INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

Trauma Talk:

Theorizing Violence and Victimization in Contemporary Performance

By

Lisa Coulthard

A Thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Centre for Study of Drama

University of Toronto

Abstract

Trauma Talk: Theorizing Violence and Victimization in Contemporary Performance

Lisa Coulthard

Doctor of Philosophy, 2002

Graduate Centre for Study of Drama, University of Toronto

My dissertation explores the relationship between depictions of victimization and the presence of explicit physical violence on the stage. Arguing that the performance of graphic physical violence in the theatre is potentially more disruptive than accounts of theatrical violence usually allow, I question the theoretical discourses of identification and therapeutic effect that are mobilized in aid of justifying or legitimizing representations of violence. I further contend that this disruption is even more problematic when what is at issue is the depiction of violence against women, a representational issue that has been prominent in psychoanalytically informed feminist theories of spectatorship.

In developing this argument I consider a variety of performances that have engaged directly with this problematic place of violence on the stage. The first chapter offers an overview of theoretical accounts of violence and argues against an over-emphasis on issues of identification and spectatorial witnessing in approaches to theatrical violence. Addressing the critical and scholarly debates that arose after a staged rape scene in Tomson Highway's *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*, my second chapter argues that the controversy elided issues of the depiction of violence and engaged in appropriative discourses of authenticity and victimization. My third chapter looks at several popular theatre projects that address domestic abuse but which eschew the

presentation of on-stage violence. Using Marco de Marinis's theorization of closed theatres, I argue that the attention to audience consensus, in addition to the pedagogical and therapeutic aims of these projects, necessitated their avoidance of violence; the performances were well-received and powerful but the avoidance of violence meant that woman abuse and domestic violence were not addressed in any concrete way. In opposition to this elision of violence, my final chapter deals with a shocking and violent play written, directed and performed by Quebec actress Anne-Marie Cadieux. Placing Cadieux's work within the context of violent performance art, fight choreography and feminist theories of bodily presence, I argue that the visceral and proximate presentation of bodily violence in *La Nuit* troubled audiences because of the problems this violence posed to empathetic identification and the clear-cut designation of victimization.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface
Trauma Talk: Theorizing Violence and Victimization in Contemporary Performance

In an analysis of what he terms the "violence of the perfect moment" Leo Charney critiques the contemporary contempt for film violence and argues that current debates about violence are merely veiled attacks on spectacle, founded upon narrative bias and realist aesthetics. Taking issue with critics' opposition to the use of violence and lack of story in contemporary American action films, Charney suggests that the underlying problem is one of an over-valuation of narrative and a misunderstanding of film history and traditions of film spectatorship: "Accustomed to staging evaluation on the ground of plot coherence, reviewers implicitly reject the possibility that violent movies that 'don't make sense' are simply a different kind of movie, with deep historical roots and evidently enduring audience appeal." (Charney 53)[1] Violence and sensation need not be tied to narrative, Charney argues, and the assumption that they ought to be is fed by an erroneous and misguided understanding of film aesthetics and history, which is perpetuated by a limited view of audience response and based in evaluative critique. Powerful in its suspension of narrative into a "perfect moment," film violence is not simply a matter of narrative purpose, Charney's analysis suggests, and its sensational and spectacular aspects should not be cause for censure or criticism: the moment of violence should be appreciated and evaluated as such, as a moment of action, suspension and physical exhibition.[2]

While Charney is critiquing the kind of explicit gore and brutal violence most often associated with contemporary action films, these same concerns about the explicit portrayal of violence are evident in discussions of on-stage violence, especially

when the violence in question is directed towards women. Diana Taylor has recently questioned the representation of the depiction of torture of a female character in a popular Latin American play, fight choreographer J.D Martinez has asserted the negative effects of viewing violence and has attacked the modes of emotional excitation and sensationalism in the choreography and stylistic elements of fight scenes and scholars such as Jill Dolan and Lynda Hart have questioned the operations of voyeurism as it interacts with the eroticisation of violated female bodies on the theatrical stage. Although violence in the theatre rarely achieves the levels of bodily wounding, blood and brutality found in film, there is still a critical and theoretical concern for the place of violence on the theatrical stage. Moreover, concerns about theatrical violence are emerging in an era that offers acts of performance art that engage in real violence, thus raising questions about the status of performance and the body of the performer.[3] Yet, despite this framework of significance, the impact of the presence of physical confrontation, wounding and injury on the stage is rarely discussed in terms other than simple condemnation or justification as analyses of theatre violence engage in evaluative critique, focusing on dramatists or theatre groups who endorse or subvert traditional modes of representation and justifying the presence of physical confrontation through arguments based in therapeutic, pedagogical and cathartic effects.

In the chapters that follow I set out to analyse the impact of the graphic depiction of physical acts of violence on the stage. Specifically, I will engage with what has been considered, at least since the advent of feminist theory and criticism, the particularly problematic and contentious issue of the representation of violence against women. Considering theoretical issues of concern to feminist scholarship, I will examine the ways

in which practitioners, critics and theorists approach and respond to the presence of graphic, physical violence against women on the stage. While my account will not attempt to offer a reconstruction or semiotic analysis of the performance of violence, I will be analyzing several performance events in order to consider the significance of the presence or absence of the depiction of physical violence on the stage. In so doing I will necessarily be dealing with the primary or paradigmatic modes for understanding and approaching that violence and will be engaging in a theoretical consideration of the ways in which on-stage violence is addressed, discussed and controlled through an over-emphasis on identification, which I argue elides the potential for serious critical engagement with issues of violence. When violence is justified or legitimated, it is most often approached as instrumental, as a mobilizing force for identification (whether viewed positively or negatively), and, as a result, the potential for critical, analytical or dialectical engagement with violence (its definition, reception, depiction or characterization) is exchanged for affirmative, compensatory and legitimizing accounts of moralistically and therapeutically charged identification.

It is important to note that in contemporary critical and theoretical use the term violence can be an expansive and often vague category covering everything from actual physical conflict, wounding or murder to poverty, psychological abuse, verbal violence or state and institutional force and coercion. In the chapters that follow I will be using the term in the limited sense of physical contact between two or more persons resulting in harm or injury and will be focusing in particular on the impact of the on-stage performance of this physical confrontation. Moreover, I will be particularly concerned with the issues that arise when this confrontation occurs between male and female

characters on stage and involves forms of violence considered particularly problematic in representational terms (rape, sexual violence, domestic violence). While this physical conflict is of course connected to considerations of verbal violence, off-stage violence or the suggestive violence of inanimate objects and props, my focus will be on the specific details of bodily presence and the performance of acts of injury in front of a live audience. As part of this argument, I will contend that for any theoretical project concerned with the theatrical depiction of violence and victimization, the distinct acts of a choreographed rape, blow to the head or shove in the face must be considered and reflected upon.

Examining these issues of violence against women in light of theatrical events and performances that complicate or illustrate the relation between the depiction of violence and the empathetic treatment of victimization, I will question the functions and effects of an approach to theatrical violence that places the therapeutic or the pedagogical at the fore of an account of performed violence. In each chapter the goal is to consider and make complex paradigmatic and prominent approaches to the reception of violence in the theatre through the analysis of performance events and controversies. Although I refer to performance art and theoretical considerations of violence in media other than theatre, my focus is on issues of the physical presence of violence on the stage in a theatrical setting defined by the co-presence of actors and audience, the repetition of performance and the physical enactment within a frame of characterization, choreography, blocking and setting. These specific aspects of theatrical performance are significant ones in the consideration of the depiction of physical violence (a point that will be discussed in detail in the fourth chapter) and are important to bear in mind when analyzing current critical

and theoretical discussions of performance, performativity and theatricality. On-stage physical violence between characters performed by actors in front of an audience for a theatrical run of days, weeks or months, is a phenomena distinct from performance art, video installation or other modes of exhibition. This distinction applies whether one is considering non-professional theatre groups performing in an open space, activist or forum theatres, avant-garde performance or mainstream theatrical events at established venues. Regardless of venue, theatre violence as I am considering it is a rehearsed or planned event, performed (often repeatedly) in front of a live audience by individuals who execute the physical acts at a remove from their personal identities as artists. These details are especially important to keep in mind because, as I will develop in my first chapter, there is a tendency in contemporary discussions of violence in performance to address only those instances of performance art that involve actual acts of physical harm or wounding directed towards the artist's body (either by him or herself or others), a critical focus that both distorts the presence of real violence in art (which is in fact a very rare occurrence) and works to validate discourses of authenticity and actuality at the expense of considerations of represented and choreographed violence.[4]

Addressing issues of the performance of violence, each of the following chapters considers instances of performed physical violence in a theatrical framework, whether that performance occurred in an ornate and established theatre or an alternative theatre space, community hall or prison. In approaching the reception of theatrical violence I will consider the ways in which stage violence interacts with audience and spectatorial reception and will seek to understand theoretical concerns important for considering the problems, effects and vicissitudes of staging violence. For the most part, accounts of

violence in the theatre approach violence in representational terms, as part of play text or dramatic theme; what needs to be theorized and discussed in more detail is the act of depicting, producing and enacting physical violence on the theatrical stage. What is violence in the theatre and what constitutes and shapes its presence, absence, implications and interpretations? How does the audience respond, and how are they instructed, imagined, expected or trained to respond, to graphic depictions of physical violence? In an attempt to examine the presence of graphic violence on the stage, I will be utilizing examples from performance events to illustrate, expand and question theoretical positions or arguments that are pertinent or imperative to the reception and analysis of violence.

The first chapter offers an introduction to theoretical arguments about violence and victimization, paying particular attention to what I argue is an exaggerated emphasis on theories of identification in contemporary accounts of theatrical violence. This attention to therapeutic or cathartic identification in current accounts of violence, I contend, often over-rides considerations of the complexities, details and irregularities of the production, reception and performance of physical violence on the stage. In particular, I analyse the construction of the spectator-witness in contemporary feminist approaches to theatrical spectatorship and argue that this concept works to evade or obfuscate both the presence of physical violence in performance as well as the problems of voyeuristic spectatorship argued for by feminist psychoanalytic theories of the eighties and nineties.

The second chapter examines a theatrical controversy around the 1991 remount production of Tomson Highway's *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*. The play contains a rape with a crucifix that, when depicted on-stage in the Royal Alexandra remount production, led to arguments and debates in the pages of newspapers and

scholarly publications. At first the response to *Dry Lips* did not seem to be motivated by questions of authenticity and identification but appeared to be focused on the presentation of gender and violence on-stage. Although the remount of *Dry Lips* was initially met with enthusiastic reviews, soon after it opened letters, articles and opinion pieces appeared arguing that the performance was misogynistic and that it was misogynistic in racially coded terms. The remount thus brought with it a debate that appeared on the surface to address violence, colonialism and the problem of appropriation, yet each of these critical and intellectual positions on the play, the remount performance and Highway himself had difficulty accounting for and incorporating the physically present stage violence of the performance. The debate seemed to be questioning and engaging with the history and impact of violence and colonialism but in the absence of discussion of actual or performed violence, the debate displayed or enacted in distorted forms these same colonialist positions and modes of understanding.

Analyzing this controversy, this first chapter deals with the ways in which the performance's on-stage rape was a site for scholarly over-identification and the centre of questions about the play's misogyny, yet was never discussed directly or in detail. The violent on-stage depiction of rape thus became an absent centre for the controversy, a result that was, I argue, an effect of the ways in which the performance of violence made difficult terms of sympathetic identification with the victim of violence -- the on-stage rape complicated easy interpretations of victimization. This complicated portrait of victimization and violence was, I argue, compensated for through acts of scholarly intervention and interpretation that staked out territory, offered polarized accounts of

racial, class and gender difference and presented a clear-cut image of First Nations culture and individuals as victimized others.

In mobilizing questions of violence and othering, the debates around the remount of *Dry Lips* suggest the problematic place of victimization in accounts of theatre spectatorship and reception in a postcolonial context. In these debates, the performance became a central, much-contested and potentially dangerous or disruptive border, a border complicated by the particularities of a performance remount. The remounted production mobilized arguments based in binary divisions (white versus First Nations, colonizer versus colonized, original versus copy, high versus low culture, authentic versus appropriated voices) and framed audience reception in a complicated matrix of material conditions and nationalistic and racially coded oppositions. These divisions constituted a major part of the debate and I analyse the acts of appropriation exercised by those who insisted on controlling and containing the violence of the play and the performance through interpretation and the compensatory application of discourses of postcolonial theory. Both *Dry Lips* and Highway were thus mobilized to do cultural work in a postcolonial cultural context that offered what appeared to be progressive multicultural analysis but that clearly, if unintentionally, traded in an appropriative politics of over-identification with a victimized other. In this chapter I examine this kind of over-identification and universalizing investment evident in the response to *Dry Lips* found in academic and scholarly publications.

Chapter three moves from alternative or mainstream theatrical events to consider popular and community theatre and the use of audience participation or engagement to address violence. In this chapter I will focus on two theatrical projects that address

domestic violence -- Headlines Theatre's *Out of the Silence* (1992) and Théâtre Parminou's *Les Bleus amoureux* (1992). Both pieces addressed themselves to issues of domestic violence, both used experimental theatrical forms, both played in a variety of venues and neither depicted explicit violence on the stage. As community and popular theatre, the focus in each was on communication and an issue-based approach to violence, a form and a focus that I argue were translated into a simplified approach to violence and an absence of on-stage violence.

Asserting that domestic violence is available to representation only very problematically, I argue that popular theatre projects face particular difficulties when attempting to simplify this form of violence into a clear-cut conflict. Although in performances like *Out of the Silence* audience intervention and participation are encouraged and in fact required, I suggest that this intervention is prescribed and determined in such a way that the resulting performance event is as strictly codified and deterministic as more traditional performance structures; the audience's interventions are determined by the performance and the principles structuring audience response still rely upon audience identification and understanding. While using a variety of theatrical techniques and forms, political, popular and community theatre projects and groups that address social issues like violence are most often driven by the desire to communicate or impart a message that is decipherable to its audience, a desire that can result in a harmonizing, simplifying or avoiding of the complex issues at hand that can in turn operate to close off or limit audience response.

As part of this critique I analyse Marco De Marinis's analysis of closed performances. There is the implication in De Marinis's theory of closed performance

and semiotics of reception that despite the concept of an active and interactive spectator, there exists within the performance text and context a manipulative and deterministic power that prescribes and delimits that act of interpretation, or at the very least seeks to have the power of interpretive control. In looking at *Les Bleus* and *Out of the Silence*, I argue that the absence of the on-stage violence works in conjunction with the codified and closed nature of restricted political theatre. In an effort to communicate a clear message to what is approached as a collective audience, the theatre projects I examine in this chapter necessitate, or at least benefit from, an absence of explicit on-stage violence. Because these theatrical projects deal with violence and strive to communicate an unambiguous message that is received according to a prescribed framework, these theatre projects assume that the performance of violence on the stage must likewise be unambiguous, controlled, and in these cases, even avoided. In order to achieve this communication and audience consensus, these projects stress an emotional response to binary conflict, which is arguably more readily achieved by not broaching or risking the problems and vicissitudes of staging violence.

My final chapter approaches the problem of placing physical violence on-stage and looks at a performance that confronts the audience with their own expectations and beliefs about the production of theatrical violence. In opposition to recent discussions of theatrical violence, which constantly assert that theatre violence is less effective than film violence in making present brutality and bodily vulnerability, I will argue that there are ways in which some theatrical performances use bodily presence and on-stage violence in disturbing or confrontational ways. Considering the role of fight choreography, bodily exertion and theatrical space, I analyse the production of Anne-Marie Cadieux's *La Nuit*

(1995) and consider reviews of the performance that assert the viewer's difficulty in watching physical violence on the stage. The explicit violence in the performance emphasizes the relationship between violence and the body dealt with thematically in the play, and confronts the audience with the process and production of violence on the stage.

A graphically violent, demanding and provocative look at the impact of past trauma on present violence, *La Nuit* confronts the audience with the acts of explicit sex and violence that occur between the characters "he" and "she" over a single night in an anonymous hotel room. During this night, the characters' current acts of violence and abuse are framed and contextualized by past abuse, violence and trauma and the play ends on a note of intimacy and tenderness. The violence of the performance and its realism thus take on thematic import as the play addresses the ways in which the past shapes the present and marks the body. In this play history is registered on the body (her body tells of a birth and his history, he says, is written in the broken bones of his face) and the violence in the performance is appropriately corporeal and disturbingly realistic. Not only was *La Nuit* disturbing because of the material addressed (child murder, rape, sado-masochism, abuse), but its presentation of realistic acts of violence and abuse on the stage caused controversy because of its narrationally unmotivated violent opening. In this chapter I examine the impact and significance of this opening scene and consider the audience's discomfort with the explicit, graphic and proximate acts of physical violence.

As these summaries indicate, the following chapters offer analyses of theatrical controversies and performances in an effort to reframe and reconsider theoretical arguments about violence, performance and spectatorship. While the majority of critical attention to theatrical violence is framed in terms of representation and the critique of

images, I will be taking my cue from the prominence of identificatory paradigms and will be focusing on the reception of violence in theatre. My account is not phenomenological: I am not interested in recreating or hypothesizing about the experience of viewing violence. Instead, I will be addressing the functions and effects (on practitioners, audiences, theorists, critics) of this paradigmatic approach to theatre violence and I will be arguing that there are moments of performed violence in the theatre that disrupt or thwart an identificatory approach. Animating each analysis is an argument that suggests the incompleteness, and potential ill effects, of an approach to theatrical violence that considers violence in performance in evaluative terms of identification and therapeutic effect. When identificatory paradigms dominate, violence is most frequently enlisted in compensatory and recuperative projects aimed at defending or attacking the depiction of graphic violence. The attention to appropriation, consensus and confrontation in each chapter is therefore aimed at a critique of the traditions and theories for approaching violence in theatre that not only shape production, presentation and representation but also influence the modes of reception and response exercised by critics, practitioners and spectators.

In each chapter I examine an issue in the reception of violence through a consideration of the particularities of the presence, absence or production of physical violence on the stage. In all instances critics, scholars and practitioners confront violence as a potential danger and, importantly, in each example, violence is framed as a problem of audience reception, whether that reception is actual, imagined, predicted or projected. In each theatrical example the presence of violence on-stage is viewed, either by the audience (including reviewers and those engaged in writing on performance), the

practitioners or both, as tied to authentic and actual acts of violence: the *Dry Lips* controversy was centred on the ways that the depicted violence disturbed a reading of the play as a documentary narrative of native life; *Les Bleus Amoureux* and *Out of the Silence* avoided depicted violence in part because of a belief that the performed violence would become as problematic, confusing and ambiguous as actual domestic violence; and *La Nuit* disturbed its viewers because they perceived the performed violence as too real. Thus through analyses of theatrical examples illustrating the functions, effects and ramifications of the performance of violence in the theatre, each chapter addresses the prominence of identification as a paradigmatic mode for addressing violence, and questions the relation of depicted violence to this paradigm.

It is important to note that the theatrical projects I discuss are designed and intended to confront violence. The violence in these performances is not incidental or residual and violence against women is a central issue in each. Yet, as my analyses will show, this purported interest in, and concern with, violence is often side-tracked, frustrated or misdirected by approaches that have at their core a suspicion of the dangerous effects of performing and depicting violence. These works desire to confront issues of violence but its presentation on stage is viewed as a potential problem, either by the practitioners or the audience. Recognizing this suspension enacted by violence enables us to rethink the paradigms that have been used for approaching the theorization and criticism of theatrical violence. Realistic on-stage violence is not merely a matter of gratuitous display in excess of narration, nor is it documentary evidence, mimetic reflection, instrument for identification or real violence; choreographed, enacted violence in a theatrical setting is not a mirror image of actual physical violence and audience

reception is not reducible to a matter of identification. When graphic physical violence on the stage is approached, analysed or received only in terms of instrumental identification, the opportunity to analyse violence, performance or reception is lost. Performed violence cannot always be subsumed or absorbed into a reading based in identifications and the analysis of violence on the stage must be prepared to account for this in a way that addresses both reception and violence in performance. An emphasis on legitimacy or the therapeutic or curative effects of theatrical violence works to obfuscate the vicissitudes and complexities of the presence of depicted violence on the stage. Underlying this argument then is both a call for a more complete and nuanced account of theatrical violence that would move beyond mere instrumentality or justification and a desire for more complex understandings of spectatorial processes and acts of audience reception and engagement. Violence on the stage is not merely a matter of identifications and, as my analyses of performed violence will suggest, this paradigmatic approach can work to engage its own forms of violent erasure and ellipsis. When identificatory effects are the only focus, violence is not the subject, and when performed violence is only damned or defended, it ceases to be a matter for investigation, engagement or analytical reflection.

Approaching theatrical violence as a problem or cause requires that its presence can be legitimized and justified, which often requires an over-valuation of victimization, pathos and appropriative identification, operations that are thwarted by the presence of violence on the stage. Depictions of violence against women usually focus on images of victimization, even though this focus often requires that the depiction of violence be framed in secondary and instrumental terms. In theatrical representations of

victimization, this framing usually means that brutal physical acts of violence are not placed on the stage: effects may be revealed, the impact of violence may be evident but the act of graphically depicted physical confrontation (physical blows, force or impact delivered by one actor upon another) on the theatrical stage is a rare event. Violence occurs off-stage, at a black-out or is rendered diffuse through stylization, lighting, blocking, movement or mise en scene. In each theatrical example I will discuss explicit physical confrontation on the stage occurs infrequently and, when it does appear, it is met by controversy, shaped by allegorical interpretation or clearly framed in didactic terms; in each instance, the practitioners and/ or writers and directors aim to address issues of violence and victimization, yet in each there is a concern about the effects of graphic depictions of physical violence on this pedagogical aim. In theory and practice, violence may be significant as an issue but it is suspicious as an image.

This suspicion is evident in the attention to victimization in the reception to the performances I discuss. The graphic depiction of violence can be detrimental to the designation of identifiable victims as empathic identification can become complicated or ambiguous when brutal physical acts of violence and gore are depicted. In the moment of explicit physical violence, the action on-stage dominates and attention may be drawn away from story, characterization and narrative and directed towards spectacle, display, theatrical technique or sleight of hand. Victim characterization or status may even become uncertain as it varies with each action, fall or blow: like the dance number in a stage musical, the fight scene, rape scene or other graphic depiction of physical violence potentially freezes and suspends narration. Clear-cut portraits of victims and victimization, presented with an eye toward beneficial or instructive social, pedagogical

or therapeutic effects, are thus made complicated by this suspending, disruptive presence of stage violence. In the representation of victimization, the moment of violence can potentially mobilize attraction and sensation, rather than identification and narration. As an exhibitionist rather than voyeuristic moment, the violent moment of performance is therefore one that can thwart the legitimizing functions of theories of pedagogical usefulness and is ultimately one that complicates its own theorization.

Endnotes

[1]Working from Tom Gunning's seminal and important argument that early film operated as a "cinema of attractions," Charney suggests that violence in contemporary cinema can be examined on its own terms as exhibitionist sensation. Charney recontextualizes contemporary film violence within the frame of early film's "attractions" mode of exhibition and spectatorship by pointing out the ahistoricism and national prejudice that enables film itself to be equated with Hollywood classical narrative cinema. He is not, however, asserting that early film was violent in the same way that contemporary action films are violent. A cinema of attractions is not necessarily violent but is linked to the sensationalism and spectacle that are part of contemporary violent films. It is also important to note that in Gunning's argument the attractions aspect is as much one of viewing as it is of film aesthetics or formal qualities. As a viewing experience of sensation rather than narration, a cinema of attractions recognizes, addresses and confronts its spectators in a way foreign to the voyeuristic fourth wall realism of classical narrative film and its spectators engage with this exhibitionism accordingly.

[2] It is important to note that Charney is not here defending all uses of film violence but instead critiquing the very modes of defense and justification that are evident in arguments about violence. The designation of excessive violence requires and reifies a norm, which is in this instance shaped by narrational and realist biases.

[3] It is also interesting to note the flip-side of this attention to real violence and that is the commonly held belief that theatre cannot realistically and convincingly portray violence in an era of reality television and film ultraviolence.

[4] It should also be noted that my focus is on violence in performance, rather than a consideration of dramatic texts.

Chapter 1
Viewing Victimization: Spectatorship and Violence in Theatre and Theory

In a current climate shaped by concerns about the ill effects of viewing violence, discussions of theatrical violence tend to concentrate on the legitimacy (or gratuitousness) of the presence of physical violence on the stage. While a very few accounts of theatrical violence address the spectacular effects of on-stage gore or brutality, most often the legitimacy of violence on the stage is judged according to the role of graphic violence in the construction of empathetic characters: Martin Esslin, for instance, asserts that violence is illegitimate if it invites the audience to identify with the perpetrator of violence, but is legitimate if it is used towards positive and cathartic identificatory ends[1]; Thomas Gould similarly argues that although violence that is depicted "in such a way that the audience identified entirely with the perpetrator" (Gould 5) is reprehensible, violence that is presented so that the audience sympathizes entirely with the victim is justifiable[2]; and Diana Taylor, in a critique of a performance involving the graphic depiction of the torture and murder of a silent and under-characterized victim, stresses the ethical, feminist and political significance of identifying with depictions of victims of violence. These arguments offer instructive criticisms of the representation and instrumentality of stage violence and all emphasize the importance of recognizing the victim of violence; concern about violence is a concern of effects, and these effects are most obviously and most significantly important in considerations of victimization. While this emphasis on victimization is framed as a progressive concern (from political, feminist and ethical standpoints), it can lead to an encompassing and exculpatory

celebration of portraits of victimization that renders the place of theatrical violence obscure or insignificant.

It is unclear in this positive valuation of the victim what the role of on-stage violence is and what part it plays in aiding identification, constructing victimization and assisting therapeutic or cathartic impact. Although these accounts and instances of identifications include violence within their purview, they do not consider issues of violence in detail and, even more surprising, they do not address the particular role or function of theatrical violence in cases of graphic depictions of violence against women. In recent feminist theoretical work, the visibility of domestic violence, the place of women on the stage and the role of the female spectator have all been critiqued, analyzed and addressed from a variety of methodological, aesthetic and ideological stances. The latent voyeurism and sadism of traditional narrative, the heterosexist and ideologically conservative functions of realist forms, the pathologization and eroticization of the female performer and the impossibility of feminist modes of identification have all been discussed in theoretical analyses of female and feminist performance, yet these concerns, which are arguably rendered even more significant when the on-stage female body is performing the impact of being beaten, tortured, raped, abused or killed, are not met by equally rigorous accounts of the presence and graphic depiction of violence in the theatre.

Thus, while cathartic or therapeutic identification is the most common argument used to legitimize theatrical violence, including violence against women, the actual depiction and on-stage enactment of violence is rarely addressed or taken account of in discussions of identification and victimization. Consequently, these accounts do not broach the possibility that the graphic and explicit physical presence of violence on the

stage can alter or make problematic the impact, issues and operations of audience reception or spectator identifications with depictions of victimization. In what follows I will consider the nature and implications of the theoretical and critical focus on identification and will argue that the conceptualization of victimology and victimization in the theatre not only sidesteps considerations of violence but potentially erases them entirely. In fact, I will contend that cathartic identification with victims, on which the legitimation of theatrical violence most often depends, requires or at least involves the absence of graphic depictions of physical violence: explicit theatrical violence makes complicated both a clear-cut victimology and a theory of spectatorship based in the positive or therapeutic effects of identification. Considering the role of explicit violence in empathetically directed theories and presentations of victimization, I will argue against the predominance of therapeutic and pedagogical approaches to violence in the theatre and, in analyzing a variety of performances that have had controversial relationships to violence, I will explore the conflict between the legitimizing depiction of victimization and the explicit theatrical presentation of violence against women.

Although the theatrical enactment of physically explicit acts of violent confrontation cannot be easily reduced to instrumental identificatory aims or be permanently fixed as either legitimate or gratuitous, representationally based arguments rely on a belief in, and discourse of, the potential positive or ill effects of viewing violence. Importantly, this act of viewing has been complicated in the last few decades by the recognition of subconscious components of spectatorship. In particular this recognition has been most obvious in interpretations and applications of psychoanalytic theory that have occupied feminist theory and have dominated the theorization of

violence in visual culture.[3] Informed by this psychoanalytic concentration, the dangerous effects of viewing violence have been approached via theories of subjectivity, identification and voyeurism.[4] For example, through cinema studies, psychoanalysis has become a principal term for approaching spectatorship and feminism through the theoretical accounts offered by theorists such as Laura Mulvey, Judith Mayne, Gaylan Studlar, Teresa de Lauretis, Linda Williams and Mary Anne Doane.[5] Working with concepts of voyeurism, pleasure, fantasy and subject construction, these theories of spectatorship use the forms and modes of identification offered to the female spectator to critique representation, spectating conventions and the normative ideological constraints of form and reception traditions.

The most influential theorization of the psychoanalytic implications of identification and spectatorship was Laura Mulvey's 1975 article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." Although her argument is often applied to a variety of narrative and stylistic traditions, Mulvey's account focuses on Hollywood classical cinema. In classical narrative, she asserts, the pleasures obtained are those of imaginary wholeness and power and the masculine subject is the only space made available for identification regardless of the gender of the actual, physically present spectator. It follows that that the passive object of narrative will always be structured as feminine and thus classical narratives, realism and other forms are critiqued for requiring and encouraging spectatorial identification with a masculinist subject position.[6] While this account of spectatorship and narrative sadism has significance for considerations of violence, most psychoanalytic approaches to representation and reception do not deal explicitly with violence. There are, however, a few notable exceptions such as Teresa de Lauretis's

"The Violence of Rhetoric" and Lynda Hart's *Fatal Women: Lesbian Sexuality and the Mark of Aggression*, which both offer psychoanalytically informed analyses of the gendered nature of violence. De Lauretis argues that rhetoric and violence are interconnected (language constructs, names, produces and performs violence) and asserts that they are both dependent on assertions of sexual difference:

> I will contend that both views of the relation between rhetoric and violence contain and indeed depend on the same representation of sexual difference, whether they assume the "fact" of gender or, like Derrida, deny it: and, further, that the representation of violence is inseparable from the notion of gender, even when the latter is explicitly "deconstructed" or, more exactly, indicated as "ideology." I contend, in short, that violence is en-gendered in representation. (de Lauretis 240)

For de Lauretis, this sexual difference is not biological or even cultural but semiotic – a "different production of reference and meaning." (de Lauretis 255) It is this rhetoric of violence that defines gender (constructing "the object as female and the female as object" [de Lauretis 253]) and that en-genders violence: "For the subject of the violence is always, by definition, masculine; 'man' is by definition the subject of culture and of any social act." (de Lauretis 250) As shaped by a rhetoric of violence, then, the violator will always be viewed in masculine terms and the victim will be feminized through language, discourse and representation; for de Lauretis violence is constructed by language and written into this construction is the conflation of the victim position with the feminine object.

This psychoanalytically informed approach to violence, spectatorship and identification is evident also in Hart's argument, which suggests an inherent masculinization of violence in representation and reception. Hart, like de Lauretis, frames her account in terms of lesbian desire as she argues that the representation of

female violence always carries with it the invisible mark of lesbian presence: "it is the lesbian's absent presence that both permits women's aggression to enter the specular field and defuses the full force of its threat." (Hart x) The lesbian as stand-in for the violent woman does not fit so easily into the symbolic order (Hart argues that the figure of the lesbian is historically inscribed as "not-woman and as violent" [Hart x]) and helps to account for both the absorption and expulsion of the figure of the violent woman in representation and discourse. Thus, unlike de Lauretis's masculinized violent subject, Hart theorizes that the violent woman never attains the status of subject, even masculine subject; she is simply made "other" and operates between any masculine/ feminine or subject/ object split.

Hart and de Lauretis both offer accounts of violence that suggest the importance of identification and subjectivity in considering the representation of violence, whether that representation occurs on the stage, on the screen or in discourse.[7] Their accounts are, however, limited by a doctrinaire treatment of both identification and the representation of violence. In fact, de Lauretis herself offers a much more complex and open account of spectatorship in her later work, *The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desire*. In this work she argues for an opening up of the idea of spectatorship to acknowledge difference and to allow for a female spectator who has access to other than objectified identifications.[8] This opening up of spectatorship to account for female and feminist spectators has been a significant shift in contemporary feminist accounts of theatre and performance. For instance, in an account of spectatorship that offers an alternative to the ideologically complicit and suspect aspects of identification, Elin Diamond's "The Violence of 'We': Politicizing Identification," both critiques and offers

a solution to the universalizing force of identification. Diamond deconstructs the notion of a coercive or universalizing audience consensus (the "violence of we" noted in her title) by offering an alternative mode of identification based in a politically charged concept of audience community and commonality. While her analysis of identification is critical of the "we" of identification, in that she addresses the potential violence of identification (noting that "such acts are distinctly imperialistic and narcissistic: I lose nothing – there is no loss of self – rather I appropriate you, amplifying my 'I' into an authoritative 'we'," [Diamond 390]) she suggests that a psychoanalytically informed, feminist materialist approach may open up the potential for positive models of reception that can establish a "we" without the concomitant violence of appropriation and universalization: "Though identification seems to promote the annihilation of difference – and thus violence to the other – it may also suggest the problematizing of models that support such violence." (Diamond 390) Arguing that identification destabilizes the subject, opening up politically informed space for contradiction, ambivalence and negotiation, Diamond appeals to Freud's connection between identification and introjection and points to the dual operations of incorporation: "To identify is apparently not only to incorporate but to be incorporated. To be radically destabilized." (Diamond 391) Unlike Diana Fuss's more in depth analysis of Freud, which asserts the "violence at the heart of identification" (Fuss 34) and which stresses the partial, incomplete nature of identification as a necessary part of its violence, Diamond looks to the unfinished and imperfect features of identification for recuperation and reinterpretation. The act of identification is one of transformation and constitutes a continuous process in the creation of the subject. It follows, then, in Diamond's argument, that identification is not a

process of surety or verification (she cites realism's appeal to the verification of its truths), but is one of disruption, even in cases of theatrical realism. Because a subject is always in process, his or her identifications always carry with them a history, a history "which is at least partly the history of her psychic life with others." (Diamond 396)

Diamond proceeds from this psychoanalytic argument to offer what she considers an historically informed account of spectatorship, which would allow for a "we" of identification based in social and political solidarity, not violence. Considering the matinee audience of *Hedda Gabler* in 1891, Diamond suggests that it is possible to imagine an empowering, politicized "we" amongst the female spectators: "Viewed this way, she [Hedda] does not reinforce a social status quo but, arguably, describes a new if temporary social space – a space occupied by women in matinee performances of Ibsen's plays." (Diamond 397) This imagined solidarity based on a particular conceptualization of the play, the historical moment and the processes of reception, identification and spectatorship becomes, for Diamond, a symbol for the possibilities of a politics of identification that is clearly utopian in its celebration of the process of psychic identifications: "Only by attending to the projections, the narcissistic, self-transforming fantasies of historical subjects can we begin to imagine a politics of identification – a politics that dismantles the phenomenological universals of transcendent subjects and objects, that places identity in an unstable and contingent relation to identification, and that works close to the nerves that divide/ connect the psychic and the social." (Diamond 397) An authoritative we, she argues, offers "the factitious but powerful sense of community which buttresses but also conceals the narcissistic claims of the critic." (Diamond 390) Identification here enacts its own violence in its appropriative and

incorporative force, although for Diamond it is a force that can also be framed in terms of politically progressive modes of empowerment.[9] Whether empowering or not, audience community is established or at least supported by the processes of identification, and, as Diamond's example (*Hedda Gabler*) suggests, these processes are aided by the theatrical performance of victimization.

In this formulation of identification and its hidden potential, Diamond's account effectively uses psychoanalytic concepts to negotiate the vicissitudes and appropriations of identificatory processes. However, there is some ambiguity in Diamond's use of certain psychoanalytic terms. For instance, she seems to use the terms incorporation and introjection interchangeably as synonyms for identification. This is in part because she is working from Freud but in contemporary usage the terms are tied to their original use by Sandor Ferenczi, whose formulation of introjection and incorporation sees the two as distinct events that operate according to an oppositional relationship similar to that of mourning and melancholia. Described and developed by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, who work from Ferenczi, introjection is a process, a working through of identification and object relations, while incorporation is defined by refusal, denial and pathological fantasy. "Incorporation denotes a fantasy, introjection a process," they argue, and the relationship between them is like the distinction between "the acquisition of a language" and "buying a dictionary." (Abraham and Torok 125) It is this kind of distinction that is missing in Diamond's celebration of the political potential for identification. Although identification may be destabilizing, it is not necessarily the case that the subject will work through and process that instability; instead the subject may simply acquire it, "buy" it as his or her own. The mode of audience identification is here

merely projection and, because it is directed towards a defensive gesture (i.e. identification is not always a negative thing), it is simplified and generalized so as not to account for the vicissitudes of performance, identification or audience community.

Diamond's analysis also does not fully take account of the particularities of the example she uses throughout -- *Hedda Gabler*. Using this example places issues of violence and victimization at the centre of her account of identification, but she does not consider the particular effects of this frame of victimization for questions of identification, appropriation or narcissistic pleasure. It is possible that depictions of violence and victimization operate as an impetus for the kind of cohesion and collectivity that Diamond describes and that any political implications should be located in a consideration of this theatrical violence. A story of victimization, brought about and culminating in violence, potentially offers the audience a different kind of "we" (and a different form of "the violence of we,") than a farce or a comedy.[10] Thus, contrary to Diamond's assertion, the identification with victimization is not necessarily a positive or progressive force. Identity formation and spectatorial identification may exist in a fluid relation but this does not necessarily mediate or ameliorate the globalizing force of appropriative identification. What is at issue for Diamond is not therefore the vicissitudes of identification but the instrumentality (framed progressively) of the performance of victimization. Thus, whether in the service of politically conservative or progressive ends, the analysis of the reception of the performance of victimization tends to validate the universalizing powers of identification. Diamond's analysis offers a different "we" but the violence (of consensus and of the performance of victimization) remains.[11]

The significance of these kinds of psychoanalytic accounts has been to extend the importance of considerations of the representation and reception of violence. Depictions of violence no longer merely reflect back on the artistic and aesthetic worth of the work or author but reflect upon the conscious and subconscious operations of the viewer and the concomitant reinforcement or disruption of forms of spectatorship and ideological norms. However, although tied to the subconscious operations of voyeurism, identification, transference or projection, these theories of identification and spectatorship still address violence and victimization in limited terms: theatrical violence is only significant in terms of its representation and implied reception as it considered in relation to violence in the world and is judged accordingly – its verification and justification are determined by the usefulness, accuracy and legitimacy of its engagement with its referenced source violence.[12] Concomitantly, the spectator or audience of theatrical violence is analyzed as the final point of communication; the reception of theatrical violence is either communicated effectively, allowing the audience to learn, profit or benefit from the message conveyed, or ineffectively, alienating or distancing its audience through its disruptive or gratuitous violence.[13]

Thus, while not engaged in the kind of strict Mulveyian assertion of the sadistic and voyeuristic drives of narrative violence, these analyses of identification are likewise framed by a belief in the potential of representations of violence to do harm, an argument that can be turned around (as Diamond does), to argue for the social, political and moral worth of some depictions of violence or victimization. There is still a concentration on spectatorial identification, character psychology, realism and the mimetic relation between image and world and there is still an assumption of harm: images of violence

carry the potential to do violence, whether through appropriative absorption, problematic or restrictive opportunities for identification or through the ideological affirmation of normalcy and the *status quo*.

More importantly, however, implied in these defenses and reworkings of theories of identification is an assertion that depictions of violence can be argued to be of benefit, can be seen to exercise cathartic and therapeutic power, especially when that violence is linked to instructive and empathetically directed narratives of victimization and pain. Indeed, in many ways theatrical violence is seen to gain credibility through its identificatory effects. By emphasizing notions of victimization -- asserting a connection between empathizing with characters who undergo violence and intervening in acts of real violence -- theoretical accounts of identificatory spectatorship can argue that presentations of violence offer a positive lesson.[14] In this elevation of identification, viewing violence in the theatre becomes more than merely a question of legitimate or illegitimate identifications but becomes an act. This lesson is argued most explicitly in contemporary theoretical applications of witnessing and trauma to the study of performance. The witness, according to trauma studies, operates as an active listener who enables the telling of trauma and who experiences a kind of secondary transferential trauma that makes it possible for the witness to keep alive the story of trauma either through repetition, retelling or the encouragement of additional, future testimonies. This concept of witnessing has been adopted in recent studies of spectatorship and audience identification and has been mobilized in what can be seen as a recuperative enterprise aimed at overleaping the problematic questions raised by psychoanalytic theories of spectatorship and identification. Diana Taylor, for instance, uses the concept of

witnessing to address and ameliorate the problems at hand in viewing violence. Taylor's book *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's 'Dirty War'* begins with a recounting of the disruptive experience of viewing violent victimization, in this instance a performance of Eduardo Pavlovsky's *Paso de dos* staged in Buenos Aires:

> From the bleachers, I watched in stunned silence. I was disoriented. How to position myself in the face of the spectacle I had just seen? I was trapped – trapped between wanting to see, to make out what was happening in front of me, and not wanting to see once I had made it out. I tired to disbelieve: this couldn't be happening. By moments, the mournful tango and beautiful lighting swept me up to what seemed a lofty plateau of transcendent 'meaning' where all this made sense. But her brutalized body brought me back. I wondered what the other members of the audience felt. Were they looking at her destruction, or though it to that lofty beyond? The prolonged applause suggested that this play had resonated with them. (Taylor 2)

The performance involved the torture, beating and murder of a female character whose voice is never heard on the stage. The play was a theatrical hit in the 1990 Argentine theatre season and was generally well received by audiences. Critical of the representation of violence in the piece, Taylor suggests that "the performance replicated and affirmed the fascination with eroticised violence." (Taylor, 1997, 4) More specifically, she argues that the use of the female body to address the militaristic discourse of the Dirty War is particularly troubling in its repetition of fascist parallels between nation and femininity: "The misogyny, rather, was a fundamental bridge or slash connecting the military/ anti-military discourse. In the struggle for national identity, both groups of males were fighting to define and occupy the 'masculine' position while emasculating, feminizing and marginalizing the 'other.'" (Taylor, 1997, 9)

Even more important to Taylor, however, than the details of the performance, was the confrontation she faced when she voiced her concerns about this production in a public forum (a conference panel with the director) that she claims suddenly placed her in the role of outsider and colonizer. Analyzing her experience as one of identity and identification, Taylor frames this defence of the performed violence as an instance of border protection and border crossing: "Standing in the auditorium in front of two hundred people, I suddenly felt trapped in the spectacle of nation building and dangerous border crossings." (Taylor 178) Looking at the performance in terms of representation, erotic spectacle and identificatory structures, Taylor replaces her concerns about the violence in the representation with a concern about the auditorium and the audience, which she characterizes as defined by division, danger and difference. Although critical of her own desires and transferential placements, admitting that "[a]t times, I am surprised by the narcissistic pull toward mis/ overidentification that converts 'me' into the victim or casts 'me' as the critic/ hero," (Taylor 184) Taylor maintains in her argument that the problem at hand is one of representation and spectatorship, and in particular is a problem of errant or irresponsible spectatorship.

As an antidote or reply to this problem of violence and voyeuristic pleasure, which she refers to as "percepticide," Taylor suggests a reconfiguration of spectatorship that would place it in the realm of ethical witnessing rather than problematic voyeurism: "But there is another 'kind of looking – one that for lack of a better word I'll call witnessing – which I've drawn from theatre." (Taylor 182) Witnessing, she argues "functions within a different scopic economy than peeping or watching," and presupposes "that looking across borders is always an intervention." (182) For Taylor witnessing "works within an

economy of looks and in a scenario where positions – subject/ object, see-er/ seen – are constantly in flux, responding to each other," (Taylor 183) so that it becomes, unlike spectatorship, an involved and ethically engaged act. Witnessing is not in this model merely looking or voyeuristic pleasure (activities that Taylor sees as morally, ideologically and politically suspect), but a work of intervention. As witness, the viewer is thus framed as a responsible interlocutor or participant, as one who conveys the message learned to others: "Witnesses, of course, make witnesses of others, ensuring that the memory of injustice and atrocity is engraved upon, rather than erased from, collective memory." (Taylor 184) Witnessing, Taylor argues, "functions within a different scopic economy than peeping or watching," (Taylor 261) and offers occupation, intervention and interchangeability: "The same scopic structure that situates the object to be looked at puts 'us' in the picture." (Taylor 261)

By advocating the insertion of the viewer into the text, witnessing is here presented as a re-theorization of the processes of spectatorship, but it is in essence offered as an antidote to the problems or potentially negative effects of representation and reception. Related to an ethically and traumatically inflected discourse of responsibility, Taylor's witnessing offers a solution to voyeurism and appropriation; in this formulation, witnessing is not merely another way of looking or viewing, it is the ethically and politically correct way of looking: it implies the spectator in the image of victimization or violence and thus makes it impossible to separate image from self or self from other.

In offering witnessing and spectatorship as interchangeable modes of reception, Taylor suggests that the spectator responds to violence in the theatre in the same way he or she responds to violence in the real world or at least to the media presentations of that

real violence: we identify effectively as witnesses or ineffectively as either distanced or overidentifying spectators or voyeurs. Indeed, sometimes in Taylor's analysis it is unclear whether the viewing responses discussed are those of the political bystander or theatre spectator:

> Watching the blows during *Paso de dos*, I might feel as if I were the torturer's next victim. Instead of reacting politically to end torture or violence against women, for example, we are paralysed by extension. It's only one more step before we feel that these images tyrannize us and that *we* are their victims. The double mechanism of undifferentiation and over-identification results in percepticide, for the same gesture that denies specificity ("it's all the same after a while") commands our over-identification (it's about us – our money, our security, our national well-being). But this drama is not about me – as such – for I am neither the victim (who is helpless), nor the perpetrator (who is guilty). My role is neither to take on the one's fear or the other's guilt, but to understand my role as *spectator* in enabling or disrupting the scenario. (Taylor 260)

In this quote from Taylor, the options available for spectatorship are not many (identification), nor are the objects for this spectatorial process varied (perpetrator, victim, bystander). Moreover, the underlying force of the argument is one that seems suspicious of viewing practices and visuality (as the term "percepticide" indicates) and is one that blurs the distinction between spectating and action, offering only another form of identification (witnessing) as a progressive alternative. It is not made clear how witnessing is distinct from other modes of spectatorship, nor is it entirely clear in what way witnessing would provide a solution to the problem of audience consensus and reception described by Taylor. Taylor's objections to the violence of the performance are not rendered less at odds with the generally positive audience reception by the concept of witnessing. The relation between the statements about the violence of *Paso* and the advocacy of spectatorial witnessing is not apparent, unless one considers the possibility

that the underlying argument is one of preferential readings: had the other audience members been viewing the performance as Taylor had, presumably through the frame of witnessing, then they too would have been offended by the portrait of victimization offered by the performance.

By focusing on the ethical potential of the witness, arguing that looking "entails a responsibility, a risk, and a danger," (Taylor 184) Taylor implies the necessary conditions of witnessing (trauma, violence and victimization), which in turn point to the problematic methodological and theoretical implications of Taylor's model. Spectatorial witnessing becomes simply an act of renaming, a reclaiming of spectatorship, based in exculpatory theories of identification, that does not alter or suggest alternatives to the conscious and subconscious processes that make up reception or spectatorship. Taylor thus shifts voyeuristic spectatorial pleasure to witnessing by merely altering terminology and by emphasizing the role of victimization in the performance of violence. This celebrated spectatorial mode suggests the presence of pain, terror, violence and victimization in performance in order to operate but this model does not address the performance of violence or the problematic over-emphasis of portraits of victimization. In Taylor's analysis of violent performance, all performances of violence become narratives of victimization and all spectators have the ability to consciously engage with the performance as witnesses.

In addressing an instance of violent performance, Taylor importantly locates her argument in the problem of "documenting and representing violence," which she argues is intimately tied to her desire "to be a better spectator." (Taylor 185) The violence of the performance is detailed, as are Taylor's objections to the representational tropes and

modes of its performance, and Taylor's analysis is insightful; there is a recognition of the distinct place of *Paso* as a piece of performance, but this representational analysis is relegated to secondary role in her promotion of the spectatorial mode of witnessing, which is explicitly tied in her analysis to real situations of violence, trauma and victimization. By holding up witnessing as an answer, and by quoting Dori Laub's work on Holocaust testimony and witnessing in her theorization of this spectator to violence, Taylor conflates the experience of viewing performance with that of experiencing (even second hand) actual acts of violence and constructs a vision of the audience as automatically and universally ethically responsible listeners. Transferring a psychoanalytic and therapeutic concept into the theatre, Taylor ascribes what is in fact an earned and serious responsibility to the experience of spectatorship, an ascription that erases the real distinctions at hand between acting as witness and experiencing and viewing a performance. She also ignores the subconscious operations that constitute spectatorship; this elision is not a minor one as it is arguably the subconscious workings of identification, voyeurism and objectification that make the eroticisation of violence in the performance problematic and that shape the play of difference and appropriation that she suggests was part of the post-performance discussion. Claiming an allegiance to a Lacanian concept of the gaze (where the force of the gaze is not our look but the awareness that the other is looking at us), Taylor frames the witness function so that it allows for the unconscious, psychoanalytic aspects of spectatorship to come into play but only in so far as they work to justify, exculpate and defend the spectator. Taylor's argument uses psychoanalytic terminology but it does not work its way into the

theorization of witnessing, which she offers as a conscious choice of viewer identification.

For Taylor the spectator witness allows the spectator of violence to move beyond clear identificatory binaries of victim and perpetrator, but yet this same construct of witnessing allows her to frame herself as victim in the debate that followed the performance of *Paso*. Further, this concept of the witness, we must remember, is mobilized by Taylor in response to the uneasiness she feels as outsider to a violent performance and to the performative violence of the audience, an uneasiness that I would argue is not a singular event but is an example of a scene that is repeated in the writings of theatre critics, audiences and analysts who feel that they are placed outside of what they conceive of as an insular and protected mass and whose discomfort is exacerbated or uncovered in particularly problematic ways in performances of violence and victimization. The audience thus becomes the locus for misunderstanding, for a lack of perspective, and the analyst, however conscious of his or her own psychic and phantasmatic investments and projections, occupies the place of teacher, corrective and instructive witness.

Taylor's argument may appear to be critical of identity politics and national or geographical constructions of the self, but her acts of identification elide and minimalize the spectatorial processes of othering and difference suggested by the disruption in the audience and auditorium. Self-reflexive, but not necessarily self-critical, her account is indicative of a theoretical and intellectual approach to reception that places the critic and scholar at the centre of analysis, offering up his or her position as exemplary, enlightened and exempt from political, cultural and ideological powers of manipulation and influence.

Although not explicitly engaged in an evaluative or interpretive enterprise that privileges the intellectual power or experience of the speaker, this kind of account offers an ideological critique that does not sufficiently recognize or address the distortions, displacements and investments of the scholar or critic in his or her object of study; Taylor exempts herself from the audience and places herself in both a privileged and vilified position of artistic, intellectual and spectatorial engagement that is on the surface critical and self-aware but is not necessarily self-critical insofar as it is indicative of over-investment, self-justification and appropriative engagement. Humble and self-conscious as white outsider, this postcolonial witness is nonetheless placed in a privileged position of exposition and is framed as being particularly useful in the explanation of violence (her response suggests that the audience needs her to translate the violence for them).

As Taylor's account indicates, academic interpretation and appropriation is aided by this theorization of the spectator as witness insofar as witnessing implies ethically and politically motivated engagement that justifies secondary transference and appropriative identification. In witnessing one is supposed to "take on" the other's story, to acquire it as one's own, albeit with a recognition of the secondary nature of this acquisition. The concept becomes useful in exercises of appropriation and it is due in part to this explanatory power of the concept that witnessing has gained popularity in contemporary theoretical accounts of spectatorship and reception and in the application of trauma studies to literature, theory, film and theatre. This application of trauma studies in a generalized, universalized way is problematic when linked to redemptive or compensatory projects that tie violence and victimization to an appropriative

identification whereby the spectator, critic or academic acquires an unearned status, identity or experience.

This appropriative identification is particularly problematic when this spectatorial investment goes unrecognized and passes for an actual political, ethical or social engagement with issues of violence, victimization, disenfranchisement or trauma. The position of the spectator witness is conceived as active not passive and, as a result, his or her identification is viewed as an ethically charged and responsible act of meaning-making. Taylor links the need for this positive witness-identification to what she terms the "compassion fatigue" of contemporary culture:

> Devastating images from around the world lead to 'compassion fatigue' – how many famished children and trainwrecks can we take in without feeling that we have to turn a blind eye for the sake of self-preservation? As waves of undifferentiated violence wash over us, differentiation seems impossible – after a while, it's all the same. We either resist identification – what happened in Argentina is not about me – or we over-identify. (Taylor 260)

The witness/ spectator is able to respond actively and, moreover, is able to internalize and extend experience. As it relates to compassion fatigue or violence, witnessing implies a response to a testimony of victimization, of trauma: it calls for a responsible witness who will identify, experience transference, absorb the perceived violence into his or her own experience and take on the role of secondary witness. In Taylor's formulation, however, it is not entirely clear how the witness would operate as an antidote to over or under-identification. Witnessing is here offered as the "just right" identificatory option – it is characterized by neither pathological excess nor empathetic lack: it is the rational and moderate option of identification and is therefore presented as ethically correct. However, as Dominick LaCapra, Cathy Caruth, Shoshanna Felman, Geoffrey Hartman

and others have all argued, witnessing is anything but moderate and it can even be a traumatic instance of extreme and detrimental over-identification. The spectator/ witness, in its assumption of ethical engagement and a politics of risk, is an attractive theoretical model or descriptive category but it is essentially a flawed and ethically questionable one. Witnessing is not distanced and can involve excessive and transferential over-identification. Thus, contrary to Taylor's clever (and easy) terminological appropriation, witnessing is not spectatorship and it is not an easy or simple antidote or way out of "compassion fatigue," voyeurism or "percepticide."

Despite its complexity and specificity, however, witnessing has gained currency in recent theoretical explorations of spectatorship, representation and expression. Taylor is not alone in turning to this concept of the witness as a model for spectatorship and she is also not alone is making a link between this model and the ethical and therapeutic potential of theatre. Emphasizing the therapeutic and cathartic aspects of theatre, Peggy Phelan maps out what she sees as the curative future for performance studies in her introduction to the volume *The Ends of Performance* (which contains a version of Taylor's chapter on the *Paso de dos* performance and the theory of witnessing). Here she suggests that each essay in the volume articulates performances' need for "its own spectator/ reader/ witness." (Phelan 12) Although Phelan does not expand upon the relations among these terms, it is evident in her discussions that, for her, witnessing is tied to the therapeutic power of the theatre. For Phelan, theatre is curative and it is in part the identificatory effects of performance that enable it to exercise its healing powers:

> It is only recently that the field [of performance studies] has given sharper attention to curative interpretations, to the affective and ideological consequences of performance events. It is these consequences that the essays in this volume articulate. Such interpretations, which are always

> reinterpretations, are also what I most hope will become the future of the field and the truest end of performance – truest in the sense that they help us move past the time of the diagnosis and bring about, enact, give us the time of the cure. (Phelan 7)

The parallel to psychoanalysis is made explicit in Phelan, as is the positive valuation of mourning, melancholy and loss: "this transformative becoming is the almost always elegiac function of performance theory and writing, if not performance itself. Our admiration for performance tempts us beyond our reason to make it ours, for better or for worse. The challenge before us is to learn to love the thing we've lost without assimilating it so thoroughly that it becomes us rather than remaining itself." (Phelan 11)

Making a connection between performance studies and the talking cure of psychoanalysis, Phelan places the critic in the privileged position of analyst and pathologizes performance into a series of symptoms. In so doing she asserts theatre's power of representation and places performance within a frame of iteration and repetition that is at once melancholic and elegiac. It is within this therapeutic and melancholic frame of reference that Phelan's concept of performance analysis gains its curative force and, it follows, that her model for the spectator is, like Taylor, that of the witness. Performance is here educational ("And we know performance knows things worth knowing" [Phelan 8]), therapeutic and somehow innately pathological, in need of and demanding the critic/ witness/ analyst. And violence, or at least death, is conferred meaning through the constructed form of the spectator/ witness: "Death is an act that can only achieve meaning in and through the observation of the other, the spectator-witness." (Phelan, 1999, 229)

For Phelan death and theatre gain their meaning and fulfill their purpose in observation; theatrical performance offers this meaning-laden act to the responsible

viewer, who is awarded the status of observer/spectator/ witness. Theatrical performance and theatrical reception are here therapeutic and spectatorship (conceived of as witnessing) is an ethical act.[15] In offering this exculpatory position to the spectator, witnessing works to advance a simplified, appropriative mode of identification: through witnessing the victim's story becomes your own and thus becomes an indication of your political and ethical engagement and commitment.

The importance of the victimized figure as a way to control and confront depictions of violence is especially evident in the prominence of issues of identification in works that attempt to confront especially troubling or difficult forms of violence. For instance, Robert Skloot's recent essay, "'Where Does It Hurt?': Genocide, the Theatre and the Human Body," places witnessing and the depiction of victimization at the forefront of his account, which argues for the positive social, ethical and political effects of empathic identification. The potential for identification and the possibility of witnessing increase in proportion to the violence and trauma represented and are seen to be dependent upon theatre's particular ability to make present a language of pain and atrocity: "When this language [of pain] is expressed and conveyed through theatrical images of persons in pain, persons whose histories we know and whose existences we care about, it is possible that some sense of reparation for humanity's loss to atrocity can be conveyed by the experience of empathic identification." (Skloot 53) The audience's (projected) identification thus stands in for action itself. They enact an ethical stance simply by virtue of being present, and are conferred the status of witness as a result: "Simultaneously, they [the plays under discussion] require our witness at episodes of atrocity causing us to question our relationship to society, our *complicity* with it, so as to

raise our ethical consciousness." (Skloot 54) For Skloot, identification offers a certain promise to the spectator and it is one based in a moral and ethical framework for understanding violence, its effects and manifestations through its reception.

As adopted by Taylor, Phelan and Skloot, this construct of the spectator/ witness implies a relationship to the viewing of violent or traumatic representations that is at once ethically implicated and exculpatory; through the application of witnessing the spectator is endowed with a power and responsibility that may imply complicity or raise awareness but this application also potentially closes off critique or analytical assessment. Because the concept of witness is such a charged one (in part a result of its use in the study of the Holocaust and in trauma studies generally), it tends to be adopted in a redemptive or recuperative fashion in theoretical accounts of spectatorship. Taylor, Phelan and Skloot do not use the concept to critique or question spectatorship but as a way *out of* the problems and vicissitudes of spectatorship and as a way of justifying and closing off the questioning of violence in performance: violence performed in aid of encouraging active witnessing is not only defensible but laudable. Violence in performance is here a necessary condition for communicating the violence of trauma and the act of viewing this violence, of acting as a spectator, is raised to a level of not only ethical engagement but ethical action. A witness is active, he or she acts as a listener, takes on a story and carries it out into the world: for these theorists the theatre spectator is likewise engaged and likewise active in the act of dissemination and education.

Not surprisingly this terminology of trauma and witnessing has been particularly prominent and influential in those forms of theatre performance and criticism that are concerned with issues of collectivity, change and community health. In addition to their

use in personal and individually directed forms of theatrical expression (dramatherapy, for example), the concepts of witnessing and testimony have been significant for theatre groups and performances aimed at community expression and intervention. Although using the term in a more limited sense than some of the theoretical writings I have been considering, popular and community theatres have turned to the concept of witnessing to further their therapeutic and pedagogic models for theatrical communication. In these accounts witnessing's pedagogical, instructive and therapeutic role is recognized and valued. For example, in her work on popular theatre, trauma and testimony, Julie Salverson praises theatre's potential to be an "art of witness." (Salverson 90) In particular, Salverson focuses on the importance of witnessing in the retelling of violent episodes, experiences and events. Pointing to the dangers of both overly abstract and overly literal approaches to "risky stories" of violence and violation, Salverson looks to the power of solidarity and ethical engagement that she argues is evident in witnessing. In framing this positive power, she suggests pedagogical and therapeutic aims for creating this "art of witness": "How can we provide an environment within which the stories told can be heard by the listeners so as to reconfigure their sense of who they are in relation to the speaker and the event – a reconfiguration that causes them to take up a stance of obligation in relation to this event as they recognize and meet it in the world?" (Salverson 184) The aim is clearly instructive and instrumental – the public telling of violence is constructed in an effort to have a real effect on the audience and it is an effect that must be manipulated, controlled and shaped:

> When popular theatre artists and members of a community negotiate how the telling of their stories will occur, both parties are attempting to set up conditions of reception that will urge and allow the participants and the eventual audience to be affected and changed by what they hear. A climate of witnessing thus involves not

> only listening to someone's story, but allowing our attitudes and behaviors to be changed by it. (Salverson 183)

This desire to actively change and influence the audience's response, knowledge and behaviour is, of course, one of the most significant aspects of any political and popular theatre (and is arguably an element in all theatre) and it is what gives this theatre its importance, power and influence. It is also, however, what is behind some of the simplifications and generalizations wrought by some popular theatre projects that place this desire for audience control in too prominent or too prescriptive a place. In attempting to extend this concept of witness into the theatre audience and to generalize the operations of trauma and testimony, Salverson's account of witnessing engages in the same kind of simplification and generalization about audience reception and identification.

In each of these formulations of the spectator/ witness, there is an underlying assumption that the viewer of violent performance is potentially able, through identification with the victim, to gain important experience with violence and to adopt the victim's voice and speak for the wounded. Violence, its presentation, reception or presence on the stage are all secondary concerns, important only for their role in constructing the figure of the victim. Approaching violence as an instrument of legitimate identification reduces violence in performance to a reflection or intervention in actual violence and ensures that acts of displayed violence in the theatre are approached and received as indicators of accuracy or reality. Performed violence and real violence lose their distinctions as the presence of violence on stage is viewed merely as an instrument for effective identification or as a marker of authenticity.

Thus, none of these theoretical adaptations of the concept of witnessing account for the violence that is necessary to bring this act of identification into existence. The traumatic identification necessitated by the presumed act of spectatorial witnessing requires the violence of victimization but that violence is only considered insofar as it is a conduit or motivating factor of empathic exchange. The problem of producing, receiving, viewing or enacting violence on the stage consequently becomes merely a question of the efficacy, legitimacy or worth of the identificatory positions offered or validated through the depiction of violence. Further, violence in this kind of theorization becomes so widely generalizable that it loses pertinence and meaning: Taylor, Phelan, Skloot and Salverson are all dealing with instances of stories of trauma and victimization and in all but Phelan there is a specific referencing of the historical violence of the Shoah and the impact of Holocaust testimony, yet this specificity is not factored into the theorization of the spectator-witness. Taking its cue from violent performance, the concept of the spectator witness thus implies a pervasive and generalized violence and suggests by extension that all significant acts of active, ethically engaged theatrical spectatorship are exercised in response to performances that are somehow necessarily traumatic or violent.[16]

Thus, while ethically and politically motivated and analytically self-reflexive, analyses like Salverson's or Taylor's are indicative of the dangers encountered in a generalizing and totalizing discourse of trauma that confers an unproblematic and uninvestigated positive value onto the act of listening to stories of violence, victimization or violation.[17] The existence of traumatic testimony and the significance of witnessing in the course of a project do not require or constitute an audience's, or spectator's, role as

witness. To automatically extend the force of traumatic testimony is to court the elision of the significant differences of degree and character of witnessing, spectatorship and audience response; such generalizing can be used to suggest that all testimony is traumatic and all listeners are, or at least should strive to become, witnesses. Taylor's argument is significant for bringing up the complexity of spectatorial response to represented violence, Skloot's article makes pertinent points about the performance of trauma and genocide and Salverson's analysis is an important one for all scholars or theatre practitioners engaging and working with victims and their stories. To critique these accounts is not to suggest that traumatic experience should not be testified to and respected; this kind of critique of trauma studies is aimed at the theoretical and critical appropriation and generalized use of the concepts of trauma, testimony or witnessing, which adopts the ethical and political recuperative and compensatory power of witnessing without rethinking the issues of spectatorship, representation or reception. Problems arise when this ethical positioning is conferred onto the audience or the spectator, merely by virtue of their being present at a theatrical telling of trauma. Listening to stories of violence or victimization does not, and perhaps should not, enable or encourage the kind of transferential over-identification with the victim of trauma that is presupposed and required for the act of witnessing; the spectator of a theatrical performance is not necessarily in a witnessing situation and ought not to be conferred the unearned title witness (nor should he or she be required to carry the weight of obligation that witnessing implies). This is not to suggest that spectators, practitioners or performers cannot chose to enter into a witnessing framework in some way (the

practitioner who works with traumatized individuals for example), but to emphasize that the act of viewing does not create this situation *automatically*.

Looking and Living: Spectatorial Witnessing and Real Violence

In theories of identification, where witnessing is used as a model, we can see a kind of over-investment in the way that violence in the theatre is justified and the victim is constructed so that the impression given is one of proximity, authenticity and enabling identification; in this analysis, the performance of violence, and by extension the spectator of that violence, acquire an ethical and moral dimension that is not necessarily justified, processed or earned through experience. As Taylor indicates, this kind of audience responsibility offers the possibility for dangerous border crossings; but in the analyses I will offer, it becomes apparent that these dangers or disruptions often operate on the basis of a concept of victimization that maintains difference, otherness and the place of the victim. Looking might entail a risk, as Taylor suggests, but it is a risk that should involve a recognition of distance, context and the processes of othering, self-othering and over-identification.

Thus, like the theoretical accounts of theatrical violence that claim a relation between represented and actual violence, this model of the spectatorial witness not only assumes a relation between theatre and world (in using the terminology of trauma studies a connection is established with actual and historical acts of violence and trauma) but asserts that this relation is one that continues after the performance ends. In adopting the witness model, the spectator is placed in an ongoing relationship with the speaking subject/ object for identification – it is assumed that the spectator will absorb the

experience through identification and will carry this viewing experience out into the world. The boundaries between life and theatre blur as the spectator gains the status and responsibility of one who has experienced (even if it is in secondary or transferential form) real violence.

Erika Fischer-Lichte is critical of this kind of conflation between life and theatre, a conflation she relates to a theatricalization of everyday life that allows for "the transfer of life into theatre."(Fischer-Lichte 59) Arguing that the spectatorial relations of postmodern theatre, reliant as they are on the theorization of the decentred subject, confuse looking with life, Fischer-Lichte warns that "[s]uch a theatricalization of reality and aestheticization of life must not allow the spectators to forget, however, that, outside theatre, looking on is nothing more than just looking on and thus cannot be equal to acting, nor can it replace acting."(59) The replacement of looking with acting is not, however, only matter of quotidian concern and aesthetic conflation but is a theoretical position that confers on the spectator a special place of knowledge, experience and power both in the theatre and outside; the power of looking thus becomes an act and moreover becomes an ethical, political and moral act of intervention, obligation or protest.

As Fischer-Lichte indicates, looking is not acting and when theatre and performance are conflated too easily with actual acts of social or political intervention, the result is often an overly generalized treatment of both violence and theatre. In recent years, this generalized approach to theatrical violence is most evident in works that take as their object the display of actual violence. If viewing the performance of violence is seen to be confronting actual violence, these works imply, then the theatre, or at least the "theatrical," is seen to include within it an alignment to acts of violence, an argument

often made through the assertion that violence is somehow inherently or essentially theatrical. Taking their cue from the "spectacle of the scaffold" of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, some of these studies focus on public displays of state violence and assert theatre's particular relation to the scaffold and to judicial frameworks of punishment, discipline and death. For example, Stephen Greenblatt notes that theatricality in Renaissance England "is not set over against power but is one of power's essential modes," (Greenblatt 46) Margaret Owens (in a thesis on dismemberment on the medieval stage) analyzes "the analogies and contiguities that may be traced between theatrical and penal spectacle through the shared modes of corporeality performed on the scaffold of punishment and the scaffold of dramatic representation," (Owens 2) Jody Enders, in her ambitious study of medieval theatre, argues that "the spectacularity of violence was embedded in the very language of the law, and the violence of the law was expressed in the theatre," (Enders 3) and Leonard Tennenhouse claims in *Power on Display* that the "strategies of theatre resembled those of the scaffold." (Tennenhouse,1986, 15) The scaffold is thus construed as an analogue to the theatrical stage: its architecture, audience and traditions are similar and both are seen to rely on theatrical effects to either support or undercut political and social power. Like theatre, punishment is staged for the masses and this staging is fed and perpetuated by the same kinds of pre- and post-performance advertising, criticism and commentary. As Foucault suggests, the scaffold, at the height of its power, became a site of performance: large audiences attended, commented upon and compared the exhibitions viewed and a body of writing arose from these events as both complement and criticism.

However, while there may be interesting parallels between the theatre and the scaffold, these parallels should not govern what is considered theatrical nor should they be used to back generalized statements about violence. When theatre's connection to the scaffold of punishment is used to argue for a relation among power, violence and spectacle, violence becomes "merely theatrical," (Barker 191) as Francis Barker notes in *The Culture of Violence: Tragedy and History*. In what is perhaps too narrow a focus, Barker attributes this form of loose theatricalization to the New Historicism of critics like Greenblatt and Tennenhouse, who, he argues, occlude and simplify the very complex relations among culture, theatre, power and violence. In response to this historicist simplification, Barker offers what he considers a more nuanced, complicated and potentially contradictory account of violence and power in the theatre, in society and in ideology. Through an in-depth analysis of a graphically violent play, *Titus Andronicus*, Barker gives his own historically based analysis of violence, display and the theatre that makes note of both non-spectacular forms of political violence and punishment (studying not only executions but deaths in jail, for example), the obfuscation of violence in theatrical spectacle and the multiple relations among history, art and society. Barker concludes that even an extraordinarily violent play such as *Titus* occludes actual state violence; theatrical violence does not, therefore, expose, confirm or work in concert with state violence, and the theatre is not merely a mode of political power. For Barker, a play like *Titus* ignores actual violence even as it displays graphic violence on the stage: "The relationship between the text and the 'quiet,' steady slaughter of the people by hanging is not one of ostentation but occlusion."(Barker 190) Violence in *Titus* is thus, like Foucault's analysis of the violence of the scaffold, related to power; but it is also, unlike

the violence of the scaffold, almost inconsequential in its explicitness. The brutal, bloody and graphic violence of *Titus* enacts, according to Barker, a kind of representational erasure; it covers over and replaces the real violence of the culture in which it is performed. Theatrical violence is here not a comment upon, transgression of or handmaiden to state violence but merely an obfuscation.

Barker's analysis is in the end an historically located and limited argument: his assertions are based on the relation between actual and theatrical violence at the time of the first performance of a single play. [18] However, while Barker's target is limited to the time and plays of Shakespeare and is directed at New Historicist orientations, his critique of the obfuscation and occlusion of violence that is at work in both theatrical depictions of violence and in theoretical accounts of the theatrical display of power is incisive. Expanding his argument to include other theoretical and critical accounts of theatre and power (that are, to be sure, influenced by New Historicism), we can see a more general critique that is aimed at the homogenizing and generalizing impulses of discourses of theatrical power that do not make distinctions among forms of violence, power and force and that do not distinguish between theatre, culture and spectacle. In its analysis of *Titus*, Barker's argument asserts that violence on the stage is not a mirror for violence in culture and that there can be varying, complex and shifting relations between violence in theatre and in society.

While Barker directs his argument (somewhat simplistically and unfairly) against New Historicism, his true object for critique would thus appear to be any simplistic approach to theatre and culture that sees the two as co-extensive. This kind of conflation of theatre with culture in discussions of violence is evident in a variety of works that

attribute an essentially or ontologically violent character to the theatre, theatricality or representation. For example, in his *Stages of Terror*, Anthony Kubiak asserts that "theatre is not merely a means by which social behavior is engineered, it is the site of violence, the locus of terror's emergence as myth, law, religion, economy, gender, class, or race, either in the theatre or in culture as a theatricality that paradoxically precedes culture." (Kubiak 5) While making significant progress towards an analysis of theatre in terms of cultural and historical context, Kubiak frames his argument in often hyperbolic and generalizing terms. The theatre becomes synonymous with violence and with the act of witnessing.[19] The connections among theatre, culture and political power, and their shared reliance on threats and stagings of violence are important points for consideration, but Kubiak's rhetorical and universalizing treatment of both violence and theatre precludes any in-depth analysis. Theatre is discourse, for Kubiak, and as such it constructs violence as much as it reflects or addresses violence. As a site of violence's transformation, dispersion and communication, theatre becomes in this analysis essentially and uniformly violent.

For Kubiak and Barker, and arguably for Taylor, Phelan and Skloot, the point of entry into examining theatrical violence is an account of, and appeal to, what is framed as "real" violence, the violence of the world that lies outside representation but is always its referent and object. Whether it be the generalized violence of culture, the historical violence of Nazism or the interpersonal violence of serial killing, the underlying assumption is that representations and graphic depictions of physical violence can and in fact should operate in reference to actual or projected acts of real violence. Inscribed in these assertions of identification is a belief in the social, political and moral worth of

legitimate theatrical violence: violence in the theatre references violence in the world and is seen as a commentary on (and a possible solution to) actual and projected or imagined violence in the "real" world. Predictably, when the referent is actual violence, the representation and reception of theatrical violence are approached in prophylactic terms; the stated aim for legitimate use of violence is to enable us to understand past violence in order to better address future violence. These referenced acts of real violence are importantly conceived of both as collective (political, historical violence such as Nazism) and pathologically personal (the intimate psychology of the serial killer), yet are seen to be communicated exclusively by means of the public spectacle of character representation and audience identification. The critical and theoretical focus is not on the depicted acts of violence; it is instead directed towards character psychology and the potential for spectatorial identification. Consequently, the model for the legitimacy of theatrical violence is firmly based in a psychological realism that references the exterior world in a clearly defined moral and political framework. The theatre is thus a microcosm and violence on-stage is conceived of as an instructive and pedagogically inflected, albeit emotionally and empathetically based, model for approaching violence in the external world.

The link between violence in the theatre and violence in the world is, however, not an easily determined one and these theoretical accounts linking theatre and life tend to engage in generalizations that conflate actual violence with theatricality or performance. For instance, Mark Fearnow's "Theatre for an Angry God: Public Burnings and Hangings in Colonial New York, 1741," considers the public execution as an example of theatrical technique applied to murderous state acts. Using theatrical language to describe the

instance of hanging, Fearnow asserts that public executions are manifestations of performance, complete with theatrical techniques and staging devices and bound to a discourse of spectacle and audience reception. He argues that if "the legal authorities can be seen as authors, their authorial intent in 'writing' the texts for these performances is that the audience would witness the event with an attitude of solemnity and horror, would go forth silent and shaken from that place, and would challenge norms no more." (Fearnow 17) For Fearnow the public execution is, in its public character as entertainment and spectacle, not only theatrical, but an instance of theatre performance.

Equally engaged with the theatricality of violence, David Graver analyzes the distinction between actual and real violence on the stage in more critical terms. His analysis seeks to address instances of the use of pain and aggression in performance art and theatrical performance. Specifically Graver deals with Fakir, a performance artist whose flesh is pierced, pulled or otherwise mutilated, wounded and punctured in the course of his performances. However, despite his attention to the theatrical presentation of real pain in Fakir's work, Graver recognizes the problematic place of violence on the stage and even argues that actual physical violence is not hospitable to theatrical performance:

> Although violence can disguise itself as meaning and join the semiotic transactions of the stage, its presence generally threatens both to escape the meaning assigned to it and to disrupt the delicate balance theatricality establishes between the ontological priorities of display and enactment. Consequently, violence is hard to hold within a theatrical context. It has a volatility that either writes its own burning meanings upon the world or wipes out all meaning in a fire storm of senseless eradication. A theatrical performance that can really put violence on the stage and keep it there is rare. (Graver 48)

Graver does not, however, consider the implications of this problem of real violence as performance and, while noting the rarity of real violence on the stage, he maintains a special place for the body of Fakir. In so doing, Graver uses violence in a generalizing fashion that is analogous to the generalizations inherent in arguments about "theatricality." Graver's piece is firmly located in theatre performance but his use of violence broadens the categories to include a consideration of instances of actual pain.

Both Graver and Fearnow indicate the contemporary inclination and desire to expand the boundaries of what is considered performance or theatre, but when the issue at hand is violence, the conflation between theatre and life can operate to generalize categories in a way that is problematic and potentially ethically and politically objectionable. Theatre is not essentially or ontologically violent and when real violence enters a public sphere, in public hangings for instance, it does not necessarily mean that the violence is thereby theatrical. While theatrical performance can occur anywhere and the definitions of theatre, performance, performance art and performativity are loosening, there is little to be gained in considering all acts of violence that occur within a public sphere as theatrical and perhaps less to be gained in considering all performative acts of physicality or pain as violence. The conflation of the performance of actual, physically present violence with theatrical violence is a theoretical position that works to generalize and to potentially trivialize real violence and victims of violence.

A conflation of the boundaries between real and imitated or performed violence is not only evident in works addressing performance art or actual acts of state violence. Discussions of generalized theatrical violence are part of a larger postmodern concern with the representation and construction of violence in popular culture. In Mark Seltzer's

Serial Killers: Life and Death in America's Wound Culture, for example, violence is tied to the nature of public life as Seltzer argues that the very concept of the public sphere in contemporary society is based in structures of violence and traumatic victimization. Although he is critical of what he refers to as the "splatter pop-Foucauldianism of the last two decades," (Seltzer 128) Seltzer's "wound culture" relies on a kind of displaced theatricality for its central argument that "the very idea of 'the public' has become inseparable from spectacles of bodily and mass violence." (Seltzer 21) His analysis stresses the figuration of the spectacular element of violence that enables the concept of the public, and by extension the idea of the audience, to become inseparable from the potential for violence. According to Seltzer, the public display of violence in a technological age exposes essential conflicts of public/ private, the individual and the mass, and binds representation to trauma: "The contemporary understanding of the subject of violence makes visible a traumatic yielding to representation (a yielding of bodies and persons to representation intensified to the point of reproduction)." (Seltzer 261)

By linking representation, violence and traumatic spectacle, Seltzer conceives of a definition of violence that implies spectacle and representation in its very essence and, in turn, recognizes that spectacle implies an audience, a collective group of persons viewing, if not witnessing, the scene. In discussing Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*, Seltzer notes that the fallen man turns a "'mob' of strangers into the unity of a crowd form." (Seltzer 280) For Seltzer, and perhaps Crane if we accept this argument, the viewing of violence, the spectacle of death, turns a mass of people into an appreciative audience and it is this collective gathering that defines the late capitalist

social, ideological and cultural formation that he refers to as wound culture. In wound culture, the public sphere itself is defined as pathological and this public character of violence is inscribed in and carries with it the forms, issues and characteristics of spectacle and representation: "The fascination with scenes of a spectacularized bodily violence is inseparable from *the binding of violence to scene, spectacle and representation*." (Seltzer 129) This is not to equate act and representation but to suggest a reconsideration of the approach to violence in contemporary society based on recognizing the representational factors inherent and implied in our definitions, constructions and understandings of what violence is: "The simple equation of images of violence and acts of violence must of course be resisted: the thought or representation of murder is of course not equivalent to the act of murder. But the thought or representation of murder is by no means separate or apart from the act of murder: it is part of it." (Seltzer 188) Because the public nature of violence links it to representation, violence is also by necessity bound to forms of reception, spectatorship and witnessing: "The pathological public sphere, we have seen, is everywhere crossed by the vague and shifting lines between the singularity or privacy of the subject, on the one side, and collective forms of representation, exhibition, and witnessing, on the other." (Seltzer 254) Witnessing and collectivity thus become aligned with violence; according to Seltzer, the very public sphere is seen to be performative and this performance is in essence, always violent.

For Seltzer, the concept of witness is not the recuperative and compensatory position it is for Phelan or Taylor, but it is nonetheless addressed as a generalized and politically implicated position that presupposes the violent nature of the performance in

question. In particular, this performance of violence is transformed into the story of victimization by the use of the term witnessing: one *witnesses* stories of trauma, terror and victimization, while one *listens to* the confession of a crime. Moreover, in the theatrical adaptation of the witness function, the viewing of the story of victimization offers the exculpatory possibility of active ethical engagement without the dangers of spectatorial voyeurism, appropriation or over-identification. What this theoretical formulation does not consider is that by adopting the victim's story as one's own in an act of witnessing, the spectator potentially exercises a mode of appropriation and identificatory occupation that can work to perpetuate victimization and justify and enable inaction. In this kind of spectatorial witnessing, looking replaces acting and identification confirms victimization.

Spectatorial witnessing is thus not only an exercise in identification, it is also an act of appropriation or transferential over-identification based in a valorization of trauma that may result in what Lacanian theorist Slavoj Žižek criticizes as the "universalization of the notion of victim" (Žižek 1994 213):

> Victimization is thus universalized; it reaches from sexual abuse and harassment to the victims of AIDS, from the cruel fate of the homeless to those exposed to cigarette smoke, from the starving children in Somalia to the victims of the bombardment of Sarajevo, from the suffering animals in the laboratories to the dying trees in the rainforest. It is part of the public image of a movie or rock star to have his or her favoured victim: Richard Gere has the people of Tibet, victims of Communist rule; Elizabeth Taylor has AIDS victims; the late Audrey Hepburn had the starving children of Somalia; Vanessa Redgrave has children who suffer in the ex-Yuogoslav civil war; Sting has the rainforest – up to the ageing Brigitte Bardot in France, concerned with the cruel fate of animals killed for their skins. (Žižek 1994 214)

In this analysis of the victim, Žižek reframes what is usually considered a strategy for coping with and addressing difference as an exercise in establishing difference: the other is rendered other through the designation of victim, who is both a function of, and available for, identification. Žižek suggests the controlling function of identificatory impulses: victimology, and the emotionally based identification that this implies, maintains a comfortable difference and distance between self and other. Identification with the victim is thus not recognition of similarities despite differences but a controlled distanciation, a making different, of a potentially threatening sameness.[20] For Žižek the fantasmatic construction of the victim (a victimology) is also a making invisible of the victimized other, an invisibility that allows for and invites over-identification, reinterpretation and appropriation.[21] In hypostatizing difference, identification is put into service in an effort to ensure that the other is in fact other and different; the danger of discursive othering and the danger of identification are not distinct but are part of the same process employed to guarantee that the other remains other after all. The dangerous border crossings suggested by Taylor, then, in her analysis of violence and nationalism are not in fact the real dangers at all if we subscribe to a Lacanian or psychoanalytic reading like Žižek's -- the real danger at hand is the possibility that there are no borders and no differences.[22]

What Žižek's analysis points to is the ideological and political work done by the concept of the victim. What it additionally suggests is a rethinking of identification that takes account of its power to erase and absorb. If theorized in psychoanalytic terms of subjectivity and absorption, and if connected to issues of violence and the depiction of victimization, identification acquires the power of erasure and exclusion. More than

merely an exercise in empathy, identification becomes an act of appropriation; it becomes a way of extending the self and absorbing the other through incorporation and projection. Because sameness is both required and created by the processes of identification, identification enables the subject to take on, neutralize and erase otherness.[23]

In its simplistic valuation of the act of identifying with traumatic stories of victimization, the model of the witness/ spectator can thus be seen as an attempt to enclose, restrain or control the disturbing vicissitudes of spectatorship. In privileging identification and conferring on it these powers, the concept of the theatre spectator as witness does not invite or enable critique of either the processes of identification or the representation of violence; violence becomes merely instrumental, it is evaluated as more or less effective in aiding desired identifications. In the chapters that follow I will critique this instrumentality and will question the place of violence in the construction and reception of images of victimization. Violence in all of its complexity and disturbing physicality can work to make the functions and operations of identification more difficult, ambivalent and potentially less controllable than theories of witnessing or spectatorship allow: as an interruption or spectacular moment, on-stage physical brutality can suspend or alter a narrative of victimization and empathic identification. Images of explicit physical violence are not always hospitable or commensurate with portraits of victimization. As Žižek says regarding the media coverage of the war in Bosnia, "the Bosnians *had to remain victims* – the moment they were no longer losing, their image changed into that of fanatical Muslim fundamentalists." (Žižek 62) Not merely a result of status (winning or losing), the shift from victim to fundamentalist, Žižek stresses, is directly proportional to the images of violence: victims with guns are no longer victims

and, if graphic violence is part of the hypostatising of victimization, it is also part of its suspension as well. In the analyses of violent performance that follow it is this power of the suspended moment of violence that I will argue complicates depictions of victimization, especially when that depiction or performance is subtended by a suspicion of violence and its ill effects.

Endnotes

[1] Esslin frames this distinction in instrumental terms: legitimate violence is violence that "is used to heighten your sense of awareness of the world in such a way that the shock that has been administered to you makes you *more* capable of evaluating the reality of the situation you are in" (Ibid) and violence is deemed illegitimate if used in such a way that it "deprives you of your autonomy, forces you in ways you would not otherwise want to." (Ibid) In this latter category, he groups films like *Jew Süss*, which he sees as a propaganda film designed to manipulate the audience into hating a racial group they would not otherwise despise. For Esslin then, the key factor in the illegitimate use of violence is the recognition or appeal to audience agency; it is the violence that "deprives you of autonomy," that "forces" you to act in a certain way that is the problem. The action here does not refer to actual acts perpetrated by spectators but the imagined or possible acts or the vicarious pleasure in acts viewed; for Esslin the problem of a film like *Jew Süss* (and it is interesting that his example here is a film and not a theatre text) is the use of the depiction of violence "designed to stir the audience into an attitude of violence." (Esslin 205)

[2] Gould supports this claim with high culture assertions of generic divisions and cultural status: tragic drama invites empathy and identification with victims, hence violence in tragedy and serious literature is acceptable, whilst the low brow, mass culture emotional identifications with violators are not: "If violence is made attractive by a drama it is in melodramas. The thrill of tragedy comes from a different kind of arousal altogether: an invitation to the pleasure of honest and realistic pity." (Gould 5-6)

[3] In fact this mode of inquiry has dominated almost all politically and ideologically charged approaches, such as Marxist or feminist critiques. In an introduction to *The Image in Dispute: Art and Cinema in the Age of Photography*, Dudley Andrew attacks the simplicity of these forms of representationally based critique, even while suggesting that violent images do indeed have the potential to do harm: "Today images seem impossible to police, in democratic societies at any rate. And yet debates over violence, particularly violence against women, often turn on the questionable freedom to expose what are considered particularly dangerous pictures." (Andrew xii) Analyzing the suspicious approach to images in some forms of feminist discourse, Andrew makes the connection between approaches to reception and the role of representation: "Such aspects of our image culture as the empowered versus unauthorized gaze, exhibitionism versus voyeurism, framing versus exclusion, deeply affect social behavior beyond the protested border of representations." (Andrew xii) The image and representation are here inseparable from the processes of reception, which are in turn implicated in any postmodernist discussion of a crisis in representation. What this connection does not adequately address is the place of violence, a violence that Andrew mentions in deliberate and precise language but does not examine except as dangerous in representation. This conflation of violence and representation is also evident in feminist theoretical accounts of the violent nature of representation: Susan Kappeler's "pornography of representation," Linda Williams' "frenzy of the visible," or Annette Kuhn's "the power of the image," for instance, offered insightful and influential reconsiderations of the representation and status of women in a culture defined by gender division, display and the pleasures of the spectacle. When turned to violence, however, many of these accounts were too closely focused on the nature and impact of representation, and discussions of violence that made their way into many of these feminist theoretical accounts often became merely clear-cut attacks on representation itself. Violence was not in itself an issue to be addressed or confronted but was merely a characteristic of the frenzied, pornographic nature of representation and a culture of display.

[4] For example, psychoanalysis has become a principle term for approaching spectatorship and feminism in cinema studies through the theoretical accounts offered by theorists such as Laura Mulvey, Judith Mayne, Gaylan Studlar, Teresa de Lauretis, Linda Williams and Mary Anne Doane. The most influential theorization of the psychoanalytic implications of identification and spectatorship, Laura Mulvey's 1975 article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" asserts that the

pleasures obtained in classical Hollywood cinema are those of imaginary wholeness and power and the masculine/ subject is the only space made available for identification regardless of the gender of the actual, physically present spectator. The passive/ object of narrative will always be structured as feminine and thus classical narratives, realism and other forms are critiqued for requiring and encouraging spectatorial identification with a masculinist subject position.

[5] I focus on cinema studies here because these are the texts upon which psychoanalytic accounts of theatre spectatorship are usually based and because there is a tendency in theatre and performance studies to emphasize ideological and formal of issues of identification without considering the deeper, more contradictory psychoanalytical support and methodology. For instance, in Jill Dolan's *The Feminist Spectator as Critic*, there is an adaptation of Laura Mulvey's analysis of voyeurism and spectatorship that reduces the psychoanalytic argument to an account of form and a positive assertion of the potential for the female spectator's identification (consciously deliberated and determined by formal issues) with women on-stage. Like Mulvey, Dolan questions the relationship between spectatorship and dominant, normative ideology and attacks the construct of the ideal spectator, defined in dominant culture as white, male and heterosexual. However, unlike either Mulvey's psychoanalytic determined spectator or de Lauretis's located spectator, Dolan's feminist spectator seems able to resist the masculinist, dominant modes of viewing and identification by mere effort. Feminist theory and theatre, Dolan argues, has begun to open up the restricted spaces of identification and to resist, read against the grain and reply to the dominant modes or representation and reception. However, Dolan treats identification as a controllable conscious activity and in so doing she does not address the core tenets of psychoanalytic accounts of identification, which stress that identification, like other psychological processes and responses, has an unconscious component and in asserting this spectatorial power, she shifts the focus away from psychoanalytic issues onto materialist feminism. In this treatment of spectatorship Dolan does not reject the doctrines of psychoanalysis or psychoanalytic feminist film theory; instead, in a move that is methodologically and theoretically troubling, she adopts psychoanalytic terms, arguments, ideas and vocabulary while eliding the psychoanalytic underpinnings and implications. For example, in her discussions of "the gaze," a concept based in Freudian notions of scopophilia and the power of looking (and central to Mulvey's formulations), Dolan approaches the concept as a fully controllable and conscious mechanism, able to be subverted by mere matters of theatrical form. In fact Dolan uses the term as interchangeable with vision or looking. See for example her analysis in *Presence and Desire* of her own production of *Midsummer Night's Dream*: "Since we staged scenes all over the room, the environmental configuration disturbed profoundly the standard one-way direction of the gaze. Our production offered the invitation to gaze along a wide range of options. Rather than deconstructing it from within the traditional proscenium structure through pointed Brechtian intervention (although we used that as well), we detached the gaze into a multidirectional circulation that made it suddenly a potent, palpable force available across a spectrum of spectating positions." (Dolan, 1993, 154) By addressing psychoanalysis in simplified fashion, Dolan is able to assert that theatrical form is more important than the actual spectator in determining the ideological conservatism or culpability of a performance. Thus, although the spectator is central in the title, the concept of spectatorship does not, in Dolan's account, receive much detailed theoretical or analytical attention because the underlying critique is one based on representation and form and not reception: "The issue of subject-formation is an integral part of any discussion of spectatorship in performance, since representation implicitly constructs a particular viewing subject to receive its ideological meanings." (Dolan 41)

[6] Mulvey's account of subject/ object relations has been influential, but problematically so, and theorists like Gaylan Studlar, Kaja Silverman and Teresa de Lauretis have worked to revise her clear-cut vision of spectatorship in order to make room for a female spectator.

[7] Although more directly concerned with issues of violence, these works are suggestive of the focus on identification in psychoanalytic and feminist accounts of representation and reception, a focus that can

over-shadow the consideration of issues of violence. Psychoanalytically and ideologically engaged accounts of spectatorship imply and point to issues of violence and victimization, but only as a part of a more general consideration of identification.

[8] Whereas Mulvey's account suggested that the female spectator was necessarily forced into a masquerade of identification, de Lauretis's argument, informed by queer and specifically lesbian accounts of identification and subjectivity, allows for a range of acts of spectatorship, which, though limited by subject position and historical and social locatedness, can change or mutate. In further contrast to the Mulveyian focus on the classical form, de Lauretis argues that spectatorship should be considered in terms of spectator subjectivity, not merely as a result of film form, convention or aesthetics, and the theorist should therefore allow for a multiplicity and variation in spectator response: ". . . no one spectator's reading of, or identification in, a film can be generalized as a property of the film (its fantasy) or merely as an effect of its narration. . . . When it comes to engaging the spectator's fantasy and identification, a film's effects are neither structural (if structural is equated with universal) nor totally structured by the film (by its fantasy, narration or form." (de Lauretis 130) De Lauretis does not, however, suggest that spectator subjectivity is entirely open, transferable or changeable. Moreover, she suggests that there are scenarios and fantasy constructions that are not accessible to all spectators, a point she uses to emphasize the importance of considering the impact of historical, social and individual locatedness when discussing subjectivity and spectatorship. Similarly engaged with and critical of a Mulveyian model of spectatorship, both Gaylan Studlar and Kaja Silverman turn to psychoanalytic models other than voyeurism. In particular, they both proclaim the usefulness of the concept of masochism for psychoanalytic accounts of spectatorship and suggest that Mulvey's concentration on the sadism of narrative is overly restrictive and inhospitable to female spectatorship. Studlar's "Masochism and the Perverse Pleasures of the Cinema," for example, begins on an adversarial or at least oppositional note: "This study offers an alternative model to the current discourse that emphasizes voyeurism aligned with sadism, the male controlling gaze as the only position of spectatorial pleasure, and a polarized notion of sexual difference with the female regarded as 'lack.'" (Studlar 773) Working from Gilles Deleuze's work on masochism (*Masochism: An Interpretation of Coldness and Cruelty*), Studlar shifts the focus from the Mulveyian concentration on sadistic narratives onto a "masochistic aesthetic." This shift, Studlar argues, would redress the Mulveyian phallocentrism and permit a more open space for female identification: "The female in the masochistic aesthetic is more than the passive object of the male's desire for possession. She is also a figure of identification, the mother of plenitude whose gaze meets the infant's as it asserts her presence and her power." (Studlar 782)

[9] Although Diamond suggests a feminist- materialist option to this violent identification and suggests that historical circumstance can open the way for identificatory cohesion (the "we" of the audience), the violent and appropriative force of spectatorial identification nonetheless adheres; her celebration of identificatory possibilities are in the end less convincing than the problematic globalizing violence that she sets up in the beginning.

[10] The globalizing of spectatorial response that is particularly powerful when the performance of victimization is at issue is ignored as Diamond merely replaces an establishment identification with a generalized socially constructive identification: "For the governesses, schoolteachers, and married women who sat in these matinee audiences, aware of, if not contributing to, the contemporary scandal of women's suffrage, perhaps the destruction and suicide of Hedda Gabler validated their antipatriarchal tendencies." (Diamond 397)

[11] Further, in this theorization of identification, the utopian and political potential is located not in the effects on the other, the object, but on the subject and the prospect that identification holds is merely one of inconsistency rather than coherence: "In other words, identification in Freud always works both ways: it is an assimilative or appropriative act, making the other the same as me or me the same as the

other, but at the same time it causes the I/ ego to be transformed by the other. What this suggests is that the borders of identity, the wholeness and consistency of identity, is transgressed by every act of identification." (Diamond 396) It is not clear, however, that this transformative or destabilizing act of identification is any less significant in creating a narcissistic community of "we" nor is it clear that it is operative without the potential for identification with victimization or violence; even if the identification with Hedda fostered the female audience's "antipatriarchal tendencies," it is still nonetheless a fostering that occurs through narcissistic identification with a universalized victim.

[12] Although approached in a complex and nuanced framework, these theoretical accounts maintain that theatrical violence and violence in the world are conjoined (literally, mimetically or referentially) and in this way these analyses are analogous to the character based analyses of critics like Fraser or Gould. The connection is one of literal readings and psychologically based assumptions about character, identification and spectatorship and the conclusions are grouped around arguments of the harm, usefulness or gratuitousness of depicting violence.

[13] The accounts of violence that I have been addressing thus far have been focused on theatrical violence but it is important to recognize that this same emphasis on the legitimate use of violence is found throughout works that take as their object of consideration the impact and effect of depictions of violence. An increased interest in violence and its place in popular culture has in recent years led to a greater critical concern with issues of representation and reception. Most often this concern has at its core a defense or critique of the use of violence. For example, many studies of violence in art and culture, like Stephen Prince's *Savage Cinema: Sam Peckinpah and the Rise of Ultraviolent Movies* (1998), make claims for the legitimacy, often framed in subversive or ideologically progressive terms, of the depiction of violence in the works that they praise. In this study Prince notes Peckinpah's extreme and graphic use of violence, which is often characterized by blood, gore and cinematographic excess and, recognizing this "ultraviolence," Prince uses it to argue for Peckinpah's subversion of ideological, political and social norms. To support this argument, Prince turns to Peckinpah's stated and implied intentions in using violence: "Peckinpah claimed that he wished to use cinema to warn viewers about the terrible nature of violence and to produce a cathartic experience that would have beneficial social effects." (Prince xix) Violence that is used to disturb the viewer, to expose character pain and the effects of violence, is, in Prince's framework, of political, social and ethical value; violence that is portrayed in association with suffering, pain and terror is therefore justifiable and arguably of social benefit. Asserting the power and legitimacy of violence based on artistic merit or artist intention is, however, not always a strong or sound form of argumentation. In trying to apply this argument to violence in general, Prince only ends up further asserting Peckinpah's special status. While there may be reason to be pessimistic about the place of violence in art and culture, filmmakers like Sam Peckinpah or Arthur Penn are rendered exempt because of a perceived ideological and social subversion: "Unfortunately, and perhaps inevitably, the stylistic of graphic violence proved to hold tremendous fascination for subsequent generations of filmmakers who did not share Penn and Peckinpah's radical social objectives." (Prince, 2000, 12) Peckinpah and Penn, Prince, argues, do not use graphic violence gratuitously but subversively; the ultraviolent acts of murder, rape, torture and wounding are utilized to expose and reveal the brutal and horrific nature of violence. These recent arguments about the harm or benefit of film violence merely repeat and replay the form of argumentation offered by John Fraser in 1974 and, although writers like Stephen Prince offer filmic analysis located in the specificity of the medium, there is little difference here in terms of methodology, mode of argument or conclusion: violence in film, like violence in theatre, is likewise judged according to principles of identification and benefit. The impulse is still evaluative and legitimizing: there is an attempt to determine and stabilize the effects of viewing violence.

[14] This concentration on realism and real life violence in accounts of theatrical violence is evident in one of the few single author publications dedicated to violence in the theatre, Severino João Albuquerque's *Violent Acts: A Study of Contemporary Latin American Theatre*. Limiting his scope to

Latin American theatre produced in the years after the Cuban revolution, Albuquerque connects theatrical violence to the social and political violence of Latin America, a context that he uses to assert the legitimacy of depicted violence: "In the context of Latin America's social, economic and political situation over the last three decades, dramatic and theatrical presentations of violence, if artistically effective, are legitimate and desirable because of their ability to increase an awareness of reality." (Albuquerque 26) It is in this regard significant that Albuquerque begins his analysis with reference to actual violence, a reference supported and rendered socially significant through the citation of studies and reports (such as the 1977 Canadian *Report of the Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry*, from which Albuquerque draws his working definition of violence) and made concrete in the historical references to the political torture and violence of Latin America. Notwithstanding these references to real violence, Albuquerque's interest is in dramatic texts, not theatrical performance. The book is not an exposition or examination of the social, political or historical implications of theatrical practice and performance in Latin America but an analysis of "dramatists in revolt," (Albuquerque 13) which concentrates on represented and referenced violence supported by an imagined relation between theatre and world. Violence in drama thus accrues significance insofar as it attacks, subverts or engages with the actual, real violence that the dramatic text references and addresses. What is presented as a consideration of theatrical violence becomes merely an exercise in close textual analysis geared towards the critique or defense of the use of violence. This literary and character-based analysis of the dramatic representation of violence is also evident in Jeanette R. Malkin's *Verbal Violence in Contemporary Drama* and Mary Karen Dahl's *Political Violence in Drama: Classical Models, Contemporary Variations*.

[15] A similarly compensatory and therapeutic function for the spectator is suggested by Vivian Patraka in her treatment of Holocaust representation and theatre. Like Phelan and Taylor, Patraka frames the act of spectatorship as witnessing: "My assumption here, then, is that witnessing is an active process of spectatorship rather than a passive consumption of a pre-narrated spectacle." (Patraka 124) Taking her cue from the emphasis on witnessing in Holocaust studies, Patraka transfers the frameworks for traumatic listening onto the theatre and onto events or locations that she interprets and approaches as theatrical (museums for example). Concerned with questions of victimization and the depiction of victim's stories on stage or in the museum, this treatment of witnessing is not merely descriptive, but is instead, like Taylor's analysis, based in a reformulation of spectatorship that aims to confer on the spectatorial process a power and ethical significance that operates to distance the spectator from the pernicious voyeuristic, sadistic or masochistic impulses associated with viewing violence.

[16] Taylor's analysis implies this because she is dealing with a violent performance but the modes of spectatorship she is replacing (voyeurism, for example), apply to a range of thematic materials and are not restricted to images and narratives of violence, trauma and victimization.

[17] As Kirby Farrell notes in his *Post-Traumatic Culture*, trauma in contemporary society has been mobilized as an explanatory and enabling fiction whereby people are encouraged and prepared to feel "as if they have been traumatized."(Farrell x) For Farrell, trauma in contemporary culture operates outside of its strict clinical framework and works as a kind of "terror management" that makes it possible to negotiate, control and cope with violence.

[18] This kind of historically limited approach is also evident in collections that appear to offer a survey of theatrical violence. For instance in *Theatre Symposium*'s 1999 edition, *Theatre and Violence*, only one of the eleven essays, (which range from close analysis of historical periods [blood sports in the Roman Amphitheatre], to close analysis of play texts [both Leslie A. Wade and William C. Boles discuss Mark Ravenhill's *Shopping and Fucking*, for instance], to articles on fight choreography and stage combat), addresses performance and the depiction violence on the stage. Dale Anthony Girard's "Listening to the Language of Violence: The Orchestration of Sound and Silence in Fights for Stage and Screen," stresses the importance of considering the sounds of on-stage violence in analyzing,

producing, choreographing or directing stage violence, sounds which, because they are produced simultaneously and in front of the audience, set theatre violence apart from film or television violence that is aided by foley and post-production sound effects and editing. This article is complemented by two other pieces on staging violence, but unlike Girard's analysis these pieces do not deal in detail with the actual impact and production of on-stage violence. Further, the issues addressed in these articles on fight choreography are not paralleled or spoken to elsewhere in the collection, which attempts to cover as many historical and theoretical periods and divisions as possible. The collection is divided into four parts, each of which considers the relation of theatrical violence to a specific framework (culture, history, staging, contemporary performance). Separated and divided in this way, the articles have little relation to each other and do not suggest or form any kind of consistent theoretical approach, methodology or argument. The treatment and definition of violence and the theatre are distinct in each article and no effort is made to connect or link the separate and limited arguments. As a result, each of the essays becomes merely a close of analysis and argument of its purported object of study (usually a play or performance text) and not a consideration of violence, theatre or performance. Thus the volume is, (like the collected essays in Armstrong and Tennenhouse's *The Violence of Representation*, which address violence in texts, theory, plays and life), both too focused and too diverse. Each article is concentrated on a single text or period and there is not explicit or implicit connections made among them, excepting the very general designation of violence, a designation that is in itself too broad (physical, verbal, psychological violence; violence on-stage, in texts; actual, depicted, represented, referenced violence) to be of critical or theoretical import. In film studies, the recent volume edited by J. David Slocum, *Violence and American Cinema*, offers the same kind of problematic diversity, although in this instance there is more of a tendency towards summary and generalization than there is isolated close analysis. The result, however, is the same – a volume that addresses the texts you would expect to but that does not, for all this, cover any new territory or offer theoretical analysis of violence.

[19] Refer to Kubiak's characterization of a "theatre of pain" in his introduction. (Kubiak 22)

[20] Jean Baudrillard makes a similar argument in his "The Melodrama of Difference," which claims that one should be wary of a celebratory or emancipatory discourse of difference that can potentially lead to even more virulent and violent operations of othering; Baudrillard argues that the continued explosion and expansions of "differences" can mutate into merely another kind of racism, one dependent on identification and appropriation. The other, Baudrillard argues, "is all of a sudden no longer there to be exterminated, hated, rejected or seduced, but instead to be understood, liberated, coddled, recognized." (Baudrillard 125) For Baudrillard, difference itself is merely a fiction, and a utopic one at that, that operates to incorporate otherness into a "a discourse of difference which simultaneously implies inclusion and exclusion, recognition and discrimination." (128) The multitude of differences and the "right to difference" at work in contemporary society "leads directly, for all its benevolence, to that other desperate hallucination of difference known as racism." (129)

[21] Acts of identification and over-identification are not in these theoretical accounts of violence and difference made pathological or inherently pernicious. Instead, the force of argumentation in Žižek is an ethical one and is aimed at current critical and theoretical treatments of difference and othering that simplify the functions, effects and mechanisms of othering, identification and appropriation. The figure of victim thus discursively, figuratively and fantasmatically contains the questions of violence and identification and, as these theorists point out, it is a figure that should be approached cautiously and critically and not merely as a potential object for appropriative acts of reception.

[22]Thus, generalizing the victim so that all of us are potential victims, either directly or through identification, is, according to Žižek, not a positive exercise in witnessing but merely another way to enable and justify distance and inaction: "The 'postmodern' ethics of compassion with the victim legitimizes the avoidance, the endless postponement, of the act. . . . . The multitude of particular ethics

that thrive today (the ethics of ecology, medical ethics . . .) is to be perceived precisely as an endeavour to avoid the true ethics, the ethics of the ACT as real." (Žižek 214) Like Fischer-Lichte's spectator who confuses the act of "looking on" with action, Žižek's empathetic subject absorbs the experience of the other through identification so that he will not have to act or intervene.

[23] As Anne Friedberg notes regarding cinematic identification, "identification is a process which commands the subject to be displaced by an *other* . . . . Identification demands sameness, necessitates similarity, disallows difference." (Friedberg 36) Based in psychoanalytic and ideological critique, identification is, in this account, fed by the power of sameness, commonality and stability: "identification can only be made through recognition, and all recognition is itself an implicit confirmation of the ideology of *status quo*." (Friedberg 45) Like Žižek, Friedberg parallels structures of identification, and the privileging of its modes, alongside an ideological erasure of difference.

Chapter 2
Other/ Victims: Authenticity, Appropriation and the Reception of Tomson Highway's *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*

> What I want my work to do is . . . to educate our sons and our sons' sons that it's cruel to go around shoving screwdrivers up the cunts of women. (Tomson Highway in Interview with Tompkins)

The first Canadian play produced at the Royal Alexandra in eight years[1], the 1991 remount production of Tomson Highway's *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* was greeted with controversy about the production's representation of violence against women. Taking their cue from the on stage depiction of a rape with a crucifix, critics argued that the play's use of violence perpetuated and exacerbated cultural, racial and sexual stereotypes. These criticisms had some basis: the performed rape divided audiences and the sudden and graphic nature of the scene, as well as its juxtaposition with comedic moments, was seen by many as disturbing. In combination with the verbal violence, near total concern with issues of masculinity and performance by an almost entirely male cast (the one actress plays several female figures including the rape victim), the rape concretized what was seen as the play's incontestable misogyny. But this misogynistic label was not conclusive and, while publicly attacked, *Dry Lips* (and Highway) also had defenders who entered the debate in an effort to assert the artistic and cultural value of the play, even if not of the remount production. As the debate progressed the worth of the play and its original performance at Toronto's Theatre Passe Muraille were split off from what was deemed a polluted and inferior remount copy. In

an effort to recuperate and defend the canonical and artefactual value of a Canadian and First Nations theatrical landmark, critics and academics framed the performance's problematic remount reception as an example of cultural misunderstanding and misinterpretation. In its critical reception, the Royal Alex remount of *Dry Lips* was thus transformed from theatrical event into a divisive controversy framed by issues of political, cultural and social worth and marked by matters of identification, victimization and the performance of violence in the theatre.

The remount production of *Dry Lips* enjoyed financial backing, publicity and the promise of large and new audiences. Because of this promise of increased visibility for both Canadian theatre and First Nations culture, the remount was viewed as a significant and progressive milestone and became the focus for a variety of debates and discussions arguing over the play's place in political, social and ideological frameworks of race, multiculturalism and identity. Claimed to be a rejuvenating force for theatre in Toronto, the Royal Alex *Dry Lips* was seen as a sign of the power of theatre for social change and the potential for artistic expression to attain commercial potential. In the debates that followed, these discussions of worth became focused on issues of reception and identification as arguments centred on the reception of the Royal Alex remount and its relation to cultural otherness, authenticity and racial difference. In particular, the dissimilarity or exceptional character of the Royal Alexandra audience became the centre of these debates as the whiteness of the audience and the non-whiteness of the actors were repeatedly asserted: Vit Wagner noted that "the only white people are in the audience," Robert Cushman argued that this was "not a play about racial prejudice; it couldn't be since there are no non-Indian characters," and Bronwyn Drainie praised

David Mirvish for pushing "a high risk and controversial play under the noses of wealthy white audiences who prefer viewing the plight of the downtrodden at a romantic distance (as in *Les Miserables*) rather than confronting the harrowing realities of life on an Indian reserve in northern Ontario today." (Drainie)

In reviews this opposition between audience and other is presented as a given, not a problem (there is no indication of any critique of the racism of the Toronto theatre scene for example). Audience and performer racial difference was easily assimilated into multicultural and colonizing tropes of mutual enrichment (Drainie ends her piece with a comment about enlightening collaboration between communities) or ethnic absorption. For example, Cushman discusses the play as a example of "ethnic comedy that periodically rejuvenates the Anglo-American theatre" and frames the exchange as one-sided: "When this line [of ethnic comedy] breaks through, as Indian writing now has, it does us a double service; it introduces us to new scenes and puts us in touch with old ones. At moments we seem to be reaching back to the roots of the theatre." Combining primitivism (the "roots") with the empire-building rhetoric of the benefits of the other to "us," Cushman presents a vision of Native theatre that is both original and derivative, and is simultaneously "Indian" and Anglo-American. Further, many of the reviews and articles on *Dry Lips* focus on the realism of this depiction of Native life and culture (Drainie's "harrowing realities of life on an Indian reserve") and, in linking the performance to social and political issues, some of the writing on *Dry Lips* has given the play a transgressive and revolutionary potential in excess of its place as performance. For example, John Bemrose likened the production to the Native resistance evident in the Oka crisis and claimed that its remount "marks a special triumph for an Indian cultural

community determined to raise the profile of its concerns and its achievement." (Bemrose)

Moreover, the production was not only seen as notable for its perceived place in race relations but also for its status as Canadian artefact. Drainie claims that "Canadian theatre history is being made" with *Dry Lips*' success and Robert Cushman remarks that the "arrival of this show at the Royal Alex is an event. One hopes that a general audience, subscribers or otherwise, will fill a large theatre for a major new play. This is a matter of economics but also of morale and of ultimate value. If the Canadian theatre is to mean anything, it cannot skulk forever in holes and corners." (Cushman) Although exaggerated, these comments indicate the extent to which *Dry Lips* quickly attained canonical status after its performance at the Royal Alexandra: it became a symbol of Canadian theatre's move into the mainstream. Following its remount production, *Dry Lips* found its way into published form and has been considered and analyzed in academic, popular and theatrical frameworks as a canonical piece of post-colonial Canadian literature, a theatrical masterpiece borrowing from European forms and traditions and an authentic example of Native artistic production and expression.

Part of this canonical status stems from the play's relation to an imagined Native "reality," a reality that was almost wholly addressed in ahistorical terms. Calling *Dry Lips* raw, harrowing, searing or disturbing, these reviews offered a clear thematic and pedagogically inflected reading of the meaning of the performance: it is "an exposé of the thoroughness of cultural genocide," (Scott) a commentary on "the destructiveness of patriarchal Christianity and the need for human regeneration through female spirituality," (Drainie) an "analysis of the corrupting result of male-dominated theology," (Chapman) a

message about the way that the "spirit of the North American Indian people . . . has been all but extinguished by the powerful imported religion of Christianity." (Crew) While seeming to locate the play and its performance in a social, historical and political context, these reviews stress a reading of the play based in allegory and an ahistorical treatment of colonialism. The play might be an attack on colonialism, but it is an attack framed in historically removed terms or located it in a distant, First Nations reservation context. The implication of remoteness (geographically or historically) enables disavowal and the rejection of any sense of complicity or part in colonialist violence. These allegorical readings rarely worked themselves into a full critique of colonialism as the violence in the performance was read in terms of native implosion rather than colonial effect. For example, John Bemrose remarks in his review in *Macleans* that "Like so many native communities, Wasaychigan Hill is destroying itself in a black orgy of substance abuse and violence." Robert Cushman similarly argues that the play is not about racism but "about what people do to themselves under pressure, though the pressures may be externally imposed."

As these review comments indicate, the remount production of *Dry Lips* became in its critical reception and incarnation both a "Canadian" and an "Indian" artefact, critical of colonialism but also marked (contradictorily) by Native self-destruction and Native resilience. *Dry Lips* was thus simultaneously seen as a post-colonial narrative, critical of patriarchy, Christianity and the destruction and abolition of native spiritual life and practices, and as a celebration of Native spirituality and traditions, a milestone in bringing Native issues to the audience. It was also presented as a universal story, a

marker for Canadian theatre history and a (anti?)-misogynistic telling of what "men do to women," regardless of race or history.

The academic writing on the play was not always substantially different in tone or form from the newspaper or review pieces, many of which were significant in shaping the scholarly debate. For example, Marie Annharte Baker's "Angry Enough to Spit, but with *Dry Lips* it Hurts More than You Know," published in *Canadian Theatre Review* in 1991, was influential in shaping arguments about the play's misogyny.[2] Noting that the play had caused controversy among friends and acquaintances, Baker argues that although she enjoyed the performance, the piece works to silence native women, marginalize their position and ultimately paints a portrait of sympathetic, tragic Native masculinity. *Dry Lips*, she argues, does not address its own inadvertent racism and sexism, a situation which causes her to worry about the effects of the performance on "Do-gooders," "white liberals," and young Natives: "A yuppie would go home feeling relieved that Indians live on the rez and in the other part of the city. For whites and white-nosers, the play is a wonderful revelation about contradictions in Indian lives. But to a young Native person, the play might be another affront to one's identity." (Baker 89) For Baker, the performance thus at once assuaged white liberal guilt and re-affirmed white racism and cross-cultural sexism.[3]

Baker's argument gained greater currency when it was employed in a letter written by Susan Bennett to *The Drama Review* in response to an article published on Native theatre. Reacting to an article on Native Earth Performing Arts (NEPA) by Jennifer Preston, called "Weesageechak Begins to Dance," the letter questions the article's (and the journal's) "celebration of otherness" and lack of self-implication and examination.

Criticizing the publication of Preston's article, Bennett takes aim at *TDR*'s editors for their affirmation of liberal multiculturalism and for their part in constructing a "tourist gaze" of the Native other. In the process of this argument, Bennett uses the attention to *Dry Lips* as an example of this kind of tourist gaze and goes further to critique the play itself. Noting the absence of women in the play, she addresses the racially coded representation of sex and gender and asserts the play's misogyny. Citing and quoting Native women who have spoken out against the play, Bennett condemns not only the play but the audiences: "For the predominantly white audiences that have flocked to see Highway's plays, there has been comfort in knowing that they were right all along – Native women are, indeed, 'like that' (sex, alcohol, and bingo)." (Bennett 10)

Bennett's letter and response to the play were not isolated scholarly interventions but were part of an active discursive engagement with the play and its critique. For the most part, anxious to defend the play against these claims of misogyny, violence and exploitation, scholarly essays, letters and articles tended to address the violence in delimited and specific terms, preferring to deal with the violence of the remount and not of the play itself or its various performances. By addressing only the remount production, the violence is framed in terms that enabled the scholars and critics involved to engage with the play on a level apart from the "white audiences" of the Royal Alex. The play, its context, the violence or the use of rape in performance were not in this framework a problem – the problem was one of reception and audience demographics.

To support the assertion that only the remount production was misogynist, many of those engaged in writing about *Dry Lips* argue that the violence against women in the play was not met with controversy after its initial production at Theatre Passe Muraille.

For example, in his "Receiving Aboriginality: Tomson Highway and the Critics of Cultural Authenticity," Alan Filewod refers to the "problem of white reception" in the *Dry Lips* remount. In the "white" remount of a Native play, there is, according to Filewod, a problematic pairing of colonial complicity with seemingly postcolonial encouragement and acceptance of Native culture and it is in this problematic that Filewod locates the success of the play; for Filewod, the mainstream success of Highway's *Dry Lips* was itself a form of colonialist appropriation that afforded white audiences the opportunity of self-congratulatory appreciation. Analyzing the debates in terms of a colonial gaze, he suggests that the controversy was a result of the remount and the material shifts in production values, aesthetics and audience reception: "The problem of white reception of aboriginal theatre is a problem in the dialectics of decolonisation and reinscribed colonization, in which voices of cultural affirmation and resistance are received by white critics as a testament of authentic and unmediated reality, which in critical response, disallows the agency of resistance itself." (Filewod 3) Sensitive to the operations of oppression, reification and repression, Filewod notes the designation of the idea of authentic aboriginality in the reception of native works in the Canadian cultural context, a reception that often entails an emphasis on perceived cultural traditions, framed as "spiritualism," or "magical transformation." In Filewod's account, the mainstream popularity of *Dry Lips* is best understood as an act of cultural appropriation, that relied upon a constructed otherness of aboriginality based in essentialism and ideas of authenticity.

However, in his focus on the mainstream appropriation of the play, Filewod maintains that there existed a marked distinction between the TPM and Royal Alex

productions, which enabled transgression in one to become conservatism or colonialism in the other. This constructed dichotomy of conservatism and colonialism is made manifest, he argues, in the stage/ audience relations at the Royal Alexandra which created a lack of intimacy and an emotional distance that in turn prevented the audience from understanding the true nature of the critique offered by the play:

> In the vast house of the Royal Alexandra, critics and audiences could not position themselves as privileged witnesses to a Native Community speaking to itself, nor could they justify transgression in terms of constructed authenticity. Instead they were placed in a humanist field where they were invited to empathize with the folksy character. When that empathic bridge was broken, many members of the audience walked out; they could not reconcile their expectations of structure and causality with the transgression of the text. (Filewod 10)

Filewod argues that the critical response to both the original production and the remount were problematic and claims that the discourse of authenticity that surrounded the TPM production became a central part of the perceived problem of the remount: "*Dry Lips* was revived because critics originally saw it as an expression of unmediated authenticity; like all revivals it was marketed as a proof of the success it announced. Consequently it reproduced the process of appropriation and disallowance, in which the terms of critical reception of the first production became the predicate of the revival." (Filewod 11)

Filewod's postcolonial critique of the play's success engages with the controversy on another level as it attempts to address the alleged misogynistic aspects of the play in materialist terms; but it addresses these terms within a framework that attributes to the play an authentic, essential and essentially transgressive potential, a potential that was somehow made available only in the original production and only to viewers like Filewod. Further, in this approach, Filewod does not interrogate the possible problems of the violence of the performance, instead seeing it as a problem of reception. In this

analysis the metaphorical reading of the rape is viewed as a correct, informed and endorsed reading that is sensitive to culture, context and community, whereas the Royal Alex production's violence was read (universally and incorrectly he argues) as merely literal: "In that field of intercultural audiences and intertextual knowledge, the misogyny of *Dry Lips* was more easily perceived as ironic and perhaps metaphorical. . . . If in the original production the intertextual relationship with *The Rez Sisters* and the community of Native theatre enabled audiences to receive the rape scene as a metaphor (the crucifix raping the Trickster), the isolation of the Mirvish production made a more literal reading – Bennett's 'tourist gaze' – inevitable." (Filewod 11)

A similar account of the colonialist power of the remount production is offered by Ric Knowles' argument that the material differences of production "contained and institutionally neutralized" (Knowles 283) the subversive potential of the piece. In "Reading Material: Transfers, Remounts, and the Production of Meaning in Contemporary Toronto Drama and Theatre," Knowles considers the initial productions and remounts of three Canadian plays (in addition to *Dry Lips* he looks at George F.Walker's *Love and Anger* and Ann Marie Macdonald's *Goodnight Desdemona, Good Morning Juliet*), and argues that although the performances were seen as aesthetically or technically imperfect in their initial productions, they were powerful and effective in communicating a political point, an effect that he argues is watered down or erased in the process of the remounting of each play. For Knowles, this watering down took the form of an aestheticization that led to the problematic and contradictory response attacking the play as misogynistic. Citing Jay Scott, he states that there was "no suggestion of misogyny with the Passe Muraille production," (Knowles 281) and argues that what was

a political comment about the plight of native women in the TPM production became a universal symbol and metaphor in the remount through "a shift in relationship between stage and audience from social equality and shared space to sharply divided space in which the audience patronized the theatrical performance." (Knowles 282) According to Knowles, the *Dry Lips* remount was viewed as aesthetically more pleasing by Toronto critics like Robert Cushman[4] and this aesthetic appeal created a colonialist framework whereby any political statement about misogyny became simply a representation of, or worse, an example of, misogyny itself.

The Royal Alexandra's aesthetic, economic, cultural and historical place in the Toronto theatrical landscape thus became an animating force in the debates about the play's performance of violence. Implying that the Royal Alex production, not the play itself or the performed violence, was somehow the cause of the controversy, this position alleviates critical responsibility by presenting the problem of performed violence as a problem of aesthetics and audience reception. Thus, the defence of *Dry Lips* on these grounds of remount co-optation appears to have difficulty accounting for the on-stage violence, which was almost wholly avoided or quickly passed over in the debates that followed. While the debates seemed to address the key issues around the remount production and its problematic representation of aboriginal gender politics and violence, the elision of the actual performance of violence exacerbated and replayed many of the issues that coalesced to create a conflict in the first place. In its performance of violence, the remount production mobilized issues of authenticity, aboriginality and audience identification, but the resulting defence of the performed violence erased and obfuscated any actual potential to confront any of these issues. Violence (theatrical, historical,

colonial or gender-oriented) ceased to be an issue in a controversy that supposedly had as its centre the performance of violence. Instead the violence became an instrument and discursive trope for arguments based in assertions of cultural and artistic value.

This elision is evident even in pieces that are not based in a clear-cut division between the two iconic performances (original/ progressive and remount/ conservative). For example, Sheila Rabillard argues that the juxtaposition of violence/ decorum, high/ low and colonial/ postcolonial offered by the performance of *Dry Lips* in the Royal Alex facilitated an interpretation based in concepts of hybridization and transgression. Rabillard further suggests that it was this very contradictory combination of assimilation, opposition and juxtaposition that enabled Highway's drama to achieve its "transgressive power." (Rabillard 4) Using the concept of hybridity throughout for a textual analysis of the play, Rabillard suggests that the theatre space of the Royal Alexandra did not erase the play's subversive potential but allowed for further development of the contradictory and transgressive potential of the play:

> When this drama was mounted in the Royal Alexandra Theatre, a commercial theatre known for Broadway and West End productions or their Canadian counterparts, the juxtaposition of Highway's play – which had its own most disturbing and painful though certainly spectacular effects – with the Alex's restored Edwardian glamour, suggestive of decorous and decorative entertainments, created a peculiar shock. The nature of the material, the presentational performance style, seemed continually to allude to more intimate contexts in which the address of actor to audience would take place between members of the same community. (Rabillard 21)

The contradictions of the context here offer another perspective on the performance and another instance of hybridization. However, they also imply the presence of an original, more intimate performance, one that is written into the remount and visible to those who read closely. Setting up an opposition between the "Toronto audience members" and the

Native players onstage (Rabillard 21), Rabillard suggests that the difference is fruitfully exploited by Highway to explore hybridity and fluidity and implies simultaneously that this transgressive rewriting and mixing is intensified by the Royal Alexandra production and that something essential is missing or absent.

The contradictions that these articles bring up are part of the complexity of the debate, the production and, I would argue, are part of the conflicting discourses of race, gender, colonialism and victimization at work in a Canadian cultural context. The designation of postcolonial work is complex in terms of Canadian history, culture and identity in that all "Canadian" work can be considered postcolonial (Canada is after all an ex-colony of Britain), a situation that does not recognize the contradictory place of Canada's colonization of indigenous peoples, but frames First Nations cultures as an exemplary example of this post-colonization. Natives thus become a symbol for the victims that we all are and the audiences to native culture are conferred like status. In this framework, native culture is both "other," and therefore bound to discourses of authenticity and primitivism, and "same," therefore available for identification, transference and sentimentality. In the *Dry Lips* debate this became most clear in the discussion of authenticity that was at hand in both the reception of the performance (an "authentic" representation of native life and culture) and in the critical response to the remount that saw one production as more authentic than another. As Filewod notes, the perception of the original production as authentic became an integral part of the reception of the Royal Alex production. The "authenticity" of the TPM production was constructed in the readings of the remount; it was only when compared to its repeated, debased and

commodified other, that the TPM *Dry Lips* was viewed as inherently transgressive, transformative or subversive.

However, this colonially inflected response was not only a result of the Royal Alexandra context. Canonical readings based in authenticity were directed at the commodified space and context of the Royal Alex but similar accounts were also present in the reviews of the 1989 production and, in both cases, the reviews and criticisms relied on simplistic notions of "the Indian people," First Nations voices, myths and traditions. The difference was that in reviews of the earlier 1989 production, this colonialist simplification was less celebratory than critical. The reviews of the initial performance were mixed and contradictory. What was afterwards referred to as its "funky awkwardness and emotional messiness" (Scott) was seen in 1989 as poor acting (Crew) or a confusing narrative form (Conlogue). In setting up a binary opposition between the two productions, as some of the critical writing on *Dry Lips* and the controversy has tended to do, a false and misleading clarity is imposed on what appears to be a complex and multifaceted performance history and debate. Arguing that the remount was somehow essentially and transparently more conservative, commodified and co-opted and that one audience (uniformly defined) "got it," whilst another did not, offers an easy solution to potentially challenging questions about colonialism, theatre funding, audience reception, commodification, narrative form and theatre violence. Further, by viewing the TPM production as more true or authentic, Theatre Passe Muraille, Native Earth Performing Arts and the academics and critics who witnessed the original performance are placed firmly outside of ideology and commodification and are exempted from the implications of the play's misogyny.

Moreover, in contrasting the two productions, critics engage in a kind of logocentrism that gives precedence to the text. The play text is set up as inherently transgressive, subversive or transformative and the remount is a troubled interpretation or production. Thus the text of the play is given a power beyond production and acts as an explanation or justification for the controversy that greeted the second production – it was not the play, but the material conditions of performance and the audience that created the controversy. The space of the theatre, and its place within a capitalist market and economy and a colonialist society, are viewed as a distorting force exerted on what is an inherently oppositional piece; and the TPM production was, by virtue of comparison, located outside the market, and beyond ideology, politics and racist colonialism.

These politically and ideologically motivated discussions were transformed into aesthetic arguments as critics debated the relative value of a more polished production. Referring to the remount as *Dry Lips II*, Jay Scott sets up a distinction between the messy, "cinematic" TPM production and the "theatrical" Royal Alex remount, whereby appeals to popular culture (film), the carnivalesque (messy), effortlessness (clever, straightforward) and subversion (outrageous) construct the TPM production as the more spontaneous, less "artistic," more accessible and more genuine performance:

> The original, fluidly cinematic *Dry Lips* was blithely funny, pugnaciously outrageous and bottomlessly sad: it was cleverly staged, on a straightforward set, with a funky awkwardness and emotional messiness that pushed the audience's face into an alien world that turned out not to be alien at all – guys in the audience squirmed in uncomfortable recognition watching the men puff, posture and implode on stage, while women had their worst fears confirmed. The new, resolutely theatrical *Dry Lips* is self-consciously funny, calculatingly outrageous and (some good things don't change) bottomlessly sad: it has been staged, on a set of flying furniture, with a slick show-biz assurance and emotional precision out of 'serious' Peter Brook and 'light' Bob Fosse. (Scott)

The distinctions here between cinematic/ theatrical, clever/ calculating and messy/ theatrical suggest an argument based in aesthetic, and ethnographic, assumptions about genuineness, authenticity and the real; theatricality here becomes synonymous with artifice and the remount performance is seen as a combination of high art and commodified object (Brook and Fosse).

As Scott's analysis indicates, even critics who attempted to approach the debate in all its contradictory complexities still addressed the original performance, the play and Highway in essentialist terms.[5] The TPM production of *Dry Lips* is held up as the original and is a designated symbol of aboriginality. In analytical and critical commentary, the TPM performance, the play and Highway are treated as inherently, essentially and unambiguously native – they are icons of true aboriginality and authenticity. Violence becomes evidence of the transgression or subversion, which in turn becomes evidence for the authentic indigeneity of Highway, Native Earth and the TPM performance of *Dry Lips*. The misogyny, the staged rape, the death in the play are thus indicators of the plays "gritty realism" -- they are evidence of its authenticity. The theatrical authenticity of the Theatre Passe Muraille production was seen to be due, at least in part, to the depiction of violence on the stage, which was described after the remount as *more* realistic, *more* gritty and *more* authentic.

Further, in looking over the articles and essays produced around the Royal Alex *Dry Lips*, one becomes aware of the overdetermined efforts to explain or clarify the play, its performance and its reception. To some extent the arguments around the play seemed to have created the controversy, or at least overstated its existence, themselves.[6] In so doing, some participants, like Knowles, Scott or Filewod, utilized the remount production

to make arguments based in materialist and post-colonialist theoretical positionings that allowed for a consideration of the original production as more "authentic," more pure and less colonialized and by extension allowed the critics, mostly white males, a privileged place in the otherwise colonialist/ racist audience; the "white audiences" are indisputable and oppressive, yet there is within this overdetermined white space, room for the enlightened viewer, who is separate, distinct and somehow outside of or above race, gender or the power of representation. The debate thus acquired the characteristics of a reverse critique based in high/ low oppositions and a suspicion of mass culture: the TPM audience takes on a subversive, transgressive character as it is interpreted as accepting and understanding the "true", transformative nature of the performance, while the Royal Alex audience, accustomed to commodified, "mass" spectacles, was constructed as unable to understand and accept the challenging, transformative and intellectually "high" culture message of the play.

In fact, in considering the controversy more closely, one should consider the possibility that perhaps the main distinction in response between the two runs of *Dry Lips* was not so much one of place, budget or audience demographics, but one of canons. The Royal Alex production was a site of investment (financial, cultural, social, artistic, even psychoanalytic) and it was considered an "event," a marker for indigenous creative work and for Canadian theatre in a way that the TPM production was not. Further, a mode of critique founded upon connections between canonical and elite (defined as hegemonic) culture, as is evident in much of the *Dry Lips* controversy, relies on an overly simplistic understanding of these terms and ignores or elides questions of internal and cultural contradiction, complexity and the unpredictability of the modes of reception and

utilization of cultural products. Not only are canonical readings subject to historical shifts and changes but, at any given time, works that are considered canonical, elite or hegemonic are often inconsistently so and often contain or exhibit internal contradictions, conflict or oppositional transformations.

The debate did not address the remount performance as any of these things (contradictory, complex, inconsistent) and both the TPM production and the Royal Alexandra remount were framed as iconic and canonical examples of either Canadian theatre or of aboriginal expression. This canonization was not the result of the debate alone and the reception of the original performance was clear in its desire to establish *Dry Lips* as a "Native" play, (characterized by magic and ritual, which allegorized transparent themes and meanings pertinent to the place of First Nations peoples in Canada today). This framing of the play and its performance in indexical terms, as signifying a violent and downtrodden aboriginal realism, is found throughout the writing on the play and its various performances. For example, Marc Maufort, in an essay on the use of poetic realism in the Highway's work, asserts an essential aboriginality in order to claim that the play is a "dramatization of the plight of the Indian in modern Canadian Society." (Maufort 230) Maufort argues that Highway has used a first nations vernacular in an effort to reflect the real life of "Indians"; the play's realism is evident in the "speech which the characters use, meant to reproduce as closely as possible the way real Indians speak." (Maufort 235) For Maufort, the play is about "real Indians," and is therefore unambiguously, unequivocally and authentically a Native play.

In addition to the canonical designation of the play as somehow essentially or authentically Native theatre, canonization was also at work in the advertising and

reception of the remount production that attempted to frame the play as exemplary "Canadian" theatre. The play is credited as a rejuvenating force for Canadian theatre: it is the success story that proves that Canadian theatre has made it and can make it on major stages, both in Canada and abroad. This commercial and international success was matched by comments that asserted the play's artistic success and greatness, even when that greatness was located only in the TPM performance or the play text.

In short, *Dry Lips* was viewed by all as a significant marker, although what it stood for and how it fulfilled that function were matters of debate. Through all the controversy and the commentary on the play this status (artistic, cultural, social, financial) was never at issue, only its politics and performance incarnations were matters of contestation. However, in each of these examples of canon formation and *Dry Lips*, the presence of violence and the potential for misogyny in the play are treated in the most superficial or elliptical fashion, perhaps indicating that the canonizing context created by the designation of *Dry Lips* as exceptional, as representative, as a remount of a "hit," was disrupted when the audience was presented with an explicit scene of violence that was not easily contextualized or explained in terms of narrative trajectory or clarity, cathartic impulse or morally instructive identification. Looked at this way, the on-stage violence did not fit the canonical space carved out for the production and was only recuperated through elision, reformulation or metaphorization that sought out moral lessons and instructive messages.

In discussions of the on-stage rape scene, the rape is turned into metaphor – it is the rape of native culture, the rape of feminine native spirituality by white Catholicism. Even Highway himself discusses the rape scene in this way: "In the rape scene . . . a woman is

symbol that Christian civilization has metaphorically destroyed Indian culture with the help of Indians themselves." (Maufort 237) Similarly, Jennifer Preston in "Weesageechak Begins to Dance" states that "*Dry Lips* contains a shocking and violent scene where an emotionally disturbed young man uses a crucifix to rape a pregnant young woman, played by Nanabush – Native spirituality has been raped by Christianity and it is the right of contemporary natives to regain their dignity." (Preston 149) And Anne Nothof, although recognizing the physical implications of the staged nature of the rape, comments that "As in *The Rez Sisters*, rape has metaphorical implications – the rape of Native culture by White culture" (Nothof 39).

While the scene does invite metaphoric interpretation because of the iconic place of the crucifix and the figure of the woman Patsy doubling as the mythical Nanabush, the performance of the rape on-stage is clearly contradictory and complex: how does the rape fit into the narrative?; how is it performed (stylistically, realistically)?; what are the physical details of its performance (blocking, proxemics, gestures)?; what are the implications of the gender dynamics of the performance (the only female presence on stage is raped)?. These questions are not addressed or asked in the reviews and analyses of the play, its TPM or remount productions. In most reviews and comments on the play, the diegetic rape and the violence of the theatrical scene became simply the metaphor of the rape of native culture and the body of the woman and the experience of viewing the rape on-stage were effectively erased. The metaphor was not applied to the depicted scene but replaced it. This metaphorization of on-stage violence occurred at the expense of ignoring both the act as theatrical representation and as historical marker. Although critics enthusiastically pick up on Highway's comment about the metaphorical nature of

the rape scene, they do not often mention that Highway has also noted that this rape scene is rooted in an actual occurrence, the rape of Betty Jane Osborne:

> It's an explicit rage thing. It comes from a variety of places but I think was [sic] started it all off was the fact that I went to school with a girl [Betty Jane Osborne] who, at the age of seventeen, was gang-raped by four young white guys when she was trying to get home one day; her cunt was stabbed with a screwdriver fifty-six times. She died on the side of the road after they tossed her out of the car. And for sixteen years no one said anything, even though everyone in the town – the town council and the police – knew who did it. . . . This happened to lots of and lots of Indian women who have been raped with broken beer bottles and all kinds of unspeakable things. Nothing was ever done about it. What I want my work to do is (a) prevent that kind of thing happening to another native woman and (b) to educate our sons and our sons' sons that it's cruel to go around shoving screwdrivers up the cunts of women. (Highway in Interview with Tompkins 22)[7]

Throughout this interview (and elsewhere) Highway points to his dedication to the cause of ending violence against women and he even expresses hope that after his latest piece, *Rose*, "there will be a few less women raped." (Tompkins 28) More significant than the reference to an actual event then is the way that this event stands in for the rape, abuse and violence perpetrated against Native women by white and First Nations men on a daily and routine basis. Further, the reference to actual rape here reiterates the almost obsessive references to rape throughout Highway's work: in addition to the rape in *Dry Lips*, there are horrific rapes mentioned or depicted in *The Rez Sisters*, *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and *Dance Me Outside* (although W.P. Kinsella wrote this story, Highway wrote the screenplay adaptation).[8] The rape in *Dry Lips* can thus be seen as metonymic, as well as metaphoric: the pervasive abuse of women in his plays can be seen as indicative of the insidious and omnipresent violence faced by Native women every day.

In addition to the location of the rape scene in real life, Highway's interview comments suggest the importance of addressing rape in physical terms. What is

noteworthy in Highway's discussion of this rape is the shocking banality and directness of his language. What had only been referred to in the most euphemistic, clinical or metaphorical manner in reviews and criticisms of the play, is, in Highway's references, discussed in the most brutal, explicit and almost grotesque or even carnivalesque terms. In Highway's language, disturbing as it may be, the rape is brought "home" to the actual rapes perpetrated against native women on an almost routine basis and to the actual matter of the female body. Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver note in the introduction to *Rape and Representation* that this kind of literalization or physicalization of rape can be understood as fundamental to any ethically or politically motivated reading of the depiction of rape:

> But the act of rereading rape involves more than listening to silences; it requires restoring rape to the literal, to the body: restoring, that is, the violence – the physical, sexual violation. The insistence on taking rape literally often necessitates a conscious critical act of reading the violence and the sexuality back into texts where it has been deflected, either by the text itself or by the critics: where it has been turned into a metaphor or a symbol or represented rhetorically as titillation, persuasion, ravishment, seduction, or desire (poetic, narrative, courtly, military). (Higgins 4)[9]

Returning the violence to the body, making the violence corporeal, phenomenologically experienced and physical, is thus framed as a central project in the rethinking and rereading of rape, a framing that is made more significant by the erasure of the female body that the metaphorization of rape precipitates. This erasure can perform cultural work, as both Mieke Bal and Stephanie Jed have noted in their analyses of the ways in which rape can serve as the background for literary tropes, rhetorical constructions, representational traditions and ideological or political projects.[10] This literary and mythical conversion of rape, according to Mieke Bal's "Visual Rhetoric: The Semiotics of Rape," objectifies and redefines the victim and the violence of the act:

> As a consequence of the semiotic nature of rape, the victim, a member of the semiotic community in which the rape takes place, understands and interprets the message of annihilation absolutely. She is destroyed, hence unable to participate in semiosis anymore. Just as her body has been appropriated, so too, her semiotic competence has been usurped and her semiosis becomes the other's. (Bal 91)

Because rape is an annihilating claim to power, Bal argues, a destruction of subjectivity through objectification, it claims and engulfs the victim in a semiotic circle from which there is no escape: "The victim is not only blamed by others, she also blames herself, because she is not addressed, not spoken to, but *spoken*." (Bal 91)[11]

When turned into metaphor, seduction or myth, a black-out on stage, an implied event, rape becomes not rape at all, but something else, something other than violence and becomes available for interpretation and reinscription, a translation that appears to be central in the postcolonial appropriations of rape in evidence in the *Dry Lips* debate. By turning the act of violence into metaphor, usually pressed into service in defense of the play, and in erasing the scene by referring to it in the most abstract or barely visible terms, both "sides" of the debate equally erase the central scene and the experience of viewing the violence on stage. In the critical reception of the play, the violated female body is replaced by an unambiguous designation of "Native culture," an exercise that can be tied to the strength and pervasiveness of canonically based interpretations and readings that placed subversion, transformation or transgression at the forefront and utilized the violence in the play to support this interpretation. The performance of violence was thus framed in metaphoric or therapeutic language, that sought to hypostatize or freeze the violence into a lesson or moral, and that understood the play as representative of a traditional "Native" form (most reviews grasp onto the Nanabush figure as an explanatory device) and as representative of a way of life and a history of a

people. What becomes evident here is the way metaphorical and canonizing readings of the play transform what was a single theatrical event (a play by a Native author, with First Nations actors, about Native characters and rez life) and a brief theatrical instant (an on-stage rape) into an entire history of Western and religious colonialism, aggression and violence. Through metaphor and a powerful interpretive force, the ephemeral and passing nature of performance is fixed, hypostatized and frozen in meaning, reference and effect and the violence is both controlled and used to support a position of realistic and authentic expression.

The controversy around the remount production of *Dry Lips* thus points to the disruptive potential of violent performance and to the problematic place of the spectator in this disruption, a place that can be characterized by conflicts in national, class, sexual, gender and racial categories of difference and identification. In its designation as Native artefact, exemplary Canadian enterprise and successful theatrical marker, *Dry Lips* was located at a contested juncture of colonialism, postcolonialism, commercialism and marginalization that relied upon hidden constructions and simultaneous operations of othering and identification. In the critical and academic response to the remount, the on-stage and implied violence of the play were central but were reinterpreted to fit a post-colonial framework. The remount performance's canonical potential as a piece of Canadian theatre was conceived as a historical marker of the progress of First Nations artistic production, albeit under the paternalistic powers of David Mirvish. The metaphorical reading of the rape in this framework can be seen to derive its ease and consensus (for those who saw the rape metaphorically uniformly saw it as carrying the same meaning), from a simplistic and colonialist interpretation of Native artistic

production, myth and storytelling where everything in the story is understood to "stand" for or to mean something else. Thus, what is understood as the allegorizing tendencies of Native myths and stories operate as controlling, delimiting and ultimately canonizing interpretations of what are potentially layered and polyphonous stories and traditions. Use of metaphor, whether it is conceived of as Eurocentric or aboriginally informed, operates to render the violence useful and instrumental in some way – it is no longer a suspended moment of violent performance, unavailable for clear identificatory purposes, but a social and historically inflected political commentary.

As part of this elision and metaphorical interpretation, what was initially artistic and intellectual argumentation became characterized by compensatory identification. A focus on generalized victimization characterized an academic response that framed itself as a postcolonial, enlightened enterprise engaged with the defense of an important Native figure, play, historical moment and theatre space. This kind of generalizing of the victim is, I argue, central to the postcolonial interpretations and reinscriptions of the performance history of *Dry Lips* that configured all those involved as victims; Natives, women, the actors, Highway, the identifying audience all take on the role of victim at some point in the debate. Acts of narcissistic identification were manifest obliquely in the critical and academic interventions I have mentioned but they were also more directly evident in articles and interviews with Highway himself. In critical articles and interviews Highway is often constructed as tragic other, victim of colonialism and representative native, a position that is often linked to his sexuality, even by Highway himself. Asserting an affinity between gay men and women, Highway notes that he has a special empathy and understanding of women, one that he remarks is at least partially

determined by the threat of violence: "Homosexuals do not rape and beat women. As a matter of fact we get raped and abused and killed by heterosexual men just like women do." (Tompkins 23)

It is significant that this discourse of victimization obtained even when some of those involved actively resisted such characterization and Highway can be seen in interviews and comments to be aggressively opposing attempts to frame him as tragic Native other. For example, in Ann Wilson's interview with Tomson Highway, she consistently tries to move Highway towards a discussion of his victimization, an attempt that is met with an overstated and active resistance on the part of Highway. In response to questions about his experience of life on the reservation, his extended visit to Britain or his experience in residential schools, Highway responds with platitudes about how "fabulous" and "fantastic" his experiences were. Being sent away to residential school as a child, Highway says was "like entering a wonderland," going back to his family in the summers was "fabulous. Just fabulous," his trip to England was also "fabulous," "beautiful," and a "fantasy land." As remarkable as Highway's insistence on the positive is (his obsessive repetition of fabulous, his framing of his life as a "fantasy" or "wonderland," his emphasis on his "sheer luck"), it is only as overdetermined as the tragic reading of his life offered by Wilson. When receiving a positive answer about his experiences in England, Wilson responds with an attempt to reinscribe Highway's otherness, his difference: "But if you come from a WASP background, as I do, going to London is like going back to the roots of your culture, like going back to visit the home which your family has left a long time ago. But that couldn't have been what it was like for you." (Wilson) Asserting both her place in the colony (unproblematically) and her

power over the interpretation of the other's narrative[12], Wilson insists on Highway's difference, his status as other defined primarily by tragedy, loss and some essential nativeness, and Highway, in resisting this placement so forcefully, insists on his sameness to the point of erasing all difference, history and traumatic conflict; the frustration on both sides is palpable and it is a frustration wrought by over-identification (Wilson's over-identification with the tragic, native other and Highway's [pretense of?] over-identification with the colonizer).

In this example, Wilson configures herself as a ready witness, a willing listener, but these efforts are thwarted when the tragic or traumatic testimony is not forthcoming. In this lack we can recognize the vicissitudes of performative testimony and the implications for the belief in truth and evidence that are implied in the traumatic narrative. The traumatic testimony precipitates the witness, brings him or her into being, but it is not always clear that the witness will be present, listening carefully or be invested in the transferential relationships set up. As the Highway interview suggests, the audience's expectations may over-ride the functions of listening and the traumatic narrative may be inscribed into what is said, whether or not it is given voice: the tragic narrative of native otherness exists for the possibility of identification; it is told in order to be appropriated and absorbed.

In this kind of appropriative or incorporating identification we can see what Simon During describes as the colonialist projection of "self-othering," whereby the self is constructed through another "or by identification with others." (During 47) As discussed by During, self-othering is akin to "going native," and, as such, is the prerogative of the colonizer, enabling both appropriation/ universalization and individuation. As During

says of his example Rousseau, it is as if "Rousseau could simultaneously acquire universality in becoming other to himself and be a unique individual through the acquisition of another identity." (During 63) The other is watched, appropriated and identified with but does not, through any of this, become any less "other"; in fact, it is as if the very processes governing identification and appropriation allow for the othering of the native. The native other is constructed through identification, appropriation, occupation and, importantly, interpretation. It is the power to interpret, to reinscribe and speak for the other that enables or puts into action the kind of self-othering that During describes.

Applied to *Dry Lips*, this concept of self-othering enables us to see the controversy that arose after the remount production as a coalescence of identificatory and compensatory acts of academic writing aimed at preserving Tomson Highway as a site for appropriative self-othering. In the rhetoric of authenticity and identification around the *Dry Lips* debates, Highway, the play and the remount production were absorbed into a kind of discursive othering. The debate framed the confrontational power of the play as post-colonial, authentic expression of Native culture, staged for white Torontonians. Christopher Innes, in his article "Dreams of violence: moving beyond colonialism in Canadian and Caribbean drama," cites Highway's "almost exclusively non-native" audience in the Royal Alex, a theatre Innes characterizes as "possibly the most bourgeois theatre in Canada." (Innes 84) Moreover, he claims that "*Dry Lips* was specifically aimed at a white audience, and designed to cause a shift in the psychology of the dominant society." (Innes 92)

In fact, the whiteness of the audience, discussed by reviewers, critics and academics arguably becomes the central aspect of the interpretation of the play. According to Peter Dickinson, it even becomes a requirement for its staging: "The performance of (ab) originality on stage requires white, heterosexual audiences, in particular, to reimagine their relationships not only with Indigenous peoples, but with other marginalized communities as well, including women and queers." (Dickinson 186) In the *Dry Lips* debate, then, otherness is made manifest insofar as the controversy was characterized by attempts to establish difference: the difference of independent Canadian theatre from an imported commercial mainstream, First Nations theatre from white, Royal Alexandra audiences from those of Theatre Passe Muraille, glossy production values from authentic messy originality and ideological critique from ideological taint.

At the heart of these differences was the on-stage depiction of rape – a violent scene that fed the controversy precisely because it brought to the fore victimization and identification and because it made present and visible hidden violences of othering, oppression and appropriation. Theatrically the violence potentially polarized the audience and made apparent issues of complicity and objectification; ideologically it offered its own erasure through metaphor, elision or aestheticization. The violence of the performance was elided and with it issues of historical, cultural, sexual and gender violence were erased.

In the *Dry Lips* debate critics and academics engaged in simplifying theoretical positionings that allowed them to both recognize and disavow the violence at hand. The violence of the performance became tied to a discourse of authenticity that was applied and ascribed to Highway, the play and the initial performance at Theatre Passe Muraille

and which became linked to notions of proof, evidence and the realistic representation of native life. Claiming an authentically Native voice of a traumatic colonialist past, academics and critics worked to recuperate both the play and Highway in a way that can be tied to colonialist operations of othering. In the controversy that followed *Dry Lips*' entrance into the mainstream, we can see this discourse of othering enact a relationship akin to scapegoating whereby Highway was made to bear the violent weight of misogyny, colonization and the projected ill effects of the depiction of violence. As voice of the other, he is given responsibility for the operations of identification, audience reception and reaction and is made to bear, in this one play and this one performance, the entire weight of colonial violence.

Self-othering requires a stable other for appropriation, identification and classification and this forced stability often takes the form of the simplistic designation of victim. In constructing the audience as identificatory spectator, theories of cathartic or empathetic identification with the other superimpose an active, ethically motivated and responsible act onto a visual, auditory and perhaps olfactory experience. As witness one is allowed to watch violence, justified in his or her curiousity, voyeurism and desire by a discourse of ethically motivated transference; in this way the spectator is both self and other, implicated and separate, universal and distinct, near and far.

In the *Dry Lips* controversy this designation was evident in the way in which critical interventions were insistent on hypostatised notions of authenticity and otherness, while simultaneously appearing on the surface to be politically, ideologically and intellectually motivated and positioned in a postcolonial project of multiculturalism and liberalism; in designating the victim and identifying with him or her, the appropriative act

both constructs and absorbs the other. If we consider these aspects of violence and victimization, then the controversy around the remount production of *Dry Lips* was not merely a case of production standards, theatrical space or audience demographics but was indicative of a complex academic and critical intervention that appealed to a problematic colonial/ postcolonial framework reliant upon notions of authenticity, Native primitivism and audience identification. This intervention was thus aided and mobilized by the violence of the play, its performance and its reception and was exacerbated by a metaphorical reading of violence that placed violent performance in colonialist discourse of native spiritualism, transformation and magic and that conferred on the play and the initial performance a powerful canonizing interpretation of the work as holding an essentially transgressive or transformative power. Violence in performance both made necessary and thwarted the acts of audience identification and appropriation mobilized in response to the cultural and social place of the remount production; the implied colonialist violence of the production and performance required the identificatory acts of compensatory appropriation that in turn enacted their own forms of violence. Throughout discussions of the play there are appeals to postcolonial concepts of hybridity, transformation and transgression but these terms and concepts are applied uniformly, universally and unproblematically as defense both of the play and of the critics' and academics' appreciation of the play.

In discussions of the remount of *Dry Lips*, the metaphorization or elision of the portrayed rape operates as an anchor for arguments about race, representation and violence; those involved in the debate, who spoke "on behalf" of the audience, did not respond to the rape with an analysis of current and historical issues of violence against

native cultures, theatrical violence, violence against women, representational traditions of rape or transformational violence or with the complicity of the viewer in the action. Instead the violence was subsumed into a narrative of colonialism, from which the viewer, and by extension the entire TPM audience was exempted, or, alternatively, it was viewed through an ethnographic lens that framed the performance as a narrative of Native implosion (they are killing themselves). What should have been central to any discussion of the misogyny of the play or of the negative portrayal of native reserve life, the depicted rape, is instead treated briefly, elliptically or not at all, and is interpreted in a globalizing, totalizing and hypostatising way that makes victims of us all.

In this example of theatrical violence, the representation of violence in performance fed into a critical intervention dependent upon appropriation and victimization. This appropriative engagement was particularly visible and particularly problematic in the academic treatment of *Dry Lips* that placed scholarly critique above audience reception, that used and claimed the play, the performance and Highway's First Nations identity for academic publication, and that engaged in a critical over-identification which framed the academic and scholar as part of an othered, marginalized community. The academic critique that ensued after the remount production, which led to the publication of a number of scholarly works, was characterized by an internalized and restricted discourse of codified and often binary argumentation; what began as scholarly critique thus quickly became solidified and hypostatised into academic debate and there was throughout a sense of an overdetermined investment in the play, its original production and in Highway himself. Placed in an overdetermined position as evidence of both Native culture in a post-colonial context and a colonialist appropriation of that same culture, the

remount of *Dry Lips* became imbricated in a contradictory and complex system of cultural and artistic value, authenticity and canonization.

The violence of the performance was thus used to reconfigure Highway as an exemplary victim and other. In this way, Highway himself was set up in a fetishized fashion as "Native" author, voice of the oppressed, and as a perfect example of Canadian multicultural pluralism and equity, of Canada's success in letting the oppressed speak. In either case, Highway, First Nations peoples and the violence of colonization were, in the academic appropriation and critical engagement, elided by the overdetermined force of the identificatory desires of scholars and critics who wished to see themselves as distinct from what they saw as the "white" audiences of the remount. Whether the audience was demographically white or not, its perceived or designated whiteness became an anchoring point of a discussion that enabled an ultimately compensatory and comforting discourse of difference and otherness to dominate. Facilitated by self-othering, this critical position allowed the scholar/ critic to view the play as indicative of Native life and to decry the negative effects of colonialism, be horrified by the violence on reserves, identify with Native suffering and maintain a discursive, critical and empathetic place outside of whiteness, colonialism and history.

In analyzing this controversy, I have attempted to resituate the core details of the debate in the appropriation precipitated and animated by the under-discussed and elided theatrical violence. Because the violence of the spectacle at hand was never dealt with directly or critically, it was made available for reinterpretation, inscription and appropriation and what was potentially an opportunity for an examination of violence became merely an exercise in allegorization, spectatorial self-othering and academic

intervention. The depicted rape scene brought to the fore the problematic status of the violent image and made present the power of a spectatorial paradigm based in identification, a paradigm that relies upon distinctions between perpetrators and victims, subjects and others. It is this kind of complex spectatorial response that allowed *Dry Lips* to be critiqued for being insufficiently concerned with victimization at the same time as it was attacked for its negativity and lack of positive message; it was perhaps because of this double status as representative of both elitist and disenfranchised cultures that the play was simultaneously inscribed with both canonical and subversive value and became in academic discourse an object for postcolonial recuperation. In an interpretive maneuver that sought clear answers, canonical interpretations and unmistakable victims, scholars carried over the violence of the performance into a perceived and projected failed audience. The audience, defined in simplistic terms as unified, homogenous and unvaryingly white, thus became the source of the play's perceived misogyny (it was their misinterpretation, their inability to properly understand the violence, that was responsible for what was seen as the play's misogyny) as the play, its author and its original production were exculpated and rendered inherently and indisputably non-violent and politically, ideologically and culturally radical and transgressive.

However, recuperative projects are not always wholly successful or complete and the contradictions and inconsistencies of the debate and of the scholarly reception of *Dry Lips* indicate the extent to which clear demarcations (of self/ other, white/ native, conservative/ transgressive, victim/ perpetrator) were not easily rendered or established. In fact the very existence of what can be considered a debate or controversy in the Canadian theatrical scene suggests the complex ways in which spectatorial identification

was in this theatrical instance subtended by the problematic place of the violent history of colonialism and the potentially compensatory operations of postcolonial discourse in Canada, Canadian theatre and academic writing. As both canonized work and representative artifact of Native culture, *Dry Lips* provided a point of juncture for conflicts of identity and identification. And as violent performance it mobilized spectatorial processes and responses based in pedagogical, moralizing or didactic frames of reference. The play and its performances were not perhaps the center of the debate so much as a forum for the anxieties, concerns and obsessions of a Canadian post-colonialism and multiculturalism.

Thus, while not dealt with explicitly, violence was the accelerant for the debate and academic intervention that ensued -- in *Dry Lips*, it was the performance of violence, the place of the rape on the stage, that threatened to bring the victim "too close."[13] The spectacle of an on-stage rape with a crucifix, even when performed in a stylized or non-realistic fashion, brought to the fore the iconic presence of both the actor's body and the material symbol of the cross in a moment of sudden violence that was not easily justified, incorporated or contained within legitimating frameworks of identification or narrative resolution. Attacks on the play argued that the rape was gratuitous: it tied together characters in a moment of violence and operated as a disturbing climax, but its presence could not be explained critically in terms of narration or identificatory purposes, which made it difficult to defend or justify as legitimate or necessary. It was this uneasy presence of violence that brought about the controversy and debate and it was a presence, I argue, in the TPM production as well as the Royal Alexandra remount performance.

The violence was merely more visible and the play more heavily invested in the remount production so the debate took on more significant and more problematic visibility.

Like most controversies, the impulse in *Dry Lips* debate was a conservative one that ensured that any disturbing power the performed violence had in the theatre was discursively circumscribed and restricted in the debates that ensued. The easy metaphorical readings and defense of the staging of the rape scene in the original production enabled critics and academics alike to identify and appropriate Native voice through the assertion of difference. By setting up Highway and the original production as markers of authenticity, these critical, discursive interventions were able to both partake of that authentic aboriginality and to distance it and ensure its difference: *Dry Lips* was not misogynist, a trait that can potentially be shared by all playwrights equally, but a work by an authentic First Nations voice exposing the history of victimization and exploitation, presenting the "harrowing realities of life on an Indian reserve" (Drainie) or celebrating Native spiritualism. In this appropriation and over-identification, what was ultimately lost was the opportunity to confront violence both as it is performed in the theatre and as it occurs in daily life. What was also lost in the debates was the possibility for confrontation and examination of Canada's and Canadian theatre's problematic relation to its own historic violence of colonialism, the effects of which are still present and felt. The ascription to a postcolonial theoretical framework and the simplified references to current aboriginal issues like the Oka crisis merely offered superficial and simplified accounts of a complex, contradictory and agonistic historical and still current conflict.

This simplification leaked into and dominated the theatrical approach to the play and its performance history. In the adherence to identificatory modes of spectatorship, reliant upon clear conflict, the critical response to the implications and ramifications of a staged rape scene, resonant for those who connected it to acts of actual rape, was reduced to a binary conflict and was ultimately separated from any effort to critically confront issues of the performance of violence, race, history or gender on the Canadian stage. Over-identification and victimology dominated debates that should have taken as their center the performance, reception and confrontation of violence in a post-colonial context. What began as a potentially useful and timely debate was quickly transformed into partisan and compensatory over-identification: what was lost in this transformation was the provocative potential of a staged rape, of theatrical violence in an economically, historically and culturally charged context, that could have offered the opportunity to examine issues of the performance of violence, gender, race and history in a Canadian post-colonial framework.

Endnotes

[1] Vit Wagner notes that the production was the first Canadian play to be performed at the Royal Alex since the Charlottetown Festival musical revue in 1983.

[2] Although this article is quoted in many articles focusing on the particulars of the Royal Alexandra performance, it is interesting to note that Baker is discussing the Winnipeg production of the remount.

[3] Similarly disturbed by the representation of Native women in the play, Marian Botsford Fraser wrote in the *Globe and Mail*, that the play is not only about misogyny but is "studded with misogyny; in its structure, tone, language and point of view, this is a portrayal of women unremittingly dark and embittered. Contempt for women, both implicit and explicit, overshadows the richness and vitality of the play as a whole." (Fraser) Arguing that "the loathing for women that this plays carries is almost unbearable," Fraser questions the absence of women in the play (and the nudity of the only female performer/ character on the stage) and the sympathy that it for the tragic, sexist and violent male characters. "The empowered women are absent," she notes and "what we see are images of their degradation, shame and fallibility." (Fraser)

[4] Knowles places this aestheticism in a context of primitivism and the avant-garde arguing that "Clearly, for Cushman, the value of *Dry Lips* at the Royal Alex lay in what it could contribute to a firmly entrenched 'Anglo-American' tradition. Any political efficacy that it may have had as cultural intervention was swallowed by the march of that tradition's avant-garde, consuming 'primitive' works in order to renew itself in the way that modernism once consumed African art." (Knowles 280)

[5] For example, Filewod maintains an interpretive engagement with the play and its performance that tends towards a valuation of Highway and *Dry Lips* as authentic Native culture and Rabillard, who does not celebrate the TPM production exclusively, adopts concepts of hybridity, transgression and subversion as the defining, essential and ontological characteristics of the play and its author.

[6] Although there was a vocal negative response to elements of the performance, the level of exchange and the vociferousness of response came no where close to the concurrent "meat dress" controversy surrounding Jana Sterbak's *Vanitas: Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorectic* at the National Gallery.

[7] Critics and reviewers also fail to note the presence of this historical rape in verbal form in Highway's *The Rez Sisters*. In this play the character Zhaboonigan, upon seeing Nanabush in the form of a seagull, recounts her rape by two white boys: "They took all my clothes off me. Put something inside me here. ***Pointing to her crotch, underneath her dress***. Many, many times. Remember. Don't fly away. Don't go. I saw you before. There, there. It was a. Screwdriver. They put the screwdriver inside me. Here. Remember. Ever lots of blood. The two white boys. Left me in the bush. Alone. It was cold." (Highway 47-48)

[8] It is interesting to note also that the rape of women (as opposed to the male rapes that occur) in Highway's works almost always involve rape with an object (screwdriver, bottle, crucifix), which suggests further debasement, objectification, dehumanization and violence but also suggests an obsessive re-playing of this obviously traumatic incident.

[9] This stress on the physicality, the objectification of the body precipitated by rape is also noted in Laura E. Tanner's *Intimate Violence: Reading Rape and Torture in Twentieth-Century Fiction*: "The victim of violation is the object rather than the subject of violence, a human being stripped of agency and mercilessly attached to a physical form that cannot be dissolved at will. In acts of intimate violence such as rape and torture, the paradox of the phrase 'human body' becomes visible: the victim

is at once consciousness, emotion, subject, and at the same time physicality, material, object." (Tanner 3)

[10]Stephanie Jed in her book *Chaste Thinking: the rape of Lucretia and the birth of humanism* argues that the story of Lucretia who, to the approval of all, killed herself after she had been raped, conflates rape, murder and suicide into one act. Further, because this myth became so central to humanistic thought, rape became a common trope and operated as literary, metaphorical and allegorical currency. Jed argues that the rape of Lucretia is only one example of the hidden violence of humanism and contends that humanistic codes, models and tropes carry the weight of this violence when put into service today.

[11] It is important to remember that the erasure of the victim of rape is not limited to metaphorical or allegorical constructions, but is central to any representation of rape. As Jane Mills notes in "Screening Rape," the representation of rape can obliterate, obfuscate and expunge the very concept, the possibility of rape: "While I have never been persuaded of any causal connection between filmic representation and human behaviour, there is something about the way popular culture is so wedded to representations of rape that gives me a bad case of the ambivalences. I think it's because of the way the audience is invited, often successfully, to collude in a sense of it never having happened. This, of course, is a device that reinforces powerful cultural myths, based on men's fantasies about female sexuality that maintain that no rape ever happens." (Mills 39)

[12] Wilson can be seen asserting this interpretative privilege of the colonizer throughout the interview. When Highway does not respond as desired to Wilson's question about the connections between the content of Highway's work and its incarnation as performance, Wilson answers for him: "I don't want to contradict you, but I wonder if it really is 'luck' that you write plays. It seems to me that the Nanabush figure, who is so important to your work and presumably to you, undergoes transformations that can be captured wonderfully on stage because transformation is an important element of theatre. It's hard for me to imagine Nanabush having the same sort of vitality in a poem or story that he does on stage." Interestingly Wilson's point is made by Highway himself in other interviews where he says that he was attracted to theatre "because to me it's a natural extension of the oral storytelling tradition. You still hear the words." (Lutz 95)

[13] Lacanian theorist Slavoj Žižek's analysis of violence and victimization offers an insight into the appropriation and over-identification that shaped this debate. Žižek argues that the construction of an identifiable victim is dependent upon a recognition of difference that screens or covers over a potentially threatening proximity: for Žižek, the category of "victim" works to ensure that the other is kept at a safe, sympathetic distance, establishing difference even while asserting similarity. In the *Dry Lips* debate, the establishment of safe distance was clear in both the attack and critical defence of the play, its performance and Highway himself: the remount performance threatened to bring first nations culture into the mainstream, but the problematic performance of violence disrupted this move and the controversy assured that any aboriginal engagement was located in the distant past of a designated original, authentic and unproblematic (non-violent) performance. Critical exchange and academic intervention thus maintained divisions and re-asserted difference in a move that erased both their appropriation of aboriginality and smoothed over the problematic vicissitudes of audience reception and the performance of violence.

Chapter 3
Safe Places: Domestic Violence and the Model Spectator in Popular Theatre

In his account of theatre spectatorship Marco De Marinis asserts that the underlying impulse of popular and political theatre is one of audience manipulation and control. Arguing that the theatrical relationship is always inequitable, De Marinis contends that different modes of theatrical consumption are inscribed in the forms and techniques of performance and that popular and political modes of reception close off or limit audience response in a deliberate and forceful way. There are "open" and "closed" performances, De Marinis claims, and the more closed a performance is, the more it relies on the manipulation of the spectator and the more necessary it is that there be a correspondence between real and anticipated audience response. For De Marinis the type of audience response invoked or required is determined by the form of reception implied and written into the performance: representation and reception are cooperative or at least co-relational. But this relation is not always an easily determined one and De Marinis complicates his argument by suggesting that those performance forms that are considered most "open" are in fact the ones that attempt to control their audiences' response to the greatest and most deterministic degree and are therefore the most "closed": "Closed performances anticipate a very precise receiver and demand well defined types of 'competence' (encyclopaedic, ideological, etc.) for their 'correct' reception. This is mostly the case with certain forms of genre-based theatre: political theatre, children's theatre, women's theatre, gay theatre, street theatre, musicals, dance theatre, mime and so on." (De Marinis 103) Genre or issue-based performances, De Marinis suggests, rely more heavily on audience response and, more importantly, are based in an aesthetics and

politics of reception that actively inscribes audience reception within the act of performance. The result is a closed performance that carries with it an ideal or implied closed reception; audience response is controlled and manipulated and within the performance is written an evaluative contract that seeks and attempts to obtain desired or correct interpretations and readings.[1]

In this chapter I will question how audience response is constructed, articulated and appealed to in popular and community performances that address domestic violence. Can some popular and political performances be considered closed in the ways outlined by De Marinis and what are the ethical implications of those closed performances? More importantly, how do these ethics change when what are being "closed" are responses to violence and what other factors come into play in the "theatrical relationship" (De Marinis 101) of popular theatre when the form of violence being confronted is defined by its private, intimate and invisible nature? Does the theatrical manipulation and expectation of a popular performance tradition that emphasizes community, consensus and political engagement change when what is at issue is the performance of violence? Are there further considerations of engagement and consensus when this performance of violence takes on intimate or domestic abuse, a form of violence that is distinctly not public, often not recognized by community, not tied to clear political agendas and that has in fact historically been considered by medical, legal and societal institutions not to be violence at all? What will become evident in addressing these questions and analyzing instances of popular or political theatre performance is the rarity with which violence is portrayed at all. In addition to being ideologically and spectatorially closed, it seems that these performances are occasionally representationally closed as well: violence on the

stage does not often have a place in social or political treatments of violence as an issue. In his designation of closed performance, then, De Marinis invites us to rethink and rework the controlled or absent performance of violence in genre-based work, while acknowledging the particularities of popular, political and community-based theatres and their modes of representation and reception.

In De Marinis's account of theatrical communication and reception, the potential for spectatorial freedom and flexibility are explored in terms that place both the spectator and the performance within the purview of power, manipulation and control. Because of the physical co-presence of audience and performer(s), theatre is inseparable from the "dramaturgy of the spectator," from a politics of reception that demarcates the ways in which spectators and audiences are conceived and approached; for De Marinis, the audience of closed performances are both conceived of as passive objects, as the "mark" or "target" for the performance, and as active interpreters and interlocutors. Closed does not necessarily mean prescribed; it is merely an expressed desire for and movement towards control, manipulation and a direction of response. Although his grouping of "closed" genres may seem surprising at first, and seems to imply an aesthetic bias against political theatre, it is significant that many of these cited genre forms are identity-based performances, reliant on consensus and a construction of community often structured around a simplified or binary understanding of conflict and difference.

While not necessarily a problem or an impasse for the political, social or ideological success of these genre based performances, the desire for closed and controlled reception is a problem for works that address violence or that use violence in popular or community-based performance. In closed performance, violence becomes mere conflict,

to be worked out in an agreed upon manner and to be performed in such a way that audience response can be monitored, controlled and determined. Violence here is not merely an issue but is a physical presence that intensifies the desire for control; it is viewed as excess, an unstable element that requires that audience reception be approached as a potential danger by practitioners, audiences and critics. Theatrical violence, as bounded by both a discourse of transgression and subversion and a therapeutic instrumentality or usefulness, would thus seem to offer a particularly interesting case for examining the implications and inconsistencies of an account of spectatorship based in theatrical manipulation, control and closure of response.

This spectatorial manipulation that imposes and inscribes consensus, community and therapeutic identification onto the reception of the theatrical performance of violence is most evident in works that take on violence as a social issue or political problem. In works that address domestic violence, for example, there is an expressed desire to teach the audience, expose the issue, make visible the effects of violence and make available resources for victims. In what follows I will consider two examples of the use of popular and political theatrical modes to explore domestic violence: Théâtre Parminou's *Les Bleus amoureux*, and *Out of the Silence*, by Vancouver's Headlines Theatre. The pieces are discussed together because of the similarities in intent and reception: both toured and played in a variety of community and professional venues, both were approached in socially didactic and therapeutic terms, both received positive reviews and critical attention and both were written about by their creators in ways that suggested dissatisfaction with audience response.

Théâtre Parminou

Théâtre Parminou is a Quebec theatre troupe known for physically based, commedia dell' arte inspired work that addresses its social and political environment through popular theatre forms and modes. Although Théâtre Parminou is a professional theatre that uses trained actors and engages with theatrical form in a complex and informed manner and as such is distinct from many other forms of popular theatre, their mandate emphasizes their popularizing potential. Creating work collectively with a small ensemble, Parminou's work often travels across Quebec and is known for bringing productions and performances to a variety of venues, including prisons, public squares, picket lines and theatre buildings.

With *Les Bleus amoureux* Parminou set out to address domestic violence with the help of the Association des resources intervenant auprès des hommes violents (ARIHV), an association in Quebec made up of organizations that specialize in counselling and treatment for male abusers. The piece does not feature acts of abuse and victimized characters are only discussed and never appear on-stage. Parminou company member Maureen Martineau notes that in the creation of the play the company deliberately set out to avoid the presence of on-stage violence by excluding female and child characters: "By eliminating the stage presence of the wife or child, the pitfall of perpetrating violence through its enactment was also avoided." (Martineau and Mac Dougall 16) Instead the piece engages with the abusers and their stories of acts of violence -- told within the framework of a therapy session – that both indicate violence and enact the kinds of denial and obfuscation at work in situations of domestic violence. The motivating force of this production was thus avowedly therapeutic in its desire to call out to men in need of

counselling, to bring them to an awareness of needing and seeking help. Suggesting a complex relation among gender, performance and victimization, this avoidance concretizes the potentially problematic presence of on-stage violence, a presence viewed as so dangerous and so prolifically powerful, that the company was willing to exclude a class of characters and actors whose appearance they assumed would have not only automatically framed the figures as victims and involved graphic depictions of violence but would have led to the continuation and perpetration of further violence. The avoidance of violence reflects contemporary theoretical concerns about the negative effects of violence on the stage but it also indicates the particular problem of violence in popular and political theatre projects defined by pedagogical, therapeutic or activist aims or modes of performance. Many theatre projects that can be classified as popularly or politically based aim for a construction of audience community and consensus, which appears to be aided by an avoidance of explicit or graphic depictions of physical violence on the stage. As Martineau's comment indicates, the erasure of violence (and of victims) can be defended as preferable, as more ethically and politically conscientious, than the depiction of violence on the stage; absence is offered as a solution to the predicted, imagined and projected negative and violent effect on the audience.

This decision to avoid violence was clearly framed in terms of the performance's desired and imagined effect. In an article published after the tour of *Les Bleus*, Martineau and Jill Mac Dougall (the English translator of *Les Bleus*) state that the focus on abusers allowed the company to see themselves in a reciprocal and active relation to their audience: "The guiding verb of the intervention was *interpeller*, or 'to call out to,' which better reflected the goals than 'to demonstrate that,' 'to raise consciousness,' to sensitize

men to,' or 'to sensitize women to.' The verb *interpeller* harboured a cry, a desire to meet the other, and implied a brief contract of reciprocal trust. The expression provided not only a goal but also an impetus in the creative process." (Martineau 15) In defining their motivation role by the verb *interpeller*, as an act of calling out, Parminou sought to emphasize change, and the possibility for change, and, as a result, they attempted to distance themselves from a strictly pedagogical, epistemological or proof-centered performance. For *Les Bleus* Parminou used this guiding verb to enable an aesthetic of estrangement and to attempt to dramatize the process by which abusers justify, displace, deny or otherwise reject their own violent behaviour by guiding the actors with verb imperatives (hide or search for example).[2] As Martineau and Mac Dougall note, this "stripping down of speech allowed the actor to express the interior struggle of the character and inform the audience of the tactical negotiations hidden from the character himself. The brief pause in which the actor grasps the internal strategy verb is an interruption in the naturalistic flow of the dialogue. . . . The forces operating in the conflicted subject become palpable, and the problem can be projected beyond the reified character in therapy for woman abuse." (Martineau 24)[3]

The intentions for the project were thus clearly complex and well thought out: the aims were explicit and there was an awareness of the difficulty in confronting domestic violence and a recognition of the problematic place of violent performance in that confrontation. But it is also evident that this recognition did not address all the concerns of the creators and the post-performance article written by Martineau and Mac Dougall suggests the extent to which violence was a problem in the show's development and reception. While the performance did not contain any explicit violence, the violent

content was a matter for concern and it subtends the article in which Martineau and Mac Dougall express their apprehension about spectatorial failure or misunderstanding. Dividing the article into sections determined by audience type and performance venue, the writers argue that "there were observable differences among what we can arbitrarily label the cultural, penal, and community mileux." (Martineau 30) The three labels correspond to the staging of the play in the alternative theatres of Montreal, local and regional prisons and community centres throughout Quebec and the argument developed from comparing these venues and the reception of performance in the different contexts. Martineau and Mac Dougall assert that the different venues created distinct modes of audience reception and argue that these differences in reception were shaped by conflicting discourses of art and therapy and are therefore evidence of "the art-versus-social debate underlying this work." (Martineau 30)[4] The oppositions in the article are depicted as clear and self-evident: while the political and social import of a performance like *Les Bleus* is viewed by its participants and creators as part of its artistic merit, Mac Dougall and Martineau argue that reviews, funding and reception rely upon clear distinctions between art and political activism.

However, in asserting these biases of reception, it is clear that the creators of *Les Bleus* are not merely making observations but are engaging in evaluative comments about the ability of the audience to participate in or engage with the material as expected. Martineau and Mac Dougall even note that the Montreal performances (which they designate as "cultural") elicited positive response and that audiences were moved by and interested in the issues at hand. Although a few reviews of the performance are critical of the didactic aims of the production, most of the reviews support this positive reception:

enthusiastic reviews frame the play as social intervention and touch on the issue of domestic violence but they do not set up the clear distinction between art and politics that is suggested by Martineau and Mac Dougall, who maintain that the performance was not a success because of audience expectation and reception. The reviews noted the social activism and issue-based nature of the work, but they do not claim that this activism was an indicator of artistic failure.

Thus, in praising the community audiences because of their history, occupation or investment in the issues at hand belies a stance that sets "art" and "activism" at odds as clearly as the reviews cited in the critique of Montreal response: in short, their argument suggests that the community audiences were "better," because they approached the piece not as art or entertainment but as activism, social work or therapy.[5] While it is important to note that the article by Martineau and Mac Dougall comes from very real frustrations of theatre groups who find themselves outside of strict funding definitions and guidelines because their work crosses political, social, aesthetic, artistic and professional borders, it is equally important to note the unwritten assumptions about audience participation, effective reception and the problems of deterministic approaches to performance. Further, these problems are especially evident in *Les Bleus* because the performance is centred on a representation of violence that calls into effect the identification, spectacle, voyeuristic and cathartic (therapeutic) spectatorial processes. According to Martineau, the strategies of contextualization, embodiment and alienation endeavour to theatricalize the complex process of therapeutic change by revealing its reliance on dynamic exchange, changing perspectives, role-playing and deconstruction of self-deceit and displacement. This therapeutic process is made most manifest in the role-playing within the diegetic

therapy sessions in the play, which allow for the fractured subject to be made present through the explicit demarcations of actor, character and role-played character and which distance the violence by not showing it directly and by not depicting the victims of violence. The lack of on-stage violence was a significant part of this explicit intent to allow "the audience to experience this confrontation while remaining safe within the walls of the theatre." (Martineau 30) Identifying violence as its subject while avoiding violence as image, act or event, *Les Bleus* thus avoids confrontation, either with audience or with issues of violence. Safety and therapeutic assurance are the core of the project and violence is only obliquely glanced in what ultimately becomes a performance about abusers, their motivations, character psychology and traumas.

Headlines Theatre

In many of the projects done by Headlines Theatre of Vancouver, Boalian forum theatre is used to confront issues of social and political concern, such as youth violence, poverty or domestic violence. David Diamond calls the type of theatre of the oppressed done by Headlines "Power Play," a term resonant with associations, both playful and competitive, and which reflects the condensed form of collective creation (Power Play workshops are usually only a week long but are extended to three weeks for certain productions), the philosophy of the company (which focuses on doing theatre with communities and working towards "healthy collective expression," [Diamond, 1994, 35]) and the sense of liveliness and gaming that the company propounds. While social and political issues shape the work done by Headlines, Diamond is clear that their work is distinct from therapy or psychodrama: "We are doing theatre in community – although

this work is often therapeutic both on an individual and on a community level. There is a difference between doing psychodrama and popular theatre. Psychodrama focuses on the individual; Power Plays focus on community, granted sometimes by helping individuals embody aspects of the community." (Diamond, 1994, 36) Seeing Headlines work in community and popularizing terms (Diamond emphasizes the desire to "bring the language of the theatre into the lives of all people" [Diamond, 1994, 35]), Diamond stresses the importance of the forum theatre format and yet also recognizes the limits of this form: "the forum play does not fight oppression, it simply exposes it, asking the audience to become activated and fight the oppression themselves." (Diamond 36) The forum does not pursue answers but makes it possible to begin to ask questions.

With the project *Out of the Silence*, Headlines worked with the Urban Representative Body of Aboriginal Nations (URBAN) to develop a piece on urban Native populations. There were seventeen participants and the cast of the final version was comprised of four women and two men. The piece was developed collaboratively out of workshops and, through cooperation with various individuals and groups, the project was able to incorporate movement, visual arts and music. Indeed, this collaborative aspect determined the direction of *Out of the Silence*, a project that was not initially approached as a work on domestic violence but which became one as the workshops began to be dominated by images of violence, especially of family abuse and the violence of residential schools. These images were incorporated into the performance and the final piece focused on the ways in which these past abuses and the history of violence shaped present situations including responses to domestic violence and sexual abuse.

The completed project involved the staging of the play and then a replaying of it allowing for stop-action intervention. The rudimentary narrative follows an evening in the life of a family (Bill the husband, Emily the wife, Kelly the daughter, Dylan the son and Theresa the aunt), on the occasion of the birthday of the daughter who has been being sexually abused by her father. The first time the drama is played through, the story features several key scenes of potentially abusive or violent events: the bribing of the daughter by the father (first with an inappropriate birthday gift of a diamond ring and then with money for an evening out); the daughter's evening out drinking with her brother; the home scenes of the father, mother and aunt during which the father's alcoholism and violence are revealed; the late arrival home of the teenagers, which angers the father and leads to the beating of the son; the father's night visitation to the daughter's room, which leads to rejection and a potentially violent family intervention and confrontation. In its first run through there is verbal violence, pushing and a threat of physical and sexual violence, but the focus is on the family dynamics and situation and not on these physical acts. The first run through of the performance thus works to set the scene for the interventions and to offer a loose narrative around which issues of violence will be broached and addressed.

After this initial performance, the narrative is replayed and audience members can request alternative acts or can take the place of actors to perform alternative strategies that would ideally result in solutions to the violent outcomes (suggested but not graphically performed) in the initial run through. A designated individual, called a "joker," manages the forum and works with the actors and interveners to play out the suggested interventions.[6] These suggestions are played out by the actors and the results

vary accordingly: some interventions result in an indication of increased violence (again, only suggested and always frozen at the moment before violence), while others suggest a confrontation resulting in the recognition and desire for help, therapy and counselling. In recognition of the disturbing nature of the piece and of the thematic concentration on counselling and therapy, the show had two full-time counsellors involved who were present at all rehearsals and performances. The therapeutic and interventionist nature of the performance were thus recognized at the outset as was the need for care in involving non-professional actors to engage in a work about violence and trauma.

Out of the Silence toured across British Columbia playing in a variety of venues and to diverse audiences and the response was almost uniformly positive. Many communities reported afterwards that individuals sought counselling, developed programs and became interested in forum theatre workshops because of the performance. The potential of the show to initiate, transform or reaffirm community cohesion, dynamics and interaction is evident in Diamond's report/ diary of the *Out of the Silence* tour. The reports on performances, written immediately after each performance, outline the audience demographics, size, general dynamic and character and also make note of the particular interventions performed in each show and the effects that they had. For example, throughout the report Diamond notes the impact of performance space and the attendance and participation of Native and non-Native audience members. In addition, the report indicates that particular community sentiments or relations evidently shaped when the interventions occurred (Diamond notes that non-Natives tended to intervene in the first act, while Natives tended to stop the action and intervene in the more violent and more intense second act), the kinds of interventions suggested (some interventions at certain

locations were more "superficial" than others, focusing on the particulars of a scene rather than the underlying emotions or causes) and the success of the interventions. In the report from the performance in Smithers, B.C., for instance, Diamond notes that an "older Wet'suwet'en man intervened on behalf of Emily [the wife]. While the kids were away and Bill and Theresa were partying, he got up and asked about role models and what kind of role models they were presenting to the kids. He talked about the alcohol and how they didn't need it in the house. The audience related very strongly to this intervention, in particular, I think, because it was presented to them by a very respected person in the community." (Diamond Report 21) Here, the community dynamics had an impact on the response to the intervention suggested. The intervention was made more significant because of the extra-theatrical framing of the persona of the intervener; his personal history and place in the community were seen to shape the effectiveness of his intervention.

However, such dynamics were not always easily determined or controlled. Throughout his report Diamond alludes to the problem of containing traumatic outbursts or eruptions caused by the performance. For example, in his note about a performance in Sardis, British Columbia, Diamond recognizes the traumatic nature and traumatizing potential of the play and comments that the theatrical production might not be about exposing family violence so much as offering a space to relive the trauma of family violence in a controlled and supportive atmosphere: "Many interveners came onto the stage already in tears.....coming up not to participate so much in a theatre event but to replay events from their lives in the hope (I think) of finding a better way – using the theatre event as a tool." (Diamond Report 32) Diamond also notes the danger and the

responsibility these traumatic interventions imply: "The power we carry and the responsibility that that implies is sobering. I believe, though, and have this reinforced through conversations with counsellors, that the pain of release, although intense, is better than the pain of continued silence." (Diamond Report 32)

Focusing on education, therapeutic or emancipatory identification, community and audience involvement, *Out of the Silence*, like *Les Bleus*, attempts to approach the complexities and traumas of domestic violence in a way that recognizes, and works with, its place in society as public secret but that ultimately engages in its own form of erasure of violence by avoiding its presentation. The complexity of domestic violence was arguably a part of each of these performances, but neither *Out of the Silence* nor *Les Bleus amoureux* explicitly enacted or physically represented violence on-stage; violence was either placed diegetically in the past as reference to past trauma or located in the interrupted future (stopped before actual depicted violence occurs). There are represented acts of shoving, pushing or shouting, but neither play explicitly depicts the forms of extreme physical violence that it thematically addresses. Although the audience could arguably see that some of the interventions staged in *Out of the Silence* resulted in more violence (the act of confronting the father or the attempt to leave are two examples that led to an increased threat of violence), the audience is never shown the extent to which the options and enactments can lead to severe or fatal violence. Similarly, *Les Bleus* uses Brechtian techniques of estrangement and role-playing to dramatize the conflicts and the lies that shape the way that domestic violence is discussed and addressed in society, theatre and therapy but never engages explicitly or in depth with violence and violent acts. Although each of these productions recognizes the problems of

representing violence on-stage (the potential for re-traumatizing actors and audience, the inability of untrained or non-professional actors to enact violence on the stage convincingly and without harm to themselves or others, the possible exploitation or celebration of violence), the violence itself is not presented as a problem (a problem for interpretation, knowledge, examination) but is presented as what the audience already knows.

Despite this avoidance of theatrical violence, audience comments on *Out of the Silence* suggest that recognizing domestic violence in the show and in their own lives was the most significant outcome of the performance for many audience members. Viewers and audience members often comment on the power of the performance to make them confront the violence in their own lives, seek counselling and pursue change. But it is not evident that the performance brought about these impulses as much perhaps as the forum itself, the creation of a public, open space where one could seek help in a private fashion. In this way *Out of the Silence* might not have exposed domestic violence so much as it voiced a call for counselling. The performance thus became a forum to remind people that there is help for victims and abusers and that there is a social responsibility to seek help or expose those you know who are perpetrating violence. The forum theatre, by playing with options and alternatives, may not therefore offer any new knowledge about domestic violence but it makes present and concrete the very possibility of alternatives, of different options and interventions.

Similarly, by focusing on the therapeutic process, *Les Bleus* takes as its center and animating force the possibility of change and progress. However, in the dramatic conflicts and confrontations that arise, it does not present such change as easy, simple or

even always effective. By using Brechtian techniques, the project focused on process, unconscious and psychologically invested response and displacement and on making foreign what is treated as common-sense or "normal." Thus the "call" was not so much a direct call to incite change but a call to offer the possibility of change, of pursuing change. Formally then both works challenge audience passivity and voyeurism by engaging with collective, community-driven and documentary forms of popular theatre. However, community and popular performances addressing domestic violence face an additional obstacle by tackling an issue that is shaped to some extent by secrecy and is almost always addressed in intimate, medicalized, psychological and individual form. In addressing this violence, both pieces ultimately simplify the issues they address, a simplification motivated in part by the use of a Boalian method (and we could include Boalian interpretations of Brechtian alienation) that redefines and delimits the problem of violence in terms that emphasize clarity, conflict and binary oppositions. Thus, although often well-intentioned, carefully researched and politically and ethically committed works of theatre, popular and community theatre projects aimed at dealing with woman abuse can unintentionally and perhaps unavoidably perpetuate the secrecy and hiddenness of domestic violence through efforts to expose, document and "show" domestic violence without first addressing the problems of showing, the implications of documentation or the impossibility and ill effects of defining.

Looking closely at these examples it becomes evident that some of these problems or contradictions are not only a part of the definitional, representational and social problems of domestic violence but are also inherent in the theatrical form of Boalian or popular theatre projects that aim to address conflicts in simplified and binary ways. This

is not to suggest that the work of Augusto Boal is simplistic or one-dimensional. In fact, in Boal's work we can see a complexity and contradiction that is perhaps not recognized in North American interpretations of his work.[7] As Alan Filewod notes in *Collective Encounters*, the Boalian method has "developed into a strict formula," (Filewod, 1987, 159) that foregrounds and formalizes polemicism, didacticism and pedagogical instruction and, more important for Filewod, relies upon an "implicit 'correct' solution." (Filewod, 1987, 160) Although forum theatre presents itself as an open forum where solutions are offered and where no right or correct answers are sought or found, it is clear that in most productions some interventions are seen as more valuable than others and Diamond even suggests as much when he notes that some nights the interventions were superficial. This is not a weakness or flaw so much as it is a result of the conflict-based nature of forum theatre: if the theatre event is constructed around obvious wrongs, clear conflicts, evident oppositions and binary divides then the implied answers, interventions and suggestions will potentially be equally obvious, clear, evident and polar. Forum theatre sets out to pose a question to the audience and Boal notes that this question must be clear, defined and unambiguous: "The question has to be clear. If the spect-actors are to be able to intervene and offer alternatives, and if the Forum is to enrich our understanding, the central idea must be perceptible to all." (Boal 62) Because forum theatre relies upon intervention, questions and answers, the solutions must arise from a theatrical conflict that is obvious, unmistakably evident and carefully defined.

Thus the clarity and controlled nature of forum theatre is potentially at odds with the nature of intervention itself insofar as the vicissitudes of performance and audiences can work to disrupt the care and control necessary for an effective forum event: "The

very nature of theatrical performance may in fact preclude an objective representation of a situation. In performance, a general situation is made specific, and this brings into play variable which the form may not be equipped to handle." (Filewod, 1987, 160) However, Filewod is also quick to note that this power of the audience is limited and despite this intervening potential, the audience "has no voice in formulating the basic problem upon which the performance is based." (Filewod, 1987, 155) The audience is free to act, to intervene and to participate but only insofar as it is invited by the performance and is precipitated or called upon by the issue or situation at hand. This certainty and controlled outcome of forum theatre can, according to Filewod, be seen as a documentary theatre mode based in authenticity, truth and evidence: "It is in this issue of honesty that the concept of interactive theatre returns to documentary. The audience can intervene freely only if they accept the problem on the stage as absolutely authentic and pertinent to their own lives." (Filewod, 1987, 160) Indeed, Boal himself notes the importance of truth and accuracy in the forum format: "This search for suitable oppressors must not be random; the group which is creating the play must have genuine knowledge of the problem and must present an organic vision of the situation in which all the elements are true. Theatricality must not sacrifice truth." (Boal 62)

With these kinds of statements stressing the truth and accuracy of forum theatre it is easy to see the links to the documentary mode discussed by Filewod. Filewod notes the prominence of "the authority of actual evidence" in Canadian theatre, an evidentiary documentation that frequently finds its source in the personal rather than the factual: "The Canadian documentary tends to document experience rather than facts." (Filewod, 1987, 17) However, it is also necessary to stress Filewod's implied point that the

documentary appeal and the rigidity of the Boalian system are not so much due to an inflexibility in Boal or in forum theatre, but are a result of certain interpretations and manifestations of forum theatre that do not account for the power of ambiguity and audience complexity nor give credit to the importance of the imagined, real and constructed distinctions between public, private, self, other and community. Boal himself openly acknowledges the abstract nature of performance, the impossibility of audience consensus and the difficult relations between social, political and psychological selves. He is also clear on the importance of recognizing the difference between truth or honesty and objectivity, realism or repetition. For example, in *Legislative Theatre* Boal sets up a distinction between looking and seeing as it is manifested in what he calls "joker scenography" in such a way that the "truth" of the object does not equal its realism or accuracy: "The function of 'joker scenography' is also to allow the audience to see and not merely look. If they look at an actual telephone on stage, they won't see a telephone; but if they can see an object (larger or smaller, or different colour or texture from a 'genuine' phone) representing the absent phone then they will see the absent phone. Things which are as they are are not seen; we only see absences." (Boal 76)

This joker scenography is perhaps one of Boal's most interesting concepts and it reveals the extent to which the Boalian method is rooted in a dynamic and complex understanding of theatre and world. Although claiming to use Boalian methods, this split between what is referenced and what is represented was not evident in the representations of violence in the popular theatre projects I have considered. Seemingly aware of the problem of representing secret, private violence in a public forum, both *Out of the Silence* and *Les Bleus* approached violence in clear-cut and easily identified terms. A personal,

therapeutic and intimate discourse of personal responsibility and psychological healing tended to dominate the performances and the desired and intended audience reaction and engagement was one of epistemological, ideological and political certainty, consensus and compensatory identification. In asserting their place as community performance, these pieces appealed to a sense of community involvement and interpretation that in turn reduced and simplified complex violence into a clear-cut cause and effect logic. This consensual appeal relied upon clarity of conflict and upon the functioning of an empathetic audience engagement that placed the characters in immobile and transparent opposition. The force of consensus, of the possibility of agreement among audience spectators, elided complex problems in favour of simple solutions achieved through pathetic and empathetic identification.[8]

Consensus in the theatre, like consensus in the public spheres of politics or social activism, relies upon emotionalism, identification and the transparent and binary constructions of issues or problems that this kind of understanding implies.[9] The appeal to emotionalism and empathetic identification was, as we have seen, evident in both *Les Bleus* and *Out of the Silence* and was evident in the production, reception and in the post-production critical and analytical accounts of performance. Both works occupied a difficult and contradictory space between aesthetics, politics and therapy but it was a space that was not merely imposed from outside, as Martineau and Mac Dougall's account implies, but was inscribed in the very anxiety, caution and reserve with which the productions approached the performance and reception of violence. In using the examples of these two productions I do not suggest that the problematic approach to violence is a particular characteristic of these performances; instead, I would suggest that

the orchestration of response and the closed nature of consensual spectatorship are concomitant with popular and community theatre forms that address social issues like violence as binary conflicts, that attempt to strike a balance between intimate, personal vision and collective, community identity and that rely upon a determined and deterministic audience response for functional effectiveness. Further, I would argue that these problems of popular performance projects about violence are exacerbated in the particular case of theatrical projects that address a form of violence that is already caught between the private and the public. As violence, and often extreme murderous violence, woman abuse is a public concern shaped by social, political, historical and ideological factors but it is also secret, familial and hidden and theatrical interventions do not always effectively address the complexities, particularities or representational problems of the issue.

Perhaps then the most successful outcome of projects like *Out of the Silence* and *Les Bleus* was not in making domestic violence visible or in trying to make it knowable, evident or detectable to observers but in creating a community of audience whereby the presence of violence, its potential to harm, alienate and divide was confronted through the act of theatre itself. *Out of the Silence* and *Les Bleus* did not offer new understandings of domestic violence, nor did they render it more available to documentation, knowledge or vision; during and after the performance domestic abuse remained an invisible, open, public secret. However limited in addressing domestic violence, Headlines Theatre and Théâtre Parminou did reiterate the place of theatre as a powerful public forum that offers the possibility of bringing individuals together through the very contradictions of public/ private, individual/ community and actors/ audience.

That the reference to violence was an animating force in this construction of community indicates in an indirect way its pervasiveness, prevalence and commonality; but that the violence was addressed in so restricted a fashion and the audience reception dealt with in such simplified terms suggests that violence in the plays was felt to be and was treated as a problem to be controlled and circumscribed. The violence that was for the most part physically absent in the performances but was central to the thematic, social and political issues to which the performances were directed, also became the focus and instrument by which audience response and interpretation was manipulated and controlled. The reception of violence was thus both a problem or cause for concern and a mobilizing force that determined and made possible the feelings of community at work in the audience as they constructed and saw themselves working to address and end that violence.

It is thus important to recognize that violence, as topic, issue, absence and reference, was used in each instance to mobilize the audience into a sense of community and into a position of political, social and ideological consensus. It is also therefore necessary to recognize that this mobilizing is also implicated in its own operations of power and violence.[10] The desire for consensus carries with it occlusion, exclusion and the eradication of difference. In the theatre this consensual community of audience can cover over the extent to which the audience is potentially a contradictory, variable and potentially conflicted grouping.

In his theoretical work on performance Herbert Blau notes the problematic place of this contradictory grouping of collective audience and individual response when he argues for the importance of approaching the audience as a collective community at the

same time as recognizing its potential as a dangerous mass or crowd. The act of being an audient is thus recognized in Blau to be a complex operation involving self, others and the feeling of commonality or community that the very definition of audience seems to suggest. Implied in this discussion of audience, however, is the unstated presence of violence in this grouping of people, a violence that Blau develops elsewhere in his assertion that endangerment is an integral part of theatre-going. Appealing to the example of fire to illustrate and develop the presence of danger in the audience, Blau articulates the importance of that secondary sense, hearing, in moments of audience endangerment; when an audience member shouts "Fire!," he argues, the distinction between audience and crowd dissolves, a dissolution that he ties to the opposition between sight and sound:

> At some threatening level, however, . . . the animus of the crowd is always a liability in the audience, whose acuity may be dissolved in deficient sight or the recessions of the gaze, into which the solitary listener is drawn. (When somebody shouts 'Fire!' in the theatre, there is in what becomes a crowd the redoubled acuity of the first stage of listening, closer to the victim signaling through the flames.) The threat, which bifurcates the audience in its two major senses, is unnerving and enlivening. (Blau 131)

For Blau the dissolution depends upon the presence of solitary spectator but is equally shaped and determined by the presence of others. The audience in this instance acts both as crowd and individual spectators.

While Blau's use of the example of fire may seem initially out of place in an account of audience engagement, his comments illustrate and highlight the extent to which the audience is characterized as a potentially powerful and dangerous mass. The instance of fire suggests that danger but it also indicates the common experience, whether it be of pleasure or of endangerment, that defines the audience. The fire in this case

stands in for spectatorial attention, involvement and recognition of self, other, mass or crowd. However, the shout of "fire" also indicates the presence of risk in performance, a risk that some argue has disappeared in the wake of polite communities of audience and reception.

It is in this spirit of risk and the danger/ endangerment of the audience that Alan Read devotes an entire chapter to the incendiary in *Theatre and Everyday Life: An Ethics of Performance*. The absence of fire in the contemporary theatre, he argues, is what marks theatre today off from its history. The audience's safety from the threat of fire is what reaffirms the theatre's place as a normative structure in the city plan and what permits theatre to be set in the same category of safety as hotels, dwellings and other places to sleep:

> Hotel fires cut to the quick because of the expectation that a place to sleep is a safe place to sleep. But what of theatre? We have come to expect theatre to be a safe place to sleep – but should we? Do we have a right to expect safety where there was once danger? And what price do we pay for that safety – has theatre not disappeared in direct proportion to the restrictions that govern its performance? To raise this question is also to ask who is in a position to hear it? Where we might ask lies the power in the theatre, what is the arrangement of power that governs performance? (Read 234)

This growth of a "safety" theatre, Read suggests, comes at the expense of risk and should be analyzed in terms of Artaud's call for a rejuvenated and alive theatre of danger and discovery: "Between the 'improvement' of the theatre of the nineteenth century and the 'safety' of the theatre of the twentieth, is a loss which Artaud stands against. It is a loss of 'agitated crowds hurled against one another' for the politeness of entrances and exits, a theatre of cruelty that will be illuminated by 'sheet lightening like a flight of fire-arrows.'" (Read 215)

This safety theatre is not, however, limited only to a kind of bourgeois, polite theatre for Read and he goes on to suggest the connection of community and political theatre to the safety theatre just described. Theatrical form in itself, Read suggests, is not and cannot be revolutionary, subversive or even enlivening in an Artaudian fashion without a concomitant shift in the understanding of and the relation to the audience:

> The project which Artaud articulates has entered the contents of the theatre of the period, the plays for example of Peter Handke and the performances of Pina Bausch, without deconstructing the ordained relations with audiences beyond 'internal rearrangement'. It is necessary to examine examples of such rearrangement, from Bertolt Brecht through Augusto Boal to the 'community play' movement, to understand why the project of a political theatre is not adequate without the beginnings of an understanding of the 'metaphysics' proposed by Artaud and the revolution of forms that implies. (Read 215)

Read makes clear the connection between Artaud and political theatre movements and is critical of those traditions that elide or deny the kinds of risk and experiment advocated by Artaud. For Read, the significance of performance generally (and of a single performance in particular) is in its relation to the audience and its attention to the local, the context and particularities of a performance event. The "ethics of everyday life," then is connected to the ethical, political and social operations of a theatre that recognizes its place as tactical, local, connected and subject to the temporal and spatial patterns of the everyday. Such a connection, Read argues, would lead to the kind of ethical re-mapping proffered by Artaud and would open the space for audience re-positionings and rearrangements that could in turn suggest new forms of intervention, ethical engagement and political action not constrained by consensus, fixity and institutionalization.

The theatre is multiple and its form of communication is complex and diverse: in this definition of performance Read's analysis parallels De Marinis's in its emphasis on

the multiplicity of theatre and theatrical communication. Like De Marinis, Read sees theatre as relational and as a potential forum for communication and, also like De Marinis, Read is suspicious of forms of theatre that attempt to ensure that audiences share in a unified interpretation of a single message. Read suggests that the theatrical potential offered by its public and multiple capacities can become hypostatised or halted in theatrical traditions that rely on a deterministic sense of audience reception:

> Outmoded forms of reference such as 'political theatre' and 'community arts' limit thought to partitioned realms which have very little to do with the complexity of real contexts. These partitions not only patronise practitioners who well understand the ambivalent nature of their work, but worse, dictate boundaries to users of theatre, audiences, which are quite puerile in their simplifications. (Read 1)

Here Read is not critical of political theatre or politically motivated theatre in a general sense, only of the hypostatising and divisive constructions of political or community theatre as a strictly defined genre or form; it is not a piece's political position or the openness of its political stance that is the problem, but the freezing of performance or response into a prescribed mode of representation and reception. This formulaic model of reception simplifies issues and patronizes audiences and performers through asserting boundaries and promoting predetermined and sanctioned responses and interpretations.

This focus on the freezing of a form of theatre into theatrical form, into a strictly codified and legislated mode of representation and reception, is, as we have seen, also evident in De Marinis's account of political, popular or genre based performance. [11] While seemingly a restricted and narrow account of theatrical spectatorship, De Marinis's theory of reception is significant for the way that it recognizes the importance of spectatorial manipulation and complicity in the act of reception.[12] The similarities between Read's safety theatre and De Marinis's closed theatre become evident in the way

that they both argue that audience response is manipulated and determined at the same time as these theatres espouse principles of subversion, revolution, interaction and participation. In closed performance the audience is invited to participate but is controlled and directed in a way that values and ensures certain acts, kinds or forms of participation. This closure is not only an aspect of form and, as Gilles Deleuze notes in his work on Carmelo Bene, the problem is less the ethical and political implications of theatrical forms than the reliance on clear-cut conflict, therapeutic paradigms or pedagogical didacticism, that is often a part of these theatrical traditions: "when one speaks of a popular theatre, one always privileges a certain *representation of conflicts*, conflicts of the individual and society, of life and history, contradictions and oppositions of all kinds that cut across a society as well as individuals." (Deleuze 252). The theatre, Deleuze claims, is like other arts, "is an institution . . . is 'official,' even when avant-garde or popular." (Deleuze 252)

Political and popular theatre, then, in carrying with it the implications of closure, power and audience manipulation or at least determination would seem to be at odds with the interpretation or belief in popular or community theatre forms as activist, revolutionary or actively engaged with a destabilizing of ideological, political and social norms. Further, even more important than these commonalities is the underlying discourse of power, manipulation and domination that underwrites each analysis. Read and De Marinis both suggest a kind of theatrical control at work not only in representation but in reception; performance, while holding great potential for activism and subversion, can potentially exercise extreme conservatism and control through restriction, exclusion and obfuscation.

The strength of this desire for audience control was clear in the examples of popular theatre that I considered where the topic of violence appeared to intensify and exacerbate the already present desire for transparent and stable communication. In both examples this desire was evident in the way that practitioners felt it necessary to engage in a verbal and written evaluation of audience reception at the end of every theatre performance or performance site. The importance of this post-performance evaluation was heightened by the level of anxiety around the issue addressed. Domestic violence as an issue, theme and topic brought with it a fear of misrepresentation. Perhaps in the post-performance meetings and writings, there was an unspoken recognition of the difficulty, if not impossibility, of representing violence; audience response was controlled and monitored not only during the performance but afterwards.

What can be seen as an excess of critical commentary on and assessment of these performance events is due at least in part to the genre of performance (when strictly generic political and popular forms address themselves to issue-based content and to clear-cut commentary and solutions), but clearly the desire to monitor audience response was made even more significant and imperative because of the complex representational and terminological aspects of what is known as "domestic violence." Domestic violence is shaped by its private, domestic nature; unlike serial murder or assault, it is a form of violence that is understood, approached and treated in terms of the relation of victim and perpetrator, and it is defined in part by its inaccessibility, its private venue. Placing this private violence into a public forum is representationally problematic and ontologically complex. Domestic violence is not a publicly witnessed, acknowledged or spectacular form of violence and, when placed in this forum, domestic violence to some extent ceases

to be *domestic* violence. Thus arguments that address the representation of domestic violence without considering the reception, frame or effect of those representations do not consider either the vicissitudes of representation or the complexities of domestic violence.[13]

In the desire to "call out," theatre projects like *Les Bleus* or *Out of the Silence* place the public nature of violence in the foreground. When the form of violence at issue is defined by privacy and secrecy, this public focus becomes even more significant. It also becomes more problematic. For this public treatment of violence to work there must be a sense of community in the audience, a feeling created by the belief in consensus, like-mindedness and the therapeutic value in the common experience. In order to foster this imagined community of the audience, theatre must rely on clarity, surety and simplification, none of which are features of domestic violence as a lived reality or political issue. Violence is complex and definitionally problematic and is all the more so when what is at issue is intimate abuse; in forms of theatre requiring or desiring consensus and clarity, this complexity must be reduced into clear conflict.

This simplification of violence is not necessarily a part of what is understood as popular, political or community theatre (indeed, much of the work done by Boal, for example, does not rely upon this kind of simplified and deterministic approach to audience reception). Simplification of violence into conflict is, however, often evident in issue-based theatre which is placed within a therapeutic paradigm of healing and transformation. The desire to communicate a message outweighs the recognition of audience difference, complexity or otherness. Although performances that emphasize audience commonality in speaking to domestic violence tend to do so in a direct and

pedagogical fashion, this does not necessarily suggest that all popular and political theatres are formally, politically, ideologically or aesthetically problematic. Instead, the argument against these modes of theatrical performance is not necessarily critical of the performance itself but is aimed at the tendency to frame and evaluate audience reception in terms of audience consensus. In Martineau's and Mac Dougall's assessments of reception, those performance venues and audiences that exhibited the most uniform make-up (prisoners, social activists and workers) were viewed most favourably. Similarly, in Diamond's reports, although diversity was looked upon positively (the all white audiences are viewed as a problem), the audience response was given greater interest when it showed signs of cohesion, togetherness and agreement. Indeed, in *Out of the Silence* the appeal to a shared sense of past in Native communities, a cultural memory of historical abuse of Native populations and of the specific traumas of violence and coercion in residential schools, became the main factor in the construction of a "good" audience.

Like *Les Bleus*, *Out of the Silence* thus occupies a place between what its creators conceive of as "cultural" theatre and activism or therapy, and, importantly, it is a divided place that seems to be more of an issue for the creators than for the audiences. As collective and popular works, both of these pieces emphasize the importance of relationships among performers, audience and communities (Parminou and Headlines both note the differing responses to the plays dependent upon place and audience make-up) and both involved some form of post-production engagement that viewed the play's reception as somehow flawed or problematic. Each of these shows toured and found interested and varied audiences in community centres, schools, prisons and other

theatrical and non-theatrical venues. As Diamond of Headlines notes, the cultural invisibility of issues like domestic abuse did not translate into empty theatres; although there is a strong resistance to discussing domestic violence, the tour of *Out of the Silence* met with some very large houses and active audiences, sometimes surprising even himself and the troupe. And, although *Out of the Silence*, like *Les Bleus*, received positive press even in that urban ("cultural") context, Diamond notes, like Martineau, differences in reception among regional, local and urban audience populations. In each case, audience response was described and detailed by the works' creators as particularly significant and was, to some extent, viewed with suspicion or at least with misgivings about the accuracy and effectiveness of spectatorial processes.

What is indicated in both cases of post-performance reports and analyses is a desire to control and circumscribe audience response through interpretation and critical engagement. In each case this desire for the control of reception was amplified and fed by the presence of violence, in part a sign of a more general social, cultural, ideological and artistic suspicion of the graphic representation of violence. This suspicion and distrust of the representation of violence makes it difficult for artistic endeavours which frame themselves as morally or politically motivated to address violence explicitly or in detail. For example, Nightwood Theatre's 1983 *This is for you, Anna*, created through a collective process that emphasized ensemble work and collaboration (referred to as the Anna Project, the group of artists involved maintain collective copyright), contains a note that the play never be performed using realistic or on-stage violence. The play focuses on the true events of the rape and murder of Marianne Bachmeier's daughter, Anna, and Bachmeier's murder of the perpetrator in the face of court inaction. For the participants

of the project, this focus was a significant one and they did not attempt to sentimentalize or simplify the issues involved: "we were very concerned not to endorse violence, to make clear that we do not idolize Marianne. We do not want to sensationalize her in the way that she was sensationalized by the German press." (Rubess 171) In accordance with this desire, the copyright of the play contains the provision that the authors "expressly forbid the graphic depiction of violence, weapons or blood in any production of this script." (Rubess 128) There is little in the way of depicted or even clearly referenced violence as the play often forgoes attention to the details of the publicized case in favour of banal and commonplace evocations of the everyday (being locked outside, ordered around or ridiculed by one's partner). However, the ban on the presentation of violence is a serious one and one that suggests a deep concern on the part of the creators and an awareness of the vicissitudes of the representation and reception of theatrical violence.

This avoidance of graphic on-stage physical violence reveals the influence of theories of spectatorship on theatrical practice. Both Nightwood theatre and *This is for you, Anna* are influenced by feminism, feminist theory and feminist theatre practice and the proscription of violence can be easily located within these concerns. Clearly this prohibition of the representation of violence is fed by fears of exploitation and concerns about voyeurism and the eroticisation of violence in the media and popular culture. It is also evident, however, that in the case of *This is for You, Anna*, the concerns are not merely theoretical; the inclusion of a restriction for future performances indicates a suspicion that the play will be represented incorrectly, or at least not in accordance with the intentions of the creators, and, perhaps more importantly, that it will be received

incorrectly. Implied in the proscription against depicted violence is the same kind of closed approach to reception as the political theatres discussed. Despite the experimentation with form, reception in *This is for you, Anna* is constructed in a way that addresses the theatre audience as a group of receivers for a communication or message whose mode of reception is in turn implied and inscribed in the performance itself.

In *This is for you, Anna*, the form of violence (child murder and revenge killing) addressed perhaps made the practitioners involved more acutely aware of the dangers of reception; but the same uneasiness about violence and reception is found in the pieces on domestic violence that I have been discussing. To some extent, not staging violence is integral to the pedagogical and therapeutic intentions of these works that address violence and is necessary for the control of audience reception that is implied in these intentions. This is not to suggest that graphic physical violence must be shown in order to address issues of violence, abuse or torture, but to indicate that the functions, intentions and effects of such a proscription are not necessarily progressive, subversive or revolutionary. In many cases the avoidance of depicted violence is an avoidance of the complex and uncontrollable aspects of violence and is motivated by a distrust of the audience, reception and the processes of spectatorship. In the avoidance or proscription of depicted violence it is suggested that the presence of staged violence would somehow disturb or co-opt the ideological, political and popularizing impulse of the work; audience reception is thus controlled through representational proscription.

Like the Anna Project, neither *Les Bleus* nor *Out of the Silence* offered the viewer actual enacted scenes of violence, although violence was evoked and discussed throughout each work. In the focus on popularizing domestic violence, in bringing the

issue to the public, each work tread a difficult line between representation and violence and between pedagogical documentation and critical exploration and investigation. The collectivity of the pieces and the effort to construct a community of the audience implied a common ground and consensual interpretation for the audience that tended to privilege common-sense and common knowledge over critical investigation and engagement. And it is this collective experience that was perhaps behind the uneasiness with the violence addressed; both works were clear and unambiguous about their relation to and stance on violence but both productions revealed a wariness about the use of violence in performance. Is Martineau's wish, that the audience experience confrontation "while remaining safe within the walls of the theatre," (Martineau 30) perhaps a representational and ontological impossibility? Does the place of violence in the theatre necessarily involve risk and is it possible that when this risk is erased or elided that violence is no longer confronted or addressed? The suspicion of the representation of violence and the avoidance of actual staged violence in works that purport to address violence suggests that the latter may in fact be the case; that instead of critically engaging with agonistic, disruptive and unintelligible violence, these works only confront and engage in simplified conflict. The popularizing impulse that motivates these works seems to work to cover over or reduce any disturbing impact that the presence of violence on the stage might suggest.

Despite the play with Brechtian estrangement or Boalian forums, these works tend to emphasize therapeutic engagement and empathetic identification; reception is directed or steered towards understanding and is conceived of in collective terms. In this way these works could be seen to repeat the public secret of domestic violence; they expose it

to a public viewing but they maintain and do not interrogate the problems of this viewing or the invisibility inherent in this exposure. In each instance the problem of seeing and representing domestic violence thus became one of reception and interpretation; the violence and its interpretation were part of and integral to the performances, the practitioners' accounts of performances and to the acts of reception performed by the audiences. The violence itself was approached as a problem of reception and the audience's role in each case was constructed as one of confirmation, not communication. The audience was expected to document, give evidence of seeing and to respond in a predetermined and encoded fashion. Moreover, inscribed in each instance was the assumption that the audience was to respond as a group and to respond with the objective power of observation shaped by the assertion of truth, evidence and verification made possible by a public event; in this way popular theatre became an enterprise that emphasized control, epistemological certainty and clarity of terms even while seemingly encouraging audience participation, open interpretation or engagement.

In adopting this force of conviction, certainty and documentation, theatre projects like *Les Bleus* or *Out of the Silence* can be seen engaging in the kind of closed, deterministic and manipulative theatrical relation outlined by De Marinis and can likewise be viewed as codified instances of safety or major theatre. Taking their cue from documentary forms of theatrical creation, these works attempt to situate, locate, define and isolate domestic violence in order to make it seen and knowable to the audience. The impulses in the creation of the works are therapeutic, pedagogical and didactic and in theatre exhibiting these impulses complex issues like violence must be simplified into conflict in order to fit into the theatrical project and to achieve audience

consensus. Thus even a theatrical form such as the forum theatre of *Out of the Silence*, where the audiences respond to and talk back to the performance, the problems and issues addressed became merely matters of disagreement to be worked out through dialogue.

The focus on conflict as a matter of disagreement to be solved through verbal exchange has been critiqued by Françoise Gaillard as an "American 'let's talk it over' approach," which asserts that all conflicts can be resolved in dialogue "as if they are all merely misunderstandings." (Gaillard 67) This reduction of complex problems and differences to simple misunderstanding is not a trifling matter for Gaillard: "denying conflicts is a serious matter, which amounts first of all to denying what characterizes any community, political or other – that is, the agonistic, the dimension of conflict present in it. And this denial courts grave consequences." (Gaillard 68) Among the most significant of grave consequences addressed by Gaillard are exclusion and the denial of difference. In the construction of a consensual community, the valorization of conflict and the assertion of consensus at the expense of the agonistic exclude, erase and subsume difference; the appeal to affectivity, pathos and identification with a collective cause eradicates the possibilities of different voices, opinions, solutions and elides the prospect that some dimension of conflict, of difference, with always be present. As Gaillard notes, this process is aided by emotionalism and empathetic identification: it "is not difficult to turn a problem into an artificially consensual cause. All that is needed is recourse to an element of pathos, of the emotional, which surrounds the problem with a perceptible halo, instead of undertaking a critical analysis that might reveal its scope and its political ramifications." (Gaillard 70) Without effective representation, conflict, difference or violence are approached in a way that relies on pathos and that guards against critical

analysis, further investigation or the recognition of agonistic dimensions and that constructs a community based on exclusion and rejection – what does not agree, does not belong.

Thinking through the potential for imagining a collectivity or community based in a recognition of conflict and difference that is not necessarily located in utopian impulses of vague or generalizing pluralisms has been a motivating force behind many contemporary theoretical interventions into national, communal or collective identity formations.[14] In most accounts the community or collectivity at hand is primarily that of national or politically defined groupings but the collectivity of the theatre audience, and especially of the audience of political theatre, can be seen as an analogon to this national or political community.[15] Political or popular theatre is not therefore essentially or always ideologically or politically flawed, except insofar as it seeks to determine, manipulate and inscribe a mode of homogenizing and levelling reception. The desire for a stable and universal reception is based in consensual and collective models of unification, which should be considered with wariness and suspicion, especially when violence is at issue. Violence must be simplified or elided in order for this kind of consensual agreement to obtain. And, as my examples indicate, total control of audience reception is both more desired and more problematic in theatrical events that address violence. It is not theatrical form but the impulse towards collectivity and consensus inscribed in hypostatised models of theatrical forms that renders some political or popular performances ineffective in engaging critically with issues of violence in society, image or theatre. Theatre that places communication at the centre can inadvertently work to codify, institutionalize and manipulate spectator response in order to construct an

imagined and ideal audience cohesion and consensus, and in so doing can elide or obfuscate the very issues that it sets out to address.

In asserting the consensual audience and in presenting violence as a mere problem to be worked out through dialogue or as an easily demarcated conflict, theatre projects like *Out of the Silence* or *Les Bleus* illustrate the objection to conflict based political theatre discussed by Read and De Marinis. As examples of political theatre's preference for conflict-based presentational modes of performance, *Out of the Silence* and *Les Bleus* are both closed theatre systems. The avoidance of agonistic, difficult and problematic torture, cruelty, aggression or disagreement, which is a part of the majority, closed or safety theatres, makes it difficult to approach issues of violence in such a way that the response fosters critical and analytical engagement and intervention rather than mere emotional empathy, identification or righteous indignation. The overriding desire for consensus, agreement and clarity of audience response restricts and closes off the inherently contradictory and problematic representation and reception of violence.

What is implied in conceptions of safety, majority or closed theatre is that theatrical form cannot be seen in terms that frame it as uniformly and unproblematically subversive, political or ideologically revolutionary; form works in conjunction with modes of reception and theatre is not merely an act of communication but is an interchange with the audience that takes account of and desires to alter spectatorial response. Certain theatrical modes and forms exercise an excess of manipulation, power and violence and, in attempting to close off audience reception, this kind of theatre closes off the possibility for ongoing debate, continuing critique or recognized difference. Community theatre, genre theatre or politically motivated theatre are not necessarily

closed or unable to confront issues of violence, power or manipulation; however, it is important to recognize the dangers in hypostatising or codifying theatrical form and intent in such a way that violence is reduced to disagreement, misunderstanding or binary conflict. Not only does such an approach simplify and aim to stabilize contradictory, agonistic and paradoxical issues, but it necessitates an undertaking that attempts to control audience response and reception. As my analysis reveals, such undertakings not only risk engaging in an interpretive violence and politics of exclusion but also elide the problematics of spectatorship, audience reception and response. While it is important to recognize the positive potential for the gathering of an audience into a community and necessary to note the significant aesthetic, political and representational alternatives offered by popular or community theatre, it is equally imperative to remember that what is shown is not always what is seen, and that this failure is not an audience flaw or shortcoming but a part of the vicissitudes and complexities of representation, performance and spectatorship.

De Marinis's analysis thus suggests the potential for approaching a semiotics of reception but also implies (if somewhat obliquely) the danger of attempting to isolate and determine audience response, both in performance and in analysis. Although he limits his analysis to genre based performance, his comments can be extended to any theatrical enterprise that carries with it a strong horizon of expectation. As other semioticians working with theatrical texts and performances have noted, horizons of expectation are made more powerful, or at least more complex, by the communal and physical nature of the theatre and the potential for interaction, interruption and exchange.[16] A strong horizon of expectation can in fact work to establish a normalizing code of reception and

although such codes are not always consistent or absolute, they are nonetheless a factor in the act of spectatorship and reception.

Further, normalizing or codifying horizons of expectation may operate on levels that are not always conscious or available for analysis, critique or articulation. It is in this recognition that De Marinis's account of open and closed performances holds the greatest interest or promise; the point is not that certain theatrical forms or types are necessarily more ideologically questionable or imbricated but that certain forms and particular theatrical concerns invite audience expectations that can in turn close off, restrict and normalize the reception or interpretation of theatrical representation. Thus popular or community theatre, when it tries to "speak to all spectators," and to control what that communication means, signifies and suggests, potentially enacts a kind of interpretive violence; it follows then that interpretive control makes it difficult for consensus oriented theatre to confront violence or the complex ramifications of power and force without simplifying the issues, acts and events into mere conflict and into a matter for pedagogical instruction or therapeutic absorption. To address all spectators and assert consensus, violence in the theatre must be framed so that it invites empathetic identification, pathos and sympathy. In order to achieve this emotional affect, it must therefore simplify violence into conflict.

It is this kind of simplification that I suggest is at work in the pieces I have analyzed here and that is operational in ideologically and politically motivated approaches to violence which are both seduced by and suspicious of its on-stage depiction. In the recognition of the power and force of violence, there can be an overriding and overdetermined desire to control the reception and interpretation of its representation.

When suspicious of its power and effect, theatrical depictions of violence can potentially erase or obfuscate issues of violence by manipulating, hypostatising and controlling audience and spectator response. In the theatrical instances I have analyzed this erasure was made concrete through the absence of portrayed physical violence on the stage. The overriding desire to control the reception of violence or avoid the problem by not depicting physical violence suggests a wariness of theatrical violence that in the end can only work to further mystify and obscure the actual forms of violence being represented or addressed. This is not to suggest that all works that avoid displayed violence are condemnable or that all theatrical performance ought to graphically depict violence; instead, I am arguing that in these instances, the overriding desire for audience consensus and theatrical control dictated an avoidance of depicted violence, which in turn worked to further obfuscate what is arguably an already invisible or at least problematically visible form of violence. Works about violence became merely works about talking about violence as acts of victimization were rendered absent: *Les Bleus* became a performance about therapy and abuser denial and *Out of the Silence* became a portrait of the impact on the family of universal First Nations victimization – both significant and worthwhile projects, but not ultimately projects that broached domestic violence in any concrete way.

In attempting to control what is conceived as the risk or danger of placing violence on the stage, theatre events like *Les Bleus* or *Out of the Silence* cannot ultimately engage in the kind of critical analysis of violence implied in their stated intentions and goals. By making desired or imagined audience response so prominent in their creation, production and analysis, forms of popular or community based theatre can undermine their desire for engagement and disruption and the resulting theatrical performances can in turn quell or

erase what is considered the possibilities of risk and experiment associated with performance. When theatrical violence is controlled and prescribed in this way, theatre becomes another institution or closed space and the treatment of violence turns into an uncritical, uncomplicated and undemanding exercise in exposition and empathetic identification. If politically active theatre is to approach an ethical engagement with issues of violence, then it must include in its purview the possibilities of risk, openness and endangerment. If theatre is to openly bring violence into a public arena then it must do so with an eye towards a critique of theatrical reception as well as representation and it must allow for the possibilities of difference, disagreement and spectatorial and audience divergence, conflict and agonistic otherness; to not do so is to risk becoming merely another safe place to "sleep."

Endnotes

[1] At the fore of De Marinis's semiotic account of reception and performance are the necessary conditions of the collective act of reception and the physical co-presence of audience and performer: "theatrical performances are performance events that are communicated to a collective receiver, physically present at reception, at the very moment of their production." (De Marinis 137) Theatrical performance, he argues, is in a general sense an act of communication and, as such, is only effective when the spectator carries out his or her task, the task of decoding, receiving and interpreting the message or communication at hand. In analyzing theatre in these terms De Marinis sets out to arrive at what he terms elsewhere a "dramaturgy" of the spectator which, like a dramaturgy of the director or performer that seeks to analyze the techniques or theories at work in the construction and composition of performance text, would consider the acts and techniques necessary for reception of the performance text, namely "perception, interpretation, aesthetic appreciation, memorization, emotive and intellectual response." (De Marinis 101) However, for De Marinis, this reception is not merely an instance of spectatorial free will and individual response but is a part of the theatrical manipulation that he sees as the "essential and intrinsic aspect of the performance/ spectator relationship as such." (De Marinis 102) Arguing that the relationship between spectator and performance will always be, and in some way must be, uneven and asymmetrical, De Marinis sees performance as a manipulation of the spectator, an effort to "induce in each spectator a range of definite transformations, both intellectual (cognitive) and affective (ideas, beliefs, emotions, fantasies, values, etc.)." (De Marinis 101) This manipulation is present even in the most progressive efforts to disrupt and balance the theatrical relationship: "for whatever efforts have been and will in the future be made, this relationship can never become on of real equality." (De Marinis 101) This is not to suggest, however, that spectators are passive, only that the performance anticipates and to some extent constructs the type of spectator and reception it desires; this anticipation may not of course always be effective or complete (spectators adopting camp readings or readings against the grain are just two examples of unanticipated acts of reception) but is nevertheless inscribed into the act of performance, of addressing a spectator. It is in this inscription and manipulation that De Marinis offers an evaluative and critical dimension to his semiotic analysis of reception.

[2] As Mac Dougall and Martineau note. "It was important to individualize the characters and capture their inner struggle while creating socially positioned subjects. . . . The protagonist's confrontation with himself is at the heart of the drama." (Martineau 23) In order to achieve this effect, the dialogue was prefaced with imperative verbs guiding the action. As an example, Martineau gives the following lines from the play:

> PIERRE: **[Hide]** I told you it was an accident. I was asleep. She attacked me. I hit her in self-defense.
> ALAIN: You hit her? I thought you'd pushed her.
> PIERRE: **[Search]** Hit, pushed, whatever. (Martineau 23)

Thus the dialogue attempts to perform the process of self-loathing, denial and discovery and suggests the layers of lies, deceits and contradictions behind statements about domestic violence.

[3] According to the creators, another formal technique used to push "the problem into the public domain" (Martineau 24) was Brechtian *gestus*, used by the company to make physical or somatic different social and psychological attitudes of characters: "Mario is all in flailing limbs. Pierre's movements are stiff, like the stone of his name. He recoils from any physical contact with the other men. The characters' embodiment includes both particularities establishing them as credible individuals and social attitudes describing them as more universal prototypes evolving in a network of social exchange and transformation." (Martineau 24) In Martineau's framing of the production the bodies of the actors represent their social positioning and their psychological traits, an embodiment that aims to expand the realm of the individual abuser to social, historical and class-based environs and contexts, without simplifying the cause or effects of violence and violent behaviour.

[4]In setting up these distinctions shaped by venue and different modes of audience expectation, reception and feedback (they are basing their comments on post-performance discussions, reviews, reports and audience questionnaires), Martineau and Mac Dougall set up a clear bifurcation between the audiences that "get" the performance and those that do not. Arguing that in the "cultural" realm activism and theatre are viewed as being at odds (an assertion which, if based mainly in newspaper reviews, is certainly well-founded), the authors note that the "audience felt they were being challenged to examine a problem when all they had expected was to spend an evening at the theatre." (Martineau 32) Seeing in this response a clear statement that the audience concluded that "the play belonged on the social rather than on the artistic stage," (Martineau 32), Martineau and Mac Dougall are able to draw a sharp contrast between the reception of the play in cultural, penal and community forums: the cultural audiences saw the performance as "not art"; the penal audiences felt deeply connected to the issue and to the violence on stage and the result was active discussion and engagement; and the community audiences offered the most positive response because of the local and regional participation of social workers, therapy groups and the presence of women and men who were either victims or perpetrators of abuse.

[5] This discomfort arguably points to the company's greater discomfort with its social and political role. It is clear that Théâtre Parminou is not comfortable with a label or definition that frames them as a therapeutic, activist or pedagogical theatre. While this discomfort stems from social, cultural and political inscriptions of difference (being labelled from outside as "not art"), it is also evident that the company has to some extent internalized the problematic of art versus activism. Not content with their reception in Montreal venues, the creators felt it necessary to render concrete and clear any difference that this audience had in comparison to other audiences whose response was conceived of as more useful, intuitive and competent.

[6] As a project designed to work with aboriginal communities and populations, finding an appropriate joker for *Out of the Silence* became an important priority for Diamond: "The joker, or intermediary between the play and the audience, parallels the trickster in Native imagery. It was essential that there be a Native joker and, because of the subject matter, that that person be a woman." (Diamond 38)

[7] For example in Boal's invisible theatre, which is theatre but is "performed in a place which is not a theatre and for an audience which is not an audience," (Boal, 1992, 6) we can see the effort to emphasize process, contradiction and the complexity of audience creation and reception. However, even Boal's invisible theatre seems to fall into the problematic place of institutionalization. Although Boal always emphasizes fluidity and change, even asking his readers for comments or suggestions in his *Legislative Theatre*, much of the work done with Boalian principles in mind is programmatic, systematised, codified and fixed. Further, Boal notes that even invisible theatre, based as it is in process and becoming, must deal with conflicts, and binary, clearly demarcated conflicts at that. In invisible theatre, the play is an issue-based performance of a "matter of profound and genuine concern," and in the examples cited by Boal the positions on the conflicts at hand are clear and unambiguous: sexual harassment, racism, environmentalism. This is also the case for much of the forum theatre done in North America that focuses its attention on issues, conflicts and community and therapeutic concerns in such a way that audiences are asked to distinguish the oppressed from the oppressor, to see situations as isolated events (alterable through intervention) and to approach character as constituted by surface acts. Based in a philosophy of free will, a theory of psychological transparency, agency, action and concrete, observable desires subtends Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed; TOP depends upon and perpetuates clarity of conflict, individualism, free will and conscious acts, even as it argues for social and political consciousness, fluidity and openness. "The essence of theatre," argues Boal taking his cue from Hegel, "is the conflict of the free wills, conscious of the means they employ to attain their goals, which must be simultaneously subjective and objective." (Boal 58) This conflict-based definition of theatre becomes even more concrete and

restricted in the manifestation of forum theatre, where the actors are clearly characterized in terms of oppressed and oppressors.

[8] As Françoise Gaillard notes with regard to the political and social construction of consensus, it "is not difficult to turn a problem into an artificially consensual cause. All that is needed is recourse to an element of pathos, of the emotional, which surrounds the problem with a perceptible halo, instead of undertaking a critical analysis that might reveal its scope and its political ramifications." (Gaillard 70)

[9] In Eugenio Barba's "Four Spectators" for instance, Barba suggests the problems inherent in over-emphasized shared response and communal feeling in theatrical reception: "The necessity of distinguishing between public and spectators derives from the will to consciously exploit an inevitable condition: even though some or many reactions can be unanimous and common (these are the public's reactions), communion is impossible." (Barba 97) For Barba there is a loyalty to the spectator, a responsibility to assure that "each spectator is not patronized by the performance, does not feel treated like a number or like 'a part of the public,' but experiences the performance as if it were made *only for her/ him*, in order to whisper something personal to her/ him." (Barba 98) Prescriptive in its impulse, Barba's argument is distrustful of the aim for consensus and unanimity in audience response; estrangement is a source of energy and the potential divisiveness of the audience is something to be exploited, not erased or elided in a false feeling of communal empathy.

[10] As Beatrice Hanssen argues in her *Critique of Violence: Between Poststructuralism and Critical Theory*, "To demand 'consent' or 'consensus,' either as the zero-point condition for starting any conversation or as the projected outcome and horizon of discussion, would amount to effacing difference at every possible level of identity formation." (Hanssen 1)

[11] Again, it is important to recognize the genre oriented aspects of De Marinis's argument about reception. De Marinis's account of restricted reception and genre emphasizes the collective act of reception and depends on the active interpretation of a product in terms of intertextual and contextual elements: "In order to be understood and interpreted correctly, every textual event must be (and always is) related back to a genre, to a broader intertextual backdrop, on the basis of co-textual and contextual signals or clues which are more or less explicitly supplied by the text itself." (De Marinis 166) The spectator thus operates in this account as a receiver who interprets a performance based on fairly strictly defined genre division: "having recognized the event in question as theatrical (i.e., as a member of the macrogenre / theatrical performance/), the spectator assigns it to a given genre (understood as textual type, or sub-class of the macrogenre) in order to interpret it with the help of intertextual frames and other previously acquired schemas." (De Marinis 6) Such genre conventions work in conjunction with the presence of an implied or ideal receiver who is separate from the real receiver but who is inscribed within the frame of the text itself: "the Model Spectator is both *implied*, since inscribed in the performance text, and *ideal*, since imagined as possessing the greatest possible competence." (De Marinis 167)

[12] Erika Fischer-Lichte similarly notes that a semiotic account that emphasizes theatrical communication must also recognize the place of audience competence in reception. Focusing, like De Marinis, on the co-presence of audience and performer and on the simultaneity of communication and reception in a theatrical context, Fischer-Lichte argues for the importance of theatrical codes and for the necessary condition of homogeneity and consensus in certain forms of theatre: "Theatrical signs are generated and interpreted simultaneously; the constitution of meaning via the realization of signs and that via the interpretation of signs are completely parallel processes. It follows that, if communication is to be successful, at least the fundamental elements of a code shared by producers and recipients must exist prior to the beginning of the performance." (Fischer-Lichte 137) Fischer-Lichte notes the simultaneity and minimum consensus required in theatrical communication, especially in heavily coded theatrical forms like Nô or opera, and recognizes the problems of attempts

to break out of heavily codified modes of reception. While Fischer-Lichte notes the presence of theatrical coding, she does not broach the kinds of ideological and political ramifications suggested by the codification and restriction of reception analyzed by De Marinis in his critique of closed performance.

[13] For example, in Frances L. Restuccia's "Literary Representations of Battered Women: Spectacular Domestic Punishment," Restuccia adopts Foucault's argument about spectacle and punishment to approach literary texts without considering the significant place of the public in determining the spectacle of punishment nor recognizing the private nature of the consumption of literary texts. Restuccia argues that, like the spectacle of punishment described by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*, domestic violence is an exercise of disciplinary power of a sovereign confirmed in the spectacle of punishment itself: "Bodies in the world of battering are flagrantly marked to signal the sovereign's power; rather than being ubiquitous, such power depends on untainted forms of powerlessness." (Restuccia 47) However, the key aspect of Foucault's analysis is the importance of the public nature of this event of punishment and it is on the shift from publicly witnessed to privately experienced punishment that his analysis relies.

[14] Dominick LaCapra, for instance, in a discussion of the conflation of absence and loss, notes the importance of recognizing the presence of conflict in social, political and cultural forums. He is eager, however, to distinguish this recognition from a denial of the possibility for agreement or understanding. Making the distinction between the possibility of agreement and full consensus, LaCapra states that "One may contend that the absence of absolute or essential foundations, including consensus, does not eliminate all room for agreement or all possibility of good (in contrast to absolute or ultimate) grounds for an argument. But one need not confound agreement with full consensus, a uniform way of life, an avoidance of strenuous argument, or the exclusion or elimination of all significant differences." (LaCapra CI 709) Further, as LaCapra notes, the exclusion enacted by consensus makes difficult any critical approach to the problem of violence, difference and conflict: "A related problem is how to provide a means of symbolizing and expressing difference and conflict, thereby making possible the limiting or lessening of violence that may increasingly become an option to the extent that other options are not available. In other words, violence in unmediated form may be more likely when there are no accepted or legitimated modes of symbolizing difference and conflict in an effective manner that enable them to be addressed and to some extent dealt with." (LaCapra 709) For LaCapra effective modes for symbolizing violence or conflict are a necessary part of effective and desirable social conditions and he contends that it is this symbolization that enables social and ideological forms like democracy to work; it is criticism, interchange and the appropriate recognition of difference that makes for effective systems of representation.

[15] In fact Fredric Jameson asserts as much when he argues that a theatre going public is a necessary precondition for a national cinema. Defining national identity in antagonistic terms, as an adversarial reaction to an established other (in Jameson's example defined as Hollywood cinema), Jameson's argument emphasizes the importance of consensual, not conflicted, community and collectivity. It is thus interesting note that for Jameson a national theatre, defined in terms of stylistic tradition, actors and theatre attendance, is based on and feeds into this creation of consensus and collectivity.

[16] Working from Hans-Robert Jauss and quoting Yury Lotman, Fernando de Toro suggests that this active and dynamic horizon creates an environment where expected reception and imagined audience response have a real effect on the acts of reception in any actual, physically present audience. This palpable effect can thus create a mode of reception that operates as a normalizing code and influence.

Chapter 4
Body Talk: Choreographing and Producing Violence on the Stage

Anne-Marie Cadieux's *La Nuit* begins with an act of extreme violence.[1] As the lights come up, the stage reveals a man dragging a woman across the floor and throwing her on the bed. After the woman is shoved, thrown and whipped with a leather belt, the two characters have violent sex as the lights dim to black-out. Written, directed and performed by Cadieux (along with Gerald Gagnon), *La Nuit* depicts the acts of violence, sex and intimacy between unnamed characters over a single night spent in a motel room. An alarmingly violent piece, *La Nuit* forces the viewer to watch while Cadieux's body is beaten, stripped and physically marked during the performance of the play. During the course of the performance we discover the past trauma and violence that has led each of the characters, known only as "Her" and "Him," to this night. The crux of the performance is a speech by Cadieux's character about the rape and murder of her seven year old daughter, a rape and murder that she is seeking both to obliterate and repeat through her own abuse.

Naked and brutalized through much of the performance, Cadieux's presence on the stage confronted the audience with an image of the wounding and pain of physical violence. This bodily realism became a center point in accounts of the performance, which noted the piece's troubling depiction of violence. Although praising the performance, reviews of *La Nuit* referred to Cadieux's performance as "too powerful" (Edmonds) and "difficult to watch" (Tam): "Like a walking wound, she oozes pain," (Edmonds) said one reviewer and another noted the unsettling and relentless explicitness of the play. In addition to this critical reception, Cadieux faced criticism from audience

members and festival organizers who saw the violence as too realistic, too disturbing and too graphic. In this audience response, there was a sense that the illusionism of stage violence was violated and that the result was deemed both mesmerizing and difficult to watch.

As these comments indicate, *La Nuit* was notable for its combined use of downstage, realistically depicted and explicit violence; the performance was considered disturbing not only because of the violence of the performance, which was shocking, but because of the combination of realism and nudity that meant that the welts from the belt's contact with bare skin were visible on Cadieux's body during the performance. Through the nudity and downstage presence of the actors, the realistic fight scenes acquired an added authenticity that was both thematically significant and spectatorially troubling. In this chapter I want to consider the performance of violence in *La Nuit* in order to address the theoretical implications and orientations of this troubling presence of realistically depicted, graphic, physical violence on the stage. Stressing the problems in identifying and making violence visible, the performed violence of *La Nuit* placed bodily presence and the physical impact of violence in relation to issues of reception and the spectatorial, spatial and temporal considerations of the theatre. In many ways *La Nuit* was a traditional theatrical performance, with a stable, silent audience and a text-based performance, but the presence of this apparently real violence disoriented and disturbed viewers and troubled the boundaries of theatrical performance and performance art. In what follows I want to consider this contradictory place of "real" violence in theatre through an analysis of Anne-Marie Cadieux's *La Nuit*, which I argue makes explicit the simultaneous presence and absence of violence in performance.

During the course of the performance of *La Nuit* we see the bodies of the two main actors in various state of undress, proximity and interaction. Twelve short scenes are punctuated by black outs; during each scene the figures exchange positions of subjugation and dominance. Through these brief acts and bits of dialogue, a story emerges and the relationship between the characters becomes evident; they are strangers, participating in a night of anonymous sex and violence. They are closed in by the space of the room over an equally circumscribed temporal frame. In fact, the French title for the play and its English translation respectively evoke the temporal and spatial borders: *La Nuit* and *The Room*. The physical acts of the play are thus isolated and framed by these spatial and temporal settings and the black-outs work to divide and limit the acts of violence and sex; the audience does not see immediate after-effects of actions as the lights go to black and come up on another scene of physical intimacy or confrontation. Further segmenting these moments as isolated events is the lack of movement around the stage during each scene; action occurs on the bed, beside the bed, by the sink or in a chair. The only scenes during which the figures cover much ground are those of explicit violence: the opening scene and a scene during which the woman attempts to force the man out of the room. The scenes are thus set apart spatially as well as physically and the fight scenes are the only places that we explicitly see a cause and effect physical pattern.

Further, the dialogue and the physical movement of the figures often operate in opposition or contradistinction: as he performs oral sex on her, she speaks of suicide, as she cleans up her dirty and beaten face, he tells her that she is beautiful, as she delivers a monologue about the brutal rape and murder of her daughter, his head is in her lap, as if prepared for a bedtime story. Words and bodies do not necessarily work in concert and

information is conveyed throughout the performance by both. For example, we learn of her daughter's death and his past through words but the occasion for their speaking is corporeal. We first find out about her child through her body (he notes, while washing her naked belly, "You've had a kid,") and we find out what we know of his history through a monologue about his nose: "I got a sensitive nose. You hit it pretty hard. That's the story of my life. I got my nose broken three times." The future is written on the body as well: as Cadieux's character imitates the decay described in her monologue about aging, the audience sees a corporeal condensation of the process:

> HER: When I get old, if I live that long, I'll have breasts down to here and my bum down to there, like this. And blue veins sticking out on my arms. And the skin here will get all loose. Look, it's already starting. I'll have arthritis in my hands, my bones will ache. I'll be all bent over. I'll be an old witch. I don't like getting old.

During this speech the audience sees Cadieux's fingers curl, her back bend, her stature collapse, as she limps across the stage. It is as if she has aged her body in the speaking of the lines. Her future and as well as her past are simultaneously present in her current bodily state and incarnation.

This bodily emphasis is evident throughout *La Nuit* as the corporeal and wounded presence of the actor/ artist body is used to mirror and emphasize the thematic concern with the disjuncture between seeing and experiencing violence. Violence and the physical, psychological and emotional traces it leaves on the body and in memory are made concrete and explicit in the masochistic behaviour of Cadieux's character, who repeatedly relives the violence her daughter experienced. In these acts of violence, Cadieux's character seeks to know and experience the violence suffered by her dead daughter. This corporeal nature of knowing violence and remembering past violence is

made visceral and material in the performance through the marks of violence evident on Cadieux's body during performance.

In *La Nuit* the body carries its past and, in the end, it is Cadieux's character's past trauma that feeds her desire to continue to mark her body in pain and violence; her desire for contact and for pain is designed to both erase and make present the violent events of her daughter's death. Bodily presence and bodily acts are as significant in this performance as dialogue. Emotional, psychological and contextual information about character is provided through the bodies on-stage; their physical gestures, their movement, their comments about their own bodies convey to the audience the pertinent and significant information, information that is given sparingly and slowly. The shocking violent scene that opens the play thus prepares the audience for this process of investigation. The violent climax has already occurred, there has already been brutal and graphic physical violence at the opening of the play. The opening violence acts as a kind of newspaper headline – a summary of extreme violence, the details of which are only evident upon further investigation. From this point of violence the exercise is one of discovery and narrational progression; but this discovery is gradual as the audience is given bits of information and is part of the process of increasing intimacy. The characters enter the motel room with the audience, and all stay for the duration of the "night," undergoing the complex and contrapuntal movements of violence and intimacy.

The small theatrical space, the frontal orientation and the closed nature of the set worked to create a feeling of both being in the room with the characters and watching from the outside. Thus the spatial setting of the performance worked in conjunction with the violence, the corporeal enactment and the narration of the play. This focus on bodily

violence was emphasized through a box set that closed in the characters and framed their acts as both private and public. All the action occurred within this closed space -- a shabby and sparse motel room, with a bed, television and sink. The space is generic, worn and common: its shabbiness reminds the viewer of the thousands of others who have slept or had sex in its bed. It is a space that bears no connection to either character: they seem equally uncomfortable in its parameters; it belongs to neither and gives no information about character psychology, history or emotional state. The anonymity of the space locates the action in a liminal state of nothingness. As Cadieux notes, "c'est un *no man's land* qui te rend transparent . . . C'est un lieu à la fois privé et public: tout le monde y passé, et s'y déroule pourtant des chosses de la pluss grande intimité." (Charest) The hotel space, as both public and private, anonymous and intimate, offers in *La Nuit* an analogue or point of expressionistic reflection for the anonymous, intimate and violent acts that we view from the audience in a conflicted space of public/ private vision. Identity, space and perception are linked through the anonymity and transparency of the motel room. The motel room's liminal placement between public and private is an analogue for the contradictions in viewing, perceiving and knowing the pain of others. The split between public and private violence is made apparent in the performance both diegetically (the intimacy and closed locale implies domestic violence, while the story of her murdered daughter suggests the external violence of sex killing or serial murder) and performatively (the audience views the enacted violence through a fourth wall frame that erases their presence).

The space of the motel room is thus integral in the communication of the split between visible and invisible, public and private, violence; and the bodies of the actors

work to further this connection as well. Defined only as "Him" and "Her," the characters are both distinct (with particular histories and specific corporeal incarnations) and generalized. They are naked in front of the audience, stripped bare physically, corporeally marked by the enacted violence of the performance; but this stripping does not lead to psychological coherence, interpretation or discovery. Although the climactic speech about the death of the child brings about the concluding scene of the play and operates as a central, explanatory force, this speech is only made significant through the reciprocal bodily gesture that closes the play.[2] The bodily acts of the performance (violent, sexual, tender) are depicted as uni-directional, as act or response, and are split from each other by black-outs: he hits her; she crawls over to him; he performs oral sex on her; he bathes her; she walks around the room; she moves to the front of the stage. These acts are isolated events; they are not cumulative, changing over the course of the evening, nor are they placed in a clear causal relationship. Apart from the violent physical exchanges of the fight scenes, it is only in the final scene of the play that a reciprocal physical gesture occurs; the scene begins with his head in her lap and, as the play concludes, they reverse positions. It is this physical gesture that operates visually as a physical emphasis and inscription of the tenderness brought about by the climactic speech: the speech thus occupies only a secondary place as the spatial and physical proxemics take over.

Thus bodily presence and theatrical space shape and underwrite the enactment of violence and frame the way in which violence is viewed and received by the audience. The spatial construction of the performance invites the audience to consider the split between public and private and this consideration of space is extended to the

consideration of violence. Viewing the violence through the frame of the stage, the audience is voyeuristically positioned as if in front of a window or a television or film screen; they are, in this way, spatially placed to contextualize private and intimate violence within a public framework of communal viewing and voyeuristic pleasure. The enacted violence is integral to the construction of this framework as its place between reality and illusion feeds into and supports the contradictions and complexities of this voyeuristic position.

The references to the cinematic elements are therefore not incidental; the performance relies upon this framing as a point of contradiction. The contradiction between cinematic framing and live action exposes and makes present the corporeal physicality of the actors on-stage. Although framed like a television or cinematic image, the acts of violence and sex are embodied and enacted by actors who are physically co-present with the audience. Both the sex and the violence are graphically realistic and the narrational and thematic significance placed on bodies in this work confers an importance and disruptive doubleness onto the stage violence. The bodies are marked by the enactment of violence during the course of the play and the continued disturbance of the boundary between reality and illusion created a disturbance in the audience. The objections to the performance were palpable in a post-performance session that I attended; some spectators were angry at the violence of the piece and some were at a loss to explain the presence of the graphic violence. There seemed to be an ambiguity in the performance of violence, whereby some spectators were made to feel that what they were viewing was real.

Because of this violence and the potential discomfort of the audience, it is important to note that *La Nuit* was written, directed and performed by Cadieux herself. The issue of agency is paramount and it is significant that Cadieux places her own body at the fore of a violent performance. Cadieux does not place another female actor in the position of being stripped and beaten over the course of a performance but takes this place herself. The violence in the performance is thus potentially both less and more disturbing to the audience of *La Nuit* because of the live presence of the performer and the artistic framework of theatrical representation; if one recognizes that Cadieux is behind the work, the connection might be made to performance art and its use of real violence, and if this recognition does not occur, then an audience member might be disturbed by questions of exploitation and manipulation. The violence is thus potentially rendered more controlled (it is comforting to know that Cadieux is fully committed to and aware of the violence in the performance) and more risky (because it is her work and her body, there might be the danger of the performance slipping into the real violence of performance art). Cadieux's presence in *La Nuit* is therefore a significant element in the reception of enacted violence and is imperative to considerations of its relation to issues of domination, power and manipulation. If the audience even entertains the possibility that the violence might be real, theatrical illusion and artifice are destroyed and the audience is confronted with sharing a space with the violated and wounded actor's body (beaten, naked, exposed) for the course of the performance.

Thus the graphic violence is disturbing in large part because the audience gets the sense of actual violence occurring on the stage but it is also disruptive insofar as the audience is placed in a position of confusion and partial knowledge. The play begins

with the most violent scene of the entire performance and the audience is given no information to help them contextualize this violence: the sex, although violent, appears to be partly consensual, the relationship between the characters is unclear and the space is indistinct. This lack of contextual knowledge is carried throughout the performance as the audience is given no (or very little) information about character names, occupations or situations. The acts of sex and violence that the audience sees give as much narrative information as the lines spoken by the characters and the play becomes focused on the movement of bodies in an anonymous space.

La Nuit can thus be seen to offer a challenging look at the question of visibility in the consideration of violence (Cadieux's body is beaten, stripped, grabbed, shoved and exposed on stage), a question that is carried over to the depiction of violence in the performance: the production of depicted violence on-stage is not violent (it is a consensual, choreographed and intentional series of bodily acts and responses), but it is disturbing and unsettling. This disturbance is not only a result of the particular matrix of thematic, stylistic and imagistic issues at hand in *La Nuit*; it is also indicative of a more widespread discomfort with the problematic place of enacted violence. Because stage violence (combat and choreography) already carries with it an implied violence (either accidental, actual or the illusion of real violence), this staging of realistic violence became even more disturbing: an agreement about the non-violent nature of stage violence was broken, audiences were disturbed because they *really* believed the violence, they were not encouraged by the performance to designate the physical conflict on-stage as mere, albeit effective or believable, illusion. This believability was aided and expanded by the nudity and sexual contact in the performance. Cadiuex's on-stage

nudity not only enabled audience members to see the marks of physical contact but also offered a sense of physical authenticity: her body was offered to the viewer without make-up or costume, was clearly presented with stark lighting and was placed at the front of the stage in close proximity to the audience. The naked bodies offered a sense of realism that carried over into the presentation of violence on-stage and the result was a feeling of forced intimacy but also of a kind of forensic realism – the audience was there to investigate, to examine and to interpret the bodies of the actors. The nudity made both the sex and the violence seem more "real," a sense that was reinforced by the thematic importance of the body and bodily experience.

Contradicting arguments about the ineffectiveness of stage violence, *La Nuit* offers the viewers an explicit and disturbing depiction of physical violence that not only appears real but that unsettles the border between actual and depicted violence. While obviously carefully choreographed, the fight scenes leave visible the effects and traces of enacted violence; the violent scenes may not be real violence but they appear as real and, what is more, they leave traces that may be potentially read as evidence of actual physical violence.[3] Although on some level the audience clearly recognizes the performed nature of depicted violence, even when that violence appears to be real or at least actually impacts, wounds or registers on the bodies of actors, they are captivated by a sense of realistic and believable impact. In the instance of realistically depicted graphic physical violence, if an audience fully recognized and acknowledged in a wholly conscious manner the non-violence of what they are viewing, the intended effect would be negated -- the staged violence would be merely seen as ineffective.

Thus, while the violence performed on stage in *La Nuit* was seen by some audience members as actual violence because of the marks of physical wounding and bodily harm visually evident to spectators, it is clear that the choreographed, consensually enacted and planned movements enacted on-stage cannot be readily interpreted as violent: they may appear as violent, in fact that is the intention, and there may, accidentally or intentionally, be physical harm, but performed violence can be distinguished by its essentially non-violent nature, a characteristic emphasized in works on fight choreography and stage combat. These works state explicitly that the depiction of theatrical violence is importantly and essentially non-violent. Safety is the primary concern of stage combat and manuals and instructional guides emphasize this point repeatedly. For those involved in staging combat or any physical conflict, the emphasis is placed on the fight's place in relation to the performance's objectives. A fight scene works to communicate, to manipulate audience response, to reveal character or to forward plot and narration; it is not violent or directly related to violence in any way.

Although often reveling in tales of accidental injury or death, manuals and books on fight choreography state in no uncertain terms that actual violence should never be experienced or enacted on the stage in rehearsals or performance. For example, in *Actors on Guard*, Dale Anthony Girard emphasizes this non-violent nature of his approach to fight choreography: "It is important to remember that the physical conflict on stage is an illusion; at all times each combatant should be fully in control of themselves and their weapons." (Girard 6) Girard also notes the pressure of instinct and character and recognizes that on-stage violence may have links to actual violence for some participants: "Whether involved in armed or unarmed stage combat, you need to overcome your

primal instincts and violent reflex actions." (Girard 4)[4] This recognition of the potential for real violence is perhaps what leads Girard to place a great significance on the role of the victim in the stage fight.[5] Listed among his rules for stage combat is the statement that "The victim is always in control" (Girard 8) and this control is, for Girard, a key determinant in the construction of an environment of mutual trust, respect and safety: "By placing the victim in control, it provides that actor with the extra margin of safety to make this kind of stage violence almost foolproof in terms of both illusion and safety." (Girard 7) Essential to this establishment of control is the factor of non-violence: "Each combatant is completely in control of their actions, and the victim is always in control of their reactions. There is no actual force ever exerted on the victim *in any situation*." (Girard 6)

That the victim should always be in control is not merely a matter of safety but of illusion. Most stage fight elements depend not upon the action of impact (the hitting, stabbing or pushing) but on the reaction. Who the victim is may shift during a fight – in fight choreography the term merely refers to the one who is at the receiving end of a blow, impact, wound or who performs a fall. Response is foremost in fight choreography and the emphasis is on isometrics, muscular and bodily resistance and the appearance of force, all of which are dependent upon the victim's performance.[6] As Albert M. Katz notes regarding the illusion of stabbing, the believability of stage violence often depends on the victim being comfortable with the force and impact of the action: "The person being stabbed, the victim, has to do his part, as well. Unless the victim is secure and comfortable with the business, the audience will find itself watching an actor trying not to be stabbed rather than a character who is being stabbed or slashed." (Katz 78)

Safety is thus central to any description of performing and rehearsing stage violence.[7] The act of performing violence on the stage is not violent, if done properly and as planned, for the actors or theatre practitioners involved and the appreciation of the image and illusion of stage violence is not only shaped by this non-violence but depends upon it; audience enjoyment of stage violence is assumed and expected to rely upon the certainty of a lack of actual injury or pain. Yet, in creating the illusion of violence, the fact or possibility of actual harm is never entirely removed from the activity, description or reception of staging armed or unarmed combat. It is this implied presence of real bodily harm that animates some recent examples of theatrical violence in performance and performance art and it is significant that these works often cause audience disturbance or disgust because of their uneasy location on the border between real and enacted violence -- the audience is unsure of how to read the violence that is presented as both real and illusion.

In recent years this ambiguity has been fed by an increased use of, and interest in, actual violence on the stage. Real acts of violence have occupied both contemporary performance and theatrical theory, usually analyzed with an emphasis on the revolutionary or subversive potential of such acts. The works of artists like Chris Burden, for example, who has had himself shot in the arm, rolled over with a car and otherwise wounded, have been analyzed as revolutionary discourses of anti-capitalism or anti-commodification.

While these works are usually seen in opposition to the institutional characterization of theatre or art, there is a way in which they can be seen in relation to more traditional acts of theatrical performance. Acts of bodily wounding in

contemporary performance art rely upon the same planning, organizing and orchestrating as any example of theatrical stage combat. Chris Burden's act of being shot is, in this way, no more violent than a choreographed sword fight in a Shakespeare play; the warnings from the manuals still stand. Burden carefully prepared the act, organized, choreographed it and ensured that he would not be unduly hurt, apart from the intended and planned gunshot wound. The victim was in charge of the action and safety was paramount.

Theatrical theorists and critics who have recently addressed real violence in performance do not, however, consider these bodily acts in this way. There is a tendency to over-emphasize the role of the body and the place of the artist in performance art, an emphasis that sets up clear distinctions among performance, art and theatre and constructs a firm boundary between real and represented violence. David Graver, for instance, although critical of Chris Burden's work, places the ordeal art of Fakir and the performance events of Survival Research Laboratories in a similar context of violent transgression. Considering these performance events in the framework of violence and theatricality, Graver examines the exteriorization of pain and the exploration of corporeal limits and boundaries in terms of ritual sublimity and audience complicity. However, he makes it clear that these performances should be considered theatre and not ritual. While the work of both Fakir and SRL push the boundaries of theatre, the mechanical violence of SRL (using robots, machinery and animal flesh) and the ritualized pain of Fakir conform to, and rely upon, a notion of theatricality:

> Yet both Fakir and SRL remain within the domain of theatricality by never entirely dismissing either the enactment or display essential to theatrical performance. Instead of destroying theatricality, their uses of aggression

> and pain highlight the contradictory impulses implicit in theatricality's combination of visible and invisible worlds. (Graver 59)

Graver finds significance in this theatricality and he even argues that the ties to the theatre in these works place them on a ideological, commercial and social level that is distinct from more commodified art forms. The violence of Herman Nitsch's or Burden's work is seen be erased by the museum setting, while the public settings of works like Fakir's or SRL's accord them a subversive authenticity:

> the violence of these performances [Nitsch's] tends to evaporate into nothing more than somewhat unusual exclamation marks in statements on art and the position of the performer in the art community. SRL and Fakir avoid the discursive dilution of their theatrical violence by creating events that exist first and foremost before live audiences and by avoiding as much as possible association with the institutional structures of the art world. (Graver 63)

It is not, therefore, merely the physical acts of wounding and pain that set the works of Fakir or SRL apart. The co-presence of the artist and audience, and physical, spatial setting, are essential matters. In setting these works apart, Graver asserts that the live audience is what distinguishes these works as theatrical performance and is what enables them to be placed within a revolutionary and anti-capitalist and anti-institutional discourse. It is their liveness and their gratuitousness that makes these works potentially disruptive; in Graver's assessment, Fakir's performances are, to some extent, personal and self-serving – they are not, like Burden's spectacular feats, located within and directed toward a commodified culture of aesthetic and museological display.

Kubiak's discussion of contemporary body art in *Stages of Terror* offers a similar assessment of the subversive potential of theatricalized violence. While Kubiak does not make any claim for the essential subversive quality of what he terms "body art," he

nevertheless frames the physical acts of artists like Chris Burden or Marina Ambrovic as disruptive acts of real violence. This framing is not without a recognition of its own contradictions, but it is a recognition that exacerbates rather than addresses the problems at hand. Kubiak considers these acts as real violence, but as real violence that is turned into image: "Each of these performers delineates in a different way a fine but critical difference between the image of violence, and violence as image; between representations of terror in the theatre, and terror(ism) as representation." (Kubiak 144) For Kubiak, these acts of bodily manipulation are images and representations; hence the physical acts of pain can be considered parallel to the depicted violence in Renaissance theatre, and both are equally referential:

> the violence of threatened social chaos in the late Renaissance, the violent disciplining of the body in Restoration plays of wit, the excruciating internalization of guilt in the theatre of romanticism, and the terror of solipsism and psychosis in the modern theatre. All of these forms of performance point back to *real* bodies that are suffering the *real* pain of history and acculturation. The body artists, for all of the political problematics of their self-inflicted violence, should remind us at least of that. (Kubiak 145)

Kubiak is careful not to suggest that the performance of violence is the same as actual violence; although he asserts that these body artists are performing real violence, he does not equate this theatrical real with actual violence in the world. Instead he argues that this theatrical violence, during which bodies are actually wounded, is comparable and analogous to the violence of Shakespeare or Sheridan. This theatrical violence references the violence in the world, which is its support and foundation.

Kubiak and Graver both see this form of body art as an act of resistance to the commodification of art, culture and the body, although for Kubiak this act is not

ultimately effective. The making present of the body through pain and wounding is in Graver asserted as a subversive and disruptive act of protest. Conceiving of body art as protest and resistance requires that the acts of wounding and harm performed be considered as real. For Kubiak and Graver, the subversion lies in what is seen as a rupture in representational performance, a rupture that takes place on and through the physical wounding of the body. Although neither sees these bodily acts as essentially transgressive or subversive (and Kubiak is especially clear in his assertion that they are not), any disruptive potential they do have is attributed to what is designated as real violence. For this theoretical position to be effective, the acts of being shot, or inserting needles into one's own skin, must be considered acts of real violence (even if this is qualified, as it is in Kubiak, as real violence in performance) and not merely displays of bodily interference. Further, when this "real" violence is used to prove or support an assertion of disruption or subversion, the power of performance shifts from the theatre, the artist and performance and is relocated in life, representation and culture; the assertion of real violence in the theatre thus assumes a referential and mimetic function for performance. If violence in the theatre is taken to be real, the critical and theoretical focus becomes real violence, and not the potential disruption of performance, reception or theatrical enactment.

What Graver and Kubiak do not consider, however, are those performances that take into account the ambiguous and complex nature of violence – works that do not place themselves either in the realm of real or illusionistic violence. For example, in Kiki Smith's installation piece *Life Wants to Live* the power of the performance relied upon the split between real and depicted violence, made more significant through the piece's

examination of the forms and visibility of violence. Examining the borders between real, reported and represented violence by having her own body hit during performance, Smith enacted and communicated the difficulties and problems inherent in knowing violence and understanding injury and pain. Exhibited at The Kitchen in 1983, *Life* was a multimedia installation that used CATscans, Xrays and stethoscopic readings of cardiac, respiratory and gastrointestinal functions to monitor the impact of blows directed against Smith's body by an associate (David Wajnorowicz). The colour slides of these readings were projected onto suspended cheesecloth sheets which were painted with light yellow skeleton outlines and these images were combined with the sounds of Smith's bodily processes, satellite views of the earth and projected film loops of body and land masses. As the frame of the exhibit another set of sheets displayed newspaper headlines of violence enacted in response to physical abuse in familial or intimate settings. As one reviewer noted "The sounds of heart throbs, heavy breathing, fighting and other less easily identified beats and drones united the three elements of this exhibition, bringing the characteristic rhythms of pulp drama to bear on the more authoritative images of life inside the organism." (Princenthal 180)

In using medical technologies on her own body to investigate questions of gender, violence and the borders of bodily liveness, Smith explores the context of acts of violence perpetrated against that body, and suggests the problematic of surface and depth in the accounting of physical pain and wounding. In the dual presence/ absence of the artist and the use of medical and other visual technologies to explore gender violence, Smith's *Life Wants to Live* suggests the problematic depiction and representation of pain, violence and the material body. What the work suggests by the simultaneous absence and presence of

the artist/ victim's body is the problem of revealing, communicating or showing violence; it addresses the problem of understanding and identifying violence, its effects and its representation. The appeal to realism, to the fact that Smith is actually being hit, is central to its intent and import and is, at the same time, undercut by the suggestion that it is impossible to actually see, witness, experience or understand those blows.[8]

In its appeal to real violence through the mediated forms of technology, Smith's installation points to the problematic place of actual acts of bodily wounding in contemporary performance art and emphasizes the particular viewing conditions of a museum setting, where the artist might be central but is most often physically absent. It is not surprising then that most contemporary theoretical accounts of works that place the artist's body at the centre are concerned with performance events that never occurred in front of an audience. Taking place in museums, often not in front of audiences (Chris Burden's *Shoot* for example was in actuality a photography exhibit of the event and not a performance), these works occur within a framework that has its own modes, conventions, tropes and themes. Although the violence is planned and choreographed, the viewing conditions for Fakir do not assume and do not invite a consideration of the staging of violence (they are instead often framed as ritualistic enactments, cathartic, therapeutic and self-serving even when viewed by others). Stage combat and choreographed violence have a history and tradition that arguably shape and inform theatrical reception, whether the performance occurs in a theatre or not. In Graver's argument about the real violence in Fakir, this theatrical tradition is overlaid onto what is essentially a ritualistic and therapeutic performance. In ritual, actual wounding or pain is not customarily approached as violence but as an instrumental, anticipated and even

welcomed act; by transposing these acts into a theatrical framework, theorists like Graver are able to assert the special and transgressive impact of these bodily acts. The pain of ritual becomes a performance of violence. Whether it is Karen Finley's claims to being in a trance-like state or Fakir's transcendental acts of pain, it is necessary and important to consider these acts as non-violent; even if internalized and transcendental, Fakir's acts of self wounding are arguably no more violent than a ritual tattooing or a choreographed dance sequence. To assert otherwise is to enact theoretical and discursive levelling whereby all physically invasive or exertive acts of performance are considered violent. Fight choreography thus has more in common with the body art of Fakir than Graver wants to recognize; both involve a controlled, deliberate and consensual bodily enactment.

By seeing these works as violent performance, theorists are able to recognize artistic artifice whilst asserting subversive actuality. What these accounts do not consider is that in theatre, the "violence" is not a subversion of artifice but is artifice itself. Thus, although framed as subversive, the theoretical assertion of the possibility of real violence in the theatre perpetuates rather than disrupts an overvaluation of a mimetic, representational concept of theatrical violence. Theatrical violence thus attains a status of actuality and authenticity, which obfuscates real violence and allows for the kinds of equivalencies set up in Kubiak's *Stages of Terror* (whereby the murderous crimes of Charles Manson are termed "body art" [Kubiak 148]), Lynda Hart's *Fatal Women* (which is dedicated to the murderer Aileen Wournos), or Mark Seltzer's *Serial Killers*, (which discusses the "career" of Jeffrey Dahmer. [Seltzer 7]). An account of the representation of violence thus makes way for a discourse of the violence of representation, where all

representation is potentially violent and all violence is mere representation. Theoretical tropes and paradigms, whereby real violence occurs in the theatre and is thus theatricalized when occurring in real life, activate an exponentially diffuse notion of violence; violence can be anything and anywhere -- it covers all acts of bodily manipulation, psychological or discursive coercion or influence, emotional manipulation and defines the very process of representation itself. It follows from this form of argumentation that if violence is everywhere, is in representation itself, then the possibility exists that violence is also and always merely representation. When reduced to image, the discursive distance from Chris Burden's *Shoot*, during which Burden was actually (albeit non-fatally) shot, to Charles Manson, is short indeed. Thus, while it is important to note the shift in the treatment of violence and the body in contemporary art, it is also necessary to recognize the limitations and problems in logic with these kinds of arguments that stress the real violence of these acts: if Burden's art is considered real violence, then it is easy to see how real violence can be described as art. It is this kind of reciprocal and parallel argumentation that subtends assertions of the violence of representation -- violence and its representation become one and the same.

However, what Cadieux's performance suggests is that it is not the presence of real violence but the ambiguity of performed violence, the uncertainty of its status, that gives it the power of transgression or disturbance. This power of ambiguity is effaced when performances like *La Nuit*, or installation pieces like Smith's *Life Wants to Live*, are received within a frame of actual violence, a frame that was clearly activated in the disturbed spectators of *La Nuit*. This disturbance is not, however, necessarily transgressive and in fact, it works against what can be considered the truly disruptive

nature of the depicted violence in a performance like *La Nuit*; it is through the recognized doubleness, the ambiguity of performed violence, that the audience and the spectator are potentially unsettled or disturbed. I would further argue, against Graver and Kubiak, that this doubleness obtains even when an artist is actually wounded, like Chris Burden or Fakir. Although the audience is aware of an actual physical impact, they are also aware of the planned, agreed upon and authorized nature of this act; to approach it as violence is to negate this endorsement and premeditation. The performance is not therefore violent per se but is an evocation and depiction of violence; audience disturbance is indicative of an awareness of this split. Like the choreographed stage fight, which appears real but is merely imitation, this actual wounding appears as violence but is, on some level, merely non-violent physical enactment.

Thus, the potential for disturbance or subversion relies on the ambiguity and split between actuality and illusion. It is not so much that the violence is real; the question and force of performance are found in the possibility that it might be real. The split and confusion of this ambiguity is at the heart of the performance of violence in the theatre. The appearance of violence and the acting of pain amplify and emphasize the situation and location of performance, reception and the relation between audience and actor. It is also, according to Herbert Blau at the centre of the art of acting itself:

> there is still a chastening difference between acted and actual pain, though some actors can act it so that it is something more than vicarious. We have also seen (and I have worked with) some actors who virtually *embody* pain, who seem to make it present merely by being there. . . . Yet since for the moment of its appearance it is still an image of pain – even if the actor should suffer (as I have seen) a serious injury or actual stroke – the theater is then a model of the primary model of what it is to have doubt, with the attentive body of the audience as the unstable measure of the certainty of its pain. (Blau, 1990, 163)

Theatrical performance embodies for Blau "what it is to have doubt" – the question of actual or illusory pain is moot, the real issue in the embodiment of pain is the fact that there is doubt. The performance of pain, or violence for that matter, is always performed and is never "real," at least for the audience. The audience determines what will be received as convincing and the fact of actual pain is irrelevant.

Like manuals on fight choreography, Blau's argument points to the useful contradiction and ambiguity in the performance of violence. While performing violence is not actually violent (when it is deployed with full consensus and agreement among actors), it always carries with it the possibility or border of violence because it is always inscribed with its reception; the audience is the "unstable measure" that has the power and potential to make violence "real." Performance implies an audience and therefore the performance of violence will always imply actual violence. The split between presence and absence, and between illusion and actuality, is what in the end makes the illusion of theatrical violence possible and potentially powerful.

It is because of this potentiality that Anne-Marie Cadieux's performance was seen by some to be "difficult to watch." Her embodiment of pain and the palpable threat of real violence constructed her as the "walking wound" that some audience members saw. It was not that the performance was violent but that the depiction and choreography of violence brought the shadow or reminder of actual physical pain into the realm of audience reception. Indeed, Cadieux herself notes the physical difficulty of performing this piece over an extended run and also notes her own reservations about allowing others to perform or direct this work. But to some extent this extremity of physical exertion was what the piece was about. The exaggerated presence of extreme film violence reframes

the presence of physical impact on stage. In fact, in contemporary theatre there is a great concern about the effectiveness or believability of stage violence, of the strength of the contract of negation: Severino Albuquerque notes that "real violence presented in film and on television makes modern audiences highly critical of most acted-out physical violence" (Albuquerque 95); Martin Esslin cites the realism of television and film violence as a reason for lack of graphic, physical violence on the stage (stage violence can no longer compete); and even fight directors acknowledge that because contemporary audiences are so used to the violence viewed in film that this "makes the believable presentation of stage violence considerably more difficult." (Girard, 1999, 87) In an era of film ultraviolence and television reality shows, violence on the stage is viewed as inferior, as unable to compete. However, a piece like *La Nuit* suggests the important possibilities for theatrical depictions of violence. The physicality of the actor's body, the co-presence of audience and actors and the proximity of the action are all factors of *La Nuit*'s disturbing depiction of violence. The question at hand is not one of mere believability or realism, but of the physical presence of the actor's body: physical exertion in time and space and the demands on that body come to the fore of the performance.

La Nuit is physically exertive in that it demands of its actors a willingness to engage in physical harm, but importantly it is a performance about violence and not an enactment of actual violence. This split between actual and performed violence was what created the viewing conditions of *La Nuit* and it was a split fostered and amplified by theatrical space, design, choreography and bodily presence. Cadieux remarks that the work was to some extent motivated by the question of the place of violence on the stage

in a era of explicit and graphic cinematic violence and she contends that when creating this work she saw it as a piece of performance art, influenced by female visual artists like Louise Bourgeois, Kiki Smith and Jenny Holzer.[9] Initiated as an investigation into the body and the question of bodily presence, the creation of *La Nuit* began not with an image of violence but with suicide (Cadieux says that the first image from which the work stemmed was of a woman sitting in a glass bathtub on the stage slitting her wrists) and from this point it became clear that it was necessary and implicit that the body wounded in the performance would be her own.[10]

Graphic violence was therefore part of what the performance was attempting to explore and investigate: it was the physical presence of the hit body on stage that made concrete the issues of abuse, intimacy and trauma that the performance explored. This violence was not, however, simplistically conceived and, while realism (and a cinematically inflected realism in particular) was significant, the piece sought to explore the contradictions of violence performed on the stage. This commitment to the exploration of violence in performance is made concrete in Cadieux's refusal to alter the opening scene of the play: in the touring of *La Nuit*, Cadieux has been asked to cut the violent beginning, to perform it farther back on the stage or to perform it in tableaux, all of which she has refused to do. The violence and its placement at the top of the performance and at the front of the stage are central to *La Nuit*, as is the fact that the piece is written, performed and directed by Cadieux herself. The violence may appear real and her body might be actually wounded in the process of performance but these are not indicators of authenticity or the actuality of the violence; they are instead markers of the piece's thematic and stylistic exploration of the relation of violence to space, time and

performance. In the same way that the characters engage in mutually agreed upon and consensual violence, the performers engage in physical acts that appear as violence but are not.

This ambiguity of violence was also significantly an ambiguity of victimhood as the explicit presence of violence worked to make difficult any easy notions of victimhood or victimization. In both Smith's installation and Cadieux's performance, the uneasy actuality of the violence made the enactment of violence seem more graphic, more disturbing and more problematic for viewers. In Smith, this violence was explicitly connected to a disruption of concepts of victimhood: the newspaper reports suggest stories of fighting back and Smith's willingness and full participation in her own wounding complicates categories of victimization, violence and performance. Violence against women was here approached not as a story of victimization but as an instance of survival and the instinctual and corporeal will to live in the face of violence and threat. The physical violence found in Cadieux's *La Nuit*, where violence was addressed and enacted in a concrete and explicit way, was similarly performed in opposition to current discourses and beliefs about violence and women and victimage. This problematizing of notions of victimhood would be even more evident if Cadieux rewrote the play without the central speech about the daughter's murder, as she suggests she would today. Both Smith and Cadieux offer complicated and nuanced treatments of violence against women that eschew easy categories of victims and perpetrators and that rely upon the graphic and explicit enactment of physical violence to achieve this aim. Indeed, in the physical co-presence of audience and actors in Cadieux's work, where the violence was rendered immediately visible (and its effects readable in time and space), this questioning of

victimhood was arguably more explicit and disruptive. As the works on fight choreography suggest, the role of victim in the actual enactment of a fight scene shifts with every blow, move or step; the role of victim assigned and negotiated in a narrative may thus be complicated by the enactment of physical violence. It may also be complicated by the effects of this violence on the audience, who might, as in *La Nuit*, be reading this violence as a sign of victimization in an extra-textual sense (i.e. the wounding of Cadieux's body and not the character's).

In *La Nuit*, it was this ambiguity, and not the actuality, of the violence performed that provided or invited the disruption and disturbance of the performance. Like Smith's *Life Wants to Live*, which explored the forms of knowing, telling and experiencing violence and pain through writing (newspapers), imaging (X-rays) and embodiment (bodily blows and punches), *La Nuit* confronted the lasting impact and traces of violence through the split between the corporeal presence of the actor and the audience expectation of illusion and artifice. In some way then, the audience becomes responsible for interpreting the status of the violence of the performance. As the "unstable measure," they are active in the reception of violence and it is in their response that something that is inherently and essentially non-violent becomes an image of violence. From the disturbed response to *La Nuit*, it can be argued that the process of negation does not fully account for the response to and reception of theatrical violence – the audience is not always consciously aware of the doubleness of performance. In fact, in *La Nuit*, the power of the performance relied upon this lack of awareness; thematically the performance explored the boundary between the image and reality of violence and its physical production on-stage echoed this contradiction and confusion. In this way Blau is

right to note the non-relevance of whether the violence is real or not -- the real issue and the place for exploration is whether the audience receives it as real. For Blau the audience embodies "what it is to have doubt" and if we look at the reception to the on-stage violence in *La Nuit*, we can consider the possibility that perhaps this doubt is not only a factor in reception but constitutes an appropriate and ethically informed response to the depiction of violence: to have doubt, to recognize doubleness in the non-violence of the performance of violence, is a requirement in the confrontation of the problematic visibility of violence. And to explore these ambiguities and the relation of this doubt to the depiction of violence against women is to recognize the risks and power that can be a part of the performance of violence.

Endnotes

[1] *La Nuit* was performed in Montreal at the Monument Theatre as part of the Festival of Theatre of the Americas in 1993

[2] Cadieux notes that if she were to rewrite or perform the piece now that she would lose this explanatory, climactic scene thus making the violence of the piece much more disturbing, ambiguous and potentially much more interesting. She also notes, however, that had she not included this section initially, she doubts that the play would have had the extended run and touring that it did. The speech about the murdered child frames and delimits the violence in the piece in a way that arguably comforted and reassured the audience,at least somewhat. Even with this speech, Cadieux was confronted with audience outrage and she is probably right to note that without it, the violence would have disturbed the audience to a far greater extent. (Comments made in personal conversation with playwright).

[3] In one performance the enacted violence accidentally became real with Cadieux receiving a severe blow to her nose, which resulted in a nosebleed. Because the piece is performed without breaks, Cadieux and Gagnon merely paused the action, staying in character, until she stopped the bleeding; they worked the accident of the wounding into the narrative of the play.

[4] Girard stresses the importance of technique and method in achieving this suppression of instinct: "In order to redirect the body and mind away from the reality of actual aggression to the process of acted aggression, you must be submerged in the methodology of stage combat." (Girard 4)

[5] In J. D. Martinez's *Combat Mime: A Non-Violent Approach to Stage Violence*, the importance of the victim's agency is likewise emphasized. Martinez begins his book with a series of partner exercises recommended to help build trust between participants and to aid partners in coming to a recognition of physical reflexes, power, strength and limits. Framing these exercises as games, he focuses on developing partner trust and awareness before working towards the aspects of contact and the exercises are always directed towards shaping the appearance and illusion of the fight for audience appreciation and response (even noting where there should be pauses or beats to allow for audience recognition). This appearance of violence is shaped by rehearsal, choreography, co-operation, trust and is dependent on the victim being in control of all acts of performed violence.

[6] The victim is not pushed so much as he or she "shoves himself or herself, while the attacker merely supports the illusion through mimetic actions." (Martinez 43)

[7] Occasionally this focus on the safety of stage combat can result in overly graphic descriptions of actual violence. In an effort to assert the difference between real violence and stage violence, Katz's *Stage Violence* (1976) repeatedly refers to physical injuries that have resulted or that could possible result from errors in stage combat. He also offers detailed accounts of what real injuries could result from actual violence. In hypothesizing about the physical effects that would result if the punches and blows to the head depicted on the television series *Gunsmoke* were real, Katz offers this graphically violent description of the imagined wounded victim: "What about the victim? Well, if the blow from a right cross lands full on his jaw, that section of his jaw is located somewhere in the middle of his mouth! Don't laugh, it isn't funny. The jawbone was not meant to take that kind of punishment. It will fracture, splinter, or separate completely when struck that hard. If the blow lands higher, on the cheek, then the cheekbone is shattered, the eye socket may be severely damaged, and because we don't know where all the bone splinters went, we don't know the condition of the eye itself. If the blow lands full-face, on the nose, we have several possibilities. The nose itself is surely broken, but the angle at which it was struck and the point at which it was broken are crucial. You see, the septum (the bone that supports the flesh of your nose) is a 2- to 3- inch needle-shaped bone, connected very tenuously to the skull, between the eyes. Immediately behind the septum is a hole, and immediately

behind the hole is the brain. If the blow struck the nose at just the right angle, or if the septum's bridge to the skull had been snapped by an earlier blow, then the punch in question would drive 3 inches of sharp-pointed bone straight into the brain, killing the victim." (Katz 48) Ending this lengthy, detailed and graphically violent description of imagined possibilities of physical injury with the summary lines, "Head blows are dangerous. Never play with them," (Katz 49) Katz undermines his own emphasis on non-violence. His over-determined and obsessive replaying of imagined actual injuries frames and circumscribes his assertions about safe, non-violent and victim-centered choreography. Despite the effort to move stage violence into the realm of isometrics, choreography and safe illusion, actual physical violence animates and subtends the entire discussion. While appearing to emphasize safety, the rhetorical impact and effect of passages like these is to constantly place the reader and student of stage violence into a realm of physical harm, violence and threat.

[8] While theorists like Kubiak and Graver explore the potentialities of the performance of real violence, a work like Smith's suggests the interesting possibilities in works that locate themselves on the border or boundary of actuality or presence. Smith's piece is neither clearly representational nor therapeutically self-serving; it is unlike the confessional, internal or shockingly excessive and transgressive acts of bodily manipulation and wounding that are usually discussed in accounts of postmodern art and performance. It has much more in common with the theatrical stagings and rehearsals of violence discussed at the outset of this chapter. The blows delivered to Smith are planned, orchestrated and within her control. Importantly, theses acts are not staged for her benefit but for the audience: the frame of the art installation, in addition to the artist's absence, enables the blows to be distanced from issues personal psychology and embodiment. The violence is instead placed as performance, commentary and signification: the blows play a role in the narrational processes of making sense of an installation about violence and visibility.

[9] These comments were made during a personal conversation with Cadieux on August 10, 2001 in Toronto.

[10] It is interesting to note here that Cadieux had some difficulty convincing her fellow actor, Gerald Gagnon to participate in the performed violence. The creation and performance of the work was emotionally and physically exhausting for both of them and Cadieux notes that Gagnon initially had problems with performing the violence.

Conclusion
"Violence Makes Victims of us All," or Transferential Victimization – No Thanks!

In a piece entitled "Love Thy Neighbour – No, Thanks!," theorist Slavoj Žižek argues that the media obsession with portraits of victims of racial hatred masks a subconsciously formulated fantasmatic and ideological distancing of what is perceived of as the threat of otherness. Applying this same mode of argumentation to a more generalized account of the notion of the victim, Žižek claims that this universalization and emblematization of the victim work to obfuscate the threat of proximity and sameness. Reliant upon emotional appeals to empathy and compassionate identification, this universalization of the victim, Žižek argues, operates to maintain distance and to ensure that the victims in question remain victims:

> The examples of 'compassion with the suffering in Bosnia' that abound in our media illustrate perfectly Lacan's thesis on the 'reflexive' nature of human desire: desire is always desire for a desire. That is to say, what these examples display above all is that compassion is the way to *maintain the proper distance* towards a neighbour in trouble. . . . we must pay so that our neighbour will remain a neighbour, at a proper distance, and will not come to us. In other words, our compassion, precisely in so far as it is 'sincere', presupposes that *in it, we perceive ourselves in the form that we find likeable*: the victim is presented so that we like to see ourselves in the position from which we stare at her. (Žižek, 1994, 211)

According to Žižek's Lacanian reading, the construction of the category of "victim," works as a kind of screen or field that protects us from our own fantasy, from our own racism and fear of the other – it keeps the other at a safe, sympathetic distance and maintains the presence of "difference." The impulse is a conservative one and, as it works to control and contain the threat of difference, it engages in a kind of identificatory appropriation which may resemble empathy or ethical engagement but which establishes

distance and perpetuates the victimization of the other. In Žižek, the distanced victim (and the question of otherness this implies) ceases to be about actual otherness or difference because difference itself is an operation that allows for and enacts the processes of othering; difference is a designation that ultimately keeps the other from getting too close: "The unbearable is not the difference. The unbearable is the fact that in a sense there is no difference." (Žižek, 1994, 2) The "problem" therefore arises not when one is confronted with the victim but when the other becomes "too close" and loses his or her victim status: "The true object of anxiety is the other no longer prepared to play the role of victim – such an other is promptly denounced as a 'terrorist,' a 'fundamentalist,' and so on." (Žižek 215)[1]

What is unstated but implied in Zizek's account is that the designation of "victim," requires violence to bring it into being but equally requires the erasure of violence that could potentially threaten the unified and hypostatised image of "victim." The victim who carries a gun or fights back, is no longer considered a victim but a terrorist or a threat. Žižek's critique of contemporary victimology thus points to the fantasmatic usefulness of the category of victim that authorizes full identification and appropriation through the erasure of violence. In this way it is clear that his discussion is not about actual or real victims but about "victims" set up and assigned for the purpose of ease of identification and exculpatory acts of subject formation; it is the fantasy of victims that concerns him in this formulation and not actual persons who have suffered illness, violence or persecution. Victimology, like other forms of difference, othering and identification, is not a stable category or mechanism and it is in fact the desire to stabilize, fix or assert permanence that is presented as the problem. In this construction

of the idea of victim is the implied invisibility, or at least partial obfuscation, of acts of violence that threaten to bring the other "too close." If the victim crosses this border or boundary of proximity, he or she ceases to be victim and becomes something else.[2]

In this kind of generalized victimology, empathic identification with a victimized other not only establishes difference but extends the category of victim to include not only those who are truly victimized, but those who identify with victims. The stars who adopt causes become blurred with the victims they are seen to represent and their association works to lend them the position and standing of victim. Dominick LaCapra notes the potential for levelling and blurring that can accompany this kind of positive valuation of victimology:

> As a consequence [of the conflation of absence with loss] one encounters the dubious idea that everyone (including perpetrators or collaborators) is a victim, that all history is trauma, or that we all share a pathological public sphere or a 'wound culture.' (As a recent public service message would have it, 'Violence makes victims of us all.') (LaCapra, 1999, 712)[3]

Attacking the conflation of absence with loss that he argues is characteristic of some psychoanalytic theory and some works that take trauma as their basis in an overly generalized or generalizing way,[4] LaCapra argues that many structural interpretations create a situation whereby all of us are uniformly made victims of some originary trauma. Such an approach dangerously conflates victims, perpetrators and bystanders, thus allowing a worldview where we are all equally and indistinguishably traumatized. Implied in LaCapra's citation of the commercial slogan "Violence makes victims of us all" is an appraisal of the modes of over-identification that can so generalize victimization as to erase actual victims. As LaCapra notes elsewhere, the over-identification that is characteristic of generalized accounts of victimology has negative

consequences for spectators, critics and all those who engage and identify with victims of trauma: "If we who have not been severely traumatized by experiences involving massive losses go to the extreme of identifying (however spectrally or theoretically) with the victim and survivor, our horizon may unjustifiably become that of the survivor, if not the victim, at least as we imagine her or him to be. In other words we may come to feel that it is enough if we simply survive and, at most, bear witness." (LaCapra, 2001, 211) In this assertion we can see similarities between his argument and Žižek's; in both the issue at hand is the way in which actual, afflicted persons are both implied in and obscured by the representation and construction of victims. This generalized victim also necessarily erases any consideration of acts of violence (being a victim is a subject position, available to all either directly or transferentially and not a result of being the victim of violence) and can ultimately further acts of victimization: "Unproblematic identification – more generally a binary logic of identity and difference – furthers victimization, including at times the constitution of the self as surrogate victim." (LaCapra, 2001, 219)

For LaCapra, as for Žižek then, the concern for the victim is often in fact a concern with the victim *as* victim (LaCapra, 2001, 98) and one of the grounds for the power and force of this levelling or generalizing construction of the victim is the absence of violence, of an explicit confrontation with violence that characterizes constructions of and identifications with victims. This absence can be tied to what LaCapra refers to as a fetishized or redemptive narrative, which is a "narrative that denies the trauma that brought it into existence." (LaCapra, 2001, 179) In redemptive narratives, the ambivalence, violence or complexity of trauma is transformed into a harmonious and

straightforward portrait of victimization that invites cathartic identification, but erases any signs of disruption or agonistic difference.

This kind of redemptive erasure of violence is evident in the theories and performances of victimization that I have covered here. It is evident in the fixing of a victim identity for Highway, in the avoidance of on-stage violence in works on domestic abuse and is implied in the disruption caused by the explicit violence of *La Nuit*, which offered not a clear-cut portrait of victimization but an ambivalent and unsettling narrative of loss, violence and empathy. The presence or absence of violence in each instance became a marker or site for controversy (or at least disturbance) and in each, a redemptive narrative of victimization was mobilized to control, contain or account for that disturbance. In *Dry Lips*, the on-stage rape quickly took on the role of symbol and metaphor because of its narrational, dramatic and imagistic qualities but this role was amplified by the debates and controversies that followed (and in which Highway fully participated). The remount performance was a heavily invested one in all senses and the presence of violence was an uneasy one for readings of the play based in appropriative celebrations of First Nations culture and/ or self-serving appreciations of First Nations victimization. In the debates that followed the remount, the on-stage rape ceased to be an instance for the examination of the performance of violence and became instead a sign of Highway's misogyny, a marker of his authentic voice as First Nations playwright or a symbol of First Nations victimization. In all interpretations, the violence was discussed only insofar as it was framed as a marker and metaphor for a generalized victimization (of women, of First Nations culture and spirituality, of Highway himself). In this focus on victimization, the violence of the depicted rape with a crucifix that was arguably

central to the performance was elided and obfuscated by arguments of appropriation, absorption and over-identification and its uneasy presence on the stage became explained and subsumed by narratives of victimization.

The emphasis on victimization was equally evident in the works on domestic violence that I addressed in the second chapter. While *Les Bleus* and *Out of the Silence* were clearly concerned with issues of violence and its visibility (a concern evident in the suspicion and distrust of explicit violence), this concern was not investigated or made a topic for inquiry. This is a particularly problematic absence in the instance of domestic violence because, as recent inquiries have made evident, it is so often rendered absent, invisible and secret in public culture.[5] In attempts to make this secret visible, both of these projects experimented with form and content and were successful in facilitating conversations about abuse and therapeutic initiatives. However, in the distrust of theatrical violence and in the emphasis on pedagogical and therapeutic contexts, each of these projects displayed a desire for full consensus that required the complexities and ambivalences of domestic violence be reduced to simplified and negotiable conflicts.

The problem with this kind of reduction and appeal for consensus became apparent in the final chapter through the exploration of a performance of violence that was full of ambiguity and complexity and which, as a result, was met with some measure of audience outrage and anger. Anne-Marie Cadieux's *La Nuit* is a powerful example of the use of explicit violence in performance to bring issues of victimization, trauma and embodiment to the fore without reducing these issues to simplified and unified instances of character conflict. The enacted violence in *La Nuit* is disturbing in its immediacy, its realism and its material manifestations; but it is also, as I have shown, disturbing because

of its place within the narration, story and character development of the performance. The violence occurs at the opening of the play and is not easily placed within a narrative framework or context. Indeed, it is not even clear in the opening scene that this enacted violence is violence at all (after all the scene ends in what can be construed as consensual sex). Disturbing the relationship between violence and victimization, and placing both in relation to acts of intimacy and human compassion, *La Nuit* addresses the variable, unstable and intricate nature of violent acts. In performing these acts realistically and in full view of the audience, *La Nuit* also confronts the disturbing nature of the performance of violence in its relationships to the body, performance, spectatorship and identification.

In analyzing these examples I have attempted to explore the ways in which theatrical violence is related to identificatory paradigms and to a valorization of victimization that feeds into the performance, theorization and reception of theatrical violence in therapeutic terms of audience consensus, catharsis or pedagogical benefit. I contend throughout that the concentration on the therapeutic reception of theatre violence, which has shaped theories of spectatorship, especially those of spectatorial witnessing, has emphasized the necessity of containing and justifying theatrical violence to such an extent that issues outside the realm of meritable identification have been obfuscated or obliterated: identification and victimization have become the legitimizing focus of inquiry and it is presumed that the positive ends towards which violence may be used are pedagogical, therapeutic and instructive. In particular, as I discussed in the introduction, I argue that the theoretical construction of the spectator/ witness indicates the extent to which narratives of victimization are privileged and thus

operates as kind of marker for the undiscussed violence of performance: the witness stands in as a kind of justification for both theatrical violence and full identification.

The presence of explicit violence can make difficult this full identification, especially if the violence is not contained by unambiguous and homogenously unified depictions of victimization. Whether it is the effacing theatrical violence discussed by Francis Barker that operates to occlude the violence of culture or the useful, cathartic and traumatic violence that is necessary to theories of identification, victimology or witnessing, the presence of violence in the theatre is interpreted and approached as a problem to be managed, controlled or neutralized. While the act of creating or depicting violence on the stage may be recognized as a non-violent exercise (a point I developed in the fourth chapter), the presence of theatrical violence is often treated and received with suspicion or even as an outright danger: violence is a problem, these theoretical, critical and practical interventions and approaches inform us, and in instances of the performance of physical violence on the stage, it is a problem specifically for empathetic identification. Ill effects, legitimate or useful identifications, violence in excess of identificatory purposes, violence used to thwart or distance identificatory operations – these are the bases of analyses of violence in performance, regardless of whether that violence is explicitly, realistically or stylistically performed.

In its justification theatrical violence thus becomes merely an instrument for identification and the implications for this restricted approach are made clear by the analyses offered by Žižek; inscribed in the celebration of identification is a problematic unifying, universalizing, levelling and generalizing approach to violence that ultimately excuses inaction, erases difference and exculpates and even potentially privileges the

viewing and identifying subject.[6] As Žižek's analysis suggests, victimization enacts and demands violence but it also necessitates that this violence be carefully and systematically controlled, directed, dealt with and accounted for; for fully enacted empathic identification, violence cannot be presented or addressed in a way that is disruptive or troubling. Identification with the victim thus requires violence (insofar as the construction of victim demands it) but also necessitates that this violence be erased, or at least not addressed directly, in the processes and understandings of identification. The problem with this over-valuation of the victim is the concomitant erasure or avoidance of violence that this necessitates; full identification requires that confrontations and investigations into violence and its performance become foreclosed, thwarted or subsumed into redemptive narratives of full closure. Moreover, as we have learned from Žižek, when the aim is full identification and appropriation of victimized others, the victim must remain *as* victim.

But full identification is not always the only response to depictions of violence and victimization and, as *La Nuit* reveals, the presence of violence on the stage can occasionally be truly disruptive, challenging and critically engaged. This kind of complex image of violence and ambivalent portrait of victimization suggests the possibility for another mode or theory of spectatorship, one that Dominick LaCapra terms "empathic unsettlement." In contradistinction to the appropriative impulses of full identification, LaCapra suggests the potential for empathy: unlike identification, empathy involves the recognition that understanding does not authorize appropriation and that spectatorship does not enact the kind of transferential absorption achieved by witnessing.

Empathic unsettlement thus reflects the ambivalence and ambiguities of traumatic and violent accounts of victimization:

> Being responsive to the traumatic experience of others, notably of victims, implies not the appropriation of their experience but what I would call empathic unsettlement . . . . At the very least, empathic unsettlement poses a barrier to closure in disclosure and places in jeopardy harmonizing or spiritually uplifting accounts of extreme events from which we attempt to derive reassurance or a benefit (for example, unearned confidence about the ability of the human spirit to endure any adversity with dignity and nobility). (LaCapra, 2001, 41)

The key in this configuration is the "unsettlement" and it is in this unsettling, this disturbance and recognition of difference, that the potential for this concept is located. Empathy involves ethical engagement and it can involve secondary or muted witnessing, but it does not transform these forms of engagement into appropriative acts: empathy potentially "unsettles" the maintenance of difference and the designation of the victim *as* victim and in so doing it makes room for the victim to get "too close." In the theatrical performances and theories I have examined here, this potential unsettling is a rare occurrence and is, I would argue, correlated to the presence, confrontation and exploration of the performance of violence on the stage. In the explicit and disturbing physical violence of works like *La Nuit*, which does not merely use violence but confronts it (physically, narrationally, thematically, imagistically), we can see the unstable and variable forms and effects of theatrical violence; in inviting us to recognize this unsettlement and disturbance performances like *La Nuit* confront violence in all its messiness, complexity and corporeality and remind us that the power of theatrical violence is not always one that can be, nor that ought to be, absorbed into narratives of victimization made available for full identification.

Endnotes

[1] The subject thus identifies with the other, establishes difference under the guise of empathetic sameness; the well-intentioned respect for difference becomes another way of establishing otherness and the question of otherness ceases to be about actual difference: difference itself is an operation that allows for and enacts the processes of othering; it is a designation that ultimately keeps the other from getting too close. The victim is thus merely a mode of othering, of creating difference where the terrifying possibility that there might be none exists. This is not to suggest that victimization does not exist and is not a horribly real act of violence; it is rather to reiterate and stress that the discursive and representational construct of the "victim" does not necessarily have anything to do with victimization and has everything to do with identification and appropriation. Žižek's formulation addresses identification's necessary precondition of a clearly designated victim, whether this category, character or individual has actually been victimized (or victimized in a clear cut and unambiguous way) or not, and suggests a notion of difference that is mutable and dependent upon circumstance, location and position.

[2] Judith Butler similarly addresses this kind of leveling identificatory force in her reading of the Rodney King trial, "Endangered/ Endangering: Schematic Racism and White Paranoia," in which she argues that the video of the brutal beating of Rodney King was not ignored but reinterpreted so that King himself was framed and conceived of as the site of, not victim of, violence and danger. Inversely, the police were framed as fighting on behalf of victims; situated to fight this danger they are in a position, Butler argues, to protect whiteness and to block the incipient and imminent violence of the other. Thus, Butler argues, within the legal/ judicial framework of the court, and within the racist field of vision this implies, the video could only possibly be read as an example of King's latent and inchoate violence: "According to this racist episteme, he is hit in exchange for the blows he never delivered, but which he is, by virtue of his blackness, always about to deliver." (Butler 19) While Butler's analysis appears to contradict Žižek's formulation insofar as she addresses the identificatory pull towards perpetrator not victim, her argument emphasizes the necessary precondition of the placement of the police in the role of victim. In order to be available for empathetic identification the police, in this instance and in this framework, had to be cast as victims. Recognizing the underlying operations and functions of identification and subjectivity what Žižek's and Butler's analyses point out are some of the problems and complexities of spectatorship, identification and trauma that are elided or ignored in the accounts of the witness/ spectator offered by theatre theorists and scholars.

[3] LaCapra makes this same point in his "Violence, Justice, and the Force of Law," in which he claims that a current interest in violence is inseparable from contemporary obsessions with visibility and spectacle: "The fascination with the image of violence may be ineracible, especially in a society where spectacle, narcissism and voyeurism have assumed a pronounced role." (LaCapra, 1990, 1065) LaCapra emphasizes that, although impossible to eradicate completely, the voyeuristic fascination with violence is not, however, totalizing or complete, and the desirability of demystification and critical engagement: "One point of my own commentary will be to stress the desirability of a demystification of violence insofar as possible, thereby permitting some measure of control over an image that fascinates and may well prompt ill-considered forms of action." (LaCapra, 1990, 1065) Although LaCapra is in this instance responding to a particular strain of postmodern thought and theory, his critique is aimed obliquely at Derrida, his comments are designed to hold weight and pertinence for any account of violence that uses violence as a marker for loss or aporia.

[4] As LaCapra asks: "Has violence or force become the preferred name, say for the sublime, the excessive, the non-reciprocal gift? Has (the image of) violence become obsessive? Is it a place-marker for the nostalgia for the sacred." (LaCapra, 1990, 1069)

[5] For example, in a recent article on the O.J. Simpson case, Shoshana Felman argues domestic violence is ontologically and inherently invisible, an argument she bases on the jury's nullification of the battering of Nicole Brown Simpson: "They look at the pictures of Nicole's bruised countenance but declare they cannot see the husband's blows on the wife's (the victim's) battered face." (Felman 763) Arguing that the jury used "the court's authority to ratify, indeed, the inherent cultural *invisibility* of the battered face," (Felman 761) Felman reiterates the current concern with the secrecy and erasure of domestic violence and recent works on woman abuse and domestic violence support Felman's point insofar as they suggest the erasure of violence evident in cultural constructions of domestic violence. However, while Felman acknowledges the specificity of domestic abuse by recognizing "the deceptive package of the violence (marriage, love, police, protection, justice)" (Felman 744), her analysis moves towards abstraction in her assertion that the domestic violence in the Simpson case was invisible because of "a built-in cultural failure to see trauma," because "trauma is precisely what cannot be seen." (Felman 764) The extension to trauma is a problematic one because what is at issue in the Simpson case is not abstract trauma so much as the particular question of the battered woman's body as evidence and the problem of the invisibility of domestic violence: at issue also is domesticity, privacy, familial and gendered (and racialized) constructs of ownership, property and protection. The "public secret" that is domestic violence, and the way that this secrecy constructs the visibility and understanding of the battered female body, is ultimately elided in her analysis. What she also bypasses, even though she addresses the Rodney King beating, is the particularities of the racial coding and racist representative traditions that construct their own kind of blindness and invisibility in evoking that other public secret of the past – lynching.

[6] Thus the concept of witness offers a way out of confronting the problem and vicissitudes of violence and its place and production on the theatrical stage. What witnessing assumes is the benefit of identification with the victim, an identification that is framed as an act of ethical and instructive engagement. Identifying with the victim here becomes not merely a matter of empathetic identification but is turned into an ethical act, a moral confrontation with violence and victimization itself.

Bibliography

Abraham, Nicolas and Maria Torok. *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*. Ed. And trans. By Nicholas T. Rand. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Ackley, Katherine Anne, ed. *Women and Violence in Literature: An Essay Collection*. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1990.

Albuquerque, Severino João. *Violent Acts: A Study of Contemporary Latin American Theatre*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991.

Andrews, Dudley. "A Preface to Disputation." *The Image in Dispute: Art and Cinema in the Age of Photography*. Ed. Dudley Andrew. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997.

Armstrong, Nancy and Leonard Tennenhouse, Eds. *The Violence of Representation: Literature and the History of Violence*. London: Routledge, 1989.

Artaud, Antonin. *The Theater and its Double*. Trans. Mary Caroline Richards. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1958.

Auslander, Philip. *Presence and Resistance: Postmodernism and Cultural Politics in Contemporary American Performance*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992.

Auslander, Philip. *From Acting to Performance: Essays in Modernism and Postmodernism*. London: Routledge, 1997.

Auslander, Philip. *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Austin, Gayle. " The Madwoman in the Spotlight: Plays of Maria Irene Fornes." *Making a Spectacle: Feminist Essays on Contemporary Women's Theatre*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989.

Baker, Houston A. "Scene . . . Not Heard." *Reading Rodney King/ Reading Urban Uprising*. Ed. Robert Gooding-Williams. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Baker, Martin and Julian Petley, eds. *Ill Effects: the media/ violence debate*. London: Routledge, 1997.

Bal, Mieke. *Reading 'Rembrandt': Beyond the Word-Image Opposition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Barba, Eugenio. "Four Spectators." *TDR* 34.1 (Spring 1990): 96-101.

Barker, Francis. *The Culture of Violence: tragedy and history*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Baudrillard, Jean. *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena*. Trans. by James Benedict. London: Verso, 1993.

Bemrose, John. "Theatre Review: Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing." *Maclean's* 104.17 (April 29, 1991).

Bennett, Susan. "Subject to the Tourist Gaze: A Response to "Weesageechak Begins to Dance." *TDR* 37.1 (Spring 1993): 9-13.

---. *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*. New york: Routledge, 1990.

Birringer, Johannes H. *Performance on the edge: transformations of culture*. New Brunswick: Athlone Press, 2000.

---. *Media and Performance: Along the Border*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.

---. *Theatre, Theory, Postmodernism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.

Black, Joel. *The Aesthetics of Murder: A Study in Romantic Literature and Contemporary Culture*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

Blau, Herbert. *To all Appearances: Ideology and Performance*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

---. "Ideology, Performance, and the Illusions of Demystification." *Critical Theory and Performance*. Eds. Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992.

---. *The Audience*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990.

---. "Universals of Performance; or amortizing play." *By Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1990.

---. *The Eye of Prey: Subversions of the Postmodern*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

---. *Blooded Thought: occasions of Theatre*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982.

---. *Take up the bodies: Theater at the Vanishing Point*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982.

Boal, Augusto. *Legislative Theatre*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Bok, Sissela. *Mayhem: Violence as Public Entertainment*. Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1998.

Brask, Per, ed. *Contemporary Issues in Canadian Drama*. Winnipeg: Blizzard Publishing, 1995.

Bronfen, Elizabeth. "Kiiling Gazes, Killing in the Gaze: On Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom*." *Gaze and Voice as Love Objects*. Eds. Renata Salecl and Slavoj Žižek. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.

---. *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Bryson, Norman, Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey, eds. *Visual Culture: Images and Interpretations*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1994.

Burkman, Katherine H. and Judith Roof, eds. *Staging the Rage: The Web of Misogyny in Modern Drama*. Cranbury, N.J. : Associated University Presses, 1998.

Butler, Judith. "Sovereign Performatives in the Contemporary Scene of Utterance." *Critical Inquiry* 23.2 (Winter 1997): 350-377.

---. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

---. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge, 1990.

Cadieux, Anne-Marie. *The Room*. Unpublished script, 1995.

Callahan, John M. "The ultimate in theatre violence." *Themes in Drama 13: Violence in Drama*. Ed. James Redmond. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Campbell, Anne and John J. Gibbs, eds. *Violent Transactions: The Limits of Personality*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1996.

Campbell, Patrick, ed. *Analysing Performance: A Critical Reader*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996.

Carlson, Marvin. *Theatre Semiotics: Signs of Life*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

Carmody, Dianne Cyr. "Mixed Messages: Images of Domestic Violence on 'Reality' Television." *Entertaining Crime: Television Reality Programs*. Eds Mark Fishman and Gray Cavender. New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1998.

Carr, Cynthia. *On Edge: Performance at the End of the Twentieth Century*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1993.

Cartwright, Lisa. *Screening the Body: Tracing Medicine's Visual Culture*. London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

Case, Sue-Ellen and Janelle Reinelt, eds. *The Performance of Power: Theatrical Discourse and Politics*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1991.

Case, Sue-Ellen. *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.

Cerulo, Karen A. *Deciphering Violence: The Cognitive Structure of Right and Wrong*. New York: Routledge, 1998.

Chapman, Geoff. "Royal treatment for *Dry Lips*." *The Toronto Star* April 14, 1991.C1

Charest, Rémy. "Voyage ay bout de la chamber d'hôtel: Anne-Marie Cadieux monte *La Nuit*." *Le Devoir* June 1, 1991.

Charney, Leo. The Violence of a Perfect Moment." *Violence and American Cinema*. Ed. J. David Slocum. New York: Routledge, 2001.

Conlogue, Ray. "An emotionally riveting *Dry Lips*." *Globe and Mail* April 24, 1989.

Cooke, Lynn and Peter Wollen, eds. *Visual Display: Culture Beyond Appearances*. Seattle: Bay Press, 1995.

Creed, Barbara. "Dark Desires: Male Masochism in the horror film." *Screening the Male: Exploring masculinities in Hollywood cinema*. Eds. Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark. London: Routledge, 1993.

Crew, Robert. "Hope flickers in disturbing probe of native spirit." *The Toronto Star* April 23, 1989.

Cuklanz, Lisa M. *Rape on Prime Time: Television, Masculinity and Sexual Violence*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000.

Dahl, Mary Karen. *Political Violence in Drama: Classical Models, Contemporary Variations*. Ann Arbor: U.M.I. Research Press, 1984

Deats, Sara Munson and Lagretta Tallent Lenker, eds. *The Aching Hearth: Family Violence in Life and Literature*. New York: Plenum Press, 1991.

Degan, Catherine. "Une pureté noire, noir de noir." *Le Soir* April 6, 1995.

Dekeseredy, Walter S. and Linda MacLeod. *Woman Abuse: A Sociological Story*. Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1997.

Deleuze, Gilles. "One Less Manifesto." *Mimesis, Masochism, Mime: The Politics of Theatricality in Contemporary French Thought*. Ed. Timothy Murray. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.

De Marinis, Marco. *The Semiotics of Perfromance*. Trans. Áine O' Healy. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.

---. "Dramaturgy of the Spectator." *TDR* 31.2 (Summer 1987): 100-114.

Derrida, Jacques. "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority.'" *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*. Eds. Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld and David Gray Carlson. London: Routledge, 1992.

---. *Writing and Difference*. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1978.

Diamond, David. "*Out of the Silence*: Headlines Theatre Performance Report." 1991.

Diamond, David. "*Out of the Silence*: Headlines Theatre and Power Plays." *Playing Boal: Theatre, Therapy, Activism*. Eds. Mady Schutzman and Jan Cohen-Cruz. London: Routledge, 1994.

Diamond, Elin. *Unmaking Mimesis: Essays on Feminism and Theater*. London: Routledge, 1997

---. "The Violence of 'We': Politicizing Identification." *Critical Theory and Performance*. Eds. Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992.

---. "Mimesis, Mimicry and the 'True-Real'." *Modern Drama* 32.1 (March 1989): 58-72.

Dickinson, Peter. *Here is Queer: Nationalisms, Sexualities, and the Literatures of Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.

Diez, Claire. "Abrutir son corps, pour fuir la folie." *La Libre Belgique*. April 6, 1995.

Doane, Mary Ann. *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Dobash, R. Emerson, Philip Schlesinger, Russell Dobash and C. Kay Weaver. "'Crimewatch UK': Women's Interpretations of Televised Violence." *Entertaining Crime: Television Reality Programs*. Eds Mark Fishman and Gray Cavender. New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1998.

Dolan, Jill. *Presence & Desire: Essays on Gender, Sexuality, Performance*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993.

---. "Practicing Cultural Disruptions: Gay and Lesbian Representation and Sexuality." *Critical Theory and Performance*. Eds. Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992.

---. *The Feminist Spectator as Critic*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988.

During, Simon. "Rousseau's patrimony: primitivism, romance and becoming other." *Colonial discourse/ postcolonial theory*. Eds. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994.

Edmonds, Eve. "*La Nuit*: A dark and sordid time at the theatre." *The Ottawa Sun*. April 1995.

Enders, Jody. *The Medieval Theater of Cruelty: Rhetoric, Memory, Violence*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.

Eppert, Claudia, Chris Hiller, Sharon Rosenbergm Julie Salverson, Florence Sicoli and Roger Simon. "Historical Memory, Violence and Civic Education." *Orbit: On Becoming a Global Citizen*. 27.2 (1996): 19-21.

Erickson, Jon. *The Fate of the Object: From Modern Object to Postmodern Sign in Performance, Art, and Poetry*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995.

Eron, Leonard. *Symposium on Media Violence and Pornography: Proceedings and Resource Book*. Ed. David Scott. Toronto: Media Actions Group, Inc., 1984.

Esslin, Martin. *Brief Chronicles: Essays on Modern Theatre*. London: Temple Smith, 1970.

Farrell, Kirby. *Post-Traumatic Culture: Injury and Interpretation in the Nineties*.

Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.

Fearnow, Mark. "Theatre for an Angry God: Public Burnings and Hangings in Colonial New York, 1741." *TDR* 40.2 (Summer 1996): 15-36).

Felman, Shoshana. "Forms of Judicial Blindness, or the Evidence of What Cannot Be See: Traumatic Narratives and Legal Repetitions in the O.J. Simpson Case and in Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonanta*." *Critical Inquiry* 23.4 (Summer 1997): 738-788.

Filewod, Alan. "Receiving Aboriginality: Tomson Highway and the Crisis of Cultural Authenticity." *Theatre Journal* 46.3 (October 1994): 363-373.

---. "Averting the Colonizing Gaze: Notes on Watching Native Theater." *Aboriginal Voices: Amerindian, Inuit, and Sami Theater*. Eds. Per Brask and William Morgan. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.1992.

---. *Collective Encounters: Documentary Theatre in English Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.

Fischer, Lucy. *Shot/ Countershot: Film Tradition and Women's Cinema*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre: A European Perspective*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997.

---. *The Semiotics of Theater*. Trans Jeremy Gaines and Doris L. Jones. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.

Fishman, Mark and Gray Cavender, eds. *Entertaining Crime: Television Reality Programs*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1998.

Forte, Jeanie. "Focus on the Body: Pain, Praxis, and Pleasure in Feminist Performance." *Critical Theory and Performance*. Eds. Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Fraser, John. *Violence in the Arts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974.

French, Karl, ed. *Screen Violence*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1996.

Frick, John W., ed. *Theatre Symposium Volume 7: Theatre and Violence*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999.

Fried, Michael. *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of*

Diderot. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.

Friedberg, Anne. "A Denial of Difference: Theories of Cinematic Identification." *Psychoanalysis and Cinema*. Ed. E. Ann Kaplan. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Friedland, M.L., ed. *Rough Justice: Essays on Crime in Literature*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991.

Frijda, Nico and Dick Schram. "Introduction." *Poetics: Journal of Empirical Research on Literature, the Media and the Arts*. 23 (1994): 1-6.

Fuchs, Elinor. "Staging the Obscene Body." *TDR* 33.1 (Spring 1989): 33-58.

Fuss, Diana. *Identification Papers*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Gaillard, Françoise. "The Terror of Consensus." *Terror and Consensus: Vicissitudes of French Thought*. Eds. Jean-Joseph Goux and Philip R. Wood. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Garoian, Charles R. *Performing Pedagogy: Toward an Art of Politics*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999.

Gilbert, Helen. "Dressed to Kill: A Post-Colonial Reading of Costume and the Body in Australian Theatre." *Imperialism and Theatre: Essays on World Theatre, Drama, and Performance*. Ed. J. Ellen Gainor. London: Routledge, 1995.

Girard, Dale Anthony. "Listening to the Language of Violence: The Orchestration of Sound and Silence in Fights for the Stage and Screen." *Theatre Symposium: Theatre and Violence*. Volume 7 (1999): 86- 95.

---. *Actors on Guard: A Practical Guide for the Use of Rapier and Dagger for Stage and Screen*. New York: Routledge, 1997.

Girard, René. *The Scapegoat*. Trans. Yvonne Freccero. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

Godard, Barbara. "The Politics of Representation: Some Native Canadian Women Writers." *Native Writers and Canadian Writing*. Ed. W. H. New. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990.

Goodwin, Jean and Reina Attias, eds. *Splintered Reflections: Images of the Body in Trauma*. New York: Basic Books, 1999.

Gordon, Gilbert. *Stage fights: A Simple Handbook of Techniques*. London: J. Garnet Miller Ltd., 1973.

Gordon, Linda. "Family Violence, Feminism, and Social Control." *Gender Violence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Eds. Laura L. O'Toole and Jessica R. Schiffman. New York: New York University Press, 1997.

Gottfried, Amy S. *Historical Nightmares and Imaginative Violence in American Women's Writings*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998.

Gould, Thomas. "The uses of violence in drama." *Themes in Drama 13: Violence in Drama*. Ed. James Redmond. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Graver, David. *The Aesthetics of Disturbance: Anti-Art in Avant-Garde Drama*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995.

---. "Violent Theatricality: Displayed Enactments of Aggression and Pain." *Theatre Journal* 47.1 (March 1995):43-64.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Guattair, Félix. *Chaosmosis: An Ehtico-Aesthetic Paradigm*. Trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.

Haag, Pamela. "'Putting Your Body on the Line': The Question of violence, Victims, and the Legacies of Second-Wave Feminism." *Differences* 8.2 (June 1996): 23-67.

Haedicke, Janet V. "'A Population (and Theater) at Risk': Battered Women in Henley's *Crimes of the Heart* and Shepard's *A Lie of the Mind*." *Modern Drama* 36.1 (March 1993): 83-95.

Halberstam, Judith. *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.

Hanssen, Beatrice. *Critiques of Violence: Between Poststructuralism and Critical Theory*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Hart, Lynda. *Fatal Women: Lesbian Sexuality and the Mark of Aggression*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Hayden Taylor, Drew. "Storytelling to Stage: The Growth of Native Theatre in Canada." *TDR* 41.3 (Fall 1997): 140-152.

Highway, Tomson. *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1998.

---. *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*. Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1989.

---. *The Rez Sisters: a play in two acts*. Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1988.

Hill, Annette. *Shocking Entertainment: Viewer Response to Violent Movies*. Luton: University of Luton Press, 1997.

Hobbs, William. *Fight Direction for Stage and Screen*. London: A & C Black, 1995.

Hooks, bell. "Violence in Intimate Relationships: A Feminist Perspective." *Gender Violence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Eds. Laura L. O'Toole and Jessica R. Schiffman. New York: New York University Press, 1997.

Huyssen, Andreas. *After the great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*. Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1986.

Innes, Christopher. "Dreams of violence: moving beyond colonialism in Canadian and Caribbean drama." *Theatre Matters: Performance and Culture on the World Stage*. Eds. Richard Boon and Jane Plastow. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Jabri, Vivienne. *Discourses on violence: Conflict analysis reconsidered*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996.

Jameson, Fredric. *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998*. London: Verso, 1998.

Jed, Stephanie. *Chaste Thinking: the rape of Lucretia and the birth of humanism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.

Jeffords, Susan. "Narrative as Violence, Violence as Patriarchy, Patriarchy as Storytelling." *Gender: Literary and Cinematic Representation*. Ed. Jeanne Rupert. Gainsville: University Press of Florida, 1984.

Jenks, Chris, ed. *Visual Culture*. London: Routledge, 1995.

Jenkyns, Marina. *The Play's the Thing: Exploring Text in Drama and Therapy*. London: Routledge 1996.

Johnston, Denis W. "Lines and Circles: The 'Rez' Plays of Tomson Highway." *Native Writers and Canadian Writing*. Ed. W. H. New. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990.

Kappeler, Susanne. *The Will to Violence: The Politics of Personal Behaviour*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995.

---. *The Pornography of Representation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

Katz, Albert M. *Stage Violence: Techniques of Offense, Defense and Safety*. New

York: Richard Rosen Press, Inc., 1976.

Keough, Peter, ed. *Flesh and Blood: The National Scoiety of Film Critics on Sex, Violence, and Censorship.* San Francisco: Mercury House, 1995.

Kershaw, Baz. *The Radical in Performance: Between Brecht and Baudrillard.* London: Routledge, 1999.

---. *The Politics of Performance: Radical Theatre as Cultural Intervention.* London: Routledge, 1992.

King, Thomas. "Native writers put focus on current history." *The Toronto Star* April 13, 1991. G16.

Knowles, Richard Paul. "Reading Material: Transfers, Remounts, and the Production of Meaning in Contemporary Toronto Drama and Theatre." *Essays on Canadian Writing.* Nos 51-51 (Winter 1993 – Spring 1994): 258-295.

Kowalewski, Michael. *Deadly Musings: Violence and Verbal Form in American Fiction.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Kubiak, Anthony. *Stages of Terror: Terrorism, Ideology, and Coercion as Theatre History.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.

Kuhn, Annette. *The Power of the Image: Essays on Representation and Sexuality.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985.

Kurz, Demie. "Violence against Women or family Violence? Current Debates and Future Directions." *Gender Violence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives.* Eds. Laura L. O'Toole and Jessica R. Schiffman. New York: New York University Press, 1997.

LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

---. "Trauma, Absence, Loss." *Critical Inquiry* 25.4 (Summer 1999): 696 - 727.

---. "Violence, Justice, and the Force of Law." *Cardozo Law Review* 11.5-6 (July/ Aug. 1990): 1065-1078.

---. *Soundings in Critical Theory.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.

Larsen, Otto N. *Voicing Social Concern.* NewYork: Lanham, 1994.

Lauretis, Teresa de. *The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desire.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

---. *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

---. *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

Lecercle, Jean-Jacques. *The Violence of Language.* London: Routledge, 1990.

Ledbetter, Mark. *Victims and the Postmodern Narrative or Doing Violence to the Body: An Ethic of Reading and Writing.* London: MacMillan Press, 1996.

Leps, Marie-Christine. *Apprehending the Criminal: The Rpoduciton of deviance in Nineteenth Century Discourse.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1992.

Lévesque, Robert. L'acteur, l'actrice en scène: Jean-Louis Millette et Anne-Marie Cadieux." *Le Devoir* May 29, 1995.

Ley, Graham. *From Mimesis to Interculturalism: Readings of Theatrical Theory Before and After 'Modernism'.* Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999.

Lieb, Michael. *Milton and the Culture of Violence.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.

Lutz, Hartmut. *Contemporary Challenges: Conversations with Canadian Native Authors.* Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1991.

MacCannell, Dean and Juliet Flower MacCannell. "Violence, power and pleasure: A revisionist reading of Foucault from the victim perspective." *Up Against Foucault: Exploration of Some Tensions Between Foucault and Feminism.* Ed. Caroline Ramazamoğlu. London: Routledge, 1993.

Mac Dougall, Jill and P. Stanley Yoder, eds. *Contaminating Theatre: Intersections of Theatre, Therapy and Public Health.* Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998.

McAuley, Gay. *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in Theatre.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999.

Malkin, Jeanette R. *Memory-Theater and Postmodern Drama.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999.

Mansfield, Nick. *Masochism: The Art of Power.* Westport: Praeger, 1997.

Martineau, Maureen and Jill Mac Dougall. "Art Scarred by Reality: *Les Bleus amoureux (Blues and Bruises)*, A Théâtre Parminou Intervention on Domestic Violence." *Contaminating Theatre: Intersections of Theatre, Therapy and Public Health.* Eds. Jill Mac Dougall and P. Stanley Yoder. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998.

Massumi, Brian, ed. *The Politics of Everyday Fear.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

Maufort, Marc. "Recognizing Difference in Canadian Drama: Tomson Highway's Poetic Realism." *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 8.2 (1993): 230-240.

Mayne, Judith. *The Woman at the Keyhole: Feminism and Women's Cinema.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

Melrose, Susan. *A Semiotics of the Dramatic Text.* London: Macmillan Press, 1994.

Miller, William Ian. *Humiliation: And Other Esays on Honor, Social Discomfort, and Violence.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Minow, Martha, Michael Ryan and Austin Sarat, Eds. *Narrative, Violence, and the Law: The Essays of Robert Cover.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992.

Moore, Henrietta. "The problem of explaining violence in the social sciences." *Sex and Violence: Issues in Representation and Experience.* Eds. Penelope Harvey and Peter Gow. London: Routledge, 1994.

Morgan, William. "The Trickster and Native Theater: An Interview with Tomson Highway." *Aboriginal Voices: Amerindian, Inuit, and Sami Theater.* Eds. Per Brask and William Morgan. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992.

Morris, David B. *The Culture of Pain.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Moss, Jane. "'All in the Family': Quebec Family Drama in the 1980s." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27.2 (Summer, 1992): 97-106.

Moss, John. *Sex and Violence in the Canadian Novel: The Ancestral Present.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977.

Much, Rita, ed. *Women on the Canadian Stage: The Legacy of Hrotsvit.* Winnipeg: Blizzard Publishing, 1992.

Mulvey, Laura. *Fetishism and Curiosity.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996.

---. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology.* Ed. Philip Rosen. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.

Murray, Timothy, ed. *Mimesis, Masochism, Mime: The Politics of Theatricality in Contemporary French Thought*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.

Newham, Paul. *Using Voice and Theatre in Therapy: The Practical Application of Voice Movement Therapy*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000.

Nothof, Anne. "Cultural Collision and Magical Transformation: The Plays of Tomson Highway." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 20.2 (1995):34-43.

Oatley, Keith. "A taxonomy of the emotions of literary response and a theory of identification in fictional narrative." *Poetics: Journal of Empirical Research on Literature, the Media and the Arts*. 23 (1994): 53-74.

Owens, Margaret Ellen. *Dismemberment and Decapitation on the English Renaissance Stage: Towards a Cultural Semiotics of Violent Spectacle*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Toronto, Department of English. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1994.

Parker, Andrew and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, eds. *Performativity and Performance*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Patraka, Vivian. *Spectacular Suffering: Theatre, Fascism, and the Holocaust*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.

Pavis, Patrice, ed. *The Intercultural Performance Reader*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Phelan, Peggy. "Andy Warhol: Performances of Death in America." *Performing the Body/ Performing the Text*. Eds. Amelia Jones and Andrew Stephenson. London: Routledge, 1999.

---. *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories*. London: Routledge, 1997.

---. *Unmarked: the Politics of Performance*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Phelan, Peggy and Jill Lane, eds. *The Ends of Performance*. New York: New York University Press, 1998.

Pollock, Griselda, ed. *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings*. London: Routledge, 1996

---. *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art*. London: Routledge, 1988.

Potter, James W. *On Media Violence*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1999.

Preston, Jennifer. "Weesageechack Begins to Dance: Native Earth Performing Arts Inc." *TDR* 36.1 (Spring 1992): 133-159.

Price, Monroe E., ed. *The V-Chip Debate: Content Filtering from Television to the Internet*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1998.

Prince, Stephen. *Savage Cinema: Sam Peckinpah and the Rise of Ultraviolent Movies*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998.

Prince, Stephen, ed. *Screening Violence*. London: The Athlone Press, 2000.

Princenthal, N. *Life Wants to Live/* The Kitchen. *ARTnews* 83.4 (1984): 180.

Rabillard, Sheila. "Absorption, Elimination, and the Hybrid: Some Impure Questions of Gender and Culture in the Trickster Drama of Tomson Highway." *Essays in Theatre* 12.1 (November 1993): 3-27.

Raby, David Ian. "Violation and Implication: *One for the Road* and *Ficky Stingers*. *Themes in Drama 13: Violence in Drama*. Ed. James Redmond. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Read, Alan. *Theatre and Everyday Life: An ethics of performance*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Read, Alan, ed. *The Fact of Blackness: Frantz Fanon and Visual Representation*. Seattle: Bay Press, 1996.

Redding, Arthur F. *Raids on Human Consciousness: Writing, Anarchism, and Violence*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998.

Reinelt, Janelle G. and Joseph R. Roach, eds. *Critical Theory and Performance*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992.

Restuccia, Frances L. "Literary Representations of Battered Women: Spectacular Domestic Punishment." *Bodies of Writing, Bodies in Performance*. Eds. Thomas Foster, Carol Siegel and Ellen E. Berry. New York: New York University Press, 1996.

Rockett, Will H. *Devouring Whirlwind: Terror and Transcendence in the Cinema of Cruelty*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1988.

Rosenberg, Sharon. "Intersecting Memories: Bearing Witness to the 1989 Massacre of Women in Montreal." *Hypatia* 11.4 (Fall 1996): 119-129.

---. "Inside the ellipses: intervals (of) (for) memory." *Border/ Lines* 24/ 25 (1992): 30-35.

Rothman, William. "Violence and Film." *Violence and American Cinema*. Ed. J. David Slocum. NewYork: Routledge, 2001.

Rubess, Banuta. "Different homes for *This is for You, Anna*." *Canadian Theatre Review* 43 (Summer 1985): 171.

Rudakoff, Judith and Rita Much. *Fair Play: 12 Women Speak*. Toronto: Simon & Pierre Publishing Co. Ltd., 1990.

Russell, Catherine. *Narrative Mortality: Death, Closure and New Wave Cinemas*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

Russo, Mary. *The Female Grotesque: risk, excess and modernity*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Salverson, Julie. "The Art of Witness in Popular Theatre." *Canadian Theatre Review* 90 (Spring 1997): 36-39.

---. "Performing Emergency: Witnessing, Popular Theatre and The Lie of the Literal." *Theatre Topics* 6.2 (September 1996): 181-191.

---. "The Mask of Solidarity." *Playing Boal: Theatre, Therapy, Activism*. Eds. Jan Cohen-Cruz and Mady Schutzman. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Saunders, Kevin W. *Violence as Obscenity: Limiting the Media's First Amendment Protection*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.

Savran, David. "The Sadomasochist in the Closet: White Masculinity and the Culture of Victimization." *Differences* 8.2 (Summer 1996): 127-152.

Sayre, Henry M. *The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde since 1970*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Schneider, Rebecca. *The Explicit Body in Performance*. London: Routledge, 1997.

Scholder, Amy, ed. *Critical Condition: Women on the Edge of Violence*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1993.

Schorstein, Sherri L. *Domestic Violence and Health Care: What Every Professional Needs to Know*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1997.

Scott, Jay. "Cross-Current." *Globe and Mail* Monday April 22, 1991. C1

Scott, Shelley. "Collective Creation and the Changing Mandate of Nightwood Theatre." *Theatre Research in Canada* 18.2 (Fall 1997): 191-207.

Seltzer, Mark. *Serial Killers: Death and Life in America's Wound Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1998.

Sherman, Jason, ed. *Canadian Brash: New Voices in Fiction, Drama, Poetry*. Toronto: Coach House Press, 1990.

Siegel, Reva B. "'The rule of love': wife beating as prerogative and privacy." *Yale Law Journal* 105.8 (June 1996): 2117-2207.

Silverman, Kaja. "Masochism and Male Subjectivity." *Male Trouble*. Eds. Constance Penley and Sharon Willis. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

---. *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Simon, Roger I. and Claudia Eppert. "Remembering Obligation: Pedagogy and the Witnessing of Testimony of Historical Trauma." *Canadian Journal of Education* 22.2 (1997): 175-191.

Simon, Roger I. "The Pedagogy of Commemoration and Formation of Collective Memories." *Educational Foundations* (Winter 1994): 5-24.

Skloot, Robert. "'Where Does It Hurt?': Genocide, the Theatre and the Human Body." *Theatre Research International* 23.1: 51-58.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty and Sneja Gunew. "Questions of multiculturalism." *The Cultural Studies Reader*. Ed. Simon During. London: Routledge, 1993.

Stafford, Barbara Maria. *Body Criticism: Imaging the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991.

Staiger, Janet. *Perverse Spectators: The Practices of Film Reception*. New York: New York University Press, 2000.

Stanley, Christopher. "Si(g)ns of the Flesh: Law, Violence and Inscription upon the Body." *Ritual and Semiotics*. Eds J. Ralph Lindgren and Jay Knaak. New York: Peter Lang, 1997.

States, Bert O. *The Pleasure of the Play*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.

Stoltzfus, Ben. "Violence as tragic farce in Camus's *Caligula*. *Themes in Drama 13: Violence in Drama*. Ed. James Redmond. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Studlar, Gaylyn. *In the Realm of Pleasure: Von Sternberg, Dietrich, and the Masochistic Aesthetic*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.

Tam, Pauline. "Trilogy of dark playlets demanding presentation." *The Ottawa Citizen* April 7, 1994. H8.

Tan, Ed S.-H. "Film-induced affect as a witness emotion." *Poetics: Journal of Empirical Research on Literature, the Media and the Arts*. 23 (1994): 7-32.

Tannenbaum, Percy H., ed. *The Entertainment Functions of Television*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1980.

Tanner, Laura E. *Intimate Violence: Reading Rape and Torture in Twentieth-Century Fiction*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Tasker, Yvonne. *Spectacular Bodies: gender, genre and the action cinema*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Taussing, Michael. *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Taylor, Diana. "Border Watching." *The Ends of Performance*. Eds. Peggy Phelan and Jill Lane. New York: New York University Press, 1998.

---. *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's 'Dirty War'*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.

Tennenhouse, Leonard. *Power on Display: The Politics of Shakespeare's Genres*. New York: Methuen, 1986.

Theobald, Elizabeth. "Their Desperate Need for Noble Savages." *TDR* 41.3 (Fall 1997): 142-143.

Tompkins, Joanne and Lisa Male. "Twenty-one native women on motorcycles': an interview with Tomson Highway." *Australasian Drama Studies* 24 (April 1994): 13-28.

Toro, Fernando de. *Theatre Semiotics: Text and Staging in Modern Theatre*. Trans. John Lewis. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995.

Turpin, Jennifer and Lester R. Kurtz, eds. *The Web of Violence: From Interpersonal to Global*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997.

Ubersfeld, Anne. *Reading Theatre*. Trans. Frank Collins. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.

Valaskakis, Gail Guthrie. "Indian Country: Negotiating the Meaning of Land in Native America." *Disciplinarity and Dissent in Cultural Studies*. Eds. Cary Nelson and Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar. New York: Routledge, 1996.

---. "Rights and Warriors: First Nations, Media And Identity." *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 25.1 (January 1994): 60-72.

Wagner, Vit. "Live Theatre: Last antidote to blandness." *The Toronto Star* April 13, 1991. G1

Wallace, Henry. *Family Violence: Legal, Medical, and Social Perspectives*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999.

Wasserman, Jerry. "Daddy's Girls: Father-Daughter Incest and Canadian Plays by Women." *Essays in Theatre* 14.1. (Nov. 1995):25-46.

Wied, Minet de, Dolf Zillmann and Virginia Ordman. "The role of empathic distress in the enjoyment of cinematic tragedy." *Poetics: Journal of Empirical Research on Literature, the Media and the Arts*. 23 (1994): 91-106.

Williams, Anna. "Domesticity and the Aetiology of Crime in *America's Most Wanted*." *Camera Obscura: A Journal of Feminist Film Theory* 31: 97-118.

Williams, Linda, ed. *Viewing Positions: Ways of Seeing Film*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1995.

---. *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure and the Frenzy of the Visible*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.

Wilson, Ann. The Culture of Abuse in *Under the Skin, This is for You, Anna* and *Lion in the Streets*. *Contemporary Issues in Canadian Drama*. Ed. Per Brask. Winnipeg: Blizzard Publishing, 1995.

---. "Interview: Tomson Highway." *Other Solitudes: Canadian Multicultural Fictions*. Eds. Linda Hutcheon and Marion Richmond. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Wynants, Jean-Marie. "Le corps, la sexualité, la mort réunis dans *La Nuit*." *Le Soir* April 4, 1995.

Yardley-Matwiejczuk, Krysia M. *Role Play: Theory and Practice*. London: Sage Publications, 1997.

Zillmann, Dolf. "Mechanisms of emotional involvement with drama." *Poetics: Journal of Empirical Research on Literature, the Media and the Arts*. 23 (1994): 33-51.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Fragile Absolute – or, Why is the Christian legacy worth fighting for?* London: Verso, 2000.

---. "Love Thy Neighbor? No, Thanks!" *The Psychoanalysis of Race*. Ed. Christopher Lane. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

---. *The Plague of Fantasies*. London: Verso, 1997.

---. *The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Woman and Causality*. London: Verso, 1994.

---. *Enjoy Your Symptom: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out*. New York: Routledge, 1992.