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Abstract	Blain (composer, performer) and Turner (ethnographer, dramaturg) discuss the processes that led to the development of collaborative strategies over the course of making the multi/interdisciplinary performance *The Good, The God and The Guillotine.* Focusing on their respective positions as 'insider' and 'outsider', the authors consider the efficacy of different types of collaborative approaches tried out over the course of the project in relation to what, following Lavender, they define as 'concentric circles of collaboration'. The circles of collaborative decision-making are here critically aligned with Kant's notions of 'interested' and disinterested' aesthetic judgement, as well as Carroll's taxonomy for qualifying aesthetic experience. The resulting critique provides significant insights into creative development and collaborative decision-making processes in performance-making projects.	
Keywords (separated by " - ")	Collaborative strategies - Performance - Insider - Outsider - Decision-making - Aesthetic experience - Performance-making	

CHAPTER 11

The Good, The God and The Guillotine: Insider/Outsider Perspectives

Martin Blain and Jane Turner

The focus of the writing in this chapter engages with the principal research aim of the project that became known as *The Good, The God and The Guillotine* (*TG3*),[1] which was to develop strategies towards a 'successful' collaboration between a range of professional artists. The project brought together theatre makers, musicians, a digital artist and lighting designer with an aim to develop strategies of engagement with a creative process that both challenged the artists to extend their own ways of working, as well as their expectations of their disciplinary field within a multi/interdisciplinary context.

At the outset, the collaborating artists explored what the tenets of a successful collaboration might entail. Two key strategies that the artists considered should be the basis for the collaboration included (a) the development of a shared consciousness by initiating inclusive ways of developing, sharing and reflecting on creative ideas and materials and (b) interrogating disciplinary specific terminology in order to construct a shared creative and performance language. It is evident that even

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this initial strategy of amalgamating ideas, as a way of working, reflects an intention to inclusively acknowledge all the collaborators equally.

At the heart of the project was the impact and creative use of technology in performance, and the wider world, and all the collaborators were interested in exploring the possibilities of technology in a multi/interdisciplinary context, bringing their expertise into a shared space that required them all to reflect and revise their normative ways of creating material and performing.

This chapter provides a critical appraisal of these collaborative strategies and intentions that led the artists to collectively build a shared theatrical performance language that translated the central text, *The Stranger* (*L'Étranger*), Camus's existentialist commentary on religion, and re-inflected it as an examination of the contemporary existentialist anxiety concerning the pervasiveness of technology. The chapter will draw on particular examples derived from the creative process that illustrate moments where collaborators were challenged and required to resolve creative problems.

The authors offer complementary perspectives on creative collaboration from their insider/outsider positions. Jane Turner's ethnographic role gave her a privileged outsider perspective on the collaboration process and insights into the insider perspectives from the interviews she undertook with the collaborators. Here she focuses on the ways in which aesthetic judgements were made and how a process of creative cohesion evolved. Her observations are aligned with Noël Carroll's taxonomy[2] for qualifying aesthetic experience. Although Carroll focuses on the experience of the recipient of an artwork, in this context, the taxonomy provides a useful insight into the creative development and decision-making processes engaged with over the course of the *TG3* project.

Martin Blain is a composer and laptop performer directly involved in the project and was particularly interested in exploring how his creative practice was influenced, freed up and compromised by interactively working on such a multi/interdisciplinary project. From his insider perspective, he documents some of the creative insights exposed through the processes of collaboration. Developing on Andy Lavender's notion of 'circles of collaboration',[3] Blain positions and theorises his own experience as a performer-musician[4] within his formulation of the concentric circles of collaboration, which are conceived as three contrasting types of collaborative relationship:

- Inner circle of collaboration: for this project the creative challenge for Blain, and each of the collaborating artists, was to develop effective practical applications of innovative compositional techniques, processes and practicalities that could be communicated to and aesthetically realised by the wider group;
- Middle circle of collaboration: this is where the practical experiments initiated in the inner circle between individuals were re-worked within the studio space and connects with the ideas and relationships discussed in the outer circle. This is a playful space where discoveries, inherent, in the material can be revealed, developed and refined for performance;
- Outer circle of collaboration: this is where ideas were discussed and collaborative relationships were developed across different arts disciplines with the ambition to develop a shared consciousness. Activities in this circle of collaboration were, in this instance, facilitated by the use of regular reflective feedback discussion, both in the shared studio space (at the end of each day's work) and virtually (via a blog).

In a similar way that the artistic work explored new strategies for collaboration, and creative play that led to a novel aesthetic framework, Turner explored how critical frameworks opened up and informed her observations as ethnographer/dramaturg. In addition to Carroll's taxonomy, the twin ideas derived from Kant's aesthetics, interested and disinterested pleasure, also provided useful commentary on the creative processes of collaboration, particularly in relation to decision-making and creative judgement calls in *TG3*. The two terms 'interested' and 'disinterested' are used by Kant to identify two positions whereby pleasure is experienced that leads to a form of aesthetic judgement/aesthetic evaluation of art and offer a further critical connection with the concentric circles of collaboration.

Kant makes a link between imagination and understanding (sensuous and rational) in relation to our experiential response to an artefact that he argues both transports us from everyday life and heightens our experience of life.[5] 'Interested' might here be understood as an insider perspective, the direct experience generated in the Research & Development (R&D)[6] space. 'Disinterested' might be considered an outsider perspective, a contemplative feeling, where an aesthetic judgement is possible because of a gap created between the art object and the spectatorial position, here illustrated by the viewing of the work on the blog that allowed for a critical distance.

The blog became a memorial space, and 'jars a bodily memory',[7] and it also allows the collaborators to re-evaluate an experience with the benefit of time and space. As such, disinterested activity can be aligned with the work taking place in the outer circle (e.g., in the blog), whereas the concept of interested activity can evidently be associated with the operations in the inner circle. The inner circle represents a space where material is initiated and developed through a process of negotiation between the creative initiator and the technical ability of the performer; thus, it is a space of experimentation. Both inner and middle circles equate to interested, sensuous, imaginative engagements with creative materials. However, the middle circle also represents a collaborative space of negotiation that draws on both interested and disinterested activities. The middle circle serves as an aesthetic space for the collaborators' creative experiments to be played out in conjunction with other collaborators and thus requires a process of discussion, compromise and adjustment in line with the broader vision of the project. The outer circle offers the collaborators a disinterested perspective, one where they critically and aesthetically reflect and make judgements in order that the materials can be refined to create an experience that operates as both sensuous and rational for the spectator at the point of performance.

Context

TG3 set out to be a collaborative project exploring Camus's novel *The Outsider* (*L'Étranger*) to be performed as an intermedial concert event in 11 Chapters.[8] The collaborators were: two members of Proto-type Theater (Gillian Lees and Andrew Westerside) and Leentje Van De Cruys (associate member of Proto-type Theater) as performer-singers; MMUle (Manchester Metropolitan University laptop ensemble) comprised three musicians (Martin Blain, Nick Donovan [latterly replaced by Jonas Hummel] and Paul J. Rogers) who were performer-musicians; lighting designer Rebecca M.K. Makus (from the USA), digital designer/animator, Adam York Gregory (freelancer) and writer and, initially, director Peter S. Petralia (founder of Proto-type Theater).

The collaborators were involved in five short blocks of R&D time: February, March and May 2012, followed by a week at the Tramway in Glasgow in January 2013, a three-week block in July/August 2013; the show premiered at the Lincoln Performing Arts Centre in October 2013 and continued to tour in the UK through 2014.[9]

The *TG3* project required the collaborators to creatively respond to a contemporary adaptation of Camus's novel prepared by Petralia. The performer-musicians were each charged to initially compose scores for four Chapters of the adaptation and then to perform with pre-recorded samples, as well as with live sounds and samples recorded during each performance. The performer-singers sang the textual scores and created an enigmatic theatrical world, with further creative input from Makus, who provided a lighting score and a range of light objects, and Gregory who created and operated a complex animation projected onto different surfaces throughout the performance.

Processes and Terminology

Over the course of the R&D process, collaborative strategies were tried out that aspired to create a shared consciousness between the collaborators, a shared consciousness that identified and then resolved the tensions and conflicts that inevitably arose from a group of individuals coming together to develop a performance project. Some strategies were successful in achieving their artistic aims; some were not. For example, during the first R&D block the performer-singers played with a tarpaulin and sand, while the performer-musicians improvised with found sounds as well as live sounds produced in the space; however, while the task generated some interesting moments, it was impossible for the improvisatory play to be reproduced by the performer-musicians and the performer-singers. Furthermore, while the task created an enjoyable mess it proved to be very difficult to clear up. Due to the amount of electronics being used in the performance space, the presence of sand raised particular issues concerning the functionality of the technology. However, some of the sound structures generated did make their way into the final sound-score.

There was an ongoing tension that emerged at this early stage between what was achievable and reproducible by the collaborators. For example, an early comment on the challenges of the project was made by Gregory, the digital designer, who described the project as a performance engaged in 'tangled webs of technology'.[10] His comment usefully identifies the way in which technology both literally operated and how it served metaphors and motifs around the visible and the invisible textual layers developed through the creative processes. The project was described as using media-driven elements as a 'structuring logic' and conceived of technology as an 'existential agent of the 21st century'.[11]

At an early meeting of the collaborators there was a discussion about terminology, especially terms such as rehearsal, improvising and devising. Rehearsal was a term that the collaborators agreed was loaded with an expectation that there was pre-existing material that could be rehearsed; however, as Harvie suggests, 'rehearsal … is never just the repetition of learned delivery but the *creation* of performance',[12] thus illustrating discrepancies in understanding of terms in common usage in any creative process. However, within *TG3*, the group settled on calling the periods of time that they came together to work as R&D blocks rather than rehearsals.

Time together, in an equipped studio space, was scarce and costly. Over the two and a half years, from first meeting to first performance, the collaborators worked in a shared space for no more than 58 days. Further challenges and a consequence of the fractured duration of the project include the early departure of Petralia, the initial director and author of the adaptation. Petralia left the project 18 months in; this event was followed by one of the performer-musicians, Donovan, leaving the project two years in.[13] Both female performer-singers, Lees and Van De Cruys, were ill during scheduled meeting times, and the lighting designer, Makus, because she lived in the USA, was unable to attend all the scheduled meetings. Thus the 58 days were compromised and disrupted for a range of very legitimate reasons. It is testimony to the determination and commitment of all the collaborators that the project came to fruition.

Improvisation was a further term that highlighted differences in understanding. It emerged that the term had a currency that was inflected differently across the different disciplines, and across cultures. It became apparent that the term improvising was understood differently in the USA than in the UK; Petralia reported that in the USA the term devising was rarely used as improvising was the more usual term to describe creative activity where new material was generated and refined for performance.[14] However, in *TG3* the term improvisation was more usually used to describe the experimental, spontaneous activities generated during R&D and, as we shall see, can be aligned to the middle circle of collaboration. The term devised or scored was used to describe the pre-planned materials that were brought into the physical R&D space by Gregory, Makus and the performer-musicians, whereas devising became more prominent in the latter stages of the collaboration to describe the process of refining the materials for performance.

Heiner Goebbels, a renowned international music-theatre maker, composer and collaborator, comments that his works 'are never improvised …

but as a method of research on material, an experimental improvisation is the best possible tool'.[15] The technical complexities of his work and *TG3*, at the point of performance, required a very precise score to be fixed and thus to use the term improvisation to determine the structure would be misleading. In both instances the term devising is preferred. Jörg Laue, in *Composed Theatre*, described his preference for the term devising as a 'process-related'[16] activity that required constant re-negotiation. For *TG3*, as a process involving both devising and improvisation, the evolving performance language similarly needed to be reconsidered in each R&D block. While the collaborators often created scored (yet another contentious term in the field of contemporary performance)[17] material on their own, occupying the area we have identified as the inner circle of collaboration, the material was then shared with others in the middle circle, where the collaborators worked 'in the moment',[18] often using improvisation strategies as a tool; the outer circle then provided a disinterested opportunity for reflection on the successes and failures of the materials.

While challenges concerning terminology and the disparate and diverse making processes being brought into the R&D could have led to irrevocable breakdowns in the creative development; in actuality, these discrepancies and incoherencies became a positive strategy for creating innovative practice. John Cage, when discussing his own insights on developing collaborative work, reminds us that:

> We must construct, that is, gather together what exists in a dispersed state. As soon as we give it a try, we realize that everything already goes together. Things are gathered together before us; all we have done is to separate them. Our task henceforth, is to reunite them.[19]

Echoing Cage's comments, in one of the reflective discussions held each day during R&D blocks, performer-singer (and latterly director), Westerside, commented that the performers needed to move away from each other and the compositional scores in order to come back together.[20] In this way, he believed that a theatrical language would organically develop alongside the sonic score. This point is further supported by what Laue describes as 'flexible time-brackets',[21] another concept derived from Cage, that operate in conjunction with a multilayered strategy and creates what Laue calls 'performative polyphony': this describes the way in which apparently discreet materials are simultaneously combined and create a particular sense of coherence.[22] Laue's notion of the performative

248 polyphony, here, reflects the way in which the diverse individual scores,
249 developed by the collaborators, were put into play and successfully com-
250 bined in the concatenation of the final performance.

251 The Concentric 'Circles of Collaboration'

252 Through experiment and play, the rules of engagement and negotiations
253 concerning language and practices required a particular approach to
254 reflexive and reflective collaboration; this was liberating in terms of cre-
255 ativity, seeing what was possible, especially in the early stages of the proj-
256 ect. For Blain, the 'inner' circle of collaboration was a place where he was
257 able to focus his attention on the practical music making elements of the
258 work. Blain's focus of attention was on exploring the musical potential and
259 possibilities in bringing together performer-singers with a laptop ensem-
260 ble. Two of the performer-singers were untrained, one had some previous
261 vocal training; all performer-singers were confident in using their voice
262 and were open to the challenge of trying out new (for them) approaches
263 to developing vocal structures. To become better acquainted with the
264 vocal qualities of the performer-singers, Blain worked with them individu-
265 ally, in pairs and as a trio. Through a series of vocal exercises, tasks and
266 interventions, he became aware that they were able to develop stronger
267 and more convincing sound structures (a) when they were not singing in
268 unison, (b) when they were working with short melodic fragments and
269 developing materials within a heterophonic texture[23] and (c) when the
270 male and female voices were being used to explore pitch contrast, for
271 example, the male voice explored the low vocal register at a time when the
272 two female voices explored the high register.[24] Consequently, Blain elected
273 to experiment with composing using heterophonic textures to both chal-
274 lenge the technical ability of the performer-singers, while also remaining
275 true to his compositional aims.

276 An example of the development of a heterophonic vocal texture can be
277 heard in Blain's composition *The Best Way to Taste the Salty Sea* (*TG3*,
278 Chap. 4). The final section of this Chapter lasts c.3 minutes and is built
279 around a static pointillistic texture that was provided by the three
280 performer-musicians. One of the performer-singers began singing and the
281 other two performer-singers began singing shortly after, with Blain's
282 instruction that they should sing the same melodic line but not in rhyth-
283 mic unison: there were no precise rhythms to follow, but the response
284 from each performer-singer needed to be delivered with confidence and

appear improvisatory. With this amount of indeterminacy within the development of this sonic structure, there was flexibility for the performer-singers to not be too concerned with the rhythmic complexity that would have resulted had this heterophonic texture been fixed in music notation with an expectation that the individual parts would be repeated exactly the same each time it was performed. This enabled the performer-singers to move freely within their individual parts, thus providing musically complex and interesting vocal textures. Thus, the heterophonic technique, within this sonic structure, developed out of necessity. Blain negotiated a fine balance with the performer-singers in achieving his compositional aim of developing a rhythmically complex vocal texture, within the technical and musical capabilities of the performer-singers. This was a negotiated compromise that met the artistic aims of Blain and the performer-singers.

For Blain, the 'middle' circle of collaboration, illustrated by MMUle's working relationship with Proto-type Theater, a lighting designer and a digital artist, revealed processes, ways of working together and developing ways of interacting with each other that were more important than the results of their labour. Spontaneous play, what was referred to as 'noodling' in the R&D blocks, generated what was later described as the most experimental and exciting experience for both performer-musicians and performer-singers. However, the process was not sustainable and the material generated would have been difficult to repeat because the dynamic energy of responding spontaneously to a moment, a gesture or a sound could only be enjoyed by those recognised as insiders to the creative process. In an interview with Rogers, he explained that, for the musicians, improvisation operated within a field of technical expertise:

> you need to be proficient on your instrument before you can begin to conceive of working with improvisation aesthetically and at the early stages of this project the laptop musicians were still developing their knowledge and expertise of the instrument.[25]

Given the limited amount of time available for real-time interaction between the collaborators, as well as the limited ability for some of the collaborators to improvise and respond to requests to change and adapt materials in real-time, the blog, as a manifestation of the outer concentric circle, became a useful documenting platform, a virtual R&D space. Gregory used the platform to present work-in-progress animations as well as the results of subtle changes to existing material that would have taken

too long to explore within the scheduled R&D time. This virtual platform was also useful for MMUle as a way of offering sonic structures in development and in response to vocal work explored in R&D. For example, in *The Smell of Darkness* (*TG3*, Chap. 9), to help the performer-singers learn their vocal parts, Blain recorded an audio version of each vocal part and uploaded this to the blog. This enabled the performer-singers to learn their part before the next R&D block. This demonstrates how the circles of collaboration and insider/outsider perspectives became productively tangled throughout the course of the project.

Performing with Technology

TG3 was a technologically driven project and, as has been discussed, this produced a range of particular challenges. Nicholas Till encountered similar technical and performative challenges in his work on digital opera where he was exploring the notion of the 'technologically uncanny'. He defines the term as,

> an effect that arises through the blurring of nature/culture distinctions, both at a phenomenal level (the electronic that *sounds* human, or vice versa; the anthropomorphism of machines) and the conceptual level (do we hear technologically produced sounds/images as phenomena of nature or culture; as 'mediated' or 'immediate'?)[26]

Till's discussion of the relationship between vocally produced and digitally produced sound and the difficulties experienced by the spectator regarding what was occurring live in the space and what was pre-recorded was shared by *TG3* collaborators. A characteristic of many laptop performances is that it is unclear who is in control; speaking about his project, Till asks whether it is 'the performer; the person sitting [standing] at the laptop or sound console; the machine itself?' that is in control.[27] Following a work in progress showing at Battersea Arts Centre, Till records that perhaps the most important observation was that 'the audience was unable to discern either the liveness or the interactivity of the live interactive elements, meaning that our assumption about the 'uncanny' effect of these interactions was not working'.[28]

In light of Till's account, the aim in *TG3* to create an experiential ambiguity for the spectator needed, to be reconsidered. Till notes that eventually a 'cheat' was employed to signpost the relationship/connections for

the spectator. In *TG3*, Petralia was clear that the signposting and 'rules' of the performance were made explicit to the spectator early in the performance so that the web of connections and later disconnections were made meaningful to each spectator and that they were able to commit to the experience. This was an aspect of *TG3* that was noted as particularly successful by both Andy Lavender and Nicholas Till in a round table discussion after a performance at Axis Arts Centre in 2013.[29]

Following Till, further commentators[30] have also reported that it is not always clear how laptop musicians' performance gestures relate to the sounds they produce and that this has the potential for a loss of connection between performance, gesture and spectacle. Similarly, for some more sceptical spectators, there may be a suggestion that some of the musicians may not be performing at all and may, in fact, be more likely to be responding to and initiating email correspondence while spectators watch, so establishing a connection between performer-musicians at their laptops and the performer-musicians became a significant issue in *TG3*.

The logistical restrictions of working with laptops and software programming in a rehearsal space only began to emerge in the second R&D block. This realisation is shared by Till who notes that using Max/MSP slowed down the process of 'immediate response and improvisation essential in a rehearsal situation'.[31] For the performer-musicians in *TG3,* adapting their bespoke Max/MSP program patches, and Gregory working with animation software, was not possible in the moment of R&D; by the time proposed adjustments had been made, the material and flow of the improvising and devising processes had moved on. In *TG3,* the generation of materials was dependent on contributors all taking responsibility for preparing material outside of the R&D space for the group to work on. Gregory commented on the blog that generating digital material spontaneously was not possible for him as a working method:

> That was something I became aware of as we worked. As it stands, I can't match the reaction times of the performers. Or the musicians. At least not whilst I'm part of the process … let the machine take over, however, and everything will be fine.[32]

An ironic comment in relation to the critique offered by *TG3* is that the live is compromised by the digital. Gregory's comment here is a further example that collaborative strategies need to be flexible to accommodate the differing work patterns of the collaborators.

Petralia, as writer and initial director, was interested in working with strategies of displacement and defamiliarisation both in the making phase of the performance and in the way materials were juxtaposed in the final performance score. The strategies were developed to distinguish live from pre-recorded materials, to foreground connections but also disrupt connections between human and machine and to provide and destroy the notion of visual and audio clues concerning 'cause and effect' relationships in the playing out of the material, thus requiring the spectator to be carried down different aesthetic and sensory pathways.

The challenge of signposting the live efficacy of the performer-musicians at their consoles was tackled in the second R&D block. The configuration of the space positioned the laptop performer-musicians at the front of the playing area; however, the three performer-singers (positioned at the back of the space) noted that their ability to work playfully behind the computers 'felt' as though it was thwarted by the rules imposed by the technology. A shift of dynamics was suggested that paired a performer-musician with a performer-singer, and this decision opened up possibilities for connections to be made in the space; however, one performer noted a further frustration pertaining to the compromised sense of live connections between performer-musician and performer-singer: that the relationship produced was static and unidirectional. This feedback led to the performer-musicians having their chairs removed, requiring them to be more evident bodies, standing (awkwardly) behind their laptops in the space rather than appearing as an extension of the machine. A further defamiliarisation strategy was introduced whereby all the performers removed their shoes. This somewhat radical suggestion produced very positive results in terms of the performers developing an awareness of themselves in the space, connecting with each other and beginning to explore what performing as 'self' might mean in the context of the project; thus, all six performers became integral to the developing landscape.

The method of creating an initial space for play allowed for some basic strategies for learning to work with each other to emerge, as described above; however, it became apparent in the second R&D block that the group required more intervention and clearer instruction from Petralia as the 'outside eye'. In feedback, there was a call for connectivity, a narrative, a sense of who these people were and why there were there. This led to further, more specific, interventions being introduced in the form of rules and structuring principles; thus, a process of filtering, eliminating and distilling of the creative materials began.

Having confidence in each other's abilities to make judgements, to willingly be taken on a journey out of normative aesthetic and artistic 'comfort zones' was vital to the efficacy and success of the collaboration and, thus, further strategies were explored. Pairing each performer-musician with a performer-singer, so that physical movements and gestures were synchronised with the resulting audio sounds, made an important connection between performer-singer, performer-musician and laptop computer. This approach to developing a causal relationship between movements and sounds was further explored by Rogers (MMUle) and Lees (Proto-Type Theater). Through improvisation, Rogers captured the vocal sounds Lees was producing as she copied the physical movements he was making as he interacted with the computer to control and manipulate the captured audio. Michael Kirby has suggested that whilst 'the differences between acting and non-acting may be small […] it is precisely these borderline cases that can provide insights into acting theory and the nature of art'.[33] At moments during this particular improvisatory session it became evident that both Rogers and Lees were working in, or trying to find subconsciously, that space Kirby identifies as 'borderline'. For moments in this improvisation Rogers and Lees reported that it was not apparent who was initiating material and who was re-acting to the process. Whilst the material developed from this improvisation session did not appear in the final performance of the work, the performance strategy to align 'cause and effect' relationships between actions and sounds did.

Simon Emmerson, when discussing compositional approaches within electroacoustic music, has suggested that 'cause and effect' relationships might exist at both the micro and macro levels within the audio stream. He suggests that, 'From grand gesture to a *noh*-like shift in the smallest aspect of a performer's demeanour, we attempt to *find relationships* between action and result'.[34] Emmerson's point here is that for him, it is the 'hearing' of a cause that can result in the 'hearing' of an effect.[35] Emmerson has defined this as the audio's 'sounding flow'.[36] Developing 'cause and effect' relationships within the audio stream can be helpful for spectators when attempting to engage with sonic structures that have little or no apparent connection between the visual and the sonic. However, in the world of electroacoustic music, the sounding flow is normally prioritised over the visual stimuli that may result, as a consequence, in human and machine interaction.

Retreating a little from this position, MMUle, working within a multi/interdisciplinary context, was required to locate its musical practice

within the wider context of contemporary arts where the audio and the visual complement one another (in terms of coherence but not necessarily unity). Here, the audio 'cause and effect' relationships were competing with 'cause and effect' relationships in other mediums, as noted in relation to Kirby above. In an attempt to encourage the spectator to 'find relationships', 'cause and effect' connections were planted at the beginning of the musical score so that the resulting audio streams developed with an identifiable 'cause and effect' relationship; the clues, as mentioned earlier, had the potential to allow the spectator to discover their own pathway through the material being presented.

The initial work in the R&D sessions, developing spatial relationships between MMUle and Proto-type Theater, along with the reflexive approach to building a physical and sonic relationship, as evidenced through the example of Rogers and Lees above, and MMUle's approach to planting audio clues into the sonic structures of the developing work, led to what became the opening section of the work. In *Prologue*, two performers (one performer-musician and one performer-singer) entered the space. The performer-musician stood behind a laptop computer stage right; the performer-singer stood down stage behind a microphone; both were lit by spot-lights; the performer-musician encouraged the performer-singer to 'test' the microphone; the performer-singer spoke into the microphone and made a physical gesture in recognition that their relationship had been established. The performer-singer's voice was 'captured' by the performer-musician. This process was repeated until all six performers had entered the performance space and established, for the spectator that there was a special, sonic and visual relationship that would be played out throughout the performance.

The intricate web of creative compromises and problem-solving documented above evidences the complexities inherent in any collaborative process. The work undertaken in the concentric circles of collaboration was all underpinned by the necessity to make decisions and articulate value judgements and, thus, the following proposes a critical frame that provides an insight into these processes.

Aesthetics as a Critical Framework

TG3's collaborative journey was saturated with aesthetic experiences, judgements and decisions. Noël Carroll, in an article on aesthetic experience, examines a taxonomy of three sorts of aesthetic experience:

'affect-orientated', 'axiologically-orientated' and 'content-orientated'.[37] While Carroll primarily discusses artistic value from the position of an outsider, he notes the possibilities and limitations of each sort of experience and seeks to identify key characteristics of aesthetic experience, as opposed to aesthetic evaluation that denotes a distance or separation from the aesthetic object. In terms of *TG3*, value (for the collaborators) was generated both in the immediacy of the work space and from a distance via a project blog, a space where the insider/outsider positions merged. Simply, affect-orientated aesthetic experience is generated in the moment of an encounter; axiologically-orientated aesthetic experience is where experience is interpreted via pre-determined value judgements; content-orientated aesthetic experiences are driven by the construction of the materials rather than experience, thus the aesthetic experience is a response to the expressive qualities of the art work.

In the outer circle of collaboration, the blog provided a virtual space that replicated the daily review of the day's experiments and similarly encouraged an open debate that crystallised thoughts on the aesthetic 'content-orientated' materials being developed that, in turn, resulted in axiologically-orientated decisions or a sense of the growing, collectively agreed, intrinsic value of the performance. While there were many notable moments during R&D that generated affect-orientated aesthetic experience for the collaborators, these moments were often unrepeatable, as have been noted previously. What was required was the generation of affect-orientated experiences for the spectator. Thus, being able to shift perspective away from the sensorial affect that something 'feels good', but we do not know why (aligned with the play of activities in the middle circle) and away from the axiological aesthetic, reminiscent of the collaborators working in the inner circle, informed by their own previous experiences of what was 'good', enabled the collaborators eventually, and effectively, to focus on the content-orientated aesthetic and the intrinsic value to the performance product.

Carroll usefully queries the notion that an aesthetic experience must be pleasurable. In *TG3*, being able to distinguish between an aesthetic experience that aroused pleasure and/or excitation rather than tedium and displeasure was important to both the collaborators and the desired experience designed for the spectator. Those aspects of the process that resulted in 'defective' aesthetic experiences were discounted or re-worked in order that the aesthetic experience galvanised for the spectator was not merely

pleasurable but also had the potential to evoke a heightened sensorial experience that might overwhelm, disturb and potentially mobilise a sense of disorientation.

In relation to the experiential effects that were designed to garner a sense of disorientation for both performer and spectator, Makus created several kinds of light objects and lighting designs that were dismissed (see Fig. 11.1) and re-worked before being completely reconceived (see Fig. 11.2). The final built light objects were used interactively by the performer-singers and performer-musicians and created a seemingly discordant dramaturgical strand. The objects appeared late in the R&D process and disrupted what, in many ways, had become a comfortable pleasure in the sound and visual composition. Makus was not interested in merely providing light to see the stage action but to provoke both performers and spectators at a heightened sensorial level. She commented that she liked to

Fig. 11.1 R&D block 2: Gillian Lees, Leentje Van de Cruys, Nick Donovan and Andrew 'Wes' Westerside; light objects by Rebecca M.K. Makus. (Image courtesy of Proto-type Theater)

Fig. 11.2 R&D block 5: Leentje Van de Cruys, Andrew 'Wes' Westerside and Gillian Lees. Developing interactive light objects worn by performer-singers by Rebecca M.K. Makus. (Image courtesy of Paul J. Rogers)

tilt lights so that they grazed the eyes of performers, agitating them but not infuriating them, producing an affect-orientated aesthetic that was not pleasurable but was effective in disturbing and exciting the sensibilities of both performers and spectators.[38]

For the collaborators involved in *TG3*, it became evident that they needed to recalibrate their sense of value and align it with the project as opposed to their knowledge and expertise of a particular disciplinary domain. For example, Donovan reported that, at times, Petralia, as an outside eye, would make positive comments about a section that he experienced as unsatisfactory, as lacking in innovation—as tedious. However, he grew to recognise that his experience was different from what became a common or collective discourse. With a group of collaborators, with radically different skill sets and reference points, each searching for something innovative, what they produced/suggested was frequently considered

too outlandish or extreme for another collaborator. Thus, an important aspect of the collaboration was recognising the terms with which they perceived each other. They needed to construct a common language and common value to know what was a 'common good' for the project. Donovan comments that 'it was not about compromise (although it felt like it at times) but a need to re-define and negotiate what was collectively good for the project'.[39]

Understanding the aesthetic judgement that something 'looks right'/'feels right' required a collective agreement of values. Some of the performers commented that their value judgements were based on intuition but, of course, intuition is informed by experience (cultural, social, political) and particular predilections for particular approaches to developing artistic content; intuition is axiological. In order that the performance evoked a heightened sensorial affect for the spectator required that the decisions of the collaborators needed to be based, not just on what was in some way familiar but, perhaps more importantly, where the art work imaginatively departed from existing techniques and compositional practices (in both form and content). If the collaborators became energised by an aesthetic experience, then so might the spectator. However, something that energised the performer-musicians often appeared passé to the other collaborators; something that appeared novel musically to these collaborators equally appeared mundane and clichéd to the performer-musicians. Thus, questions of innovation and originality in relation to cultural/personal context, the breaking of rules, rupturing conventions and so on became important markers in the making of decisions and aesthetic judgements.

To return to Carroll's taxonomy, the affect-orientated approach may best serve to recognise that the collaborators were drawing on different—and discrepant—aesthetic experiences. From this perspective the individual's experience is prioritised, whereas a more effective strategy might have been for the collaborators to acknowledge that a different type of approach was required to make collective decisions regarding aesthetic experience, hence the axiological approach, which provided a way of describing the aesthetic agreement that was constructed through the project through repetition and negotiation. Making space for group feedback and discussion after each day's work, using the blog, as well as having intense periods of R&D where, in some instances, the collaborators shared living space as well as work space, fostered a level of collective experience, facilitating a

collective valuing. Carroll describes this approach as valuing the art experience 'for its own sake'.[40]

Building strategies that enabled the disparate collaborators to transform into a collective ensured that their experiences and creative proposals were listened to/supported/rejected equally. Such processes were vital in terms of keeping everyone on board and trusting that this was, as has been documented, a genuinely collaborative process.

As noted above, the strategy of pairing a performer-musician with a performer-singer had the effect of breaking down any perceived normative privileging of the performer-singers in relation to the performer-musicians. In relation to Carroll's axiological aesthetic experience, the effect of the pairings was to affect the working relationships across the whole process, promoting the importance of shared experiences and thus building opportunities for developing collaborative strategies as the collaborators developed a sense of shared responsibility. As Carroll states, it is,

> to the advantage of the individual to develop and refine a talent for being attuned to the feelings of conspecifics. Aesthetic experience makes the transmission of a common culture of feelings accessible—with evident benefits for both the group and the individual.[41]

In the case of a project such as *TG3*, an agreement that the project had intrinsic value was a motivating force. However, running parallel to this sensibility was also a sense that the collaborators valued aspects of the process and the final performance as 'instrumentally valuable'.[42] Van De Cruys reported that, as a solo performer, she had a freedom within her work that was not possible in *TG3*. At times, she said, she felt like a 'small robot'; she needed to find moments of freedom but also recognised that she had a responsibility and part to play in the 'machine'.[43]

Van De Cruys's experience of digital oppression produced a tension in her performance quality: she, along with the other two performer-singers, fought to re-assert their place on stage against the 'tangled webs of technology'. Their performances embody a physical resistance in the playing out of their material scores as they are caught between the live and the digitally processed, further emphasising the fundamental relationship explored in *TG3* between the human and the machine. While the project illustrates that effective collaborative strategies between humans are possible, we might query, as does Camus, the relationship we have with the machine.

Conclusion

TG3 sought to maintain a level of inclusive collaboration throughout the R&D blocks. Consequently, each collaborator was encouraged to develop their own response to the source materials and, thus, there were as many dramaturgical threads as there were collaborators. The content drove the aesthetic experiences, and while the project itself needed to have intrinsic value for the collaborators, the individual dramaturgical strands were content driven. This is the third formulation of aesthetic experience identified by Carroll's taxonomy. He says,

> Sometimes form gives rise to aesthetic properties, such as unity, while the succession, evolution, or juxtaposition of expressive properties can constitute the form of the art work … if attention is directed with understanding to the form of the artwork … then the experience is aesthetic.[44]

Carroll defines form as 'the ensemble of choices intended to realize the point or the purpose of the artwork'.[45] In this instance the form was a composite of individual dramaturgical strands that frequently collided but whose overall aim was to sensorially overwhelm the spectator, a metaphor representing and providing a sensorial insight into Camus's existential condition. Lavender commented that in performance *TG3* engaged with a different aesthetic palette, whereby collaborators came together as a team and where, as a spectator, 'we could not see the joins'.[46] Echoing the comment made earlier by Cage, Lavender stated that the project aesthetically engaged with different individual entities that came together to find a common voice; although the entities were separate they could not be looked at separately: it was a composite. He went on to describe the performance as,

> a piece of music-theatre based on inter-relations; it asks not what it is but what it does. It performs the fact of needing to be produced, manifesting the production as a part of the piece; it becomes about surfaces, coming together in integral ways as well as juxtaposed ways. It had a uniformity of voice derived from a composite of elements—like a mosaic.[47]

As Lavender stated *TG3* might better be located in terms of what it does rather than what it is. What it does is offer a platform to a diverse range of artists to collaborate and demonstrate that collaboration can be affected by allowing individual voices to be retained and promoted. The

three concentric circles, discussed earlier, depict the ways in which collaborators were able to retain a sense of agency while also producing a discordant but coherent shared aesthetic. The success of the collaboration was that the artists all recognised a need to compromise as well as accommodate and embrace different creative strategies. Their aesthetic dispositions at the start of the project were challenged and restored as a powerful and effective collective aesthetic sensibility that effectively drove the performance.

Notes

1. Henceforth referred to as *TG3*.
2. Noël Carroll, 'Aesthetic Experience Revisited,' *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 42, no. 2 (2002): 145–168.
3. Andy Lavender, 'The Builder Association—Super Vision (2005)—Digital dataflow and the synthesis of everything,' in *Making Contemporary Theatre: International Rehearsal Processes*, edited by Jen Harvie and Andy Lavender (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 21.
4. For the purposes of clarity and consistency throughout this chapter, we have elected to refer to the three laptop performers (MMUle) as performer-musicians and the three theatre performers as performer-singers.
5. Paul Crowther, *Critical Aesthetics and Postmodernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
6. R&D (Research and Development) was the preferred term to describe the time the collaborators physically met and worked together.
7. Peter S. Petralia, interview with Turner 2012.
8. The concept of Chapters was conceived as a series of musical interpretations aligned with Camus's narrative; there was, in addition, a Prologue and Epilogue that framed the event in terms of the way that technology has replaced God as a twenty-first-century existential anxiety.
9. *The Good, The God and The Guillotine* was commissioned by Lincoln Performing Arts Centre (Lincoln), Manchester Metropolitan University (Crewe) and Tramway (Glasgow). Supported by Live at LICA and the National Lottery through Arts Council England. *The Good, The God and The Guillotine* premiered at Lincoln Performing Arts Centre on 25 October 2013 followed by a 2014 UK tour including performances at Live at LICA, Contact, Manchester (Presented by Contact and Word of Warning), Axis Arts Centre and Nottingham Playhouse. see http://proto-type.org/projects/past/the-good-the-god-and-the-guillotine/ (last accessed 30 August 2019).
10. Adam York Gregory, interview with Turner 2012.

11. Proto-type Theater, 2015. http://proto-type.org/ (last accessed 21 August 2015).
12. Jen Harvie, 'Introduction: Contemporary theatre in the making,' in *Making Contemporary Theatre: International rehearsal processes*, edited by Jen Harvie and Andy Lavender (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 1.
13. Both Petralia and Donovan left the project as a result of taking up jobs overseas.
14. Peter S. Petralia, comment made during R&D 2012.
15. Heiner Goebbels, '"It's all part of one concern": A "Keynote" to Composition as Staging,' in *Composed Theatre: Aesthetics, practices, processes*, edited by Matthias Rebstock and David Roesner, 111–120 (Bristol: Intellect, 2012), 113.
16. Jörg Laue, '… To Gather Together What Exists in a Dispersed State,' in *Composed Theatre: Aesthetics, practices, processes*, edited by Matthias Rebstock and David Roesner, 133–154 (Bristol: Intellect, 2012), 136.
17. For a discussion regarding the use of the term score in theatre, see Eugenio Barba, *The Paper Canoe* (London: Routledge, 1995).
18. The idea of working in the moment is also discussed in Chaps. 6 and 7.
19. John Cage and Daniel Charles, *For the Birds* (Boston and London: Marion Boyars 1981), 215.
20. Andrew Westerside, comment made during R&D 2013.
21. Laue, '… To Gather Together What Exists in a Dispersed State', 2012, 137.
22. Ibid.
23. This is a non-western technique where the same melody is sung simultaneous but with some variation to the rhythms used, thus avoiding unison singing.
24. For a more detailed discussion of how these and other techniques were incorporated within *TG3,* see Andrew Westerside, Martin Blain and Jane Turner, 'Through collaboration to sharawadji: immediacy, mediation and the voice,' *Theatre and Performance Design,* 2, no. 3–4 (2016): 293–311.
25. Paul J. Rogers, interview with Turner 2013.
26. Nicholas Till, 'Hearing voices: transcriptions for the phonogram of a schizophrenic: music-theatre for performer and audio-visual media,' In *Composed theatre: aesthetics, practices,* processes, edited by Matthias Rebstock and David Roesner, 183–199 (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect Books, 2012), 187.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., 196.
29. Both Professor Andy Lavender and Professor Nicholas Till attended and participated in a Roundtable, post-show discussion following the

performance of *The Good, the God and the Guillotine* at Axis Arts Centre, Cheshire in 2013.

30. See, Kim Cascone, 'Grain, sequence, system: Three levels of reception in the performance of laptop music,' *Contemporary Music Review*, 22, no. 4 (2003): 101–104; Caleb Stuart, 'The object of performance: Aural performativity in contemporary laptop music,' *Contemporary Music Review*, 22, no. 4 (2003): 59–65; Tad Turner, 'The resonance of the cubicle: Laptop performance in post-digital musics,' *Contemporary Music Review*, 22, no. 4 (2003): 81–92; Martin Blain, 'Issues in instrumental design: The ontological problem (opportunity?) of 'liveness' for a laptop ensemble,' *Journal of Music, Technology and Education*, 6, no. 2 (2013): 191–206.
31. Till, 'Hearing voices: transcriptions for the phonogram of a schizophrenic', 2012, 197.
32. Adam York Gregory, Private project blog 2013.
33. Michael Kirby, 'On Acting and Not-Acting.' In *Acting (Re) Considered*, edited by Phillip B. Zarrilli, 43–58 (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 43.
34. Simon Emmerson, *Living Electronic Music* (Padstow: Ashgate, 2007), xiii.
35. Simon Emmerson, 'Music imagination technology,' *Proceedings of the International Computer Music Conference* (2011): 365–372, 269.
36. Emmerson, *Living Electronic Music*, 2007, 30.
37. Carroll, 'Aesthetic Experience Revisited,' 2002, 145–168.
38. Rebecca M.K. Makus, interview with Turner 2013.
39. Nick Donovan, interview with Turner 2013.
40. Carroll, 'Aesthetic Experience Revisited,' 2002, 159.
41. Ibid., 157.
42. Ibid., 160.
43. Leentje Van De Cruys, Roundtable post-show discussion, Axis Arts Centre, 2013.
44. Carroll, 'Aesthetic Experience Revisited,' 2002, 164.
45. Ibid., 165.
46. Andy Lavender, Roundtable post-show discussion, Axis Arts Centre, 2013.
47. Ibid.

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