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Blain, Martin  and Turner, Jane  (2020) The Good, The God and the Guillotine: Insider/Outsider perspectives. In: Artistic Research in Performance through Collaboration. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp. 205-228. ISBN 9783030385989 (hardcover); 9783030385996 (ebook)

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-38599-6_11

Publisher: Palgrave Macmillan

Version: Accepted Version

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Metadata of the chapter that will be visualized online

Chapter Title	<i>The Good, The God and The Guillotine: Insider/Outsider Perspectives</i>	
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Abstract	<p>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 <i>The Good, The God and The Guillotine</i>. 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.</p>	
Keywords (separated by “ - ”)	Collaborative strategies - Performance - Insider - Outsider - Decision-making - Aesthetic experience - Performance-making	

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

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

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

38 The authors offer complementary perspectives on creative collabora-
39 tion from their insider/outsider positions. Jane Turner's ethnographic
40 role gave her a privileged outsider perspective on the collaboration process
41 and insights into the insider perspectives from the interviews she under-
42 took with the collaborators. Here she focuses on the ways in which aes-
43 thetic judgements were made and how a process of creative cohesion
44 evolved. Her observations are aligned with Noël Carroll's taxonomy² for
45 qualifying aesthetic experience. Although Carroll focuses on the experi-
46 ence of the recipient of an artwork, in this context, the taxonomy provides
47 a useful insight into the creative development and decision-making pro-
48 cesses engaged with over the course of the *TG3* project.

49 Martin Blain is a composer and laptop performer directly involved in
50 the project and was particularly interested in exploring how his creative
51 practice was influenced, freed up and compromised by interactively work-
52 ing on such a multi/interdisciplinary project. From his insider perspective,
53 he documents some of the creative insights exposed through the processes
54 of collaboration. Developing on Andy Lavender's notion of 'circles of col-
55 laboration',³ Blain positions and theorises his own experience as a
56 performer-musician⁴ within his formulation of the concentric circles of
57 collaboration, which are conceived as three contrasting types of collabora-
58 tive 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.

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

118

CONTEXT

119 *TG3* set out to be a collaborative project exploring Camus’s novel *The*
 120 *Outsider (L’Étranger)* to be performed as an intermedial concert event in
 121 11 Chapters.⁸ The collaborators were: two members of Proto-type Theater
 122 (Gillian Lees and Andrew Westerside) and Leentje Van De Cruys (associate
 123 member of Proto-type Theater) as performer-singers; MMUle
 124 (Manchester Metropolitan University laptop ensemble) comprised three
 125 musicians (Martin Blain, Nick Donovan [latterly replaced by Jonas
 126 Hummel] and Paul J. Rogers) who were performer-musicians; lighting
 127 designer Rebecca M.K. Makus (from the USA), digital designer/animato-
 128 r, Adam York Gregory (freelancer) and writer and, initially, director
 129 Peter S. Petralia (founder of Proto-type Theater).

130 The collaborators were involved in five short blocks of R&D time:
 131 February, March and May 2012, followed by a week at the Tramway in
 132 Glasgow in January 2013, a three-week block in July/August 2013; the
 133 show premiered at the Lincoln Performing Arts Centre in October 2013
 134 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

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

181 Time together, in an equipped studio space, was scarce and costly. Over
182 the two and a half years, from first meeting to first performance, the col-
183 laborators worked in a shared space for no more than 58 days. Further
184 challenges and a consequence of the fractured duration of the project
185 include the early departure of Petralia, the initial director and author of
186 the adaptation. Petralia left the project 18 months in; this event was fol-
187 lowed by one of the performer-musicians, Donovan, leaving the project
188 two years in.¹³ Both female performer-singers, Lees and Van De Cruys,
189 were ill during scheduled meeting times, and the lighting designer, Makus,
190 because she lived in the USA, was unable to attend all the scheduled meet-
191 ings. Thus the 58 days were compromised and disrupted for a range of
192 very legitimate reasons. It is testimony to the determination and commit-
193 ment of all the collaborators that the project came to fruition.

194 Improvisation was a further term that highlighted differences in under-
195 standing. It emerged that the term had a currency that was inflected dif-
196 ferently across the different disciplines, and across cultures. It became
197 apparent that the term improvising was understood differently in the USA
198 than in the UK; Petralia reported that in the USA the term devising was
199 rarely used as improvising was the more usual term to describe creative
200 activity where new material was generated and refined for performance.¹⁴
201 However, in *TG3* the term improvisation was more usually used to describe
202 the experimental, spontaneous activities generated during R&D and, as
203 we shall see, can be aligned to the middle circle of collaboration. The term
204 devised or scored was used to describe the pre-planned materials that were
205 brought into the physical R&D space by Gregory, Makus and the
206 performer-musicians, whereas devising became more prominent in the lat-
207 ter stages of the collaboration to describe the process of refining the mate-
208 rials for performance.

209 Heiner Goebbels, a renowned international music-theatre maker, com-
210 poser 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 texture²³ 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

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

331 PERFORMING WITH TECHNOLOGY

332 TG3 was a technologically driven project and, as has been discussed, this
 333 produced a range of particular challenges. Nicholas Till encountered simi-
 334 lar technical and performative challenges in his work on digital opera
 335 where he was exploring the notion of the ‘technologically uncanny’. He
 336 defines the term as,

337 an effect that arises through the blurring of nature/culture distinctions,
 338 both at a phenomenal level (the electronic that *sounds* human, or vice versa;
 339 the anthropomorphism of machines) and the conceptual level (do we hear
 340 technologically produced sounds/images as phenomena of nature or cul-
 341 ture; as ‘mediated’ or ‘immediate’?)²⁶

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

354 In light of Till’s account, the aim in TG3 to create an experiential ambi-
 355 guity for the spectator needed, to be reconsidered. Till notes that eventu-
 356 ally 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 commentators³⁰ 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.

394 Petralia, as writer and initial director, was interested in working with
395 strategies of displacement and defamiliarisation both in the making phase
396 of the performance and in the way materials were juxtaposed in the final
397 performance score. The strategies were developed to distinguish live from
398 pre-recorded materials, to foreground connections but also disrupt con-
399 nections between human and machine and to provide and destroy the
400 notion of visual and audio clues concerning ‘cause and effect’ relationships
401 in the playing out of the material, thus requiring the spectator to be car-
402 ried down different aesthetic and sensory pathways.

403 The challenge of signposting the live efficacy of the performer-musicians
404 at their consoles was tackled in the second R&D block. The configuration
405 of the space positioned the laptop performer-musicians at the front of the
406 playing area; however, the three performer-singers (positioned at the back
407 of the space) noted that their ability to work playfully behind the comput-
408 ers ‘felt’ as though it was thwarted by the rules imposed by the technol-
409 ogy. A shift of dynamics was suggested that paired a performer-musician
410 with a performer-singer, and this decision opened up possibilities for con-
411 nections to be made in the space; however, one performer noted a further
412 frustration pertaining to the compromised sense of live connections
413 between performer-musician and performer-singer: that the relationship
414 produced was static and unidirectional. This feedback led to the performer-
415 musicians having their chairs removed, requiring them to be more evident
416 bodies, standing (awkwardly) behind their laptops in the space rather than
417 appearing as an extension of the machine. A further defamiliarisation strat-
418 egy was introduced whereby all the performers removed their shoes. This
419 somewhat radical suggestion produced very positive results in terms of the
420 performers developing an awareness of themselves in the space, connect-
421 ing with each other and beginning to explore what performing as ‘self’
422 might mean in the context of the project; thus, all six performers became
423 integral to the developing landscape.

424 The method of creating an initial space for play allowed for some basic
425 strategies for learning to work with each other to emerge, as described
426 above; however, it became apparent in the second R&D block that the
427 group required more intervention and clearer instruction from Petralia as
428 the ‘outside eye’. In feedback, there was a call for connectivity, a narrative,
429 a sense of who these people were and why there were there. This led to
430 further, more specific, interventions being introduced in the form of rules
431 and structuring principles; thus, a process of filtering, eliminating and dis-
432 tilling 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 sub-consciously, 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 *nob*-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

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

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

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

505 AESTHETICS AS A CRITICAL FRAMEWORK

506 *TG3*’s collaborative journey was saturated with aesthetic experiences,
 507 judgements and decisions. Noël Carroll, in an article on aesthetic experi-
 508 ence, examines a taxonomy of three sorts of aesthetic experience:

‘affect-orientated’, ‘axiologically-orientated’ and ‘content-orientated’.³⁷ 509
 While Carroll primarily discusses artistic value from the position of an 510
 outsider, he notes the possibilities and limitations of each sort of experi- 511
 ence and seeks to identify key characteristics of aesthetic experience, as 512
 opposed to aesthetic evaluation that denotes a distance or separation from 513
 the aesthetic object. In terms of *TG3*, value (for the collaborators) was 514
 generated both in the immediacy of the work space and from a distance via 515
 a project blog, a space where the insider/outsider positions merged. 516
 Simply, affect-orientated aesthetic experience is generated in the moment 517
 of an encounter; axiologically-orientated aesthetic experience is where 518
 experience is interpreted via pre-determined value judgements; content- 519
 orientated aesthetic experiences are driven by the construction of the 520
 materials rather than experience, thus the aesthetic experience is a response 521
 to the expressive qualities of the art work. 522

In the outer circle of collaboration, the blog provided a virtual space 523
 that replicated the daily review of the day’s experiments and similarly 524
 encouraged an open debate that crystallised thoughts on the aesthetic 525
 ‘content-orientated’ materials being developed that, in turn, resulted in 526
 axiologically-orientated decisions or a sense of the growing, collectively 527
 agreed, intrinsic value of the performance. While there were many notable 528
 moments during R&D that generated affect-orientated aesthetic experi- 529
 ence for the collaborators, these moments were often unrepeatable, as 530
 have been noted previously. What was required was the generation of 531
 affect-orientated experiences for the spectator. Thus, being able to shift 532
 perspective away from the sensorial affect that something ‘feels good’, but 533
 we do not know why (aligned with the play of activities in the middle 534
 circle) and away from the axiological aesthetic, reminiscent of the collabo- 535
 rators working in the inner circle, informed by their own previous experi- 536
 ences of what was ‘good’, enabled the collaborators eventually, and 537
 effectively, to focus on the content-orientated aesthetic and the intrinsic 538
 value to the performance product. 539

Carroll usefully queries the notion that an aesthetic experience must be 540
 pleasurable. In *TG3*, being able to distinguish between an aesthetic experi- 541
 ence that aroused pleasure and/or excitation rather than tedium and dis- 542
 pleasure was important to both the collaborators and the desired experience 543
 designed for the spectator. Those aspects of the process that resulted in 544
 ‘defective’ aesthetic experiences were discounted or re-worked in order 545
 that the aesthetic experience galvanised for the spectator was not merely 546

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

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

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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)



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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

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

582 Understanding the aesthetic judgement that something ‘looks
583 right’/‘feels right’ required a collective agreement of values. Some of the
584 performers commented that their value judgements were based on intu-
585 ition but, of course, intuition is informed by experience (cultural, social,
586 political) and particular predilections for particular approaches to develop-
587 ing artistic content; intuition is axiological. In order that the performance
588 evoked a heightened sensorial affect for the spectator required that the
589 decisions of the collaborators needed to be based, not just on what was in
590 some way familiar but, perhaps more importantly, where the art work
591 imaginatively departed from existing techniques and compositional prac-
592 tices (in both form and content). If the collaborators became energised by
593 an aesthetic experience, then so might the spectator. However, something
594 that energised the performer-musicians often appeared passé to the other
595 collaborators; something that appeared novel musically to these collabora-
596 tors equally appeared mundane and clichéd to the performer-musicians.
597 Thus, questions of innovation and originality in relation to cultural/per-
598 sonal context, the breaking of rules, rupturing conventions and so on
599 became important markers in the making of decisions and aesthetic
600 judgements.

601 To return to Carroll’s taxonomy, the affect-orientated approach may
602 best serve to recognise that the collaborators were drawing on different—
603 and discrepant—aesthetic experiences. From this perspective the individu-
604 al’s experience is prioritised, whereas a more effective strategy might have
605 been for the collaborators to acknowledge that a different type of approach
606 was required to make collective decisions regarding aesthetic experience,
607 hence the axiological approach, which provided a way of describing the
608 aesthetic agreement that was constructed through the project through
609 repetition and negotiation. Making space for group feedback and discus-
610 sion after each day’s work, using the blog, as well as having intense periods
611 of R&D where, in some instances, the collaborators shared living space as
612 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

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

659 Sometimes form gives rise to aesthetic properties, such as unity, while the
 660 succession, evolution, or juxtaposition of expressive properties can consti-
 661 tute the form of the art work ... if attention is directed with understanding
 662 to the form of the artwork ... then the experience is aesthetic.⁴⁴

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

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

681 As Lavender stated *TG3* might better be located in terms of what it
 682 does rather than what it is. What it does is offer a platform to a diverse
 683 range of artists to collaborate and demonstrate that collaboration can be
 684 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*. 694
2. Noël Carroll, 'Aesthetic Experience Revisited,' *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 42, no. 2 (2002): 145–168. 695
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. 697
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. 701
5. Paul Crowther, *Critical Aesthetics and Postmodernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). 702
6. R&D (Research and Development) was the preferred term to describe the time the collaborators physically met and worked together. 703
7. Peter S. Petralia, interview with Turner 2012. 704
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. 705
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). 706
10. Adam York Gregory, interview with Turner 2012. 707

- 724 11. Proto-type Theater, 2015. <http://proto-type.org/> (last accessed 21
725 August 2015).
- 726 12. Jen Harvie, 'Introduction: Contemporary theatre in the making,' in
727 *Making Contemporary Theatre: International rehearsal processes*, edited by
728 Jen Harvie and Andy Lavender (Manchester: Manchester University Press,
729 2010), 1.
- 730 13. Both Petralia and Donovan left the project as a result of taking up jobs
731 overseas.
- 732 14. Peter S. Petralia, comment made during R&D 2012.
- 733 15. Heiner Goebbels, "'It's all part of one concern": A "Keynote" to
734 Composition as Staging,' in *Composed Theatre: Aesthetics, practices, pro-*
735 *cesses*, edited by Matthias Rebstock and David Roesner, 111–120 (Bristol:
736 Intellect, 2012), 113.
- 737 16. Jörg Laue, '... To Gather Together What Exists in a Dispersed State,' in
738 *Composed Theatre: Aesthetics, practices, processes*, edited by Matthias
739 Rebstock and David Roesner, 133–154 (Bristol: Intellect, 2012), 136.
- 740 17. For a discussion regarding the use of the term score in theatre, see Eugenio
741 Barba, *The Paper Canoe* (London: Routledge, 1995).
- 742 18. The idea of working in the moment is also discussed in Chaps. 6 and 7.
- 743 19. John Cage and Daniel Charles, *For the Birds* (Boston and London: Marion
744 Boyars 1981), 215.
- 745 20. Andrew Westerside, comment made during R&D 2013.
- 746 21. Laue, '... To Gather Together What Exists in a Dispersed State', 2012, 137.
- 747 22. Ibid.
- 748 23. This is a non-western technique where the same melody is sung simultane-
749 ous but with some variation to the rhythms used, thus avoiding unison
750 singing.
- 751 24. For a more detailed discussion of how these and other techniques were
752 incorporated within *TG3*, see Andrew Westerside, Martin Blain and Jane
753 Turner, 'Through collaboration to sharawadji: immediacy, mediation and
754 the voice,' *Theatre and Performance Design*, 2, no. 3–4 (2016): 293–311.
- 755 25. Paul J. Rogers, interview with Turner 2013.
- 756 26. Nicholas Till, 'Hearing voices: transcriptions for the phonogram of a
757 schizophrenic: music-theatre for performer and audio-visual media,' In
758 *Composed theatre: aesthetics, practices, processes*, edited by Matthias
759 Rebstock and David Roesner, 183–199 (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect
760 Books, 2012), 187.
- 761 27. Ibid.
- 762 28. Ibid., 196.
- 763 29. Both Professor Andy Lavender and Professor Nicholas Till attended and
764 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. 765
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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. 767
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31. Till, 'Hearing voices: transcriptions for the phonogram of a schizophrenic', 2012, 197. 776
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32. Adam York Gregory, Private project blog 2013. 778
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. 779
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34. Simon Emmerson, *Living Electronic Music* (Padstow: Ashgate, 2007), xiii. 782
35. Simon Emmerson, 'Music imagination technology,' *Proceedings of the International Computer Music Conference* (2011): 365–372, 269. 783
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36. Emmerson, *Living Electronic Music*, 2007, 30. 785
37. Carroll, 'Aesthetic Experience Revisited,' 2002, 145–168. 786
38. Rebecca M.K. Makus, interview with Turner 2013. 787
39. Nick Donovan, interview with Turner 2013. 788
40. Carroll, 'Aesthetic Experience Revisited,' 2002, 159. 789
41. *Ibid.*, 157. 790
42. *Ibid.*, 160. 791
43. Leentje Van De Cruys, Roundtable post-show discussion, Axis Arts Centre, 2013. 792
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44. Carroll, 'Aesthetic Experience Revisited,' 2002, 164. 794
45. *Ibid.*, 165. 795
46. Andy Lavender, Roundtable post-show discussion, Axis Arts Centre, 2013. 796
47. *Ibid.* 797

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