Performance Studies As A Discipline?
A Foucauldian Approach to Theory And Practice

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The thesis comprises my original work except where due acknowledgement is made in the text to all other material used.
This thesis has three major purposes: firstly, to describe and analyse the institutional power/knowledge relations operating in the constitution of the academic 'discipline' of performance/theatre studies. I deploy Michel Foucault's conceptions of 'discursive formation,' 'discursive practice,' and 'power/knowledge' in an attempt to demonstrate the ways in which the academy distinctively articulates the discipline. The second purpose of the thesis is to map and critique specific conceptions of the 'discipline's' epistemological profile, through an examination of the discursive practice of theatre at the University of Melbourne from the mid-fifties to the present. Third, I go on to prioritize a specific performance oriented articulation of the field's epistemological profile, based on an interdisciplinary pedagogy. I describe the techniques, methods and theoretical justifications for such an articulation of the discipline by offering a critical account of The Killing Eye project - a multi-media performance which deals with the topic of serial murder - which was initiated in the context of a third year performance studies course. I conclude with an analysis of the academy's institutional enablements and constraints in the areas of theatre practice and pedagogy.
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Introduction

Power is less a confrontation between two adversaries or the linking of one to the other than a question of government. This word must be allowed the very broad meaning which it had in the sixteenth century. "Government" did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed: the government of children, . . . of communities, of families, of the sick. It did not only cover the legitimately constituted forms of political or economic subjection, but also modes of action, more or less considered and calculated, which were destined to act upon the possibilities of action of other people. To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others.¹

Michel Foucault, 'Afterword: The Subject and Power'

In broad terms, this thesis is concerned with the ‘government’ of what is alternately referred to as theatre studies or performance studies in modern Australian universities. In other words, I am interested in examining the institutional rules and procedures that determine what can legitimately be taught, said and practiced under the disciplinary banner of theatre studies. More specifically, this thesis attempts to answer the following questions: What is the discipline of theatre studies? What are its legitimate objects of study? How is it organized as an academic discipline? How is it taught? What are its present intellectual preoccupations and where does its future lie in Australian universities?

Whilst my starting point was my own institutional position, in that I have a vested interest in the survival of the Department of Theatre Studies at the University of Melbourne, it is hoped that this thesis will be of value in ongoing debates about the status of performance studies in the national and international university context.² I want to demonstrate, for both strategic and heuristic purposes, the value of performance studies as an academic discipline. It may be argued, particularly in a political and institutional environment that prioritizes industry-oriented research, which an academic work that takes its own institutional base as its major object of analysis is indulging in the worst kind of dissipated intellectual activity. Conversely, I would argue that not enough attention is paid to the university’s technologies
of ‘government’, and their attendant political effects. Therefore, I sympathize with Meaghan Morris when she observes that:

\[
\text{. . . there is always the pressure to feel that "practice" always lies elsewhere (on the streets, on the beaches. . .) and never there where one works, which is rarely an ivory tower of dreams called Theory, but the school, the University, the college, the hospital, the clinic, the media. . .}\]

This thesis scrutinizes my ‘practice’ as a teacher and student of theatre/performance studies in the context of the University of Melbourne, and is informed by Foucault's claim that:

A new mode of the 'connection between theory and practice' has been established. Intellectuals have got used to working, not in the modality of the 'universal', the 'exemplary', the 'just-and-true-for-all', but within specific sectors, at the precise points where their own conditions of life or work situate them (housing, the hospital, the asylum, the laboratory, the university, family and sexual relations).

The dissertation seeks to examine the ways in which the academy enables and constrains specific articulations of the discipline. I will argue that performance activities have been transformed, as both discourse and practice, by entering the university as 'legitimate' objects of academic inquiry. The academy's 'transformative' capabilities will provide one major focus of this work.

The thesis also examines the contradictions that arise when the pragmatic need to forge a clear disciplinary identity for theatre studies (for purposes of institutional survival) conflicts with the desire to open up new areas of interdisciplinary research and practice. The importance of a coherent disciplinary identity cannot be overly stressed. Ingrid Moss, in her paper 'Academic Work Reconsidered', argues that:

The traditional Universities [like Melbourne] were organized around disciplines; and disciplinary knowledge and their contribution to disciplinary knowledge determined individual academics' standing within their department and institution, as well as in the national and international community of scholars. The
socialization into disciplinary cultures and preparation for the academic role mainly occurred through postgraduate research study -- at least in the sciences and the arts.\textsuperscript{5}

In arguing that disciplines constitute the basic organizational unit in the academy's bureaucratic infrastructure, Moss demonstrates that it is vital for disciplines like theatre studies to participate in the academy's conception of disciplinary normalcy.

However, it is equally important for the discipline to generate innovative forms of knowledge, and develop the appropriate pedagogy for this knowledge. An interdisciplinary approach to theatre studies fosters such innovation through the importation of knowledges and practices from adjacent fields that question accepted verities and produce significant developments. The conflict between the utilitarian impetus for disciplinary identity and the desire for interdisciplinary innovation is a dominant concern of this dissertation.

Questions concerning the epistemological coherence of the discipline are not new. Bruce Williams in his paper, 'Subtexts of the Workshop: Teaching Plays through Practice', records that:

In 1976, the Australian Theatre Studies Centre arranged a conference at the University of New South Wales on the theme 'Drama or Theatre Studies: the nature of the discipline'. That conference gave birth to the Australasian Drama Studies Association, now a well-established professional organisation of academics working in tertiary drama . . . Philip Parsons describes the gathering as a kind of stocktaking, an attempt to get answers to the question: 'What shape is the discipline assuming in Australia?'\textsuperscript{6}

The discipline of theatre studies, like most of its relations in the humanities, is still taking stock nearly twenty years later, which may not be a bad thing if it encourages a greater degree of critical self-reflexivity in the field's research and teaching activities. However, the question 'what shape is the discipline assuming in Australia?' is now formulated in a very different political and academic context. The post Dawkins University no longer accepts the
a priori value of the humanities in general and of theatre studies in particular. Williams wryly observes that:

[The former] Prime Minister of Britain [Margaret Thatcher] has told us, with her usual charm and candour, that the purpose of a university is, very simply, to create wealth, and that, without the charm and candour, is also the line taken by Mr Dawkins.7

One of the effects of this 'line' is that academic work is now subject to unprecedented scrutiny from outside the academy. A wide range of techniques and procedures, such as staff appraisal interviews and performance indicators, has been introduced to govern the production of academic work. Disciplinary 'house-keeping' is no longer a relatively private affair, something to be discussed amongst colleagues -- it is now, more than ever, subject to the institution's inquisitive gaze.

The other major difference between the contemporary academic milieu and that of the mid-seventies can be gauged by the place that theory now occupies in disciplines in the Humanities. Much of the energy, innovation and critical sophistication that characterize a substantial body of today's research work would not have been possible without the importation and dissemination of critical theory. Theatre studies, while being comparatively slow to join the 'theory revolution', has been significantly transformed by its encounters with theories and methodologies developed in other contexts. These contextual shifts demand the resurrection of the question: 'what shape is the discipline assuming in Australia?' The distinctive contribution this dissertation makes to the debates generated by that question can be found in its theorization of the university's technologies of government, an operation that utilizes specific forms of critical theory.

My use of Michel Foucault's conceptions of 'discursive formation,' 'discursive practices,' and 'power/knowledge' is intended to map the academic institution's procedures for turning performance events and practices into suitable objects for academic inquiry. That is, I examine those institutional factors, which determine such things as how disciplinary boundaries are drawn, what elements may constitute a discipline's epistemological profile,
its research activities, and pedagogical practices. I will also look at what forms of power and resistance are incited by institution's procedures of government.

By extracting these Foucauldian concepts I am not attempting to employ a coherent 'Foucauldian Methodology' (such a move would, in any case, go against the grain of Foucault's work). Rather, I use aspects of his work to illuminate specific problems. Foucault encapsulates the spirit of my enterprise when he states:

All my books, whether *Histoire de la Folie* or this one, are little toolboxes, if you will. If people are willing to open them and make use of such and such an idea, of one analysis or another, as they would a screwdriver or a monkey wrench, in order to short circuit or disqualify systems of power, including even possibly the ones my books come out of, well, all the better...

Chapter One deals with the constitution of theatre studies as an academic discipline within the university. I critically examine a variety of positions regarding the epistemology of academic theatre studies, by referring to the work of Richard Schechner, Gay McAuley and Patrice Pavis. My approach will be informed by Foucault's paper 'The Order of Discourse', which argues that discourses are formed through competing forces of constraint and profusion which can be observed in the play between what he terms 'desire and the institution'. In other words, I acknowledge my own desire to situate theatre/performance studies within an unlimited field of discourse, whilst recognizing the institutional constraints that do not make this possible.

Chapter Two examines the truth-effects of power operating in the disparate discursive practices that have characterized the different formulations of the University of Melbourne’s Interdepartmental Drama course. My aim is to establish a connection between the discipline’s perceived epistemological coherence and its position within the institution’s value hierarchy (which can be gauged by, among other things, the stability of the course’s
departmental location, and its ability to attract research funds). Whilst my analysis focuses on a specific institution and its local political issues, my purpose is to formulate strategies, which may raise the disciplinary profile of performance studies in other institutional locations.

Chapter Three examines the epistemological debates currently being conducted within cultural studies in order to situate it in relation to performance studies. I compare the two disciplines in terms of their respective positions within the academic value hierarchy, and establish the institutional conditions that enable theoretical migrations from one disciplinary domain to another. I go on to specify the kinds of contiguous knowledges and methodologies that may be productively transferred from cultural studies to a theatre/performance studies context. Thus, the second half of this chapter consists of an analysis of media commentaries on two popular 'serial killer' texts, *American Psycho* and *The Silence of the Lambs*, originally presented to students in the cultural studies course 'Art, Pornography, Blasphemy and Propaganda', and subsequently used to generate a performance project in the third year ID performance dramaturgy course (the most recent incarnation of the program described in chapter two). The move to import adjacent knowledges from cognate disciplines like cultural studies constitutes a major strategy for raising the epistemological profile of performance studies within the academic value hierarchy.

Chapter Four is primarily concerned with the pedagogical and political effects of making a body of theory travel from one disciplinary context to another. I will pay particular attention to the transformations engendered by teaching the serial killer commentaries, discussed in the previous chapter, in a performance-oriented context, and note the enablements and constraints produced by the performance dramaturgy course's particular interdisciplinary articulation of performance studies as an academic discipline.
Chapter Five summarizes the major issues that have emerged from my interrogation of the institutional power/knowledge relations operating within the academic discipline of theatre/performance studies. I assess the discipline’s current state in the Australian academy, and elaborate what I consider to be further paths of research. I pay particular attention to pedagogical practices as ‘technologies of self’, and to the potential productivities that may result from an interrogation of both the discipline and the scene of teaching.

It is worth noting that I am currently investigating the possibility of locating the records and documents assembled for this dissertation in a central theatre history archive at the University of Melbourne. This would enable future researchers interested in the University's theatre culture to access material, which has hitherto been stored in a number of different sites. It is hoped that The University of Melbourne Theatre Board will assist with the establishment of such an archive.

Many people have contributed to this project by reading and commenting on all or part of the manuscript in its various states, or by providing me with the encouragement to complete it. I would especially like to thank the following for their assistance and support: Steven McIntyre, Chris Worth, Marie Maclean, and my students and colleagues in the theatre studies program at the University of Melbourne, Norman Price, Denise Varney and Angela O’Brien. I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of James McCaughey, Terry Collits and the late Dinny O’Hearn, all of whom answered my questions with great patience and wit. Carolyn D’cruz deserves my special gratitude for introducing me to the work of Michel Foucault, and for her sound advice on a wide range of academic and non-academic issues. Finally, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Hector Maclean, whose generosity and guidance made the writing of this thesis possible.

Endnotes

2. At the time of writing it appears as though the academic theatre/performance studies courses at the University of Melbourne will not survive beyond 1994.


7. Williams 172.


   There is no "Foucault system". One cannot be a "Foucauldian" in the way one can be a Marxist or a Freudian: Marx and Freud left coherent bodies of doctrine (or 'knowledge') and organizations which, whether one likes it or not (for some that is the attraction), enjoy uninterrupted apostolic succession from their founders. If Foucault is to have an 'influence', it will no doubt be as a slayer of dragons, a breaker of systems. Such a task should not be seen as negative; indeed it is the system-building that is the real negation. Its achievements may be measured by the range and variety of its effects, not by some massive uniformity.


CHAPTER 1

Constituting the 'Discipline' of Theatre Studies

1.1 Introduction

Theatre studies and its performance-oriented cognates have a formidable presence in most Australian institutions of higher education. The 1992 edition of the Adelaide magazine, Directions, lists no less than forty-five different undergraduate theatre studies courses, of which thirty are located in Universities.¹ This statistic suggests that the desire to become involved with the fickle world of the performing arts has not diminished despite the increasing scarcity of jobs in the field. It also indicates that, despite limited vocational potential, academic theatre studies is a growth industry. Rachel Healy’s preface to Directions may go some way towards explaining this fecundity:

No one needs to be reminded about the scarcity of jobs around at the moment. There are fewer jobs for more people and the arts industry is one of the worst hit. If you are one of the many young people busting to get a foot in the door, one way to increase your chances at a job is to become as multi-skilled as possible. Tertiary education is one of the first and best ways of doing this.²

A university degree possesses more market value than a professional theatre qualification from an actor training institution precisely because university students have the opportunity to develop a wider range of skills. But what 'multi-skills' are students taught in the context of University theatre studies programs, and what does the study of theatre and drama at Australian tertiary institutions entail? What skills does it teach? What are its legitimate objects of study? How is it currently organized as an academic discipline? How is it taught? What are its current intellectual preoccupations, and where does its future lie in Australian universities?
These questions are difficult to answer because theatre studies as an academic discipline does not constitute a homogeneous body of knowledges and practices -- there are at least four major approaches to the field. The first focuses on practical training for the theatre, film and television industries; the second is more concerned with analysing and theorising the performance event from the point of view of contemporary critical theory; the third major perspective foregrounds educational drama and theatre-in-education, while the fourth approach concentrates on the explication of canonical dramatic texts and theatre history. Programs often combine elements of all four areas of emphasis. For example, Charles Sturt University combines theoretical and practical theatre/media studies in an attempt to produce graduates "... employable in acting, directing or writing for theatre, theatre administration, marketing, teaching drama, or video production."³ The Drama Centre at The Flinders University of South Australia has a similar orientation, while the performance studies course offered by the University of Sydney emphasizes the documentation and analysis of professional work.

Even a cursory reading of handbook descriptions of theatre studies courses reveals the extent to which the discipline lacks a coherent epistemological profile. This is not a bad thing in itself if it produces genuine interdisciplinary work, whose value is recognized by the academy, theatre institutions and the wider community. Unfortunately, theatre practitioners view theatre studies courses, with the possible exception of the odd actor-training centre like the Flinders University Drama Centre, with a high degree of suspicion. In some cases, the discourses and theoretical presumptions of theatre practitioners are quite incompatible with those of their academic counterparts. Ronald Layne's 1987 report, 'Australian Studies in Theatre Arts and Drama', argues that:

The structure of tertiary education in Australia tends to impede collaboration and interaction both between theatre arts and drama studies institutions and between those institutions and the field of practice. [This may account for] ... 'the practitioner's' general disregard for 'the academic', which is indicative of a division between theory and practice.⁴
This, I would argue, is not always the case, for it is possible to cite many examples of productive collaborations and exchanges between the academy and the ‘profession’. The issue of whether the division between the practitioner and academic is virtual or actual will vary with each tertiary institution. However, there is no doubt that university theatre studies differs from vocational actor training programs and professional theatre practice in significant ways.

The academy is a strict taskmaster, and its acceptance of a 'new' discipline is conditional. For example, theatre studies in a university environment cannot be solely concerned with the production of performance texts; if the discipline is to survive in an academic milieu it needs to generate at least three other features. Firstly, a research paradigm must be established: books, articles and thesis topics must be able to be continually generated. Secondly, a pedagogical program must be formulated: courses with clearly stated objectives must be developed, and appropriate assessment procedures must be organized. Finally, the academy demands the creation of a public profile for the discipline: it must be perceived as contributing to society; it must be able to account for its use of funds; it must be capable of producing graduates who are marketable.

These institutional dictates raise a number of serious problems for the discipline. How does one assess student performance work? Do productions count as publications? Is the drama workshop a legitimate vehicle for serious academic enquiry? The criteria for professional advancement within the academic hierarchy are largely based on publications, and success in terms of attracting research funding is based on criteria that pay scant regard to the specificity of performance-oriented enquiries. These factors may account for the proliferation of statements on the epistemology of theatre studies -- there exists a need to articulate the discipline in terms that are relevant to the contemporary world, and to the contemporary academy. Richard Schechner, writing about the North American context in a recent editorial of The Drama Review, observes that:
If most theatre departments really don't train professional artists; if those who are trained can't find jobs because the market is flooded; if most departments don't produce either working artists, innovative scholars, or relevant scholarship; if elite live performance such as the so-called "legitimate theatre" is shrinking relative to film and TV (even as popular entertainments are growing) -- then why do we need so many theatre departments?  

Schechner goes on to argue that:

Most theatre departments should get out of the professional training business and rejoin -- and reform -- the humanities in a big way. A new paradigm for the field needs to be developed and deployed. Professional training for the orthodox theatre -- a very small slice of the performance pie -- is neither economically enough nor academically acceptable. The new paradigm is 'performance,' not theatre.

It is not enough to simply agree or disagree with Schechner's call for a paradigm shift in the discipline of theatre studies. Rather, it is important to be aware of the practical and political consequences such a shift entails, and to ask why discourses such as Schechner's appear at this particular juncture in the discipline's development. I will go on to argue, in the rest of this chapter, that the rules, which have hitherto governed the production of valid propositions in the field, have been modified by developments in adjacent fields.

1.2 Mapping the 'Discipline'

So far I have been using the terms 'discipline' and 'field' in an unproblematic manner; to refer to the 'discipline' of theatre studies without acknowledging the rules and procedures which tie the discourse to specific "regimes of truth" and value is to ignore the dissonant and dissenting voices that speak theatre in ways that may not be legitimized in the academy. The act of naming theatre studies as a 'discipline', in a variety of institutions (universities, academic journals, professional affiliations, and publishing houses), gives it an epistemological coherence that it does not necessarily possess. An interrogation of this
term (in the manner of Michel Foucault) will allow me to examine critically the practices that are enabled and constrained by locating theatre studies in the academy.

In "The Order of Discourse" Foucault argues "... a discipline is defined by a domain of objects, a set of methods, a corpus of propositions considered to be true, a play of rules and definitions, of techniques and instruments." A 'discipline' must be capable of generating an infinite number of propositions, but these propositions must be intelligible within their own frame of reference, or, as Foucault would have put it, within the discourse of the 'true.'

A brief account of the reception of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* will illuminate this point. The play, according to Martin Esslin, was initially met with a hostile critical reception because it ignored accepted theatrical conventions. However, the now celebrated San Quentin production was well received because the prisoners were perceived as being:

... unsophisticated enough to come to the theatre without any preconceived notions and ready-made expectations, so they avoided the mistake that trapped so many establishment critics who condemned the play for its lack of plot, development, characterization, suspense, or plain common sense.

Nevertheless, both the prisoners and the establishment theatre critics recognized *Godot* as a theatrical event: actors who assumed fictional identities in order to inhabit a fictional world performed on a clearly demarcated stage. The play accepted certain conventions and established others, although its status as a work of drama was never in doubt. Once a hermeneutic key manifested itself in the label 'The Theatre of the Absurd,' *Godot* was accepted as a 'classic' of modern drama; a new proposition had been articulated within the 'discipline'. However, while critics and audiences could insert *Godot* into the genre of modern drama, they would be reluctant to describe an event such as a criminal trial as a piece of theatre, even though it may contain a number of theatrical elements (costumes, roles, prescribed forms of speech). A criminal trial is not readily admitted to traditional conceptions of the 'discipline' of theatre studies because the 'field's' rules of formation prevent the recognition of such an event as an instance of performance practice.
Foucauldian terms, the ‘discipline’ delimits critical discourse and the objects of its analyses by "... pushing back a whole teratology beyond its margins."9

Theatre studies has traditionally demarcated its legitimate domain of inquiry by excluding para-theatrical activities, that is, those 'everyday' activities which can be described as containing theatrical elements in a 'real' as opposed to a 'fictional' framework. Theorists such as Erving Goffman, Richard Schechner and Jerzy Grotowski have all attempted, in different ways, to include the para-theatrical within the disciplinary domain of theatre studies.10 The work of these theorists examines the various productivities that may result from linking the conventions and practices of theatre with the conventions and practices of para-theatrical phenomena, such as the legal system. Whilst their studies may be valuable in themselves, and may extend the boundaries of the discipline, they fail to examine the 'truth effects of power' operating within their own discourse, and the consequences of their enquiries for the status of theatre studies within specific academic sites. For instance, while para-theatrical studies have been accepted in many institutions, such as the performance studies course at New York University, they have inadvertently caused a disciplinary crisis in institutions, like the University of Melbourne, which have more conservative bureaucratic structures. The inclusion of para-theatrical activities may have the effect of confusing those academics, administrators and bureaucrats who make decisions regarding the funding of university courses. These persons, whose knowledge of performance are normally limited to those activities that take place in conventional theatre spaces, may be reluctant to sanction the distribution of research funds to activities, which appear to fall outside their conception of the 'legitimate' domain of performance/theatre studies.

A Foucauldian interrogation of the notion of a 'discipline,' with its emphasis on the connection between discourses and social practices, is, therefore, valuable because it can more readily enable the formulation of strategies and tactics for institutional survival. One of the purposes of this thesis is to demonstrate how a self-reflexive interdisciplinary conception of performance studies can be accommodated within institutional structures that demand epistemological coherence. Furthermore, such an approach can
simultaneously encourage a form of analysis that questions the desire for such coherence. Thus, a Foucauldian interrogation of the very notion of a discipline can legitimate the inclusion of para-theatrical activities within the domain of theatre studies. This will become more apparent when we examine Foucault's conception of the discursive formation. It will also enable a more receptive approach for connecting potentialities that are contained in adjacent discourses.

If the 'discipline' delimits discourse by smoothing over contradictions, and by giving an imaginary coherence to a body of propositions and practices, then it is less likely to form discursive alliances that may bring contiguous knowledges into play. Rather than speak of the 'discipline' as such it is perhaps more useful and empowering to strategically employ Foucault's notion of 'discursive formation' in the examination of the epistemological profile of theatre studies in the university. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault states:

A discursive formation is not . . . an ideal, continuous, smooth text that runs beneath the multiplicity of contradictions, and resolves them in the calm unity of coherent thought; nor is it the surface in which, in a thousand different aspects, a contradiction is reflected that is always in retreat, but everywhere dominant. It is rather a space of multiple dissensions; a set of different oppositions whose levels and roles must be described.11

Thus, the discursive formation of theatre/performance contains a 'multiplicity of contradictions'; different formulations of the discipline (or instances of the discipline's specific discursive practices) may legitimate different objects of study and research. Maria Shevtsova's work in the sociology of theatre consciously excludes specific performance events from the legitimate domain of the discipline she describes:

'PERFORMANCE' here does not include, as does Richard Schechner's theatre anthropology, what I have called . . . 'raw-life' events. Nor, on the other hand, does it cover the full range of activities denoted by 'performance' (as in 'performing arts'), *spectacle*, *spettacolo*, or whichever term obtains in a given language and culture for invention played to audiences and socially, collectively, understood as brought about for this purpose. . . . For the regrettably narrower purposes of
Foucault's notion of the 'discursive formation,' alongside his concepts of 'discursive practices' and 'power/knowledge' relations, has two important functions: one, to describe the rules and procedures that create the conditions in which the so-called 'discipline's' epistemological limits are marked; and, two, to formulate tactics for extending institutional boundaries. My aim is to extract particular features from the elaboration of these terms rather than to explicate Foucault's theories as if they were a coherent body of knowledge. Following Foucault's comments on 'methodology', cited in my introduction, these three terms are to be viewed as the 'monkey wrenches' and 'spanners' that will "short circuit the systems of power" operating in the institutionalization of performance/theatre practices.

1.3 Theatre Studies/Performance Studies: 'Disciplinary' Status

It is a widely held misconception that the academic study of theatre (as distinct from the study of dramatic literature) is a relatively recent phenomenon. While the discipline has been articulated in a number of different ways with different areas of emphasis, it is important to acknowledge that theatre studies and the theorization of the theatrical event have a long lineage. James Arnott, in his article 'An Introduction to Theatrical Scholarship,' provides us with a comprehensive account of theatrical theory, history and research in Britain, the United States and Europe. The field, as mapped by Arnott, forms a kind of 'disciplinary core', which has been generally accepted as constituting theatre studies' legitimate domain of enquiry.

Arnott points out that works from the Indian Sanskrit tradition such as Bharata's *Natyasastra* (which is dated some time between the second century BC and the sixth century AD), Dhananjaya's *Dasa-Rupaka* (from the tenth century), along with the essays on dramatic theory by Japan's Zeami (1363-1443), the lost works of Agatharcos of Samos and Aristotle's *Poetics*, must be included within the academic theatre studies tradition. Arnott lists an impressive array of works drawn from a wide range of historical epochs. However, the
most important aspect of Arnott's work, for my purposes, concerns his documentation of the institutionalization of theatre studies in the modern academy. He notes that:

Theatrical scholarship in Europe was promoted by the foundation of societies for theatre research and of University chairs in the subject. The Berlin Gesellschaft für Theatergeschichte was founded in 1902, the Gesellschaft für Schweizerische Theaterkultur in 1927, the Société d'Histoire du Théâtre in 1933. . . Other early German foundations were the chairs at Kiel and Cologne.\(^{14}\)

Arnott attributes the development of theatre studies as an autonomous discipline in the American Academy to Brander Matthews and G.P. Baker. He states:

To G.P. Baker more than to any other -- though he himself gave the credit to Matthews and to Alfred Hennequin of Michigan -- is due the unique American contribution to institutions devoted to theatrical scholarship, the university department of drama. From 1888 Baker lectured at Harvard on Elizabethan drama and participated in historical reconstructions of Elizabethan productions in the manner of Poel. . . Yale, and many other departments founded subsequently in the United States, make provision for practical training as well as academic study.\(^{15}\)

University theatre departments were later founded in Britain and Australia. The first British university to establish a theatre studies centre was the University of Bristol in 1946, and the first university theatre department in Australia was set up at the University of New South Wales in the late 1950's. If one accepts that theatre studies as an academic discipline has a relatively long and rich tradition of scholarship, one needs to account for its current epistemological crisis.

Janelle G. Reinhart and Joseph R. Roach go some way towards explaining this situation when they note, in their recent anthology *Critical Theory and Performance*, that:

Much of the turbulence generated by performance and performance scholarship, which has proved productive and frustrating by turns, stems from the divisions
created by the diverse institutional sites of research in
the field. These include departments of theatre,
performance studies, communication, literature, media
studies, and anthropology. The dialectics that they
produce include theory versus practice, history versus
theory, and dramatic text versus stage performance . . .

Much of the recent writings on the epistemological status of the discipline concern a
perceived need to situate and legitimize the place of theatre studies beside more established
or 'in-vogue' disciplines such as law, economics, and physics, while simultaneously
marking out a coherent and distinctive disciplinary profile for itself.

Before examining the discourses and debates related to the discipline's epistemological
profile, it is useful to invoke another Foucauldian 'monkey-wrench'. In Foucauldian
terms, the entry of theatre studies into the academy necessitates its participation in games
of 'truth', which is inseparable from relations of power. The term power/knowledge is
deployed to illustrate this inseparability. The important thing for Foucault is that:

. . . Truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power . . .
Truth is a thing of this world; it is produced only by
virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces
regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of
truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of
discourse that it accepts and makes function as true; the
mechanisms and instances which enable one to
distinguish true and false statements, the means by which
each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures
accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of
those who are charged with saying what counts as true.17

According to Foucault, the most highly valued regime of truth in Western society is
attached to the discourse of science.18 The academic disciplines awarded the highest status
in the academy are to be found in the physical sciences, or in those disciplines which
employ so-called scientific methodologies. The discourse of logical positivism, which
dominates the discipline of economics in most Australian universities, has pretensions of
value neutrality, which emerge from its self-professed scientific profile. This has the effect
of placing the discipline outside the realm of politics; its claim to 'scientificity', therefore,
disguises its complicity with the relations of power invested in its knowledges. The
theoretical assumptions, which validate the production of knowledges in the physical sciences, are duplicated in the bureaucratic value hierarchy, which distributes, among other things, material resources, research funding, and postgraduate scholarships. This is one of the reasons why theatre studies is in a vulnerable position within the academic institution: its value as a 'non-scientific' discipline does not attract a level of funding which would ensure its institutional security.

While Humanities disciplines like English, Fine Arts and History are generally placed at a disadvantage compared with their counterparts in the sciences, they nevertheless compete with each other for resources and funding; the value hierarchies which operate in the Humanities are based more on 'in vogue' theories and methodologies than on degrees of 'scientificity'. For example, certain critical positions in literary studies, those associated with the discourses of post-structuralism and postmodernism are accorded a greater degree of departmental support than positions, which are connected with discredited or outmoded forms of critical practice, like Anglo-American New Criticism. It is, therefore, important for a perceived fledgling 'discipline' like theatre studies to forge links with the 'in vogue' methodologies of more established cognate disciplines, such as English and cultural studies. The paradigm shift advocated by Schechner, cited above, may be read as a strategy for moving theatre studies into an institutional space named performance studies, which can legitimately form strategic alliances with those cognate disciplines which produce and circulate the 'in-vogue' theories (Semiotics, Deconstruction, Lacanian Psychoanalysis and so on). But how do academic fashions, institutional practices and relations of power in the university transform the study and production of performance practices? What does this positioning enable? What does it constrain?

These questions can be approached by examining debates and contestations that have shaped the field over the last ten years or so. I will focus on the Drama Review/Performing Arts Journal (TDR/PAJ) polemic and the disciplinary definitions elaborated by Patrice Pavis and Gay McAuley.
1.4: Positions and Polemics

In the Summer '89 edition of *The Drama Review* (TDR), Richard Schechner defends what he calls the 'broad spectrum approach' to performance studies from the accusation, articulated by the editors of the *Performing Arts Journal*, that his proposition "shifts performance to the realm of the social sciences, rather than that of art". Schechner's spirited and sometimes contemptuous response foregrounds the need for scholars and artists in the field to extend their disciplinary boundaries to include the study of performance events which are not situated in conventional theatre institutions. Schechner points out that:

> ... over the past 25 years theatre and dance departments, obsessed with "professional training," have let the intellectual aspects of performance studies -- historical, political, philosophical, theoretical -- pass into the hands of social scientists, literary scholars, and historians. The editors of the *Performing Arts Journal* are apparently unaware of this slippage.

The *TDR / PAJ* debate stems from competing definitions of what is presumed to be the same 'disciplinary' field; the accusatory tone of the interlocutors suggests that specific professional and personal investments are part of the debate's immediate context. Marranca and Dasgupta (the *PAJ* editors) argue that the constitution of performance studies as an academic discipline threatens the status and specificity of theatre studies; they fear that Schechner's 'broad spectrum' would not value the study of dramatic literature, or conventional theatre practice. They propose "... the main purpose of theatre is founded on the staging of texts, just as the main purpose of the musical world is to acknowledge the playing and singing of musical texts."

A similar tension between strategies of disciplinary expansion and delimitation marks the work of Gay McAuley and Patrice Pavis. In her paper 'Performance Studies: A Personal View', McAuley states:

> It is generally accepted that the basis of our work is detailed knowledge and understanding of theatre practice, but in our pursuit of this we have to be careful not to blur fundamental distinctions between the
In his article 'Approaches to Theatre Studies', Patrice Pavis makes a welcome, if overly tentative foray, into the world of practice when he observes that:

... certain observations and analyses require the theoretician to leave his protected shelter in order to test all his theories on the practical level. He does not become, for that matter, a practitioner or an artist, but remains a go-between, caught in the space between Page and Stage. But he should definitely take some risks to test and complete his theoretical know-how with some incursions into the practical field. But he must know how far to go. The study of theatre only has meaning if it is accompanied by or merges into practical work (my emphasis).

How do we determine how far is far enough? And why need we distinguish between an artist's work and academic work. And what of theatre directors and playwrights, like Heiner Müller, who teach within academic institutions?

I will take issue with the status of practical work within the academy in the following chapters. For the moment, I think it is interesting to dwell on the terminological and theoretical confusion that is evident in the quotations I have cited thus far. McAuley situates her work in the field of performance studies by naming the category in the title of her paper, yet her focus seems to be exclusively directed towards theatrical practices and processes. She is opposed to the undertaking of practical work by academics, and appears to show little interest in Schechner's 'broad spectrum' definition of the 'discipline'. Pavis locates himself within a field called 'theatre studies' through his citation of the appellation, even though he notes that "... a theory or study of this field must take into account the fact that the other forms of performance (including the media) are crowding into the performance space, breaking out of the narrow framework of théâtrologie limited to theatre, and of theatre limited to text." This statement echoes Schechner's call for a 'broad spectrum' definition of performance studies. Pavis argues that the aims of the field need to be clearly articulated and calls for "... an epistemology of theatre studies that outlines the
framework of the different fields of knowledge and the limits of this knowledge. His paper goes on to define the field through a detailed account of its themes and objects of study. On the one hand I sympathize with Pavis' desire to map the boundaries of the 'discipline'; on the other, I recognize the limitations of such a strict agenda. For performance studies to raise its status, it seems that it must first enter the 'disciplinary' games of knowledge where its discourses must speak in the institution's conception of the 'true'. However, the discipline, in attaining this status, must be aware of the possible exclusionary and constraining effects that such a move may produce. It seems then that we need to balance the interface between the factors that may constrain and enable the elaboration of the discipline in the academy. Once again, Foucault offers a possible solution to this aporia.

1.5 The Order of Discourse

I have already introduced the term 'discursive formation' to enable a more dynamic conception of theatre studies. I will describe how this notion may be productively used at the end of this chapter. For now, I wish to focus on the constraints placed upon the field through its articulated delimitations.

In his essay, 'The Order of Discourse', Foucault argues that discourses are formed through competing forces of constraint and profusion which can be observed in the play between what he calls 'desire and the institution'. This may be articulated as the play between discursive plenitude and discursive delimitation. Foucault's lyrical explication of this relationship is worth quoting in full:

Desire says: 'I should not like to enter this risky order of discourse; I should not like to be involved in its peremptoriness and decisiveness; I should like it to be all around me like a calm deep transparence, infinitely open, where others would fit in with my expectations, and from which truths would emerge one by one; I should only let myself have to be carried, within it and by it, like a happy wreck'.

The Institution replies: 'You should not be afraid of beginnings; we are all here in order to show you that discourse belongs to the order of laws, that we have long
been looking after its appearances; that a place has been made ready for it, a place which honours it but disarms it; and if discourse may sometimes have some power, never the less it is from us and us alone that it gets it."^{27}

The discipline cannot mean whatever we want it to mean; a desire for the inclusion of a multitude of discourses and practices is prohibited by specific institutional constraints. For Foucault, such constraints may be divided into three categories: the first involves principles of exclusion/prohibition; the second is concerned with internal procedures of rarefaction; while the third category of constraint observes the imposition of roles on speaking subjects.

1.5.1 Principles of exclusion/prohibition

If we turn our attention back to the definitions of theatre studies cited earlier, we can observe the operation of the principle of exclusion/prohibition. McAuley excludes student/academic engagement in theatre practice from the 'disciplinary' domain because "the task of the academic specialist in the field of performance studies is... essentially to observe, record, document and analyse the creative process (my emphasis)."^{28} Similarly, Marranca and Dasgupta argue for the exclusion of non-theatrical phenomena from the field's legitimate objects of study. These delimitations, by defining what can be spoken about, exemplify Foucault's notion that discourse is invested with power, particularly when a 'field' of knowledge is defined. He argues that:

. . . discourse is not simply that which manifests (or hides) desire -- it is also the object of desire; and since, as history constantly teaches us, discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized.^{29}

It is as if each cited theorist is reaching for the seizure of power by claiming to define the discipline's legitimate objects of study, for the validation of one definition pronounces the exclusion of its competitors. Whilst it is important to acknowledge that all of the principles of exclusion that Foucault cites in 'The Order of Discourse' (such as the external rarefying
principles of discursive practices -- forbidden speech, reason and madness, truth and falsehood) invest discourse with power, I shall focus on the exclusionary effects of what Foucault identifies as internal rarefying principles.

1.5.2 Internal Procedures of Rarefaction

The three internal procedures of rarefaction are ‘commentary,’ ‘author function,’ and ‘discipline’. Rarefaction ensures that only ‘true’ propositions and methodologies circulate within a field. The first internal procedure of rarefaction, the commentary, involves the interpretation of primary texts by repeating and reasserting a ‘field’s’ fundamental tenets. For example, my commentary on the works, which circulate under the names of Pavis, Schechner and McAuley, locates my discourse within a specific field and forces me to repeat their arguments and propositions. Such a gesture enables me to enter the ‘discursive fellowship’ of performance studies, whilst binding me to rarefying practices of ‘disciplinary’ coherence.

Foucault argues that ‘disciplinary’ coherence may also be internally controlled by the author-function. This term refers to the way in which the names of specific authors are used to give unity to what may be points of dissension within a heterogeneous ‘field’. For example, the theoretical and dramatic works of Bertolt Brecht are often unified through the invocation of the proper name Brecht with little regard for the works’ stylistic and thematic diversity. There need not be any direct relationship between a text like *The Messingkauf Dialogues* (primarily a work of dramatic theory) and *of the infanticide Marie Farrar* (a poem), yet commentators attempt to situate both texts within the same oeuvre. However, when we observe performance practices, the rarefying author function is problematized; it is difficult to assign a single signatory to the performance of a dramatic text. For example, who is the author of a production of *Mother Courage*? Bertolt Brecht? The director of the production? The designer? The actors? Brecht's commentators? The illusion of authorial coherence is not easily conferred upon performance texts. Consequently, performance texts more readily enable the elaboration of multiple voices involved in a text's articulation than
constrain such texts to an illusory univocal author. I shall discuss this issue further in Chapter Four.

The third procedure of rarefaction that Foucault identifies is the 'discipline' itself. I have already dealt with the way in which the 'discipline' functions as a mechanism of delimitation. I have also cited Foucault's definition of a 'discipline' as "... a domain of objects, a set of methods, a corpus of propositions considered to be true, a play of rules and definitions, of techniques and instruments." He goes on to say that, "... all this constitutes a sort of anonymous system at the disposal of anyone who wants to or is able to use it, without their meaning or validity being linked to the one who happened to be their inventor." In this way the 'discipline' is opposed to the principle of the 'author'. Similarly, the discipline is opposed to the principle of commentary insofar as:

\[
\text{... in a discipline, unlike a commentary, what is supposed at the outset is not a meaning, which has to be rediscovered, nor an identity, which has to be repeated, but the requisites for the construction of new statements. For there to be a discipline, there must be the possibility of formulating new propositions, ad infinitum.}\]

However, these new statements must remain within the accepted disciplinary framework. New propositions must be articulated in terms, which have come to be accepted as 'true'. The propositions advocated by Pavis, McAuley and Schechner seek to participate in defining the parameters of what is considered the 'true' discourse of performance/theatre studies. The articulation of such propositions disguise the rarefying 'truth effects of power' that cannot help but exclude discourses that may otherwise circulate within the pedagogical practices of performances studies. Once again, the notion of a discursive formation may bring into play subjugated 'offstage voices' that disciplinary definitions may silence. In chapter three, I attempt to make alliances with critical practices, which would conventionally be outside the disciplinary definitions advocated by Pavis, McAuley and Schechner.
1.5.3. The imposition of Roles on the Speaking Subject

So far, I have discussed discursive restraint in terms of what can be spoken and how this speaking must be framed in order to take place. The third trope of discursive restraint refers to the status of speaking subjects. Not all subjects have equal access to discursive practices in the academy. Certain voices are privileged, while others are excluded because they lack the 'rituals' required to enter 'discursive fellowships', that is, "... the gestures, behaviour, circumstances, and the whole set of signs which must accompany discourse".33 The possession of academic qualifications, the circulation of writing in specific journals, the possession of an office space, access to the institution's letterheads, even the leather patches on a tweed coat can all be read as signs of authority. These signs open doors; these signs enable one's voice to be heard over the multitudes. Obviously, my interventions in the disciplinary debates in the field of theatre studies carry a greater authority than those of an undergraduate student because of the institutional position I occupy as a Lecturer in the academy; my academic qualifications coupled with my role as a theatre director accord my discourse a higher degree of authority and validity. I will take up the question of politics and pedagogical practice (particularly in relation to student participation in theatre work) in chapter five.

1.6 Reordering Discourse

The political implications of the preceding discussion can most clearly be apprehended through Foucault's notion of 'discursive practice'. For Foucault, a discursive practice may describe, "a delimitation of a field of objects, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge, and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts and theories."34 Put simply, discursive practices determine what can be spoken of, who can do the speaking and how this speaking must take place. It is important to recognise that discursive practices attempt to bring coherence to a field of knowledge.

The forces of delimitation and constraint are useful insofar as they enable us to examine a discursive practice's 'rituals of exclusion'; however, having outlined the rarefying consequences produced by such practices, I now wish to focus on the transformative effects
that 'discursive practices' may strategically enable. For, as Foucault stresses, the 'truth-effects' of power may incite strategies of resistance:

Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.  

In their attempts to acquire a secure disciplinary status, the discursive practices, which dominate the field of theatre studies, may provide a strategic 'starting point for an opposing strategy'. As I have stated throughout this chapter, I perceive a need to raise the status of the discipline in the academic hierarchy. This may possibly be achieved by entering the academy's own institutional games of power/knowledge. For my purposes, such institutional games must transform the 'discipline' in such a way that it will legitimate performance practices in an academic environment. Whilst I am aware of the rarefying principles involved in defining a 'disciplinary field', it is my contention that the academy may, ironically, enable a more self-reflexive form of critical practice. It is also my contention that the inclusion of a strong, theoretically informed practical component in the discipline's epistemological profile will enable a more effective form of pedagogy, and raise the discipline's status in the academic value hierarchy. For example, an involvement in the construction, as well as the analysis, of texts, would grant more agency to students and teachers engaging with the politics of interpretation and representation. Furthermore, the access that the 'discipline' of theatre studies has to adjacent discursive practices within the institution enables a more eclectic approach to research and performance. The theoretical discourses found in these adjacent fields have, in the words of Reinhelt and Roach, "... inspired new ways of creating texts and performance events, or, at least, created a new climate for their inception.""
One of the major purposes of this thesis, then, is to pursue the notion of the way in which "discourse can be both an instrument and effect of power... [as well as] a starting point for an opposing strategy."37 I shall approach this task by firstly examining the power/knowledge effects of the discursive practices that have characterized different periods of theatre practice and pedagogy at the University of Melbourne. This move, as I mentioned in my introduction, is both strategic and heuristic -- the theatre studies program at Melbourne is under threat, possibly because of the way the discipline has been elaborated in its local context. An examination of this local disciplinary crisis will also enable me to illustrate some of the general theoretical points concerning the political effects of institutional power/knowledge relations that I have outlined in this chapter. I will subsequently rearticulate the discipline in terms, which I believe to be politically and pedagogically productive in the present economic and academic context by describing the processes involved in The Killing Eye project -- a research-based performance developed within the context of the University of Melbourne's Performance Dramaturgy course.
Endnotes


2. *Directions* 2.

3. *Directions* 3.


10. Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Grotowski's *Towards a Poor Theatre* and Schechner's *Ritual, Play and Performance* are perhaps three of the most prominent discourses on the relationships between theatrical and para-theatrical phenomena.


13. Gay McAuley's statement that it "... is only in relatively recent times that any serious recognition has been given by University teachers and critics to the fact that theatre is something more than a literary genre and that plays, although existing as printed texts, need to be treated in a different way from other exclusively written art forms" is a paradigmatic example of this commonly held view. Gay McAuley, 'Theatre Teaching in a University Literature Department,' *Australian Journal of French Studies* 25.1 (1978): 54.


15. Arnott 38.


24. Pavis 23.


27 Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse' 51-52.


29. Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse' 52-53.

30. Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse' 59.

31. Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse' 52.

32. Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse' 59.

33. Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse' 62.


37. Foucault, The History of Sexuality 100.
The Interdepartmental Course in Performance Drama: A 'History'

Text of letter from John Sumner to Wal Cherry; the letter is written on desk diary pages dated 5-11 Jan 1956 (Extract).

My Dear Wal, It seems to be my style to write to you from aeroplanes -- sorry about the pencil, but my pen has covered the page with blots -- it does not like air travel. After our meeting I felt, perhaps, that you were feeling the strain of work at the Rep. and perhaps were worried, I also felt a little guilty when I realised you took the Union job without much previous experience of Rep. production which is an art in itself and learned more by experience than anything else.

I would like to remind you of certain points in our talk, which because of emphasis may indicate to you their greater importance.

(1) Rehearsing the play: A definite plan has to be followed here -- one, which the actors and producer are acquainted with and depend on -- it allows everyone to know just where they are and what is expected at a given time in rehearsal. It goes roughly as follows (this is a plan that I have found most economical and of course learnt it from others)

1st Tuesday - a.m. reading for everyone to hear what the play is about. Don't expect great things from this, many actors are bad readers and they are also tired from the last effort of production. Give general notes on line of (character), but don't expect too much, just a glimmer of your explanations being seen in their eyes. If the play is especially difficult to understand -- then a second reading may be necessary on the Tuesday afternoon, but this sort of thing should be the exception, not the rule. If the reading is bad give the cast the benefit of the doubt as long as the play is simple.

Tuesday p.m. - should normally be free for everyone if possible - it affords a definite rest and break after the previous working weekend. Stage management should also enjoy this break and get props and things like that back during the following days.

Wednesday a.m. - start at 10.30 and make sure everyone is on time. This time discipline I cannot underline
enough. It establishes a very definite routine which you must insist upon and lead. I always made a point of being hard on time and seeing that everyone else was. It shows you mean business and that the whole thing is a business. The Wednesday rehearsal is one of getting to know the play -- move it in any old way, so long as you keep it going, don't go over and over one small part at this time -- try to construct an overall picture which will explain to the cast which way you are going. Tell them "I am going to move the whole of the play as soon as possible so we can see the thing as a whole, detail will come later'. If you have worked out a basic idea of the moves before the start of rehearsals -- this of course is in relation to the set -- it might make things easier for you and quicker, this sort of thing is not to be sneered at, and give yourself a basis for the work. You can alter things in two weeks, but it is better to have something to alter and this way is a short cut whilst you are gaining experience. 

Actors need confidence and even if you lack it in them, at all times make them believe. . . They are the most important component in the whole thing -- more important than the producer, setting, lighting and in some cases, the play.

It is a dead heat as to importance, sometimes, between the play and the actors. The actor is the visual entertainer, however, that is what we are doing in the theatre, entertaining, look after him therefore, fuss over him, he is worth your care.¹

* * * *

Course Objectives of the Interdepartmental Drama Course at the University of Melbourne, 1993.

. . . students completing this subject should:

* be able to demonstrate a familiarity with the major contemporary theories of performance as they relate to theatre practice;

*have developed the ability to apply theoretical concepts to practical theatre work;

*be able to critically apply the analytical methodologies of performance theory to performance texts;

*have a background of relevant knowledge and skills on which to base further theoretical and practical performance work.
Content: Contemporary theory and practice, studied through practical workshops and recent critical writings on performance.

Assessment: Participation in workshops and performance projects, a course journal and written work of not more than 7000 words.


* * * *

Although separated by a period of over forty years, both the preceding quotations are recognizable as discourses concerning theatre practice. More significantly, they both emanate from the University of Melbourne, and, therefore, function as a convenient index of the changes that have occurred in the discursive practice of theatre within that institution. Following Foucault's insights on the operation of discursive practices, I will pose and endeavour to answer the following questions: Who and what do these discourses govern? What are their regimes of truth? What enables them to distinguish true statements from false statements? What techniques and procedures are accorded value in their pursuit of truth? What is the status of those charged with identifying valid forms of knowledge and practice?

John Sumner's letter to Wal Cherry, Sumner's successor as director of the Union Theatre Repertory Company, contains descriptions of theatre practice which are modelled on the British repertory tradition (the Union Repertory Theatre, which later became the Melbourne Theatre Company, self-consciously mimicked the British repertory pattern).3 Sumner is primarily interested in the theatre as an entertainment medium. His advice to Cherry consists of a series of observations and suggestions, significantly gleaned from practical experience, designed to facilitate the efficient construction of a theatre performance. It is Sumner's practical involvement in the theatre that legitimates his authority to speak about theatre practice.
Sumner is concerned with the government of a professional theatre company; he draws his authority as a speaking subject from his practical experience, and operates within a regime of truth, which accords value to such things as the ability to effectively run a rehearsal, organize actors and produce play-scripts. In Foucauldian terms, Sumner's discourse is embedded in a web of power/knowledge relations, which gives him the status to determine what counts as the truth based on, among other things, his British repertory experience. 'Practical experience' is valued above other kinds of knowledge in Sumner's discursive practice. It is this experience that he imparts to his less experienced successor in the correspondence he composes at an appropriately high altitude. Stylistically, his discourse is personal and colloquial --- "My dear Wal. . . sorry about the pencil, but my pen has covered the page with blots"--- and much of his authority is derived from the illocutionary force of his utterances, which frequently take the form of imperatives ('has to be followed', 'make them believe', 'tell them', '. . . this time discipline I cannot underline enough' and so on). His discourse implies, whether intended or not, the exclusion of academic values. Consequently, his practice is positioned in a space, which does not impinge on the academic establishment -- it does not blur the distinction between theatre practice and academic enquiry.

The 1993 description of the ID Drama course is more concerned with pedagogy, research and the explication of theories, which do not necessarily interface, with the world of theatre practice. Its objects of study, its sources of legitimate disciplinary authority (such as academic textbooks), and its modes of speaking are principally derived from the academic institution. It is concerned with the government of theatre students, and is part of a different discursive practice --- one that operates within a different regime of truth, and employs different mechanisms for distinguishing true statements from false statements. The ID program's status indicates that it values the techniques and procedures valorized by the academic institution. Thus, knowledge gained from drama textbooks and from formal research, work is just as valid, for the ID program, as Sumner's 'practical experience'. It also
means that those charged with the authority to say what counts as true must be properly credentialled in academic terms. That is, they must possess the requisite academic and theatrical qualifications to teach in the program. The drama course necessarily locates itself on the cusp of at least two discursive domains through identifying theatre and drama practice as its legitimate object of enquiry.

The handbook extract employs the lexicon of the academy. Its discourse is stylistically formal and impersonal. The institution recommends rather than orders (it uses words like 'analytical', 'critical' and 'theoretical', all words anathema to Sumner). By virtue of its institutional location the course is in the business of assessing the knowledges and practices imparted to students. While both the University's students and Sumner's actors are required to demonstrate a mastery of specific skills, the students are subjected to formally administered assessment procedures, which take the shape of essays, a journal and participation in workshops and performance projects. The students are required to undertake research work, and critically reflect on their performance activities.

The focus in this chapter, generally, will be on what occurred in the theatre culture of the University of Melbourne between the years, which separate the production of the cited documents; more specifically, it investigates the changing fortunes of the Interdepartmental Drama Course (the University's first foray into the academic discipline of theatre studies). Such an operation will involve an analysis of the different power/knowledge effects produced by different articulations of the discursive practice of theatre-related activities within the University of Melbourne.

The historical narrative that follows has been woven together from archival material drawn from course documents, committee minutes and various University reports. In addition, I conducted a series of interviews with most of the major academic contributors to the course over the last eighteen years. Edited transcripts of these interviews, from which I liberally quote, have been appended to the dissertation. It is important to stress that my
purpose in this chapter is not to write a 'true' or continuous history of the course by either noting the correspondences and contradictions between the University's official records and the personal testimonies of those people involved in the course; nor is it my aim in this chapter to prioritize any particular incarnation of the program by advocating one particular approach to theatre studies over another. Rather, I attempt to document the different discursive practices which have been employed in the organization and teaching of the course in order to chart changes in the University's approach to theatre studies as an academic discipline. I will also scrutinize the power/knowledge effects of each discourse in terms of local institutional politics.

1.2 'Beginnings'

The ID course was set up in 1975 as one of the four interdepartmental programs in the Arts Faculty at the University of Melbourne. These programs were set up to facilitate interdisciplinary work and open up new areas of intellectual inquiry. The Arts Faculty Handbook for 1974 announces that:

Normally [courses in interdisciplinary studies] will be available for later year Honours students and for M.A. Preliminary and postgraduate students. As these course are innovatory, and to some extent, experimental, students are asked to note that close consultation with the Directors of the programmes and with the individual departments is strongly advised. . . [my emphasis] 7

The early seventies marked a turbulent period in the University's history; a complex series of factors, such as the anti-Vietnam war protests and the country's adoption of new social and political values (which perhaps culminated with the election of the Whitlam government in 1972), combined to politicize students, who became highly critical of the University's bureaucratic structure. The 1974 Orientation handbook, published by the Student Union, contains an article by Uldis Ozolins on the Arts Faculty. Ozolins claims that:

. . . the academic creed reflected by the arts faculty is a pitiful, out-of-date, senseless one. The most important elements are: academic subjects tend towards the greatest narrowness of knowledge, rather than breadth;
disciplines have rigid borders and there is nothing in common between different subjects; lecturers refuse to see themselves as educators or teachers, but only as detached scholars; there is no need to justify what they do in the light of current social, political or intellectual problems; and if the students don't like it, the students are wrong and can go away.8

Another article titled 'The Elitist University' argues that:

At present the University functions to mass-produce cannon fodder for capitalism and its technology. Learning should be a creative experience, which requires freedom, discussion, responsibility and significant control over our educational experiences. The university, like the high school, denies us this -- perhaps we'll have to take it. (my emphasis)9

It is significant that a lot of the student writing of the time, like Foucault's work of the same period, is directly concerned with the politics of institutions and bureaucracies. However, power for the student activists was something that the institution possessed, and, therefore, something that had to be taken away; whereas, for Foucault, power is something that is exercised, decentralized and productive rather than repressive.10

The student publications of the period are filled with a wide range of texts (articles, cartoons and photographs) which express similar sentiments. The cited writings are characterized by a potent blend of oppositional rhetoric (mostly drawn from the Marxist lexicon) and counter-culture buzzwords like 'creative' and 'freedom'. It is interesting to see words like 'innovatory' and 'experimental' (which are also commonly associated with the sixties counter-culture) appear in the ID course description. The establishment of the ID programs demonstrates Foucault's point that, while discourse may transmit, produce and reinforce power, it "... also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it".11 The discourses of the academy, its assessment procedures, its lists of objectives and aims, its definitions of disciplinary boundaries can be used as a "starting point for an opposing strategy." The perlocutionary force of the students' oppositional discourses produced specific material effects, which ranged from the University's limited
use of words like 'experimental' and 'innovatory' in course descriptions to the adoption of more democratic bureaucratic procedures.

However, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that the institution is also capable of using the emancipatory discourses of the counter-culture as a starting point for its own opposing strategy. Roland Barthes, in his celebrated essay 'Myth Today', names such a strategy 'the inoculation':

[This figure] . . . consists in admitting the accidental evil of a class-bound institution the better to conceal its principal evil. One immunizes the contents of the collective imagination by means of a small inoculation of acknowledged evil; one thus protects it against the risk of a generalized subversion. . . the bourgeois no longer hesitates to acknowledge localized subversions: the avant-garde, the irrational in childhood . . .

It is not unlikely, then, that the interdepartmental courses were set up partly as a token response to student unrest. The University's formal concession to, or inoculation against, the changing times was the creation of the Melbourne University Assembly in 1974. Pam Stravropoulos points out that the Assembly:

. . . was the product of more than three years of deliberation, and constituted an innovation, which was unique in Australia, and unusual anywhere else. Designed as a consultative body, which would consider issues of concern to the university community, it was the only campus body, which was comprised of the full range of groups making up that community. Students, academics, graduates, administrators and general staff were all represented in a forum, which gave expression to their diverse perspectives and interests.

It is also important to record that the Assembly produced a document concerned with the place of theatre on the Melbourne campus. Significantly, the chairperson of the committee set up to produce the report was none other than James McCaughey (who was also involved in the move to set up interdisciplinary first year courses). The postscript to the Assembly's history, *Short Circuit!*, contains the following statement:

On re-reading the Assembly Theatre Working Group Report over a decade later, its chairperson James McCaughey spoke of the mixed response he had had to it. At one level, he said, it was a document of its times -- wide ranging and provocative. But some of its
recommendations were implemented, and it yielded practical results. At another level, it placed theatre on agendas where it would not otherwise have been found. At still another level, the report evoked the sense of possibility, which fuelled so many Assembly initiatives - - 'redolent in every line is the dream of a creative university'. McCaughey said that in this sense the report was 'emblematic of a dream'; of a creative society in which the University had a major role to play'.

The emancipatory discourse of the Sixties and Seventies had entered the academy. The setting-up of the Melbourne University Assembly, and by extension the introduction of the ID programs is a testament to this assertion. The creation of these bodies should not be seen either as an inherently good or bad thing. The subsequent fate of the program indicates the extent to which the discourses of indepartmentalism and drama were open to a variety of uses by a wide range of different interest groups. In any case, the history of the ID Drama course must be situated within the context of the social, cultural and political climate of the early seventies, in that James McCaughey speculates that the creation of ID programs can be read as a response to the student body's dissatisfaction with the institution's range of traditional academic courses:

If I was in really cynical mode I would say that the setting up of inter-departmental programs was a palliative move, given the [Art's Faculty's] departmental structure. Universities often have this knee-jerk reaction: "there's a lot of unrest around, so we'll give them drama to mop up their energies."  

Terry Collits concurs when he observes that:

The course could be seen as a post sixties attempt to address the fact that a lot of the old departmental and disciplinary structures were pretty arid. I remember one of the big things that happened at the time was the democratising of the governance of departments. Heads of department were being elected to their positions -- unprecedented things like that were coming in at the same time, as a response to the same broad phenomenon. And interdepartmentalism was the name of the game. The ID courses were seen as the way to break down the barriers.

The Zeitgeist of the period, with its propensity for political contestation, also manifested itself in the local theatre culture. Indeed, Carlton, a suburb of Melbourne adjacent to the University, was the site of some of the most exciting theatrical activity in the history of
Australian theatre. It was during this period that The Australian Performing Group, the
Pram Factory and La Mama flourished. It is significant that the University, through the
theatre culture nurtured by the Student Union's theatre department, made an important
contribution to the local scene.17

Those were bold and innovative times, according to most Australian theatre critics of the
period; Australian drama, nurtured by a vibrant student theatre culture, particularly at the
Universities of Melbourne, Sydney and Queensland, produced an impressive, if uneven,
array of theatrical products. The connection between student theatre culture and the
professional theatre world cannot be overestimated. As Leonard Radic acknowledges, in
his book The State of Play: The Revolution in Australian Theatre since the 1960’s, playwrigths
of this era were "... mostly products of both the universities and the middle class, as were
the actors and directors with whom they worked in close association."18 Angela O'Brien
concurs, and notes that the "... impetus for the new theatre movement came from the
University dramatic groups."19 She goes on to point out that:

The University theatres always escaped the taint of amateurism and were reviewed in the avant-garde
magazines as a category within themselves. The new left was open to 'intellectualism' whereas the old left had
been ambivalent towards it, and it was through the universities that the theories of Artaud's Theatre of
Cruelty, Grotowski's Poor Theatre, Brecht's Epic Theatre. .. were disseminated, and became part of theatre-speak
in Australia. There was a belief that the new wave theatre might be usefully allied with the student protest
movement.20

The close association between student and professional theatre in Melbourne did not,
however, produce a performance-oriented approach to the subject in the University until
the advent of the ID performance Drama course in 1975. The academic study of theatre, as
it was taught in departments of English and departments of foreign languages, focused on
canonized dramatic texts: for example, Greek and Shakespearian tragedy, modern drama
from Ibsen to Brecht, and the canonical playwrights of France, Germany and Italy. The
practical business of staging plays remained in the domain of extra-curricular activities,
formally administered on the Melbourne campus by the Student Union. Consequently,
drama was studied as a sub-genre of literature. The ID Drama course, which emerged from the confluence of the spirit of the times and the high profile drama activity emanating from Melbourne, represented one of the earliest attempts in Australia to shift the focus of academic work in theatre from page to stage.

Some of the testimonies and commentaries cited above suggest that the establishment of the University of Melbourne's interdepartmental program in drama may be read as an instance of the institution responding to a collective desire, on the part of certain sections of the staff and student population, for a form of discursive and pedagogical plenitude. However, it is important to note that the opposition to the ID programs was significant. Dinny O'Hearn, a key figure in the curriculum struggles of the period, recalls that:

> What was at stake was a whole mindset, really. A highly trained consciousness about what a university is and is not. One of the opponents, she wouldn't mind being mentioned, God bless her, she's a wonderful person in so many ways, was oddly enough Maggie Tomlinson. Maggie was a great actress in the early days of the Melbourne Union Repertory Theatre with Ray Lawler and Barry Humphries. She performed under the name of Mary O'Fahey. Once she became an academic, theatre became something you did in your spare time and the study of drama became serious intellectual stuff. We were still fighting a huge battle to argue that universities are different from places like RMIT or teachers' colleges where all that practical stuff was perfectly good. It's a long-held traditional view and it's held very passionately, that if we teach practical courses we become no different from RMIT, which was set up to do other things. And one can understand that point of view.21

How productive was the encounter between the institution and the desires of the various voices of dissension? And how interdisciplinary was the interdepartmental assault on the forces of disciplinary constraint?

1.3 The Articulation of a Discipline

In its inaugural year, the program was directed by James McCaughey, a Senior Lecturer in Classics, with the participation of Dr. Hector Maclean, a Reader in the Department of
Germanic Studies, Dr. Judith Armstrong, then a lecturer in the Department of Russian and
Language studies, Mr. Dennis Pryor also from Classics and Mr. David Kendall from the
Student Union Theatre Department. Fifty percent of McCaughey’s time was allocated to
the co-ordination and teaching of the program. The other contributors participated on a
voluntary basis. Student numbers were limited to thirty, although the number of potential
applicants always exceeded the quota.

The 1975 Faculty Handbook describes the course in the following terms:

An exploration of three periods of western theatre from
practical and critical standpoints. The plays will be
discussed in seminars and explored in practice through
workshops. At the same time, lectures and reading will
set them against the background of the development of
drama and lead to an examination of the problems that
the medium faces today.22

The course was taught through a weekly two hour seminar and a weekly two hour
workshop. McCaughey was primarily responsible for the workshop aspect of the course,
while all contributors generally restricted their involvement to the seminar program. The
course was divided into three sections: the first dealt with Greek and Roman Tragedy, the
second with Chekhov, Stanislavsky and the Moscow Arts Theatre, and the third focussed
on Brecht. Although texts by Artaud, Grotowski and Brook were set as preliminary
reading, the seminar program primarily dealt with the dramatic literature, which reflected
the interests and expertise of the staff involved in its teaching. The aims of the course were,
according to McCaughey, not clearly formulated. This proved to be both a blessing and a
hindrance.

There was a very loose brief, and I can say that with
some conviction because I know that I went in there
saying I have absolutely no idea of what a university
drama course properly consists of. I have the strongest
recollection of us working that out, the students and me
as much as myself and my colleagues . . . 23

In other words, there was no disciplinary base, which grounded the course, in terms of
substantive ‘performance-based’ academic content, critical methodologies, or pedagogical
techniques. The notion of theatre studies or performance studies as an academic discipline,
in Australia at least, was only tentatively being formulated. Writing in 1978, Gay McAuley noted that most critical commentary in the area of theatre performance contained a literary bias, which constituted:

\[ \ldots \text{a major problem not only in its effect on students, but more importantly in that it is evidence of the lack of an accepted critical methodology whereby the play in performance can be fully taken into account. So the theatre teacher is not only attempting to devise a means for effectively communicating a body of knowledge and a set of skills, he [sic] is also involved in a constant search for a critical method, for the very skills he is supposed to be teaching.}\]

If, after Foucault, we acknowledge that "... a discipline is defined by a domain of objects, a set of methods, a corpus of propositions considered to be true, a play of rules and definitions, of techniques and instruments," then it is not possible to see the ID Performance Drama program as having a clear disciplinary profile. The program was not constrained by the institutional expectations that governed the teaching of the more established discipline-based courses. For example, McCaughey and his collaborators were not compelled to undertake research and publish their findings in journals. This lack of disciplinary clarity proved to have a liberating effect on McCaughey's approach to the program: experimental work was conducted in an environment that was not tainted by canonical texts and techniques, even though the syllabus appears completely canonical.

It is also evident that the course, in its early years, was still indebted to the world of dramatic literature for its seminar content. It was, therefore, not totally devoid of a disciplinary profile insofar as the methodologies of literary studies found their way into the syllabus. Indeed, most of the course's guest lecturers came from foreign language departments with an expertise in the dramatic literature of a particular country. This meant the course was not interdisciplinary in the sense that we use the term today. New forms of knowledge were not being generated by the coupling of adjacent disciplinary methodologies and theories. Rather, it was the exploration of dramatic literature from a performance perspective in a workshop environment that validated the course's status as an experimental and innovatory program. Terry Collits points out that:
The interdepartmental description is accurate because people were brought in from their own departments and behaved pretty well as they would in their own departments, although they all addressed topics that were to do with drama. There were a number of interesting characters like Dennis Pryor who had, if you like, an amateur, as well as a professional interest (as a classicist) in theatre. He'd come into the course with his own personal style, rather than anything you could call representative of the discipline of the classicist. I'm sure Judith Armstrong's work with Chekhov would be rather like the work she'd do in 'Russian Literature and Society' on Chekhov, for instance. And I think with all of us there would've been a concern as to how to make what we knew and what we did relevant to theatre and performance. And so there was a high degree of amateurism in there, nothing like a theory or an academic structure that included some developed notion of a theatre studies program. 28

However, it is important to remember that the Brechtian segment of the course did focus on a sophisticated and relatively well-developed body of performance theory -- Brecht wrote eloquently on questions concerned with performance and the politics of representation.

The course, according to the declarations of those involved, proved to be highly successful in terms of students' enthusiasm and the quality of their work. Many of the students who participated in the program went on to work in and make significant contributions to Australian theatre culture. Indeed, many ID students over the years have became involved in the theatre industry in a number of diverse roles. The litany of names associated with the program include: Peter King, the artistic director of the experimental performance group Going Through the Stages, Hannie Rayson, the acclaimed playwright, Suzanne Olb, associate editor of the now defunct New Theatre Australia, Suzanne Chaundy, director and dramaturg at Anthill, and Jill Buckler of the Carlton Courthouse theatre.

It is important to recognize that, while the academic contributors to the ID program had no particular sense of the subject as an academic discipline or their own pedagogical brief, they were nevertheless creating a disciplinary profile for theatre studies by teaching performance based skills in a university environment. The intuitive pedagogical techniques used by McCaughey, the assessment procedures set up to examine students,
and the performance work presented to a public audience become the components of a specific articulation of the discipline of theatre studies because these practices and discourses are situated in an institution. McCaughey's discursive practice of performance drama, while characterized by a certain amateurishness and a wide range of heterogeneous discourses (the discourses on dramatic literature already circulating in the academy, the discourses of the local theatre culture, the discourses of adjacent disciplines like Classics and so on) must be seen to have taken on the efficacy of an institutionally sanctioned practice.

1.4 Profusion and/or Constraint

The University acknowledged the success of the Performance Drama course by funding a full-time lectureship for 1977. This was a somewhat unusual move, given that the program consisted of only one full year subject. McCaughey was offered the job but declined and instead took up a position with the new performing arts course at Deakin University. McCaughey went on to establish the innovative 'Mill' community theatre in Geelong, which had a significant influence on the theatre culture of the time. He cites his two year involvement with the Melbourne course as being important to his artistic development ("I really had to go to Deakin to find the room and freedom to go where I wanted to with the course, but I only got to that point by working through the great richness and excitement of the ID course at Melbourne").

McCaughey's position was filled by Dr. Wonbok Develin, a graduate of the theatre studies program at the University of Michigan, under the direction of J.L. Styan, an early and influential theatre studies theoretician. Develin's appointment marked a move towards professionalism and, by virtue of her academic background, a more secure disciplinary profile. Develin's training in the American academy positioned her as an authoritative figure in what was still an emerging discipline in Australia. Terry Collits recounts that:

. . . the English Department sponsored a seminar on the very question of the place of theatre studies in an academic curriculum. Four people, Jack Hibberd, James McCaughey, Wonbok Develin and the director
Peter Oysten presented papers. A prominent member of the Union Theatre Department came in very drunk and created quite a scene. There were probably 150 people there, from memory, it was a very big. There was a lot of interest, and there was a lot of politics. There were students from student theatre who would’ve been hostile to the drama course; there’d have been drama course students who were hostile to the teacher of it, there was David Kendall and his followers, Dinny O’Hearn came along with him; it was a pretty wild occasion. Howard Felperin who was a new Professor in the English Department at the time was amazed: he saw it as sheer anarchy. And coming from America, he saw Wonbok Develin as the only one who had a clear notion that wasn't based on sheer intuition of what an academic program might look like. 30

Theatre studies during this period was obviously in a state of crisis. The seminar, if nothing else, unearthed the various voices of dissension, and made manifest the vested interests of those who had specific stakes in particular articulations of the discipline within the university context.

Develin's tenure, which spanned the years from 1977 to 1979, proved to be fraught with a number of difficulties. Firstly, the University's commitment to the program's increased funding came with the proviso that the course be expanded to include the development of an advanced third year component. Develin did not comply with this directive. This decision, subsequently, proved to be disastrous. Develin also excluded many of the people who had contributed to the program during McCaughey's tenure from participating in her seminar program. This decision bred dissension and discontent. There also appears to have been a great degree of student disaffection with Develin's approach to her subject matter. Develin departed after three years. The archival records of this period of the ID course's history are scant. Apart from the Faculty handbook entries, which were not significantly altered from McCaughey's era, there are few clues as to how the course was taught or assessed. It is, therefore, difficult to comment on Develin's conception of the discipline (I have been unable to locate her). Her credentials indicate, however, that her approach would have been significantly conditioned by Styan's construction of theatre studies. Dinny O'Hearn was, understandably, reluctant to talk about his difficulties with
Develin, while Terry Collits and Hector Maclean did not get the opportunity to observe Develin's pedagogical methods. Suffice it to say that this was a period of stagnation rather than development, and this was reflected in the Faculty's decision to abolish the subject in 1980. It would not be correct to see the move to abolish the course as the inevitable exercise of institutional constraint upon an innovative and oppositional program. Had Develin developed a third year drama course, and attracted the support of interested staff and students, the early eighties may have marked a period of consolidation in the history of the program.

After intense lobbying by Terry Collits, Colin Duckworth, Hector Maclean and D. J. O'Hearn, the Sub-Dean of the Faculty of Arts, amongst others, a paltry sum of money was eventually found to fund a part-time tutorship. This move must also be put in the context of the Federal government's move to rationalize the University sector's recurrent funding; this, after all, was the period of the Fraser government's notorious 'razor gang'. The course has only experienced relatively short periods of stability since this time. Mr. Rush Rehm, an associate and collaborator of McCaughey's, who also possessed a background in Classics, filled the vacant position. Rehm's tenure, which from all accounts was successful in terms of student interest and enthusiasm, was too short for him to have made any distinctive contribution to the articulation of the discipline within the University.

The Performance Drama program, along with the other interdepartmental courses, had been administered by a specially delegated secretary. Her retirement coupled with changes in the Faculty's administrative structure meant that the course was forced to begin a nomadic quest to find an 'administrative home'. Perhaps because of the high degree of input from academics working in Foreign language departments, the course was initially 'housed' in the Department of Russian and Language Studies (it must be remembered that Dr. Judith Armstrong, a Member of the Russian Studies Department was one of the inaugural contributors to the course). The problem of finding a secure departmental base continues to threaten the course even at the time of writing.
Mr. Norman Price, a National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA) graduate whose major theatrical experience was as a professional actor, succeeded Rehm in 1981. Price, although in possession of a Bachelor's degree, was the first appointment whose main experience was more in the realm of practical theatre than the academic sphere, and this altered the course's direction. While the official course description remained tied to the appreciation of dramatic literature as performance, Price's workshops and his own research displayed an interest in performance-specific problematics. The 1989 course description, which remained more or less unchanged during Price's tenure, states:

The aims of the course are:

(1) To present selected students with a choice of major dramatic texts within at least five of the following areas of study: Greek and Roman Drama; Medieval; Elizabethan and Restoration; Commedia dell'Arte; Classical German drama; Aspects of French drama;

(2) to provide, by means of lectures and tutorials the necessary background and methodology for an appreciation of plays, both as theatre and literature;

(3) to encourage participation in practical drama;

(4) to encourage the creation of drama by individual and collective effort. (my emphasis).32

The course's major objects of study, if one accepts the above handbook entry, are plays drawn from those specific historical epochs and dramatic forms which are usually scrutinized by the ubiquitous 'great plays' course, and those texts, such as Ronald Harwood's All the World's a Stage, 33 which construct chronological, continuous historical narratives. The first objective signals the course's continuing relationship with the discourses on dramatic literature favoured by the University's language departments. The second objective is concerned with methodologies and the means through which knowledge about the course's objects of study will be transmitted. Both these objectives could be comfortably inserted into a conventional humanities course in dramatic literature. It is significant that while the course can 'present' the students with a body of texts to study and 'provide' the 'necessary background and methodology' to appreciate these texts, it can
only 'encourage' the participation in and creation of practical theatre. There are no references to the workshops which were (by Price's own account) where most of the truly innovative, performance-oriented work was developed. The handbook extract demonstrates the problematic nature of articulating a practice, which is relatively new to the institution. The aims of the course must be enunciated within a context, which may be hostile to its actual practices. Despite its tentative formulation, the fourth course objective represents a significant rearticulation of the discursive practice of drama within the university. Price, whose own higher degree research concerned the generation of original performance work, moved the course away from a predominantly canonical perspective.34

His training at the National Institute of Dramatic Art, coupled with his practical work in the professional theatre and television industry, facilitated a productive exchange between these sites of performance activity and the academy. Price's work probably constitutes the first genuinely interdisciplinary moment in the course's history.

Price's work as a research student in the Department of English gave the program the beginnings of a research profile. He recalls that:

Hector and I developed a series of workshops on Brechtian theory, which were offered at the 1984 NADIE [National Association for Drama in Education] conference. It was in that work with Hector that my ideas began to form in a more concrete way -- what is the body doing? What is the space saying? Where is the voice going? In other words, I think the construction of the workshop became something that we were interrogating more closely. It was at this time that we became aware of things like semiotics, and became aware of a more realised articulation of performance analysis through things that were published, like Patrice Pavis' work and Susan Melrose's work. There was a time when both Pavis [1988] and Melrose [1987] visited the course. We also became aware of what Gay McAuley was doing in Sydney. So, I became more aware of the fact that other people were also making similar enquiries to mine. We began to feel less isolated, but at the same time we suddenly realised that what we were doing here was quite different from what was happening in other places.35
As Price points out, his involvement with the course coincided with a time when international performance theory was slowly being disseminated in Australian universities through a veritable plethora of publications, the most notorious being Keir Elam's much maligned book, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama Studies*, which was responsible for generating an interest in an important body of hitherto marginal critical activity in Australia. This is not to say that theatre studies research was unconditionally accepted by the University. Hector Maclean recounts that:

I don't know when Norman actually started his M.A., you'd have to check with him, but I do know that it took a good deal of persuasion to get the Arts Research Committee to accept it. The notion of a performance as the basis for research was totally foreign to most people. I think you'll find its acceptance was more of Dinny O'Hearn's work. It was probably the first dissertation of its kind in Australia. Both Patrice [Pavis] and Gay [McAuley] were very interested in it and very generous in their assessment of it, but I don't think that was the kind of research their students undertook.

The eighties witnessed a period of growth in the area of theatre studies. New courses and research centres devoted to the performing arts were being established throughout the country, the most significant being the centre for performance studies at the University of Sydney under the direction of Dr. Gay McAuley. In addition, journals like *Spectator/Burns*, and magazines like *New Theatre Australia* appeared. Forums for performance-oriented criticism, much of which was informed by the newly imported European critical theories, were created through the Australasian Drama Studies Association's various conferences. Indeed, the establishment of similar courses in most Australian tertiary institutions has generated a 'constituency' for the production of theatre research.

Theatre studies had become by this time a legitimate academic discipline, and the ID Performance Drama course began to look, paradoxically, both more and less like a traditional university course. I was appointed as the ID program's part-time tutor in 1989, and rewrote the course, in collaboration with Hector Maclean and Terry Collits (the objectives of this particular articulation of the discipline are cited at the beginning of the
chapter). The study of canonical plays has became a rather peripheral concern of the program in its current formulation; 'great plays' are now more likely to be scrutinized in the light of contemporary feminist and post-colonial theories, imported from adjacent academic disciplines, than to be taught as significant developments in a grand historical narrative. Performance processes and the growing body of performance theory displaced dramatic texts as the program's legitimate objects of study, and more exploratory performance-based investigations were formally initiated. Thus, on the one hand, the present ID drama course bears little resemblance to its forebears, and perhaps looks less like a traditional university course than ever before. On the other hand, a definite research profile has been established; academic publications, conference attendance, and research activities in both conventional and exploratory areas of enquiry are mandatory activities, which are common to all university disciplines. The centrality of interdisciplinary critical theory, such as Schechner's, to certain formulations of the discipline's epistemological profile have aligned it with more recently formed disciplines like cultural studies.

My account of the ID drama program has, hopefully, demonstrated the ways in which the discursive practice of theatre has been transformed, in a relatively short span of time, to produce a new 'régime' in discourse. In other words, the whole ensemble of knowledges and practices that have hitherto supported a particular conception of theatre practice within the university has been challenged by the transformation in the governance of 'true' statements within the humanities. The 'theory' revolution, which has swept through cognate disciplines announced the reign of interdisciplinarity, and the rules and procedures, which determine a particular discipline's place in the institution's value hierarchy, have been modified accordingly.

At a local level, the interdisciplinary focus of the ID program was also further developed with my part-time appointment to the department of English where I taught courses such as Novel and Film and Art, Pornography, Blasphemy and Propaganda. My involvement in these course changed the way I approached my performance drama teaching, just as my
performance background has been shaped by the approach to these cognate subjects. The next chapter will explore how the current discursive practice of performance drama, the one which informs the *modus operandi* of the recently developed third year performance dramaturgy course, has been shaped by interdisciplinary research methodologies and modes of textual analysis, which have primarily been developed in areas such as cultural studies, women's studies and literary studies.

**Endnotes**

1. This document is located in the Barry Street archive of the University of Melbourne.

2. The Faculty of Arts Handbook (Melbourne: The University of Melbourne, 1991) 123.

3. Geoffrey Hutton's history of the Melbourne Theatre Company (MTC), *It Won't Last a Week* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1975), records that the MTC came into existence when John Sumner, who was appointed as the Union theatre manager at the University of Melbourne in 1951, convinced the University council to support the establishment of a non-commercial, professional theatre company which would be modelled on the British repertory theatre (5-6). Melbourne did not possess a full-time, professional theatre company at the time. The company's first season commenced on 31 August, 1953 with a production of Jean Anouilh's *Colombe*. Sumner was appointed to the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust in 1955, which was created to commemorate the visit to Australia by Queen Elizabeth II, and Ray Lawler was given the job of directing the company's third season, which included the 'landmark' premiere of Lawler's *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* (25-30). The success of 'The Doll' meant that Lawler had to relinquish his role as director of the MTC. Wal Cherry, a protégé of Sumner's, whose theatrical experience at that time was mainly limited to student theatre productions, succeeded Lawler in February 1956 (32-40). Sumner returned to the company as director for the 1959-60 season, the final season on the University campus (the MTC moved to the Russell Street Theatre in 1961).

4. This material is housed in the University archive (Barry Street, Carlton) and the Baillieu Library.

5. See chapters one and four for my arguments concerning the discipline's formation and pedagogy.

6. The other ID programs, all of which were set up a year before the Performance Drama course, were Eighteenth Century Studies, Religious Studies and Social Theory. Religious Studies was opposed by some on the grounds that the University of Melbourne is a secular institution.

8. Uldis Ozolins, 'Arts', 1974 *Orientation Handbook* (Melbourne: University of Melbourne Student Union, 1974) 41. This publication can be found in the Rowden White library at the University of Melbourne.


14. 'Postscript', *Short Circuit* 273. Comments cited in this quotation by James McCaughey were made in a conversation of 27 October 1989.

15. James McCaughey, Personal Interview (1 April 1993):118. The page numbers cited in interviews refer to appendix 1 of this dissertation.


17. The University has always had a strong presence in Melbourne theatre culture. The 1955 Orientation Handbook: "The Union Theatre has existed since 1938, but undergraduate theatre is much older. In the 1930's, for example, the annual University Revue was presented in a downtown theatre, and was a lavish production. In one show, the late Des Connor recalled 'We got through 48 scene changes between eight o’clock and ten past eleven. That is still a record for swift moving revue.' First nights were stampeded, and on two occasions traffic was stopped on Exhibition Street. The idea for the theatre originated in 1936, when the old Garrick was pulled down. Its equipment was given to the University, and a theatre was suggested to be run as a commercial proposition. Outside organisations were to produce plays there, and this would allow student productions to be put on at professional standards. 1955 Orientation Handbook (Melbourne: University of Melbourne Student Union, 1955) 78-79.


23. McCaughey, 121.


26. Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse' 61.

27. There were in fact no local academic journals devoted to the study of theatre in Australia in the seventies. This may explain why Gay McAuley published her paper on theatre pedagogy in *The Australian Journal of French Studies*.


29. McCaughey 122.

30. Collits 176.

31. The 'Razor gang' was so named because of its brief, which was to trim government expenditure, particularly in the areas of education and social services, during the 1977 budget.

32. Faculty of Arts Handbook (Melbourne: University of Melbourne, 1989) 211.


38. The 1989 ADSA conference was titled 'Body, Power and Representation', and even a cursory scan through its program reveals the presence of contemporary critical theory. See in particular Tom Burvill's paper 'Representing the Body of Oppression, Or, Resistance/Deconstruction/Nausea: Towards a Viable [Postmodern] Political Theatre'. The discursive practice of theatre studies has certainly altered since the days of Wal Cherry.

39. For example, Price and Maclean published 'Building and Sending Signs in a Theatre Space', *Mask* 9.3 (1985). This work deals with Brechtian theory in the context of the actor's creation of space through his or her body.
CHAPTER 3

‘Travelling Theory’: From Cultural Studies to Theatre Studies

Like people and schools of criticism, ideas and theories travel -- from person to person, from situation to situation, from one period to another. Cultural and intellectual life are usually nourished and often sustained by this circulation of ideas, and whether it takes the form of acknowledged or unconscious influence, creative borrowing, or wholesale appropriation, the movement of ideas and theories from one place to another is both a fact of life and a usefully enabling condition of intellectual activity. Having said that, however, one should go on to specify the kinds of movement that are possible, in order to ask whether by virtue of having moved from one place to another an idea or theory gains or loses in strength, and whether a theory in one historical period and national culture becomes altogether different for another period or situation.  

Edward Said, ‘Travelling Theory’

How should cultural studies travel? How should it locate itself in the relations between its local speaking positions and the increasingly dense and intense lines connecting these positions?

Lawrence Grossberg, ‘Cultural Studies and/in New Worlds’

3.1 Introduction

The following chapters will examine how the ‘broad spectrum’ paradigm shift advocated by Richard Schechner may operate in a local theatre studies context. Specifically, I will demonstrate how contiguous knowledges in the adjacent ‘discipline’ of cultural studies can practically be deployed in theatre/performance studies. In other words, I will evaluate the intellectual and pedagogical effects produced by ‘travelling theories’, and establish the institutional conditions, which enable such theoretical migrations.

This chapter will be divided into two sections. The first will examine the relationships between cultural studies and performance studies in terms of their respective institutional ancestries, disciplinary identities and pedagogical practices. This will enable me to identify those conditions, which facilitate the transfer of knowledge and methodology from one disciplinary context to another. The second will present the findings of a body of research conducted within the cultural studies course, ‘Art, Pornography, Blasphemy and
Propaganda', into censorship discourses and media commentaries on the serial killer genre in popular fiction and film. This research was subsequently imported into a performance studies course, which explored the politics of censorship discourses, and the representation of gender in the serial killer genre through performance. This process will allow me to articulate a specific critical practice within the field of cultural studies, and demonstrate the practical value of making this theory travel.

3.2 What is/are Cultural Studies?

As an academic discipline, cultural studies has much in common with performance studies. Both disciplines are characterized by their commitment to the 'broad spectrum' of interdisciplinarity. However, while the proponents of performance studies are concerned with giving their field a disciplinary identity, some of their colleagues in cultural studies are moving in the opposite direction. John Hartley, in his book *The Politics of Pictures*, observes that:

Cultural studies is notable for its participants' squeamishness about orthodoxy, manifested positively in a commitment to interdisciplinarity, and negatively in the avoidance of authority; it has no unified theory, textual canon, disciplinary truths, agreed methodology, common syllabus, examinable content or professional body, no bodily integrity at all.3

If one accepts Hartley's description of the field, it becomes difficult to perceive cultural studies as an academic discipline in the conventional sense of the term. Its objects of analysis are so wide, and its critical methodologies are so diverse that its legitimate domain of enquiry would appear to have no limit. Graeme Turner believes that, "it would be a mistake to see cultural studies as a new discipline, or even a discrete constellation of disciplines." 4 Lawrence Grossberg, like Gay McAuley and Patrice Pavis in the field of performance studies, recognizes the dangers involved in not delimiting the field's borders when he observes:

I am aware that policing the frontiers of cultural studies is a dangerous endeavour: Still, as 'cultural studies,' as
a description of a certain body of work, becomes
increasingly content-free, we increasingly will need to
ask what is being lost? What specific bodies of work
have no name?5

These questions have not been asked with enough force, and the 'broad spectrum'
definition of the field is one, which circulates widely. For example, John Fiske claims that
cultural studies is "... concerned with the generation and circulation of meanings in
industrial society", 6 and Andrew Milner believes that the discipline covers "... that entire
range of institutions, artefacts and practices which make up our symbolic universe'.7

Like performance studies, cultural studies is compelled to traverse the nebulosity line
between discursive plenitude and institutional constraint. It is also a site of multiple
dissension where competing conceptions of the discipline's aims, methods and legitimate
objects of analysis clash. It is interesting to compare statements of disciplinary identity in
cultural studies with those articulated by theorists of theatre/performance studies. The
latter group of scholars pays far greater attention to what their field does not include.8

Does this mean that cultural studies can mean whatever we want it to mean? And does this
apparent lack of what Foucault terms 'principles of exclusion/prohibition' mean that
cultural studies is not subjected to forces of institutional constraint.9 The short answer to
this question is no. Cultural studies, like every other academic discipline, is governed by a
set of institutional rules and procedures (like those internal processes of rarefaction:
'Author', 'Commentary' and 'Discipline') which regulate its practices.

In chapter one, I argued that all disciplines need to construct a research paradigm, a
pedagogical program and a public profile if they are to survive in an academic milieu.
These institutional dictates give cultural studies its 'bodily integrity', its disciplinary truths,
its examinable content; in short, its epistemological profile. While books such as Hartley's
and Milner's Contemporary Cultural Theory recount the discipline's formation with
references to its disciplinary forebears, and its 'prodigal parents' ('blessed by reiterated
invocation in opening chapters and exegetical articles') they are, for the most part,
reluctant to scrutinize the institution's role in shaping and regulating the discipline.\textsuperscript{10} The obligation to teach necessitates the creation of a disciplinary infrastructure which creates canons and hierarchies of value. For example, the pedagogical imperative produces a demand (and creates a market) for anthologies of critical essays, which by definition enter the exclusion/inclusion game, and produce 'truth-effects'. These publications create canons of key texts through the inclusion of specific works (usually sired by eminent 'prodigal parents' like Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault) and the exclusion of others. In their book, \textit{Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies}, Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson point out that “[p]opular culture studies embraced such a range of issues with such an array of methods that they have become bafflingly diffuse to many students”.\textsuperscript{11} They go on to claim that:

\begin{quote}
... students approaching the field have no coherent way to understand why analysts of popular culture care so much about, for example, the role of the working class, the meaning and development of literacy, the extent to which popular forms mirror reality or express dreams and wishes. ...
\end{quote}

Mukerji's and Schudson's anthology, like all the other anthologies in the field, gives cultural studies a form of disciplinary coherence. The taxonomies, classifications and commentaries that characterize the critical anthology as a form are reproduced in other sites. The publication of books and journals (which are categorized as belonging to the field of cultural studies by publishers\textsuperscript{13}), the formation of professional associations and the organizations of academic conferences are signs that cultural studies participates in the academy's games of truth. This is not to say that the institution exerts a monolithic form of control over the discipline's affairs. Disciplinary boundaries can always be extended and challenged. However, cultural studies is not only an academic discipline. Graeme Turner, in his book, \textit{British Cultural Studies}, argues that the purpose of engaging in cultural studies is:

\begin{quote}
... also political... [and] this political dimension is one legitimate reason there is concern about the establishment of a cultural studies orthodoxy, about cultural studies' inclusion within the traditional academy, or about the incorporation of its work and its
\end{quote}
challenges within more conventional academic discourses.14

Turner articulates the tensions that exist between the political dimension of cultural studies and its necessary participation in the academy's games of truth when he acknowledges that, while his book has been written for pedagogical purposes (that is, to make a body of theory 'accessible' to undergraduate students), it "... could support the installation of an orthodoxy within teaching programs if not in research...".15 This fear of orthodoxy and institutionalization may be seen as yet another conflict between 'desire and the institution'. It is a fear, which is predicated on the tacit assumption that the academy is an inherently conservative institution whose acceptance and legitimation of the discipline will blunt its political edge.

Cultural Studies and Performance Studies

The transfer of knowledges and practices between the disciplines of cultural studies and performance studies is enabled by the following commonalities: they are both relatively young disciplines with interdisciplinary profiles; this means that they share objects of analysis, research methodologies and theoretical perspectives. Joseph R. Roach recognizes the similarities between the two disciplines when he writes:

[Raymond]. . . Williams strove to relate the material productions of culture (institutional continuities of physical practices such as manufacture) to its signifying and symbolic systems (such as literature and media). The convergence of material productions with signifying systems inheres in the fundamental nature of theatrical performance, a definitional truth to which Raymond Williams's career as a professor in Drama adds the logic of disciplinary affiliation.16

The 'logic of this disciplinary affiliation' becomes more compelling when one recognizes that 'theory' functions as a kind of universal currency, or intellectual traveller's cheque, which possesses value across the humanities' disciplinary boundaries. For example, many of the 'exegetical articles' in Reinelt's and Roach's anthology pay homage to the same 'prodigal parents' cited by Hartley and his colleagues.
Before moving on to second section of this chapter, it is important to acknowledge that universities are also producing 'dual passport holders', that is, people who are formally qualified to teach and research in cognate disciplines like literature and cultural studies, or performance studies and anthropology. These individuals function as 'agents of interdisciplinarity'. For example, my position as a tutor in a cultural studies course ('Art, Pornography, Blasphemy, Propaganda') facilitated the transfer of specific knowledges and reading strategies from one disciplinary domain to another. I literally moved the work I had begun in a traditional classroom-based course to a theatre studies context, where I was required to conduct a series of seminars and practical workshops in order to generate a theatrical performance. The rest of the chapter will examine this body of research.

3.3 Censorship and the Serial Killer

The censorship debates that raged over the publication of the novel American Psycho and the release of the film The Silence of the Lambs in 1991 prompted my interest in the fictional representation of serial killers. This interest was pursued in the context of the 'Art, Pornography, Blasphemy, Propaganda', which explored how the category of 'art' has been used and 'policed' in the twentieth century as a means of defending literary and filmic texts against censorship on grounds of sexual morality, religion and/or politics; the two aforementioned texts were discussed and analysed in this context with the intention of establishing the degree to which they could be defended against accusations of obscenity on aesthetic grounds. The course debated whether there are legitimate criteria for distinguishing these texts, which self-consciously aspire to the status of art, from their less pretentious though equally salacious, pornographic counterparts. In other words, the course examined the extent to which works which are framed and recognized as 'art' are given licence to represent taboo subject matter. This question was explored through the analysis of commentaries on the serial killer phenomenon drawn from a wide range of texts (books/film reviews, newspaper articles, 'tabloid' television, etc.).
My preparatory research, which proved to be such an invaluable resource for The Killing Eye project, was originally presented to cultural studies students as a possible model upon which they could conduct their own analysis of media texts. My approach sought to combine close textual analysis with an examination of the workings of media institutions.

Graeme Turner argues that:

> The most recognizable and possibly the most important theoretical strategy cultural studies has developed is that of "reading" cultural products, social practices, even institutions, as "texts". Initially borrowed from literary studies, its subsequent wide deployment owing significant debts to the semiotics of Barthes and Eco, textual analysis has become an extremely sophisticated set of methods --- particularly for reading the products of the mass media.18

The analyses of serial killer commentaries, which are presented below, does not represent a definitive cultural studies methodology. Rather, it is emblematic of a recognizable, if eclectic, cultural studies methodology, which has been institutionalized.

### 3.3.1 Art/Politics - Power/Knowledge (commentaries)

How do texts, such as American Psycho and The Silence of the Lambs, generate a variety of competing interpretations? Claire Johnston, in her paper 'The Subject of Feminist Film Theory/Practice', argues that:

> Films are read unpredictably and can be pulled into a variety of ideological spaces and mobilized for diverse projects. Textual strategies have thus to be posed in conjectural terms. The problem must be thought in terms of which set of discourses the text encounters and how this encounter may restructure the productivity of the text and the discourses with which it combines to form an inter-textual field in ideology and history.19

I would add that it is equally important to acknowledge that the encounter between a text and any set of discourses is dependent on each reader’s location vis-a-vis the text. This location will be dependent on an indeterminate number of institutional and 'subjective' factors. For example, the institutional conventions that govern journalistic practices will determine what an individual journalist can say about a given text.20
Subjective factors including a journalist's gender, age, race and class will also play a role in articulating a particular reading or critical position. Each of the following readings/responses to *The Silence of the Lambs* and/or *American Psycho* is articulated from a different journalistic/literary institution, and each position seeks to establish the 'truth' of the analysed text by appealing to specific forms of knowledge. It is useful to reiterate Foucault's conception of power/knowledge by invoking Paul Patton's explication of the term before turning to these readings:

> No knowledge is formed without a system of communication, registration, accumulation and displacement which is in itself a form of power and which is tied in its existence and functioning to other forms of power. No power, on the other hand, is exercised without the extraction, appropriation, distribution or retention of a knowledge.\(^2\)

Knowledge produces effects of power; the different responses to the serial killer texts do not signify disinterested differences of critical opinion amongst a heterogeneous group of critics; rather, they mark a site of political struggle. Thus, we can ask: What political stakes are involved in disputes over interpretations? What networks of power/knowledge enable these acts of interpretation?

Let me return to a question I posed earlier: are there grounds for distinguishing certain fictional serial killer texts, such as *American Psycho*, from other kinds of texts that contain violent pornography? The commentaries dealing with this issue, particularly in the local press, may be divided, somewhat unequally, into four camps represented by: Rosemary Sorensen's review of *American Psycho* in the *Age*; Norman Mailer's review of the same text (originally published in *Vanity Fair*) in the *Sunday Age*; Jocelyn Scutt's article “The Chilling Effect” in *The Bulletin*; and Neil Jillett's review of *The Silence of the Lambs*, also published in the *Age*. All of these reviews/articles appeared in May/June 1991 -- a period when local media attention on the serial killer phenomenon was at its peak.
Rosemary Sorensen's favourable review of American Psycho foregrounds the power of the text's satirical depiction of American capitalism. She concludes her argument with the observation that:

Even this shocking book, with its blatant message that there's something very nasty in late-capitalism's body politic, will be smothered by the indignation of a society that can't see its own boils for the decorative pus.22

While it is not possible to specify the determinants of this 'literary' reading in their entirety, I think it is practicable to map the signs and institutionalized forms of power/knowledge that situate both the review and the novel in a 'literary' context.

The review appeared in the "EXTRABOOKS" section of the Saturday Age (a Fairfax newspaper that is still considered to be one of Australia's prestige publications). Sorensen's implied audience, the 'you' who might find the book worthy of attention, is presumed to have 'literary' interests; the review refers to "late-capitalism's body politic" and uses phrases such as "desire is channelled straight towards consumption." Such language would not be out of place within the lexicon of Marxist literary criticism. The review's 'literary' qualities are also signified through Sorensen's use of compound and complex syntactical structures -- features that one would not find in a less prestigious publication such as a Murdoch tabloid like the Herald-Sun. For example:

If, on the other hand, you think that abduction, rape and murder, reported, fictionalized or made into a pop video, is intolerable and ghastly however it's represented, then you might find that the humour of this book is the kind of bleak satire that shocks but deserves attention.23

The 'if-then' logic reinforces the review's measured tone, while foregrounding its essayistic structure. It argues for, rather than asserts, the book's value; a value located in the text's satirical depiction of 'yuppie' consumer culture: something is rotten in the United States of America, and American Psycho, through its literary devices and figurative tropes, tells us all
about it. Therefore, *American Psycho*'s graphic representation of sexual violence is legitimated by its satirical content.

The review is produced in a discursive field which is governed by a set of conventions which are partially journalistic and partially literary. Like most contributors to this particular section of the *Saturday Age*, Sorensen is not a full-time journalist (she is a well-known critic and the editor of *The Australian Book Review* [*ABR*]; indeed, most contributors to "EXTRABOOKS" are well-known academics, writers and critics). It appears that Sorensen is given licence to use the language of the *ABR* in a journalistic context as long as the article is relatively 'reader-friendly' -- concise and accessible to an 'educated' non-specialist constituency. Her review displays features associated with 'quality journalism' -- figurative language, polysyllabic words, and the odd bit of fashionable academic jargon. Despite the review's literary qualities, its title, "Bleak Satire Shocks But Deserves Attention," conveniently compresses the review's interpretation of the book into a single sentence, and signifies its journalistic status. The review, I presume, is also subject to other journalistic procedures such as sub-editing.

It is the contribution of reviews like Sorensen's that give the 'prestige' tag to publications like *The Age*, in this case by virtue of her occupation as a literary critic. In addition, her intertextual references to specific forms of knowledge (academic discourse on literature, Marxism, pornography) produce certain 'truth-effects' which lend authority to her text. The review, then, is located in a complex network of power/knowledge relations, some of which are brought into play by the rules of the media institution, while others receive their currency from what the author's name signifies in other contexts. These institutional factors affect the book's location within an ideological space that privileges a 'literary' reading.

The second critical position I have isolated is represented by Norman Mailer's review which, like Sorensen's, couches its argument in a framework of literary criticism. Mailer, however, produces a different assessment of the book's 'literary' worth. *American Psycho*
encounters, within Mailer's article, a set of discourses that also locate the book within the
general field of aesthetics. Mailer makes a number of lofty pronouncements on the value
and function of art. "Art serves us best," he argues:

... precisely at that point where it can shift our sense of
what is possible, when we now know more than we
knew before, when we feel we have -- by some monster
leap -- encountered the truth.25

Mailer argues that American Psycho does not precipitate an encounter with the 'truth', and
therefore fails to meet the criteria of what he considers to be a well written novel. One of
the book's principal flaws, according to Mailer, is that it tells us nothing about the
psychological make-up and motivations of its serial-killer protagonist. It is important to
note that Mailer does not object to the book's violence per se. The violent representations of
the book would be perfectly acceptable to him if they were inserted into a more acceptable
aesthetic form, a form that would presumably hasten a close encounter of the 'truthful'
kind. Violence in art is acceptable because:

Art has now become our need to be terrified. We live in
fear that we are destroying the universe, even as we
mine deeper into its secrets. So art may be needed now
to provide us with just those fearful insights that the
uneasy complacencies of our leaders do their best to
avoid. Splendid, you may say, but where is 'American
Psycho' in all this? Is the claim being advanced that it is
art?26

Mailer condemns the book for its artistic inadequacies, but clearly supports the principle of
aesthetic autonomy and freedom of expression.

Most of the stylistic and institutional factors that characterize Sorensen's review also
characterize Mailer's review. Some of these features are exaggerated. For example,
Mailer's name, as an author, is better known -- he has an international reputation as a writer
who is both a novelist and an exponent of what came to be known in the sixties as the 'new
journalism' (a style of reporting which unashamedly draws attention to its use of literary
strategies and structures). The Age credits Mailer, at the end of his review, as being the
author of books such as *Tough Guys Don't Dance*, *Advertisements for Myself* and *The Executioner's Song*. The review foregrounds the name of the author: Mailer's credibility as an 'expert' in the field of violent writing is further promoted through the copyright claim that also appears at the end of his review (*Copyright 1991 by Conde Nast Publications, Inc. This edited extract reprinted by permission of the author and his agents*). 27

However, Mailer's text is positioned in the news section of *The Sunday Age*; his review, if one can call it that, is not surrounded by other book reviews, but by an extract from *American Psycho*, and an article on current Australian censorship laws, written by John Dickie, the chief censor with the Office of Film and Literature Classification. Pictures of *American Psycho*’s cover and author are placed in the centre of the page, as if to draw attention to the progenitor of the debate. Mailer's 'literary' pronouncement is news (perhaps because news is 'truer' than fiction). It is placed within the context of a social debate:

'American Psycho', a new novel by 27-year-old Bret Easton Ellis, explicitly portrays acts of brutality, sex, torture and murder involving adults, children and animals. Several publishers refused to touch it, but it has been released and this week became available in Australia. Here is an extract from the book. Norman Mailer looks at whether it should have been published, and the chief censor John Dickie, explains his decision. 28

The editors of *The Age* place the book in an ideological space that encompasses the discourses of media ethics, publicity, literature, censorship and freedom of speech; the paper announces its awareness of the politics of this gesture by issuing the following statement to readers:

To debate a book such as 'American Psycho' is to give it free publicity. Should 'The Sunday Age' be looking at the issues involved? Should we have published an extract? Should you be able to read it? Readers [sic] views are welcome. 29
Reader responses were in fact published; the presentation of a wide range of perspectives concerning the debates generated by American Psycho have the effect of creating an illusory public sphere that accords an equal status to each expressed opinion. The published opinions of readers do not, of course, enjoy the same kind of authority granted to critics such as Mailer. Let us now turn to the third commentary concerning the serial killer genre's depiction of violent representations.

3.3.2 "The Chilling Effect"

Jocelyn Scutt’s cover-story article, ‘The Chilling Effect’, published in The Bulletin offers the following comments on The Silence of The Lambs and American Psycho:

Only men who hate women could see any value in producing a movie which unforgettably shows women, skinned, faced down, moth-chrysalis shoved deep in throat. Only men who hate women could see any worth in publishing a book which generally depicts women, pinned to the floor by their hands with nails shot from a nail gun.30

Scutt is a Melbourne lawyer and writer, whose anti-pornography stance is well publicized. She opposes the arguments used by 'civil libertarians' to defend the circulation of texts like American Psycho and The Silence of the Lambs by arguing that these champions of free speech speak from a privileged position.

Those who speak "for" pornography, under the guise of freedom of speech and anti-censorship, generally do so from a white, male, middle-class position. That they have no perception of what it is like to live as a woman in a world where violence is inflicted daily is hardly surprising. . . Only those who have free speech can so wilfully ignore the reality of those who do not have it. Freedom of speech does not extend to large portions of society. But it extends with a vengeance to the peddlers of pornographic magazines, films and videos.31

Scutt is clearly not interested in analysing the finer points of Bret Easton Ellis’ prose style; she shifts the debate from a literary framework to one that deals more explicitly with gender politics. Hence, the complex relationship between art and politics is further
problematized by examining the relations between representation and reality. That is to say, her analysis shifts the focus from the text to the 'effects' the text produces.

American Psycho and its ilk, whether by words or through pictures, create or exacerbate conditions in the world where women are forced into a state of fear. To present women being attacked, defiled and murdered as if it is "all in a day's work" creates a "chilling effect".32

Scutt sees no qualitative difference between "American Psycho and its ilk" and pornography; once this equation is made she can invoke the kind of argument articulated by feminist critics like Andrea Dworkin who draws a direct relationship between pornographic representations and male sexual violence; she suggests that pornography is "... the DNA of male dominance. Every rule of sexual abuse, every nuance of sexual sadism, every highway and byway of sexual exploitation, is encoded in it."33 Texts like The Silence of the Lambs, and American Psycho, which owe something to the language and iconography of pornography, are deemed, by Dworkin, to participate in this sexual exploitation.

The outrage and anger expressed by Scutt are understandable, and I do not want to suggest that the violent representations found in the texts under scrutiny do not have dangerous, if not lethal, consequences for readers who may very well be the victims, or survivors of gratuitous violence. However, moves towards even more stringent censorship measures will not necessarily produce a less violent world. It is not my purpose, and this may be a luxury my reading position affords, to enter the censorship debate as such.

Scutt's position on censorship, however, is not the only feminist perspective on the issue. Ann Snitow, in her introduction to Caught Looking: Feminism, Pornography and Censorship, asks whether "... the politics of outrage effect change in the sex-gender system?".34 She answers her question in the negative by shifting the debate into the realm of power and pleasure. The views of Snitow, amongst others in the "Caught Looking Collective", make it clear that women are divided on the issue of censorship. Instead of speaking about the
"chilling effect" of pornography, the collective reframes the debate in terms of the production of pleasure effects. Similarly, Philippa Hawker concludes her essay, "Criminal Intent: Representations of Violence in Writing" by speculating on the pleasure effects of crime fiction:

Why do I read crime fiction? What am I after? What am I getting? The answer is not contained here: not directly, although there are clues scattered throughout the text. I expect to be perplexed sometimes, unsettled sometimes, horrified occasionally. I expect, sometimes, to find myself reading as if I were supposed to identify with a killer. And I am certain that within the next couple of days I will be looking at the next body.35

The 'chilling effect', then, is one effect, among many, that serial killer texts may produce. The debates inspired by Scutt's article are important for my purposes, because they highlight the reader's relations to the text. Unlike the two previous commentaries, Scutt's article exhibits an embodied relationship between text and reader.

So far I have focussed on the propositional content of Scutt's article because of its polemics and their importance for analyses concerning the gender politics of the serial killer genre. As with Sorenson and Mailer, Scutt's name carries authority, and her discourse is conditioned by specific institutional constraints. The Bulletin, a publication owned by Consolidated Press, cultivates a prestige tag. It devotes most of its space to political analysis and comment. Scutt's article is therefore situated in a non-literary context, one which gives a high priority to contemporary political issues. Her article is carefully argued, and stylistically consistent with the reviews I have analysed thus far; that is, she employs a similar argumentative essay structure, invokes specialist discourses, uses complex and compound sentences and so on. Scutt's discourse derives its authority partially from her reputation as a feminist lawyer/writer and partially from the publication's 'prestige' tag.

3.3.3 'Fascinated Disgust'
Neil Jillett's review of Jonathan Demme's film, *The Silence of the Lambs*, is also concerned with the text's 'effect' and the censorship issue. His institutional context combines with his personal opinions on censorship to produce a curious contradiction: as *The Age*’s film critic, he is compelled to talk about the text’s themes and aesthetic qualities; as an individual he is disturbed by the film’s possible 'effect' on an audience. His discourse draws on both the aesthetic and the 'political/moral' judgements articulated above. So, on the one hand, he attacks the film’s viciousness, its gratuitous violence ("Even when the violence is shown obliquely or only in part, as in the sequence of Lecter’s biting and bashing, it is done with relish rather than out of dramatic necessity"36) and its sexual politics ("... even if she is an aggressive heroine rather than an enraged victim, the Foster character is consistently presented as a target for rape")37. He combines this anti-misogynist line of argument, which is consistent with the one advocated by Jocelyn Scutt, with an expression of paternalistic outrage at the film’s "M" censorship rating, a rating which places no legal restriction on the age of the audience.

The film, in Jillett's view, is not fit for children because of its subject matter and its 'realistic' depiction of violence. Our censorship system has failed, he argues, because we, as a society, need to protect "the innocence of children". The statement is interesting insofar as it reveals Jillett's conception of the censorship system as a moral guardian, which is obliged to protect those who are least able to determine what texts they can safely consume. His patronizing paternalism appropriates the rhetoric of the feminist anti-pornography movement; he takes offence at director, Jonathan Demme's claim that the film is pro-feminist, and points out that its only "genuine touch of feminism" consists in the female protagonist's strength, which, according to Jillett, lies in a "... refusal to test the possibility of an ordinary relationship with a man."38 The appropriation of feminist discourses by both Demme and Jillett is significant considering the film's story, which is about, in part, a serial killer who wishes to take on a female identity. Jillett, nevertheless, speaks of the film's "technical excellence", its "clever ghastliness":

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The Silence of the Lambs provoked in me a fascinated disgust, which I suppose is a way of saying I was entertained by its blend of documentary coolness and vigorously unfolded story.39

How do we account for this fascinated disgust? Jillett is clearly not alone in his fascination for the film -- The Silence of the Lambs was one of the top-selling books and top-grossing films of 1991 (the film has made over one hundred million dollars, and occupied first place on the film popularity charts for the first five weeks of its release).40 I suspect that Jillet's response to the film is a common one -- the representation is horrific, yet compelling at the same time. It is important to note that this 'fascination' also extends to 'real-life' serial killers.

The language of outrage is only one of the many discourses which are invoked by Jillett. His institutional context demands that he make intertextual references to other films; he refers to specific genre conventions as well as specific films -- The Accused reference reminds us that Jodie Foster's star persona, as well as her previous films, may have some bearing on our reading of The Silence of the Lambs. We also find references to literature, feminism, criminology and legal discourse. Jillett's review, like the other reviews and articles I have discussed here, is embedded in a complex web of discourse which shapes and emphasizes different aspects of the text to satisfy the demands of its institutionalized context.

The aforementioned commentaries on American Psycho and The Silence Of The Lambs repeat specific motifs and arguments: aesthetic value is debated, censorship laws are chastised, authors are damned and applauded, words and pictures are produced and a lot of books, magazines and films are consumed. But, to what effect? It is not difficult to observe the relations of power operating in the institutional sites in which these commentaries take place. These relations of power can be seen in terms of Foucault's notion of the discursive practice, which, as stated earlier, determines what can be spoken of, who can do the speaking, and how this speaking may take place. The commentaries are obviously shaped
by journalistic conventions which require specific modes of argumentation. It is also evident that the commentaries are legitimated by the names of their authors; each commentator is an 'expert' in his or her respective field. Furthermore, each commentary delineates how the serial killer genre should be approached by emphasising different political/aesthetic concerns.

The link between cultural studies and performance studies becomes clearer when we realize that many of the processes of 'textual' analysis undertaken in an examination of newspaper articles and reviews are paralleled when material is being prepared for a performance text. No study of the material in the context of a university theatre studies course can aim for a purely aesthetic effect, in this respect our experience reflected that of Patrice Pavis in his 'Columbus' project. All the questions involving constraints imposed by community authority and attitudes, above all the exploration of their differing and often confrontational convictions, the effects of certain subject matters on readers (or actors and audience) and the means by which they are represented, are present in the preparation of material for performance, often in more acute form. This is what we have to explore in the following chapter.

The most recent articulation of theatre/performance studies at the University of Melbourne involves staff and students in processes which lead to the generation and public presentation of a performance. This work is conducted within a third year interdepartmental course in Performance Dramaturgy, which among other things aims to give students the opportunity to construct, under the direction of academics, a full-length performance text from an academic research base. The 1992 course produced a performance text, The Killing Eye, which was developed in the light of the issues raised by the aforementioned analyses of media commentaries on the serial killer genre. The ways in which these commentaries found their way into the production, and the transformations that occurred in the way these issues were taught in the context of performance studies will be examined in the next chapter.
Endnotes


5. Grossberg 2.


12. Mukerji and Schudson 5.

13. Cultural studies publications are filed under Literature and Cultural Studies by Verso, Culture and Politics by Blackwell. Routledge produce a cultural studies catalogue, but cross-reference their publications; for example, Hartley's *The Politics of Pictures* is as Media/Cultural and Communication Studies. It is interesting to note that while Routledge produced its first full length theatre studies catalogue (with an independent performance theory and practice category) in 1992, the other major publishers of academic titles list their theatre and/or drama studies titles with works of literature --- Verso,

17. This course was set up by Dr. David Bennett of the University of Melbourne's English Department, and attracted over one hundred students in its first year.
20. These conventions are perhaps best articulated in Nigel G.E. Harris' article 'Codes of conduct for journalists'. He observes that:

   Codes of conduct are only a part, and perhaps a quite minor part, of the regulatory framework within which journalists operate. Reporters and editors may be constrained in many different ways from acting unethically. For their own job security it will be prudent for journalists to avoid acting in ways to which their proprietors might object; and because most newspapers rely so heavily on revenue from advertising, they will be under pressure not to offend major advertisers or, indeed, readers, since a drop in circulation will lead to a reduction in advertising revenue.

23. Sorensen 8
24. It is worth noting that the United States, a country that contains five per cent of the world’s population, has produced seventy-five per cent of the world's serial killers. In his book, *Serial Killers: the Growing Menace*, Joel Norris claims "as the influence of American culture spreads to less developed countries, the fear is that, unless checked somehow, the disease of the serial murderer will spread as well". *Serial Killers: the Growing Menace* (London: Arrow Books, 1988) 38.
25. Norman Mailer, "Is this bad art, or is it just bad?" The Sunday Age 26 May 1991: NEWS 15.

26. Mailer 15

27. Mailer 15


29. The Sunday Age 15


31. Scutt 80-81.

32. Scutt 82.


Chapter Four

Travelling Pedagogy

Thiessen [an East German Atomic Physicist] . . . spoke about the fact that all institutions and organisations have the tendency to conserve their structures that is to say, they reject everything creative. The Creative appears first of all as confused, because it does not fit into the given categories and is not to be recognised within the given categories. Therefore it escapes control, therefore institutions and structures tend to reject and to strangle these phenomena, and therefore, [. . .] it is important that one gives special attention to the dreamers. Those [attitudes] were aimed at education, constituted an attempt to break up the universities and tertiary institutions, for everywhere there prevailed this negative selection principle according to which the best were excluded because they could not be classified and could not be controlled.

Heiner Müller, Krieg ohne Schlacht: Leben in Zwei Diktaturen

Introduction 4.1

After more than ten years of frustration and disappointment, the ID drama program finally managed to get the Faculty of Arts to accept a third year course proposal, and the Interdepartmental Course in Performance Dramaturgy (106-398) was first taught in 1992. The content of the course and its pedagogical objectives are listed below:

Objectives: Students completing this course should:

* be able to apply dramaturgical principles in the areas of performance construction and documentation;
* be able to construct a performance from an academic research base;
* have developed an appreciation for the processes involved in presenting a performance text to a public audience;
* have acquired skills for solving problems and making decisions in professional theatre/performance activities.

Content: The theory/practice interface in performance studies, explored through dramaturgical research and practical workshops which culminate in production and public performance.
The course, developed by Norman Price and myself, was written to permit the maximum flexibility in curriculum content. The course is distinctive in that it does not seek to illuminate dramatic literature through performance, nor does it seek to use workshops to explore a particular theatrical or dramaturgical concept. Rather, the emphasis placed on the acquisition of dramaturgical research skills promotes interdisciplinarity, as opposed to interdepartmentalism, by demanding that students construct performance texts from an academic research base; they are encouraged to look for inspiration in and engage with a wide range of themes, methodologies and theoretical perspectives developed within cognate fields like cultural studies. The course's commitment to interdisciplinarity aligns it with Schechner's 'broad spectrum' performance paradigm, whilst its engagement with theatre practice ensures that it maintains contact with the distinctive disciplinary core of theatre studies. The constraints placed on the course by the institutional necessity to formulate pedagogical objectives and develop assessment procedures have not inhibited the transfer of knowledges across disciplinary boundaries. In fact these institutional dictates, together with the various formulations of theatre/performance studies as an academic discipline, point to the discursive practice of performance studies as a site of political contestation. If we accept, after Foucault, that discourse is "the thing for which and by which there is struggle," then the development of a course like performance dramaturgy can be read as an interventionist strategy, which seeks to accommodate the political dimensions of cultural studies within its boundaries. It is also worth noting, in the words of Foucault, "any system of education is a political way of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourses, along with the knowledges and powers which they carry".4 This particular articulation of the discipline also signals the institution's acceptance of production-oriented performance work as a legitimate form of academic study. Indeed, such a course would be impossible without considerable institutional support. Production courses are expensive and labour intensive, and represent a
significant investment of resources. It is also worth mentioning that the course brings together two quite distinct yet complementary articulations of the original ID drama course. Norman Price’s training in and experience of the world of professional theatre was coupled with my approach to performance, which places a greater emphasis on theoretical explorations and academic research methodologies. While we both bear the traces of the institutions, which have shaped our respective approaches to performance, work, we also function as the agents through which the field and practices within the field may be re-articulated.

In order to evaluate the productivities enabled by the course’s importation of the research into media commentaries on *The Silence of the Lambs* and *American Psycho*, this chapter will critically examine the work conducted in the first semester of the performance dramaturgy course in 1992. It will be divided into two sections: the first will provide a brief account of the advantages of aligning performance studies with cultural studies. The second will briefly describe *The Killing Eye* and the processes, which led to its construction. The third will map the effects of making a body of theory travel from one disciplinary context to another. I will pay particular attention to the transformations engendered by teaching the serial killer commentaries through workshop explorations, which led to a full-scale theatrical performance.

### 4.2 Why Cultural Studies?

Why choose cultural studies as the discipline most likely to inspire the construction of engaging performance texts? Apart from the common factors (outlined in the last chapter) which facilitate the relatively painless transfer of knowledges between the two disciplines, cultural studies is an ‘in-vogue’ discipline --- it has aroused an unprecedented degree of student interest, it has produced a seemingly inexhaustible supply of quality publications, media attention and, most importantly, it possesses academic credibility, even if it is not
universally acknowledged. This is a quality that performance studies does not possess in the context of Melbourne University. It is important to stress that this is a local problem because the discipline is experiencing a vigorous period of growth in other universities in Australia and around the world.5

When compared to cultural studies, performance studies occupies a relatively low position in the humanities value hierarchy. The reasons for the establishment and acceptance of cultural studies at the University of Melbourne are complicated and beyond the scope and immediate concerns of this dissertation. However, it is useful to remind ourselves that cultural studies was conceived in the academy insofar as it emerged, at least in what Andrew Milner calls its 'culturalist' incarnation, “within the academic discipline we now know as 'English' ”.6 University English departments, as the self-ordained custodians of canonized literary culture, were compelled to respond to those cultural practices and formations which they perceived as a threat to their sovereignty. The salient point is that cultural studies, in spite of its oppositional politics, was articulated by credentialled, professional academics (the 'prodigal fathers' named by John Hartley).

The relative lack of institutional security in the field of theatre/performance studies can be attributed to the fact that, despite their significant tradition of scholarship, theatrical activities have been coded as 'non-academic', particularly in the English-speaking world. Their 'prodigal fathers' (particularly in its 'narrow-spectrum' phase) tend to be practitioners like Stanislavski, Brecht, Artaud, Grotowski and Brook rather than scholars.7 It is also important to consider what Jonas Barish calls the anti-theatrical prejudice. Barish observes that:

most epithets derived from the arts are laudatory when applied to other arts, or to life. If one describes a landscape as 'poetic', or a man's struggle with adversity as 'epic' . . . one is using terms of praise. . . But with infrequent exceptions, terms borrowed from the theatre
Barish, whose book documents this phenomenon in great detail, goes on to demonstrate that theatrical metaphors are, more often than not, deployed to signify inauthenticity and deception, and are, therefore, antithetical to the academy's pursuit of 'truth'.

Even if the affiliation with cultural studies does not raise the profile of performance, it has the ability, by virtue of its analysis of society's manifold technologies of subjection, to enhance the discipline's 'political edge'. That is, it has the ability to increase the range of analytical methodologies and theoretical perspectives that can be used to short circuit the systems of power operating across the 'broad spectrum' of performance phenomena. This is not to say that performance studies lacks a political dimension, or that it has ignored the political implications of performance practice and theory. I am suggesting, however, that there is much to be gained from the kind of political analysis one finds in cultural studies. Such collaborations are already under way. Reinhelt and Roach's anthology, Critical Theory and Performance, is a testament to the fact that the theoretical cross-fertilizations between the two (inter)disciplines has been highly productive.

4.3 Performing Cultural Studies

The course began with seven introductory seminars, which examined various aspects of the serial killer phenomenon. Apart from explicating the material I had developed on the censorship debates generated by the media's obsession with The Silence of the Lambs and American Psycho, I arranged for the students to be presented with additional perspectives on the topic by guest lecturers who, in keeping with the tradition established by the earlier incarnations of the ID drama program, were drawn from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. For example, Dr. Ken Gelder from the Department of English delivered a paper on The Silence of the Lambs as a hybrid literary form, which pastiches the conventions of detective fiction and horror fiction. Bruce Clezy, a tutor in the Department of Russian and
Language Studies, examined the construction of masculinity and the function of fetishism in the genre. These presentations provided the beginnings of the research base from which a dramatic text was to be constructed. The students conducted further research, and collaborated with me in producing the dramatic text of The Killing Eye.

This text comprised three narratives, which were intercut in order to juxtapose and compare the effects of each narrative as a particular mode of representation, especially in terms of gender politics. In part, the project sought to dramatize the discourses of commentators such as Scutt, Jillett and Mailer. The production's major narrative, in terms of length, which deals with the notorious 'moors murderers', Ian Brady and Myra Hindley, and was articulated in a variety of textual forms, displayed many of the features that Gelder and Clezy isolated as being characteristic of the serial killer genre in popular film and fiction: for example, the protagonist's obsession with transcending the mundaneness of everyday existence, his ambiguous sexual identity, his fetishism and so on. We presumed that a dramatic re-coding of the Brady/Hindley story would bind the audience into a specific relation with the performance, which would hopefully allow them to experience Neil Jillett's "fascinated disgust". The activities of these characters were supposed to be compelling enough for the audience to want to know more about the motivations for their deeds. Rainer Werner Fassbinder's play Pre-Paradise Sorry Now and Tony Harrison's prurient 'true-crime' paperback, Brady and Hindley, were used as the source material for this segment of The Killing Eye.

The second narrative strand was taken from the Marlene Gorris film, Broken Mirrors, which tells the stories of a group of women who work as prostitutes in a Dutch brothel. Their story is intercut with that of a serial killer, who frequents the brothel; the film concludes with the killer, whose brutal activities are concealed from the prostitutes, saving the life of one of the prostitutes after she is attacked by a client.
Only those scenes, which dealt with the activities of the serial killer, were used in *The Killing Eye*. The purpose of the Gorris quotation was to create an atmosphere of repulsion, and to get the audience to identify emotionally with the plight of the abducted Woman represented in those scenes. The function of this segment was to exemplify what Jocelyn Scutt calls the 'chilling effect'.

The third narrative strand attempted to comment critically on the electronic media's re-coding of the serial killer phenomena through the presentation of *I've Got an Opinion*, an amalgam of late night variety television (in the manner of the local Steve Vizard or its American precursor David Letterman), and daytime talkback shows (like *Donahue* and *Oprah Winfrey*). This device provided comic relief and enabled some of the factual information about serial killers to be communicated to the audience. The segment focused on a panel of 'experts', who literally mouthed the positions articulated by commentators like Scutt and Jillet, and on the antics of the show's host, Phil Winfrey. Theatricalized television commercials were used to mark the transitions in and out of the *I've Got an Opinion* show. The show's final segment canvasses the audience's opinion on the topic of serial killing. Much of this segment's dialogue was transcribed from an *Oprah Winfrey* episode, which dealt with the serial killer phenomenon.

The three narrative segments were intercut using lighting cross-fades and sound bleeds to create filmic transitions between scenes. The segments were arranged in an order, which was designed to move the audience through a series of conflicting and contradictory emotional and intellectual states. For example, the opening scene of the play concludes with the abduction of the woman in the *Broken Mirrors narrative*; there is a quick blackout and cut to the *I've got an Opinion* show, which begins with a comic stand-up routine involving a number of 'bad-taste' serial killer jokes. This juxtaposition is repeated with increasingly larger contrasts between the world of the serial killers and the television variety show. The technique was supposed to jolt
the audience into considering the relationship between these contradictory representations and their own involvement with the play's presented world.

It is not possible within the confines of a dissertation to document exhaustively the processes involved in the construction of *The Killing Eye*. In any case, I am not concerned here with performance documentation. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the consequences of making cultural studies theory travel to an adjacent discipline, and the broader aim of the thesis is to consider the institutional power/knowledge relations operating in the articulation and practice of a specific form of performance studies. However, it is important to note that the research work conducted within the performance dramaturgy course was supplemented by practical theatre workshops, which radically transformed the way the cultural studies material was taught and received.

4.4 'The Workshop/Production Effect'

The place of practical performance work in university theatre courses has always provoked a great deal of debate amongst those charged with the responsibility of formulating and implementing such programs. Bruce Williams, in his paper 'The Ghost in the Workshop: Liberal Education and Practical Drama', points out that, "[w]hat made the introduction of drama studies controversial was not that people set out to study drama in performance, but the use of active methods." 14 In Australia, as we have seen, these 'active methods' entered the academy in the early seventies as a particular manifestation of radical pedagogy, which, in the words of Williams, was "... not to be some bloodless contemplation, but a whole encounter of living persons in lived experience." 15 I am certainly not implying that all other forms of pedagogy are exercises in 'bloodless contemplation' or asserting that the discourse of theatre practice is unproblematically assimilated by the academy, but it is necessary to emphasize that the establishment of theatre as an autonomous discipline must involve an engagement with the experiential,
the sensuous and the practical and that the drama workshop produces a wide range of productivities and problems not encountered in more established teaching models. These differences were accentuated by the performance dramaturgy course's investigation of the serial killer genre within a performance context.

The seminar and lecture material presented to the performance dramaturgy students differed little in terms of content from the material presented to their counterparts in the cultural studies course 'Art, Pornography, Blasphemy and Propaganda'; the same selection of commentaries on *American Psycho* and *The Silence of the Lambs* was analysed in terms of their rhetorical strategies, institutional locations and ideological sympathies by both sets of students. The differences between the classroom-bound cultural studies class and the workshop-driven performance dramaturgy program become most apparent when one examines the texts produced, for purposes of assessment, by the students in the performance dramaturgy course. Here are two extracts from one student's (Damien Millar's) production casebook of *The Killing Eye*:

> The Woman/monster identification has become even more charged, and the punishments for looking even greater in recent serial killer films. In modern films there isn't only an affinity between women and monsters, they are the same thing. Monsters no longer terrify us. Mutilated women's bodies do. When Sarah screams on stage, we are invoking or representing a certain type of gaze. It is the woman's look -- Jane Dough's primal response to the faceless serial killer/monster. I think that it is interesting later on in our project when Edwina is psyching up Sarah by telling her to scream. There are now two women involved in the same process, constantly complicated by Edwina 'looking over' the entire Sarah/Patrick drama. Two women gazing, one man performing. This will have an interesting relationship with the forensic scene where two men are gazing and one woman is inactive. Perhaps we should put Edwina into the forensic scene?
Millar uses feminist film theory, specifically Linda Williams' paper, 'When the Woman Looks', to interrogate *The Killing Eye*'s sexual politics and goes on to use the theory by suggesting an alternative way of representing gender in a particular section of the play. This paragraph would not be out of place in a cultural studies or cinema studies essay. Indeed, Millar’s use of Williams is representative of the kind of interdisciplinary work, which is produced by students who undertake, often simultaneously, subjects from different disciplines. What is interesting here is not the interdisciplinarity as such -- it is something of a growth industry in most universities -- but its unique application in a course such as this; the task of writing a script and staging a play based on theoretical investigations enables students like Millar to use theory to construct as well as deconstruct representations, that is, to explore, test and even generate theory through engaging in practical theatrical processes, thus constituting one of the major productivities enabled by the performance dramaturgy course. Here is another extract from the same journal:

There is so much personal shit going on behind the process and it is dragging me down. A lot of this stuff I feel is beyond talking about with a lecturer. But theatre is such an emotional exercise. This can't be divorced from the project even if it is just another subject at Arts Administration. I'm rambling but I hope you can make some sense of this.

This second journal extract employs a register and tone radically different from the first; it is colloquial and personal. It is the language of theatre practice, and its informality invites comparison with John Sumner's letter to Wall Cherry cited at the beginning of chapter two. The passage also makes manifest the fears of the early opponents of the original ID course, who expressed concerns about teaching practical theatre within a university environment. It will be clear by now that *The Killing Eye* created a space of multiple dissension. Students disagreed about whether the project was complicit with the commentaries and representations it was supposed to critique. Some of the participants were perturbed by the impact the characters they portrayed had on their own lives. Others were more interested in their disappointment at not being cast in a major role. Theoretical
problems merged with practical staging problems, which, in turn, were affected by the disparate political interests and investments of the individual group members. The project managed to concretize everything that was dangerous, and everything that was productive about interdisciplinary performance work. These contradictions and tensions are present in the cited extracts from Millar's journal.

The drama workshop as a pedagogic form, in the words of Bruce Williams, "... gets us passionately involved in disorderly human encounters" which, on occasion, create tensions and anxieties not normally encountered in university teaching. Production-oriented work intensifies these tensions and anxieties because theatrical processes are by definition collective processes, which require students to participate in physical activities, and work with their emotions -- theatre, despite some protestations to the contrary, is an "emotional exercise". While the serial killer commentaries provoked a great deal of interest and controversy amongst its original cultural studies constituency, the class discussions and debates in this context were conducted with relative detachment; for the most part, the students' analyses of texts followed the example I had set: they examined commentaries on a wide range of serial killer texts in order to determine how they produced their 'truth-effects' and from what source they derived their authority.

The performance studies students were put into a different relationship with these texts by virtue of the fact that they had to concretize them. The discourses of Scutt, Jillett and Mailer were spatialized and, what is more, taken up in the bodies of the students. While this process was part of a larger pedagogical imperative formulated to generate a structure, which enabled the disparate positions on the serial killer genre to be compared, and subjected to critical scrutiny, it was also responsible, in some cases, for destroying the critical distance that is perhaps a necessary precondition for dealing with contentious material. This is not to say that performance-based pedagogy necessarily prioritizes or
consciously cultivates the experiential and emotional. Rather, the performance dramaturgy course as a discursive and material practice requires students to participate in analytical and critical processes as well as practical processes, all of which demand a high level of intellectual and emotional commitment.

I noted, in chapter one, that one of the requirements for a discipline's survival in the university environment is the establishment of a research paradigm which produces demonstrable research outcomes; The Killing Eye was conceived and shaped in such an environment, and it must be viewed as a research project, concerned as much with social and cultural issues such as media representations of gender as with theatre practice. It is perhaps the academic approach to research and the inclusion of contemporary theoretical speculations that distinguish The Killing Eye from its research based confreres in theatre culture outside the university. There is, of course, no reason why a professional theatre group could not employ similar research techniques to generate a performance text. However, the institutional rules and attitudes, which govern most theatre companies, would make such a prospect highly unlikely.

An academic performance studies course is compelled to assess its students in accordance with specific academic criteria. The students who undertook the Performance Dramaturgy course were required, in addition to contributing to the construction of a dramatic text and its subsequent production, to produce a production casebook which included documentation of the production's research and performance processes, as well as a piece of sustained critical writing on the project as a whole. The casebook, which constituted the main assessment component of the course, caused a certain amount of concern on the part of the students, who felt that too much emphasis was placed on the project's processes of documentation and analysis at the expense of more direct performance work; I was informed that the project's research orientation prevented other methods of text generation.
from being explored. This was a regrettable but, nonetheless, inevitable feature of the project. As I have stated many times before, the institution is a strict taskmaster, and its laws must be obeyed. The Killing Eye is an example of the kind of performance that has been shaped, both formally and in terms of its aims and objectives, by the academic institution. The students, however, are only partially conditioned by the university.

The Foucauldian concepts I have employed throughout this thesis (my methodological 'monkey-wrenches and spanners') have enabled me to specify the rules and procedures which govern the practices and behaviours which the academy legitimates, and the discourses it makes function as true. And while the behaviour of lecturers and students is conditioned by these rules and procedures, it is important to remember that a large number of discursive practices emanating from an equally wide range of institutions shape them before they enter the academy have inscribed all members of the university community. In Foucault's terms, they have been shaped by many 'technologies of self'. A student, or for that matter a vice-chancellor, will travel to the institution with emotional, social, and political baggage. This is no great insight. However, until relatively recently, the facts of one's personal biography were not supposed to intrude upon academic work. Terms like 'objectivity' and 'critical distance' characterized academic discourse across a wide spectrum of disciplines in both the humanities and sciences. Contemporary interdisciplinary areas like women's studies and cultural studies have encouraged students to situate themselves in relation to the texts they read and the cultural phenomena they analyse. As I have already stated, performance activity requires students to embody characters and explicitly work with emotions. This has the potential to produce an acute awareness of one's 'situatedness', and it is this awareness that produces the kind of tensions, productivities and dissension described earlier in this chapter.

4.5 Disciplining Practice
While theatre practice, in the guise of workshops or full-scale productions, is almost universally accepted as an integral part of any theatre/performance studies program, its specific function within the discipline's overall epistemological profile is unclear. It is useful at this point to return to the various definitions of the discipline cited in chapter one. Performance presents the academy with a wide range of problems: how will performance work be assessed? Will the university's acceptance of a 'practice' based discipline compromise its academic standards? Where will such a course be taught? How much will it cost? What will be its legitimate objects of analyses? In chapter two I charted the changing fortunes of the University of Melbourne's ID drama course. The testimonies I collected together with the archival material I compiled provide some idea of how one institution has dealt with performance in the academy. The epistemological profiles articulated by Schechner, McAuley and Pavis also express anxieties about the place of performance work within academic programs.

Richard Schechner's 'broad spectrum' approach to the field prioritizes the 'intellectual aspects of performance studies," which, of course, are more likely to conform to the academy's conception of the 'true'. Gay McAuley is careful "not to blur fundamental distinctions between the academic study of theatre and vocational training and even artistic practice". So while she does not overtly exclude practical work as a legitimate part of the discipline, she does not endorse work that may be confused with 'artistic practice'. And while Patrice Pavis acknowledges that theoretical investigations should be tested by practical work he argues that the theatre/performance studies academic must know "how far to go". How far did The Killing Eye go? Was it an unauthorized venture in theatre practice, enabled by some political sleight-of-hand? Was it a legitimate research project driven by unorthodox means? The project made use of a wide range of theoretical discourses drawn from adjacent disciplines; the students undertook conventional academic research tasks, participated in a theatre workshops and performed a self-devised
performance text. The project can be legitimately described as being both academic and theatrical.

The anxieties expressed by the institutions and theorists of performance/studies in this dissertation emerge out of local power/knowledge networks and relate to specific programs and elaborations of the discipline. There are encouraging signs that these anxieties are not universal. In an article titled 'Theatre and University: the Gießen Model', Christel Weiler speaks with Andrzej Wirth, Hans-Thies Lehmann and Susanne Winnacker about the applied theatre studies program at the University of Gießen. Weiler poses the question: why shouldn't critics direct plays and directors teach and write?

Here is part of the exchange between Weiler and Wirth:

C.W. Work on performance projects is . . . an essential part of the [Gießen course]. But it does not simply mean that a member of staff together with students puts a text on stage in a conventional way, but rather it is an attempt to link compatible theoretical and practical forms (Annäherungsformen] with the theatre.

A.W. Yes, I think that is what Thies and I understood and sought to achieve by using projects for the stage - but also the guest professors I chose. But as far as my own motivation is concerned -- I'm not a purely theatre person, I always saw myself as an intellectual in the theatre, as someone who uses theatre for thinking . . .

It is also important to note that projects like The Killing Eye are not unique, and that work of a similar nature is being conducted, in an international context, by people like Patrice Pavis. In September 1992 Pavis, within the framework of the 'Erasmus' scheme, created in collaboration with thirty-five students drawn from the universities of Seville, Paris VIII, Leicester, Frankfurt, Bologna and Brussels, a short performance work, KafCat en America, which explored the issues generated by the Spanish colonization of the American Indians. The intercultural nature of the group produced a variety of perspectives on the project's theme; Pavis speaks of the crisis precipitated by his inability to understand how
the Spaniards could be proud of Columbus' conquest of the Americas, the Germans' anxiety at appearing overly logocentric, the English anxiety to situate themselves in relation to their homeland and so on. The KafKat en America project, like The Killing Eye, created a space of multiple dissension. The difference of cultures and personalities combined with a controversial topic produced many of the same pressures and concerns that I have articulated in this chapter. Pavis notes the project's institutional origin (the university) and its experimental nature, but is unsure how to categorize the work: is it an autonomous artistic production, a piece of intercultural art, a pedagogical exercise, or an instance of amateur theatre? He also indicates its value as a vehicle for teaching problem-solving skills.

The major productivity to emerge from the projects described in this chapter is something that has been known by theatre workers for a long time: the theatre can be used as an effective vehicle for thinking and testing ideas. This dissertation attempts to expand the boundaries of this truism by demonstrating that academic theories can also be tested and perhaps generated through performance. Apart from functioning as a laboratory in the Brechtian sense, the theatre may have something to offer its academic cousins in adjacent disciplines. Theatre cannot only be used to think, it can be used to teach. I shall briefly explore this proposition by way of conclusion in the next chapter.

ENDNOTES


3. The course does not teach plays through the kinds of workshop practice described by Bruce Williams in his paper "The Ghost in the Workshop: Liberal Education and Practical Drama. See Meridean, 9.1 (1990):170-177. The course is
perhaps more closely related to the kind of work currently being conducted by Patrice Pavis (see Chapter three, note 41).

4. Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse' 64.

5. Refer to the statistics cited in chapter one.


7. It is inevitable that the discipline of performance studies will, if it has not already done so, produce founding fathers and, dare I say, mothers whose primary training is academic.


15. Williams 170.


CHAPTER 5

(In)Conclusion: 'Reforming the Humanities: The Politics of Theatre Pedagogy'

A substantial proportion of this thesis has been concerned with mapping the effects of 'travelling theories', and this activity has compelled me to travel into territories both familiar and unfamiliar. It is now time to take stock of where I have been, what I have learned and to indicate future paths of travel. I began this dissertation by describing and analysing the institutional power/knowledge relations operating in the constitution of performance/theatre studies as an academic discipline within an Australian context. I utilized Michel Foucault's conceptions of 'discursive formation,' 'discursive practice,' and 'power/knowledge' to demonstrate the ways in which the academy governs the discipline, and isolated some of the major 'truth-effects' produced by the institution's technologies of government. My interrogation of the various epistemological articulations of the field, both here and abroad, produced the following observations: first, the discipline constitutes a heterogeneous body of knowledges and practices, and the fluidity of the field's borders is indicative of what Gayatri Spivak has termed, in another context, a 'productive crisis'.

The disciplinary core of theatre-specific objects of enquiry and methodologies has been questioned by developments, such as the rise of critical theory, in cognate disciplines. This has led a number of influential theorists in the field, most notably Richard Schechner, to argue for an expansion of the discipline to cover a wide range of performance phenomena. The debates cited and analysed in chapter one point to a discursive shift from theatre studies to performance studies (Schechner's 'broad spectrum' articulation of the discipline). Gerald Rabkin's article "Waiting for Foucault: New Theatre Theory" notes the "...the enormous critical energy released into the discursive worlds of literature, film, fine arts,
and philosophy by the influence of new European -- largely French -- theoretical speculation."² He goes on to argue that:

In a proliferation of new books and journals, traditional humanist and formalist axioms were being challenged and destabilized. . . Theatre discourse (and by discourse I mean the reciprocal communication of ideas within a prescribed field), on the other hand, had atrophied.³

Rabkin's proposition that the field has 'atrophied' ignores a considerable body of contemporary performance theory and theory-driven practices.⁴ The 'theory revolution', which for the most part has been fought on adjacent battlefields, has, as I have demonstrated, made substantial incursions into theatre/performance studies. While the 'disciplinary' domain is far richer than he would have us believe, Rabkin nevertheless echoes my observation that it is the academy itself, which enables, through its value hierarchies and procedures of government, critical theory to travel. However, it is one thing to name the theorists and theoretical schools that are being invoked in the 'discipline', and quite another to account for the reasons why these discursive alliances are being forged and to analyse the effects that are produced by these encounters. Rabkin's paper would be stronger if he spent less time waiting for Foucault, and more time productively employing his work.

This brings me to my second observation, which is that not enough attention can be paid to the workings of institutions like universities. Contrary to the widely held belief that the academy is a hermetically sealed environment, separated from the cut and thrust of the 'real' world, I believe that the institution's activities, particularly in the areas of research and pedagogy, are 'worldly' and, most importantly, political. Those of us who work in such environments need to become aware of the local political agendas that shape our behaviours and, indeed, ourselves. Such an awareness demands that the scene of teaching and research is viewed as a site of political struggle, a point reinforced by my experience in
the performance dramaturgy course described in the last chapter. Susan Melrose, in her paper 'Making Do: Strategies and Tactics in Performance Pedagogy', states:

> It is politic, in the light of changing circumstances, to make do -- not by advocating radical group action; not by seeking to feed students with one version of 'universal principles' argued in one or another name; but by providing the enabling conditions to a recognition, comparison, and relativisation of established practices in theatre (including strategic practices of spectating) wherever these may come from. In this sense deconstruction of the institutions and their strategies is constructive: it does not cause a revolution or leave a void, nor cause us to rage, nor to turn in endless circles, precisely to the extent that we eschew both despair and advocacy of one particular solution coming from yesterday's scene (which was once my own).5

Melrose goes on to argue that political contestation and praxis need to be undertaken within an institutional environment. This means that we "... need to learn how to get in to the institution, since only institutions now provide us with the means to speak and act effectively, and to 'make trouble'." 6 'Making trouble', in Melrose's terms, may involve contesting such things as disciplinary definitions, course content, established assessment procedures and so on. This imperative brings my argument a full circle, and prompts me to ask: how do you 'make trouble' and be an effective pedagogue?

The third major lesson I have learned from my own theoretical journey is that every articulation of the discipline produces certain productivities and constraints. For example, performance studies, at the University of Melbourne, has been situated in close proximity to cognate 'disciplines', and this enables the kinds of interdisciplinary exchanges I have described in the last two chapters. However, the knowledges and practices, which are the progeny of interdisciplinary couplings, produce a variety of material effects, particularly in the area of pedagogy.
An examination of the implications specific disciplinary definitions have for pedagogical practice is of vital importance to any academic who wishes to engage with institutional micro-politics. In a chapter titled 'Aesthetics and Literary Education' in his book, *Outside Literature*, Tony Bennett convincingly argues that:

> To think critically about criticism requires that account be taken of the actual mechanisms of the literary--pedagogical apparatus, of the techniques of subjectification through which this apparatus works and of the forms of aesthetic, ethical or epistemological self-shaping they support.7

Bennett points to one of the further paths that the research I have presented in this dissertation may take. If one accepts that teaching activities participate in processes of self-fashioning for both students and lecturers, then more attention needs to be paid to the specific techniques and procedures used to impart knowledge. In a performance studies context it becomes important to answer the following questions: how do production courses differ from more traditional seminar/lecture-based courses in terms of the kinds of subjectivities they foster? How do performance-based courses alter the student/teacher relationship? What alternative pedagogical models are currently available to teach performance studies courses?

I began this thesis by arguing for an interdisciplinary articulation of performance studies along the lines advocated by Richard Schechner. I demonstrated the value of such an interdisciplinary approach by employing those modes of textual analysis, which have been most closely identified with the adjacent 'discipline' of cultural studies in a performance studies context. This move was predicated on the belief that an interdisciplinary 'broad spectrum' approach to performance studies is more likely to produce beneficial discursive alliances between contiguous knowledges. However, such alliances do not occur by themselves. People may need, as Melrose suggests, to 'make trouble' before it is possible to make the kinds of alliances I have been arguing for. The historical narrative of the ID drama course, presented in chapter two, is filled with instances of people 'making trouble'.
at a micro-institutional level, and it has been one of the purposes of this dissertation to advance the cause of such strategic nuisance-making.

It is important to remember that Schechner's 'broad spectrum' paradigm has a messianic function: to reform the humanities. Schechner does not specify how this reformation might take place. However it is worth noting that theorists such as Gregory Ulmer use the performance paradigm as the pedagogical model for what he calls an 'applied grammatology'.8 Before elaborating on Ulmer's work it may be useful to contextualize his argument in relation to this thesis by engaging in some strategic 'backtracking'.

In chapter one I wrote about the three major conditions a 'discipline' must meet in order for it to survive in the academy; I argued that it must, as a minimum requirement for institutional respectability, consolidate a research paradigm which ensures the generation of new 'truth-statements' within the 'discipline's' discursive formation; it also needs to establish a pedagogic program which articulates the limits of its body of substantive knowledge in terms of aims, objectives, and assessment procedures; it must also demonstrate, particularly in the current economic climate, a connection between its knowledges and practices and those skills which are in demand in the labour market. Almost every epistemological profile of performance studies addresses, to greater or lesser extent, such institutional 'decrees'. These 'decrees' can be read as constraining forces insofar as they make specific demands on the teachers and students whose learning/teaching activities must take place within the context of the academy. I have described some of these constraints in my discussion of the problems that arose in The Killing Eye project. Institutional constraints or 'decrees' of this kind point to the ways in which performance practices are transformed by their location in the academy (that is, of course, if performance work is recognized as a legitimate academic pursuit in the first place). The value in a project like The Killing Eye or Pavis' KafCat en America lies in its ability to collapse the distinction between research activities and so-called 'artistic practices'. There are signs that the binary oppositions, such as the one between reason and the emotions,
mind and body, that have dominated pedagogic practices in the academy are being revised in the light of poststructuralist epistemology. And this is where Ulmer's interests intersect with my own.

Ulmer's *Applied Grammatology*, referred to above, attempts to use Jacques Derrida's proposed 'science of writing' (grammatology) to formulate a series of pedagogical procedures, which displace, among other things, the sovereignty of the book in the scene of teaching. His form of 'grammatological' pedagogy involves the use of multi-media technology and practical teaching procedures, which are drawn from the world of performance. Ulmer's work is made possible by Derrida's critique of western metaphysics and his deconstruction of the speech/writing opposition, which is at the heart of the Western philosophical tradition. Derrida argues that 'speech' has been systematically privileged over 'writing' because, in the words of Barbara Johnson, "... the speaker and listener are both present to the utterance simultaneously... This immediacy seems to guarantee the notion that in the spoken word we know what we mean, mean what we say, say what we mean, and know what we have said." 9 Writing, however, is a debased form of speech because it is severed from its initial point of articulation. Derrida demonstrates the impossibility of separating the terms of the speech/writing opposition on the grounds of immediacy or 'presence' by pointing out, after Saussure, that spoken language is made up of a phonic signifier and a mental signified and therefore differs from writing only in terms of its mode of signification. Johnson states:

As soon as there is meaning, there is difference. Derrida's word for this lag inherent in any signifying act is différance, from the French verb différer, which means both "to differ" and "to defer." What Derrida attempts to demonstrate is that this différance inhabits the very core of what appears to be immediate and present... The illusion of the self-presence of meaning or of consciousness is thus produced by the repression of the differential structures from which they spring.10
This critique of the speech/writing opposition produces a radically new conception of writing, grammatology, which is not limited to the purely linguistic realm. It is this notion of grammatology, which, according to Ulmer, has important implications for pedagogical practice.11

The multi-media text generated in The Killing Eye project involved itself and engaged with such an expanded notion of writing. Indeed, the construction of any performance text involves the manipulation of multiple forms of writing. It is no accident that theatrical metaphors abound in most postmodern discourses. Ulmer, who makes extensive use of performance theory, notes that:

Examples of what an applied grammatology might be like -- of a pict-ideo-phonographic Writing put to work in the service of pedagogy -- are already available in the intermedia practices of certain avant-garde artists. Contemporary movements such as conceptual art, performance art, and video art may be considered from our perspective as laboratories for a new pedagogy, since in these and other movements research and experience have placed form as the guiding force.12

The 'Writing' processes used to generate The Killing Eye, described in chapter three, can be read as a concrete instance of the picto-ideo-phonographic Writing championed by Ulmer. The critique of the serial killer commentaries proceeded through the construction and presentation of images, sounds and movements as much as through conventional forms of academic writing such as essays. This is not to say that all forms of 'stage-writing' can be described as forms of grammatological pedagogy; most theatrical activities do not have explicit pedagogical aims. The institutional location of The Killing Eye project is, therefore, highly significant: the project's raison d'être is pedagogical. It is in the project's function as a learning device, as the site for what Bertolt Brecht13 may have termed major pedagogy, that its true value lies. The production sought to interrogate the aporias of the serial killer formation by collapsing the distinctions between analysis and creation, research and invention. What better way to explicate the workings of textual strategies in film, literature,
theory and theatre than by generating one's own strategies. An epistemology of performance studies, which makes theatre practice an integral part of its program is perhaps the most obvious place to experiment with Ulmer's post-structuralist model of pedagogy. This is why 'disciplinary' contestations are necessary. If performance studies is to take its legitimate place in the academy as a valuable site for the production/reception of pedagogically, valuable practices it must make discursive alliances with its cognate 'disciplines' without sacrificing its own repertoire of performance-orientated perspectives. This thesis has, hopefully, sketched a more politically efficacious conception of the 'discipline'; and one that will help to legitimate the presence of performance studies within academic institutions.
ENDNOTES


3. Rabkin 90.

4. Rabkin disregards the work documented in the pages of *TDR*, the various *PAJ* publications, the Routledge theatre studies publications and critical anthologies, such as *Critical Theory and Performance*, cited in this dissertation.


10. Johnson ix.

11. Derrida explicates his science of grammatology in the following quotation:

   It is clear by now that "writing" is being redefined in grammatology. For sometime now, as a matter of fact, here and there, by a gesture and for motives that are profoundly necessary, whose degradation is easier to denounce than it is to disclose their origin, one says "language" for action, movement, thought, reflection, consciousness, unconsciousness, experience, affectivity, etc. Now we tend to say
"writing" for all that and more: to designate not only the physical gestures of literal pictographic or ideographic inscription, but also the totality of what makes it possible; and also, beyond the signifying face, the signified face itself. And thus we say "writing" for all that gives rise to an inscription in general, whether it is literal or not and even if what it distributes in space is alien to the order of the voice: cinematography, choreography, of course, but also pictorial, musical, sculptural "writing." One might also speak of athletic writing, and with even greater certainty of military or political writing in view of the techniques that govern those domains today. All this to describe not only the system of notation secondarily connected with these activities but the essence and the content of these activities themselves. It is also in this sense that the contemporary biologist speaks of writing and pro-gram in relation to the most elementary processes of information within the living cell. And, finally, whether it has essential limits or not, the entire field covered by the cybernetic program will be the field of writing.


12. Ulmer 225.

13. Brecht made a distinction between the pedagogical function of his 'epic' theatre and the Lehrstück. Wright notes that Brecht associated his epic plays with what he termed 'minor pedagogy'. These plays were, in the words of Wright, designed to "... undermine bourgeois ideology without breaking too radically with bourgeois traditions." See Elizabeth Wright, *Postmodern Brecht* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989) 13. The Lehrstück, on the other hand, was a form of 'major pedagogy' and "... unlike epic theatre, which exposes the contradictions while perpetuating the institution which produces them, Lehrtheater breaks with bourgeois theatre and provides a new revolutionary praxis". See Wright p.13.
This bibliography includes some sources not directly cited in the main body of the text. They have been included because of their contribution, in the form of background reading, to either the main body of the dissertation or the composition of *The Killing Eye*.

### 1.1 Theatre/Performance Studies


### 2.1 Primary Material – Serial Killers
This section contains a list of films, novels, reviews, and criticism, which focus on the issue of serial killing.


Jillett, Neil. 'Censors let loose a cannibal who is gallant'. The Age 8 May 1991.


Mailer, Norman. 'Is This Bad Art, Or Is It Just Bad?' The Sunday Age 26 May 1991: NEWS 15.


Sorenson, Rosemary. 'Bleak satire shocks but deserves attention'. The Age (Books Extra) 1 June 1991.


3.1 THEORY


Baudrillard, Jean. 'The Precession of Simulacra' in *Simulations.* New York: Semiotext (e), 1983.


Johnston, Claire. 'The Subject of Feminist Film Theory/Practice', *Screen* 21.2 (1980):27-34.


Appendix 1

ID Performance Drama Interviews
James, what sort of involvement did you have in theatre before you were involved with the ID course?

Well, both substantial and limited. I'd returned to Australia in 1969 to take up a position in the Classics Department, and I had before that a certain involvement in student theatre. But immediately before coming back to Australia I'd produced a couple of Greek plays at the behest of my colleagues at Princeton, and that had been a particularly provoking and exciting experience. So I came back in '69 with a sense of mission, and all that, but I also found a very exciting theatre environment in Melbourne. It was not just theatre; there was dance and music. A lot was happening, and that led to setting up what we called the Group Theatre Project. So by 1970 I'd set up the Group Theatre Project, which existed for basically four years and led to four major productions. So I suppose you'd say in terms of my experience before going to the course that it was in that classic fringe area between professional, student and Melbourne alternative theatre. It was the theatre of the Carlton environment, and while I wasn't part of the mainstream of that environment in terms of being involved with the APG, my involvement stemmed from Melbourne University through the Carlton theatre and through the people who were actually quite often in the act of moving into the profession. But you couldn't say that my involvement was as a professional theatre director. That started with the foundation of the Mill theatre company.

So who were some of the people who were active at that time?

In my group or generally?

Generally.
If you look at the late 60s and early 70s in terms of writers, there's Hibberd; I worked with Jack Hibberd on a translation of Aristophanes. He and I were quite close friends at that time. Williamson, of course. I don't know quite when David moved to Sydney but he certainly was around at that time. That first generation of writers spawned a second generation of writers in people like Colin Ryan. In terms of directors, well there are all the directors associated with the APG, Graeme Blundell, and the APG [Australian Performing Group] itself through that time actually took on its last lease of life as the APG ensemble in about 74/75. But I mean there's also that terrific environment of university theatre at that time, the years of 1971 and 1972 as I recall them were the two years of the great Australian seasons. Every single dramatic group in Melbourne University dedicated itself to the creation of an Australian play. That would even now be amazing but it certainly was a tremendous step in those days. I think a lot of that activity was attenuating a bit by 75 - I think often what happens in the university happens a little bit after the act. But the Pram Factory was still open at that time; I don't think it actually closed until after I went to Geelong in 77/78. For me, personally, the very fact of my involvement was based on and related to the feeling that theatre was very much alive and very polymorphous in Melbourne at that point. If it hadn't been I wouldn't be involved with theatre now.

For that first year of students that Hector and I taught, the 75 course, there was a great sense of waiting for something like the ID course. While there was a lot of different stuff happening in university theatre, there was no academic output, so they were just lined up at the door, waiting. The list of names in that first year of that course is a bit of a roll call itself. And that was definitely part of what made the course a success. I think, however, that the linkage between that theatre environment and the setting up of the course can be overstated. I really think it is to give Melbourne University too much credit. The origins of the theatre course are much more linked to some unrest about curriculum development or the lack of curriculum development in the Faculty of Arts, which was reflected in many
ways. From my own experience it was reflected in the eventual and spectacular crash of the new first year course, proposed only the year before. If I was in really cynical mode I would say the setting up of inter-departmental programs was a palliative move, given the departmental structure. Universities often have this knee-jerk reaction: "there's a lot of unrest around, so we'll give them drama to mop up their energies." Anyway, to put it less contentiously and more simply, the setting up of the drama course had much more to do with internal politics of the Arts Faculty and certainly the only reason I became involved -- it took a bit of a prompting from Hector for me to get interested in doing it, actually -- was because I was by that stage so devastated by the defeat of the first year scheme, that I had actually really lost interest.

So what was this first year scheme?

Well, it was an attempt headed up by Richard Canto, who was tutoring politics at that time, and myself, but supported by many others including Hector, which addressed what we saw as a problem with people who come to the University with a decision about what they're going to do based on prior knowledge, which is no prior knowledge, of what University subjects are. They're committed to then studying those subjects from there on unless they make a deliberate course change. So we developed a structure which, to be fair to the Arts Faculty, was just a little bit less holistic. We were prepared to sort of fit in a bit more, rather than take over. We were only trying to take over the lives of 50 students. Again, there are developments like this in many American universities and some British universities.

I could go on about the first year scheme but it’s probably not relevant to the present discussion. I still think the ideas that were there were quite good. We weren’t just tackling the departmental structure; we were also really interested in the structure of learning and
getting students setting their own goals. There was eventually a fallout from its defeat; a smaller scheme, 'special studies' was introduced.

So, would it be correct to say that the ID programs were set up in a climate where old pedagogical models were being questioned?

You are right in saying that old pedagogical models were being challenged, but really they were being challenged by a very small handful of us that had been pretty much defeated. I don't think we posed a threat to anybody. There were other things around like university assembly, which had its toes cut off before it even started. There were around '72, '73 demonstrations around issues like exams, so there was a very strong sense of unrest about university structures, which led to the foundation of the University assembly. It's as if you've got this enormous fucking dinosaur that moves across the face of the university, and then it drops these three little rabbit turds out the other end, which were the three interdepartmental courses. It meant nothing. It gave a handful of students, 30 students in each program, a year. I think the interdepartmentals were always moderately successful. So, I suppose in that sense you can say they were an answer to pedagogical unrest, but there was no inherent radicalism in the actual structure of the teaching of these interdepartmental courses; in fact, you could argue that there was an inherent conservatism in the structure because the University didn't put money into these bloody things. Although the Drama course did have a favourable staffing structure to start off. I was put across there to run this one course, but it was based on the notion that lecturers would come into the department and give lectures and then I'd do workshops. I'd give also give some lectures. But it really settled down to a combo of Hector, Judith and Terry. So, that in itself is not exactly a model for pedagogic radicalism. If we'd been set up as a team, Hector, Judith and I then you can develop structures. Now we actually became a team and I think there was a modestly radical air to the interdepartmental drama program
in those first two years. But that was because we trusted each other and we went off on a bit of a journey. If you look at what happened to 18th century studies, I remember it was a very nice course, lots of interesting things, but I don't think it was particularly radical.

*James, if we could just go back a little bit. I get the impression you weren't altogether responsible for initiating this course.*

A retrospective history would say Hector and I brought it into existence but we didn't. So it's very, very odd. I think that maybe one of the things that the students were saying at the time, because there was a huge amount of real negativity from the students, was that they really were pissed off; there was a large dropout rate, there's always been a large dropout rate at all Australian universities, but I think one of the things that I now recall that was distinctive at that time was that a lot of your best students were dropping out; a lot of really good students were just not completing the courses, and I think they were worried by that. Whenever a student is dissatisfied, as you would know well from personal experience, they often actually snatch at peripheral issues. I think one of the things that they were saying was "ah, there's no drama course," or something like that. So, I suspect the drama one was more reactive. Another possible issue is whether some of Dinny O'Hearn's drinking mates across in Stewarts around the Pram Factory were saying Dinny, "why isn't there a proper drama course?" It'd be worth asking Dinny about that, and Dinny would be candid, I think. If candour is not forthcoming, say that James McCaughey was wondering if - it'd be an interesting reaction because Dinny has a highly ambivalent relationship with me, but at least he does respect me, I think. So, if you just provoke him a bit you might get somewhere.

Another possible source of drama getting up and going was a very major feeling of dissatisfaction about drama in the English department. When I first came back from overseas in 1969 it had been really very much the best department, but by the mid 70s it
had become really quite retrogressive -- repressive, actually. And it was in its imperial way teaching drama like good literature, and I think there was a strong feeling around of opposition to that. I taught some of their best students and they weren't happy with what they were getting; but look, on that point, I've taken it as far as I can go I had to think of other things.

So you were approached to take on this course.

Yes, I was, I can't remember by whom.

Were you given any instructions as to how to run the course? -

Oh yes, absolutely. Well, yes and no. There was a very loose brief, and I can say that with some conviction because I know that I went in there saying I have absolutely no idea of what a university drama course properly consists of. I have the strongest recollection of us working that out, the students and me as much as myself and my colleagues like Hector. There was honestly no brief; there was simply no brief. Really, if I'd had a different temperament and gone to Dinny and said what is this course meant to be, they just wouldn't have known. I was aware of models, the Rusden drama program had been going for some time, but that was clearly related to teacher education; well, taken on a very broad brief under John Ellis' leadership, it was much more than merely teacher education, but it was very much structured around productions, and I knew that wasn't possible or desirable. I knew it was not to be a training program because of the number of hours that sort of thing requires, and we didn't get students of that quality, although some of them developed great quality. So I knew it wasn't that. I guess there was an indication that it had to have some activity base, and I suppose insofar as I could really diagnose, now looking back at it retrospectively, what they thought we were going to do was pretty close to what the La Trobe model is now: the study and analysis of text with workshop used as an illustration. I think that would be a somewhat enlivened classic university course, a
great plays course. You will observe that the three categories of drama were Greek tragedy, Chekhov and Brecht. This is not exactly an agenda for stirring radicalism or deep responses to what's happening in Carlton, although I hope that my study of Greek tragedy was particularly dialectic with the times. But it is not a recipe for radicalism, and by the end of the second year I had difficulty staying with that course. I really had to go to Deakin [University] to find the room and the freedom to go where I wanted to with the course, but I only got to that point by working through the great richness and excitement of the course. So okay, in terms of the models available, there was the Rusden drama program; there was that sort of illustrative La Trobe model, which was comprised of lectures, seminars and workshops. I was greatly helped by my own ignorance at this point. I think there's nothing like knowing a little in the world of education because I'd never done a drama course. I should say this too; I think the only thing, which I'd ever been trained to do in my life, was to teach classics. One might say I hadn't been trained very thoroughly for that. I'd never done a drama course of any kind, but I did vaguely know there were these historicist courses up in NSW, and I knew I didn't like them. Anyway, we didn't really have the resources to do a historicist-based course; we just didn't have access to that amount of Hector's time or other people's time.

I suppose it was actually a real advantage that we took Greek tragedy that first year. I believe that you can only render Greek tragedy on the stage by using a paradoxical dialogue between establishing, as far as you can, exactly what it was that happened on the original theatre, and then opening yourself up to every possible contemporary technique to realise that's exactly what it was. I think that probably that view of mine, which is not a particularly radical or unusual view, was a little bit distinct at that time, because there were only two other real models: I think one was the boring old historicism, pseudo historicism. You do it the way it was done, which we all know is an act of rubbish, because you can't ever do it the way it was done; or take the ball and run with it. So, why doesn't that work perfectly well with the La Trobe model? By the way, I think lots of good
things happen at La Trobe, it's getting better and better, but I don't think it is right. The problem is that when you only have workshops by way of illustration, there's an enormous conceptual, procedural, and dare I say epistemological problem because a workshop doesn't illustrate anything but itself. If you want to say there's this point I want to make about, say, Brecht, what happens if you go into workshops and what the students do actually doesn't show that? You're either going to say it's a failure, which is what Richard Coe did. He did some terrible things to the students because they were just not illustrating Genet the way it should be. But it's actually likely that almost any point that Hector would want to make about what happened with Helene Weigel, or something like that, is actually not illustratable by the students because they're not Helene Weigel. A) they don't have the skills, B) they're not German, C) they haven't lived through the war, they weren't trained in the same way as her, they haven't eaten the same for breakfast, they could not have slept with Bertolt Brecht. At this junction it's either you believe in what's happening in workshops, and the point is that if you do believe in that, then the workshops have to become the life of the course. So what is produced in the workshop becomes the subject matter of the course. But the real secret was because the students had been involved, either directly involved with that rather interesting student and Carlton environment, or had been observers and participants or even just affected by it, that they progressively, as the course came on, did start to do such fantastically interesting work that there was no problem in saying that what was done on the floor of the workshop was sufficiently interesting. That was the main part of the course, the structures were incredibly simple. I would now, if I went back to those courses, find them crude, simplistic, badly formed, and badly conceptualised, but there was a fantastic energy. I remember that what we would very often do was just divide each class of fifteen into two groups of six or seven, and they'd both have to do a version of a particular event, as I would call them, a sub segment. We would then analyse what happened to text.
I can remember a particular extraordinary sequence of workshops involving Russell Walsh who is still working, John Forster who is not. They were two very, very bright students and very often, I'd always put them in two different groups. They were in one workshop of 15, and it was just quite dazzling what they would do. I've always felt in structuring university courses that it's very important to give students clear signals about what the course is about. I've noticed that in drama courses again and again, that people nervously interlay other things; they say it's a workshop course but they then pile a colossal historical framework over the top and maybe exams on the end and that sort of thing. Students are very good at taking signals; they're going to work out from not what you say but what you're doing, where the strength is. I felt that we could very easily destroy this course by nervously piling back to historicist conservative modes, so we actually didn't have great seminars and discussion groups, the lectures were what I always believe lectures are, not for transferring information but the stimulus and creating an environment, bringing in exciting people, and of course getting information across. They did learn a lot from Hector and Judith, and I can still remember some of the information... Yes, that was really it, honestly. It was to work less well in the second year, because although there were some very good students, they didn't have that terrific hit that the first year with the three years of waiting and impatience had. They weren't quite as good, although there were some very good students in the second year, and again some students went on to make a life in theatre, I think Hannie Rayson was one of them.

We were all working out what would happen in those workshops and I really think that we couldn't have succeeded without those very bright students -- if we'd had a dumb lot of students in our first year, the course could really have crashed because we didn't have much idea.

*So there was no agenda, you didn't go in with a prescriptive set of aims and objectives.*
Yes, I guess we did. I went in with the view that informed the Greek theatre project, which is what our mission description would now be called. Our statement of aims for the Greek theatre project was to render Greek theatre in the mode of contemporary theatre. I guess I believed that if the students could explore in contemporary modes, these texts from other times and countries, that they could both learn something about theatre, but probably, because I myself was working in that intellectual environment of the university, I’d have said the main job still was the illumination of the text. I probably would’ve said that was the aim to begin with. I’d probably from the very beginning have felt that there was an agenda in the workshops themselves, but one’s got to be careful about retrospective clarity.

I was to go on to far more radical things at Deakin. What happened at Deakin was only possible for me, was only possible for Deakin, because of the Melbourne drama course. But by the end of the second year we were hitting some quite major conceptual problems, and it was getting a bit unstuck probably because of our unresolved intentions in what we were doing.

What were some of these problems?

It came round Shakespeare; it wasn't to do with Terry (Collits), although probably I made a bit more elbowroom for Terry. I think both Hector and Judith felt that I knew what was happening on the workshop floor and they were observers. Actually, Hector and I cooperated very fully, but I didn't feel that I had to make room for anybody. Terry kind of thought he could do it, so I started to step back a little bit, you know, and that was always a possible model. Actually, I was only meant to be a coordinator, so I probably taught it all a bit more directly. See, I taught much more directly than Graham Marshall did in 18th Century Studies. Graham in his well-bred way smoked Gitanes and chaired people. This makes it sound as if it's Terry's problem -- it wasn't. I actually think that it's really quite
difficult conducting workshop technique on Shakespeare because of the logistics. With the Greeks, the point of difficulty is also the point of freedom. I mean because you just have to attack those texts in such a huge way to get anything from them. With Chekhov, the imagistic intensity, the purity of the event, structure and the writing is such that it leaves people very frequently with different versions. With Brecht it just worked, I think there was just a harmonious thing between the students and Hector and me. But again, because it's not written English, there's a greater freedom. I don't remember the Shakespeare workshop as being really very satisfactory, but that's more symptomatic than causal. I remember that I had a meeting with Hector and the team before I decided to go to Deakin, and I remember saying to the team: "look, if we are saying that the subject matter of the course is what the students themselves create, then we've got to unharness it from reaction to an illustration, reaction to text." The reaction to text can be part of the course and all the time I taught at Deakin, I always taught some Chekhov and some Ionesco. Then we would do bits and pieces of Brecht. Hector came down and had a year as visiting lecturer and that brought it into the course. I still do it at VCA, where I teach at the moment.

I would always say that the study of the text as it exists is a very stimulating and proper and important arena, but I felt at that moment that the only way the Melbourne drama course could go forward and be true to itself was actually to trust its own radicalism. If you say the course is what students create, then you've got to be willing to say that agenda actually comes off what the students are doing and therefore is different from student to student, group to group, term to term and year to year. And we were actually able to do that at Deakin. There was a general feeling at Melbourne University that this was going to be difficult. It's grossly simplistic to say that's why I left, it wasn't. I left much more because of the ineptitude of Melbourne University. At that point Melbourne University advertised for a lecturer in drama, they must've felt the course had succeeded. So I was invited to apply for that at about twelve levels lower than I was presently employed. I
must say I didn't go to Deakin because I'd had that conversation with the team, and felt that we weren't going to be able to make that change, ie. that would be retrospective...

So the course wasn't under threat during your tenure.

Oh no, I think we were going full steam ahead then. It had a pretty good reputation.

If I could just change tack a little bit and move away from historical stuff, I was interested in asking you how you see the relationship between academic institutions and the world of theatre practice. Was it a very uneasy alliance during your involvement with the course?

It was then, there's no question. Some of that came from APG power base. There was a lot of quite specifically antagonistic stuff about universities, university lecturers, and university critics. Some of that was APG paranoia that retrospectively heroised the APG, it was an amazing institution and I'm delighted they're doing this reunion. But when you say what do I think is the relationship between the universities and the theatre world, I guess I really had the feeling that it is the role of universities to foster creative activity in whatever field. I suppose I have a commitment to the university as a generator of activity, a generator of culture and not simply an analyst and custodian. I still think that within that framework the university brings an absolute fearlessness to analyse and talk and criticise and to put things within theoretical frameworks. But having said all of that, it doesn't mean that I just think that university should be just one big happy sixties sort of workshop, nor do I think creativity is so mindlessly fostered. Let's take a step back. When I came up to Melbourne for my brief and inglorious relationship with the Playbox Theatre Company, I decided I wanted to create a play with three actors who would really take on responsibility of creating their own play. So I selected the three applicants I wanted and although the play was nothing wonderful the choice of those actors was certainly good.
And it was only after I'd done it I suddenly realised that all three actors had been at university. Julian Murray, Susan Fraser and Drew.

**You are currently teaching at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA), which is an actor training institution. How would you describe the differences between the academic institution on the one hand and the actor training institution on the other?**

They’re not necessarily opposite, of course, they do overlap and they all depend on the students, and my teaching is within what’s called the theatre creators stream in which the animateurs, directors and writers work, so that would be the most theoretically and intellectually oriented of the streams there. I find it very difficult in the actors’ stream. I think both sides have got a lot to gain if they play it properly, but there are two or three problems within actor training institutions as they are found within the British world, in which we so unhappily find ourselves. One is that the students all come with absolutely no sense of the past --history begins with them. So a paradox again. Here I am saying I didn't want to teach historicist courses -- it's like that old thing, you know, the Zen practice tries to get you away from being obsessed with memory, trying to get away from living in memory, but then they say the worst possible thing that can happen to a person is to get Alzheimer's disease and lose their memory. It's that one doesn't want to dwell in the past like some university structures do. If you go to a drama school and see people who don't even think there's a past it is deeply problematic. So that's problem number one. Problem number two is that the anti-intellectualism of Australian and British theatre communicates itself very directly to the training schools. A lot of the students are very slow to actually be patient with any intellectual considerations; it's not true of the present generation of teachers who're actually quite intellectually acute. But to me those two things would probably be fairly obvious. You'd think university students would be more arrogant than students in actor training school, but actually they're not. Students in actor training school are very arrogant. Okay, it's often out of fear and insecurity, but that
doesn't help them learn. But I guess both of those would be perhaps predictable and obvious problems. To me the real problem is actually more radical: the real problem is that because at the end of the day those students are all obsessed with employment, for perfectly good reasons. It's only about two of them per year that really get work, but instead of actually seeing it as a liberation, to know that they've got to take their future into their own hands, and develop their own work, their own style, they actually become more timid. They're John Hewson's or David Kemp's dream -- they're absolutely vocationally oriented. I have hardly seen a show come out of the VCA, which is worth a row of beans. They have the most leaden-headed variety of experimentalism. They don't really think that's the main point of their course, they think it's the funny experimental bit on the side. And because of that, those institutions don't generate work. So, here again is a paradox: if they don't generate they've got more room to be theoretical, but I'd say because they're not generating they've got less room to be theoretical. Theory only comes from looking in front of you and saying this works, that doesn't work -- why? If you're not generating work, you're probably only doing one more boring play about the first World War and asking how you do it. I'm painting a pretty black picture. I wouldn't want to say that nothing good is happening because there are some quite good teachers, and you always get some good students.

*Was there ever any pressure put on you to produce research publications at Melbourne University or Deakin University?*

I actually think that I was very lucky in that way. It's probably a slightly different answer as to why in both places. At Melbourne University I really think that I was protected by the fact that my academic status as a senior lecturer in Classical studies was . . . actually I never really produced much written work; I mostly produced performances, but for whatever reason I was okay. Now, at Deakin the reason is a little more complicated, and perhaps more interesting. It was a new institution, with an extremely radical new dean --
really what we did at Deakin was based on Max Charlesworth. I owe him practically everything. He set up an environment, he trusted us. You'd have a conversation about what you were doing which lasted about three and a half seconds and he would say "yes, yes, fine," and off you'd go and do it. And you'd work for another year. But Max is very smart. He knows what's happening and so he'd let us go. Now, what we did in that environment, we were able to press, quite early on, the notion that research work is what is produced in performance. Now I have to say that I think that can become quite a problematic statement. I was, in fact, put in the quite difficult position of being a referee in a University that shall remain nameless for a promotion for an academic that shall remain nameless, who was riding that as hard as John Wayne riding a horse across the desert. There was no question that he was doing heaps of work, but I don't think it stands for research, what he was doing. But there was actually a feeling, a quite proper feeling, at Deakin that what we were creating with the Mill theatre company was research. And we actually got some centre of excellence research money. So, the answer is no, but I recognize the problem in what you are saying. And I would find it very, very uncomfortable to have to produce conventional written research, and I myself, if I ever had the chance to build a large department, would hope that there were always people like Charles Kemp who does find that comfortable. But the analogies for research in drama must be like chemistry research. But then you must really be producing something, because to `act King Lear is not necessarily an act of research.

_But it seems that when you moved to Deakin you were given the opportunity to engage in the kind of practice-based theatre research you have been advocating._

I wasn't given the opportunity. I did it. Nobody asked us to do it. I made it quite clear when I applied for the job that I'd be seeking to do that, and the University was only too pleased because it precipitated the University's activity in Geelong. But then again it's retrospectively more clear that it actually was. And again, this is strictly confidential, the
University had inherited a far from brilliant art and design department, which had quite a high percentage of leaden-heads in it, and of course they were very happy to say that whatever they were doing was research which is a problematic statement. That said, there were so many inconsistencies in the University. I was never particularly threatened because it was obvious that I was working as hard as I possibly could. And that the Mill was productive. And I think, quite properly there was no questioning of the research environment in that context. And I think that we were fortunate in that we were a young University; there's that windfall time in a young University, if you drive really furiously through the years you can get a long way down the road before anyone stops you and imposes constraints. And we were a long way down the road. They got their revenge when I left, of course.

*And to what extent were the respective courses at Melbourne and Deakin interdisciplinary?*

The Deakin one wasn't interdisciplinary at all. And the Melbourne course was only superficially interdisciplinary. It was more international than interdisciplinary; it was interdisciplinary in the sense that Hector and I had a very cordial relationship, and interdisciplinary to the extent that I learnt a little about Brecht. We all learnt a little about drama. But to me that's not the deepest level of interdisciplinarity. Deakin was founded as an interdisciplinary university, and all of its course teams were truly interdisciplinary. So I was on its "Images of Man" course team, so I was doing a lot of stuff that wasn't drama, until I became so overwhelmed with business. As long as Max Charlesworth was there it was interdisciplinary. But just coming back to the drama course at Deakin for a second, it was interdisciplinary insofar as it combined dance, music and drama. But I didn't try to tie the drama course into the history of ideas section, nor to the Australian studies course because I felt that the students were already working in an interdisciplinary environment. But part of the mission of a drama course at a University is to teach drama
to students who are studying other things. How could I miss such an obvious statement?
That is the great difference between a drama school and a university drama course.

*James, I just have one final question, if you were given the opportunity to set up a theatre and drama studies program from scratch, what form would that take?*

I really don't know. The truth of the matter is that when you start out to do something new you tend to start from the end of the last chapter, and the only question there is how fast and well you travel. When someone comes to a theatre company as a new artistic director you'd think that would be a great leap forward, but it's like what I did at Playbox, I took a big step back. But at Deakin there was a forward momentum from Melbourne University, and I really knew what I wanted to do at Melbourne University at that point but couldn't do at Melbourne University. So I had a sense of being released from an obstacle. I would hope that the pathway was on from Deakin, and it presumes that every student either collectively or individually was creating material, and that material was the subject matter of the course. But what I would now wish to do is to ask much more deeply than I did at Deakin how that material relates to the world around them. What is the view of the world reality that they are taking on? What is the bit of reality they're portraying? I always start my course now with a question I would never ever have asked at Deakin: I ask my students to write down what they do not understand that they would like to understand. So, I would actually want to say that where the course at Deakin was actually based on creativity at all cost, because, at the time, we were concerned with bringing drama in to a place where active drama didn't exist, that was Geelong, and so that was our pressure. And without dressing it up because there were failures and flaws there too, but it was no small achievement I think to take eighty to one hundred students a year, and at the end of the year each one of them would perform a solo. It was a pleasure to sit and watch them for a whole day. It wasn't boring, they were all different. But, nevertheless, that was the agenda. What I would now be doing would be to say that, yes, we can accept
it and trust it now and I know that could take place. But there was a hollowness in the
Deakin thing. It was terrific, but I used to end up on Melbourne Cup day, a festival day
when all the off campus students and on campus students would perform for six hours
straight. It was an exhilarating experience, but I always used to sense some small sense of
sadness, a small tinge of limit. And I now know that limit was. That the students
weren't actually on a journey of understanding about themselves and the world around
them. It had a somewhat positivist view, which is the limitation of community theatre.
But if you ask why is drama so awful at the moment, why is there nothing that you want
to see? It's because nobody is really engaging with the great problems inside themselves
or in the world around them. Or we are not doing it well enough, or we are not doing it
hard enough. I would really want to try to draw students into a really deep personal
struggle, which is also a struggle within themselves. What is their own pattern, their own
struggle? I'm also interested in contemporary psychiatric understandings of the world
around us. A subject I wouldn't have touched with a bargepole at Deakin. Because I think
that the great advances in acting have always been involved with our advances in the
understanding of the structure of human personality. And you can only deal with that by
dealing with yourself, and looking at the theoretical framework. I think psychiatric
understanding has leapt miles since Freud, yet most actor training is still based on a
Freudian/Stanislavskian framework. It's just boring psychiatrically. So I'd want to explore
that. I really think that we have to start looking at the spiritual dimensions of
performance. I think a colossal amount of people in the arts around me say privately that
they become more and more concerned about the interrelationship between their creative
work and spiritual questions, but nobody is doing it out in public. It's between consenting
adults at the moment, in the closet. And I think I'd want to ask that question. I was very
interested to see it in a recent edition of The American Poetry Review; there was a
beautiful series of poems by a classicist, at the University of Michigan, called fourteen
poems about God, and I thought that is a real straw in the wind because ten years ago you
would not have got them published. I'd of course ask them to look at political questions.
But it would be much more in the light of the sort of questions that confronted us in the Timorese question: that is, what you do with questions very close to ultimate evil. It is not enough to write a political play about Timor; to deal with the politics of what's happened in Timor, to be involved in this play is to face questions about human existence, which are almost intolerable. And I don't think what we are doing and studying in drama goes anywhere near touching these things at the moment. But those are the questions that I am facing in my own life, and those are the kinds of questions I'd want to structure a University course around. And that creates the best course because in '75 there were questions we had to resolve for ourselves and that's why the course was as good as it was; If we walked back into the classroom now I think we'd be mildly appalled, but it was why I went down to Geelong. I asked how does performance extend itself to become more characteristic of society. I think that should be pretty exciting. Maybe I should go ahead and do it.
What was your involvement with the ID drama program?

I had a great interest in theatre; it was one of my private areas of academic study. The ID drama program in theatre was part of a larger development, which provided the opportunity to branch out and expand our curriculum. The establishment of a performance drama course was one of the things that a group of us, including someone as eminent as Professor Davies, and a number of other senior members of the faculty, thought would be a very good thing to start. This proposal ran into immediate difficulties because at that stage the arts faculty, and even more particularly the English department, concerned themselves with teaching the theory of literary criticism, and was opposed to teaching any applied tasks. This was particularly clear in the fine arts department where all the creativity and application of the skills were left to other institutions like Melbourne Tech or RMIT.

We had to convince the faculty that drama was worth teaching and that the ID programs were worth getting off the ground. A number of people did not want drama to go ahead, particularly conservative members of the English department who considered that the university had no business teaching practical drama. I was involved in the various political and academic negotiations, and I had a private interest in developing at least some small part of the curriculum where students could actually put their ideas into practice.

Were you directly responsible for initiating the program?

Fundamentally, the whole concept of interdepartmental studies was my idea and drama was part of that development. The whole ID program was a dream of mine, and the various aspects of it, the first year aspect, getting the money into the faculty was also a very important thing, as far as I was concerned, it was totally fresh money. However, of course, when you do this you've got to fight faculty who says what happens at the end when this money is no longer there, and so you've got to show ways in which this can become incorporated into the mainstream, and it's not just a three year hike and everything folds up and the tents go down and darkness descends. So it was interesting times and as you
might imagine a lot of pargy-dargy talk, argument, and finally approval, finally approval.
And in those early days it was decided by the conservatives, who lost out on the final vote
and was not going to go ahead, if that were the case then it would have to go ahead with
somebody whose major qualifications were very strictly academic, but who also might be
able to teach drama on the side. And there was a lot of worry about how you would
examine this subject. The examination had to be mainly academic and take a written form.
And indeed, it seems funny now, looking back, but it was a serious problem for people to
get their minds around because at no time in the Arts Faculty had people ever had to cope
with how to implement practical examinations.

We're currently fighting a battle with the arts faculty to get a theatre studies program
located in that faculty and they are baulking at assessment, how do you assess drama, and
the argument is practical work has no place in Melbourne University arts faculty, despite
the existence of this course for some twenty years.

Well that's the kind of madness you run up against and people can always fish out these
dim, dark, sinister problems whenever they want to actually make a political point which,
of course, was what was being done.

So what was at stake? Why was there such resistance, do you think, on the part of the so-
called conservatives?

What was at stake was a whole mindset, really. A highly trained consciousness about what
a university is and is not. One of the opponents, she wouldn't mind being mentioned, God
bless her, she's a wonderful person in so many ways, was oddly enough Maggie
Tomlinson. Maggie was a great actress in the early days of the Melbourne Union Repertory
Theatre with Ray Lawler and Barry Humphries. She performed under the name of Mary
O'Fahey. Once she became an academic theatre became something you did in your spare
time and the study of drama became serious intellectual stuff. We were still fighting a huge
battle to argue that universities are different from places like RMIT or teachers' colleges
where all that practical stuff was perfectly good. It's a long-held traditional view and it's
held very passionately, that if we teach practical courses we become no different from RMIT, which was set up to do other things. And one can understand that point of view.

So they were literally fearful of the barbarians at the gates, that sort of thing.

Yes. And their hard-won academic positions, which they could see, being frittered away as the number of senior lecturers in the land increased ten-fold. To be a senior lecturer in English was to be one of about forty across Australia. Soon it came to be just one amongst five or six hundred, and eventually one out of ten thousand, or something like that. This was also, of course, coming after the Vietnam student protests, and the resistance to the course was yet another attempt to keep students out of the decision-making process.

This was around the time that the university assembly came into existence.

That's right, and I was part of the group that set that up too. The assembly enabled students to get onto faculty committees and onto the faculty itself. In the case of drama faculty were concerned that the students would have to assess each other, or they would have to look at each other's work. It was teamwork, you see. It wasn't individual work, and how are you going to assess teamwork? All these little bits and pieces were used to defend what was basically a mindset.

And so how did you go about winning that battle because it seems to be quite a formidable task?

Well, of course, the first thing was to win the battle on ID programs across the board, and get the money - which we did. But because these ID programs had to be, by definition, quite experimental and quite innovative, this was an obvious runner to something that fell into both those camps. It was also, as we continued to argue, obviously an academic pursuit and we cited the existence of long-standing courses performance drama course at liberal college units across America. The ID proposal came at a time when many academics feared that the much-dreaded America influence was moving into the university's Scottish-English influence tradition. For example, there were only two or three people in the whole of the arts faculty, big and all as it was, that were doing Phds. Everyone else was doing the
MA. We didn't like Phds; they were an American invention and no one would let anyone do one. So you had all these factors involved. We pointed out that you only had to look to universities of quite some standing, like Berkeley and Yale; we fished out a course from there, to see that the introduction of practical theatre studies hadn't done any harm.

Would it also be true to say that given what was happening in Australian theatre at that time the university was reluctant to deal with questions of say Australian identity, because it seems that the drama of the late 60s/early 70s particularly was concerned with finding an Australian voice, as it were?

That's right, it definitely was.

How much of a worry would that have been?

That wasn't so much a stated worry because in some sense that would've brought a whole different argument and a very strong backlash against it, but it was certainly a hidden concern. There were a whole lot of these hidden concerns, which come to focus on two or three central issues like assessment. Behind those lead arguments are a whole lot of concerns such as those you've just voiced, and the ones I've just spoken about like students getting too much of their own way. So it was finally agreed that we would get the ID programs and this became a kind of a cause celebre: are you a bit liberal minded or are you not? Interestingly enough one of the ways in which it was voted in eventually was with the help of the language departments. The language departments at that stage were notoriously conservative about certain things, but you had younger members amongst them who wanted to see a bit more of their own drama, even in translation, taught and they also wanted an opportunity to show the straps of their own drama. And so with the historians on side and the psychologists who couldn't vote against anything because they were running psychodrama groups, we had supporters people who could argue for the pedagogic value of staging a bit of Oedipus or Sartre. Eventually the numbers were simply there and the drama thing got off the ground - but with very strict qualifications. We had to appoint a lecturer whose qualifications were mainly academic. We also had money for either a full time or a four-fifths time tutor. There were other concerns, practical concerns,
like where will the course be taught, and how long was going to be per week. There were concerns about how students having to undertake unsupervised work, since they had to practice their parts. Was somebody going to lock up the building after them - see, this occurred during a period of great student unrest. A lot of these schemes, as I'm only too well aware, can fail at the last post. You can't teach people politics, and if you don't watch your selection committees very carefully, the conservatives can thwart the best laid plans.

The next major problem was where to house this program; everything had to be housed as part of a chain of command. This used to drive me crackers. I argued that the faculty should house the program, but they insisted that the programs be attached to academic departments. So we had to find academic departments who were liberal enough to look after the ID courses.

_Didn't the drama course occupy a free standing position in the first couple of years of its existence? James was from classics, and as far as I can piece together it seems that it wasn't until the course became threatened that it then had to go to Russian and language studies?

It was never a freestanding program, a lot of people get this confused. Since there was a lot of money available in the early days we wanted to get as much of it as we could, so we appointed a director of ID programs and a created a little office of ID programs with a secretary. The director's task was make sure that each program under that director was a responsibility of both that director and the director's department and the secretary. Now we found departments who would come to this party because they would say: "oh, we'll get the placement for the director and we can use that money for a while and we'll get an extra bit of secretarial help for the sake of finding an office." So once that proposition was put to them in hard cash, so to speak, the departments became interested in housing the programs. Later down the track, as the money started to disappear we had to trim the whole operation. we had to cut the number of ID programs, cut the secretary, and put the director on three-quarter time instead of full-time, instead of full time and so on. But for the first few years, it all worked splendidly because even though hierarchically the person was
plugged into a specific department they had fairly free rein over their own budget and could do with it as they wished. They had to produce a report each year, and, of course, an eye was kept over the proceedings, but not a very close eye.

*Were you directly involved in any of the teaching in those early years?*

No, I would've liked to have been but I just didn't have the time. I did a few guest lectures apart from that, no.

*Did you get a chance to have a look at any of the work that was being produced?*

Oh yes, I certainly did that, and it was high quality work. It was very strongly suggested that they ought to put on a showpiece every year, not for assessment but to win people over. The best way of proving your point is of course to show people what you've done, and so for the first few years, several years, there was this annual showpiece. We'd invite a number of people along just to see how the thing was working. It worked extraordinarily well.

*So what happened? When did the rot set in?*

There was one disastrous appointment. I'm not naming names. The appointment was disastrous because the selection committee prioritized academic qualifications above anything else. The appointment, though a perfectly good person and highly qualified, couldn't come to grips with the weirdness of both the course, the arts faculty itself and the structure of Melbourne University and a whole lot of other things - mind you, very few people can. But this person found it particularly difficult and did not establish a particularly good relationship with the students. All this came to a head with the problem of assessment and I had to be called in to arbitrate on a number of occasions. The written assessment was not a problem, since that was mainly done and cross-examined by academics, but naturally enough it was the other part of the program that caused the real difficulties. There were appeals and there were counter-appeals and all sorts of other things. We got it all sorted out in the end but it was very unfortunate, and it put the whole
course in a bad light for a while. Whenever people would say, "there, I told you so" they'd use the very ammunition they'd used when the course was first introduced.

The course survived because other people got deeply involved and loved what they were doing. People like Hector Maclean, Judy Armstrong, Terry Collits, and other people within the English department. And so by this stage you had a number of senior academics who said: "look, this is silly, we don't throw out something just because we've had a bit of a rough patch with one group or one particular person, we can vouch for the fact that of course there are going to be difficulties."

There were all sorts of minor problems, which people would pick on. You know. The room was left unlocked all night and cups and saucers were left all over the place, it was too noisy, other classes couldn't use the space. People used to come to me fiercely and we'd calm them down, pat them on the hand and give them an Irish whisky, talk to them and off they'd pop. The major factor was of course financial. As the free money departed you not only had to persuade people that the project itself was worth continuing as an academic project, but that someone had to fund it. Now the people to persuade were either a given department, or the budgets committee of the faculty. I'd been on the budgets committee long enough to know that if you put a sound case you can persuade people to say we'll put up a bit more money for the next three years, and then you had to persuade people to trim their costs. Originally all lecturers would get paid and I think we dug up some money for students to travel to conferences, all that sort of stuff. We dug up money for equipment that was always a hassle, of course, because you were fighting all departments for the equipment money and space.

_How were you placed to act as advocate for the course as the sub-dean of the arts faculty?_

_What did that position enable you to do?_

Mine was an extremely free-floating position without real definition, thank God. It meant that I sat on all the key committees in the faculty. I'd been around for a fair while, so the faculty trusted my judgement on a number of things. By definition, I was not self-interested; I wasn't going for a department or a person. I was an impartial consultant with a
good deal of, I suppose, power, on various committees, and well known round the faculty by academic members, so I could go to people and talk to them. I used to handle anything, and point out straightforward things like a drama course is going to need space. That was a big hassle for a long time. We got different spaces, the major one we got was on top of engineering for a number of years, and that took a lot of getting because then you've got to argue with the university and the engineering faculty and so on. And once you've got that, then you've got all the equipment to put in, the curtains and the floor coverings and the areas. And none of that was easy to come by, but you argued that you either abandoned the course entirely, which would be a great pity because it's going well and it's academically valuable, or you put some money into helping it at least limp along. And so gradually over the years, we got space. We didn't ever get an ideal space until one day I was looking at a regulation, as I often had to, in that monstrous book of regulations, and noticed there was a little scholarship that'd never been taken up called the Keith Macartney scholarship. He was a professor of English in the 50s, he had a great interest in theatre, fantastic interest in, and knowledge of theatre, he was always trying to get a practical theatre course going. He's one of the founders of the Tin Alley players.

So I found a sum of money there. I did a highly complicated deal with the Student Union to use the money in that scholarship fund. Well first of all I had to persuade the university solicitor that the terms of the will could run to such a thing instead of a scholarship, and could be used for other drama purposes, and the student union made the Des Connor room available to us.

There'd always been a slight friction between the union theatre board and the director of student theatre, but I was on very good terms with all the student directors of theatre and with the union board administrators. So we were able to draw out an elaborate lease plan, which at least gave the drama course a reasonable home.

*So you had connections with all those factions.*

Yes, well as sub-dean I had to, I had to have connections all over the university with all manner of beast and being. At first stage it looked like it was going to be a terrifically
elaborate plan and the union was going to refurbish offices and shift other bits around, as long as we, the drama course, would use it for x hours a week and the ordinary students could use it for rehearsals. This was the first time agreement between the faculty and the union had gone ahead, so it was to their benefit as well.

What year was this?

It must've been sometime in the early eighties.

We actually still have access to that space, although it's rarely used because the course is now housed in the institute of education.

What was the relationship between practical theatre work in the university and theatre work in the larger culture, larger theatre culture. I found that a lot of people, a lot of practitioners, actors, directors, become very suspicious when I start to talk to them about what I actually do at Melbourne University and the very term university seems to send shivers down their spines.

That's right.

And I was wondering whether you ever conceived a formal relationship between established between the theatre course and institutions like Melbourne Theatre Company.

Oh yes, we tried to get kind of a little apprenticeship scheme running, at one stage. I was also a member of the student theatre board for many years, I guess, and I was still involved in most theatre around Carlton, again in a peripheral way. I'd be called upon for whatever skills I had in various negotiations and consultations to get this and that done and through the Australia Council. We were also trying to get some funds out of them, though I was highly critical of the Australia Council. But to your primary question, basically people still think this isn't a proper academic pursuit - well, that sort of argument has been going on from time immemorial, and I don't think it'll ever be solved. My view is that medicine and law and engineering are not proper academic courses, but if a university's going to offer medicine, law and engineering then how on earth can you say that a drama course is not a
proper academic pursuit, I can't for the life of me see, given that drama is taught across almost every department in the humanities.

There's another side to that whole issue and it seems that the theatre practitioners are equally suspicious of universities.

Yes, because they were the victims of people who'd never had a university education. You've got to understand the importance of class - well you probably do understand the class and all sorts of other structures that people can erect, particularly in Melbourne, to prevent people from leaping from one little niche to another. Now the fact that, say, the Melbourne Theatre Company and La Mama started as a student theatre in Melbourne, the fact that all these things came out of student activity at Melbourne University, gave people the impression that drama was a good thing for students to do in their spare time, and that's the point of it, it's spare time stuff, it's recreational.

I remember speaking to a lot of my ex-students, because I used to teach a traditional academic course in drama for years and a lot of my students and a lot of friends too fetched up as say part time lecturers at the VCA. They came back with the reverse story, that the kids are wonderful but they really do have a gaping hole in their knowledge of theatre per se. They hadn't read all that much Shakespeare, they didn't know the history of theatre, they'd never really studied classical theatre and they couldn't see how anything fits together. So they've got all the enthusiasm and talent in the world but there's this academic block. And a lot of them found that when they went down to say the VCA, they had to spend most of their time, in fact, not so much encouraging practice but doing academic type lectures, arguing that if you're going to be playing Brecht, you need to know where Brecht came from in the history of theatre, what his connections are and what they're not, with say classical theatre.
How central was it to the culture of Carlton back in the late 60s/early 70s? It seems that theatre now occupies a very different cultural space, very - it's a serious thing for me to say because I make my living in the theatre but it seems for the most part kind of irrelevant?

It's gone back to the periphery again.

But that wasn't the case back then?

Well no. Not that anyone sat down and thought all that seriously about what they were actually doing. There certainly was no sense of plotting a revolution or being part of one, that's nonsense. But highly intelligent people were gathered together in substantial numbers, who were both writers and actors. They were dedicated to the theatre; they ate and slept it, and some of them still do -- people like David Kendall, Graham Blundell, Gillies, Peter Cummins, Williamson, Hibberd. Most of them are graduates.

That's another interesting thing, isn't it, the link between Melbourne University and this Carlton scene.

Oh yes. But see in those days a lot of students lived around Carlton. Every second house had students in it, so it was really a student community as well as a working class community. That's all changed completely now, this street is odd in that it's still full of students, I think I'm about the only one who's not. In those days, it was the venue for late night parties, drug experimentation, sexual experimentation, and the theatre scene provided a great chance for drug and sexual madness, letting off steam and so on. But someone like Jack Hibberd certainly knew what he was doing, and his vision impinged on like-minded people like Peter Corrigan, David Kendall and Blundell and so on because they talked and lived together and threw ideas around. But you get worn out, as you know, there's nothing to wear you out faster than the theatre, and unless you've devoted your life to it and that's your career, people drift away from it. I've heard people who would go to the theatre every night and see different things all over Melbourne, around here, anywhere, who just say oh, I don't think I could stand another play. A lot of dross comes up and
there's nothing worse than sitting through dross. There's nothing worse than bad theatre, simple as that. It's the most deadly dull and boring thing you can possibly imagine.

**Were you involved in the theatre scene up until you left university?**

Sure, and I always go back when things seem to be going wrong. People call on me and ask me to do things like rejoin the theatre board. I would look at the situation and bring back whatever skills I had to that immediate situation because that's one's duty. But generally speaking, the way I used to try to work was to leave it alone, let it work on its own and just talk to the people in charge. If they had problems, they would come to me, anyway, and the students, if they had problems they would come.

**So the students would come and talk to you about difficulties-**

Yes. When the whole thing blew up that time years ago, they'd come in a delegation to me and say this is not working, we can't get on with X and I'd have to investigate this. And I did, that was my duty, that was my role and I'd get things sorted out. Act as negotiator and peacemaker; get the thing back on the tracks again. So I'd only work when called upon, and hope I would never be called upon because if I was never called upon it meant that everything was going okay.

**But you would maintain contact with the students.**

Oh yeah, sure. And I used to go to all their parties and end of the year things, keep in touch that way, look at the stuff they were doing. But when you had someone, say, as competent and as skilled as James McCaughey running the thing, well you'd just leave it to James. If James had any particular worries, then he'd come to me - worries about money or what's happening next year and so on or he'd run into this block or that.

**Finally, Dinny, do you have any views on theatre studies today? Would it be a great loss if the course was to vanish?**

Yes, of course it would. Well, because drama and theatre are central to any culture. If you looked at any given culture for even half a second you would realise how central the drama
and the rituals associated with that drama are to that culture. It's just right at the very core of it, always has been and always will be. And therefore there's a great need every so often with the drama reinvigorating itself and rebounding and springing phoenix like. Now if you don't have trained people ready to take the ball or keep the ball running and take up the challenge when the revolution needs to happen, then you've lost something. Now I'm not necessarily saying that academic study is the only way it's going to happen, but it doesn't do any harm to have a ready received audience who know what good writing is, what good theatre is, what good acting is. An audience who have done a bit of it themselves and know the difficulties involved, and who know what space is all about and use of space and so on. So my answer is it'd be a disaster if theatre studies were to sort of slip through a hole in the ground. It'd be revived some time down the track; anyway, because it's a need, it's a cultural need. And the notion that we're just going to sit tight now and say right, well I've always been dumb, nothing more to learn, is just ludicrous, especially in the theatre for God's sake. But the theatre's always dangerous, and so it should be, and that's what worries people. If you let them go too far, how do you control the passion in theatre.

Dinny O'Hearn had no opportunity to read the final edited transcript, but I believe he would have wished it to be included and I have tried to edit in a way he would have approved.
Maybe we can begin by getting you to talk a little bit about your involvement with drama before the ID course was set up.

My original research was on Expressionist drama and subsequently on the Nazi philosophy and approach to art with a focus on theatre. The starting point was inevitably literary, but both, particularly Nazi theatre, involved the way performances were staged. There was a close relationship between the mass rally and the theatre in Nazi times. In the fifties and early sixties the German Department used to put on a play in German every year. I generally got pulled in to act the odd role. The standard as theatre was not great, but there were some interesting plays done, including the first performance in Melbourne of *Mother Courage, which* got a good review in *The Age*. In the fifties there were many more people than now who were German speakers, so we always had full houses. It was good for students too, the opportunity to practice German and to take a play out of the classroom onto the stage.

*So theatre wasn't formally taught in the Department of German.*

Not theatre. Drama in the same way as novel and lyric. Theatre was practically never mentioned. It was mainly an extra curricular activity. As I said, it was directed largely at maintaining relations with the German-speaking community, but it did also help students with the speaking of the language. Nobody as I recall made any reference otherwise to the productions.

*So the course that is currently taught in the German Department by Tim Mehigan is not new.*
For the most part. In the late seventies I introduced a seminar for senior students, which discussed a number of plays in relation to performance, and I even did some workshops with them in association with the seminars. It was a course they enjoyed, but nothing more was done in that direction until Tim arrived on the scene. Obviously I was making use of the experience of working with James in the ID Course.

_So were you familiar with the developments in the local theatre scene while you were teaching the German Department or did that come after your involvement with James?_

Familiar no, I used to go to the Union Repertory, later to Emerald Hill, Russell Street and the MTC quite often, then from time to time to the Pram Factory. But I wasn't a fanatical theategoer; a good deal of what I was seeing was not exciting. That was all as spectator of course. My earliest recollection of being actively involved was, as I said, German theatre in the Union, when Sumner was there at university.

_This is the man who was part of Melbourne Theatre Company._

Yes, he became the Melbourne Theatre Company, in effect; he really was the Melbourne Theatre Company, particularly at the beginning. He introduced professional theatre to the University of Melbourne, the Union Rep. that subsequently became the Russell Street Theatre, then the Melbourne Theatre Company. He was impatient with what he saw as uncommitted theatre.

_What were some of the plays that you were involved with, that you directed?_

I directed a play by Kleist, the _Broken Jug_, my most successful effort. Then I did a Dürrenmatt play, _Romulus the Great_ and a number of smaller pieces. Gradually there was less time available, so we changed our approach and put on cabaret-type evenings.

_Is there any documentation of these productions?_
I've still got programs, including, I think, the one for *Mother Courage*, which I mentioned earlier.

**And so how did you precisely come to be involved with James and the ID course? Do you remember who approached you or how you met James?**

I knew him from way back but didn't get closely acquainted till we started working together in areas of the theatre. I joined a seminar he was conducting on the "Theatre of Cruelty", but I forget when precisely that was. But I was really excited when I went to see his productions of Greek Theatre, especially the *Oresteia*, over in the Pram Factory. Previous to that the most exciting theatre experience was 1957, when I saw Brecht's productions at the Berliner Ensemble, but James' work was quite different.

**So what was it about James's Greek productions that inspired you so much?**

With his work one got away from the conventional notions of acting, movement on stage and gestures without much meaning, spouting the lines, and so on. James really thought, and made his actors think, about the body, the relationship of the body to other bodies and to the space. He taught me more about the use of the body, the object and above all space than anybody else except Norman. Both he and Norman taught one to look at the stage.

**And so where did you go from there? How did you come to be involved as a teacher of the course?**

I was one of the people they put on the committee, which was formed in 1974 to set up the ID Course. The chairman was Alan Davies, a professor in Political Science, Sam Goldberg, a professor in English, Hilde Burger from the French Department as well as myself were on the committee. It would be fascinating to have the minutes of those meetings, because I'm quite sure the resulting course bore no relation to what was discussed there! But I
remember the practical nature of the work was a subject of discussion. Most of us regarded it as essential, Alan Davies, I suspect, because he was supervising Charles Kemp, who was very active as a theatre director and was one of the first to apply modern theory to the theatre. Sam Goldberg of course was totally opposed to the whole idea of performance.

*Why was that?*

He was one of those who believed the word was all important, that it was some form of betrayal of Shakespeare to put Shakespeare on stage - amazing how prevalent that was. Drama begins and ends with Shakespeare. And drama begins and ends with the text of Shakespeare plus one or two others who made it into the literary canon.

*So you began as a lecturer in the course.*

Yes, James talked about Greek theatre in first term, Judith Armstrong about Chekhov in the second and I discussed Brecht in the third. In 1975 I gave some general seminars on Brecht, the main plays and the theory. For the workshop we took his "Round Heads and Pointy Heads". It's not one of the best plays, but there was one scene, which was good for the type of workshop James wanted to develop. I can still remember climbing over chairs and through a mass of bodies.

*You participated.*

Yes, I participated, and this was very important for me personally because really it was the first time I ever struck a workshop in the modern sense of the word 'workshop'.

*As a exploratory theatrical tool.*
Yes. Before 1975 I had really no notion of the possibilities the workshop offered. The bits and pieces of information, which came my way, were distorted and/or biased.

*How did the two approaches differ, do you think? How did your pre ID work differ from the work you subsequently did with James and other people?*

Before the ID Course I had the idea that actors learnt the lines and then did what the director told them. The director read the text and the shape of the production sprang ready formed into his - never her -mind. I thought I was extremely wimpish when I was directing because I welcomed suggestions from the cast when I was directing and tended to think it was due to my inexperience. And frequently enough it was apparent to me that quite a few people agreed. What I am saying is exaggerated, of course, but it's not so very far from the truth. But I guess that experience did prepare me to be receptive to the sort of thing which James and Norman do. In Kleist's *Broken Jug*, for example, which I directed in 1961, the jug is on stage for practically the whole play, it's constantly handled and presented as evidence to the court. That alerted me to the importance of the object on stage, the way in which the object is handled, how the object relates to the body, and so on. But it wasn't till much later that I was able to go beyond the purely instinctive phase and approach such things in a systematic way, and even later still that I became aware of the theory involved. Of course I had read a certain amount of Brechtian theory, but it didn't really get beyond the printed page for me.

*Correct me if I'm wrong but perhaps the difference between these two faces of your career can be articulated in terms of the pre theoretical approach, and an approach which was not only theoretical, I'm talking about the James era particularly, but one which generates theory out of the workshop, out of the practice.*

That's a very good way of putting it. Definitely James' ideas about both object and space were developed very early on, and I still have his notes on the treatment of space in the *Agamemnon*, together with things we both wrote for his Deakin classes. In 1980 I talked
about the Elam book to the actors in the Mill group. They weren't madly impressed, partly because I didn't do justice to Elam, but also because much of what James was doing with them was more creative and innovative than Elam ever thought of being. Semiotics in Italy and France was never discussed from the actor side.

Mind you the introduction of the study of semiotics during the seventies was more important than many people realise. It may have had its limitations, it may have been too mechanical and too oriented towards the spectator, but it did help to persuade quite a few people to look at the stage more carefully.

So you continued to work with him once he had left Melbourne University and gone to Deakin to set up the Mill?

I spent a semester there.

As a scholar in residence?

That kind of thing, yeah. James said in his interview that he went further at Deakin than he had been able to at Melbourne, and that's perfectly true. He had much more backing there from on high, much greater funds and facilities, and he surrounded himself with very interesting professional actors. The first year course he developed which was a combination of theatre, dance and music was unique. He had a close association with Rusden which was much more interesting then than it is now. He learnt a lot from Rusden, he brought in some very interesting people in dance and music, but he was the driving creative force. I seem to remember he didn't talk much about his Deakin period, but I believe it was a very important stage in university teaching of theatre in this state.

James mentioned that the early 70s were quite an exciting time in Melbourne theatre culture and it seems that the ID course to some extent emerged from that kind of spirit, kind of atmosphere that was prevalent at the time. Now the course was threatened at some stage and I think it's been battling for survival ever since. What're your
recollections about the early voices of dissent?

There are two main areas. Students did not ever attack the existence of the course, though there were inevitably arguments about how it was taught. I've already mentioned the kind of dissent emanating from people like Sam Goldberg; text is holy and mustn't be defiled by bodies. More often it was the assumption, usually not explicit, that theatre studies do not measure up as a discipline. But after two years of McCaughey the course was pretty generally accepted as having proved itself. That is proved by the fact that a full lectureship was advertised. James himself was suspect in some quarters because of his attitude to assessment and one or two other holy cows, but both he and the course were manifestly successful. This was the time when there was quite a lot of so-called new money for innovations. The idea was that they would prove themselves and if successful would then become established. So that with Wonbok's appointment as lecturer, it was the first and only time there was a full time appointment to the Drama course.

How long was that appointment for?

I think it was for 3 years.

So this is really a period where the course could've consolidated.

It could've consolidated. The idea was that, with a full appointment, the introduction of a third year would be possible.

The idea of a third year was mooted back then?

Yes, and of course it could've been done.

Wonbok was employed solely to teach ID drama.
That's right. Now without going into too much detail this was a period of - I won't say absolute disaster but certainly stagnation.

Why was that?

Students didn't like her approach, it tended to be: I tell you what to do and you will do it, that kind of thing.

Can you tell me a little bit about - what was her approach, what was the content of the course in those years?

I can't tell you a lot because I tended to withdraw. It wasn't entirely Wonbok's fault, I did some teaching for her, Büchner and Brecht as I remember, but I never attended a workshop by her. It was the period when I was Chairman of Germanic Studies, and there was not too much time to spare. I did get called in when she ran into some difficulties with students, and she used to call upon me for advice.

What was the nature of those complaints?

I think again it was that she did not recognise people's legitimate desire to experiment with other ways of doing things that she tried to keep to the old notions of discipline in class and assessment. James had maintained a very tight discipline, but it was a discipline, which disregarded formal assessment and focused more on theatre discipline.

So what was her background?

I rather forget, to be honest, and I'm not just being diplomatic! She was originally Korean but she'd studied in America, possibly in the more conservative institutions. I never saw her teach, so it was more of an impression.
She was a student of JL Styan, wasn't she?

That's perfectly right. She was very much a Styan fan and so I suppose her approach would not have been so old fashioned. Styan was advanced for those days, so I'm already having to correct myself. But I doubt if she had much experience as a theatre practitioner.

So how as that appointment made? Why was such a person appointed to a course.

There were, as I remember, three main contenders for that job: James, Wonbok, David Kendall, who was then director of student theatre in Melbourne. His academic qualifications were quite mediocre, and they weren't even going to short-list him, but I insisted he be interviewed. It was a disaster, but I'm still glad I insisted on it, it established, I felt, an important precedent. The other big argument was over James and Wonbok, and there I really had a fight on my hands. James wasn't popular, academics didn't like his approach to academic disciplines, they didn't like him, he was too outspoken. The person I had to fight most was Marion Adams, but in the end she said yes, James is the best person, after all. He was given the appointment but about two weeks later, Deakin came in with an offer of a senior lecturership. I wrote a testimonial for him for Deakin and I simply said to him look, you're crazy not to go. With James gone, Wonbok was second on the list. She had very good qualifications, she interviewed well, and I was happy with the appointment.

This is 1978?

The end of 77 for 1978. So 78/79 would be those two years. During 78, of course, Dinny, who could probably fill in some gaps, together with those of us associated with the course, wanted her to begin a third year for 1979, and she refused. I have to say all that because it gives you the background; it explains, of course, one of the main reasons why, at the beginning of 80, people wanted to abolish the course. I forget what happened, she went off; people didn't want to renew the lectureship.
Did she resign?

I forget whether they just refused to renew the lectureship or whether she herself decided to go to another job.

You mentioned earlier, Hector, that there was considerable student discontent with the way things were being run post James.

That related mainly to Wonbok. As James told us, the type of student that wanted to do the drama course was fed up with the conservative approach in most areas of the Faculty. So they wanted something more revolutionary and didn't really get it, I gather, with Wonbok. Of course there has always been the other kind of student - you'd be familiar with them too - who'd been the star of the school production and thought the course would be a continuation of 'showing off' and 'having fun'. The workshops they have encountered over the years didn't allow for that.

So workshops remained a component of the course?

Very much so. When Rush Rehm came in, it was only after a battle had been fought and they said okay, we'd allow a minimal amount (it was incredibly small) to run the course. We advertised for someone to do it and of course, there were applications despite the amount offered. There always are in theatre studies.

So what was Rush's background?

Rush's background was American. He had worked with James, he had studied ancient Greek, and was interested in the theatre. Terry Collits could give more background. During that year he was living with his partner in Womens (now University) College and earned his keep by acting as tutor there. He applied for the tutorship when it was
advertised. His academic background, together with his experience in theatre, was the reason why he got the position. One reason why we regarded him as a good choice was that he had worked with James on the translation for the *Oresteia*.

*Which was published, I believe.*

I believe it was published, yes. James must have a copy. When I last heard of Rush he was professor of Greek and Drama at Ithaca University.

Rush's period was one of the least controversial years. He spent an enormous amount of time on the course and with the students - considering what he was being paid, it was absurd. Over and above the teaching administration, he directed a Pinter play, which was well received. He took a whole group of students in his own car down to the Mill in Geelong for one of the famous Mill 'nights'. I was with them and can testify that the students loved it. That was a time when Rush and James were still buddies.

*They had a falling out?*

They had a falling out. Rush felt James was too inclined to exclude absolutely anything, which didn't correspond to his approach in the theatre. James felt Rush was too conservative in what he did. I guess they were both right. I know James got stuck into me on several occasions when I did something in workshop or direction he didn't approve of. When this happens with James you're left in no doubt about his attitude. And I found Rush in his teaching and direction was enormously energetic and supportive, but his approach to theatre was rather conventional and unimaginative. I think it's worth mentioning this clash, because it touches on a fundamental aspect of the relationship between theatre studies and the institution. Rush would not have alarmed anybody in the Arts Faculty with his approach to the subject; James did, as you know. And yet there is no doubt in my mind that made the most creative and effective contribution.

*But everyone was happy during the period Rush was there?*
Everyone was happy. As I said, this doesn't always produce the most effective work. It was the same in the Theatre Department in the Union. Eva Czajor, whom everybody including myself liked enormously, who was very conscientious in her administration and who gave the students so much of her time, nevertheless, in my opinion, created rather boring theatre when she directed students. Her successor, Andrew Ross, was the precise opposite. He was unpopular with students and nowhere near as conscientious as Eva, but he was a marvellous director.

*While we're talking about the student theatre department, what was the relationship in those early years between the ID course and the Union's Theatre Department?*

Much the same as it's always been.

*Pretty ambivalent.*

Yes. James wasn't too impressed by the work they did there. For one thing, James is a disciplinarian, and one of the problems with student theatre has always been a lack of discipline. That causes trouble when students are both in the Union theatre and in the ID Course. In the very early years we had workshops in the Union, though there was very little contact. Later we moved to Old Engineering - that was James' legacy - and there was even less communication. The Old Engineering space was magnificent. One of the problems was controlling it in the face of all the people who wanted to use it.

*If we can get back to the threats to the course post James, from what quarters did they come? How were they formally articulated?*

I think after Wonbok I think quite a few of the threats came simply because it was seen as not viable, students were complaining, it hadn't developed - this was one of the conditions under which the new money was allocated, that it should prove itself and develop - and it
hadn't, so you couldn't really blame people for saying it should not be continued. Interestingly, one person who fought for the course when it was most under threat was Colin Duckworth, and Colin did not approve of what James was doing, nor did he approve of what was happening when Terry Collits was co-ordinator.

*I got that impression from what James was saying last week.*

Colin was certainly interested in theatre and he directed a certain amount of student theatre, especially theatre in French. Rather like Bruce Williams, Colin rejects modern performance theory completely, but he was also not very sympathetic to the type of theatre which James was developing, and James has not himself much time for modern theory, indeed he's rather suspicious of it, though I suspect he knows more about it than he lets on. I mention Colin because he was connected with the ID Course over a number of years and used to lecture on Beckett, until he decided that he didn't want to be associated with it any more.

*How did the course manage to get through those things?*

Chiefly because of the fact that it was very cheap, no one was sufficiently involved to go through the slightly arduous business of having a row in faculty to get it removed. It was easier to keep it than to get rid of it, put it that way. And there was always a strong student demand. The quota was always over-filled, usually the number applying than could be accepted. As you know, of course, the numbers have dropped off slightly but I see that as a change in the structure of the university and a change in the economic environment. People are much more directed towards stuff that will bring in the money. But I don't think you can ascribe that to a lack of interest by students.

*If we could slightly change direction here, you've hinted at the relationship between academia and the practical theatre world. Can you flesh your thoughts on that relationship out a bit more?*
For most academics, as you know, theatre has never been a discipline in the sense that 'discipline' is normally understood. You are currently looking at the way that is changing, so I needn't expand on that. Then there is the distrust of theatre in the general community, the sort of thing you quote Barish to illustrate. Again I don't need to expand.

I think there is another reason why the academic world is distrusted, which is not so often mentioned, i.e. when it's doing its job properly, it puts in question all sorts of received notions. I've come to the conclusion that this is something, which is almost universally resented. I think I've told you about the student in the ID Course about ten years ago - it was certainly in Norman's time - who complained at the end of the year that the course had given her no answers but only questions. This is even more the case outside the university. It's the case with theatre professionals who've developed their philosophy of theatre and have settled in one way of doing things, and bitterly resent being asked to rethink. It's prevalent among the theatre-going public too. Even people who are prepared to allow differences of opinion about all sorts of things get very up tight when their judgment of what is or is not good theatre is questioned.

*What about the relationship between those academics who were teaching theatre, who were engaged in a critical rigorous approach to the subject? What's the relationship between those people, how did the theatre community deal with a figure like James?*

The theatre community as such? Generally speaking, theatre people respect James. Those he worked with at the Mill especially have retained their admiration and their liking for him. Of course, events at the Playbox - when James succeeded Carrillo Gantner - did not work out well, but I don't know the details of that, and I suspect it was a pretty complicated situation. But his work has always been respected by people who take their theatre seriously. Those who can't stand him are typically like Leonard Radic. They are dominated by text, never think about the way the body is being used in the space, indeed appear never to look at the stage at all. His problems at Deakin were caused by the traditional theatre people in only a minor way, I think. Most of the trouble came from the
academics that resented the independence of theatre studies and the fact that it was allowed to set up a territory of its own at the Mill away from the main campus. I think it's relevant to say that, after James' departure, the course was wound back and has been indeed under threat.

After James and then Richard Murphet went, the Mill theatre was closed. What is insufficiently taken into account is that the loss of the Mill theatre was more than the loss of a space, though it is a great loss. What was important was the situation of the theatre in the town itself - Waurn Ponds of course is well outside the town - and this was important for the relationship between the theatre, which housed both the course and the professional group, and the town. The Mill nights which were open to all comers were famous, and many of the plays devised by James and his group had to do with the history of the region around Geelong. In other words, it provided a link between university and the community of a kind, which all universities are now trying to foster, the kind of link, which Stephen Knight was talking about when we were setting up the MPRG. Of course, you need encouragement and funding, but James had that, largely because of the presence of Max Charlesworth who was a particularly influential dean.

I think that's an important point, if I can just clarify that, what you seem to be saying is that it is important for an academic approach to performance to have some kind of public face, to have some sort of community profile, and that is perhaps something which the ID Course has not had -

No, not as much as it should or might have. Of course, as you know, there has been contact with the public in the form of productions, but there has been nothing as developed as the Deakin organisation under James. It wasn't only the productions built on regional history and personalities; it wasn't only the Mill nights. The group used to go to the Geelong prison, for example, and conduct workshops there, they used to work with primary schools, and so on. But, as I said, for this sort of thing you need funding and the proper backing at the appropriate level. There is another point I'd like to make in this connection. I'm sure many people who went to the Mill would not have gone if it had been
set up within a university campus. Mark Minchinton made the point to me a year or so ago, when we were trying to alter the direction of the MPRG, that someone like Robert Draffin (who was incidentally one of James' band at the Mill) would be keen to join the MPRG if sessions were to be held outside the university grounds. Many people, and this applies to professional theatre people as well as amateurs, feel intimidated by the university. That's one thing I believe you don't take sufficiently into account in your discussion of theatre studies in the institution, the question of territory.

This is a question which sort of follows on from those previous statements, what're your present views on the place of performance/theatre studies in the university?

When I first began to work in the ID Course, my view was fairly narrow, more or less what I described at the beginning of this interview, the need to get plays out of the classroom. Obviously that's still important, but I've come to look at things from a wider perspective. The history of theatre in this town, and probably in most places, shows that there needs to be every so often a fresh start or a series of fresh starts. These come largely from groups (Pram Factory, Anthill, Gilgul group etc.) reacting against the prevailing modes, and that will always be the normal path of change. But everyone knows that all new groups atrophy in time, they tend to take up non-negotiable positions (e.g. the Kosky group and the exclusion of narrative as opposed to Theatre Works and its current addiction to narrative). So you need a place where all the old and the new truths are constantly being challenged, where experiment is not only possible but required, so I come back to the need for questioning, and there is no better place for that sort of thing than the university.

But the importance of performance studies for the university, which I take to be part of your question. I think it's maybe best illustrated by the shock you and the students got when you finished the seminar stage, and all those uncomfortable questions which you coped with reasonably well in discussion, whilst anchored to chairs or squatting on the floor, invaded bodies and became audible and visible in the space. Obviously, the 'serial killer' topic is an extreme example, but it shows there is a dimension of experience, which
can be relevant to a 'learning' situation. This is what most people who comment on Brecht's Lehrstück fail to understand. When Brecht says it is the actors who learn (more than the spectators), he doesn't mean just facts or attitudes or ideologies, he also has in mind the direct impact of situation on body and emotions. And I think this is a problem with most academics. The body is currently a fashionable subject for discussion, but I think most prefer to keep it at the theoretical level.

*But I don't think that's true of someone like Norman Price.*

No, I know it's not, People with experience in the theatre know that work with the body is not inviting anarchy but that it requires rigorous discipline.

*You were saying internationally there do seem to be positive signs in Europe that practitioners are-*

Traditionally, in places like France, Germany and Italy, practitioners have not been involved in academic theatre departments, but, as you can see from Gießen and the more recent Pavis activities, that is changing. I think actually that, as in the U.S.A., we have been somewhat ahead of that trend. James was a classicist before he became a practitioner, but Norman Price, for example, has been involved in the ID Course for over 10 years. And both Rachel Fensham (now at Murdoch) and Mark Minchinton (now at Victoria University of Technology) were both practitioners before they started teaching at universities.

*The interesting about the names you've mentioned is that all those people had an association with the ID course as either guest lecturers or workshop facilitators, but in addition to that they have completed their post graduate degrees in the English Department at the University of Melbourne. So, even though drama here doesn't seem to have a great profile, indeed it seems to be almost an invisible course, its effects-*

...are very considerable, and that's just to mention tertiary education. I think too it's had an
effect on Sydney - as indeed Sydney has influenced us.

**This is Gay McAuley's program?**

Yes. But the effect of the course in the theatre itself is also considerable. Quite a few of the students of the Course are established in the theatre in one capacity or another: Russell Walsh, Jill Buckler, and Suzanne Olb, to mention a few.

**So you do see positive signs - in the local context?**

Yes, though not necessarily at the University of Melbourne.

**But nevertheless in academic institutions.**

Yes. But I would like to refer back to what I said about the need to communicate with people outside the universities, people like Robert Draffin and James McCaughey, now that he (James) is no longer directly linked to a university.

**That's a very interesting suggestion because the next question I wanted to ask you concerns research and the place of research in a theatre studies university department. Maybe we'll come back to the MPRG at a later point, but in the early years of the course I seem to get the impression that there was not a high priority placed on research, as we perhaps understand it today.**

No. I don't think anybody, including ourselves, thought of it when the ID Course was established. Later we became aware of Gay McAuley's research and later still, in 1986, I met Patrice Pavis. I don't know when Norman actually started his M.A., you'd have to check with him, but I do know that it took a good deal of persuasion to get the Arts Research Committee to accept it. The notion of a performance as the basis for research was totally foreign to most people. I think you'll find its acceptance was more of Dinny
O'Hearn's work. It was probably the first of its kind in Australia. Both Patrice and Gay were very interested in it and very generous in their assessment of it, but I don't think that was the kind of research their students undertook.

*I'm actually in the process of conducting a library search which the Baillieu's helping me with next week. So they're going into all the databases, so one of the things they'll come up with is a list of theses...*

It will be fascinating to see what they come up with. You're the first person here who has done that sort of thing systematically. James moved away from research when he became involved in theatre, but if he'd kept it up it would have been a project involving performance in ancient Greece, not present day performance.

*So it was really with the appointment of Norman Price that the profile changed somewhat and became more research oriented.*

Certainly that was so in terms of a focus on performance, which was the difficulty. Interestingly enough, Suzanne Olb's fourth year English thesis revolved around a production of Andrew Ross' *Twelfth Night* in which she acted as dramaturg (Terry Collits was the supervisor). That was before Norman's thesis was written. But Norman made no progress with his first supervisors and didn't really get under way till I took over. The significance of that is that I had worked closely with him both in workshops and in the genesis of the play, which was the basis for his thesis. I'm not sure I should be saying this but I think there's a point to be made.

*Don't worry, Norman has said this himself.*

A similar thing happened with Denise Varney and indeed Mark Minchinton. In both cases it was basically a lack of understanding or an unwillingness to understand what they wanted to do, even on the part of people who are sympathetic to performance studies as
such. Rachel's thesis provided a different problem. There were faults there, as Rachel herself acknowledges, but there was an enormous apparently unclosable gap between the perceptions of one person who could see no positive value in what she was doing and others, familiar with performance, who could see the exemplary nature of her work.

*Can you just maybe fill me in a little bit for the record on what Rachel was doing?*

It would be a good idea if you talked to her directly. Rachel is the only postgraduate student in theatre studies I worked with who did a minor thesis together with course work for her M.A. She worked with Marion Campbell on feminism and did an essay for her on dance and the body. She worked with David Bennett, and did an essay with him on urban theory, which she then linked in her minor thesis with the work of a theatre group called 'Primary Source' which performed in the streets of Melbourne during the International Festival. That included reference to the group's relationship to the festival as institution. She was looking at the way in which the group intruded into everyday life and disrupted the normal patterns of existence. There is a certain relationship with the work you are doing, the fact that the group derived its right to perform from the festival and the city of Melbourne, but was at the same time subversive of both.

*The interesting thing about your description of that piece of work is that it points to the inter-disciplinary nature of a lot of research that has been conducted in the field.*

Yes, that is very important, and of course all the research I have spoken of has emerged since the course became associated with the English Department. Terry Collits was of course central to that association, but the influence of other people there who aren't directly connected with performance has also been crucial.

*One final area I'd like to explore that we haven't covered yet is the changing face of pedagogy throughout the course. You're well placed to talk about it because it seems you're the only person who has had contact with the course throughout its history, so*
could you maybe tell me a little bit about the changing teaching styles that you perhaps observed over the years.

That's a tall order. Let me say that the course has been extremely fortunate in having had almost always not just competent teachers but very talented and stimulating teachers. Each of course has had an entirely different style. James' style was a very interesting mixture, a very effective mixture, and very democratic but at the same time creating an atmosphere of unmistakable authority. There were few overt disciplinary techniques, though he fixed people who were late with the sort of look, which made them, reform fairly smartly. In matters he believed in he was uncompromising. One of his dicta was that you don't need exams because students fail themselves. And with him this was so. Some students did fail themselves, they just didn't last the distance.

I asked this question precisely because of that point. It seems that perhaps one of the factors that has worked against the drama course historically is that it has been somewhat unorthodox in its assessment procedures and this goes against the grain of much of the academic-

There was a lot of criticism. To a certain extent we agreed with that. When Norman came and Terry took over as co-ordinator we introduced a more normal type of assessment. We even tested students for their knowledge of the plays we discussed during the year and instituted a take-home exam with an enormous number of optional topics, but of course there was a strong emphasis on workshops. Norman was very strict on attendance at workshops, and I remember there were some students who complained bitterly about having their marks reduced because their attendance and performance in workshops were unsatisfactory. But of course his approach to the use of text and his assessment of the way in which students handled text were quite unorthodox if you apply the traditional lit. crit. criteria.

That seems to be a characteristic of the course, the personality of the tutor or lecturer seems to really be quite significant-
Yes, it is. Of course, there obviously has to be something in common, for example, that fundamental assumption that students have to contribute more, make a more creative and physical commitment than is expected of them in orthodox courses. But the way in which each of the various teachers has gone about achieving that has been markedly different.

*To what extent, though, has this work found an audience - I'm aware of some publications that*

Reception is always hard to estimate. James' influence on students was very great, and his influence on the community in Geelong was remarkable. And at various times James has been very influential in providing advice to various theatre departments in Australia. Norman has looked to a wider audience. There was the workshop for the drama teachers at the NADIE conference in 1984 from which we got very good feedback. And we published in the NADIE journal. Then there were Norman's working stints in Paris (twice), New York and his visit to Gießen. I believe they have been very important. Then your work. The publication of *Antithesis*, but also the MPRG conference and the Shakespeare conference, including the relationship with Philip Mead and Marion Campbell of the English Department, where you were all involved, have been vital. And I think the work with people like Chris Worth and now Terry Threadgold at Monash, Ian Carruthers at La Trobe, Mark Minchinton and Libby Dempster at the V.U.T. means that we're not on our own here any longer.
Terry Collits - 4/4/93

Terry, what was your involvement in theatre before you came to the ID drama course?

It was limited to university campus performances. In my first year at Newcastle University College (1953) I was in a review that did very well and was put on for a wide city audience in Newcastle. I also played in a Greek tragedy in my Dip Ed year. When I did my honours degree in English at Sydney University, play readings, rehearsed readings and moved readings of Shakespeare were in vogue. Wilbur Sanders, who came from Melbourne University, often organized good readings for literary society conferences. I played various small parts here and there.

I didn't really get into university drama until I went to Latrobe University in 1971, where I was involved in a lot of productions, mainly Shakespeare. I had a lot of big roles that went over well: Falstaff, King Lear and others. In fact, there were three separate productions of Henry IV in which I played Falstaff, the most notable being a double barrel part 1 and part 2 performance in one night at the University Theatre, which went on for two weeks at four and a half hours a night. I guess my most 'famous' moment was an Oxford production of Othello, which went on a tour of France.

Were any of these productions associated with formal theatre or drama courses?

No, not really. It was only once I became involved in the ID drama course that I was in touch with any sort of formal drama program.

How did you become involved with the ID drama course?

When I came back from Oxford in 1976 I didn't take up my position in the English department until July, so I was looking for some other things to do; George Russell, who was one of the professors in the department at the time, told me that the drama course was going well. He himself had actually been involved in developing it - I only discovered this much later.

What was his involvement?
I believe that he, with people like Hector Maclean and James McCaughey, really thought of the whole thing. He possibly gets credit for being the one who first had the idea. I'm not sure about this.

That's interesting because I've found it difficult to track down the origins of the course, because both Hector and James deny having anything to do with setting it up.

George claims that he was the one who thought of it. It's a small historical point, if it's true. It's interesting because the English department at the time was not supportive of the drama course. The personality of James McCaughey tended to split the department -- he was a bit of a tear-away as an academic. James was involved in the first year experimental course and Sam Goldberg, who was the other professor of English at the time, used the phrase 'McCaughey's Mafia' in a faculty meeting, which outraged everybody; you just didn't talk that way in those days, although it doesn't seem that heavy to me. But the interesting detail is that if George thought of drama in performance as an important new development for the faculty to look at, he possibly had to work in covert ways; he probably didn't deal directly with the English department, it would've come through him and he probably communicated this with other like-minded people he knew in the faculty. Anyhow, he was the one who said to me, "why don't you go and have a chat to James McCaughey?" which I did.

So what year was this?

This was 1976, I can remember it vividly. It would've been about May in '76 when I came back to Australia. Alan Cole in the English department had recently died and I picked up some of his teaching. He also had had a small input into the drama course, I believe. The course was supposed to involve people from different departments, and there was a consultative committee that was made up of departmental representatives. There was a vacuum as far as the English department went and George possibly spotted this. George had seen my performance in Othello at Oxford, so he knew of my interest in drama. He suggested that I contact James, whom I'd had happy relationships with before, mainly over Greek tragedy. I once invited him out to Latrobe to give a rather splendid one-man
performance-cum-paper on The *Oresteia* -- he got up on tables, that sort of thing. His presentation went over very well: a one-man performance of Aeschylus! So I found him stimulating, and I didn't share the fastidious distaste that some people had for his style. Nor did some of the people in English, either. James more or less set up a gig for me in the course and I went along.

I remember giving a talk on the soliloquy in Shakespeare, and talking about the soliloquy as a theatrical problem. After my presentation James and his students workshops some soliloquies, and played around with them. It was fairly spontaneous, and their approach struck me as rather unstructured. I think there was a structure, but they tended to follow their nose a lot.

So my role was to give some lectures, I was paid on a sessional basis for this, and participate in some workshops. This was an extremely good group of students, like Peter King and Hannie Rayson, people who went on and made careers in theatre (this career-making aspect has been a mark of the course from the word go). I'm speaking now about the second year of the course, which was my first point of involvement.

My involvement waned somewhat when James surprisingly (to me) didn't accept the four-year lectureship that was granted after the period of development funding. It was decided that the performance drama development had proven an overwhelming success, so the faculty provided a lectureship on a four-year basis.

**On what basis did they consider the course to be a success? You mentioned earlier that you found it to be unstructured. Maybe you could talk about your initial impressions, about what you thought of the course when you were first involved.**

I had worked with a man called Steven Wall at Oxford, who, in connection with the Playhouse Theatre Group (a professional company), was attempting to teach Shakespearian plays by using workshops and theatrical techniques. He would focus on a particular scene or problem to demonstrate how production or assumptions of production might affect the way you actually read Shakespeare. I suppose the importance of this
against a purely literary textual approach to Shakespeare was electrifying. Droves of students in Oxford came along to Wall's workshops. Some of the ideas I used when I joined in the drama course were directly pinched from those workshops in Oxford.

Now while the ID course struck me as a bit unstructured, the level of input from the students, the energy level, was so much greater than I'd been used to in conventional tutorials -- this was the course's great success, and this success was recognized by the University.

A friend of mine, Geoff Missen from Geography, was on the University development committee, and he told me that the committee had decided to give a lectureship to the course because it was a new development that had proven itself. There seemed to be money everywhere in those days for development. I imagine they probably got reports from James McCaughey and others involved with the course; they were aware that it was attracting very high student interest, so I think a few people, in a fairly laid back way, at a time when budgets weren't quite so severely constricted as they are now, thought this seemed a good thing and why not.

James' two years in the position, where he was half in Classics and half in Drama, ended at the end of 1976, and the lectureship was advertised. I think everyone assumed that James was certain to get it. He didn't; I understand he was offered it, but decided to go to Deakin instead to pick up on the similar development that was going on there. Perhaps he saw that as a better long-range prospect? I've heard Hector Maclean talk of it and I've talked a bit with James about those matters, particularly when he finally left Deakin. This was an important moment in the course's history because the program was ready to take off: to commit in a full lectureship to a course that had only thirty students in it was a very big commitment, even then.

My research indicates that the ID programs were set up as a response to student dissatisfaction with traditional academic structures, and were supposed to provide a site for the development of new knowledges in the academy. Could you comment on
whether you found the course to be innovatory in the sense that it did represent an alternative to traditional pedagogic models and disciplinary classifications?

The course could be seen as a post sixties attempt to address the fact that a lot of the old departmental and disciplinary practices were pretty arid. I remember one of the big things that happened at the time was the democratising of the governance of departments. Heads of department were to be elected to their positions -- unprecedented things like that were coming in at the same time, as a response to the same broad phenomenon. Inter-departmentalism was the name of the game. The ID courses were seen as the way to break down the barriers.

I’d describe the course as an exercise in inter-departmentalism rather than interdisciplinary because there’s a real problem in saying how the disciplines conceived themselves in relation to this new program.

The inter-departmental description is accurate because people were brought in from their own departments and behaved pretty well as they would in their own departments, although they all addressed topics that were to do with drama. There were a number of interesting characters like Dennis Pryor who had, if you like, an ‘amateur’, as well as a professional interest (as a classicist) in theatre. He’d come into the course with his own personal style, rather than anything you could call representative of the discipline of the classicist. I’m sure Judith Armstrong’s work with Chekhov would be rather like the work she’d do in Russian Literature and Society on Chekhov, for instance. And I think with all of us there was a concern as to how to make what we knew and what we did relevant to theatre and performance. And so there was a high degree of amateurism in there, and nothing like a theory or an academic structure that included a developed notion of a theatre studies program.

As a discipline in itself . . .

I don't think it existed. Peter Brook was in the air and people read Brook. There were all sorts of ideas about where progressive theatre was and ought to be and what it was doing.
All those ideas were in circulation, but not in any kind of organised academical way that I'd call a discipline. I don't think anyone had a clear idea of how they were in fact creating a new discipline. They knew the grounds for it were there. (I might be selling James a bit short here, I'm not sure. I simply didn't work with him long enough, and then in a slightly perfunctory way, to really get a sense of what his vision of it was and what the structure, or organisational principles for the course might be. There were 'workshops', (that was new) -- workshop was a bit of a buzzword.

**And were you involved in those workshops?**

Yes, I was involved. I sometimes took them, as it were, and that was a case of the blind leading the blind. I'd had no training at all as a drama teacher, I hadn't even directed a play; I'd been involved basically as an actor, very much as an amateur performer. I used that experience in my teaching of Shakespeare to good effect in the English department, but I wouldn't have had anything like the background knowledge needed for the to building up of a new discipline. Hector Maclean had a wealth of knowledge about Brecht, and he'd come through a Germanic studies world, so he probably knew more, even back then, about theatre and theatre theory than most other people around. You wouldn't be involved with Brecht without having thought about all of those things. Whether Hector had any kind of developed sense of how this might translate into organising the course I couldn't say, either. I always felt Hector was a person who mainly responded to ideas and developed them. He was never inclined to impose any notion of how it should be done, but with his European background and knowledge of European pedagogies, even back then, he might've had a more developed idea than I was aware of.

To go back to my involvement with the course, it really stopped, to all intents and purposes, when Wonbok Develin was appointed as the drama lecturer. She was a person who did have an academic background: she had been a Phd student of J. L. Styan's from Michigan (I think) and so she came from a real drama department. She didn't have a background that resembled a literary background at all. I think two things happened with her: one, she very sharply broke with the lively traditions that had been set up in the
course's first two years, and two, she refused to develop a third year of the course when part of the job description was that she should have. And for that her role has to be seen as negative. She let it down at the very point when it should’ve been extended and developed. The money was available for the program's development. It was a great pity, and the failure has been felt to this day.

She never seemed to be very happy in the job, she possibly was very good at what she did but she kept it to herself; there was much less input from people like myself, she tended to favour professors and senior people. Perhaps she felt they’d give her more support. I got to know her a bit, and occasionally she’d consult with me, but I always felt I was being lobbied, for some reason, against someone else. It was a very nasty time. There was a lot of in fighting and bitterness, which came to a climax, (or an anti-climax) when the English Department sponsored a seminar on the very question of the place of theatre studies in an academic curriculum. Four people, Jack Hibberd, James McCaughey, Wonbok Develin and the director Peter Oysten presented papers. This was around 1978. A prominent member of the Union Theatre Department came in very drunk and created quite a scene. There were probably 150 people there, from memory, it was a very big. There was a lot of interest, and there was a lot of politics. There were students from student theatre who would've been hostile to the drama course; there'd have been drama course students who were hostile to the teacher of it, there was David Kendall and his followers, Dinny O'Hearn came along with him; it was a pretty wild occasion. Howard Felperin who was a new Professor in the English Department at this time was amazed: he saw it as sheer anarchy. And coming from America, he saw Wonbok Develin as the only one who had a clear notion that wasn't based on sheer intuition of what an academic program might look like. But it was a vexed occasion and a sign of what a mess the whole thing was in. The only reason this fiasco didn't attract bad publicity was because people weren't interested outside: the course just rolled along. Wonbok Develin left after three years and went to Tasmania. She was actually appointed for four years, but left at the end of 1979.

At that point the Arts Faculty established its own razor gang to trim expenditures and call for more accountability, so things like development funds were the first thing to go. Colin
Duckworth played, I believe, an important role at one point when Faculty decided that
drama should be cut. Colin raised the fact that a motion in Faculty passed several years
before had agreed that it should go to the end of 1980, so that bought us a year; Faculty
must've been prepared to stick to what they'd passed more religiously than they would
now. So they made an extraordinarily tiny offer of $4,500 to pay for four and a half
sessional tutorial hours for the year, and they threw in about another thousand for a
coordinator's expenses, which could be used to bring in the odd guest. But the course was
allowed to go on, with a very low budget.

So what do you think happened in those 3 years? Why did the course find itself on the
verge of extinction?

I think it was that the director of the program, Wonbok Develin, was a disaster at the level
of entrepreneurialism; she simply severed all contacts with student theatre (which I think
she probably despised) so the thirty odd students doing the course each year, became a
rather small group working away at whatever they did, but with no public profile. There
was also enormous tension between her and the Arts Faculty office run by Dinny O'Hearn.
She complained about him and he complained about her, and she complained about the
fact that he'd let students into the course whom she didn't want. A lot of bickering went
on. The other important factor was financial. Funds were now drying up, so people who
might not have had a point of view on the drama course in itself were deciding that drama
was an area where money could be saved. Unless you have a powerful lobby in place to
resist such criticism, you're in trouble. Not only was there no powerful lobby, but also a
vacuum was created by Develin's departure. The course was particularly vulnerable
because she had failed to develop a third year program.

Fortunately the old supporters of drama had remained committed to the program, and
regrouped as a new lobby group, even though I think they'd felt fairly distanced by
Wonbok's modus operandi. After discussions with Colin Duckworth and members of the
drama consultative committee, I became coordinator of the program in 1980, and remained
in that role until 1989 (I was technically coordinator of the program for a few more years,
but I was tending to shift out of those operations a bit). Through the 1980s the drama course probably accounted for about forty per cent of my total work. This component of my workload was totally unfunded, so the work of myself and Hector and others through that period was not paid work. While the course thrived and always had strong student demand (the peak of that was something like seventy students trying to get into a course that only took thirty, it was not properly financially supported by the Faculty.

In my first year as co-ordinator I didn't know what could be done with three sessional tutorials, which amounted to a mere four and a half hours of teaching. How would you get anyone who was any good to work for that sort of money? Anyway, we advertised this meagre position, but in the meantime I had gone to see Rush Rehm whom I knew in Classics; I knew him as a performer, a director, an incredibly energetic man.

I found that he was more or less between jobs (he was an American, and he'd planned to return to the States in October of that year). I asked him if he wanted to do a full time job for peanuts, and he said he was willing to give it a go because the course sounded interesting. He was a very powerful and charismatic teacher, who had enormous loyalty from the student group; he basically put in a full time performance for $4,500 salary. He put on a performance of Harold Pinter's *The Homecoming* downtown in South Yarra, and he made sure that people from faculty budgets came along and saw it. The production was a great success, so by the time I had to appear at faculty budgets to discuss the future of the course, we'd put in an application to get our lectureship back. Well, no one was getting that kind of support, but drama was the only ID program to receive an increase in funding. We were given a .75 tutorship, and a coordinator's allowance. The course was run on that basis up until you arrived in 1989.

When Rush departed Norman Price was appointed. Norman was the first person to teach the course whose primary training was not academic. His was a genuine theatre background in acting and directing, and so we felt we had to deal with someone who came from a totally different world. It was at this point that a real notion of inter-disciplinarity began to take shape. Norman hadn't fully academicised his thinking about theatre, but he
was a person whose perceptions were theatrical perceptions, in the strongest and best sense. Our relationship grew into a healthy symbiosis.

Norman began a Masters degree, and he started to develop his own academic work, largely in collaboration with Hector Maclean (although I had some connection with that too). Theories of performance analysis began to develop at this time. We also became involved with ADSA, who ran annual national drama conferences, and we picked up on semiotics and what was going on at the University of Sydney in Gay McAuley's centre for performance studies. Patrice Pavis' visit to the course in 1988 gave us a high profile; theatre studies was now seen as a discrete disciplinary area.

The course evolved greatly during this period, and was also probably marked not just by the discipline's wider growing development, but by Norman's intense and peculiar pedagogical style. He really was exposing students to anything but conventional notions of acting, of putting on a play. Norman could direct a play in a comparatively straightforward manner and make it really work: I saw a Lorca play [Blood Wedding] which he did with first-year students from the Institute which was stunning, although it didn't involve any degree of high experimentation. But his other work did, such as a production of a Tennessee Williams play, and one of Tardieu I saw in the Guild Theatre, the ones he wrote himself, and in collaboration with others - he tended to be a great collaborator, so that notion of collective working became very much a stamp of his work in the course.

**What was your role during this period, Terry, as coordinator? You were coordinating the seminar program, I take it, but you were also directly teaching in the course, were you not?**

Yes, I was. I was involved in almost every aspect of the course except for the running of the workshops. We'd choose the students together: I'd go to workshops, when I could find time, participate in them sporadically, so that was the weak side of my involvement. I was involved in representing the course in the faculty and I was involved in a great deal of the politics of where it was to be located because the whole inter-departmental arrangement
was and remains to this day very badly structured and funded. We're still trying to solve problems of how to fund such programs when all budgets are passed through departments. The department is the powerful unit in the university. Everything has to be linked with departments in funding, and most other arrangements. However, after the flush of inter-departmentalism in the 70s, these courses and interests and so on had gone too far, they couldn't be repressed but remained a permanent embarrassment for the faculty.

When Susan Zisman as the secretary for all the interdepartmental programs retired, she wasn't replaced and the interdepartmental programs were required to find departmental homes. Drama was put in the Horwood language centre, which also included the Russian department. The course remained in the centre for a few years until they became uneasy (in ways I could understand) about just what the institutional basis of this course was. One only had to look at the personnel teaching the program: a part time tutor, a voluntary retired academic, Hector Maclean, who seemed to have a lot of input, someone in the English department who wasn't paid to do all this. They rightly saw the whole thing could collapse like a pack of cards if these volunteers all just walked away. Their solution was to try and take the course over and to get rid of Norman and myself. I hope I'm not overstating that too much; but at a certain point I had to decide whether to fight this or not. I decided to fight it, so many hours were spent over the next ten days lobbying everyone who might have any input into making the decision about the course's future. I tried to convince these people, one by one, that the best thing for drama would be to be transfer it to the English Department. Fortunately the new chairman of the English department, Ken Ruthven, was totally supportive, so I was able to speak for English. Some of the people in the Horwood language centre were bitter about this because they'd gone down an entirely different road. Judith Armstrong seemed enthusiastic about picking up the role of coordinating the course herself. However, it was simply my judgement that the course would be better served by getting it out of the arrangement with the Horwood language centre. Hector, Norman and I agreed that this was the right way to go. So drama was 'housed' in English, though it remained an inter-departmental course. But of course over
time it became identified more and more with English. Occasionally, there was a bit of
disgruntlement from some of the old brigade who felt they’d been cut out; basically I think
it was a case of atrophy: they’d been doing their bit for the course year after year after
year, some people were getting older or retiring or moving on. Norman was very good at
attracting the interest of younger people he’d get to know, he was like a bowerbird in
terms of finding people and bringing them into the course, and some of those contacts
were very important, so there was some replenishment of interdepartmental input.

The reward for me was that I was developing my own interest in drama and elaborating
that to myself and learning things that I would’ve had no opportunity to do otherwise,
simply through the long discussions with Norman and Hector and what was going on in
the workshops and conferences around the country.

While we're on the topic of the politics of survival, you can tell me a little bit more
about some of the blockages that you perceived to be threatening to the course in those
days. What were the battles that you had to fight specifically?

The biggest one was the one I just described. Drama was moved for administrative
convenience into a department, the Horwood Language Centre (I think it was called the
Department of Russian & Language Studies and it included the Horwood Language
Centre). A lot of these departmental arrangements were fairly arbitrary and I think a lot of
them were hatched in the brain of Dinny O’Hearn and he probably had various ideas of
what might work or what created reasonable sized units within the faculty. So for reasons
that were not primarily to do with our needs, we were moved there and we went along
with it. It seemed wiser to go along with what the powerful people in the faculty were
suggesting than not. And indeed when we had early negotiations with Terry Quinn who
was head of that department, and Judith Armstrong and others, relationships were
enormously cordial: there were parties, there were dinners, there seemed to be money
around, there was a lot of money talked about - which was new to me - and the Horwood
Language Centre gave me the impression of being awash with money. So while our
budget didn't expand particularly, we were favourably received. The notion of the elusive
third year course was always there as something we would develop, and even in those days we were putting up proposals and starting to talk it around. Each time this move to develop happened the project seemed to founder on other kinds of problems. To take one example: In those days we were housed at the top of the old Engineering building; it was a beautiful space, and we happened to occupy it at a time when Engineering was suffering a 20% unemployment rate for its graduates, so there was a contraction in Engineering. We got the space and a lot of money was put into it to develop a wonderful drama space, probably the best one I’d worked in, I’d say, for all sorts of purposes. But that proved to be an indication of how much the course was subject to the vagaries of wider concerns: at the point when the Engineering situation changed and Engineering suddenly became the country’s great need again, we quickly learnt where real power was and were peremptorily booted out; there was no discussion about it. A single subject in the Arts Faculty had no clout whatsoever. At that stage our problems were not just administrative but had to do with our personal relationships with people in the department that housed us. Space, of course, became a major problem. One of the things that I was endlessly involved with was finding a space. I remember the tours we went on of buildings in Barry Street and Bouverie Street and Christ knows where else. In the end we wangled, again through the wiles of one D.J. O’Hearn, the Des Connor room in the Union, and the other wangling that went on was to find money that could be ploughed into that. As it happened, the Student Union (I think) had been sacked at the time, and we were able to do secure the space through the handiwork of an administrator, Paul Morgan. This move into student union territory now made us more vulnerable to the vagaries of student politics, of whatever faction or whatever obtuse personalities were running the Union at the time. If we got on with them that was fine; if we didn't then we were vulnerable. You spent a lot of time somehow bringing people up to date with the real issues involved and letting them know that we had a right, we’d put in money. There was a constant need to placate and inform and keep on side the sorts of people who could really quite casually ruin the whole operation by just saying "we won't be able to let you use the Des Connor room, there isn't room," or whatever it might be. I’m not complaining about them individually, really, but there were great problems always with finding a proper space for the drama course, both
in the program and within the institutional organisation, where its administrative home should be, how it might get money to develop and simply where just physically it would be taught. As you know this campus isn't well endowed with such facilities. At this stage Melbourne State College was a separate institution and it wouldn't have come into our heads as being relevant, even though Norman Price taught in both places. The man who ran the department, Brian Hogan, seemed to rule it all with a rod of iron, so that no possible overtures could be made in that direction - I know he and Norman didn't get on, so we never thought about there at all; it was only after the amalgamation that connection through Norman started to shape up. Does that give you some of the kinds of areas of survival politics?

Maybe we can return to this question of research, then. I know about Norman's Masters thesis emerging from his work in the course, but what about other research activities? There are a couple of things here that I'd like you to talk about. Firstly, your own work as a critic, which may've been associated with the course, but also if you could maybe provide some kind of historical perspective on what was happening in terms of research in the early days.

I'm not aware of any research projects that were around in that earlier period. As I say, Wonbok Develin simply taught a second year undergraduate pass course. So through the course itself there was no room for research development because you weren't dealing with students at the level where they start working on autonomous research projects.

Wonbok was along way from thinking of how to develop anything like a research unit. However, Hector Maclean more than anyone else was aware of a world of research potential. I'm not sure exactly when Hector started to crystallise his thinking about theatre research, but there is no doubt that the main line of development of research potential came through the relationship between Hector and Norman.

My own research work was more closely tied to my role as a teacher of drama as literature. What I was able to do pedagogically was to translate my involvement with the performance drama course into lectures and classroom discussions in other contexts. My
major areas of research and teaching over this whole period have been, on the one hand, concerned with Joseph Conrad, post colonialism and the critique of imperialism; and, on the other hand, with theatre and drama studies. The Conrad and the colonialism material has taken up more space in recent times, but I have published articles on Shakespeare and Greek Tragedy from a performance perspective as well as commentaries on plays set for VCE. These pieces attempted to explain the importance of a theatrical awareness to any study of drama texts. I don't believe it is any longer possible to ignore the performance component of drama, even if you are only writing about dramatic texts. It is essential to think in terms of theatrical and performative modes. Of course, there is a growing body of literature in this area. I haven't published a lot in the field of theatre studies, but I possibly will before the end of the day.

So, you are quite comfortable locating performance-oriented work in the academy?

Totally; it's simply an accident of history that we've borrowed our assumptions of what constitutes a liberal arts degree from England rather than from the United States where performance work has been accepted for a long time. Slowly, however, attitudes towards such work have markedly changed both here and in England. So I'm not only comfortable with the performance paradigm, but find it hard to see an interesting future for drama in the academy in any other form than one related to performance and theatrical practice in the wider culture.
NORMAN PRICE 31/3/93

Can you tell me how you became involved with the ID drama course?

I was teaching at Preston and I applied for a position that was advertised in the paper in 1980. I didn't get the job. It went to Rush Rehm. I got a letter the following year, asking me if I was still interested. Colin Duckworth, Terry Collits and Hector Maclean interviewed me the first time -- the players in the ID course for many years remained that group of people.

So what were your perceptions of the course?

Let me go back; I got the letter of acceptance from the university at the same time I got a teaching job at the old MCAE. So both things came together in the same year. So I married both positions together.

You were working part time in both places.

Yes, I worked part-time in both places. Over the years my time increased within Melbourne State College, but I kept working in the ID course simply because it provided me with the necessary research focus that I needed; it was giving me access to students that I wasn't getting here, and it provided me with an identity in terms of doing real work.

So you found that there was a qualitative difference between the students-

There was a vast difference, and I think that had to do with the way the course was run. In other words, I was encouraged in the ID course to work more along the lines of how I now run my workshops; I was testing theories in workshops, whereas that was not what I was being asked to do within the old State College system, it was a very different approach. I always felt there was a strong memory of the James McCaughey model in the ID course.
Which was?

Which was the notion that you do the seminar plus the workshop and somehow these two things would either be related or not related or whatever.

So you inherited that structure.

There was a structure. I felt that I had inherited that - I don't know, I had no feelings about it at all, really.

So there was a body of content you were asked to teach.

No, there really wasn't. But what I felt was there was a structure, a sort of pretty - there was a structure, there was this notion of the seminar and the workshop.

The content was left up to you.

Yes, the content was left up to me; although being new to this and wanting to do the right thing, I relied on getting information from the people who were around like Hector, Terry, Judy Armstrong, Colin Duckworth about what the content could be. I was also interested in the fact that the ID course existed because of the interests of a large group of people, mainly from the languages but also people like Dennis Pryor from Classics. It was important to keep those people on side and to be able to give them something back for the investment that they'd put into the course. I always felt quite strongly in those days that it was really a good idea to keep them included.

So how would they contribute?
They would contribute by offering seminars. I decided, after a few years, that the workshop wasn't something that was necessarily going to be attached to the seminars.

So they were independent streams.

Yes, so I then set up a process where the workshop had a different outcome. In other words the workshops weren't related to what was happening in the seminars. In many ways the seminars were mainly concerned with textual analysis. They were very old fashioned in a positive sense, and I mean that genuinely. These people were giving students knowledge about dramatic literature. And there was no real discussion of performance theory, as we would now talk about it. So I felt if I wanted to have some input into the content of the course it would be in the workshops. Hector became a major component in that process for me. It was his encouragement, actually, that forced me to develop my work. And to a large degree Terry Collits also contributed to that process. Terry was very keen to see the subject survive and he just wanted to make sure that I was encouraged. Hector has been incredibly important in the development of that course.

So what were your aims in that workshop program?

At that time I was beginning my own postgraduate work, so I was trying to isolate the meaning of the actor's body in the workshop process. Now it's quite clear to me what I was trying to do, but I wasn't entirely sure back then. It's always been a part of my enquiry to find out what actor's body is actually doing, or what an actor is learning in the workshop. A number of things happened in those first few years: Hector and I developed a series of workshops on Brechtian theory, which were offered at the 1984 NADIE [National Association for Drama in Education] conference. It was in that work with Hector that my ideas began to form in a more concrete way -- what is the body doing? What is the space saying? Where is the voice going? In other words, I think the construction of the workshop became something that we were interrogating more closely. It was at this time that we became aware of things like semiotics, and became aware of a
more realised articulation of performance analysis through things that were published like Patrice Pavis’ work and Susan Melrose’s work. There was a time when both Pavis [1988] and Melrose [1987] visited the course. We also became aware of what Gay McAuley was doing in Sydney. So, I became more aware of the fact that other people were also making similar enquiries to mine. We began to feel less isolated, but at the same time we suddenly realised that what we were doing here was quite different from what was happening in other places.

*What kinds of students were you attracting to the course?*

Interesting students. A lot of the D Generation were students of those courses, like Santo Cillauro, Magda Szubanski. There people in the course, like Lorina Filocetti, who went on to work in community arts. There were others who wrote for theatre, like Lisa Jacobson. There were a number of those students who subsequently auditioned for NIDA and actually got in. A lot of those students who did that course found their way into fringe theatre in this city. It seemed to me that the course provided a springboard, in a way, for the students to find their way into the world of theatre. The course legitimised their interest in theatre. But at the same time I think they were equally encouraged through their work in student theatre at the Union.

*What was your relationship with the Student Union Theatre Department in those days?*

It was not as formed as it is now. It was much looser because of the way the department was structured back then. I might add here, that it worries me that it’s called the theatre department in the student union.

*It often causes confusion; people assume that it’s an academic department.*

Exactly, and I think that then became a problem. I found that in later years, when the ID course was under threat, for instance, that the department in the student union became
more aggressive, more assertive, more focused. It seemed to me that at one point we were having difficulty really defining exactly what we both did -- people were getting us confused. I would like to see them change their title. It’s just a bureaucratic term. My relationship with that department was very ambiguous -- I was in a different part of the University; my classes were in the old engineering building. The issue of where the classes were conducted is also very interesting because when I was in the old engineering building it was my space, it was the course’s space, and the course had a definite place. There was a room on the top floor of the old engineering building, which made us self-contained.

*And the space was equipped.*

And the space was equipped, yes. When I first went there it was poorly equipped. We did a lot of experimental work up there; my postgraduate work was done up there, and we had public performances up there. When we went to the Des Connor room in the student union building we lost a lot of that identity. At the time I did *Dust Covers* the space had become a very nice little laboratory. When the subject moved out of Old Engineering into the Des Connor room, we were forced to deal with the student union theatre department in a very different way. But at that point, the difficulty within the student union had to be sort of hosed down, they took a very different line on their artistic directors and there was Ewa Cjajor. She was a great person to work with. What happened to her was I think tragic, not only for her own life but also in terms of contribution to theatre on this campus. It would’ve been interesting to have had the opportunity to have worked with Ewa for a bit longer, because her approach and style was very different. The department later became much more bureaucratised and suddenly they had the formed a structure that in many ways was opposed to the miserable structure of the ID course; I mean we had a very casual approach: we were always running around the campus trying to get people to do seminars, we had very little money, no administrative support. They were a well-oiled piece of machinery in comparison, and this was at times very difficult to confront.
You've mentioned that the course was often under threat. Can you tell me a bit about why you were forced to fight for survival?

You continually had to fight for survival, particularly in terms of budgeting.

This was despite having the support of language departments.

They're an interesting lot of questions in their own right about the way the subject developed. When I was first appointed the ID course had its own secretary, a woman called Susan Zizman, and she had an office in Old Arts. Now this is very interesting, she looked after all the ID courses --the administration, the budget, everything. There was even a drama library outside her door that contained drama texts as well as all the administration files for the ID course. And she looked after all the other ID courses in the University. Now somewhere into my time in there she resigned. Now at the point of her resignation the University placed ID courses in departmental homes. We went, into the Department of Russian and Language Studies.

And why did it go there?

Because it seemed that there was an interest from that department. I can't remember why -- it was expedient. And I think at that point there was again the need to argue for its survival. Letters would be circulated and you'd get all these signatures attached to it, like Terry Collits, Judy Armstrong, Dennis Pryor, and Dinny O'Hearn. We'd then run around summoning up all this sort of energy for the course to survive.

So why do you think there's been this hostility towards the subject?

I think simply because the University has never decided what it wanted to do with drama. See, I don't think it's an accident, but the University of Melbourne could've had NIDA
[National Institute of Dramatic Art]. They chose not to, so that's why it ended up in Sydney, but I think the initial negotiations for NIDA were with the University of Melbourne. I just get this feeling sometimes that the University of Melbourne has never really been quite sure about what theatre means. Yet it's always traded on the fact that the university environment has produced so many figures in the local scene. There was always an energy in the drama subject, but it seemed to always rely upon the good will of people, academics in the University, who felt there was value in theatre studies. It never found its way through to those high levels of bureaucracy. But then what was interesting, I think, was when the Theatre Board was formed with Colin Duckworth as chair the whole thing was cleared up. Theatre within the University of Melbourne got a bit more serious.

So what do you see as the relationship, then, between the academic study of theatre and theatre practice? This would seem to be one of the University's great problems, this notion of practice within an academic environment.

The University just hasn't understood the degree to which the enquiry into performance has gone off on so many different tangents. I don't know what the answer is, except that I think you just have to keep spelling things out to people and demonstrating the value of your work. But I used to all the time feel that there's this old guard of text based people who had a real concern and a genuine fondness for getting the show on, doing the play and all that, and a very high regard for the development of Australian theatre and all that goes with that; but when you get with them and you start to talk about the things that you're interested in, like the new performance theories, the new practical enquiries, there's a certain discomfort -- you could almost call it a generation gap. That's a dilemma, and I think those of us who are here now are a very different breed from those of us, who were here then. I would even argue that in terms of people like McCaughey, whose approach is very different from the work we would do now.

If there has been this ambivalence on the part of academics, how have theatre practitioners responded to your work?
Positively, I think. I can only talk about that personally. Okay, practitioners. We've produced more students that have actually gone out and started to work in theatre. Our network has expanded. In other words, we've now got students that work out there, so it seems to me that it is now easier to have a dialogue with those students. I think the interview with Tom Wright was particularly interesting.

**What did he have to say?**

He was talking about how actors make performance.

*He was one of the students who went through the ID course.*

Yes, he was one of the students who went through the ID course. I find it interesting how these people then talk about their work. People like Jill Buckler and Joanna Murray-Smith; they were products of this course. I think that there's something that has developed in their discourse that is interesting. It's the language they use, it's the way that maybe just ask questions about what they do in their work. So I think there's been that sort of effect. But also, I think, like if you look at last year's Suzuki project, we as University academics are getting access to observe training programs. People like Suzuki, people that are developing theories or working at new approaches to theatre, are interested in having their work recorded and analysed. They've shown that interest. And I think that sort of attitude is infiltrating through in our own theatre culture. So today we're getting access to high profile practitioners, whereas a few years ago we wouldn't have got a foot in the door.

*So you see the relationship between the Academy and the world of practice as being a very productive one.*
I think it's growing into a productive relationship. Remember, James McCaughey became artistic director at Playbox for a short time. Rex Cramphorn worked with Gay McAuley in Sydney. We were sitting here in the University of Melbourne and we wanted to tap into that world of practice, but we didn't quite know how to do it. I think the fact that some of our students began to work with these figures gave us access to theatre people. For instance, Suzanne Olb became the assistant editor of *New Theatre Australia*, gave me access to people like Waites, the Sydney Front, Entreact, groups like that. I also think that there is a feeling in the wider theatre community that we are doing things that they can get something out of. That Suzuki conference demonstrated that. Playbox saw that there was a service that we could provide. Over the last three or so years we've had more practitioners in the University, even if they just come in to use the spaces.

*It's interesting the course has been given the term inter-departmental. To what extent do you think the course has been inter-disciplinary? I'm making a distinction between those two terms.*

It's been inter-departmental simply because it needed all of those people to keep it going and I think they did bloody good work. But interdisciplinary, no. I mean to go and read a play for the Russian department wasn't read as being interdisciplinary. We never got to discover how my students would react to the text spoken in Russian or to analyse whether the Russian sounds as opposed to the English utterances influenced the staging of the text. That was never a part of the enquiry.

*We've talked a little bit about some of the difficulties that the ID course has experienced. What about research and how has the University either supported the drama program or hindered its development in terms of academic research?*

I think there was always a difficulty with it because we didn't really have a home, the course had no friends at court, so to speak. So you weren't quite sure where you could go
for assistance or how research funds could be made available. But I can remember that the Russian department at one stage were helpful in terms of a small amount of money that enabled me to publish a paper and also to attend a conference. That was very encouraging, but that was due to, I think, Paul Cubberley who was then chairman in the Russian department. On reflection, that makes me think about the degree to which the subject has always been dependent upon the good will of people. We were very aware that we had to get a research profile to survive, so when the research forms came out to register your research interests, we would dutifully send those forms back.

**And how often were you successful in attracting research funds?**

Not often at all, well never. I was successful on a couple of occasions with two small sums of money at the Institute of Education, so I probably got about $3,000 out of this institution. I have put in a number of grants through the ARC over many years for my work on dramaturgy, contemporary Japanese performance, drama and English as a second language. I have a pile of unsuccessful research applications. I don't know where the University places notions of performance research in its overall research profile. It has difficulty in terms of locating any form of arts practice in terms of research. It doesn't know what to do with it. These are not problems in other universities in the world that have programs like this. It seems to be a particularly local problem. I'm not just talking about the practice of artists; I'm also talking about that the institution has a problem with the theoretical writing up of creative processes.

**Do you think that one of the problems with the discipline is that it lacks a coherent focus, particularly in recent years where there seems to have been a shift away from theatre specific theory and practice, to a larger field of enquiry?**

Yes, I agree. We are interested in cultural studies, gender theory, theatre anthropology. I think that many of the people in the University, who would have thought that they understood notions of performance, haven't kept up with these developments; they're out
of touch and that's a problem. This means that there is sometimes a total lack of understanding as to what my research is about. People often have old-fashioned notions of theatre studies. Some administrators find it odd that theatre should be studied at all. There's not an understanding of what constitutes research in the discipline.

The interesting thing in all of this, I think, is that when Stephen Knight was appointed into English you suddenly get a proliferation of higher degrees in theatre studies. I think I was the first person that went through that process, and then I think there was Denise Varney. It seemed to me that my higher degree work in the University is very interesting to chart.

*Can you maybe talk about that and tell us how that a department like English accepted work? It would seem a very unconventional sort of patron.*

I think it was very brave of them to take it on. It needed the far sightedness of someone, someone who was also seeing that English departments were also changing their face. But prior to Stephen Knight's appointment it was really a very difficult to find the right supervision. I started off in Russian and Language Studies, where I was continually confused because no one seemed to know what I was on about, and I think I had a meeting with Hector at the end of one year and he advised strongly me to see if I could locate myself in English and then move into what was then hopefully a much more comfortable environment. I don't want to get into naming names here, but I would go in to work with people and at that point Hector was not my supervisor, and I would go in to work with people and it would be like they'd be sort of saying like where's the theory, like as if they were expecting me to write within theory that was either literary theory or established theory in their own discipline areas. They weren't familiar with the sorts of theory that I was reading or, God forgive me, developing in terms of performance analysis.

*So your practical work was actually generating a new forms of theory?*
I was presenting new approaches to work, and I think that was what was unique about my thesis. So that's why it was brave of the English department to take me on. My work was breaking new ground in that sense that it was trying to establish theories about the genesis of a performance piece. Then, following that, I wanted to take the development of the work further. That's where the dramaturgical research came into being. The thesis was finished, it was done, but no one seemed interested beyond a small circle of people who were concerned with it within the University. I might as well have farted Maybe that would've had too much of an effect. Within my department at Melbourne State College it was of no interest whatsoever. In terms of contributing to the development of the ID course within the University it was of no value whatsoever. It was of value to me, and people like Hector Maclean and Terry Collits and the people who were around me at that stage promoting my work. I think it was eventually the thing that took me overseas in 1987. The most positive response I have ever had to my work has always been in external environments, like the ADSA conference in Sydney, run by Gay McAuley. That's where I first met Susan Melrose and David Birch. I presented my work and there was this immediate response, immediate; there was an interest and excitement about what I was doing.

If we could just change tack for a moment, you mentioned earlier that one of your difficulties in terms of your research was being located in an institute of education where the research outcomes being advanced were related to education. What do you think are the pedagogical outcomes of your work? Given that you are in an education environment, do you see any interface between what you do in the discipline of theatre studies and what occurs in the world of education?

Oh yeah, there is a tremendous connection. But it would be my intention to overturn, through my research, the positions of people like Bolton and Hornbrook— theorists, I think, who've missed the boat. I think they've proceeded from very traditional and quite old
fashioned models, borrowed from 60s/70s approaches to sociology; whereas I think the work being done in performance analysis presents a much more accessible process for students and a much more accessible process for teachers. I mean just look at the work we've done on Stanislavskian model, for instance. I think it would help relieve problems for teachers because one is starting, through the work that we do here, to give quite interesting practical examples of how you tease out notions like emotional memory or rhythm or whatever. I've always felt that what I work at is not something that is just restricted to theatre practice or to academia.

What about other sorts of applications in other sites?

Actor training would be one place that I think my work could be taken up. Business communications another area. I do consultancy work with the law faculty here, I've worked in industry, in institutions totally disassociated from theatre.

Could you elaborate on precisely what sort of things you do?

I work with groups of people who are forced to adapt to changing work practices. So what one is doing in those sorts of situations is just setting up a series of role-plays, which enable people to change their own practices or to look at ways in which new work practices are affecting them. The methodology that I employ in these situations is very similar to the ones I use in theatre workshops. It's a matter of adapting material to suit the context. It's the same when I go to work in the Horwood Language Centre, teaching English as a second language. Again I adapt my drama methodologies and use it there. I would suggest that I had very good results in terms of teaching English as a second language through drama processes. So it seems to me that I have quite clear evidence that what I'm doing as a researcher in theatre studies has applications in other places, not just in the University.

How do you see your research developing within the context of the University?
I see a need to work on the practice of theatre, I see a need to do research on how actors think, how they make things, how directors work. Research into the generation of dramatic texts. I think that this would be different from McCaughey’s vision. Let’s call it vision, or one’s intention.
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