

Risking Confrontation With the Other in DV8's Physical Theatre¹

by Andrew Houston

The theatre's raw material is not the actor, nor the space, nor the text, but the attention, the seeing, the hearing, the mind of the spectator. Theatre is the art of the spectator. (Barba 1995: 39)

"DV8 Physical Theatre's work is about taking risks, aesthetically and physically..." So says the company's publicity, and not unlike many physical theatre companies, the performance DV8 offers is every bit the embodiment of risk. While this may not seem a particularly unique offering, to witness performers who push and punish their bodies for our pleasure -- given the commercial popularity of risky, shocking entertainment -- it is entirely unique, however, to experience the way in which DV8 demands *our* risk in relationship to their work.

Looking to the company's most renowned live -- and video --production, Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men, this article proposes an examination of how the most profound risk in DV8's physical theatre exists between performer and spectator, in the *potential* of encounter between the 'real' physical matter of the 'performing body' and the psychic experience, for both performer and spectator, of em-bodiment in performance. Risk is seen to occur as the spectators confront their potential to reconsider subjectivity and the Real, through experience of the theatre event. For Sergei Eisenstein, this risk is a process which he called *ex-stasis* or, "to go out of oneself." He says:

It is not the actor who must enter ecstasy, but the spectator who must 'go out of himself', who must, that is, transcend the limits of the direct and literal perception of what the actor is doing in order 'to see' behind the screen of the obvious and the known. (Eisenstein 1991: 58)

If we take the body and its energy as the raw materials for physical theatre, this 'energy' can be seen as 'potential' for the process of ex-stasis, and therefore risk on the part of the spectator to think beyond that which is known. Looking to physical theatre as a system of bodies, we see that the greatest difference of potential is between its performers and its audience. This difference is equalized through the 'work' of the performance, as energy flows from the performers to the spectators. In this respect the audience is offered a potential empowerment through the experience of performance.

In physical theatre, the experience of action is the means by which the spectator's psychic state is affected. DV8's physical theatre creates a system of energy-flow among bodies which is sexual. The sexual aspects of the performers' bodies become the object of the spectator's gaze, and so the energy transformed to the spectator is a libidinal energy. It is therefore crucial to explore *how* the action of this physical system affects the psychic apparatus of the spectator. It is this inherent energy-flow, which increases a spectator's potential for risk; I would like to demonstrate how this dilation of the body's energy occurs through the actions of a theatre event, increasing the potential for ex-stasis, or for the 'work' to bring about risk of confrontation with that which is beyond the spectator's sense of self and reality.

In referring to the spectator's experience of physical theatre as a 'theatre event', I am drawing on Jean-Francois Lyotard's notion of an *event* in communication. The 'event' is constituted by an experience of knowing over the fact of knowledge (Docherty 1993: 25). Its effect encourages experience rather than knowledge of the world it presents, and thereby offers an ontological challenge.

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Attempting a theoretical framework for understanding this challenge is a risk in itself. The task of how to legitimise or judge a spectator's experience of risk in a theatre event is an endeavour of indeterminate potential, and therefore a risk for the role of postmodern criticism. For Lyotard the event is also characterized by the fact or case that something happens, after which nothing will ever be the same again. It disrupts any pre-existing referential frame within which it might be represented or understood (Lyotard 1988: 79). In the following analysis of DV8's physical theatre, an attempt to do justice to the eventhood of their video and live performance is made. Themes and meanings, important to each work will be explored; however, the analysis of risk I am suggesting requires risk as well, as it is hoped the meaning for my readers of DV8's physical theatre will stimulate risk in their own understanding and experience of the work presented. In a process of exploring the 'eventhood' of these theatre events, I shall propose a postmodern dramaturgy.

Eugenio Barba, has likened performance dramaturgy to an analysis of actions at work. He explains:

The word text, before referring to a written or spoken, printed or manuscripted text, meant 'a weaving together'. In this sense, there is no performance which does not have 'text'.

That which concerns the text (the weave) of the performance can be defined as 'dramaturgy', that is *drama-ergon*, the 'work of the actions' in the performance. (Barba 1991: 68)

Given a dramaturgical analysis that takes into account the work of actions via, and upon, the body, we may now cite specific examples of how Artistic Director, Lloyd Newson's dramaturgy in Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men extends the work of actions to the spectators, implicating them in a process of 'work' -- toward a risk in making meaning of their experience in the theatre.

Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men

Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men was commissioned by Third Eye, Glasgow, and first performed there in October 5, 1988. It later transferred to the ICA, London, as part of Dance Umbrella in November of that year. The work is based on the life of the homosexual serial killer, Dennis Nilsen, who lured 15 men back to his flats in Cricklewood and Muswell Hill where he killed them, and often dismembered their bodies. Lloyd Newson was inspired to create the work by the account of Nilsen and the murders given in Brian Masters's book, Killing for Company. When the work was subsequently filmed and broadcast for London Weekend Television's South Bank Show, its presentation of sex, death, and the dark forces which led Nilsen to blend the two made front-page tabloid news.

Ironically, Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men was an attempt to explore the isolating phenomena of homophobia engendered by the popular media, both in the sensational accounts of the Nilsen murders and the rampant AIDS paranoia, which was at its height in newspapers at this time. Critic, Keith Watson has said,

Dead Dreams served both as an epitaph for a clubland lifestyle past its sell-by-date and a forceful plea for humanity in a dehumanising world. At its core lay the conviction that societal homophobia, which intimidates same sex lovers from sharing a kiss in the street, repressing spontaneous feeling -- is bound to result in tragic consequences. The name just happened to be Dennis Nilsen. (Watson 1992)

Newson creates theatre only when he feels there is a need, an issue to be addressed, and he assembles different performers for every production, chosen according to their skills and -- *equally* important -- ideas about the given issue. His process of developing Dead Dreams, as with most of his

work, involved a lot of improvisation around emerging themes. Performer, Russell Maliphant describes one such improvisation:

We did a lot of improvisation with 'dead' bodies, like, "You can do whatever you want with this 'corpse' of another dancer for forty minutes" and then we'd discuss what worked and what didn't. (Buckland 1995: 373)

A significant part of the devising process used for Dead Dreams involved each performers' personal response to the issues explored in the work. Newson wanted to create an environment where self-revelation went alongside improvisation. He only works with performers prepared to reveal themselves in the rehearsal process; to the point where there is a direct connection between what they think and feel about these issues and what they show in performance. Newson comments:

we felt angry, we showed anger immediately. And it got to a point where we burned ourselves out with that directness. We were always very much ourselves, what you saw on stage was always exactly who we were. (Meisner 1992: 12)

Newson had set up a process where the performance became a parallel life for the performers. The emotional and psychological risk reached a nearly intolerable level: "we were all learning things about ourselves and each other that you don't usually have to face up to." (Watson 1988: 101)

The intensity adopted by DV8 in the development and performance of Dead Dreams is important in terms of the what is at stake in the risk undertaken by the company in exploring such material. It is significant to a spectator's risk in that Newson creates a theatre event which problematizes the distinction between theatrical representation and reality. Regarding the dispute over this distinction in theatre, which stretches as far back as Classical Greek culture, Peggy Phelan has said that "[w]ithin the history of theatre the real is what theatre defines itself against, even while reduplicating its effects" (Phelan 1993: 3). That is to say, theatre represents reality while creating a *supplement* to this reality, which becomes a reality in its own right. This amounts to a deconstruction of the conventional (metaphysical) conception of mimesis; which in theatre is so often considered to be an imitation of the real (or 'nature' as it is often called), but actually can be seen as an imitation of reality's (nature's) creative processes (Boal 1985: 1).

For Newson, artistic engagement with reality in this broader sense was born of a disillusionment with the contemporary dance establishment of England in the early 1980s. Dancing with Extemporaneous Dance Theatre, he found it increasingly difficult to work within a medium which, at the time, was more concerned with formalist expression and purity of movement than motivation. Tired of choreographers who denied *who* he was as a dancer, treating him like "pigment" with which to create, he strove to find a process of working with performers' bodies which did not deny their individuality and humanity on stage (Meisner 1992: 11-12). DV8 was born of a need to challenge perceptions of what dance "can and should address" (Cranitch 1992: 14). DV8's exploration into the "'lived body' rather than the danced one" (Buckland 1995: 372) develops the dancer into a subject who is motivated to move. Newson's concern with motivation, and the meaning of movement and action, seemed best addressed by the dance/theatre hybrid found in physical theatre.

DV8's challenge to classical aesthetics of representation (metaphysical mimesis) in the theatre and the formalism of contemporary dance has resulted in an aesthetic reminiscent of Ihab Hassan's postmodern sensibility, which looks to a mediation between art and life in its account of "the world of real human needs and desires" (Hassan 1982: 259-271). To begin to understand the spectator's relationship to this postmodern aesthetic, I want to draw from Scott Lash's conceptualization of postmodern culture in his book the Sociology of Postmodernism. For Lash postmodernism is a cultural paradigm, and his analysis offers a thesis of cultural change. Briefly, modernization is a process of cultural differentiation while *postmodernization* is a process of cultural 'de-differentiation'(Lash 1990: ix). Lash cites specific cultural components in whose de-differentiation can be seen the kind of hybridization of concerns behind Newson's creation of DV8. Newson's rejection of

the modernist pursuit of specialization (cultural differentiation), found in a contemporary dance bound by its formal and aesthetic concerns, gives way to a consideration of the referent (reality) alongside his signifying process (movement, physical theatre), and this de-differentiation problematizes reality itself. Newson has honed his dancer's sense of movement from experience in the everyday:

If someone walks into a cafe, we have an immediate reaction to the way they look, how they hold their body, what their body's telling us. As a creator you become aware of that information and you find ways to reveal that formally, stylistically. *But its source must always be clear [my italics]* (Tushingham 1995).

The combination of his choreographer's skill with the 'everyday' creates a kind of surreal juxtaposing of realities. Scott Lash associates this with postmodernism because the juxtapositioning of two or more objects, clearly out of place with each other -- and both figures often out of context with their ground -- problematizes reality (Lash 1990: 14). Lash explains:

It does so from the standpoint of the Freudian primary process which, surrealism suggests, is somehow more real than the phenomena of every-day life. A half century later, the problematization of the real comes not from the depths of the id but from a society whose very surface, whose very empirical reality, is largely made up of images or representations (Lash 1990: 14)

The opening scene of Dead Dreams is a presentation of four lonely men (Newson, Nigel Charnock, Russell Maliphant, and Douglas Wright). They are not theatrical 'characters' in that we never have any intimate sense of who they are; as Fiona Buckland has said, "They are defined on stage in terms of their actions: by what they *do* (Buckland 1995: 375). They are four male bodies as anonymous as 14 of the 15 Nilsen victims, who were never reported missing. The setting is an equally anonymous gay club -- Nilsen's hunting ground -- complete with pounding music and pulsing lights. The stylization of Newson's choreography, rich in libidinal energy, is juxtaposed by the stagnant, routine, and realistic club behaviour of the other performers; their hard-man exterior is made all the more into a kind of advertising imagery by the camera flash pulsation of the lighting. Newson wants the audience to have a clear picture of how the reality of this club culture is made up of deadening, 'monochrome' representations. Here we have a reality penetrated by a homophobic lack of intimacy, macho masculine physicality, and a numbness of sight and sound. The sensation is that of a battle ground, and it sets the tone for a theatre event where chaos, instability, and eventually catastrophe is reality itself.

The primary premise developed in Dead Dreams was how Denis Nilsen's fantasies became blurred with reality, hence the allusion to 'dreams' in the title. Newson's intensive involvement with his work as director and performer meant an intimate relationship to the obsessions of Nilsen, and what drove him to extremes of behaviour. Acknowledging a mutual desire to control his environment, and a frustration in the face of a homophobic society that will not accept openly intimate contact between men, Newson saw the parallels between himself and Nilsen. Acknowledging his empathy for Nilsen's outsider status, his anxiety and hostility, Newson places only his art between himself and the Other (Nilsen) his work confronts. He says:

I've had my work in which to excise my fantasy life...It's been hard, but through working on this [Dead Dreams] I understand much more about myself and the work I'm doing. I've never had to stop and question what I was about before and it pulls you up to discover that, after all, you are weak and vulnerable. (Watson 1988: 101)

In Dead Dreams, Newson's use of physical theatre can be seen as way of exploring the unconscious of both himself and Nilsen, in a manner that is not limited to rational conscious means. This can be seen as a further development to a postmodern cultural de-differentiation. Modernist Freudian psychoanalytic theory conceived of the psyche as differentiated into two spheres -- of desire, on the one hand, and the conscious mind on the other. Briefly, Freud can be seen to have tried to explain the

former through the latter; that is, through rational discourse of the conscious mind, he attempted to explain the unconscious. Newson's postmodern aesthetics opposes the subordination of the unconscious to the dictates of the conscious. Narrative meaning or representation of the unconscious are problematized as its workings are brought to the surface of a now de-differentiated psychic apparatus (Lash 1990: 174).

Jean-Francois Lyotard's developments on Freudian psychoanalysis in "The Dream Work Does Not Think", are helpful here because he explores the work of desire, and this is the aspect of the unconscious of greatest interest to Newson. Lyotard argues that if consciousness is structured by language, the workings of the primary, unconscious processes appear as *figural* disruptions and distortions to the ordered representations of consciousness (e.g.: language). It is important to clarify three things here, first, 'figural' is defined as

an unspeakable other necessarily *at work* within and against *discourse*, disrupting the rule of representation. It is not opposed to discourse, but is the point at which the oppositions by which discourse works are opened to a radical heterogeneity or *singularity*. As such, the figural is the resistant or irreconcilable trace of a space or time that is radically incommensurable with that of discursive meaning (Readings 1991: xxxi).

Second, "'discourse' is the condition of representation to consciousness by a rational order or structure of concepts" (Readings 1991: xxxi). And Thirdly, it should be understood, then, that the figural disruption of our conceptual or discursive understanding of Dead Dreams is what constitutes it as a theatre event. As outlined above, the 'event' prioritizes the immanent experience of 'happening' over the fact of knowledge -- the representation -- about what happened. The figural disruption of our pre-existing referential frame (our conscious discourse) within which the theatre event might be represented or understood is what brings about risk for the spectator. For Lyotard, the theatre event is that which deconstructs the binary oppositions of the theatre experience, such as, reality/fantasy and presence/absence. The work of desire on the part of the spectator, therefore, does not operate in a pure alterity to the real, but through the clash of equally present, heterogeneous spaces of the real and the imaginary. For the spectator of the theatre event, this co-existence of real and imaginary experience, prevents the reduction of desire to a matter of discursive understanding.

Of the four characteristics of Freud's unconscious processes developed by Lyotard as violations of the order of discourse about the unconscious, two will help illustrate the work of desire in the spectator of Dead Dreams. These are "the absence of contradiction" and "the free mobility of cathectic energies" (Lyotard 1989: 23-30).

The culmination of the gay club sequence, which opens Dead Dreams, is the juxtapositioning of three separate actions. The actions of the four men up to this point have been a series of manoeuvres, through gaze or physical contact, toward fulfilment of desire. It is understood that in this environment, the body is the place of cathexis, of libidinal investment, and therefore the body exists only as a place of desire. The first action sequence begins with a man's attempts to seduce another through sexual contact and finishes with him developing this contact against the flat surfaced, caulked outline, of a male body on the wall. The initial object/subject of his desire slips away unnoticed in pursuit of the object of *his* libidinal investment, which has been reciprocated, through a returned gaze. Their interaction builds but not before we register a fourth man whose uncomfortable movement builds to an enactment of a silent scream. Two heterogeneous spaces of desire are established, the first, a man's desire for sexual intimacy with an Other (a subject) is enacted with an other (object), a caulked outline on a wall; the second, a man's desire to scream in outrage becomes a slow, silent collapse to the floor. The interaction of the other two men constitutes the third space, situated between the other two spaces. This interaction is a series of gradually developed sequences of sexual dominance: first the dominated man is caressed, then stripped to his underpants, then blindfolded. At the moment when he is physically most vulnerable, the domineering man reverses roles placing the near naked, blindfolded man's foot on his face and curling into a submissive foetal position under his foot.

The effect of the non-contradiction, for Lyotard, is the anamorphic function of denial in desire (Readings 1991: 46). Contradiction does not eliminate that to which it is opposed. Freudian psychoanalysis demonstrates that the patient's negation of an object of desire is at the same time a presentation of that object (e.g.: "'It's *not* my mother,' says the patient. We correct: so it's his mother,' says Freud" [Readings 1991: 46]). In the above scene, in each of the three actions, vulnerability is both present and absent, in a way that parallels Lyotard's description of anamorphosis. As Bill Readings suggests,

the work of desire is to open this incommensurability in our discursive relation to objects, which are constituted (presented) as lost (absent). This 'logical scandal' is the catastrophic event of the figural arising in discourse (Readings 1991: 46)

The progression from a presentation of aggressively sexual gay male behaviour in the dance club sequence to this anamorphosis of juxtaposed actions offers a risk to the audience in the way they make meaning from this sequence of events. To see vulnerability out of place, "...no place for it, neither foreseen nor pre-comprehended" (Lyotard 1989: 51) is the means by which the spectator is obliged to confront their discursive judgement about what has happened to the Other (their information about Nilsen) and risk an indeterminate confrontation with what is happening to the Other in the theatre event.

The complexity of this scene is undeniable, it is obviously available for multiple and resistant readings. As a theatrical representation it follows Peggy Phelan's two laws: "it always conveys more than it intends; and it is never totalizing (Phelan 1993: 2) The idea of 'representational excess', however, is complicit with Lyotard's notion of a figural disruption to discursive understanding of the theatre event because the 'excess' is that which transgresses the binary oppositions of reality/fantasy, presence/absence, and other limits of theatrical representation. The work of psychic forces instigated by the theatre event mark the incommensurable co-presence of representation and its excess. The unpredictable emergence of power in the vulnerable body of the near-naked, blindfolded man, and in the foetal-positioned dominator-turned-dominated, may not change the spectator's sense of horror over the behaviour of these men, but the fleeting glimpse of vulnerability is an unforeseen truth about the spectators' judgement, and a risk as they confront such glimpses of excess in how they represent themselves.

Newson's choreography regularly makes use of the juxtapositioning of actions out of place with each other, and thereby offers an anamorphic 'reading' for the spectator. Another example (of several), which occur in the first half (Part One) of Dead Dreams, is a series of scenes Newson devotes to the power struggles inherent to the anonymous urban clubland where the difference between sex and violence is erased. In this scene, Russell Maliphant has remained in his underpants from the earlier sequence, and as such he is exposed, seemingly vulnerable. Yet, this reading is problematized repeatedly by the presence of contiguous action. In the first scene he performs a routine of purposeful self-display; in this action of conspicuous presentation vulnerability vanishes. He stands atop a chest of drawers, slowly moving through a sequence of poses reminiscent of a body builder; his celebration of masculine muscularity refers homosexual man to maleness, not to effeminate, castrated 'otherness' (Buckland 1995: 375). This image of strength and beauty is soon disrupted by the presence of a mirror, which collapses into a window to reveal observers. Suddenly this powerful image can be seen to be diminished into narcissism, and then with the addition of on-lookers, a kind of cult of the body. Other readings are possible, but the addition of a third action amounts to a critical affront to the former image of masculine strength. A man with his trousers to his ankles, labours to carry another man, clinging to his upper body. His journey makes a slow circle around the poses of masculine strength on the pedestal. Gradually the labouring man collapses.

The spectator is presented with a composite of actions, signifying sexuality, desire, and physical strength. The anamorphic co-existence of each action creates a simultaneous presence of the real and the imaginary. The fantasy of posed masculine strength is juxtaposed with the *actual* physical strain of

a man being worn down by his labours to carry a body, with his legs restricted. As the imaginary borders reality anamorphically, we have both sensations and thoughts about what we are experiencing, but what is important here is that our sensations problematize our thoughts by the way they are co-present. We perceive the exhaustion of the man's encumbered journey, his actual strain in evidence, and we perceive sensations from the poses of the other man, although these are the sensations of cathexis, our investment of desire. As the instance of perceiving these different sensations is indeterminate, their energies will affect different spectators in different ways. Interpretation of these actions cannot claim to find their putative meaning because the indeterminacy of their relationship frustrates any such 'possession' of understanding. However, this is where risk emerges. In the immediate instance of perceiving these co-present actions we confront the limit of understanding of what has happened in the theatre event. It is in the recognition of an excess to understanding, that the spectator-as-subject begins to risk the sensations and thoughts of an alterity to the known. The spectator risks a kind of 'dream' of encounter with the Other in their experience to Dead Dreams because the actions of the work, their physical and psychic energy, make us question what it is to be a subject which knows -- about reality and how it is represented in theatre; about seeing and the given to be seen; and thus about the self and how the self represents, sees -- generally -- has an experience of the Other.

Newson's dramaturgy provides the potential for the spectator to play a central role in the dream-work of DV8's physical theatre. The consideration of actions, their space, energy, and the spectator's role, brings us to the Lyotardian re-consideration of Freud's second unconscious process, 'the free mobility of cathectic energies'. When Lyotard claims that the unconscious escapes discursive conceptualization, his concern arises out of thinking about *perception* in communication; his focus on perception in the unconscious comes from the influence of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology in his work. Here the secondary process (consciousness and reality principle) operates through discourse, and it is also structured like discourse; while the primary process (dreams and pleasure principle) does not only discharge energy through the use of perceptual memories (visual images), it is structured like a "perceptual field" (Lash 1990: 178). This perceptual field is a space where the unhindered mobility of the eye over the "continuous and asymmetrical visual field" resembles the "unhindered mobility of cathexis" in the primary process (Lyotard 1984: 58). So, the perceptual field can be seen as a kind of performance space, upon which the unhindered gaze of the spectator works through an investment of libido in the subjects/objects observed.

Concerning the experience of the spectator's perception of action in such a spatial field, it is important to appreciate how perception differs from cognition. Drawing on the Kantian dualism of cognition and perception, in principle, perception -- though it operates through the categories of time and space -- is immediate. Cognition on the other hand is mediated by representation, be they concepts or propositions. Perception is concrete, cognition is abstract. Perception is variously seen as operating through sensation, or as in Kant, a matter of 'intuition'. Cognition is contingent upon abstract categories or logic, on abstract classification (Lash 1990: 24). Given, then, that the spectator's perception of action is immediate, involving an exchange of energy through space, it is difficult not to draw a parallel here with quantum mechanics. Concerning such a parallel, Peggy Phelan has noted that

The attempt to measure quantum energy with macroscopic instruments transforms and 'contaminates' the form of that energy. Observation and measurement themselves both absorb and emit energy; thus the act of observation transforms the activity observed (Phelan 1993: 116).

Thus, through consideration of how we perceive phenomena, the theory of the quantum marks the transition from 'objective' measurement to 'uncertainty,' from deterministic rules to probability and chance. We have seen how through the juxtapositioning of actions, Newson has created an indeterminate moment of judgement in the spectator. Given the link between psychic and physical energy in the spectator's perception of action, the application of quantum theory to perception takes this process a step further. The physical risk in Newson's choreography has such penetrating affect

because of its unpredictable physical -- that is *also* to say, psychic -- perception on the part of the spectator. Such moments of uncertainty are necessary for the awareness expressed in Eisenstein's ex-stasis, because in order to 'go out of oneself', to question subjectivity, and risk the confrontation with that which is beyond the known, one must recognize the value of uncertainty in perception.

In Dead Dreams there are various scenes where despite each man's actions to maintain control, interaction gives rise to uncertainty, and its denial is evident. In these scenes, Newson deliberately equates an openness to uncertainty in relationships with vulnerability, and this in turn is conveyed to the spectator through action which demands a quantum reception. The most poignant examples involve Russell Maliphant and Nigel Charnock. There is a progression of three scenes between these two performers that have their origin in a disclosure of desire that Maliphant makes to Charnock. It should be noted that this is the only verbal form of expression in the work, and the scene in which the disclosure occurs -- like those discussed above -- creates an anamorphic co-presence between Maliphant and Charnock, so the link between the performers, and indeed the scenes, is open for multiple readings. Maliphant offers an apparently sincere expression of his desire, he is still in vulnerable attire (his underpants), seated upon the chest of drawers from which he was previously posing. Charnock appears physically transfixed in a narrow shaft of light behind Maliphant. He does not verbally respond but rather becomes increasingly agitated, within the confines of this shaft of light. His contorted thrashings reach their climax when he can no longer be 'contained' by the beam of light, and moves to escape. The first scene begins when he is cut off by Maliphant.

Generally, the three scenes show various stages of Charnock refusing the intimate gestures of Maliphant. In the first, Maliphant's embrace is met with a stiff refusal as Charnock seems unwilling, almost incapable, to return this emotional offering. Given Charnock's response, Maliphant's desire for intimacy and mutual vulnerability can be perceived alternately by the spectator as an act of entrapment. One reality is shadowed by the other -- its alternative -- and this is the way the quantum potential of the spectator's perception receives it:

Every reality is seen to be shadowed by its alternatives; every reality is, in the end, an assumption and, what is more, indeterminate and ambiguous [simultaneously wavelike and particle-like] (George 1989: 173).

The second scene is again a kind of embattled embrace, but now the 'force field' between the men has opened up somewhat. The interaction here is more a suspension between actions, and an exposure of forces which bring about the will and energy to act. Initially Maliphant appears to try to embrace Charnock, who repels his body away, and then gradually Maliphant's movements become more subtle, mere twitches, to which Charnock's responses are extreme, near seizures which collapse him to the floor. In the moment of potential between each action the spectator experiences what Eugenio Barba describes as *sats*, or a pre-condition to action which is an 'action' in itself because it is in this instant that the performer's entire being is energizing to act (Barba 1995: 55-57). In relaying this to the spectator, Barba adds:

to find the life of the *sats*, the performer must play with the spectators' kinaesthetic sense and prevent them from foreseeing what is about to happen. The action must surprise the spectators (Barba 1995: 57).

The suspense of sheer physical indeterminacy between performers attracts the spectator's attention, but what is even more captivating is how our senses are involved in the space between the performers, in a complex feedback process whose final result is to actually *create* what is there (George 1989: 173).

The third scene expands the space between Maliphant and Charnock further. Beginning with an embrace, Charnock pulls away and moves to a ladder, Maliphant follows, and then Charnock proceeds to climb. He climbs a few feet, turns, and then jumps landing so as to make contact with Maliphant, whose posture is receptive and willing to catch his partner. The contact knocks Maliphant

over, but the returned energy sends Charnock back up the ladder -- two more times -- to higher and higher positions. The third climb takes Charnock to about three metres above the stage floor; having just picked himself up from the last contact, to this challenge, Maliphant wisely declines leaving Charnock to lunge for the top of a nearby wall and hang, precariously high -- and alone. As with the other scenes, the action here is replete with uncertainty; the increased physical risk to the performers serves to make an even more graphic illustration of the point. Parallel to this reality of physical forces can be seen the forces of libidinal investment and denial, also making an energy field 'visible' between the performers. The spectator is perceptually drawn to the forces at work through the interaction between these performers because the forces themselves appear to have a 'material' quality.

The theory of the quantum helps the spectator to 'see' forces within the perceptual space which now constitutes the stage. Michel Foucault, in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (Foucault 1977a: 148, 154-5) and "Theatrum Philosophicum" outlines a theory of the body in terms of 'phantasms' and 'events'. Phantasms are 'figures' on the surface of human bodies. They arise between the surfaces of bodies and constitute a sort of 'incorporeal materiality'; they can only be characterized 'quantitatively', by a multiplicity of points of given intensities (Foucault 1977b: 169-72; Lash 1990: 62-3). The term 'phantasm' comes from Freud's analysis of phantasy, yet phantasm's are neither Freudian images nor Lacanian signifiers. For Foucault, they are *real* and material (Foucault 1977b: 177). Newson's use of action creates the visibility of such forces and intensities produced from bodies colliding, mingling, separating; both emerging from within and on the surface. Through the indeterminacy of quantum reception of these actions, the spectator is drawn into the balance between these psychic and physical forces in the performer.

The second half of Dead Dreams takes us out of the battlefield of the club scene and into a more private space, which from scene to scene gradually reveals domestically familiar objects. As the performance space becomes more intimate we recognize a bathroom, a bathtub; a record player, a lamp and chair. Subverting expectations that this private and familiar space might yield more vulnerable, intimate behaviour between the men, it shockingly reveals the opposite. Part Two of Dead Dreams, explores a series of actions between an animate body and a 'dead' body; a living self and a dead Other.

In the title of Brian Masters's book about the Nilsen murders he gives us the reason why Nilsen killed the men he brought back to his flat after picking them up in clubs -- 'killing for company'. Concerning this paradox, Fiona Buckland has said,

The corpses in Dead Dreams have not been transformed into that state to destroy the individual, to make him absent, but (perhaps even more chillingly) to make him eternally present, to stop him from leaving (Buckland 1995: 375)

One such action sequence between a live and 'dead' body begins before a mirror, two men standing in intimate embrace, taking in this reflection of themselves. Shockingly this potentially erotic embrace becomes morbid as movement between the two reveals that one is a 'corpse'. The following action sequence is sublime for its poignant choreography of loss.

Looking to the spectator's relationship to loss and subjectivity, Peggy Phelan employs the work of Jacques Lacan in the following observation:

All seeing is hooded with loss -- the loss of self-seeing. In looking at the other (animate or inanimate) the subject seeks to see itself. Seeing is an *exchange* of gazes between a mirror (the image seen which reflects the looker looking) and a screen (the laws of the symbolic which define subject and object positions within language). Looking, then, both obscures and reveals the looker. (Phelan 1993: 16)

In theatre, for the spectator there is often a desire for a response through the performance. The possibility for a responding eye, like the yearning for a responsive voice, informs the desire to see the

self through the performance of the other which Western theatrical representation exploits. Dead Dreams demonstrates an awareness of the spectator's desire for solidity; an arrangement mediated by fear of entropy (or disorder) in the Other. But if Quantum theory has taught us that the world is a game of chance, and whether we consider ourselves spectators of this process or not, we are in fact among the players (George 1989: 172), how might this risk of involvement in action open up an even more penetrating risk in confrontation with other players; that is to say, with the Other?

As Dead Dreams moves towards its disturbing conclusion, that of one man alive and the rest, dead bodies on the floor. For the spectator their is the painful awareness that the hope of being valued and desired by the Other has prompted sacrifices from which the lone man will never escape. This is a particularly unbearable moment because the action, between live and 'dead' bodies, which leads up to this scene has made effective use of metonymy. In the physical theatre of DV8, the dramaturgy (the weave or grammar of actions) makes use of metonymy because it uses the agonizingly relevant body of the performer as referent (Phelan 1993: 150). There are many instances in Dead Dreams where a scene of aggressive action has caused a performer to be in pain, break out in a sweat, or be out of breath. The scene following such exertion will make use of the performer's exhaustion. This is emphasized on video through the use of close-ups; the close-up focus of the camera shows the physical anguish of the performer. Newson's dramaturgy demonstrates the power of metonymy over the more commonly used practice of metaphor. Metaphor signifies hierarchically, by erasing dissimilarity, negating difference, and in theatre it turns performer and character into one. Metonymy is additive and associative; it works to secure a horizontal axis of contiguity and displacement. In the physical theatre of DV8, the performer's body is metonymic of the performer's self, and its various roles in theatre and reality: gay male, murderer and victim. But in the theatre, as in reality, often the plentitude of the performing body -- in all its visibility and availability -- the self of the performer actually disappears. As theatrical representation takes on a kind of 'reality' itself, the self of the performer becomes obscured because the spectator's gaze is fixed on the object of performance, the character which the self has metaphorically become. This metaphorical body is the object of the spectator's gaze, the object of desire, the sex object, and thereby a body for reproduction, exchange, for sale or abuse. This representation of the body is what metonymy attempts to disrupt, by showing the representational excess to this way of seeing the body in performance. Through action -- its energies and forces -- metonymy simultaneously makes visible the body of the performer's self to the body in theatrical representation.

The physical theatre of DV8 uses the performer's body to pose questions concerning the objectification of the self (through the physical and the psychic body) in a reality now entirely made up by representations, where such objectification is the norm. In showing the relationship between the self and what it is to *Be* -- embodied physically and psychically -- the work of DV8 shows that *Being* is metonymic. More accurately this is to say that *Being* is more a process of *Becoming*, because metonymy works through a process of action. Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men explores the cost to the self when this process of *Becoming* is denied. Through the work of actions and their relationship to the spectator, Dead Dreams shows us how this process of exploration is most often denied because the performer's body is used to frame the lack of *Being* promised by and through the physical body alone. Occasionally, however, there are quantum glimpses of a balance of *Becoming*, which exists between physical and psychic embodiment. This balance of *Becoming* is the risk offered the spectator in confrontation with the pain and loss of Dead Dreams. As a theatre event, Dead Dreams problematizes the distinction between theatrical representation and reality, and obliges the spectator to explore these glimpses of *Becoming* as potential for confrontation with that which is beyond their sense of self, their sense of subjectivity and reality. It is in the process of *Becoming* that the self may be vulnerable and openly confront the risk of that which is not known, the alterity of the Other.

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