

TAKING THE ACTORS SERIOUSLY: MICHIEL VANDEVELDE'S "PARADISE NOW (1968–2018)"

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Abstract

The article departs from a phrase in Paul Ricoeur's "Memory, History, Forgetting" (2003), and attempts to take Ricoeur at his word, by taking seriously the troupe of Flemish teenage actors performing Michiel Vandeveld's "Paradise Now (1968–2018)", a re-working of the iconic performance by The Living Theatre, which when it was presented fifty years ago at the Avignon Festival offered itself as a preparation for its audience to take action, individually and collectively, personally and politically, beyond the space of the theatrical representation. Vandeveld and the teenagers' re-do functions rather differently. Drawing as much on film history and news and popular media as on theatre history, it offers a compilation of iconic images winding back to 1968, an occasion for these young 21st century performer-citizens – at once theatrical actors and "actors" of their own history – to voice their ambivalence about the potentials for common action in the present moment and the times ahead. The article considers the role of the "actors" (including the absent and the dead) in historical representation. It argues that the temporal form of the serial or chronicle (one image after another in chronological order) rather than the supposedly more complex – and human – dramatic plot (which structures relations between beginning, middle and end), attends to "taking the actors seriously" – in their actions and their passions – as a pressing task for our times.

Keywords: *"Paradise Now", teenage actors, theatrical re-enactment, chronicle and historical representation.*

Performance documentation

1968. A photograph of a crowd, people together in a space. Some sort of stage area. Those in the dark around the edges are watching. Those in the middle, in the light, are letting themselves be watched, talking to each other, or just hanging out.

Several of the people in the central, lit area are naked, half naked. Although they are a crowd, they are individualised, as people often are after something has taken place, in the aftermath of an event. Some clothes have been hung up at the back of the room. The crowd and the darkness extend all the way over to here, where the photo was taken, and to us who know next to nothing of what went on over there only a moment ago.

1968. An image from earlier in the event. Choreographed clusters of semi-clothed bodies, some sort of ritual action perhaps. But it is also a spectacle: produced for public consumption. We can see the backs of spectators' heads: an audience like at a theatre. A blue light pervades, no-one is individualised. Does any theatre look like this anymore?

1968 again, a last image from this set. If the photos are all of the same performance, then this one was probably taken some time between the other two. We can see more clearly where we are. A stone interior, like a medieval church, somewhere in Europe maybe. The spectators are in the performance space now, and some of the performers – their exposed flesh marks them out – are among the audience, but the action is still going on. It involves several other partially-naked people on the floor, horizontal, embracing, wrapped around each other, seemingly oblivious to the nearby spectators, absorbed with each other and with themselves. It is an odd sort of action to be watching, to be present at, but you can see the attention in people's gazes. Appreciative, expert even, taking in the whole scene. Connoisseurs of actuality. They are there and part of it. And what they are part of is something serious, meant and intended. Something real going on.

Fifty years later. 2018. A group of young people, some if not all of them teenagers, looking out from behind what appears to be a string curtain. Perhaps they are looking for "us", over here on the other side. They are there as themselves – individualised fully – but also not quite themselves. Their looking looks like something rehearsed, like they could be pretending. They could be performers, actors or dancers in a show. They are costumed, in single-tone pastel colours. The background is black, giving definition to the image, their posture, their faces.

Finally, 2018 once more. The same young people, but this time a motion image. A still image of people in movement. A group circles a duo, again against a black background. Picture-making. The group and the duo are moving at different speeds. The group are blurry – and therefore must be moving faster than the duo, who can be seen clearly. This is odd, because the two in the centre look like the ones who should be in sudden motion, one throwing a punch at the other. But they are frozen in their pose, holding their balance, straining to keep still: two young people, one white, one black, imitating a historical photograph of boxer Joe Frazier swinging at a leaning back Muhammad Ali during the 1971 "Fight of the Century". Worlds away from

them, from us, from here. The others, circling, watch them do that. As do we, from wherever we find ourselves right now.

The historical images, by photographer and counter-culture documentarist Don Snyder, are of American company The Living Theatre's "Paradise Now", which premiered at the Avignon Festival in summer 1968 and then toured the USA – along with other works by the company – later in the year, the tour serving as the occasion for The Living Theatre's return to their home country after several years of European "exile". At this point in time, for the young people in the more recent photographs, "Paradise Now" is – as it were – still to come; or else they are still to arrive.

These latter images, by Koen Cobbaert, are publicity shots for "Paradise Now (1968–2018)" [Kunstenfestivaldesarts 2018, where all of the images described above are archived], directed by choreographer Michiel Vandeveldel for fABULEUS [fABULEUS 2018a], a company based in the Belgian city of Leuven, who specialise in artistic collaboration between young performers and experienced theatre makers. The production, made with thirteen young people aged between 14 and 23, premiered at *kunstenfestivaldesarts* (KFDA) in Brussels during May, 2018 (which is where I saw it performed), as part of the festival's 50th anniversary commemoration of "May '68", and the multiple narratives that went into and arise from that moment. Acknowledging what The Living Theatre's "Paradise Now" attempted and, to an extent, achieved for its time: its critique of the dominant culture, its radical method of aesthetic assault, and its complex poetics of "suspension" of the language and structures of "command" for the sake of what the Living themselves claimed as "spontaneous, non-violent anarchist revolution", Vandeveldel and his collaborators also acknowledge the ambiguity of the '68 "legacy", the subsequent commodification of that cultural moment, and the difficulty of "thinking the future" on the model of this or any other received historical precedent. The 2018 production remains, though, we could say, concerned with exploring what remains of the revolutionary impulses of an earlier era, what can be retained – so to speak as critical or transformative potential – not least by those who have no memory of that past at all. But who have, perhaps, the youth – the "energy" – and the stake in futurity to realise aspects of that potential, to the extent that history still holds its potential in store.

History, remembered

A project, then, on the poetics and politics of history pursued, in large part, through the extension of collective *memory*, reaching back through the intervening years – and across generations – between 2018 and 1968. The way it works: the young ensemble inhabits a movement piece structured around the "freeze-frame" imitation of fifty iconic photographs [fABULEUS 2018b], drawn from news media, films, popular culture, performed in reverse chronological order. A movement into

the past that perpetually stops, and re-starts. Captions projected on the back wall of the stage identify the events for the audience, each projection a sort of history lesson in miniature, underwriting the shapes being thrown on stage, which may or may not provoke us to recall the images that have been selected to represent a history of the past fifty years. A history, largely, of main events. 2017: "pink protests" by women around the world following the inauguration of Donald Trump. 2016: Trump's election victory. 2015: Alan Kurdi's infant body at the sea's edge in Turkey, watched over by a stunned policeman, the projected caption recalling the Syrian Civil War and European intransigence over refugee migration. 2005: youth protests in the Parisian Banlieues and a note on President Sarkozy's inflammatory response. 2002: the Moscow theatre siege. 1997: Leo and Kate, "Titanic", prow of the boat, *My Heart Will Go On*, eleven Oscars. 1986: Chernobyl. 1972: Vietnam War, the Napalm Girl. 1971: *Ali v Frazier*, the fight of the century. 1970: the Kent State University shootings. 1969: Woodstock. 1968: Vietnam War, the handgun execution of a Vietcong soldier, an image – as the caption informs us – that was also used prominently, i.e. mimed onstage in a sequence of repeated "shootings" and fallings, by The Living Theatre in "Paradise Now".

By which point, accompanied by the suspended climax of a contemporaneous rock song (which will remain noisily "stuck" in its groove for the next twenty minutes or so), they have arrived "at" "Paradise Now", and I am wondering, from my seat in the auditorium, how they – these contemporary adolescents – are going to deal with it. The "it", I should confess, is something that in May 2018 I was only imprecisely familiar with, from images and reports I had come across over the years. I knew – or thought I knew – about the exhibition of "liberated" sexuality in The Living Theatre piece, and something about the invitation to take what has been rehearsed on stage into our lives – for real, as it were – and also outside the temporal and spatial bounds of the theatre, as they say – or as they said then – into the streets. My knowledge hardly went further. I was curious how theirs would.

The way that the young cast appear to deal with it is by continuing the same mimetic process through which they dealt with the 50 iconic images, imitating the actions of the Living in much the same way. And to an extent, that is what happens. They enter the space of the audience, climbing over our seats, climbing over us, reciting – as did their predecessors – a list of prohibitions that impact on their – our – someone's lives, with a kind of high-energy hooligan enthusiasm that befits their age. And it remains imitation, or it remains choreography, or at least a kind of performative action that – for all the intensity with which it is put over – remains free of "pathos" [Kaminski 2018] or rhetorical demand. They do not, it appears, feel obliged to believe in it: nor do they oblige us to believe in it either. And so, they recall the 1960s performers' exposure of their bodies by referring, gesturally, to their own

bodies – hitching up a top briefly, flashing a belly or a bum cheek – not so much in moderation or temerity, but in a way that remains resolutely within the realms of the representational. This is us on show: this is us doing history, if this is what doing history requires. And then they snatch their bodies, their voices, their energies back from us, and invite us to join them on stage. Or rather a projection on the back wall invites us to do that, promising – on their behalf – that our bodies and sensibilities, as paying spectators, will remain sacrosanct: *Don't worry, we will not touch you*. Some of us accept the invitation, we go up and sit among the performers, and – the evening that I am there at least – more follow until eventually we just about fill the stage, although there are still plenty of spectators behind us to watch. And then, as the music that has been playing all this time is exchanged for silence, and the theatre lights fade slowly for the end of the performance, the young people, dispersed among us, pass round a microphone and speak. Each speaks individually, and in the language of the “personal”, not about taking theatre or revolution to the streets, but about hope and hopelessness, about the inefficacy of protest, about their distrust of democracy, about solidarity and desire but about exhaustion too, about doubt and courage, and about despair. Mostly they speak about despair. And it is a kind of despair that circulates, here, unsentimentally enough. As if, having sat down in this very spot – wherever it is we have all arrived – these young people know what time it is. And that is what they are doing now, telling the time. But the time has changed. Something else has emerged alongside the imitations.

I stay for the post-show discussion. The cast speak confidently about their experiences making the show with Vandevelde and his dramaturg Kristof van Baarle, both of whom are present but barely called on to speak. Several of the performers describe the learning process, encountering historical events of which they knew nothing at first, but which they have come to understand better, they say, by confronting – and inhabiting – images of those events and understanding something of their context and implications. There is, then, much here to appeal to someone like myself, who teaches theatre at a university. On the one side, a project of artistic investigation built around a complex historical object, a rigorous methodology and a clearly-articulated set of research questions and impact considerations (with a range of theoretical touchpoints, cited by van Baarle in an essay in the programme booklet [van Baarle 2018]). On the other, a resounding demonstration of the pedagogical efficacy of theatre-making with young people. There is, though, something else that interests – or bothers – me more, and which has to do with the sense of a change having taken place, between the imitation of the 50 historical photographs and the acting out of elements of the 1968 performance. Something of a switch, between iconic representation and a kind of “standing for”, as if between memory and history. And the grounds of that switch – what makes it available for consideration –

is that both the 1968 and the 2018 productions make it a matter of significance that we attend to the actors as it were "for themselves". That is to say, as actors on stage (performer-demonstrators, pretenders, switchers between roles and places), but also as social actors: or at least, as living contemporaries of the performances in which they take part. Either way, as actors – or so I would suggest – who expose themselves as such in those moments when they appear beside themselves, in the shadow of mimetic accomplishment. For instance, here in this place where they invite us to join them at last and hear what they have to say of themselves, which is somewhere – we might feel – they are no more at home than we are, their witnesses. At least not yet.

Taking the actors seriously

For philosopher Paul Ricoeur: "the historian does not only strive to resuscitate the living of the past who are no longer but who once were, but also attempts to re-present actions and passions." He continues: "What history is concerned with is not only the living of the past, behind today's dead, but the actor of history gone by, once one undertakes to *take the actors themselves seriously*" [Ricoeur 2004: 384–385]. To add a gloss to these oppositions. Not just the living of the past behind today's dead: for example, the figures of the departed who inhabit the fifty photographs, where death is not just a prominent and explicit feature of the image content – the dead of the Vietnam War, of the purges in Cambodia, of state violence in Soweto, of civil war in Lebanon and so on – but also intrinsic to the representational structure of the historical news photograph as such, which is only ever (not least for Ricoeur) the trace of an absence. History is concerned, then, not only with the figures in the images, but also – in the philosopher's phrases – those *people of the past who formulated expectations, predictions, desires, fears, and projects* [Ricoeur 2004: 382], and did so *in situations of uncertainty, responding to constraints, norms, and institutions* [ibid 384]; *under the limitation* – as he elaborates elsewhere – *of the production of the social bond and of the identities concerned* [ibid 344]. To take the actors themselves seriously, in this sense, is to reintroduce "contingency" to history, so that past events are no longer regarded as "fixed", with respect either to their meaning or their moral significance for later times (Ricoeur: *the moral weight tied to the relation of debt with respect to the past can be increased or lightened* [381]). For the philosopher, then, the territory to be mined is where the tremors are felt between the writing of history – which for Ricoeur, following French historian Bernard Lepetit, concerns *acting-in-common in the social world* [Ricoeur 2004: 354] – and the affective impressions, fadings and erasures of memory. It involves worrying at the distinction between the past as *what has elapsed, eluding our grasp*, and what can be claimed on our behalf as *having-been and belonging as such to our existence as care* [ibid 351]. In this respect, history appears, in Ricoeur's words, *not only as the evocation of the dead but as the theatre of the living*

of other times [ibid 351]. Here again, we recall that suspension between the re-enactment of the fifty photographs and a partial re-inhabiting – by way of behaviours and representations – of the “actions and passions” of the actors of *The Living Theatre* fifty years on. This “theatre of the living” will be one in which historical being, and the experience of living-in-time, will be a matter of care or “concern”, and that primarily a concern for a life lived alongside other beings, among others. One particular aspect of which – emphasised in Ricoeur’s thought, explicit in the reflexive, epochal claims of the 1968 performance, and implicit at least in the ages and identities of the mimetic labourers of the 2018 re-do – is generationality: both in the sense of an “anonymous” relation between succeeding generations, and as an interpersonal bond, a horizontal connection, an “us” that connects members of the same generation [Ricoeur 2004: 395], even as that “us” performs itself to a mixed-age gaze, as on the Kaaithatre Brussels main stage in May that year.

There is a further aspect of Ricoeur’s reflections on the interlinkings and mis-alignments of history, memory and forgetting that might enable us to redirect the metaphorical resonance of phrases such as *the theatre of the living of other times* or *taking the actors themselves seriously* towards – well – the “actors themselves” in a substantive – or theatre-specific – sense. Ricoeur returns frequently to a felt absence, in the philosophical materials he attends to, of what he calls at one point a *carnal dimension* [ibid 379]. He misses, for instance, in the Heideggerian discourse of care that underpins an important part of his thinking, *the very particular existential that is the flesh, the animate body, my body*. Elsewhere, he marks the absence of *any consideration of the relation to one’s own body, to the flesh, by virtue of which the potentiality of being adopts the form of desire in the broadest sense of the term* [ibid 357]. And, even as he unpacks the concept of generation referred to a moment ago, he bemoans the lack of that *carnal dimension that the concept of birth could have provided* [ibid 379]. We might suppose that the actors “themselves” in our own study materials, given the – as it were – up-front physicality, if not outright carnality, of “Paradise Now” (1968) and the vigorous choreographic embodiments of “Paradise Now (1968–2018)”, would answer to such a lack. But the matter is not so straightforward. It hardly ever is where the actors are concerned. I offer a couple of comments, both of which derive from the founding structure of a chronological ordering, or chronicle form, and the kinds of sensibility – poetic and political – that such a form might provoke.

Contemporary chronicle: living in time

For the first, if we return to Ricoeur’s invocation of the actors of history as deciders and desirers, thrown into situations of uncertainty with regard to the norms, constraints and institutions that consolidate this or that aspect of the social bond, then we might consider the immediate “norms, constraints and institutions” confronting

the young performers of "Paradise Now" (1968–2018) to be the fifty photographic images themselves, and the particular version of collective memory those images appear to institute. For one thing, the fifty photographs are not merely a collection of images but also a temporal ordering, specifically a chronological ordering, arranged year by year from 2018 back through 1968. As far as historical narrative form goes, this is the form of chronicle, rudimentary enough perhaps, but as Hayden White has remarked in no way neutral: it is a "first-order symbolisation" involving selection and placement, symbolising – to put it again in rudimentary terms – living in time, and in relation to a certain externality (a pastness, say, beyond one's knowledge and experience), an external or "given" selection and placement that determines the order and ends of representational action [White 1987: 176]. To put it very simply indeed, I don't imagine that the young performers chose the fifty images themselves. That, however, is not the reason I mention the matter. Rather, it strikes me – or it did that evening at the theatre in May – that by deploying chronology to structure the first part of the performance in this way (i.e. the imitation of the fifty photos one after another), Vandeveldé's piece finds family resemblance with a number of very different recent works that also employ a "chronicle" structure to engage with historical materials from the perspective of the contemporary, and in doing so share a certain poetics – and politics – of the actor and of the actor's requisite "seriousness". I am thinking, for instance, of Egyptian film-maker Wael Shawky's multi-part epic "The Cabaret Crusades" (2010–2015), which retells the history of the 11th and 12th century (according to the Western calendar) "crusades" from a non-orientalist point of view, deploying a voice-over story-teller and using 200-year old marionettes, or custom-made Venetian glass puppets – with their strings clearly showing on film – as "actors" in the historical roles. Or American performer, singer and drag artist Taylor Mac's 24-hour musical theatre performance "A 24-Decade History of Popular Music" (2011–2016) [Mac 2018] charting 240 years of American history, from 1776 to the present day, each decade of that history represented by popular songs of the time, the songs themselves like actors or characters of a sort: re-dressed, re-purposed, taken seriously for sure but then put to work on stage in the service of Mac's queer, spectacular account of "how communities are built as a result of being torn apart." Or else, British ensemble Forced Entertainment's 36-part "Complete Works: Table Top Shakespeare" (2015): each one of Shakespeare's plays reworked as a 50-minute narrative, told by a single performer at a kitchen table, with the characters of the drama represented by ordinary household implements: a pepper-pot, a condiments bottle, a hairbrush, a box of matches [Forced Entertainment 2019]. Chronicle form appears here, not as datability and recorded time, but in the reduction of the temporal complexity of Shakespeare's dramatic plots – through the simple expedient of narrative re-telling – to a basic succession of events, of things that take place on the table, each play

beginning with the spoken phrase *It begins with...* and concluding with *And the last thing that happens is...* One aspect of resemblance across these works, is that the actors – the marionettes, or the kitchen and bathroom objects, as much as the figures of medieval middle eastern history or the song-sheets of American popular history – are exposed, with whatever ridicule or pathos or empathy, as hubristic in regard to the passing of time. In Forced Entertainment’s “Complete Works”, for instance, future thinking is figured as often as not by the character being held forward – literally – and declared to be “feeling very pleased with himself” as some unlikely scheme or device is concocted. To be part of the past, then, is – again literally – to be laid horizontal on the table, killed, dead, no longer acting as anything other than itself. The young performers of “Paradise Now (1968–2018)” of course bring something else to the stage than this, and they will emerge on the other side of the year-by-year chronicle into a space of speech and re-enactment; but their end in this is also – as we saw in the photographs at the start of this lecture – a horizontality of a kind, a closeness to the floor that we will not entirely disentangle from the landscapes of horizontal and entangled bodies we have passed through during the past hour: in the Lebanese refugee camps at Sabra and Shatilla in 1984; in Rwanda in 1994; at Srebrenica in 1995; at Abu Ghraib in 2003. Our taking seriously the young actors would involve acknowledgment of *their* taking seriously – through the chronicle of carnality and the carnage they have inherited – the very particular existential that is “the flesh, the animate body, my body”, and these other bodies too, other actors than myself, beside me now and behind me then.

For the second, related, observation, we might begin by remarking that while, say, the inanimate actors of Forced Entertainment’s “Complete Works: Table Top Shakespeare” draw attention to their insensibility, we are likely rather to project a significant degree of sensibility – and sensitivity – onto the adolescent performers of “Paradise Now (1968–2018)”. As Astrid Kaminski remarks, in her review of a performance in Berlin during summer 2018: “With some bodies one builds up a sensual tension, but not with others. That can be nice, but also tragic. Who with whom? The question can cause panic in children’s eyes. Remaining: a stigma. Status questions often form for childhood around body issues. Someone has greasy hair, or dandruff, is chubby or just dressed uncool. Although the tolerance limit shifts hopefully later in life, the effect of foreign bodies on our own remains” [Kaminski 2018, my translation]. Kaminski remarks that one of the social aesthetic achievements of dance is to have developed techniques that mean one does not have to surrender to such situations. She goes on to ask, however, in consideration of the techniques of “care” evidently developed by Vandevelde and fABULEUS in their work with these young performers: *How much sensitivity, tenderness, consideration, empathy can be expected of the not yet sexually autonomous body?*

Vandevelde frames his own approaches to such questions in a video interview [Radio Etoile 2017], where he says that one of the concerns of the production will have been to negotiate intimacy on stage between young bodies in a contemporary context marked, on the one side, by extreme conservatism with regard to how we deal with bodies in public space; and, on the other, a ubiquitous commodification and pornification – not least of young people – through advertising and other public media. We might imagine, then, these matters to be particularly tested by the performance legacy – the theatre-historical “institution” – that is The Living Theatre’s “Paradise Now”. As James Penner sets out in a critical excavation of the 1968 production, the declaredly utopian project was not immune to its own violent, dystopian whiplash, which did not go unacknowledged by core members of the company such as Judith Malina, and which was witnessed by contemporary spectators such as Erica Monk, whose first impressions of the production Penner quotes: “Chaos, fury, mindlessness. Damned if I’ll be bullied into participating. Nothing to see anyway except crowds in a shapeless muddle occasionally punctuated by the actors’ grossly rhetorical gestures or a couple of naked people groping or yelling at each other. Maybe it would have been OK 10 years ago? Would Beats have thought it was Artaudian? Right now, no joy. Something deadly here” [Penner 2009: 30]. With regard to which, if a certain criticality engrained in the 1968 production – concerned with challenges to authority, to the police, and the status quo as such – was met later by another sort of criticality in Monk or Penner’s historical revisionism, it is not exactly these sorts of radical, undermining criticality that we encounter in the 2018 theatrical re-do. Rather, if anything, what “Paradise Now (1968–2018)” appears to be presenting for the consideration of its audiences is a resolute repetition of the forms, actions and passions of the earlier work, involving – for sure – some necessary modification of behaviour that is partly to do with a responsibility of care with regard to the young 21st century performers (and partly down to a fundamental unreality of historical re-enactment, at least in these representational conditions); but predicated even so on a committed deferral as it were to the autonomy and externality of the historical material. There is, for instance, no question of the credibility of the images that are being re-enacted here, nor of the credulity of the re-enactors, even as the materials extend – as we have been noting throughout – towards a past that none of the present company can be expected, ever, to remember. In these lights – and in a very different way to the 1968 production, which used physical proximity and confrontation as a performative vehicle for its concerns – the sensitivities and sensibilities of the young performers from Leuven attach to the performance as a kind of remainder; or, better, as an “accompaniment” to the performance of which they are a part. A sensibility, in short, that is their business only; and figured as such; and, as such, to be taken seriously by ourselves. Nothing anyway is said of these bodies, until – eventually – these bodies, the actors, speak for themselves. And, when they do

so, they speak of themselves alone, before passing on the microphone, one to another, companion to companion, pulling at the links between being here, now, this living in time, and what can be recalled, of what has passed, between one and another.

Coda: another theatre

Some weeks ago, I went back to The Living Theatre's "Paradise Now" myself, by way of various materials including Marty Topp's contemporaneous film of the company's North American tour [Topp 2019], the four-hour plus performance compressed into a 45-minute, black-and-white sound and vision collage: livid, cacophonous, hallucinatory. It is a film in which picture and soundtrack are synched only imprecisely, if at all, and where voices are perpetually coming in, as it were, from off-image, so that shouts from the audience are mixed with scraps of scripted and improvised speeches from the performers, the former now as much part of the performance text as the latter. In the early section where the actors take a litany of repeated complaints among the spectators, some of these sounds, now, simply complaining *I am not allowed to smoke marijuana. I am not allowed to take off my clothes.* Others have as much force as they did fifty years ago: *I am not allowed to travel without a passport. I cannot live without money.* Other elements stick for this particular viewer. For example, a confrontation between a black, male member of the cast, the upper part of his body exposed, and a white, male, suited member of the audience. They are yelling in each other's faces: *I'm tired of suffering while you suffer. I don't want any more of white suffering. I refuse your guilt. And I am not a hooligan.* The exchange escalates from there. Other voices swirl around. *Let's see your flag, American. Let's see your red, white and blue, cocksucker. You're only getting bourgeois people coming in here, and that's who you're getting across to. What are they doing with your money? Keeping you fat. Suppressed and fat. Don't look at your body like you don't understand what I mean. Fat in the brain.* And then, when I hear the word "theatre", in hollered phrases like *free theatre* and *free sexual theatre*, it sounds out of time, archaic. Like the technical vocabulary of some cultural practice – other places, other times – I can't be sure I know, let alone remember, what that is.

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