YES	**NO**

Gosh, it is really important to have your own space, though, right? For me it was so important, particularly in those years, when we start to gain a greater sense of ourselves. When we start to experiment with our own choices, even just by starting to buy our own clothes. I still remember that crazy jacket I bought.
(entertainer mode repeats chosen answer)

Ladies and Gentlemen
Did I have spots? . . . *(in entertainer mode)*

YES	**NO**

Aha, I am aware that this question might seem so superficial to some of you. But if any of you have ever been obsessed over how you look, who you might be and what you might become for others, then you will understand how a single, visibly placed pimple on your face can wipe out any kind of courage for the day.
In general, though, I was a jeans and T-shirt kind of girl. I was in wellies, whatever the weather . . .

Ladies and Gentlemen
Did I feel misunderstood . . . . *(in entertainer mode)*

YES	**NO**

Laughing
There is a point when child or early adult experience turns into something of quite a different nature. When it does more than break or not break any bones.
You know, they say that traces are often left not once, but several times, meaning that they either continually overlap, becoming unrecognisable or deepen by repetition[452]. So, if it happens only once, it might get lost behind many other experiences. But if it happens again and again . . . It becomes deeply engrained.

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[452] *Trailed* p.96

Ladies and Gentlemen
Was I lonely at times? . . . . . . *(in entertainer mode)*

YES	NO

I liked reading. I always liked reading and I still like reading. I love music. Not interested in playing it, but I like listening to it. I can't remember my first CD.
I don't remember liking much else.
I did not really have a hobby. That's what we are meant to have, I think. Hobbies.
I had books. I also had those glowy stars on the ceiling. I regularly changed the constellations. The glue of them sometimes would leave shiny spots. Little traces.
I remember those.

Ladies and Gentlemen
Did my parents' divorce? . . . . . . *(in entertainer mode)*

YES	NO

Hesitates in answering
Actually can I come back to the previous question . . . .
You know I think you do not know what loneliness is until you really experienced loneliness. It is one of those words that is so often used – like depression.
In a mocking tone 'I am depressed' – like, really . . do you know what that means for those who really can't get out of bed?
Loneliness is lethal. Like, it literally can kill. Until you have experienced that, I don't think you know what loneliness is. Stop talking about it.

Ladies and Gentlemen
Did I get sacked from my first job, prepping salad in the local Caf? . . . . . . *(in entertainer mode)*

YES	NO

Sorry. Really, that was just a shit job. What can I say.

Ladies and Gentlemen
Did I drink before I was of legal age? . . . . . . *(in entertainer mode)*

YES	NO

During that age, you might feel pressured to do things because others do them. Drinking, for example. I remember being quite torn. What's the right response. To join in and conform to the expectations of others? Or to go against the grain?

I mean, to conform to general rules can be understood as a positive thing to do, as it might mean we join in, we follow everyone else, whereas non-conformity might label you 'difficult', or rebellious. Equally, rebellion could be looked at as a creative, positive force, and conformity as just being boring and passive.

Ladies and Gentlemen
Did my first boyfriend force himself on me? . . . . *(in entertainer mode)*

YES	**NO**

I didn't think he did. At the time. And now looking back . . mmhhh I am not so sure. But everyone speaks differently about these things now. I mean, time is like a screen, right? It tints experiences in one colour or another.

Ladies and Gentlemen
Was I lacking in potential . . . . .. *(in entertainer mode)*

YES	**NO**

(Laughing out loud)
What does that even mean? Potential – potential for what? Why does it always come back to having potential? Or talent?. . . .
Has anyone ever discovered the potential of, say, a squirrel or the Great Big Whale . .

Silly question . . .

Ladies and Gentlemen
Did I move out before I was ready to live on my own? . . . . .. *(in entertainer mode)*

YES	**NO**

I actually really don't know what to say to that. Who wrote that question . .
I mean really . .
Can we stop this now?
Thank you
I know where I am going .. . .

Act 2, scene 2:

Music: *Midnat* by Bremer/McCoy
(Movement section – depending on the accumulative numbers of either 'no' or 'yes', this section will be performed either as Faye or as Penny. These movement sections are designed to disperse audiences in the space, either with indirect use of space, caution, indecisiveness, apologetic and self-aware demeanour (Faye) or with speed, direct use of space, force and a high sense of risk (Penny).

Continue as Faye or Penny

My early adult years I think were quite successful. I mean they were horrible, too, but I think in general I can't complain . . . I don't think I had any major traumas, but then, who knows what we buried in our subconscious.

During this speech Faye/Penny set up the space with tables with A4 paper with either A or B stuck on it, lights and envelopes and pens on table. Moving chair out the centre of the room

FAYE	**PENNY**
WORK *(Faye – does her job well and endures her boss's advances because she needs the money; she needs to be independent but feels highly uncomfortable)* I have a great job. I mean, it's a little boring but it pays for the bills and the flat, and I can stash a little away. The guy I am working for is a little awkward though. But I think I can handle it. It doesn't always feel great, but I guess I am learning a lot.	**WORK** *Penny – does her job not very well but makes up for it with her charm, flirts with boss because she knows she could get away with anything)* I have a great job – I mean it's a little boring and, in all honesty, I don't understand half of it, but I get by. It pays the bill well. So it's good. I have a laugh with my boss, although he is a little awkward. But he understands that I am still learning. And excuses my mistakes.
LIVING CONDITIONS *(Faye – doesn't connect to her flat mates because she feels awkward in their presence due to her own insecurities. She comes home and goes to her room, closing the door behind her.)* I live in a shared house. It is a nice house, I like it. I decorated the hall way and the kitchen, so I think I really put my stamp	**LIVING CONDITIONS** *(Penny – doesn't connect fully to her flat mates but actually thinks they are really cool and likes to think she supports them. She looks at them like they are pets. Somewhat beneath her)* I live in a shared house. It is a nice house. I like it. I decorated the hall way and the kitchen, so I think I really put my stamp

on it. I have 3 flat mates. They are quite different than me, but we have a laugh. They are a little messy though. And one of them is clearly having some issues with her boyfriend. She shouts a lot behind her closed door. She thinks we can't hear her, but actually, we can. It is a little embarrassing. She's annoying.	on it. I have 3 flat mates. They are quite different than me. They are cute. Quite cool. They are a little messy though. And one of them is clearly having some issues with her boyfriend. She shouts a lot behind her closed door. She thinks we can't hear her, but actually, we can. It is a little embarrassing. She's annoying. I feel a little intimidated by her
PERSONAL LIFE *(Faye – he is too kind, she cheats, because she doesn't think he will stay anyway . . . .)* Yes, I have a boyfriend. He is great. He is very nice. Very Nice. He is very steady. Reliable. Very kind. He always wants to hold hands and it annoys me. He sees a future for us, I am not so sure I do. I mean, I still have so much time, right? I find him a little irritating to be honest. He is just so perfect. How can I match him in any way? He makes me feel guilty; I feel I quite often disappoint him.	**PERSONAL LIFE** *(Penny – he is too kind, she cheats, because she thinks he is a little dim)* Yes, I have a boyfriend. He is great. He is very nice. Very Nice. He is very steady. Reliable. Very kind. He always wants to hold hands and it annoys me. He sees a future for us, I am not so sure I do. I mean, I think he is a little dim. I find him a little irritating to be honest. He is just so perfect. Not very exciting. Quite boring actually. I think I could do better. Find someone a bit more . . . manly?
FAMILY *(Faye – a fractured relationship. She worries about her mother, she is weary of her father. She doesn't like thinking about her childhood to much. She thinks they have not given her that much help and support)* The house I grew up in got sold. My mom and dad don't live there anymore. My mom is frail. My dad is cruel. I love them very much. I try to stay connected to them, but it feels uncomfortable. There is not much I can do to help them.	**FAMILY** *(Penny – she uses her parents for support. She knows they would help her, and sometimes she accepts money from them although she doesn't need it. She pities her mother and fears her father)* The house I grew up in got sold. My mom and dad don't live there anymore. My mom's just fallen apart; my dad has become hard and bitter. I love them very much. I try to remain connected to them. But I also don't want to become their carer. There is not much I can do to help them.

Act 3, scene 1 (Game 3) AGES 23-32

What happens when she was 23 -32
A wild life

Medieval pathways . . . rebellion

Music: *Anadamastor* by Dead Circus and Marc Ribot

In entertainers voice:

Ladies and gentlemen. Let's play another game. Wow all these relationships are too much to handle: I need some help . . . I am loosing myself between all these people. Please find yourself back in your teams. Place yourself on either side of the room . .

You will be both, as a team, given a task . ..

I will tell you a little more detail about myself and my situations with other people. I need you to help me make sense of this. In order to do this, you, in your teams, will either be me, or the people I am dealing with.
If you are me, your choices can gain you a point. If you are not me, I'm afraid you are just along for the ride ...
picks up the cards
Let's start with my professional career:

WORK:
My boss has, in the last few weeks, behaved really weird. He looks at me funny and stands to close. He doesn't really look me in the eye, but rather. . . well you know, checks me out in a way that doesn't feel right. Euw; it's gross. But I can't afford to lose this job. I need the money. I thought about finally getting a diploma. Learn something new. But right now, it feels really risky to give up a well-paid job.

(Hands Team A a cue card)
Team A – you are my boss. You know I am young, and therefore think I am gullible and you may want to exploit my lack of experience. You are attracted to me and really, you imagine a wild, one-night stand with me.
This is your choice:
I will kiss her by the printers.
Yes or No

(Hands Team B a cue card)
Team B – you are me –You are not sure what is happening but it feels wrong. You don't like this man, but if you don't play along are you jeopardising your job. You may have other options, but leaving this job is risky.
This is your choice:
I will hand in my resignation,

Yes or no
Discuss, make a choice and write down your answers

Music: Ticking clock sound effect
Technician continues to write out the audiences choices onto the character board.

Team B:
What is your choice?

Team A: What is your choice?

Team A Boss	**Team A Boss**	**Team B Character**	**Team B Character**	**Score for team B**
Kiss the character by the printer	Do not kiss the character by the printer	resign	Not resign	
x		x		+1
	x	x		-1
x			x	**-1**
	x		x	+1

Improvised feedback loop as Faye / Penny

Thank you for your choices.
LIVING CONDITIONS
Let's continue with my living scenario.
As you know, I live with others. Where I live is important to me and I want to look after it. My flat mates are not like that. Particularly that one girl. She is unclean and I think she steals my food. She never pays the rent or the bills on time. Because the house is under my name, I'm liable. It is infuriating. She just doesn't care.

(Hands Team A a cue card)
Team A – you are me – you are annoyed. Her dishes are always in the sink. You leave post- it notes and you keep having to remind her for the money. You think this is unfair

This is your choice:
I will evict her
Yes or no
Discuss and make a choice . .

(Hands Team B a cue card)
Team B – you are my flat mate. You like living in this house but you are very annoyed with me. You think I pester you with constant, passive-aggressive texts. And you are tempted to wind me up even more. Because you don't really care, there is too much going on in your own life.
This is your choice:
I will pay the rent on time
Yes or no

Discuss, make a choice and write down your answers

Music: Ticking clock sound effect

Team A:
What is your choice?

Team B: What is your choice?

Team A character	**Team A character**	**Team B Flat mate**	**Team B Flat mate**	**Score for team A**
Terminate her contract	Not terminate her contract	I will pay the rent on time	I won't pay the rent on time	
x			x	+1
x		x		-1
	x		x	-1
	x	x		+1

Improvised feedback loop as Faye / Penny

Improvised feedback loop as entertainer

Let's continue with my personal life (ooohhhh)

PERSONAL LIFE
I love my boyfriend. He is so lovely. I mean he is what other girls might dream off. But, and oh gosh this is horrible, I have cheated on him. It was a wild, messy night, one of a kind, something I would never usually do. I had sex with two other guys on that party, I just pulled them into that bath room. I was drunk, they were funny and so into to me. It was thrilling, invigorating, something I have never experienced before but . . . arrghh it's awful; I betrayed and he is the kindest person I know.

Team A – you are my boyfriend. You love me dearly. But you think I have acted weirdly lately and you don't know what's going on. Our sex life is non-existent at the moment, and you feel rejected and you feel hurt. You can't work out how I feel. What will you do next?
This is your choice:
I stay in the relationship
Yes or No

Team B – you are me – you are kicking yourself. You have never done anything like this before; and you do not want to hurt him. You love and care for his man, but he's annoyingly nice. And you just had the most amazing sexual experience of your life without him. Do you tell him?
This is your choice:
I tell him that I was unfaithful,
yes or no

Discuss, make a choice and write down your answer

Music: Ticking clock sound effect

Team B:
What is your choice?

Team A: What is your choice?

Team A boyfriend	**Team A boyfriend**	**Team B character**	**Team B character**	**Score for team B**
Stay and forgive	Leave and forget	Tell it all	Do not tell	
x			X	-1
x		x		+1
	x		x	+1
	x	x		-1

Improvised feedback loop as Faye / Penny

Improvised feedback loop as entertainer

Let's continue with family

FAMILY
It's so difficult with my parents. I mean, most of the times, I feel like we are living on different planets. They don't get me, we have become so distant.

You know, with everything going on, I would be nice if they were to just call me, out of the blue, ask how I'm doing. Even just the one of them. But it feels like neither can be bothered.

Team A – you are me. You wake up on a Sunday morning, with no real plans. The sun is shining. You could call your parents and invite them to the pub. Just like that. For no reason. But you are not sure how it will be received and fear rejection.
This is your choice:
I call them and invite them to a pub
Yes or No

Team B – you are my parents. I've grown up and you do not agree with some of my choices. But you think that, as an adult, I am responsible for my own life. You think I could do better. You have some issues of your own and you think I don't care what's going on with you and so you feel neglected.
This is your choice:
We would accept a spontaneous invitation to go to a pub lunch
Yes or No

Discuss, make a choice and write down your answers

Team A:
What is your choice?

Team B: What is your choice?

Team A character	**Team A character**	**Team B parents**	**Team B parents**	**Score for team A**
Invite them to pub	Do not Invite them to pub	Accept the invitation	Do not accept the invitation	
x			X	-1
x		x		+1
	x		x	+1
	x	x		-1

Improvised feedback loop as Faye / Penny

Improvised feedback loop as entertainer

Final chance to score a point

Technician rolls three cars into the space

Act 3, scene 2

I thought I made choices, but actually, these choices made me.
I thought I was in control, but I was just a passenger.

During this speech, the character rearranges the space, and places piltes of paper and pens into the four corners of the room.

You know, these routes and complicated maps of motorways, that connect different places, allowing us to travel from one location to the other via identical, never-ending lanes of tarmac? The ability to speedily travel via these strong and broad roads is not just a sign of personal health and wealth, but also a requirement for the health of our society.[453]
The free circulation of people and capital along these roads allows us all to grow, grow stronger, grow richer . . . .
Hey, I'm a highflyer I am in the fast lane . . .
but the means of *reaching something* has become faster and faster. We need to *get there* faster and faster.
And so I was running from one thing to the next, trapped in a network of traffic between people, places and things. I kept going, kept pushing myself, I was in free fall, because, well, keeping going, keeping striving, keeping on, that's living, right?[454] Oh and I wanted to get there. So badly. I mean, I wanted to be vital, I wanted to be vibrant, to progress, and in doing so, to matter, I wanted . . so many things . .

I was so focused on reaching 'it', and reaching 'it' fast, that I lost myself. I was making quick decisions based on others or some misplaced goal, . I was not listening to myself or my own instinct. I thought I was setting something up, I thought I knew it all. But actually, I just got stuck, loosing myself within it all. I kept driving without knowing where I was going. It all looked the same. And it was making me sick.
I had to stop. Slow down. Pull on the breaks.
I knew it came down to me this time.

Act 4, scene 1 (Game 4) AGES 33-42

What happens when she was 32 -43
Finding a happy and healthy life

Entertainer:
Ladies and Gentlemen, here we are again, let's play another game.

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[453] Traffic 123
[454] Traffic p. 118

I need your help. I need to sort myself out and try and live a happy, healthy and calmer life.

How do I do it? You tell me. Here is some paper and pen, please write your suggestions on a paper – one suggestion per paper please.

At this point, I am open for anything.
Here is a basket. Your aim is to get your suggestion into the basket; those suggestions in the basket will be applied in my life; what changes should I make? What little hacks or tips can you give someone to live a happy and healthy life?
Again, I will use those suggestions in the basket - But sorry, even if your suggestions lands in the basket, you will not get points for it – you are just helping out an old friend.

Music: *Washington Square* by The Village Stomper
MOVEMENT SECTION AND GAME 4: The character dances around the participants – they need to be able to throw their scrambled up pieces with suggestions into the basket.

Music finishes

Thank you so much ladies and gentlemen, give yourself a round of applause, very well done, and for being such great friends, here, have a glass, and some of these, don't use them yet, wait for my instructions . . . .

Act 4, scene 2 - Settled in life

Entertainer morphs into character – puts herself into spotlight.
Stood in front of audience with champagne glass in hand – like in a spot light, or some celebratory speech given to friends at a birthday or anniversary, basket with suggestions in front of her. She smiles quietly towards audience

Technician sets up party paper streamers on the table

In voice of either Faye or Penny

Welcome everyone, I am so happy to have you all here, in our new and amazing home, so exciting and I am so grateful you could all be here . . .
. .
Because, well, over the years you are the ones who have offered me so much support. You helped me to make sense of it all, and most importantly, probably, at some point along the line, offered me some great tips and well, yes, what can I say, I mean, alright, alright, the last few years have been kind to me!

Now, some of the best tips I have received, from some of you here, are worth repeating, for everyone, as they have helped me turn my life around.
Sooooo,
My friends: do remember to . . . . *(reads out suggestions from the basket)*

Now these are all tips to remember for life!
(Awkward laughing)

As you may know, I recently have accepted an amazing position as project development manager for this start-up, and it's so wonderful that the great bunch of people I am now working with are right here with me.

Thank you, for supporting me whilst I am finding my feet in this role!
.It's a little challenging, at times, as you may have noticed, but I am feeling very supported and am having a lot of fun. So thank you!

I also, and most importantly, want to express my heart-felt thanks to , well, ok I am going to say it – My fiancé!! Yes, so this is not just a house-warming party, but also an engagement party, surprise.

You have been my rock! And I wouldn't know, what to do with you!

So here's to me and you, and to everyone else here. . . let's celebrate

Cheers to good people and good things . . . .
Takes a drink from the glass

As Faye or As Penny – (drunk version)
Music: *I'm every woman* by Chaka Khan
Movement section – Partying around audience – taking to individual audience members in a shouty voice, like over the music, so everyone can hear .

Yes it gorgeous, isn't it. We got it from Habitat . no no, he pays the mortgage, I mean, I contribute too, but he pays the majority which, well, feels a little odd but you know

As Faye or As Penny – (drunk version)
Movement section – Partying around audience – taking to individual audience members in a shouty voice, like over the music, so everyone can hear .

Ha ha yes that first meeting was so weird . . .I mean, really I don't quite really know what I am doing most of the time, but I will do. . . I have great plans for this company, are you with me? It is such a great team, we can do great things . . .

As Faye or As Penny –
Movement section – Partying around audience – taking to individual audience members in a shouty voice, like over the music, so everyone can hear .

He proposed on my birthday. At first I didn't know what to say, but . . well, yes ok, I really want to be his partner for life. I mean, I feel more settled and happy than ever . . . it's a privilege, right?

As Faye or As Penny –
Movement section – Partying around audience – taking to individual audience members in a shouty voice, like over the music, so everyone can hear .
I mean I know what you might be thinking – I need someone else to be happy in my life, but no no, that was not it, it was that . . . I felt settled and just at that time this guy came a long and made me even more settled and . . .
Well, it felt natural, right? It's the logical next step, surely . . . .

Music fades

She is cleaning up space – music fades. Collects party rubbish and puts it in a bin bag. Places empty basket back into centre of stage. Chair behind it

And well . . .you know . . it happened . . . the next things that can happen when you're on that road . . .

I got pregnant. .

Freeze. Puts the basket down in front of chair

Wow, I did not expect that . . . neither of us expected it . . . because, well, we weren't trying . . I mean we were also not NOT trying, you know . . . . and now . . . it is growing. My body feels different. I have a lot of energy at the moment, I feel great – they say that means it is a boy. But I don't know. I don't want to know. But the point is that I feel good, I am exercising and eating healthy and following all the guidelines, because, you know, carrying a child and all that responsibility is a total new experience, and I feel scared, of course, I think that is normal . . .
but we have a great GP practice. Our midwife has been amazing. Helped us find our way through all of this information, appointments and tests. I mean, there is a lot to learn, right? We followed all of her suggestions, and went to all of the check - ups and follow - ups and everything else . . . . it was all how it should be, until . . .

Sits down behind basket on chair

I can't piece together the conversation. I forgot the name immediately. Something that sounded Latin. Or perhaps some scientist's surname.
Some medical jargon.

Now, he is looking it up all day every day. Trying to find out about it as much as he can.
I never looked up anything. I can only remember that one sentence:

9 out of 10 children die during the first year after birth.

Act 5, scene 1 (Game 5) AGES 43-52

A curve ball

Standing up: As entertainer:

Ladies and Gentlemen
Please return to your pen and papers –
What do I do? 9 out of 10 children die during the first year after birth.

Do I terminate this pregnancy – yes or no

Write your answer on a paper and place them in in the basket . . . .
Your answers will remain anonymous
Thank you

Audience are dropping in their papers indicating their choice

She takes basket and puts it aside . . . . (Outcome of audience response is revealed in therapy session) picks up card game and sits on floor

Act 5, scene 2

Brings out some card and starts laying out a game of solitaire

(as Penny / Faye)

Technician rolls a car into the space

Of course, everything changed after this. How could it not. Everything was paused. Stopped, even. A total breakdown. I remember a lot of silence. In that pretty house in its quiet street. Between me and him. In the office, when I would return to work.

How do you argue with silence?
How do you shout at something that does not respond back?

I thought that there were choices.
I thought that there were options . . . things that can be done. Alternatives. Cause and effect, this is how we work, right? This is how our Western world functions. And if things are caused by something, we can determine what has caused it, and therefore, how to perhaps find solutions for undesired or unfortunate result. We can fix things. This is what science promises. And Medicine. But the promise of fixing things with science or medicine is like the illusion that our roads allow us to travel wherever we want.

There is a human desire to control and know and influence things. But they said it happened for 'no reason'. Imagining something occurring for no reason is odd. It comes close to the concept of the miracle.[455]
Ah fucking miracle, are you joking?

In our society miracles are associated with wonderous events. But really, miracles are suspicious and they inspire fear. They are unsettling. And that's what happened. Everything was unsettled.

Act 6, scene 1 (NO Game) AGES 53-62

What happened when she was 53 - 62

***As Entertainer*:**
Ladies and gentlemen;
There are no games anymore. Oh that's not true, we have loads of games. Little ones, big ones . . .
But there is a point where perhaps we don't want to play anymore . . . or want to find those games, which we can play on our own.

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[455] Traffic p. 223

Act 6, scene 2

Like in front of some singular conversation partner (a therapist)

ANGER AT THE ILLUSION OF CHOICE

She is there because of the abortion – and whatever the audience did!!!
They need to be held accountable.
We need to point the finger!

No no I am ok, I am just . . angry you know?
So fucking angry . . .

I am fucking angry because
How can one person be expected to make such a decision?
It will be worth in the long run, it will save you from pain, it will be for the best, don't worry there will be another one, time will heal, call me, whenever, I know its fucking hard, just look after yourself now,
I am so sorry
I am so sorry I am so sorry

What else is there to say.
I'll never know if it was the right choice. I never know if I made a mistake.
What would my life be right now if things had been different.

This concept of choice.
It's an illusion, right? So many forces exist outside of ourselves. How can we ever know what choice is truly ours?

They say life is just like a game. You have to learn the rules and then play it better than anyone else.
I don't like the rules.

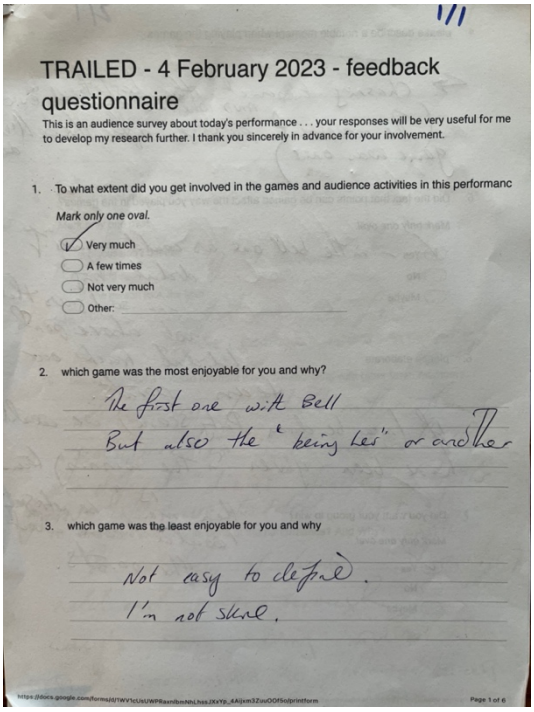
The character runs towards the technician sitting behind her table. She rings the table bell. They look at each other. They then stand up, and start clearing the space. The technician rips down the score board, and the character boards. Character cleans up the space.

Music: *Plays John Cassavetes 1* by Ekkehard Ehlers
Character leaves the space with the door open. The technician starts a new character board, writing out the headings of the questions from the first game.
The audiences leaves the space.

Appendix 6.1 - *Trailed* Audience Feedback - 4 February 2023

For the Appendix 6.1 *Trailed* Feedback – 4 February 2023, please go to:

[Trailed - 4 February 2023 - Feedback Questionnaire]



1/1

TRAILED - 4 February 2023 - feedback questionnaire

This is an audience survey about today's performance . . . your responses will be very useful for me to develop my research further. I thank you sincerely in advance for your involvement.

1. To what extent did you get involved in the games and audience activities in this performanc

Mark only one oval.

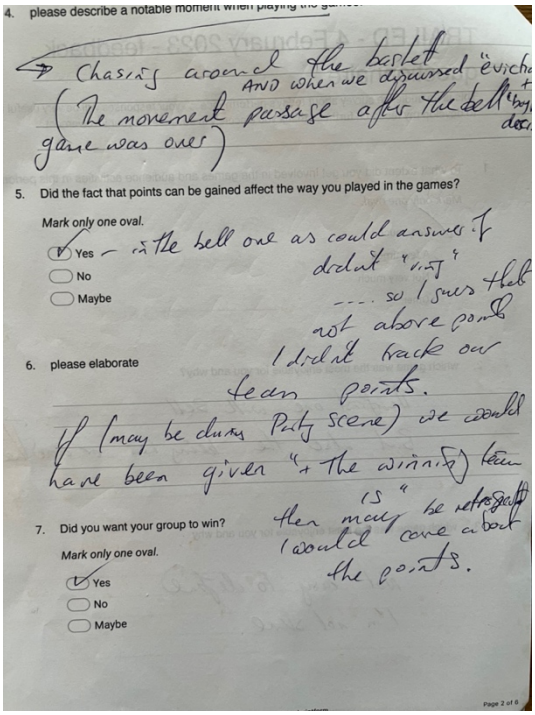
- (✓) Very much
- ( ) A few times
- ( ) Not very much
- ( ) Other:

2. which game was the most enjoyable for you and why?

The first one with Bell
But also the "being Les" or another

3. which game was the least enjoyable for you and why

Not easy to define.
I'm not sure.



4. please describe a notable moment when playing the game

Chasing around the basket
(The movement passage after the bell game was over)
AND when we discussed "evicte" + "big doc."

5. Did the fact that points can be gained affect the way you played in the games?

Mark only one oval.

- (✓) Yes – in the bell one as could answer if doubt "win" ... so I guess that not above point I didn't track our team points.
- ( ) No
- ( ) Maybe

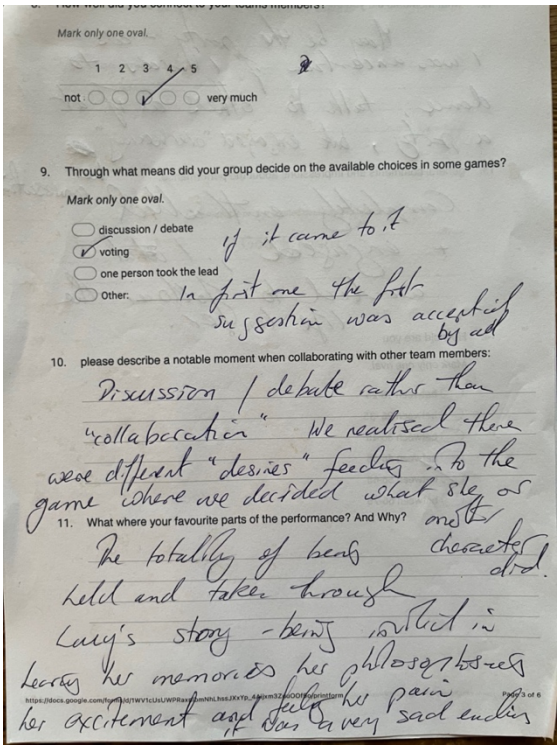
6. please elaborate

If (may be during Party scene) we would have been given "+ the winning team is" then may be retrospectively I would come back the points.

7. Did you want your group to win?

Mark only one oval.

- (✓) Yes
- ( ) No
- ( ) Maybe



Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

not ( ) ( ) (✓) ( ) ( ) very much

9. Through what means did your group decide on the available choices in some games?

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) discussion / debate
- (✓) voting
- ( ) one person took the lead
- ( ) Other:

if it came to it
In first one the first suggestion was accepted by all

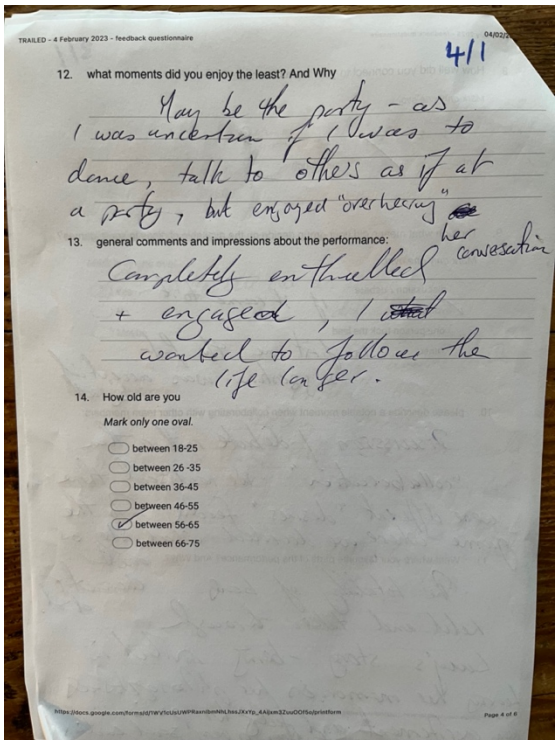
10. please describe a notable moment when collaborating with other team members:

Discussion / debate rather than "collaboration" We realised there were different "desires" feeding into the game where we decided what sides or

11. What where your favourite parts of the performance? And Why?

The totality of being led and taken through Lucy's story - being involved in learning her memories her philosophies her excitement and feelings of her pain as a very sad ending

another character did.



TRAILED - 4 February 2023 - feedback questionnaire

4/1

12. what moments did you enjoy the least? And Why

May be the party - as I was uncertain if I was to dance, talk to other's as if at a party, but enjoyed "overhearing" her conversation

13. general comments and impressions about the performance:

Completely enthralled + engaged, I wanted to follow the life longer.

14. How old are you

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) between 18-25
- ( ) between 26 -35
- ( ) between 36-45
- ( ) between 46-55
- (✓) between 56-65
- ( ) between 66-75

4 February 2023 - feedback questionnaire 04/02/2023, 07:23

1/2

TRAILED - 4 February 2023 - feedback questionnaire

This is an audience survey about today's performance . . . your responses will be very useful for me to develop my research further. I thank you sincerely in advance for your involvement.

1. To what extent did you get involved in the games and audience activities in this performanc

Mark only one oval.

- [x] Very much
- [ ] A few times
- [ ] Not very much
- [ ] Other: _____

2. which game was the most enjoyable for you and why?

THE YES OR NO, RING THE BELL GAME AS THE ANSWERS WERE MORE SPONTANIOUS

3. which game was the least enjoyable for you and why

THE 9/10 BABY GAME

TRAILED - 4 February 2023 - feedback questionnaire

2/2

4. please describe a notable moment when playing the games:

MY OWN MORAL JUDGEMENT

5. Did the fact that points can be gained affect the way you played in the games?

Mark only one oval.

- [ ] Yes
- [x] No
- [ ] Maybe

6. please elaborate

I DID NOT SEE THE POINT SYSTEM UNTIL NEAR THE END

7. Did you want your group to win?

Mark only one oval.

- [ ] Yes
- [x] No
- [ ] Maybe

4 February 2023 - feedback questionnaire 04/02/2023, 07:23

3/2

8. How well did you connect to your teams members?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
not	○	○	☒	○	○	very much

9. Through what means did your group decide on the available choices in some games?

Mark only one oval.

- [ ] discussion / debate
- [ ] voting
- [x] one person took the lead
- [ ] Other: _____

10. please describe a notable moment when collaborating with other team members:

11. What where your favourite parts of the performance? And Why?

I LIKED THE SWITCH BETWEEN THE FUN GAMES TO SERIOUS MONOLOGUE

TRAILED - 4 February 2023 - feedback questionnaire

4/2

12. what moments did you enjoy the least? And Why

AH GOOD, APART FROM NOT KNOWING WHAT WAS WRITTEN ON THE WHITE BOARD IN THE LAST MOMENTS

13. general comments and impressions about the performance:

MAYBE SLIGHTLY TOO LONG

14. How old are you

Mark only one oval.

- [ ] between 18-25
- [ ] between 26 -35
- [ ] between 36-45
- [x] between 46-55
- [ ] between 56-65
- [ ] between 66-75

1/3

TRAILED - 4 February 2023 - feedback questionnaire

This is an audience survey about today's performance . . . your responses will be very useful for me to develop my research further. I thank you sincerely in advance for your involvement.

1. To what extent did you get involved in the games and audience activities in this performanc

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) Very much
- (X) A few times
- ( ) Not very much
- ( ) Other: _____

2. which game was the most enjoyable for you and why?

Writing down suggestions as it was easy and individual. Also choice making when the group was either the character or somewhere - refreshing.

3. which game was the least enjoyable for you and why

Ringing the bell, I am not sure why.

2/3

4. please describe a notable moment when playing the games:

Panty and the ending.

5. Did the fact that points can be gained affect the way you played in the games?

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) Yes
- (X) No
- ( ) Maybe

6. please elaborate

I didn't know how the points were being paied and so I believed they won't affect anything.

7. Did you want your group to win?

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No
- (X) Maybe

3/3

8. How well did you connect to your teams members?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
not	( )	( )	( )	(X)	( )	very much

9. Through what means did your group decide on the available choices in some games?

Mark only one oval.

- (X) discussion / debate
- ( ) voting
- ( ) one person took the lead
- ( ) Other: _____

10. please describe a notable moment when collaborating with other team members:

Polite discutions and finding common ground.

11. What where your favourite parts of the performance? And Why?

When we were switching to game mode and the change in actor's energy.

4/3

12. what moments did you enjoy the least? And Why

It doesn't enjoy it, however, I wasn't able to get/follow all the details of the story.

13. general comments and impressions about the performance:

Inspiring, interesting, out of the box thinking, original, enjoyable. Despite heavy topics, the piece did put a smile on my face.

14. How old are you

Mark only one oval.

- (X) between 18-25
- ( ) between 26 -35
- ( ) between 36-45
- ( ) between 46-55
- ( ) between 56-65
- ( ) between 66-75

TRAILED - 4 February 2023 - feedback questionnaire 04/02/2023, 07:23

1/4

TRAILED - 4 February 2023 - feedback questionnaire

This is an audience survey about today's performance . . . your responses will be very useful for me to develop my research further. I thank you sincerely in advance for your involvement.

1. To what extent did you get involved in the games and audience activities in this performanc

Mark only one oval.

- [ ] Very much
- [x] A few times
- [ ] Not very much
- [ ] Other: _____

2. which game was the most enjoyable for you and why?

The ~~four~~ Yes or no game with the paper because I felt people debated and communicated the most.

3. which game was the least enjoyable for you and why

The ~~[illegible]~~ last game of deciding the babies fate as no one discussed and I could tell it touched some people

TRAILED - 4 February 2023 - feedback questionnaire

2/4

4. please describe a notable moment when playing the games:

I think towards the middle of the performance the team got a sense of knowing each other so in the yes or no games we chatted a bit more.

5. Did the fact that points can be gained affect the way you played in the games?

Mark only one oval.

- [ ] Yes
- [x] No
- [ ] Maybe

6. please elaborate

I only really saw the actual scores later in the performance so was unaware until that point

7. Did you want your group to win?

Mark only one oval.

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [x] Maybe

04/02/2023, 07:23

3/4

8. How well did you connect to your teams members?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
not	○	○	✓	○	○	very much

9. Through what means did your group decide on the available choices in some games?

Mark only one oval.

- [x] discussion / debate
- [ ] voting
- [ ] one person took the lead
- [ ] Other: _____

10. please describe a notable moment when collaborating with other team members:

Team members debated and during the relationship question many of us were persuaded to change our answers and it was a true collaboration with no one really taking charge.

11. What where your favourite parts of the performance? And Why?

I really enjoyed the party section as it pushed me out of my comfort zone but I also enjoyed watching the performer and others enjoy themselves and relax

4/4

12. what moments did you enjoy the least? And Why

I can't say I disliked any of it as I still found this section interesting but I think the abortion section was a topic that was particul difficult and seeing a character we had all collaborated on in pain was hard.

13. general comments and impressions about the performance:

I really enjoyed the collaboration and felt I got to know people in an interesting way, as well as watch a performance that addressed very important topics

14. How old are you

Mark only one oval.

- [x] between 18-25
- [ ] between 26 -35
- [ ] between 36-45
- [ ] between 46-55
- [ ] between 56-65
- [ ] between 66-75

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